

**AN EVALUATION OF FIGURES OF SPEECH IN ONYEDIBIA'S ORIE IN THE  
CONTEXT AND AESTHETICS OF ORAL LITERATURE**

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**Abstract**

*Aesthetics is the study of beauty, especially beauty in art. This work focuses on oral poetry, with a special emphasis on an evaluation of figures of speech in Onyedibia's Ori in the context and aesthetics of Oral literature. The research methodology adopted for this paper was descriptive survey design deriving data essentially from two sources: the primary and secondary sources. The primary source is the text book 'Ori' which is used for analysis. The secondary source include materials of Oral literature textbooks, journals and online materials. The paper adopted ethnopoetics as its theoretical framework to discuss the principle of bipartite structure as one of the features of oral literature, citing copious examples from the text to buttress assertions identifying such poetic qualities, as contrast, ideophones, repetition, metaphors among others through which beauty is created. Paper also showcased that the book, Ori, as a source of historical information of the Omoku people in Ogba /Egbema/Ndoni Local government area of Rivers state Nigeria . The paper concluded while recommending that both lecturers and students should collect, collate, transcribe, translate and conserve oral literature products for posterity.*

**Keywords:** *Aesthetics, Bipartition, Ideophones, Myths, Oral Literature*

**Introduction**

“Oral”, according to Abram (1981) are “Stories passed on by oral tradition, i.e from one generation to the next without being written down”. Commenting on oral literature in her *Introduction To Oral Literature*, Chukwuma (1994) noted that: “Oral literature is a tradition in literature with marked features and styles. It is a pleasurable form of communication communally owned and orally transmitted in a face-to-face contact”. World Oral Literature Project (2022) defines oral literature as “any form of verbal art which is transmitted orally or delivered by word of mouth”. These include ritual texts, curative chants, epic poems, musical genres, recitation, riddles, tongue twisted, among others.

It is pertinent to note that from these definitions of oral literature, it is obvious that oral literature is different from written literature as a result of its unique features. This study attempts a critical analysis of Adiola Onyedibia's book entitled, *Orie* in the context and aesthetics of oral literature. The bipartite structures and the use of language which include proverbs, repetitions, ideophones etc. as characteristic oral features will be fully enunciated. Appropriated passages would be quoted to buttress our assertions.

Cite this article as

Isaac, M. A. (2022). An evaluation of figures of Speech in Onyedibia's Ori in the context and aesthetics of oral Literature. *THE COLLOQUIUM*, 10(1), 16-28

**The structures of *Orie***

The principle of Bipartition: The bipartite structure as one of the features of oral literature is aptly used by Onyedibia in *Orie*. Two worlds are portrayed: the physical and the spiritual world. In an oral genre, the physical world has a mutual relationship with the spiritual. The concept of reincarnation is succinctly described in Onyedibia's *Orie*:

*How shall I forget that you died and returned  
As you yourself told me with love  
Because your husband, long gone, slapped you  
In the other world angry that you did not wait  
Until I should return from my journey overseas  
And you woke with the stripes of his fingers on your face  
And you lived on and on for me, Emelego... (.ii)*

In the foreword to *Orie*, Ezeokoli also re-echoed the Author's belief in reincarnation. She stated inter alia:

*Orie continues the noble tradition of honouring Motherhood. Orie, the quintessential mother accomplished, wise, nurturing, giving, weaves the tapestry of the author's childhood, and generates the hues of this life, having, as he believes returned from death to live on and on for his*

Furthermore the bipartite nature of African seasons are presented in *Orie*: The rainy and dry seasons. In Nigeria, Omoku in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local government area of Rivers state, Nigeria in particular, the dry season is between November and April yearly. Immediately after the flood which comes once every year between July and October serious farming commences. In *Orie*, Adiola Onyedibia introduced this season while narrating the folktale of the farmer and the hippopotamus. He noted that:

*And time came  
And the bank of the river was clear  
Good and fertile  
Then the time of farming came  
Son came the season of the farmer  
Hoping to grow a farm, to fed his home... (17).*

