

Structures, Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Modes of *Àwòrò-Òsẹ́* And *Ìsìn-rò* Festival Performances Among *Ìlá-Òràngún* *Ìgbómìnà* People

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Abstract

Àwòrò-Òsẹ́ (ÀÒ) and Ìsìn-rò (otherwise called Ilé-Orò (IO)) festivals are significant performances of the social, historical and mythical existence of Ìlá-Òràngún Ìgbómìnà people. Earlier works on these festivals were mostly approached from thematic and stylistic perspectives, neglecting the semiotic nuances through which they articulate the culture and ideologies of the Ìlá-Òràngún Ìgbómìnà people. This paper aims at filling this gap. A purposive sampling of data collection featuring participant observation, gender-based focus group discussions and in-depth interviews of open and exclusive in-door live performances of the two festival activities were observed and documented through audio-visuals. The data were subjected to, and analysed within the sphere of Cultural Semiotic Theory Model of Cassirer's (1923-59), taking its root from the general concepts of semiotics.

The study establishes that ÀÒ and IO festival performances feature specific and general semiotic structures, which symbolise and indexicate informative, consultative, evocative/ritual and entertaining structures and culture of the



people. The content communicates socio-political, mythico-historical, communal and ideological restrictive information of the community, employing the verbal and non-verbal forms largely enshrined in the musico-poetic chants, songs, *Ìgbìn-Òòṣà* dance and drum performance of *Òsé-títa* day, *Èje-Àrénù* of *ÀÒ* and at the *Èkà-kíkà* at *Àlùmójú-Orò* and *Àlùwolé-Orò*. The study concludes that semiotic nuances, manifested in the collaborative structures of *Àwòrò-Òsé* and *Ìsìn-rò*, demonstrate the distinctive communal experiences, victory and gender-spiritual valour of the *Ìlá-Òràngún Ìgbómìnà* people. They also define their mythico-historical cleavage and socio-religious and political ideological orientations through actions which form the bulk of non-verbal mode of communication as a booster to the verbal form, as the content of their culture.

Key words: Verbal and Non-verbal modes, *Àwòrò-Òsé* and *Ìsìn-rò* festivals, Structures and Performance codes, *Ìlá-Òràngún Ìgbómìnà* people, Mythico-historical identity.

Introduction

Festivals connote different things to many people. To some, a festive period is a season for celebrating and commemorating various ancestral divinities of a community in unique ways (Agbaje-Williams, 1992). To others, festive periods are considered as integral and dynamic part of the culture of Africans and occasions to which individuals respond spontaneously to the cultural demands of their environments (Ògunbà, 1977 and 1991). Annual festivals represent the attempt by each community to revitalise its creation so as to keep it alive (Sóyínká, 1976 and 2011). In spite of the various misrepresentations of the culture and festival performances of the Yorùbá by some scholars, such as Ìdòwú (1962), there have



been clear thoughts foregrounding the cultural significance of such communal bounds and values in festive performances. Works of Echeruo (1981), cited in Ogúnbíyí (1981: 136), for instance posit that: "... festival reinforces common values, share bonds and common taboos. It re-established link with the past and compels the living to participate in hilarity and comradeship of a communal happening". Also, as rightly observed by Ilésanmí (2004), the Yorùbá culture hinges on six main pillars; and among the Yorùbá, out of the six pillars of culture, religion has the strongest influence on the culture of the people because it permeates her worldview. Therefore, culture as an all-encompassing phenomenon in human endeavours, is considered as having certain special or preferential meanings in some contexts, and this explains why culture may be considered as specialised knowledge reserved and shared by certain groups of people. Viewing through the festive performances of the Yorùbá people, a better understanding of their worldview can be best assessed.

From past documentations and observations, festival performances provide an avenue for celebrating a particular event which is of great concern to a society, a nation or a country at large. This also informs the involvement of certain agential actional portions within their festive performances. For instance, in Nigeria, various ethnic groups such as the Hausa, Igbo and Yorùbá are well known for celebrating colourful festivals, which are characterised by traditional dresses, dances, music and mythical stories from time immemorial which make them memorable, quite animating and distinct shared

experiences. In the same vein, for centuries, the Yorùbá Ìlá-Ìgbómìnà people have been found to celebrate various events around them in festive forms. Also, their festive celebrations have received impetus of new zeal and vigour in their enactments for continuity and sustenance even with the glaring effects of globalisation. In the same vein, Ògunbà (1983:14) also assesses the scopes and contents of traditional festivals in Africa, thus: "Traditionally in Africa, the festival is a prime institution and indeed the only one, in which all the art forms of community are co-ordinated in its framework". From the views of scholars, no doubt, festivals cement the relationship of people in a community, while it serves as a source of cultural history, exposing certain roots of the laws or norms, taboos, specifically guiding the behavioural pattern of the people within a given culture for the purpose of preservation and the like.

Festivals which are of interest to this paper are ÀÒ and IO in Ìlá-Òràngún. Ìlá-Òràngún Ìgbómìnà people are distinct in their identity which is reflected in their culture and religion. Viewing through their celebrations, some of their values are within the structures of their activities which reveal that they are sign-dominated. Therefore, this paper aims at investigating the structures and sign features of *Àwòrò-Òsé* and *Ìsìn-rò* festivals among the Ìlá-Òràngún Ìgbómìnà people with a view to deepening the understanding of their nature, structure, inter-relationship and socio-cultural values as enshrined in sign usages. Additionally, it classifies and analyses some selected semiotic features of the structures and contents of the two festivals, while it discusses the ideologies underlying the



semiotic features and interpret the features within the contexts of their use(s), and relate the semiotic signs to their socio-cultural and socio-political significance.

Conceptual Clarifications

Ìsìnṛò Festival: Morphologically, *Ìsìnṛò* is segmented into three syllables thus = *Ì* + *sin* + *Orò*, where the word "*Orò*" is synonymous to *Àyèdú*- a mythological character in the oral narratives of the *Ìlá-Òràngún* *Ìgbómìnà* history (Pemberton III and Afọláyán, 1996; Adébáyò, 1996; and Fáléyẹ, 2005 and 2015). *Ìsìnṛò* denotes the actual act of seeing off or sending away *Orò* - *Àyèdú* within the festival (*Ọdún*) otherwise called *Ilé-Òrò* (the home-coming of *Orò*) away from the community.

In *Àwòrò-Òsé*, the term *Àwòrò* denotes a "Priest" in the Yorùbá language, while "*Òsé*" refers to the mythico-historical character (name) which also shares semblance with the universal *Ọbàtálá* divinity in the context of *Ìlá-Òràngún* mythology. However, the festival is interchangeably called *Òsé* or *Àwòrò-Òsé* festival within the community. The term "structure" as used in this paper represents the arrangement and relations between the parts or elements of the two festivals under investigation. The structures of the two festivals therefore encompass the infusion of plotal arrangement of events, the characters and other performers in the festivals.

Verbal and Non-Verbal Communications: These refer to all the vocalised texts and silent communicators that are used within the performances of *Ìsìnṛò* and *Àwòrò-Òsé* festivals. The non-verbal forms represented through codes and signs

(symbols), insignias on enacting objects on human body and/or locations of performances. These include gesticulations of people largely found during dance, movements, expression of thoughts in mime form, finger-taping, and all types of insignias on enacting tools or carvings found within the shrines and on other paraphernalia of enactment (Ògúndèjì, 1998; Adésànyà, 2014 and Fáléyẹ, 2015).

