

METAPHYSICAL ELEMENTS IN YORÙBÁ WRITTEN LITERATURE

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This work is totally dedicated to the Supreme Being; the Alpha and Omega, for His inspiration, mercy, strength, power, and grace upon me to successfully complete this study.

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ABSTRACT

Metaphysics constitutes an integral aspect of Yorùbá sociocultural life. Previous studies on Yorùbá metaphysical elements have largely been situated in film and philosophical studies, with little attention paid to their manifestations across the three genres of Yorùbá literature. This study was, therefore, designed to investigate the manifestations of metaphysical elements in Yorùbá literary texts with a view to determining their roles in the textual worlds.

Hippolyte Taine's Approach to Sociology of Literature and Charles Peirce's Semiotic Representation Theory were adopted as the framework. The interpretive design was used. Twenty-six Yorùbá literary texts, covering the three genres, were purposively selected based on the availability of metaphysical elements in them. The prose texts were *Ayé Daiyé Òyìnbó* (ADO), *Orí Adé Kù Sùn'ra* (OAKIS), *Èdá Omọ Oòduà* (EOO), *Omọ Olókunṣin* (OO), *Orilawè Àdìgún* (OA), *Ojú Rí* (OR), *Ògbójú Ọḍe Nínú Igbó Irúnmalè* (OONII), *Kékeré Èkùn* (KE), *Omọ Oniyán, Kò Sáyè Láàfín* (KSL), *Ìgbèyìn Laláyò N' Ta* (ILNT) and *Àditú Layé* (AL). The drama texts were *Ọba Kòso* (OK), *Ìsújú Ọsanyìn* (IO), *Efúnṣetán Aníwúrà* (EA), *Ìyàwó Ifá* (II), *Ààrẹ-Àgò Arikúyeri* (AAA), *Iná Ràn* (IR) and *Ápótí Alákàrà* (AA). The poetry texts were *Áádóta Àròfò*, *Wá Gbọ* (WG), *Ìgbàlonígbàákà* (I), *Áwọn Ojú Odu Mèrèrèrindínlógún* (AOOM), *Adé Ori Ọkín* (AOO), *Akòwé Kọ Wúrà Àti Áwọn Ìjìnlẹ Àròfò Mùràn* (AKWAAIAM) and *Áwọn Akéwì Şàşàrò* (AAS). Data were subjected to literary analysis.

The metaphysical elements identified are *ikú* (death), *yèhwo* (divination), *àlá* (dream), *ọfọ* (incantation), *orí-inú* (inner-head), *nṅkan abàmi* (strange signs), and *ájé/ošó* (witchcraft/wizardry). *Ikú* is deployed in *Áádóta Àròfò*, *I*, *ILNT*, *OK*, *IO* and *OONII* for revelation, suspense, sociocultural reflection, hope and justice. *Yèhwo*, in *Áádóta Àròfò*, *AAA*, *AOO*, *AA*, *EOO*, *KE*, *II*, *OO* and *OA*, is employed to reveal the hidden issues and proffering solutions towards human challenges. *Álá* is deployed in *ADO*, *EA*, *AOOM*, *Omọ Oniyán* and *OAKIS* for divine revelation, warning, and prevention of evils. *Ọfọ* is exploited to create suspense, command, security and to hypnotise subjects and enemies in *AA*, *AAA*, *EOO*, *EA*, *IR*, *IO*, *II*, *KE*, *KSL*. *Orí-inú* features in *AOO*, *AAA*, *AKWAAIAM*, *EOO*, *WG* and *AOOM* as a symbol of passing judgement, destiny's determination, success attainment and a paramount lesser *òrìşà*. In *AL*, *ADO*, *EA*, *WG*, *OONII*, *AOOM* and *OA*, *nṅkanabàmi* is deployed as a semiotic code for prediction, warning, precaution, awareness creation and revelation. *Ájé/Oşó* is employed to portray the import of sacrifice, places and activities of witches and wizards. The activities include spiritual inflictions, recounting of one's ordeals, possession and use of spiritual birds within the Yorùbá cosmos as portrayed in *OONII*, *OA* and *AOOM*.

Metaphysical elements were deployed across the three genres to establish their realities in both physical and spiritual occurrences of life. This emphasises that there is the existence of metaphysical elements in Yorùbá society.

Keywords: Metaphysical elements in Yorùbá, Cultural semiotics, Yorùbá written literature, Sociology of literature

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Among the Yorùbá of southwestern Nigeria, there is a potent belief that certain elements, both seen (physical) and unseen (spiritual), are present. Such elements and creatures, most of which are metaphysical in nature, are veritable sources of information about nature and natural events. Such metaphysical elements which include death¹, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, and witchcraft are considered worthy of academic study, especially as they are significantly present in Yorùbá written literature.

Considerable literary attention has been paid to Yorùbá metaphysics within the framework of Yorùbá studies and literature. Some of the more prominent contributors in the field include Délànò (1970), Adébòwálé (2003) and Ọlátéjú (2009), among others. Despite the vast literature, any study of metaphysical phenomena can never be exhaustive because of its dualistic nature. The dualistic nature of metaphysics concerns with its existence in both seen and unseen phenomena. This indicates that metaphysics, which is about the existence of reality, has to do with the presence, belief, and affirmation of reality not only in what we can see with our naked eyes but also in spiritual entities or elements. According to Anpe (1990: 63), "literature is a mirror of the reality that exists in the society." It is therefore necessary to investigate how different Yorùbá writers have explored and exploited metaphysical elements in their literary texts to mirror this reality. This is one of the motivating factors for this study.

The three written literary forms of prose, poetry, and drama, which were previously foreign, have now been fully domesticated (Ògúnsínà, 1992), as Yorùbá studies now boasts of many accomplished novelists, poets and playwrights. Many of the Yorùbá literary texts - prose, poetry and drama, contain metaphysical elements. However,

many metaphysical elements, such as death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs and witchcraft feature prominently in the three Yorùbá literary genres. This is considered an important area that is worthy of scholarly attention.

Previous scholars have also been noticed to lack the holistic presentation and treatment of metaphysical elements in their works. Some previous scholars had only treated one or two metaphysical elements in their presentations and not to the extent of handling seven different metaphysical phenomena which this study sets out to handle at a time and across the three Yorùbá literary genres. For instance, Oyèshílé (2002) and Dànóyè (2006) singlehandedly worked on inner-head (*orí-inú*) which invariably remains a piecemeal and even contrary to the holistic idea of handling seven metaphysical elements as this study aims at presenting. This has invariably served as a propelling reason for the presentation of this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Yorùbá literary texts such as Délànò's (1970) *Aiyé Daiyé Òyìnbó*, Qlábímtán's (1978) *Àádòta Àròfò*, Fágúnwà's (2005) *Ògbójú Qdẹ̀ Ninú Igbó Irínmalẹ̀* and Qlátẹ̀jú's (2009) *Iná Ràn*, etc. contain different metaphysical elements like death, divination, incantation, etc. While some people believe that the metaphysical elements exist, others either because of their religions (Christianity or Islam) or their high level of education and social status or for any other reasons that matter, do not believe in their existence. Consequently, the existence and reality of the metaphysical phenomena constitute an existing problem which this study will attempt to solve or explain. For instance, people think literary writers such as Fágúnwà and Délànò are not realistic in the worldviews they portray in their literary works, although the worldviews are not extremely strange to the Yorùbá experience. The fact that the authors depict them shows that they exist and for the Yorùbá, they are realistic.

The question of reality or otherwise of the elements are interrogated in the study. Again, previous Yorùbá scholars have not holistically examined metaphysical elements in Yorùbá written literature to the extent of having the treatment of seven metaphysical elements as we have it in consideration in this study. For instance, Bámgbósé (1974) examines the issue of realism with reference to the study of witchcraft as a metaphysical element in the novels of D.O. Fágúnwà. Hence, the need

for this research which is a timely intervention in this regard for treatment of metaphysical element holistically.

In addition, Àdisá (2016) examines the Yoruba worldview in the novels of D.O. Fágúnwà with focus on the philosophical beliefs and ideas in the novels. She examines spiritual elements such as dream, magic and witchcraft in her study. However, her work treats three elements only in Fágúnwà's novels and not across the three literary genres which this study will present with seven different metaphysical elements.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to identify metaphysical elements in Yorùbá written literature in order to critically examine how Yorùbá literary artists have deployed such elements in their literary texts and the various effects of such deployment. The objectives of this study are:

- (i) to consider what constitutes metaphysical elements in the Yorùbá worldview.
- (ii) to critically assess how Yorùbá literary authors have used the selected metaphysical phenomena in their literary works and for what effects.
- (iii) to identify the literary writers who have employed the selected metaphysical elements in their works, and to what effects.