Moreover, in *Orie*; the protagonist *Orie*, explains to her son while returning from the farm on a rainy day the importance of rain on their crops and the rainy season. *Orie* comments:

*And when the rain comes  
The crops in the farm will eat well  
When they eat well from the sun and water  
They grow well and give more of us  
And we expect the fruits of our farm (77).*

Again still talking about the seasons in the hippopotamus folktale, *Orie* Observes:

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*And the river was too shallow to swallow him again,  
For the tide was going down now  
To rest and swell in another realm  
And as we know, the tide comes but once every year  
So the animal waited for another season  
To find his way back into deep water (17).*

The theme of duality of nature is effectively handled in Onyedibia's *Orie*. The Firmament and the Earth are genderized. The Firmament is given the masculine gender who rains and fertilizes the Earth being the feminine gender. Commenting on the union between the earth he writes:

*Soon, the Land, this land will be dressed  
Random in moulds  
Short cassavas stems will be in their short ridges  
Yams and coco yams will slant in their little peaky moulds  
Like crumbling ant hills  
...  
Waiting, perhaps praying for the blessing of Firmament and Earth  
Waiting for rain, sun, water and wind  
That they may rout their moulds like babes cut out of looms  
And grow, and then fruit, and then multiply (63-64)*

It is often asserted that, "behind every successful man there is a women". This relationship and harmony between husband and wife is aptly demonstrated in the protagonist, *Orie*, while working with her husband in the farm:

***Orie:***  
*Beside her husband  
From head to toe, she's a special bow of strength  
As she bends till the earth  
Bearing the burdened curve of labour  
For posterity (62).*

In *Orie* land and aquatic birds are highlighted and their physical characteristics that enabled them to be adequately adapted to their distinct environments are effectively described. The land birds: the *Otukpokpro-ro*-the Wood pecker; the songful *Nwanza* – the Sunbird; the *Okwurukwuru*, ugly, short-nose and beak, primitive and sad – the Owl. Others are: *Iche* – the Parrot; the *Opa*, Laughing jackass, white and slim; The *Ezanwaoyibo* – the Weaver bird; the *Okwori*, sleazy with a mighty head; the hen; hawk and duck. The duck is an amphibian. It lives on land as well as in water. The following are the aquatic birds: the red-becked *Nkelu* – the king fisher; the black and white – striped *Achra* and the wiggly *Ogalanji*, as light as feather. These birds survived through the aquatic elements. The author demonstrates the perfect work of *Chukwu Abiama*, God the Almighty in creating these animals and giving them the necessary feathers that would enable them to survive in their various environments.

Furthermore, still on the bipartite structure of *Orie*, the author, Adiola Onyedibia make use of riddles which also occur in two: the proposition and the answer. Even the narrative technique is bipartite in nature – the narrator and the audience. However, detailed discussions on these

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concepts would be elaborated on oral style and the use of language. Having enunciated the bipartite structure of *Orie*, I shall proceed further to comment on the use of myth and legend in *Orie*.

### **The Myth and Legend**

Myth is man's quest to explain nature unscientifically, trying to understand why things are in their present order. We have the creative myth, the river myth etc. According to Wikipedia (2022) "Myth is a traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining supernatural beings or events".

A famous prolific writer who has contributed immensely towards development of oral literature in print, Finnegan (1979) elucidated the use of Myths. She stated inter alia:

*These are conceived on a vast scale, and in co-ordination with a whole series of supporting myths allied to social groups and institutions, present a kind of re-enactment through song of the deeds and journeying of the mythical ancestors in the primeval 'Dream-time' of the creation of the land and the natural species social institutions of the world today (116).*

Onyedibia made adequate use of the myth of *Erisi-Omoku*, the goddess of the river in *Orie*. As an indigene of Omoku it is believed that *Erisi-Omoku* is the wife of *Ughamini-Ugwuta*, a god. Occasionally, the Chief Priest would issue a warning that *Ughamini-Ugwuta* would visit his wife, *Erisi-Omoku*. Within the stipulated period people (especially stranger) are prevented from going to the river to have their bath to avoid being taken by the *Erisi-Omoku*. However, this line of argument is not the effect which this study wants to achieve.