Performance and Performance Codes: Performance involves creative ingenuity of a collective or an individual idea which is communicated through a mode/code to the spectator(s). This is in tandem with the view of Okpewho, (2003: 4) that performance is "...something creative, realized, achieved, even transcendent of the ordinary course of events". The inference from the definitions is that, codes are apparatus utilised by performers (Characters) and audience within a context of a performance for the purpose of passing an idea to the audience meaningfully.

The Ìlá-Òràngún-Ìgbómìnà Culture and Traditional Festivals

A typical example of people whose culture and other salient preservation modes are explicit in their festive activities is the Ìlá-Òràngún Ìgbómìnà community, in Ìlá-Òràngún Local Government Area of Òşun State in Nigeria. They exercise their belief systems through verbal or non-verbal modes, communicating basic mythico-historical, socio-political and metaphysical ideologies through their festive activities as evident in *Àwòrò-Òsẹ* and *Ìsìnrò* festivals (Pemberton III and



Afoláyan, 1996; and Fáléyẹ, 2005). With some levels of veneration to sacred phenomena like myths and rituals which serve as the lenses through which the community's behavioural attitude and style can be identified and assessed, their shared beliefs and values are prominent in the selected two festivals. The activities of the people corroborate the thoughts shared by Danesi (2004) thus:

Myths are so fundamental to human understanding that they continue to inform activities ranging from psychoanalysis to sports events such as wrestling. And since mythological thinking is universal, it may explain why although details of stories change from culture to culture, they all reflect the same kinds of mythic themes (good vs. evil, heroism, etc.). The study of ancient myths comes under the semiotic layman rubric of mythology. (2004: 145-146).

The above view also agrees with Cassirer's (1955) view, that "the mythical world is concrete not because it has to do with sensuous, objective contents, not because it excludes and repels all merely abstract factors - all that is merely signification and sign" (pp. 24-26). He considers that myth is "concrete because in it, the two factors - thing and signification, are undifferentiated, because they merge, grow together, in an immediate unity." In essence, the connectivity of sign representation, which may be abstract in form and the concrete evidence as often realised from attitude, expression and human activities, are often residual in mythological narratives and

actions of artists/characters as found in the two traditional festivals under investigation.

Review of Related Literature and Theoretical Framework

The Encyclopedia Americana Volume XI, (1953: 153) defines "festival" as a word which takes its root from the Latin word "Festum". In old French, it connotes "Feast". Oyinloyè (2004: 45) observes that "festivals are regarded as sacred religious and social duties that are observed on either annual or bi-annual event in a given environment". The import of this definition implies that festivals are not just any occasion but somewhat specially connected to important and organised religions which are carried out yearly or bi-annually involving feasting - eating and wining. This regularity or periodicity of festive occasions is re-echoed in the studies of Benet (1829) and Awólàlú and Dòpámú (1979) that all important festivals of the world are linked with rhythmic changes in nature. With respect to the nature and labels ascribed to Yorùbá traditional festivals, Ògunbà (1991) warns against labelling Yorùbá traditional festivals as "religious", "sacred" or "secular". Rather, he suggests that they should be seen in more holistic ways. Ògunbà (1991: 355-360) succinctly posits that: "...such strict categorization into religious and secular or religious and political seems alien to the spirit and nature of the traditional African". In agreement with Ògunbà's view, therefore, the view of this paper is that Yorùbá traditional festival performances encompasses many events which are sacred, ritualistic or entertaining and mythical relationships; which are often fused together. Due to these fusions, outsiders may see the events as



mere entertainments, taking for granted that such events often go beyond the physical reality of the narration. This is why, at times, the understanding of the meta-physical context, the mythical information and so on involves some level of spirituality and search through the structures of the events.

Earlier classifications of Yorùbá traditional festivals were hinged on the nature of God, the Supreme Being and other deities (divinities) among others. Scholars such as Ìdòwú (1962), Abímbólá (1966), Dáramólá and Jéjé (1967) point out that the Yorùbá people worship numerous *Òrìṣà*; while acknowledging the supremacy of the Supreme Being, God (the creator). These scholars also argue that because of the supremacy of God and His exalted position, the Yorùbá people celebrate God through the numerous divinities/deities called the "intermediaries" such as *Ifá-Òrúnmìlà*, *Ọbàtálá*, *Èṣù*, *Ṣàngó*, *Ògún*, *Oya*, etc. to seek His favour. Farrow (1962) expresses that the distance of God often informs the various offering of sacrifices and prayers. Abímbólá (1976), among others, is of the view that the divinities of the African nation are infinite, while Ìdòwú (1962: 67), Westerlund (2006) and Olúpòná (1992 and 2011) posit that the divinities are two-hundred and one in number. This current research corroborates the views of earlier scholars that reverences to the divinities are given daily, weekly or annually to many of the divinities within the Yorùbá communities.

Other works which attest to the supremacy and earlier classifications of the *Òrìṣà* (Divinities) as either Primordial or Human-Deified Divinities include Johnson (1921), Ọlájubù

(1978), Adéjùmò (2008); Bákàrè (2008); Tishken *et. al* (2009); and Àkàndé (2013). Awólàlú and Dòpámú (1979: 73) also classify the Yorùbá divinities into three groups. The first group of divinities is called *Òrìṣà Atẹ̀wọ̀nrọ̀*. These are divinities that descended from heaven and were originally sent by God as "eyes" of God to monitor and control the affairs of human beings. Examples of this category of divinities include *Odùduwà, Ifá, Sàngó, and Ògún*. The second class is the "Man-made" or "Deified personalities", thus, referred to as *Akọ̀nidòrìṣà*. These are the personalities who, after their demise, became deified *Òrìṣà* due to their deeds while they were on earth. Examples include *Agẹ̀mọ, Mọ̀rẹ̀mi, Olúorogbo, Yemoja, Èlúkú* and *Agan*. The third category is the *Èmí àìrì* (unseen spirits), and these are of different forms. Awólàlú and Dòpámú's (1979: 73) examples of these *Èmí àìrì* are: "*Ìwin, Eboṛa, Òrọ̀*". Dòpámú (2008: 77) also claims, that "group of spirit-beings reside in trees, mountains, hills and rivers and that they are worshipped when sacrifices are offered to them by human beings for supports at locations known as "sacred places". These sacred locations are referred to as *Ibi ilẹ̀ gbé lójú* (places where the earth has eyes) by Ògunbà (1991) and Ògúndẹ̀jì (1998) respectively.

Scholars of Yorùbá traditional festivals have identified three types which are occasional, family and hegemonic festivals. First, occasional festivals refer to festivals that occur rarely. Ògunbà (1967) refers to such festivals as "occasional celebrations". Family festivals are those that are 'restricted to certain families' (Adémíjù-Bépo, 2012: 215). They are



otherwise called "area or ward festivals", and "community festivals". Finally, hegemonic festivals are festivals involving the entire community where the *Ọba* is at the centre of the celebration. The content of this type of festival is usually larger than the sacred or religious worship in outlook. Ògunbà (1991:51) identifies that "hegemonic festivals" "usually incorporate other re-enactment ceremonies reminiscent of the foundation of the community". Hence, *Ọdún Ìlú* or *Ọdún Ọba* was coined to capture the nature of this category of festival in most Yorùbá cities. Àkàndé's (2013) classification corroborates this same view.