1.4 Justification

The main concern of this study is on the use of metaphysical elements in Yorùbá written literature. Therefore, the disbelief and doubt that might have generated controversies among some quarters or people over the existence and reality of these metaphysical elements will be laid to rest. This is because several Yorùbá literary writers across the three Yorùbá literary genres have deployed the selected elements in their literary texts.

This study sheds light on the in-depth usage of the metaphysical elements by the various literary authors in order to manifest the accurate interpretation of their meanings and messages to the entire society.

The fact that some scholars regard some of the narrative stories as fictitious and unrealistic, e.g. Fágúnwà (2005), has being a thing of the past. This is so in that this study shows that several metaphysical occurrences have contemporarily occurred and even been captioned in national daily newspapers and magazines. This confirms, affirms, and establishes the fact that metaphysical elements are no more unrealistic. Some regard most of these metaphysical elements, e.g. death, strange signs, etc. as being unrealistic. This is so to them in that they have never witnessed, with their naked eyes, most of the occurrences relating to these metaphysical phenomena in question. For instance, it is no more a hearsay that the spirit of death can appear and disappear in the presence of human beings or real life. Some diviners have even taken the act of conjuring or invoking the spirit of death as a profession or means of making spiritual enquiries for their clients on attendance. This reminds us of a Yorùbá saying that ‘bí a bá p’òkú ní pópó alàyè ní dáhùn’ (the moment death is invoked a living soul appears). It is no more a fallacy that death’s spirit can appear and be communicated with. Hence, the establishment of the realism of metaphysical elements, especially in our society.

In conclusion, the study addresses the missing link on the works of earlier Yorùbá literary writers and scholars and the present-day writers and scholars in order to bridge the gaps between them. The previous works on metaphysical elements have been presented in isolation; not up to the handling of seven metaphysical elements, while this study maintains a holistic presentation of the metaphysical elements cut across the three literary genres. This will serve as an extension of earlier scholars' works on metaphysical elements. It will also prove beyond reasonable doubt that the employment of the selected metaphysical elements showcases the portrayal and projection of the sociocultural and traditional heritage of Yorùbá by the Yorùbá literary writers.

1.5 Research questions

The following are the research questions which the study will attempt to answer.

- (i) What constitutes metaphysical elements in the Yorùbá worldview?

- (ii) How have the Yorùbá literary writers utilized the selected metaphysical phenomena in their literary texts?
- (iii) Which Yorùbá literary writers are known to be famous for the use of each of the metaphysical elements in their works, and for what reasons?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study about metaphysical elements in Yorùbá written literature is significant in that it provides an understanding of the universe and various metaphysical phenomena existing in it. It equally provides insights into the operations, interactions and possible effects of the existing metaphysical elements within the human society. For instance, a dreamer may be relieved of his or her psychological trauma through his or her consultation with an oracle such as Ifá via the Ifá diviner who has the capacity to identify the cause of the nightmare and ward it off.

The study is also relevant and significant in that it documents and fills the gaps in the previous studies by providing the missing elements and insights into their understanding. This is so in that it serves as an eye opener through which other researcher can further their research works on other metaphysical elements like vision, magic, re-incarnation, etc. This will pave the way for interdisciplinary research, especially in relation to the sociological and psychological treatment of metaphysical phenomena in Yorùbá written literature.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Seven critical metaphysical elements in the Yorùbá worldview have been selected for this study. They include ikú (death), yẹńwò (divination), àlá (dream), ọfọ (incantation), orí-inú (inner-head), nńkan abàmì (strange signs), and osó àtì àjé (witchcraft/wizardry). They have been selected because they are found to be very common in the Yorùbá worldview, especially as evidenced in their repeated occurrences in written Yorùbá literary texts which cut across the three literary genres; namely, prose, poetry and drama.

The study adopts content analysis of the relevant Yorùbá literary texts, with application of the sociology of literature and the semiotic approach as pertinent theoretical frameworks.

Since the study recognizes the types and features of metaphysical elements, the Yorùbá ways of life with regard to the people's belief systems in their traditional environment are also within the purview of this study. This presents how the belief system of Yorùbá people are exposed on each of the treated metaphysical elements in this study.

1.8 Research Methodology

This study focuses on Yorùbá written literature with relevant texts from prose, poetry and drama that are selected for the study as primary sources of data while materials such as journals, magazines, articles, inaugural lectures, and online resources are also utilized as secondary sources of data. Purposive sampling method was used to select twenty-six literary texts across the three literary genres. This study adopts textual analysis of data derived from purposive sampling method of selecting the Yorùbá literary texts. The selection of the Yorùbá literary texts is also in line with the occurrences of the selected metaphysical elements in the Yorùbá literary texts. The data are then subjected to critical analysis and interpretation based on the sociology of literature and semiotic theory.

1.9 Metaphysics

As this study focuses on metaphysical elements such as death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, ominous signs, and witchcraft/wizardry, it is expedient to explicate this subject matter: metaphysics. This will no doubt enhance a better understanding of the term 'metaphysics' as used in this study and as it applies in particular to Yorùbá written literary texts.

1.9.1 What is Metaphysics?

Metaphysics has been defined in various ways. Unah (1998: 47) defines it as "the study of the constitutive elements of the universe, the science that studies what is or what constitutes reality." In this definition, all that makes up the whole world in

relation to its existing realities remains the focus of the discipline of metaphysics. Aristotle (70 BC) viewed metaphysics as the first philosophy of the “sciences, which studies 'being qua being.’” What Aristotle seems to be saying is that while other sciences study an aspect or certain aspects of reality, which is, ‘being as being’, metaphysics studies reality as a whole, which is about the totality of being.

Like Aristotle, Omoregbe (1998: 70), a non-Western metaphysician, describes metaphysics as “the study of the totality of being; that is, the nature and structure of reality as a whole.” However, Omoregbe’s opinion differs in certain respects by trying to correct the notion or misconception about metaphysics by stating that metaphysics is concerned not only with existing realities that are beyond the physical world but also includes those realities within the physical world. Plato, as cited by Omoregbe in Unah (1998: 72), describes metaphysics as ‘Dialectics’, that is, a philosophical method that tries to explain the truth of reality as distinct from appearances. For Plato, reality, the focus of the concept (metaphysics), lies beyond the material world, which is only an imperfect reflection or shadow. Metaphysics takes us beyond this reflection or shadow and brings us to reality.

Grice (1965: 2) combines both the Aristotelian and Platonic views of metaphysics, describing it as something that is against mere appearance or as the efforts to comprehend the universe as a whole. According to Fádáhùnsi (2008: 10), metaphysics is a “systematic study of the fundamental problems related to the ultimate nature of reality and human knowledge.” This definition entails the experience of all that may be the confrontational challenges of human beings out of which metaphysical elements are one and the different ways of coping with or tackling those challenges.

It is clear from the different definitions given so far that metaphysics is not only the study of unseen or spiritual realities but also an attempt to understand the whole of reality, both seen and unseen, and the place of individual entities within the total scheme of things. In this study, metaphysics is taken to be the study of the totality of reality with special consideration of man and other existing phenomena in both the physical and spiritual realms of life.

1.9.2 Origin of Metaphysics

Metaphysics originated from the Greek words *meta* which means ‘after’ and *physika* which means ‘physics’ (or nature). Metaphysics could be said to have emerged from the works of Aristotle which were later edited and published by Andronicus of Rhodes around 70 BC. Metaphysics is therefore traceable to the founding fathers of Western philosophy, such as Whitehead, Permenides, Grice, Plato, and Aristotle. The works of Andronicus of Rhodes, together with his editorial works on Aristotle, contributed significantly to Western metaphysics. The inability of Aristotle to give title to those treatises dealing with non-physical matters made Andronicus to describe those treatises² under non-physical matters as ‘after physics’ or ‘metaphysics’. Therefore, the term ‘metaphysics’ deals with all the phenomena within the spiritual realm (Omoregbe, 1998: 70).