In appreciating the mythic essence of *Mini Omoku* in the introduction, David I. Ker quoted a passage in *Orie* describing the abode of the goddess according to Onyedibia:

*Down its streams again, speeding through its banks irregular and curving lengths to empty itself at this legendary mouths This mysterious place where it is said, Erisi-Omoku, goddess of the river, dwells where the mighty rays of the sunrise and the beautiful glow of sundown Break through the evergreen leaves of the aged trees that have protected this Mythic water sparkling and dazzling in serenity in silence so deep (xi - xii).*

*Erisi-Omoku* is a source of inspiration and protection for the *Omokians*. During the famous Omoku and Aboh wars about 18thc A. D; it is believed till today that *Erisi-Omoku* sunk the war boat of the Abohs which resulted into the vanquishing of the Abohs. I was told by my late father Mr. Michael Adiola Isaac that in those days during the *Erisi's* happy moments it will bring the war boat on the surface of the water for public view. This belief still holds in Omoku up till today. Onyedibia recreated the historical fact in *Orie*. Hear his account:

*Enemy my boats with enemy warriors were sunk by Erisi-Omoku and her warriors and where like a strand of palm kernel lotion in the dusk smooth and shimmering like coconut lotion in the sun it dissolves into mini Ozimini... (2).*

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Commenting about the admiration of *Orie*, the Protagonist, and *Mini Omoku*, V. C. Ezeokoli writes in the forward: “The legends and mystique of *Mini-Omoku* weave through the entire work. The author’s fascination with this river and the “little town” of Omoku is just as obsessive as his adoration for *Orie*”. (x).

### **Oral Literature serves as a tool for Information and Commemoration**

Apart from the pleasurable instruction, it is a medium of passing on knowledge from one generation to another. Through the legendary *Orie*, Onyedibia traced his ancestry and lineage. The reader is entertained and gained vital information and knowledge about his historical background.

This is one of the basic aims of oral literature. Tracing his genealogy in the dedication of *Orie* he stated thus:

*Dedicated to you Usomini nwa Erisi  
Sister of Amadike nwa Erisi  
Erisi son of Ahia  
Olowu son of Odila  
Of the kindred of Enyike of Krigene  
Your mother was Nkwogbo  
Daughter of Odu, son of Oriewu  
Of the kindred of Ihiukwu of Omoku  
Your husband was Kio “Kio Bonima”  
...  
Son of Aririoga and Orie, his wife  
Of the kindred family of Umueke (Ngwor)  
Orie daughter of Akorukwu of Ohali-elu  
Upon you a dowry of one female cow was paid  
You bore five children  
Last married Friday  
Son of Onyedibia, son of Oki, son of Oriekwo  
Son, of Akala, son of Olowu in the kindred of Ezeali  
Prolific womb who bore me and to whom also this  
I dedicate (.i).*

We have quoted this lengthy passage to enable the reader really understand, appreciate, and gain knowledge of the ancestry and lineage of the author, Adiola Onyedibia. As we stated earlier, tracing of ones genealogy is one of the aesthetics of oral literature. In Omoku, during important traditional occasions such as *Nchaka* festival, funeral ceremony and so on, the groit while performing would trace the ancestry of important personalities.

The legendary *Orie* as an epitome of perfection, Onyedibia used the book *Orie* to commemorate her achievements and set here as an example worthy of imitation and emulation by generation yet unborn.

### **Oral Styles and the Use of Language in Orie**

The book, *Orie* is written in verse form and it is very turgid. It takes a discerning mind to read and appreciate *Orie* as a work of art. It obeys the rules of obscurantism in poetry. This is one of the features that distinguish poetry and other forms of creative writing. *Orie* is presented in a folktale form with the story teller or narrator on one side and a live audience on the other. The author uses the first person narrative technique. ‘I’ and the audience “you”.