Similarly, there are core festivals, which are devoid of entertainment. In collaboration with Ògúndèjì's (1988) view, these types of festivals are sacred and ritualistic. They are the performances of art that are restricted to some specific groups in a community. Their contents and contexts of songs, chants and other verbal recitations and non-verbal art (actions) are sacred, deritualising or ritualising in content. Additionally, there are some festivals that are culture-bound or restrictive in nature. These are festivals that are simply known in their community and may not be universally celebrated across the globe. These festivals are restricted in the sense that certain factors and features of the festivity are historical and mythological. In some cases, such festival(s) may share the features of primordial or deified personalities that are not considered to be universal in scope. The examples of such restrictive festivals are the *Pòkúlere* in Ilé-Ifè, *Agemọ* in Ìjẹbú (Ògunbà, 1991), and *Oro* festival of Ìsẹyìn, *Oro* in Èrúwà (Aşúbíòjò, 1984), *Oro* in Ìjẹbú,

and *Èrùgbè* tradition in Ìkòròdú (Ìdòwú-Òshó, 2005) of the Yorùbá communities. We can then say that in spite of the sacredness of some festival performances, the offering of sacrifices and ancestral placations which seem common to the Yorùbá celebrations, is influenced by several factors such as the need for historical, cultural renewal and preservation purposes. In essence, the circumstances surrounding the continuation of traditional festivals in Yorùbáland depend on some basic shared sociological factors such as belief in ancestors, spirits and other extra-terrestrial powers which are believed to have continually supported the co-habitation and development of their people. After all, the belief in spirit of different kinds is practically a component of most religions and cultures of the world.

The Structures of Traditional Festivals in Ìlá-Òràngún

In this paper, the festivals of Ìlá-Òràngún are broadly grouped into two in consonance with other Yorùbá traditional festivals. These groups are: (a) Major or Main and (b) Sub-festivals (see Fáléyẹ, 2015). The term "major or main festivals" refer to the festivals that are elaborately celebrated once in a year, in the studied society. This categorisation is in tandem with Ògunbà's (1991 and 1999) position, which describes 'major (main)' festivals as a better linguistic (verbal) code for festivals that are celebrated as the most important event in a community than the terms hegemonic, religious or sacred festivals. This categorisation does not in any way downplay the paramount position being occupied by religion in festive celebrations. Based on the contents, nature and features, *Ìsìnrò* festival in Ìlá-



Òràngún setting falls under the category of the major or main festival.

The other category is the Sub-festival. The term ‘sub-festival’ denotes festivals in the secondary cadre of significance and magnitude of celebrations in the community when compared with those under major (main) festivals. Also, sub-festival refers to the class of festivals that are of great importance to specific families and different lineages in the society, which are not at par with the events in the major (main) festivals. The divinities under this category are the human-deified or man-made divinities which include Ajagun-nlá, Ìgbònìbí, Àmòtàgesì, Ìwà and Òsẹ́. All these are human personalities that are very significant to the community. Thus, it is common to hear such expressions as *Ajagun-nlá, Àmòtàgesì... é gbè ó o, Eboṛa Ìlá é bá ha ṣe e o* (Ajagun-nlá, Àmòtàgesì, the various unique divinities would come to our aid).

It should be stressed that some of the festivals that are grouped as sub-festivals have the transformative capacity of being included in the Major (Main) festivals because of the various myths that connect them to the community. This ambivalence of such festivals is akin to the cases of some divinities that were both categorised as primordial, human-deified and unseen divinities of the universal context and of the studied community. It should also be stated that some of the festivals in this category of sub-festivals may also be celebrated annually, bi-annually or as occasion demands in some Yorùbá communities. This depends largely on the shared belief of the society concerned. However, Àwòrò-Òsẹ́ is commemorated



yearly around early or mid August to September, while *Ìsìnṛò* is annually celebrated within the calendar month of September spanning through first or second week of October; subject to Ifá consultation and affirmations.

Àwòrò-Òsé festival of Ìlá-Òràngún community shares some features with the group of Yorùbá universal festivals in other Yorùbá societies. However, because of the uncommon history and mythology of Ìlá-Òràngún-Ìgbómìnà in reference to the institutionalisation of *Àwòrò-Òsé*, this differentiates the celebration of the *Àwòrò-Òsé* festival from those often shared by the larger Yorùbá communities. Therefore, the similarities of the semiotic features which are evident foreground its categorisation as one of the universal primordials - *Obàtálá*, the Arch-divinity. This informs the grouping of *Àwòrò-Òsé* in the class of primordial or universal divinities (see Fáléyẹ 2015). The *Ìsìnṛò* festival on the other hand is a merger of several festivities involving the celebration of *Ifá Òràngún (Ifá-Ọlójà)*, the core remembrance of past ancestral founders and spiritual essences of the community, alongside other cultural funfair.

By the structure of festival celebration in Ìlá-Òràngún, *Àwòrò-Òsé* festival ushers *Ìsìnṛò* celebration into the community. The link is such that, without the structural performances of *Òsé's* festive activities, *Ìsìnṛò* celebration cannot hold within the community. Hence, *Àwòrò-Òsé* showcases a structural nine-day activity that encompasses the religious sacred/ritual informative and evocative symbolic activities leading to the various joyous celebrations of long lasting fourteen-day structural events of *Ìsìnṛò* elaborate festival.



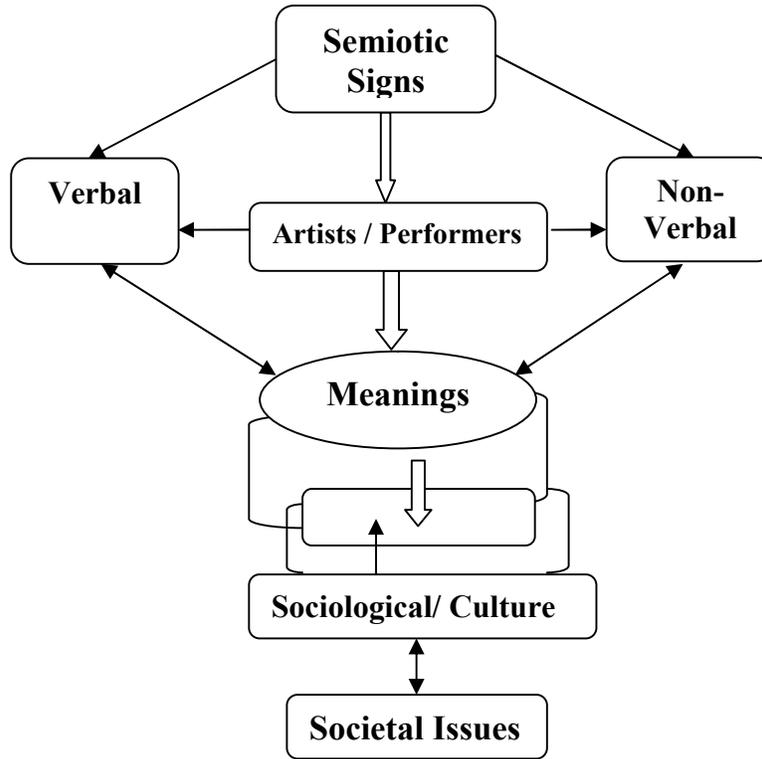
The amalgamations of the various nine-day activities which are the components of *Àwòrò-Òsé* festival dovetails into the larger celebration of *Ìsìnrò* (the major festival) of the community. From the cultural semiological perspective, the mythology of *Òsé*, and the prioritisation of *Òsé's* activities in the community—as both primordial and human-deified divinity, leaves the divinity to sharing double codes. Therefore, *Àwòrò-Òsé* and *Ìsìnrò* festivals are intertwined. This claim is hinged on the mythological narrative of the society¹.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws insights from Cultural Semiotics as a branch of general concept of semiotic in analysing the data. Specifically, it draws insights from Cassirer's (1923-59) model of cultural semiotics which underscores two basic tasks (a) the study of sign systems in a culture with respect to what they contribute to the culture, and (b) the study of cultures as sign systems with respect to the advantages and disadvantages which an individual experiences in belonging to a specific culture. This model seeks to provide answers to some questions which are in tandem with the set aim and specific objectives of this study. Also, Winner and Umiker-Sebeok (1979), Schwimmer (1986) and Posner (1991) observe that cultural semiotic theory provides a scientific framework for the empirical investigation and comparative description of all cultures in the world. Therefore, our choice of theory offers the theoretical foundations needed in answering the queries of cultural semioticians which seek to establish the relationship that exist between the interpretation of the sign-system, its cultural understanding and the