In the arrangement of Aristotle’s works, which Andronicus edited for publication, ‘after physics’ or *meta physika* came to be understood and referred to as ‘beyond physics’, that is, ‘spiritual’ or ‘beyond the physical world’. In other words, metaphysics came to be understood as a term or discipline that is concerned with the realities beyond the physical world (Omoregbe, 1998: 70). In the Western sense, metaphysics is a branch of philosophy and is regarded as different from other sciences, e.g. mathematics. This is because while other sciences study specific aspects or certain aspects of reality, ‘metaphysics’ studies reality (existence) as a whole (Omoregbe, 1998: 71).

In his lifetime, Aristotle’s description of the term ‘metaphysics’ as ‘Being qua Being’ emanated from his identification and association of the term with ‘God’. What this implies is that philosophy is regarded as the *First Science* and also the same as *Theology*. This is because, in the context of metaphysics, God is presented as the highest level, and this is widely and universally accepted. Even in the Yorùbá cosmos and metaphysics, God remains at the apex of the hierarchical order when dealing with the issues of existence or life (reality) (Omoregbe, 1998: 73).

Indeed, the essence and significance of metaphysics deserve explication in this study. The existence and knowledge of metaphysics in human life and especially in Yorùbá life and thought enable the individual to understand himself or herself to the extent of possessing the capability to perceive and further understand the environment and

every inhabitant therein. Copleston (1952: 34-42) notes that metaphysics arises simply out of a natural desire to understand the world. No doubt, the need to understand what we see, have and feel around us cannot be overlooked. Consequently, both seen and unseen elements such as death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, ominous signs, and witchcraft, which exist especially within the Yorùbá clime, demand scholarly attention. Thus, metaphysics may be said to spring naturally from our innate instinct or curiosity.

Although the word metaphysics dates back to Aristotelian philosophy, Aristotle himself gave credit to earlier philosophers, especially Thales of Miletus who was deemed the first known philosopher. The earlier philosophers, according to Fádáhùnsi (2008: 21-22), dealt with metaphysical issues and questions. Fádáhùnsi (2009: 3) describes metaphysics as “the attempt of the human mind to bring order out of the chaos of the separateness of phenomena.” This, with a lot of agitations nurtured by people, paved the way for people to be psychologically relieved of the existence and operation of some metaphysical elements that sound or appear threatening to human beings within their vicinity.

Considered as ‘the Queen of the Sciences’, metaphysics is deemed more important than other formal subjects or physical sciences such as medicine, mathematics, poetics, and music. This is because several topics or issues have been added to its purview, hence, the several disciplines connecting with philosophy through which metaphysics emerged. These include philosophy of law, philosophy of language, philosophy of literature, philosophy of religion, and many others.

As far as the philosophy of literature is concerned, there is no doubt that metaphysical issues and elements in such phenomena as death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, ominous signs and witchcraft are being literarily explored by Yorùbá literary writers such as Abímbólá (1968), Fágúnwà (2005) and Olátéjù (2009) etc. This shows that metaphysics exists in the Yorùbá cosmos and also remains one of the most prominent features in Yorùbá literature.

1.9.3 Branches of Metaphysics

Metaphysics has three main branches: ontology, cosmology, and philosophical theology. The three branches are here briefly discussed.

Ontology: It is a branch of metaphysics that is concerned with the study of existence or the nature of being. In other words, it refers to the essential characteristics of being or all the different creatures in existence. It is also referred to as the central branch of metaphysics. It focuses on the relationship existing between physical entities and non-physical entities. It also involves the study of all the realities in the spiritual realm as they affect human entities and thus promotes the act of understanding the existence and reality about the metaphysical elements (Èkànṣà, 2011: 75-78). For example, there is the belief in the immortality of the soul and that reality is eternal in this branch of metaphysics. This attests to the common belief that, although man dies, his soul still continues living and existing after death to the extent of constituting a spirit called 'death's spirit' or 'ghost.' Death's spirit is also controlled by the Yorùbá for different purposes. Furthermore, ontology relates to events, thoughts and metaphysical elements such as death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, ominous signs and witchcraft. For instance, witchcraft as a metaphysical element cannot be explained and understood without its interconnectivity with the human beings who harbour the spirit of the metaphysical element. This shows the existing relationship between the physical and non-physical (spiritual) entities.

Cosmology: This is another branch of metaphysics. Unlike ontology which addresses only the nature or essential characteristics of being, cosmology deals with the whole world and the totality of all phenomena in space and time. It focuses on the universe as a whole with reference to the distant past and future occurrences. Essentially, it is concerned with the origin and structure of the universe.

Cosmology enables one to comprehend the knowledge about how things exist in the universe, at what time, or where a believable reality or thing exists. The metaphysical element of dream, which commonly exists in the spiritual realm, is also believed and regarded as an element of revelation in its function. It is also universally believed and accepted that God exists, even in both the Western and African worldviews, but the act of positioning or ranking God differs across the world. In some quarters, especially in the West, attempts are made to prove or disprove the existence of a

Supreme Being who is regarded as the Being that occupies the apex position in the order of existence. In discussing the totality of God as a phenomenon within the whole world or universe, Oládípò (2011: 77) states that "the Yorùbá call Him 'Èlédàá' (one that owns the beings) and 'Aṣèdá' (one that creates the beings)." This implies that God creates human beings who are within the space and time of life and death.

The whole world of human beings and other phenomena are studied in order to deeply understand how things exist. Cosmology also focuses on questions such as: Why does a thing exist? Since when has a particular thing being in existence? And for how long will a thing exist? In other words, 'cosmology' refers to the study of the origin, development and roles of human beings, as well as how the world came to be and how human beings fit into the universe. Western philosophers or metaphysicians believe that the origin of the world cannot be talked about without reference to the existing planets that constitute it. In the Yorùbá cosmos, for instance, it is believed that the story or history about the tribe's (Yorùbá) origin cannot be effectively narrated without mentioning the tribe's progenitor. Agboḷá (1989:70) in Ìrosùn-méjì (an Ifá main corpus) testifies to this thus:

Ìtākùn pòṣò,
 L'ó dífá f'Òòduà.
 Atèwònrò n'Ífè.
 Èyí t'Ólódùmarè á k'ókùn ayé lé lówó.
 Òpè ní í ṣ'erú Èdú,
 Arubi ní í ṣerú Olófin.
 Èjè balè.
 Arubi a dèrò.

Long rope,
 Divines for Oòduà.
 He who arrived through chains in Ifè.
 That has handed the rope of the earth.
 Òpè remains the servant to Èdú.
 Arubi is the servant to Olófin.
 The blood touches the ground,
 Arubi becomes convenient.

Agboḷá provides a step-by-step account of how the founding father (progenitor) of the tribe (Yorùbá) came into existence and where exactly the creation of the Yorùbá world started. The Yorùbá cosmos is seen as a universe that has a historical beginning vis-à-vis several phenomena present in it, among which are the selected metaphysical

elements for this study. ‘Oòduà’ is seen at the apex level of the hierarchical structure of Yorùbá society while ‘Òpè’ and ‘Arubi’ are servants to ‘Èdú’ and ‘Olófin’, respectively. This describes the structural design of the Yorùbá cosmos.

Philosophical theology: This is a branch of metaphysics that is believed to have emerged from the Western type of philosophy. Also known as theogony³, theology is generally known as the study of God and the foundation of religious belief. Nakate (2011: 1) describes philosophical theology as “the analysis of concepts of theology by means of philosophy. It provides different channels or ways to understand more about the phenomena of religion and God.” This shows the relationship between human beings and God, and between the gods and goddesses existing within a society.

The Yorùbá believe that several gods and goddesses exist with their individual functions and responsibilities. For example, Ọbàtálá is recognized as the creation god that is known for the moulding or architectural design of human beings and the determiner of human destiny. Şàngó is the god of thunder who is responsible for causing rainfall, thunder and lightning, while the goddess Ọşun is in charge of riverine activities. In Yorùbá metaphysical theology, each of the deities identified with their individual responsibilities and functions is worshipped as a lesser god or goddess and is recognized as an intermediary between the worshippers and the Almighty or Supreme Being. These gods and goddesses are believed to be reliant carriers of the Yorùbá divine messages to the Almighty God, who may respond through the various signs or spirits harboured by the gods and goddesses.