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Discussing this style of oral genre (Akporobaro, 2006) noted that:

*The presence of a live audience with its face – to – face communication distinguishes clearly between the artist himself and the audience. Consequently we find the prevalent use in oral genres of the first person “I” signifying the speaker in relation to “you” Signifying the audience (150).*

Onyedibia started the book with the following signature tune:

Narrator: “A – gam Idu”

Audience: “Idu Oba”

*So begins this tale  
So it came to be  
Through this journey:  
Serene Mini Omoku meanders down  
A glide from springs cool afar  
Fast through streams narrow:*

The clear waters of *Oke-enya* bound the trees (1). “A-gam Idu”, literally means, I’m off to *Idu*. The narrator is transported from the land of reality to the land of fantasy accompanied by *Nwaoruke* the master spirit (muse). In *Omoku*, *Nwaoruke* usually comes at the end of a tale but Onyedibia deviated from this norm and allows *Nwaoruke* to accompany him from the beginning of the journey to the Phantasmagoric world. While praying for inspiration by the muse for the clarity of mind and vision, he pleaded that *Nwaoruke* should keep him company. In response *Nwaoruke* stated that:

*I, Nwaoruke, spirit unseen, untouched by man...  
Normally, I come at the end of a tale  
But today  
Knowing the magnitude and efficacy of this journey  
I changed my mind ...  
I decided to come now  
From the beginning of the beginning (xv).*

In order to ensure that his audience is ready and mentally alert, the story-teller addresses his audience directly:

*The story-teller adjusted himself in his three-legged chair for his audience  
bowed their heads in though and sorrow-wipe away your tears, my people  
Sorrow is said, I know  
But man must know himself  
To reinforce himself  
Not to breed blood  
But to save peace (34).*

### Contrast

Contrast as an oral aesthetic, Onyedibia made effective use of it to convey his message in *Orie*. In *Orie* one event or phenomenon is contrasted with one another. There is a contrast between life and death. There has to be death to bring life. *Orie* died and came back to life as a child to her grand-child – that is the concept of reincarnation.

*As you yourself told me with love because your husband, long gone,  
slapped you in the other world angry that you did not wait until I should  
return from my journey overseas and you woke with the stripes of his  
fingers on your face and you lived on and on for me, Emelego... (ii).*

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This concept of reincarnation also applies to plants. Yam tubers have to be buried before coming back to life as robust and healthy yams. He remarks.

*And the transition! Orie soon, the land, this land will be dressed random n mounds short cassava stems will be in their short ridges yams and coco-yams will start in their peaky mounds ... that they may rout their mounds like babes out of wombs and grow, and then fruit, and then multiply (63-64).*

In the folktale of the “hippopotamus and the farmer”, there is the use of contrast.

(a) “A refuge becomes a catacomb” (20).

The meaning is self explanatory. The house of the hippopotamus became a death trap for it. Unknown to the farmer that he is cooking his food on top of a hippopotamus, the farmer finally killed the hippopotamus in its place of abode.

(b) That in our quest for good and peace unknown often we build for ourselves traps unknown (20).

The hippopotamus in search of peace lost its life

(c) “And haven into a hole of death” (26).

(d) The beauty and ugliness in everything (27).

These expressions refer to the good and bad aspects of life.

### **Repetition**

The importance of repetition is for emphasis. Many instance of repetition abound in *Orie*. Commenting on repetition, Chukwuma (1997) noted that:

*It is important to note that repetition as a form of emphasis is a direct carry-over form speech norms, where the number of repetition enhances importance, enormity and seriousness of a fact complemented by the tone of articulations. Repetition also is used for stylistic effect as in the proverb where attention is drawn not only to the semantic but also to the phonological aspects of the words. (159)*

Onyedibia made effective use of repetition as an oral technique in *Orie*.

(a) “In the very beginning without beginning (xiii).

This expression is repeated three times. The word “beginning” occurs in the medial and final positions respectively.

(b) “With his knife, he struck and struck and struck”.

(c) “He stabbed and stabbed and stabbed” (25).

The repetitions in sentences (b) and (c) respectively refers to the killing of the hippopotamus by the farmer and emphasizes his repeated efforts to ensure that the hippopotamus is eventually killed. The verbs “struck and “stabbed” are repeated in the medial and final positions respectively. Indicating what?

(d) The sun stared down still

Firmament gazed down still

Earth stood still

Still, the wind went its way

Still, river flowed along, away ...