appropriateness of such interpretation within a culture. The paper utilised the framework which situates the semiotic codes within a social cultural context of Ìlá-Òràngún. Therefore, in this paper, festivals are conceived as performances of semiotic signs or symbols typified by verbalised and symbolic or actional components. The Characters: "Performers/Enactors" are the enunciators of the cultural semiotic acts. They are, however, not the sole agents of the products but rather derive their performance codes from the society. The enactors and their audience form the bulk of the sign-users within the context of this analysis. The festivals then become a joint production of the performers and the larger institution of Ìgbómìnà people and culture, which, like other cultures of the world, is undergoing systematic changes as a result of varied factors. The "Performers" occupy the central position within the traditional festival performances as the main sign-users, accountable to their co-performers and audience of various forms utilising symbols (signs) for communication as social-cultural artifacts/material and within their culture as a sign-system. These semiotic resources (signs) are treated as signifying systems that are composed of signifying practices, which affect relationship, the production and organisation of meanings that also make up the society and the larger content of their culture. The template in Fig.1 below summarises our submission.



*Fig 1: The Cultural-Semiotics Analytical Framework
(Source: Designed by the researcher, 2015)*

The Structural Composition of *Àwòrò-Òsé* and *Ìsìnrò* Festivals

The structures of the two festivals encompass the infusion of plotal arrangement of events, the characters and other performers in the festivals. The data show that the structures of the two festivals dovetail into one another, and they involve several segments of activities, various characters otherwise construed as performers and audience. The activities in the

Àwòrò-Òsẹ́ festival hold within nine days as shown in Table 1, below: However, we discuss the details of some selected features within the embolden days in the structural stages of the two festivals for economy of space in this paper.

Table 1: The main structural activities of ÀÒ festival

Major Activities	Days/Interval	Period/Months
Day: 1. Ìdájó Orò	Friday	(August)
Day: 2. Àlùmójú Àwòrò-Òsẹ́	Saturday	(August)
Day: 3. Ijó Ojà Àwòrò-Òsẹ́	Sunday	(August)
Day: 4. Òsẹ́ tita	Monday	(August)
Day: 5. Ìdásu Méta	Tuesday	(August)
Day: 6. Ijó Ojà	Wednesday	(August)
Day: 7. Àguntàn-è-jejà	Thursday	(August)
Days: 8. & 9. (Days 8 and 9 are indoor activities for the <i>Àwòrò-Òsẹ́</i>).		

The Structural Events of *Ìsìn-rò* Festival

The *Ìsìn-rò* festival activities take place within fourteen days. Table 2, below, highlights the (14) fourteen-day events of the festival.

Table 2: The main structural activities of Ìsìn-rò festival

Main Event	Days of the Week	Month of the Year
Ìsìn-rò Festival Activities		
Day 1: Àisùn Orò/Ìsun-Iṣu-léfá	Friday	(September)
Day 2: Ìwà Lílà (Ìwà Iyán)/Ìwọlé Orò	Saturday	(September)
Day 3: Ifá Olojà	Sunday	(September)
	(3days interval)	
Day 6: Ìwà Lílà (Ìwà Aṣọ)	Wednesday	(September)
Day 7: Ìmarúgbó/Ìsúlẹ̀ Ọmọ Ọba Arútú àti Ìgbonnibí)	Thursday	(September)



Day 8: <i>Ọbaálá n̄ sẹ̀lá</i>	Friday	(September)
Day 9: <i>Ìsúlẹ̀ Òkómo</i>	Saturday	(September)
Day 10: <i>Ìwà Lílà (Ìwà Ọrẹ̀)</i>	Sunday	(September)
Day 11/13: Ìsìnrò	Wednesday	(September)
Day 14: <i>Ọjọ̀ Òfín Ọdún</i>	Thursday	(September)
<i>Ayẹyẹ Ọdún</i>	Friday	(October)
<i>Ìgbéfá Ọràngún</i>	Monday	(October)

As evident from the above, the two festivals differ in nomenclatures, number of days, time of activities and locations of events. They are however sociologically and semiotically connected by some of the activities in the ritual/sacred enactments, dance performances and characters involved. All these are nuances classifiable into verbal and non-verbal codes within the two festive performances for our analysis.

Verbal and Non-Verbal Nuances of the Festivals

The two festivals employ multiple sign forms, which come in verbal and non-verbal modes and are employed for various thematic and symbolic purposes in the festivals. All the vocalised texts that are used in the performances of *Ìsìnrò* and *Àwòrò-Òsẹ́* festivals are treated as the verbal communication codes in this study. Some of these codes are called *Enà* or *Àrokò* mode (a secret but conventional manner of communication) classifiable into a type of verbal and non-verbal mode of communication among the Yorùbá. Within the context of use, it is restricted in nature. Also, it should be stressed that verbal codes are more prominent in *Àwòrò-Òsẹ́* festival than in *Ìsìnrò* festival that is mainly characterised by *Èkà-Kíkà* drum and some



few musico-poetic songs of the *Olori* and dance performances of the community people serving as the non-sacred form of the acts. Other verbal codes which feature prominently in the *Òsẹ́* festival include *Ìpè-Òòṣà/Òsẹ́* (summons or calls), *orin* (songs) and chants forming the bulk of the musico-poetic codes. These codes are:

A. The Musico-Poetic Codes

We identify three segments as of *Ìpè-Òsẹ́* chants thus: (i) *Ìpè ìṣaájú* (pre-performance or initial calls), (ii) *Ìpè Áárín* (in-between-performance-calls), and (iii) *Ìparí-Ìpè-Òsẹ́* (end of performance-calls). This is in agreement with Fáléyẹ (2005 and 2015). An example of the text language of *Ìpè ìṣaájú* is cited below:

Call (Lead Voice): *Héèpà mọlẹ́ /Òòṣà*
 Response (Others): *Héèpà mọlẹ́.*

The musico-poetic codes which come in different forms are:

(i) Restrictive Greeting Codes

The natures of the verbal expression in the performance at the openings, in-between and sometimes at the closing points of *Ìpè-Òòṣà/Òsẹ́* indexicate restriction and symbolically communicate paving ways for the *Èwe-Òsẹ́*. In *Àwòrò-Òsẹ́* performance, the *Èwe-Òsẹ́* employs various verbal voices that beckon and enliven the *Òrìṣà* in the morning and evening sessions of each day of the festival. For instance, shortly before *Òsẹ́* commences his dance enactments at the *Ijó-Ojà* of *Àwòrò* in the public at *Ìdẹ̀ta* and at *Imòòṣà*, the *Èwe-Òsẹ́* calls thus: *Òsẹ̀ẹ̀ẹ̀ òòòòò...* As *Òsẹ́* moves round the performance locale, he pays



homage at the drum stand, while the expression below is also echoed thus:

Call: *Hèèpà Òòṣà*. Response: *Hèèpà Òòṣà*.