Divination is also associated with the gods and goddesses within Yorùbá society. Almost every attempt or process of deity worship entails divinatory forms such as casting or throwing of kolanuts, bitter kola and sacred cowries to receive and pass messages from the deities to the devotees or clients. This shows the systematic ways of Yorùbá traditional religions and how Yorùbá beliefs are rested in the metaphysical spirits harboured by their possessed deities.

1.9.4 African Metaphysics: Its Nature and Practice

African metaphysics simply refers to the study of the African spiritual and transcendent ways of life, with special reference to human reality or existence.

According to Ozumba (2004: 2-3), African metaphysics “should be seen as the African ways of perceiving, and making meaning out of interactions among beings, and reality in general. It is the totality of the African perception of reality.” African metaphysics is concerned with the way Africans perceive things. Hence, the African way of life as regards reality is different from the ways of life of the Western world.

The issues in African metaphysics derive from African traditional thought. Wiredu (1995) identifies the nexus of African metaphysics as God, freedom and immortality. Although existence remains the main focus of both Western and African metaphysics, Western metaphysics is founded on bipolar concepts which are often contradictory. This is because one may affirm or support one thing, while the other is opposed to it. Typical examples of bipolar concepts which are peculiar to Western metaphysics are *mind* and *body*, *God* and *world*, *freedom* and *determinism*, *idealism* and *realism*. But African metaphysics does not use bipolar concepts. Rather, it holds that there is no distinction between the world of human beings and the world of the spirits. The belief is that there are natural connections among humans, non-humans and the environment. There is also the suggestion that African metaphysics has an empirical content. There is a connection between the priest (Ifá priest or diviner) who carries out the divination and the oracle from which the sacrificial directive emerges. The diviner remains the interpreter of the oracle that prescribes the sacrifice and is also regarded as the performer of the sacrificial prescription. There is a space in-between the time the divination is carried out and the time the prescribed solution (sacrifice) is executed by both the diviner and the client. Therefore, the human beings, the sacrifice, the environment and the spirits thought to have executed the plans set ahead by the divination are all found connected in this world of human beings and that of the spirits.

Furthermore, the empirical nature of African metaphysics can be exemplified in the notion that all beings form a hierarchy where God remains the highest Being, followed by the gods and goddesses. Next are the ancestors, the elders and the young ones. Awólàlú (1981: 3) testifies to the supremacy of God thus:

An indigenous Yorùbá has a belief in the existence of a
self-
existent

Being who is believed to be responsible for the creation and maintenance of heaven and earth of men and women, and who also has brought into being, divinities and spirits who are believed to be his functionaries in the theocratic world as well as intermediaries between mankind and the self-existent Being.

The above excerpt shows how highly the Yorùbá rate God. His placement at the apex of the hierarchy of beings, especially by the Yorùbá, derives from his numerous unchallengeable and unbeatable functions or roles, such as creation of earth and heavens, human beings, divinities through human beings, and other non-living beings. The Yorùbá generally believe that God created the heavens and the earth. Awólàlú (1981: 12) also states that:

Among the Yorùbá, the myth of creation (which lacks details) holds among other things, that earth was a marshy waste, Olódùmarè and some divinities living in heavens above. But heaven and earth were so close that the denizens of heaven used to descend and ascend by means of a spider's web or chain.

The above excerpt tells of the Yorùbá belief in God as the creator of heaven and earth, with heaven being ascended and descended through spider webs and connected chains. This is reminiscent of the Yorùbá saying '*Ọlórún ló dá sánmò méje àti ilẹ̀*' (It was God that created the seven heavens and the earth.). The Yorùbá also use this saying as a form of prayer: '*Ọlórún tó dá sánmò méje àti òkè méje kò ní ẹ̀kàn kù*' (God that created the seven heavens and earths (planets) will never leave one undone.). This means that God, apart from being a creator, is also the only and most capable being. This Yorùbá belief is parallel to the geographical notation and belief in God's creation of seven planets. In addition to the Yorùbá belief concerning the seven heavens created by God, Médùbi in Àlàbá (ed) (1997: 96) states that:

Òsùpá l'àwọn Yorùbá máa n ló láti ka oṣù; wọn a ní 'oṣù ti lé', èyí tùmọ̀ sí pé oṣù titun la wà yìí. Wọn kì í bọ̀ òsùpá bí òòṣà. Wọn lérò pé òkè, lẹ̀yìn òsùpá ní sánmá keje ni Olódùmarè wà, níbi tí ó gbé gúnwà sí, tí ó sì n fí isọ̀ rẹ̀ sọ̀ wa pátá poo.

It is the moon that the Yorùbá use to count the months; they tend to say 'the moon is set.' This indicates the beginning of a new month. They don't worship the moon as god. They think God resides in the seventh heaven behind the moon, where He stays and protects us all.

It is thus clear that the Yorùbá have a strong belief in the existence of the seven heavens, which were created by the Supreme Being that is also regarded as the general overseer and protector of all and sundry.

The view about God in African metaphysics is also that God is transcendental. God is regarded and believed to be the Being that oversees, controls and regulates all that exist both in the heavens and the earth. Most importantly, God's supremacy and apex position are indicated in what the Yorùbá call Him, such as Olódùmarè (Almighty God), Ọlórún (One who owns or controls the heavens), Èlédàá (The Creator) etc. The lesser gods and goddesses are also viewed from human perspectives. This is why most African communities identify specific gods and goddesses. For instance, Ògún is recognized as the god of iron and war among the Yorùbá; Sàngó is the god of thunder; Ifá is known to be the god of wisdom and knowledge, while Ọbàtálá is the creation god (Ozumba, 2004: 4).

In African metaphysics, and with reference to the hierarchical status and arrangement of all beings, the ancestors cannot be overlooked since they are regarded as part of the world even when they are dead physically. Africans believe that the ancestors form a bridge between the world of the living and the world of the dead and that they are connected with one another, hence, they are described as the living dead (Mbiti, 1982: 193-199). From Mbiti's description, one could infer that African people, with reference to the study of African metaphysics, hold the belief that, although the ancestors have died, yet they are still living as the living still feel their existence. Indeed, they still consult them as spirits for different purposes. However, belief in ancestors is non-existent in western metaphysics.

In African metaphysics the gods and goddesses are viewed in utilitarian terms, that is, in terms of the various purposes that the available African gods and goddesses serve. The Yorùbá strongly believe that '*Ori*' (inner-head) is more important than deity. Hence, the Yorùbá would say that '*Ori là bá bọ, à bá fòrìṣà sílẹ̀, nígbà tí ikú n̄ pani, kí ni òrìṣà n̄ wò?*' (We should have worshipped *Ori* (inner-head) rather than the deity; for when death was killing people, what was the deity doing?). What this Yorùbá thought implies is that the destiny of an individual is situated in the inner-head. The inner-head in which the destiny is located or situated cannot be seen physically; it is therefore regarded as a metaphysical substance that cannot be ruled out in human life. The Yorùbá, despite having a strong belief in *Ori*, also believe that a person is free to consult gods or ancestors for determining or changing of the contents of *Ori*, especially when in need or in an unfavourable situation.

Another important aspect of African metaphysics is reality. In describing metaphysics, Etim (2013: 11) sheds light on 'reality' thus:

Metaphysics therefore, is a philosophical outlook, which tries to reach "a more comprehensive, all embracing, totalistic view of reality without neglecting the unique place of individual things in the holism of reality".

(Ozumba, 2004).

The above excerpt shows that metaphysics is all about the totality of 'reality', or otherwise facts believed to be in existence. The term 'reality' can then be described as the quality or state of being real or when something factually exists. Reality is belief in the existence of something which can either be seen with our naked eyes (physically) or perceived with knowledge. Therefore, reality can be innate potentialities believed to be present in a particular being. The ways things appear physically to someone may differ from the ways the qualities of those things are being perceived. For instance, a witch is physically seen as an ordinary human being but perceived to be a witch after she might have been observed performing sorcerous or witchcraft undertakings. Consequently, in the Yorùbá worldview, such a woman is said to possess the spiritual bird of witchcraft. Although the bird is not seen, it is believed to be existing in her. She transforms into this spiritual bird when undertaking her witchcraft activities, especially in the night. Some philosophers describe 'reality' as 'matter' or something 'mental'. The most important thing about reality remains that

it concerns metaphysics more than any other branch of Philosophy as a discipline. Olúwólé in Unah (1998: 4) identifies 'reality' as "being, existence, or "the-thing-in-itself" (Noumenon) in contrast to "the-thing-as-it-appears" (phenomenon)." This shows or relates to all the existing creatures whether in a physical or spiritual nature and how it could be believed to be really so. Some of the notable aspects of reality include personality, being, causality, and soul.