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Still, spirit would not speak (27).

The adjective “Still” is repeated in the final positions in the first and second lines. While it is duplicated in the final position in the third line. The adjective “still” occurred in the initial positions in the fourth, fifth and sixth lines.

(e) “He though and though and though” (26).

The Verb “thought” is repeated in the medial and final positions.

It refers to the farmer’s feeling when he discovers that his knife cannot cut the thick hide of the hippopotamus.

(f) “Harmattan” (57-58).

The noun “Harmattan” is repeated singly in seven stanzas. It depicts the dangerous effects of the dry cold harmattan wind.

(g) “Whose song is song which shall be sung “(98-99).

This expression is repeated in nine lines

The noun “song” and the verb “sung” are repeated in the medial and final positions respectively. It is like a refrain of a song of death when *Orie* was explaining to her child about the senseless murders and man’s inhumanity to man’s during the Nigeria Civil war.

(h) “She learnt” (9).

The pronoun “She” and the verb “learnt” is repeated successively in five stanzas. It emphasizes the domestic chores and mannerisms learnt by *Orie* as a woman.

(i) “Over sun-dropped leaves

“Over sun-drunk flowers (3).

The preposition “over” is repeated in nine lines

It refers to the omnipotence of *Chukwu Abiama*, the Almighty God over all creatures.

In the light of the above analysis on the sun or repetition in *Orie*, it did not maintain a steady pattern of initial, medial and final position of repetition. The use of repetition in *Orie* is mainly for emphasis.

### **Ideophones**

Ideophones are descriptive sound modifiers. Ideophones appeal to the sense of hearing (aural). It is one of the characteristic features of the oral genre. Acholonu (2010) noted that:

*Ideophones are sounds that convey some impression not on their own but as adjuncts to words. They are a feature of oral languages and thus they are parallels of some major category of grammar as verbs, adverbs, or both adjectives and modifiers... They are descriptive sounds which given an added dimension and flair words. They spice up words. Their main interest and appeal in an oral medium is this phonological character (176).*

Onyedibia captures the interest of the readers in *Orie* through the use of ideophones.

(a) “Twice the *ojeewobbiedyogoo, yogoo, yogoo*” (16)

This ideophones refers to *Nwaoruke*, the master spirit, that comes at the end of the tale and strike his ojee (staff) three times and it broke into two and he exclaims “Let what shall come to light, come to light and let what shall remain, among spirits remain among spirits” This two worlds, the physical and spiritual is prevalent in African oral literature.

Ideophones are also used in the riddles language.

(b) Preposition: “What is it that fall *tim* and *yoi*?”

Answer “A bunch of palm fruits and bread fruit” (16)

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(a) “Upon this farm, the farmer came one day to work and as a piper must sneeze so-must a man eat” (17).

This reminds me of a popular saying that, “all work without play makes jack a dull boy”. The proverb stated above is ironical. This is because instead of the farmer having his rest and eating his food he is involved in a more tasking job harder than farming with his desperate efforts in trying to kill the hippopotamus.

(b) “Yesterday was today tomorrow is ever pregnant” (36).

This proverb refers to the unpredictability of future beclouded by mysteries, no one knows that it will bring forth. This proverb was used when the *Omokians* rejected the trade treaty between them and the Royal Niger Company.

(c) “Weep no more, my heart, my child what is hot shall be cold” (80).

This proverb is associated with the bed bug in my community, Omoku. This refers to the saying that; “no condition is permanent”. That adverse condition do not last forever. *Orie* used this proverb to soothe her child when rain was beating them while they were returning from the farm.

(d) “Things of the world pour past for nothing must last forever (8).

This proverb by the weaver bird is almost like (c) above, meaning that nothing is permanent in life. Life is transitory. The proverb is a recurring motif in the book.

(e) The red-beaked *nkelu*, the king fisher said: “oh, Fishes, call me not a criminal because you keep surfacing and I can’t stop myself (7).

This proverb by the king fisher is self explanatory meaning that you should never tempt one with what is vulnerable to him, because he will surely fall into the temptation.