The various calls, as cited above, indexicate a summon and evocative codes of the divinity, while the response symbolises a restrictive recitative code of the divinity and echoed by the performers of *Ìpè-Òòṣà/Òsẹ́* and initiates of the divinity only. This is culturally understood within the context of its usages by the enactors and the community. When echoed from afar, while the *Èwe-Òsẹ́* ladies are on their way to fetch *Omi Àjípọ̀n Òòṣà*, it iconises sacredness, which commands the passers-by to vacate the passage-way for the spiritual enactors. Also, from our observation, the various pre-performance-calls and the responses, as cited above, charge the co-performers-*Èwe-Òsẹ́*, *Ọmọ-Osú-Ilé-Àwòrò*, *Obìnrin-Ilé-Àwòrò* and the drummers (*Ọmọkùnrin-Ilé-Àwòrò*) into action during public enactment of *Òsẹ́* dance at days three and six respectively. From the semiotic perspective, the echoes of the verbal texts at this stage indexicate a symbolic call to worship. This view is substantiated in that, as the charge is made by a lead vocalist, other enactors spring to action by re-echoing the same expression, and the locale of performance is thus filled with loud drumming and other actional forms.

We also observe that it is at the initial charge of calls usually led by the vocalist, that the *Òsẹ́* Priest is energised to begin his sacred count dance movements from the drummers to the *Ọba* for the various sacred enactments involving both the principal and semi co-enactors during the public enactments. In

addition, the *Ìpè-Àárín-Òsẹ́* (in-between-performance-calls) suggests a resting period for the drummers, the *Òsẹ́* and the singers all-together. This is evident in the sense that, as the call codes are echoed by all co-enactors, the dance movement of *Òsẹ́* locates him at the base of the drum and in readiness for another round of count of the movement and change of song. The in-between performance-call is therefore construed as the checks to the number codes in the songs within the sacred dances. However, we consider that this segment of song transition/changes re-energises the priest and gets the audience also away from boredom of same song throughout the enactment. The verbal sacred calls also push the principal performer for another round of his search movement round the locale of performance. The third segment which is the *Ìpari-Ìpè-Òsẹ́* (end of performance-calls) symbolises the end note to the sacred performance of *Òsẹ́* Priest. In fact, this segment ends the entire enactment of the throwing of the *Èsẹ̀bì* kolanut by the *Ọba* which is a precursor to the wives' and *Àwòrò*'s family dance entertainment to the public and the two sacred entities (the *Òsẹ́* priest and the *Ọ̀ràngún* who serve as the principal and semi-principal enactors at the performances' locales).

(ii) Invocative Code: In sacred ritual performances, it is sociologically construed that the spirit of the divinities or unseen spirits are induced specially by wailing to them, using a loud sonorous voice to beckon at them for activity. From the semiotic perspective, one may ask whether the spirits are always asleep before waking them up. Apparently, the various sonorous verbalised wailings and special inducement of the ancestral



spirits of the *Òsẹ́* by the female co-enactors are construed as invocative in nature. Their voices indexicate special appealing echoes which sound very attractive and compelling to anyone who ears them. The tones and intonations are part and parcel of the special call codes in this context. The melodic sonorous but piercing bellows of the chanters are evocative such that the codes cannot be ignored. The sound goes thus: “*Òòòsẹ́ òòò! Olúwa iyáà miii...*”. The tone signifies a caller from a very far distance who in actual fact, summons the spirit of the Priest from the other world of the sacred beings. The connotative and denotative values are envisaged in the fact the divinity may though be physically nearer to them at the context of the performance, but the tone of the chanter and reciters suggests that the actual divinity in the character of *Àwòrò* is expected to descend from the world of the ancestors. The tone in the recitation of the performance at the invocation of *Òrìṣà-Òsẹ́* seem different to the day-to-day verbal form of communication. Hence, this is considered as one of the strengths of poetic performance.

The tonal effects of the callings of the *Òrìṣà* by the *Èwe-Òsẹ́* at those points symbolically positioned the chanters whose voices signify the ambiance of possession of the spirits of the divinity concerned. This is also seen within the frame of what the traditional Yorùbá performers called *Ègùn-iṣe* or *Ègùn-ìpohùn* in performance. We posit that the tone and various inflections would definitely have some positive or negative effects on the carriage of the Priest and principal and other co-enactors who tune appropriately when such summons are heard.

The semiological importance of the greeting code among the initiates and co-performers of *Ìpè-Òsẹ́* also serves as a source of identification of the performers and the family members who are custodian or initiates of the festival. The cultural relevance is further understood that as there exists a restricted greeting code(s) among the initiates of Ifá Priests, the hunters and others who share similar ideology, the *Òsẹ́* initiates also have theirs. This mode and code often differentiate them from ordinary members of the society. This is what informs "*Aború-boyè o, àboyè-boşíşẹ̀*" or *Ogbó ató...* as a form of greeting codes among the Ifá priests, initiates and so on for example.

The cultural knowledge of Ifá reveals that when the number sixteenth of Ifá corpus called *Òfún méjì* corpus features within the context of a consultation, the code "*Héèpà*" is often echoed by the Priests as a form of identification and respect for *the* corpus. Therefore, the associative greeting code of same expression to *Òsẹ́* in the performance of *Ìpè-Òsẹ́* further iconises and indicatates *Òsẹ́* divinity as truly royal as the code "*Héèpà*" is meant for royal icons/divinities which *Òsẹ́* and *Òfún méjì* represent. Therefore, we emphasise that, as the eldest of the *Òrìşà*, the code "*Héèpà*" is a sign of identification and greetings secluded to the Priest (*Òsẹ́*) and context of the *Ìpè-Òsẹ́*.

(iii) The Values of *Òsẹ́* and Personalised Prayers: From the expressions of the chanters at *Òsẹ́* performance, the values of the Priest is publicly highlighted and made known through the text of their chants. The message goes directly to the divinity personified who sieves the information such that his reactions



are somewhat encouraged, enlivened and re-assured of his prowess in the community. This is iconised in the expression of prayerful text in the excerpt (a) below thus:

(a) <i>Éè ní ọ ọ hun ooo,</i> <i>Àkànbí ọmọ olórìṣà</i>	It shall never be taken against you Àkànbí, son of the owner of the divinity	1
<i>Olóri olórìṣàáálá</i>	The head of all divinities	
<i>Ọmọ Àálì níSẹ̀dóóó</i>	Son of the Àálì of <i>Ìsẹ̀dóóó</i>	
<i>Ọmọ aníníure sẹ̀bọra</i>	Offspring of one who has good nature to the Spirits	5
<i>Ìwọ tọọ ẹ ẹ tọdún nìi</i> <i>lọọ ẹ ẹ tẹ̀mì o</i>	You who anchored this years' celebration would see the next	
<i>Ojú Olódùmarèèè</i>	Eyes of God	
<i>Pẹ̀lẹ̀ pẹ̀lẹ̀ o</i>	Gently, gently	
<i>Àdàṣe ní í hun mọ</i> <i>Ìbà èé hun mọ oo.</i>	Since you have paid rightful homage, you shall be successful.	
<i>Hèèpà!</i>	<i>Hèèpà!</i>	10

(iv) **Warnings to the Public:** The texts of item (b) below, from lines 7 to the end of line 15, show that the chanter sends signals of warnings out as vital information to the public and to individuals who might have forgotten the societal norms, rules and regulations which are binding on members associated to the divinity and the community. These warnings particularly remind the listeners of the divinity's surveillance at the sacred hours - in the mid-nights of *Ọjó Ọsé títa* and at *Èje-Àrénù* days which the community is forbidden from seeing the Primor-deified divinity. The semiotic import of the lyrics, is to assist comprehension of the cultural essence while also warning the deviants of the

impending doom for whoever deviates from the acceptable rules of the community. The indexical markers cautioned such deviants of the dire consequences if flouted the order of the community are found below (see item (b) and Lines 2 through 15).