(i) Personality

Personality refers to all the questions and attributes that make an individual a distinct person. When referring to the personality of somebody, one has to bear in mind the makeup or constituent parts, such as character, conduct and the personal idiosyncrasies of that person. In African metaphysics and especially with reference to the Yorùbá metaphysics of personality, a man's essence is his spirit which continues to exist even after death. Therefore, for an African or a Yorùbá personality, existence is dual in nature: earthly existence and spiritual existence. The belief of the Yorùbá in particular is anchored on the fact that the body exists temporarily after death. Among the Yorùbá, for example, Šàngó as a deity was previously identified as a human personality with marvelous and metaphysical powers to cause thunder and lightning. His prowess also extends and continues even after his death. Šàngó's presence is still felt today by both the worshippers and non-worshippers of the deity. The physical and spiritual feelings of the deity can be exemplified with the striking of thunder and lightning, which are usually believed to be the handiworks of the god Šàngó). However, the worshippers, especially Šàngó's priests, are believed to have been charged with the responsibilities of removing the thunderbolt whenever and wherever it strikes. Therefore, the deity's personality is still felt in the continuity and presence of the spirit of the god in several occurrences.

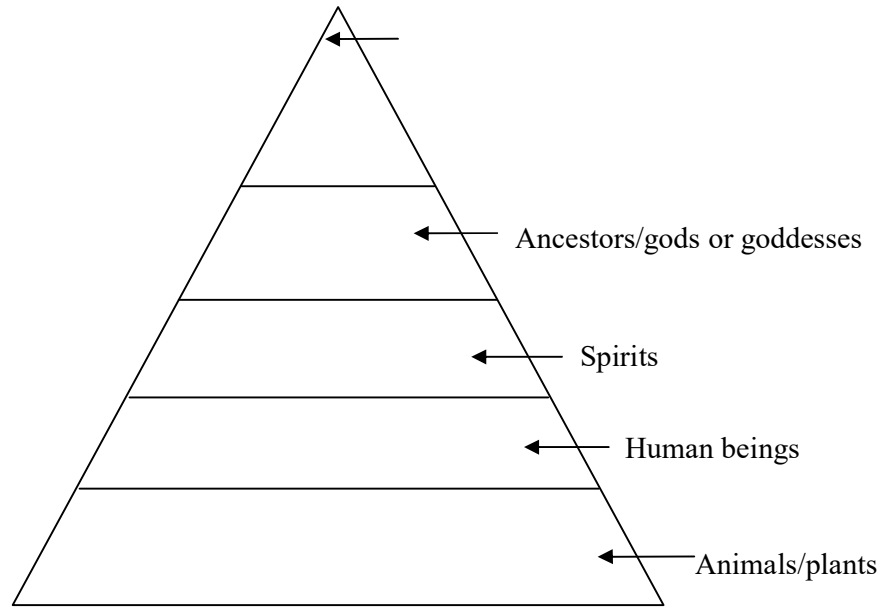
(ii) Being

In the African/Yorùbá setting, 'being' is a generic term that represents all existing things in the universe (Ozumba, 2004: 4), hence it is conceived as the whole range of existing things. The belief of Africans about 'being' rests on the fact that there is a hierarchy of status or position in the consideration of being as an entity that has to experience reality. In the hierarchy of being, God is at the apex, followed by the

ancestors, gods or divinities e.g. Ọ̀bàtálá, Ọ̀ṣun, Ọ̀ya etc., spirits, human beings, animals and plants (Opoku, 1978: 9-10). However, and in the hierarchical order, the ancestors, gods or divinities, and human beings are regarded, especially among Yorùbá, as the beings which harbour or have some potentialities or spirits with which realities can be identified and noted. The hierarchical orderliness of being in the Yorùbá worldview can then be represented with the following diagram:

Table 1: Diagram of beings

God



The 'beings' (ancestors, gods/goddesses, and spirits) thus remain the first to whom God passes His vital force with the power of exercising their influences on all posterity. They constitute the most essential chain binding men to God. The above diagram is semiotically regarded as an indexical representation of the hierarchical arrangement of beings existing in African cosmological views. Africans regard beings as things 'which exist' and are identified to be made of forces. Thus, without the presence of force⁴, being cannot be conceived. Richard (1979: 2) testifies thus to this: "to the Africans, being is that which has force."

(iii) Causality

Causality refers to the belief among Africans that nothing occurs or exists without a reason or cause. It is necessary to ask why a certain thing happens to a particular person, at a particular place and at a given time. The concept of chance does not have a place in African metaphysics, unlike the case in Western metaphysics. As such, every evidence or occurrence must have a cause for it to be considered a reality. Even though an event is taken to be accidental in occurrence, it is often traceable to a cause and reason. Among the Yorùbá, for instance, if a woman publicly and openly reveals all the negative secret things she has done – such as killing and stopping other people's progress, especially in a marketplace, at a road junction or along the road – such a woman will be regarded as possessing the spirit of witchcraft and may be stoned to death. Such a woman is usually isolated by members of the society. Akpan (2011: 721) describes 'causality' as:

One fundamental natural principle that is inevitable in ourday-to-day interpretation, explanation and prediction of phenomena, whether in religion, science, politics, social interaction, philosophy and so many other fields of human endeavour.

This implies that the concept is regarded as a fundamentally universal phenomenon that concerns every daily occurrence. While there are divergent views on causality in African metaphysics in comparison to Western metaphysics, in this study, the traditional African culture remains one of the bases upon which causality of the metaphysical elements identified within the Yorùbá society and literary texts shall be considered.

(iv) Soul

The soul is regarded as immortal in African thought about reality. The soul of a man, especially among the Yorùbá, is owned by such a man. The soul transforms into a spirit which continues to exist even after the dissolution of the body and the body is regarded as the temporary abode of the soul. The soul is immortal and closely linked with re-incarnation, be it good or bad. The good spirits are welcome while the bad ones are not prayed for or are rejected by the people. Through divination or other esoteric means, Africans claim to be capable of detecting the type of spirit or soul of the person that has reincarnated.

African metaphysics is a bundle of beliefs and realities that serve as the outcome of Africans' life experiences. It is not only the appearance that is reality to Africans; rather, both physical and spiritual personalities inherently hold reality at different levels. Almost every Yorùbá traditional religion has a holistic view of man. In addition to the tangible physical component parts (body) of man, there is definitely an element which is intangible and indestructible and which continues to live after the physical death; this is called the 'soul'. According to Oyèshílé (2002: 111):

It is also believed that soul is the part of the body, which is the definite residence of the spirit. While the soul perishes at death with the body of man, the spirit departs into separate existence in the spiritual realm and comes back as another human being.

The excerpt above unveils the position of the 'soul' in the physical body of humans. Moreover, the description shows how the destruction of the body, especially when one dies, remains not the end of the spirit which that soul harbours; indeed, there is a transformation of the soul into the spirit after death. This is why the Yorùbá have strong belief in reincarnation. Azenabor in Unah (1996: 357) notes thus:

Reincarnation could be described as "the successive animation of different human bodies by one human mind". Reincarnation could also mean that at death a person passes into another living creature; man, animal or plant. Usually, reincarnation can only take place within a people of the same clan.

With the above contribution, however, it is important to note that there is an element of transformation or rebirth into another living creature and its recognition is very obvious to people of the same relations or clan.

1.9.4.1 Features of African and Western Metaphysics

This aspect spells out the characteristic features of the two types of metaphysics. The discourse about the characteristics of African and Western metaphysics will definitely pave the way for a better understanding of the extent to which each of the metaphysical types has recognized and handled the issue of reality. First, there is the holistic conception of reality, especially of a person in African metaphysics, while Western metaphysics has a different perception of the reality of a person. The belief in inner-head (*orí-inú*) or destiny (*àyànmọ́/kádàrá*) remains one of the identifiable attributes of African metaphysics. This can also be exemplified in the common saying of the Yorùbá that '*kí orí-inú wa má ba tòde jé*' (May our inner-head not endanger or spoil our physical head).