(f) The black and white-stripped *achra* said: “How great is my creator that the river never day of fishes”. This proverb refers to the abundance of natural resources created by *Chukwu Abiama*, the Almighty God.

(g) The *Opa*, the laughing jackass said: “I laugh at the world below because it will not laugh at itself” (8).

This proverb literary means that the *Opa*, flapping high up in the sky has escaped the problems, sorrow, hunger and anger of this world and thus can afford to laugh at the predicaments of this world. It is literally in the Biblical paradise.

(h) The *Okwori* also said: “Thank God I’m still alive to tell the world that I’m passing by” (8). This refers to the sonorous voice of the *okwori* when it is flying high up in the sky. Even the deaf will hear the deep sound of the *okwori* when it is flapping across ones abode. This proverb is also similar to that of the crab who said that “anyone who does not eat it must hear its sound”.

Onyedibia made effective use of land and aquatic animal proverbs to buttress his points in *Orie*. Even the songful *nwansa*, the sunbird has its own proverb.

(i) All my fat comes out in heaps through the nose”. (7)

(j) “How often is a shining gift ever a shining heart? (30).

This rhetorical question depicts the uncertainties associated with “Greek gifts”. Proverbs are not used out of context. This proverb was used when the Royal Niger Company wanted to force themselves into Omoku. Instances of proverbs, Idioms and wise saying abound in *Orie* but owing to the limited scope of this paper it would not be adequately exhausted.

### **Riddles in *Orie***

Riddles are not flexible. They have a fixed linguistic structure. This is because when a riddle question is posed. It requires a definite answer. Riddles are used to test basic intelligence in our local environments.

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In *Orie*, *Orie* the main character, uses riddles to sustain the interest and alertness of her audience in her story telling session. In *Omoku*, we have a signature tune before a riddle question is posed. *Onyedibia* uses the skill in *Orie*.

(a) Poser: *Azarioo – oo*

Audience: *Zaa*

Proposition: What is it that fall *tim* and *yoi*?

Answer: A bunch of palm fruits and breadfruit (.16).

(This riddle has already being explained while discussing ideophones).

(b) Poser: *Azarioo – oo*

Audience: *Zaa*

Proposition: What is it that cut the teeth of other fishes but could not cut his own teeth?

Answer: The globe fish

The globe fish is a predator which feeds on other fishes but could not feed on its offspring. It could also refer to people taking the responsibilities of other but could not handle their personal affairs. In *Omoku*, skin of the globe fish is not eaten because, it is believed that once it is eaten it results to the death of the eater. However, we eat the flesh. The skin of the globe fish is swollen like a globe when it is disturbed.

(c) Narrator: *Azario – oo*

Audience: *Zaa*

Proposition: What is dateline?

Answer: Dateline is death (.23)

This riddle is used to relate the story of *Nwanza* (sunbird) the trickster, and *Obu* (dove) on a hunger context. The tiny *Nwanza* outwitted the big *Obu* which resulted into the death of the latter. (The full detail of the story is not the effect which this write-up wants to achieve).

The above riddles buttresses that point we made earlier, that riddles have fixed linguistic structure. This is because when the question is posed, a definite and correct answer is required to unravel the riddle question.

### **Metaphors in *Orie***

A metaphor is a compressed simile. This is because the words “as” and “like” as agents of comparison in similes are removed. Things are given the direct referent of that it resembles. For instance, John was a lion in the battle field.

This means that John fought like a lion in the war front. The word “like” is carefully removed in the first sentence: *Onyedibia* also employs this skill in *Orie*.

(a) “The heart of the sky tuned a volcano or explosions” (86). This expression is metaphorical because of the thunder and lightning in the sky, the explosion is likened to that of a volcano.

The expression could also be treated as a personification because the sky is described as having “heart” which is a human quality.

(b) Your feet conquered jungles and swamps” (III).

This refers to various lands, rivers and creeks traversed by *Orie* to eke out a living for herself and posterity.

The limited scope of this paper may not allow me to itemize all the metaphors and other figures of speech used by *Onyedibia* in *Orie*.