(b) <i>Òṣésẹ ọọ</i>	<i>Òṣésẹ ọọ</i>	1
<i>E è mò ọn wò ó.</i>	You are forbidden to see the divinity	
<i>E è mò ọn rẹlédàà ẹni ọọ</i>	You are forbidden to see your creator face to face	
<i>Olúa mi Àdímúlà.</i>	My Lord, the Àdímúlà	
<i>Òfirifiri olú òfidan</i>	Throw the conspirators away	5
<i>Bọ ọ wò ó firí, ọ kú firí</i>	If you peep in a jiffy, you die suddenly	
<i>Bọ ọ wò ó fàrà, ọ kú fàrà.</i>	Should you spy to see, you die unannounced	
<i>Bọ ọ dúró wò ó</i>	If you stand to spy	
<i>Ọ digi gbígbe.</i>	You will become a dry wood	
<i>Bọ ọ dọdọbálẹ wò ó,</i>	If you prostrate to spy	10
<i>Ọ ọ dejò.</i>	You will turn to snake	
<i>Bọ ọ fò sókè</i>	Should you jump up to peep	
<i>Ọ ọ dàfòmó...</i>	You will become a parasite	
<i>Òṣésẹ</i>	<i>Òṣésẹ ọọ</i>	
<i>Olúa mi Àdímúlà, Òṣésẹ ọọ. My Lord the Àdímúlà, Òṣésẹ ọọ</i> 15		

Additionally, lines 8 through 13 of the chant also suggest that such sacred ritual aspects of the festival performances are not only for entertainment purposes, but for very vital needs of the intangible spiritual essence of the community. Also, the above-



mentioned lines indexicate the fearful and awesome nature of the divinity that should not be dared. This reminds one of the sacred *Pòkùlere* festivals of Ilé-Ifè whose enactments are not open to the general public. The very special difference between the *Pòkùlere* and *Àwòrò-Òsẹ́* Ìlá-Ìgbómìnà festival is that there is the socio-cultural, ritual and entertainment aspect which makes the *Àwòrò-Òsẹ́* festival, though sacred, but embraceable, as it accommodates a relaxable context by the larger society of the Ìlá-people after the core sacred aspect which *Pòkùlere* festival of Ilé- Ifè community lacks.

(vi) Icons of Taboos: In another context of the *Òsẹ́* chant as cited below thus:

(c)... <i>Àwòrò-Òsẹ́</i>	<i>Àwòrò-Òsẹ́</i>	1
<i>Mo rípaá subúlù...</i>	I have access to rest on the staff	
<i>Omọ olóde arékókó</i>	Offspring of one who owns the major streets	
<i>Omọ agbédúdú kojú orun</i>	Offspring of one who beholds the dark to strike with the arrows	
<i>Ìlù Àwòrò-Òsẹ́ n bẹ lóde</i>	The sacred drums of <i>Àwòrò-Òsẹ́</i>	5
<i>Éè se é jó...</i>	Lays outside difficult to danceable...	

- (*Àwòrò Adébáyò*, 2010) - (My translations).

(Source: *Àwòrò Adébáyò*, 2010; translations by the researcher)

As shown in the content of item (c) from lines 1 through 5, the lyrics alludes to the sacred instrument of the heroic -deified-divinity, which confirms the dangerous nature of the human-deified weapon - *Ofà àti Orun* (bow and arrow) and the essence of abstinence from dancing to his *Ìgbìn-Òòsà* associative drum of performance. The expression in the chant reminds the

audience of the *Ọ̀sẹ́-títa* day in which the *Ọ̀sẹ́* Priest surveys the community as an icon which no one must dared while holding the hunting expedition symbol. This is evident in the text: "...*Ọ̀mọ agbédúdí kojú ọ̀run*" (Offspring of one who beholds the dark to strike with the arrows). "...*dúdí*" - in this context signifies that the character utilises the dark hours (the dead of the night) to strike the venom in the arrow - (*ọ̀run*) - which is often to the deviants anyway.

(vi) Ọ̀sẹ́ as Death Personified: In another chant in item (c) line 4, the *Ọ̀sẹ́* is simply revered as death-personified, which signifies that the chanter draws no line of difference of the personality of *Ikú* (death), as a dreadful creature of God. However, the confusion in the message is that (*Àwòrò*) *Ọ̀sẹ́* combines a double personality of *Ikú* (death) and, at the same time, someone that is beckoned at "*àképè*". From the semiotic point of view, the combination of the choice of words ironically positions the *Ọ̀sẹ́* in *Ìlá-Ọ̀ràngún* as a dreadful, terrible, but desirable personality. We interpret this metaphoric use of the expression as a source, which provides an insight to the mythico-historical narratives that inform the nomenclature "*Ikú Àképè*". Since the Primor-deified divinity came as the only rescue to the community to sting the malicious birds of their myth, one understands that the song particularly refers to the bravery attempt of the deified divinity as the only creature who was able to face the mysterious dreadful birds and he became a hero from the bold steps taken then. Therefore, *Ọ̀sẹ́* in *Ìlá-Ọ̀ràngún* connotes death to the birds and a beckonable saviour (*Àképè*) to the *Ìlá-Ọ̀ràngún* community.



The Verbal Codes in *Ìsìnṛò*

The verbal code that is prominent in *Ìsìnṛò* festival is the *Èkà-Kikà* drum performance. This drum is semi-vocalised in form as the presentation is rendered through the drum talk (see Fáléyẹ, 2005). This drum features mainly to pay homage to the past drummers and, in particular, the recitation of the *Oríkì* of the past *Ọba*; from the very founder of the community, Fágbàmílà-Ajagun-nlá, to the incumbent *Ọba* AbdulWahab Olúkáyòdé Oyèdòtún, Bíbíirè I. An example of such drum recitation features prominent rulers' names such as:

Òràngún Ajagunnlá...
 Òràngún Erímádégún...
 Òràngún Atọbatélé...
 Òràngún Agbólúajé... Òkómokásà-Abùjanjan-jómọ...
 Òràngún Òkùsù...
 Òràngún Òboyùn-móyàrà...