The Yorùbá generally subscribe to the causal reason or axiom that anything that exists definitely has a cause for such existence. Èkànọlá in Ọládípò (2011: 83) states that "another important causal factor recognized by the Yorùbá is *Orí*; the bearer of human destiny." One could see or identify 'destiny' in Yorùbá life and thought as an embodiment of *Orí*. This means that it is in *Orí* (inner-head) that one's destiny could be discovered. *Orí-inú* (inner-head) in the Yorùbá worldview is also described as human destiny. Therefore, Ọládélé (2007: 117) states that:

The Yorùbá word, *Orí*, literally translated, simply means 'head'(as in the physical head of a human or an animal). However, giving concession to our discussion on destiny (which in Yorùbá language means *Orí-inú* and translated, inner or spiritual head) in the paper, our contextual usage, meaning and understanding of *Orí* throughout the course of the paper should be construed as meaning the spiritual head, which symbolises human destiny.

From the above excerpt, it could be vividly deduced that both the terms '*Orí-inú*' (inner-head) and '*àyànmọ́*' (destiny) are similar in nature and interchangeably used among the Yorùbá.

Destiny, according to Gbádéḡesin in Coetzee and Roux (1998: 161), means “the pre-ordained portion of life wound sealed up in an Orí.” This indicates that ‘destiny’ is situated in an individual's inner-head. As Gbádéḡesin observes, the inner-head is “the bearer of individual destiny and which therefore is the remote controller of one's endeavours in the world.” He also specifically states that "Orí is not identical with destiny, though, it is its bearer." This suggests that there is a difference between the physical head (orí) and destiny (àyànmó). In its totality, destiny contains what the individual will be in life and the inner-head remains its bearer. In the Yorùbá worldview, however, it is conceived that there are three models of destiny, viz; 'àkúnlèyàn' (that which one kneels down to choose), 'àkúnlègbà' (that which one kneels down to receive), and 'àyànmó' (an affixed choice) (Gbádéḡesin in Roetzee & Roux (1998: 161-162).

This suggests that the Yorùbá strongly believe in the existence of destiny vis-a-vis its various models and some other conceptions of it. So far as it is conceived in Africa that 'Orí' (physical head) is not identical with destiny, definitely, destiny in Western culture may take a different dimension. Though, and irrespective of the kind of models of destiny one may fall in or hold to in Yorùbá life and thought, it is generally construed that an individual's destiny is subject to changeability via traditional means such as sacrifice, character of the person, responsibility, etc (Gbádéḡesin in Roetzee and Roux (1998:161-167). This reveals that man's destiny, otherwise regarded as his or her end in life, is conditionless. It means there is no issue of permanency in the operational existence of destiny in human life. The reverse remains the case of destiny in Western culture. This is because Westerners’ strong belief in destiny has more to do with a conditioned one which is believed to be the allotment of individuals. Iroegbu (1995: 81) testifies that:

The ultimate end of man is not conditionless. It requires the proper knowledge and fulfillment of the requirements of the intellectual and moral laws of nature and supernature. Thus, one that does not fulfill these requirements can miss one's ultimate end and have something less good, if not entirely bad.

This suggests that the contribution of every human endeavour and involvement in life has been supernaturally or naturally conditioned. The issue of models of destiny and

its changeability via some traditional means are not entrenched in Western beliefs in human destiny. This is another area of difference in the conception of destiny in both African and Western cultures. This leads us to the consideration of the issue of fatalism which is the belief that one cannot prevent things from happening, especially bad things. This indicates that one doesn't have control over events. Balógun (2007: 116-130) corroborates this notion by describing fatalism as:

The belief that whatever happens could not have been otherwise. In other words, certain events are such that they cannot but occur no matter what happens. Fatalism by implication does not allow for possible human efforts self-criticism and self-involvement.

In line with the above contribution, there is the belief in Western system that whatever happens has been predestined that such a thing would happen. Though, some Yorùbá are of the saying that “àyànmọ̀ ò gbòdògùn, orí ni ẹ̀lẹ́jọ́” (destiny has no antidote but would only be answerable to any occurrence to man) but contrary to that notion is the belief in Yorùbá cosmology, especially among the Ifá devotees, that destiny (bad one) can be averted via sacrifice, prayers, appeasement, traditional medicine, etc. Hence, human efforts play significant roles in the determination of one's destiny in Yorùbá life and thoughts

Another characteristic of African metaphysics is the existence of reincarnation of the departed ones, as there is the belief that human beings continue to exist even after death. This belief in reincarnation is potent not only in the Yorùbá worldview but also among the Akan of Ghana and the Igbo people of Nigeria (Oyèshílé, 2002). Though, the belief in reincarnation has also involved the attention of great Western philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc. but varying views on reincarnation have been held by the Westerners (Unuigwomen: 2004:15). This manifests the variance of belief systems held by the Westerners concerning reincarnation.

Moreover, interaction of forces or beings remains a special feature in African metaphysics. For instance, there is interaction or relationship between God and humans, among different people, between humans and animals, and between humans and material beings. These kinds of relationship do not exist in Western metaphysics. Among the West is the holding of the beliefs that there are separateness and

distinctiveness between the soul and the body, but the Africans, having being equipped with holistic notion, are of the belief that mind shouldn't be separated from the body.

The belief in the hierarchical order of beings is another identifiable attribute of African metaphysics. The forces or beings are in hierarchical order within the African traditional thought, with God as the Supreme Being and at the apex. Although God is recognized as the Supreme Being by some Western metaphysicians, the type of hierarchical order of beings maintained by African metaphysicians is a bit different from that of the Westerners. After regarding God as the apex of hierarchy by both blocs, African's hierarchical order of beings are as follows; God, ancestors/gods/goddesses, spirits, human beings and animals/plants, while the Westerners maintain the following order of hierarchy such as God, angels, men, animals, plants or otherwise inanimate objects.

Another noticeable feature of both Western and African metaphysics is that Western metaphysics limits its enquiries to experience and reason. Conversely, Africans possess the doctrine of empiricism in their metaphysics. Ozumba (2004: 1) avers that "Africans go beyond that to employ extra empirical and extra-ratiocinative means, often called extra-sensory perception (ESP)."

However, it should be noted that Africans and Westerners, being *Homo sapiens* created by God, both uphold and share a common belief of reality and existence of the spirits. For instance, the two types of metaphysics hold the idea of God as a central being. The Yorùbá recognize God as the Supreme and the apex being. This belief also holds in Western metaphysics. In the two cultures, Western and African, both see reality as partly physical and partly spiritual.

1.10 Metaphysics and Literature

As earlier reiterated, metaphysics is all that deals with the meaning and nature of reality. Oládípò (2011: 74) asserts that "it is widely accepted that metaphysics is about the search for what constitutes reality in the world and the ultimate nature of things as opposed to their apparent or contingent constitution." Literature, on its part, is a globally recognized discipline which is appreciated by all and sundry. No doubt,

literature and culture are related. Culture is regarded as the totality of the way of life of a people within a geographical location. It entails the people's traditions, norms, values, and even the dos and don'ts of the people in a certain traditional setting. Literature is divided into oral and written literature. Each of these is also subdivided into three genres: prose, poetry, and drama. Each of these subdivisions has specific usages within the Yorùbá setting.

The three genres of Yorùbá written literature have been studied and found to reflect various life occurrences and incidents such as childbearing, barrenness, death, dream, love, hatred, perseverance, obedience, etc., as in *Ojúlówó Oríkì Ifá* (1989), the presentation and exposition of life experiences of traditional hunters vis-à-vis their encounters with various dreadful animals and metaphysical elements in *Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú igbó irúnmalẹ̀* (2005), and the portrayal of the 1968 Àgbẹ̀kọ̀yà riots of Western Nigeria in *Iná Ràn* (2009), to mention a few. All of these show that various issues that positively and adversely affect the lives of humans and non-humans have been extensively treated in written Yorùbá literature. As already noted, the Yorùbá world is peopled by humans as well as non-humans, plants and those entities or creatures that are metaphysical in nature, such as death, divination, divinities, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, and witchcraft etc.

Many Yorùbá writers deploy metaphysical elements in their works for various reasons. They include D.O. Fágúnwà, who has shown that there are many metaphysical entities, substances or elements in the Yorùbá world. Literary texts such as Ògúndélé's *IbúOlókun* (1956), Fágúnwà's *Ìrèké Onibùdó* (2005) and *Ògbójú Ọdẹ Nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ̀* (2005), Láwuyì Ògúnníran's *Eégún Aláré* (2006), etc, reflect various metaphysical elements that exist within the Yorùbá cosmos.