### **The Use of Folk Tales and Songs in *Orie***

*Onyedibia* uses story-telling, one of the tools of oral literature in passing his messages in *Orie*. In fact the book started, using the story telling formula:

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“A – gam Idu”

“Idu – Oba (.I)

The entire book is written through this medium

Apart from other elements infused into the tale like, myth, legend, historical facts and so on there are actual folktales. The first folktales is recorded in pages 12 – 15. This is the story of “the gorilla and the farmers”. At the end of each tale, he introduces the *Nwaoruke* who concludes the tale with the following dictum: “Let what shall come to light come to light/And let what shall remain among spirit remain among spirits” and severed his ojee (staff) into two signifying the end of the tale.

Furthermore, the second folktale is on pages 16 – 26.

This is the folktale of the “hippopotamus and the farmer” occasionally an anecdote is introduced in the major tale. The short story of why the frogs’ head is flat and why it makes the “*worrorr, crawcraw*” sound is recorded in page 22.

Moreover, songs are oral ingredients are also used intermittently in the tale: “Sunbird and dove/*mbelekwu... Dum dumdumdumdum/mbelekwu* (18). The song is repeated in pages 21, 25, 26 and 27.

Again lullabies used to placate children when they are crying and also to make them sleep are employed in *Orie*.

Do not cry

Do not cry

Do not cry till your mother returns

Your mother went to pick flowers

Your father went to pick flowers ... (10) repeated in (80).

Birds thanking God in enabling them see the new day sings: “O welcome! O dawn so beautiful ! ... (4). A bird also sings to the farmer while he is trying to find out what is pouring out his food from the fire:

“Why worry farmer/you may never understand”... (23).

Rain song is also depicted: “Rain wait, rain wait/till we reach our home” ... (75).

### ***Orie*: A Source of Historical Information**

As we stated earlier, that Oral literature is a pleasurable instruction, as one is being entertained, knowledge is gained which will be transmitted from one generation to the other. Onyedibia while presenting *Orie* in a folktale form, verifiable historical facts are craftily infused into the tale to enrich the horizon of the reading audience.

The advent of the Royal Niger Company to Kreigani and the brutal killings of Ojum and his son and daughter are historical truths. A trip to Kreigani, near Omoku, one would see the dilapidated buildings of the Royal Niger Company up till now (32-37).

Furthermore, he also subtly included the gory experience of the Nigerian and Biafran civil war in *Orie* which is also a historical fact (96-100).

Again, the legendary Aboh and Omoku wars and the acclaimed sinking of the Aboh war boat by *Erisi-Omoku* and the subsequently killings of the Aboh warriors are all verifiable historical facts (2). In the light of the above evidence, one does not need a prophet to prophesy that Onyedibia’s *Orie* is rich with the oral tradition of the Omoku people.

Cite this article as

Isaac, M. A. (2022). An evaluation of figures of Speech in Onyedibia’s *Orie* in the context and aesthetics of oral Literature. *THE COLLOQUIUM*, 10(1), 16-28

The culture of the Omoku people is also recorded in *Orie*. The *Nchaka* festival celebrated annually late November or early December according to the native calendar marks the end of the native year. The female and male wrestling contexts, marriage ceremonies are carefully waded into the tale. After reading *Orie* the reader is well informed about the culture and traditions of the Omoku people as well as being effectively entertained.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, *Orie* is a celebration of motherhood. The duties and code of conduct like respect to God, elders, younger ones and oneself expected of a mother is highlighted in *Orie*. The character and behaviour expected of a woman in her marital home is enunciated in *Orie* as a feminine gender. The demeanour and comportment of *Orie* as a role model cannot be over emphasized. It is pertinent to note that *Orie* is one of the days of the four-day week in Omoku and *Orie* is a feminine gender.

In this paper the various definitions of Oral literature have been given. The narrative techniques employed by the author in his work have been fully discussed. The author's use of language was not left behind. It is our belief that this essay will contribute invaluablely in further research in Oral literature.

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Cite this article as

Isaac, M. A. (2022). An evaluation of figures of Speech in Onyedibia's *Orie* in the context and aesthetics of oral Literature. *THE COLLOQUIUM*, 10(1), 16-28