The semiotic relevance of various renditions indexicates the number of *Ọba* that have ruled in the community and it further expatiates the nature of each of their reigns and the perception of the people about their tenures in the community. Also, a portion of the *Oríkì* of the incumbent *Ọba* goes thus:

<i>Arútú Olúòkun...</i>	Arútú Olúòkun...
<i>Ọmọ Amìlọ-mìsà Oògùn-</i>	the progeny of one who
	understands the use and potency
	of charms...
<i>Ọmọ Ògbègùn-gbẹlá....</i>	Offspring of the one who plants
	both okro and charms...

The above excerpt indexicates that the lineage of the incumbent Oba has a deep knowledge of herbs, and it further suggests that they are farmers apart from being royal icons.

The other features of the musico-poetic song performances are mainly songs to eulogise the royalty such as: *Oba ha m̀ẹ̀yẹ̀ ẹ̀, èèlò ó l̀ò bí èl̀ò.... Arútú m̀ẹ̀yẹ̀ ẹ̀...* (Our Oba understands how to entertain people at festive periods). The song emphasises that the royalty has the finesse and right gait in celebrating the festival. Other songs are performed by the women-folks called *Obìnrin-Ilé* from the royal lineage and guild of various marketers such as *Egbé Olóbì* (Guild of Kolanut settlers) and the youths. The symbolism is that all and sundry are involved in the festivity.

B. The Non-verbal Nuances of the Festivals

The non-verbal codes also communicate many referents which are further highlighted below under the following sub-headings:

(i) Musico-Poetic Code: Apart from verbally rendered chants and songs, majority of the musico-poetic codes fall under these silent communicators. For example, the drums and *aro* (gongs) are parts and parcel of song in the Yorùbá context of music performance. Drum as an integral part of the two festivals add beauty, colours and meanings to the various dance enactment events of most African festivals. Drums perform useful functions at the locales of *Ìsìnrò* and *Àwòrò-Òsẹ̀* festivals. The different drums used in these contexts of the festivals are *dùndún* and *gbèdu* ensembles at *Ìsìnrò* festival. The *dùndún* forms the major enacting instrument for the performance of *ẹ̀kà-*



kíkà, and this is the most significant aspect of the sacred and the ritualising instrument for the enactments of the characters. The outlook of the *dùndún* drum is specially decorated with *ṣaworo* (rattle-bells) round the edges of the face of the drum with an insignia and the title of the incumbent *Ọba (Ọ̀ràngún Arítú, Bibíire I)* on the strap, with which the drummer clips it to his shoulder. This marks it out from the other types of *dùndún* in Yorùbáland and other accompanying drums during the enactments.



Fig 2: shows the Dùndún drum for Èkà-Kíkà

(Source: The pictures were captured by the researcher, 2011)



Fig.3: shows the three sets of Gbèdu drums at Ìsìnrò Festival

The semiological significance of the numerous rattles around the face of the drum signifies the richness of the royalty as against the other enacting instruments and the enactor's paraphernalia. Additionally, the insignia of the Ọ̀ràngún on the strap reminds the audience and general public about the ruling lineage of the incumbency of the Ọ̀ràngún. Also, we understand that a connection existing between the performer holding the instrument and the relevance of the context of the enactment is that the *Baálẹ̀-Enílù* is the sole performer of the royalty *ẹ̀kà-kíkà*

(Fáléyẹ, 2005). Therefore, while the personalisation of the *dùndún* enacting instrument iconically speaks about the incumbency and centrality of *Ọba* during the special outings at *Ìsìnrò*, the *gbèdu* also symbolises the royalty at the context of its use. But during *Àwòrò-Ọsẹ* festival, a set of three sacred *Ìgbìn Ọ̀ò̀şà* (Kettle drums) is used.



*Fig 4: shows the set of Sacred Ìgbìn Ọ̀ò̀şà (Kettle Drums)
(Source: the pictures were captured by the researcher, 2011)*

The inscriptions of white marks and drawings of a female image (*Arugbá Ọ̀ò̀şà*) and the drawings of bow and arrow on the sets of *Ìgbìn* drum signify the associative tendencies of *Ọ̀sẹ* as the divinity who owns the drum sets. Also, the white marks iconise and symbolically indexicate the sacredness and purity identity of the divinity. This is affirmative in the notion "*Ọ̀ò̀şà Aláşọ funfun*" the white-dress divinity. The insignia of bows and arrow is an indexical signifier of the affinity of the drum with the divinity. Hence, the design and the outlook boost the cultural comprehension of the nomenclature- *Ìgbìn Ọ̀ò̀şà* - given to the



enacting object. *Òòṣà* is associative with the divinity of *Òsẹ́*, and that name *Òòṣà* are iconic signifier of the *Àwòrò-Òsẹ́*. It signifies that the drum particularly showcases the universality of the divinity's enacting code.

(ii) The Locale Codes: Within the locations where the performances of *Òsẹ́* and *Ìsìn-rò* festivals hold (market place, at some shrines, and specially decorated platforms), there are some identified objects which silently inform the public. For example, at *Òsẹ́'s* shrine, generally, it is observed that there are common indicators of the listed objects with their semiotic analysis. These are:

a. *Apẹ Omi ti a sá ẹfun sí* (A water pot decorated with white marks) denoting reverence to the sacredness of the divinity as a white god. Metaphorically, the water signifies the soothing balm which the divinity provides to the aching mother-earth.

b. *Omi Àwẹ* – The special *Àwẹ* water pot is an indexical pointer of the curative and life procurement often offered by the divinity.

c. *Owó Èrò* – A specialised whitish type of cowry shell is suggestive of the riches of the divinity.

d. *Asọ funfun* – Whitish cloth symbolises the peaceful nature of the divinity and the sacredness of the spot (Locale).

e. *Àjà* – Hand rattles inform one of the items with which the divinity beckons or summons his people as inferred from the

statement: "*Àjà Òrìṣà lolóòṣà fì í pe àwọ̀n tiẹ̀*". This is also often used to alert the passers-by of the presence of the divinity or devotees.

f. Òjé – The brass is an index of the mantle, strength of the divinity, and it serves as a body décor and symbolic icon of longevity.

g. Ṣésé-ẹfun – A white tiny bead which symbolises the sacred and peaceful nature of the divinity.

h. Ìrùkẹ̀rẹ̀ – A horse-tail which iconises royalty and special reverence of the divinity.



Fig. 5: Shows some objects at *Àwòrò Shrine*

As evident from the picture in Fig. 6, the decorated Láńgbòdó tree, on the platform where Òràńgún and his subjects sits during *Ìsìnrò* grand finale day at *Ìsìnrò* festival located at the Ojúde Òdòdè also indexicates the sacredness of the locale. While iconising that a specific colour code is apparent, the tree at spot and at that point in time of the festival symbolises the purity of the spot which is culturally understood by the community.



Fig. 6: Shows the decorated sacred Lángbòdó tree at Ìsìn rò festival event

(iii) **Colour Codes:** we observed that various colours are used in the two festivals, most importantly and significantly, white is used by the Chief Priest in Àwòrò-Òsé festival. He dresses in a complete white wrapper, with a white scarf tied round the base of his long cone-like shaped crown, leaving his two calved eyes round with *efun*/white chalk. The crown is with an imposing figure of a bird at the apex of the crown, with *efun* marker around his two eye-balls in the front. Àwòrò-Òsé is adorned with white beads, *şşşé-efun*, and a brass bracelet called "*Òjé*" in his left-hand.