Metaphysical elements are also reflected in the dramatic aspect of Yorùbá written literature. Different Yorùbá playwrights have explored elements such as divination, dreams and incantations in their writings for literary and communicative effects. Akinwùmí Ìṣòlá's *Efúnṣetán Aníwúrà* (2003), Túnjì Ọ̀pádòtun's *Ìyàwó Ifá* (2005), Láwuyì Ògúnníran's *Ààrẹ̀-àgò Arikúyerí* (2007) and Adẹ̀ṣọ̀lá Ọ̀látẹ̀jú's *Iná Ràn* (2009) have all demonstrated the availability and relevance of metaphysical elements in

Yorùbá written literature, thus indicating the relationship between metaphysics and literature.

As an aspect of literature, poetry blends with metaphysics to produce metaphysical poetry. Metaphysical poems are sometimes lyrical and usually contain meditations characterized by striking wit, irony and play on words. It may also capture an image which can be expanded, extended and developed to become an analyzed metaphor. What is obtainable in Yorùbá poetry is deployment or use of metaphysical elements for literary, communicative, religious and cultural effects. It is worth noting that various Yorùbá written literary works on poetry, such as the Ifá corpus, lineage poetry, incantations, traditional music and songs, *Ìjálá* chants, *Èsà*, and *Iwì egúngún* have been presented by different writers through their poetic texts. Examples include *Ojú Odù Mérépèrìndínlógún* (2008) by Wāndé Abímólá, *Igbàlonígbàákà* (2003) by Olúyémisí Adébòwálé, *Àfàimò àti Àwọn Àròfò Mùràn* (1988) by Akínwùmí Ìṣòlá, and *Wá Gbó* (2001) by Dúró Adélékè. All these point to the fact that metaphysical elements not only exist among the people but are also relevant and serve different purposes for humankind.

1.11 Definitions of Relevant Concepts

It is important to discuss certain relevant concepts and terms associated with metaphysics or metaphysical elements in this study. Some of the concepts are therefore discussed below.

(i) Ideas

‘Ideas’ refers to forms situated in the mind. It is what someone thinks in his or her mind before carrying out an activity in real life. Ideas help to formulate an enterprise. Palmquist (2011: 3), in the presentation of Kant’s glossary of technical terms, defines ‘Ideas’ as:

The species of representation, which gives rise to metaphysical beliefs. Ideas are specific concepts, which arise out of our knowledge of the empirical world yet seem to point beyond nature some transcendent realm.

It could be deduced from the above excerpt that the concept 'ideas' is not a physically seen object or an object that can be handled. It is rather regarded as the formulated thought present in the mind of human beings. For instance, the Yorùbá possess the idea about the existence of God in their minds by referring to man as a resemblance of God's image. The Yorùbá have never seen God (the Creator) physically but they believe He is in the form of human beings, preferably in the form of man. Therefore, the physiological picture of God in the mind of the Yorùbá is like that of a man. The anthropomorphic notion about the Supreme Being (God) has been long nurtured by the Yorùbá. For instance, it is universally believed by the Yorùbá that God has ears to hear all the yearnings and aspirations of human beings. Hence, the common reference to God as '*Eléti gbàròyé*' (He who has ears to listen to complaints), *Olówo gbogbọrọ* (one with covered hands), *Olójọ òní* (the owner of the day or of the daily happenings) etc., (Awólàlú, 1981: 10-12).

(ii) Reality

Reality may be approached from two dimensions. If considered from the empirical perspective, it refers to the ordinary world of nature. If regarded from the transcendent (spiritual) perspective, it means the spiritual realm of an object. Iroegbu (1995: 47) corroborates this view by stating that "the visible and contingent world is equally real, though contingent. There are appearance and reality. But appearance is not reality, nor is reality appearance." This indicates that appearance may be deceptive at times but the main focus of 'reality' entrenches in not mere appearance but is realized in the in-depth meaning, interpretation and authenticity of a thing or in metaphysical elements such as death, divination, dreams, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, and witchcraft. This is to say that 'reality' is based on the element of factuality. It can be an existence that can be found in both physical and spiritual realms. Iroegbu (1995: 46) further describes 'reality' as "what we consider to be real, true, fact or historical." Thus, reality is conceived of as not only a fact to reckon with but such a fact as is expected to serve as a term of reference now or at any time in the future.

Reality also means the existence of a believable agent or factor which is present in the realm beyond physical seeing. Therefore, reality simply means what is believed to be existing or present in any realm (physical or spiritual). According to Fádáhùnsi (2008:

31), the term 'reality' is referred to as "Truth or Existence." This shows the act of coming out with a fact about certain elements, occurrences or objects in a particular place. It is a believable truth in the Yorùbá cosmos that after a person dies their soul continues to live. This justifies the common Yorùbá saying that '*ara ló kú, èmí kì í kú*' (It is body that dies, the soul does not die). This is in line with belief in the existence of ghosts as the spirits emanating after the death of human beings. Consequently, ghosts, as the spirit of death, remain a reality in the Yorùbá worldview.

(iii) Noumenon and Phenomenon

Emmanuel Kant of Königsberg, Germany (1724-1804), as cited in Iroegbu (1995: 185), refers to 'noumenon' as "the world of the "things" (objects of thought) that are not within phenomena." Kant further defines 'noumenon' philosophically as "Die Dinge an sich" (things in themselves)". Therefore, 'noumenon' is the name given to a thing or something when viewed as a spiritual object. It can be referred to as the perception of object in the mind. There can be both 'negative noumenon' and 'positive noumenon'. The negative noumenon means only the recognition of something, which is not an object of sensible intuition, while the positive noumenon refers to the attempt to know such a thing as an empirical object. The most important thing to note about the two aspects of this term is that both are used loosely as synonyms for 'transcendental objects' and what they represent.

Olúwòlé in Unah (1998: 4) refers to 'noumenon' as "the thing-in-itself" in contrast to "the-thing-as-it-appears (phenomenon)". This indicates that it can also be described as a thing as it appears in itself. The opposite of the term 'noumena' is 'phenomena', which is regarded as the appearance of things as they are seen physically. The appearance of a thing as it is thought of in the mind is known as the 'noumenon'. It is generally believed among the Yorùbá that a witch is regarded and seen physically in the daytime as a human being (female) but believed to possess an inner power or spirit (spirit of witchcraft) that can enable her to perform any act without moving her physical body, especially at midnight. A witch is also regarded as one possessing a spiritual bird that can fly to carry out any enterprise in any part of the world. A Yorùbá saying, proverb or prayer among the witches also testifies to it thus '*ẹyẹ kì í fò kó forí s'ògi*' (the bird flies freely). Therefore, the thought in the mind about the existence of

the spiritual bird of the witch is regarded as noumenon of such metaphysical element or entity. This means that a witch in her physical life is phenomenal in nature while she remains noumenal when operating in the spiritual realm.

(iv) Aesthetics

This refers to the essence and perception of beauty and ugliness of something. Jackson, (1997: 47) describes aesthetics as “a philosophy or perception of beauty in art and in nature.” This shows how the qualities of a thing are perceived and realized, that is, both the ugly and beautiful qualities of a particular thing in relation to its usefulness to human beings and the environment.

Ìdòwú (1977: 191) simply refers to 'dreams' as "trances", that is, a dazed or unconscious condition. This also means that anybody dreaming may find him or herself in an unconscious situation so far as he or she is far asleep. Dreams are universally believed to be a metaphysical reality throughout the world, especially among the Yorùbá. Therefore, dreams can be said to possess both ugly and beautiful qualities in relation to their functions for people and the entire society. A dream that reveals the future occurrence or solution to a particular problem definitely possesses an aesthetic quality, while a dream that involves eating of food while sleeping may connote the act of being poisoned in the dream, which invariably can lead to untimely sickness or the death of such dreamer.