Fig.7: shows the back view of Àwòrò-Òsé's paraphernalia

At some context, the *Ọ̀sẹ́* priest holds a whitish horse-tail which signifies that he is an *Ọ̀ba*. Additionally, black and white are used in *Ìdí-Èsì* shrineⁱⁱ at the *Ọ̀sẹ́*'s compound. The duality of the two natural colours, white and black, is indexical of the duality of our existence: good and bad, sweet and bitter, cool and warm and the like. It equally foregrounds that nothing is absolutely good or bad. There lies some inherent goodness or badness in everything or everybody. Our view is that ascribing blackness or evil to *Èṣù* may not be universally acceptable. The devotees of *Èṣù* identify more with red and black colours, not as an object of mourning but as a matter of choice and preference. The semiological reference to the *Ìdí-Èsì* colour codes metaphorically connotes togetherness. *Ọ̀sẹ́* stands for purity as a white divinity, but one side of the effigy is black, which captures the preference of the colour choice of *Èṣù* divinity. This highlights the complementary roles expected of all humanity. These complementarities are attested to in the Yorùbá incantation: *Òwú dúdú àti òwú funfun kì í jara wọn níyàn* (the white and black never disagree with each other). *Èṣù* is construed as the errand carrier of most *Ọ̀rìṣà*, and this underscores the relevance of his colour and association with *Ọ̀sẹ́*. In other words, colours are used conventionally within a culture and not as a matter of universality alone.

(iv) Number Code: It should be reiterated that as the Priest dances, enacting the ritual and symbolic movements at the *Ojúgbaara Ọ̀ràngún* and at *Imòòsà* performance during the festival, it is observed that he takes fourteen steps in a circular movement round the open space in the palace, from the position



of the drummers and back to the *Ọba* who sits with his people on the opposite side of the family members of the *Àwòrò-Òsé* and the community on another side. The slow but steady carriage movement signifies that *Àwòrò-Òsé* is in a search mood to bring back the stolen glory of *Ọràngún* which is often showcased at the climax of the *Ọdún Ọba* of the *Ìlá-Ọràngún* community. The fourteen counts in the *Àwòrò-Òsé's* open dance at the same locale are symbolically connecting the relevance of the fourteen-day activities of the *Ìsìnrò* eventful celebration.

We are of the view that the Yorùbá people seem to pay attention to number in a significant manner. In particular are odd numbers that are connected with the two festivals. Odd numbers, such as three, seven and nine are specially revered in most important events. These are often referred to as *Ìta* (3) as found at the *Òsé-ta* (*Òsé* stinging day) day, symbolising the sacred and deadly icon for the deviants of the community, while the *Ìje* (7) at the *Èje Àrénù* event which symbolises victory and communal lifting of the ban earlier announced in the *Ìdájọ-Orò* and at *Àlùmọjú-Òsé* in the structure of the events. In the context of *Àwòrò-Òsé* festival performance, the importance of these numbers, are equally evident in the structure of the two festivals. *Ìdásu* *méta* day and the three items submitted by *Ọràngún* and utilised by the divinity personified are very symbolic and communicate the concept of *ààrò-métà tí kò gbọdọ da ọbẹ nù*-representing a strong supports in the Yorùbá cultural essence. The fact that the *Àwòrò-Òsé* terminates the "evil spirits" as shown in his act of "stinging"- *Òsé ta* - at the night of day three and dawn of day four has not provided final victory.

However, seven in the context of *Èje Àrénù* performance symbolises perfection, liberation and a great achievement for the community and the heroic creature. If the priest is able to perform the "act of stinging" without any challenge, the possibility of having the *Èje Àrénù* day is useful. Also, if the Priest survives after the seventh day of his sacred enactment without any single report of causality, invasion of similar birds and mishaps in the community to the household of the Priest and the *Ọba*, then the outing for the year is considered a success. The act at *Èje Àrénù* day, therefore, indexicates that the various ritual sacrifices offered have been accepted by the "seen" and the "unseen spirits" of the land. The nine shrines, effigies and various metaphysical contents enshrined in the *ẹbọ* and *ètùtù* offered to the summoned spirits at the *Ìdájọ-Orò* at the initial day and for nine day events at the *Àwòrò* festival, then, are symbolically, culturally and associatively connected to the symbolic fourteen revolving day-events of *Ìsìnrò* festival, and the fourteen counts of the *Àwòrò-Ọsẹ* dance movements in the preceding festival.

The Socio-Cultural Ideologies Guiding the Festival Performances of *Àwòrò-Ọsẹ* and *Ìsìnrò*

The choices of restrictive and greeting modes featuring in the verbal and non-verbal communication codes of the two festivals are not just done arbitrarily. They are based on some factors which are cultural, sociological and metaphysical, and they are conventionally shared. The various titles of the priest as found in the *oríkì* and the chants in the analysis are socio-culturally binding. Also, the performances and related taboos are enacted



with reverence to socio-political and mythological undertones. Hence, the characters in the festivals are culturally assigned roles which they need to properly internalise and to carry their audience along. For example, the principal performer of *Òsẹ́* festival is the Priest (*Òsẹ́*) whose carriage speaks to the role he plays regardless of his age and stature. He is a primor-deified divinity personified who continues to uphold the valour, the strength and importance of the community and his immediate lineage. Other co-performers, who enact the role to fruition, are the *Èwe-Òsẹ́*, the *Ọmọkùnrin-ilé* (drummers), *Obìnrin-Ilé* and *Ọmọ-Osú-Ilé Àwòrò*; the *Olorì* who performs the motherly role, helping the incumbent and the ancestral *Òràngún* to affirm their relevance in the community and to uphold the political status of an affluent and royal legacy.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined the structures and semiological codes of two important festivals in *Ìlá-Òràngún* for proper investigation and proper classification. We have been able to itemise the closeness of the two festivals with reference to the structures of the two festivals which dovetail into each other. As a matter of emphasis, we have located that as the 9-day *Àwòrò-Òsẹ́* festival ends, the *Ìsìnrò* celebration, which spans fourteen days, commences. It is discovered that the two festivals employed multiple verbal modes such as chants, songs and drum talks (*Èkà-Kikà*) which are inclusive of royal *Oríkì*, prayers, warnings and the non-verbal communication modes such as locale, musico-poetic, number and enactment codes which have been analysed in reference to the mythological, socio-cultural



realities of the Ìlá-Òràngún people. The study concludes that *Àwòrò-Òsẹ́* and *Ìsìnrò* festivals feature veritable significant data for elucidating basic concepts in semiotics generally and socio-semiotics in particular. The intertwining nature of religion, myth, ritual and what constitute Yorùbá festivals are further emphasised that understanding various people within the globe alongside their cultural ideology is best done through a proper semiotic investigation of the various communication signs and codes as exemplified with the festivals of Ìlá-Òràngún-Ìgbómìnà people. The festival enactments continue to serve as a source of cultural edification and preservation of cultural artifacts through agential actions.

End Notes

ⁱ. The references here speaks to the myths connected to *Àwòrò-Òsẹ́* as a hero hunter who saved the community from a mysterious bird that was accounted for almost ruining the community in one of their oral accounts.

ⁱⁱ. *Ìdí Èsì* is a common effigy/statue found around some important locations in the community of Ìlá-Òràngún. They are of different types. Often, it has some historical and spiritual connection traceable to each family, or group of people in the community and especially, it serves as indexical code with respect to the locales where it is found. We are informed that sacrifices are sometimes offered to and placed at the points of these *Èsì*. This is also commonly found in most ancient Yorùbá towns such as *Òkè-Ìlá*, *Ilé-Ifẹ̀* among others.

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