Aesthetics has its root in many disciplines – Philosophy, Psychology, Linguistics, Arts, Sociology, Architectures, Theology and Culture, etc. This is why its study and application are complex as a result of almost its limitless boundary, coupled with its consideration of attitudes, beliefs, prejudices and human experiences. Furthermore, the perception of ‘good and beauty’ which is the major concern of aesthetics, is different from one culture to another. The Yorùbá concept of aesthetics is partly discernible from the various words, phrases or expressions that are used in describing ‘the beautiful’; ‘ẹwà’, ‘dídára’, ‘ara’, ‘ọ̀nà’, etc.(Àlámú, 2010). Alamu (2010: 39) also refers to ‘aesthetics’ as the term that is “conceived with understanding beauty, particularly as it is manifested in art, and with its evaluation”. The relevance of this as

regards the artistic works of Yorùbá literary writers in their deployment of different metaphysical elements such as death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, and witchcraft/wizardry in various Yorùbá literary texts cut across the three literary genres cannot be underestimated in this study. Hence, the literary works that exhibit metaphysical phenomena is considered aesthetic in nature.

Literarily speaking, meanings of some signs and symbols are aesthetically transmitted. Some of the meanings contained in literary texts possess connotative codes that call for deep thinking before one can arrive at specific and actual interpretations of such codes, signs or symbols. When considering aesthetics in Yorùbá worldview, it is quickly focused as ‘arts’ or ‘artistic works’. The term ‘art’ according to Adépegba (1991:1) simply refers to ‘*ṣnà*’ in Yorùbá cosmos. The idea about aesthetic work entails the design or beauty about an object. It also involves ugliness that is also present within the premise of artistic design or work.

(v) Empirical/Empiricism

This concept is used to establish a kind of knowledge that is both synthetic and a posteriori. Unah (1998: 56) states that “for us to acquire knowledge of an object we have to perceive that object with our senses.” This means that something is empirical only when such a thing can be seen or perceived with our senses, for example, senses of hearing, sight, smell, touch and taste. It is generally believed that most of the knowledge gained is empirical. Therefore, something is empirical when such a thing is based on observation and experiment.

Although metaphysics is regarded as the totality of ultimate reality, it also refers to the presence and existence of physical object as part of an existing reality. In the Yorùbá diaspora, divination, as a metaphysical element, involves certain processes, such as casting of *òpèlẹ̀*⁵ to physically bring out the mathematical reading out of which both the interpretation and the solution to the client’s intents and problems, respectively, can be prescribed or suggested. Such stage of casting shows the empirical manifestation of the stages of divination as a metaphysical element within the Yorùbá cosmos.

(vi) Transcendence

The concept of transcendence is used in relation to the realm of thought which we can never experience with our senses. Palmquist (2011: 6) notes that “the closest we can get to gaining knowledge of the transcendent realm is to think of it by means of ideas.” For instance, the spirit of death is transcendental because it is regarded as an object of spiritual realm that cannot be seen. Therefore, it is said to exist in the transcendent realm (spiritual realm) simply because it cannot be seen or visualized. God is also believed in Yorùbá life and thought to be transcendental. Hence, Awólàlú (1981: 16) testifies that:

The people believe that the Supreme Being is high and far above the heads of all. He is not one among many but wholly other. He is not of the rank and file of the divinities, neither can He be described as a nature god.

This manifests the strong fact and belief of Africans and Yorùbá people in particular that 'God', being the Supreme Being, is unequal with man, gods and goddesses and also cannot be physically seen but spiritually approached or otherwise believed to sojourn above or at a spiritual realm.

Transcendence is also the opposite of empiricism. That is, it refers to a thing that cannot be visualized with human physical senses. Dream in Yorùbá life and thought of any kind is recognized to be coming up when the dreamer is sleeping. The situation in which such a dream exists is termed to be in transcendent realm or otherwise known as the spiritual world.

(vii) Mind (Ọkàn)

The mind refers to the mental activities and memory acquired by a typical human being or somebody. In this context, mind tends to consist of conscious and unconscious activities, such as dreaming. Therefore, a human being is said to have a mind and body. Mind is used in this study as a place where the thoughts about the presence of the available metaphysical elements within the Yorùbá cosmos exist. Omoregbe in Unah (1998: 80) refers to 'mind' as "an immaterial substance, the subject of the psychological experiences of perception, thinking or consciousness." This presents 'mind' as something abstract or an entity of abstraction.

The mind, as part of the human body, serves as an abode of the soul that continues to live after the death of the human being. For example, in the Yorùbá epistemological perception of the vulture (*igún*), it is the mind that speaks to human beings not to ordinarily kill it for it is regarded as a spiritual bird. If someone unjustly kills the bird, he or she will experience negative consequences. That is why the Yorùbá say '*a kì í pa igún, a kì í jẹ igún, a kì í fi igún bọrí*' (it is forbidden to kill the vulture, it is forbidden to eat the vulture, so it is forbidden to make use of the vulture for sacrifice).

(viii) Soul (Èmí)

The soul is an aspect of human beings that is not physical. It is a complex aspect of human attributes that shows the signs of consciousness, thought, feeling and will, which is quite distinct from the physical body.

The soul, as part of the human body, is also said to be immortal. Etim (2013: 14) asserts that "though the Africans differ as regards the constituents of man, the fact that man has an immortal soul is not debatable." The concept of soul is thus regarded in the Yorùbá world as a substance that continues to live after one's death. The soul is also believed to be a substance that can transform into a spirit and thereby becomes an existing ghost when considering another life or realm after the death of a person in physical life. This is the basis for the Yorùbá belief in reincarnation.

(ix) Body (Ara)

Universally and physiologically speaking, the body is the concrete and material being or structure of a human being or entity. Awólálú (1981: 53) defines the body as "man's physical form (*ara*)". Essentially, it is the physical structure of the human being although animals also have bodies. In this study, the body refers to the physical entity that harbours both mind and soul. It is also identified as the human structure which dies and decomposes after death; this is unlike the soul which cannot die. Hence, Unah in Unah (1998: 51) states that "everyday we use words and expressions which suggest that the human being is a combination of two basically different elements – the mind and body." This indicates that the 'body' covers up the 'mind' of the individual human being.

The body is regarded as the custodian of the mind and soul. Among the Yorùbá it is believed that a baby would normally grow the lower teeth first. When a baby grows the upper teeth first, such a child is regarded as having the gift of soothsaying. According to Ilésanmí (2009: 22), “*àṣẹ ni ọ̀rọ̀ àwọn ọmọ tó bá ti kókó heyín òkè kí wọn tó hu ti ìsàlẹ̀*” (the utterances of those babies that first had the upper teeth before the lower ones tend to come to pass).

(x) Elements

Elements are existing realities of life in the human world (Bámgbóṣé, 1974: 83). They are the separately identified parts of something or a separate group within a larger group. In this study, we refer to them as metaphysical elements, namely death, divination, dreams, incantations, inner-head, ominous sign and witchcraft. Those entities are considered and related to the spiritual realm of life. Besides, they possess a reality that makes them to be regarded as a fact or believable object. For instance, a dream in which a masquerade pursues a man is regarded as a metaphysical occurrence that manifests the spiritual handiwork of witches or enemies in the Yorùbá belief system. Hence, dreams are an element of metaphysics (Bámgbóṣé, 1974: 105-106).

1.12. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have provided a general background to the study, showing the aim and objectives of the study as well as its scope and significance. We also discussed the research methodology together with the relationship between metaphysics and literature. The chapter equally examined metaphysics in relation to its origin, branches and the different features of African and Western metaphysics.

Notes

1. Although death and dream are considered as natural processes, they still possess some metaphysical elements. See Azenabor in Unah, J. (1998). *Metaphysics. Phenomenology and African philosophy*.
2. Treatises are several works or books that systematically handle a particular subject or several subjects.
3. The study of God and all that relate to God, or lesser gods or goddesses. See Nakate(2011). *Branches of metaphysics*. [www. Buzzle.com/articles/branches-of-Metaphysics.html](http://www.Buzzle.com/articles/branches-of-Metaphysics.html).
4. It is described as nature of being. It is what being has in it to be identified as a being. Indeed, it is like a spirit that is in being, such force is termed to be the reality existing in such being. See Oyèshilé (2002).
5. It is a sacred tool or paraphernalia used for divination by Ifá priests. It has two open ends at the bottom part. It is made up of metal, string, or seeds. It is otherwise called divining chain. For more information see Abímbólá (1977).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

Although, not holistically in presentation, attempts have been made by various Yorùbá writers and scholars to discuss phenomena such as death, divination, dreams, incantation, inner-head, strange signs and witchcraft, which are described in this study as metaphysical elements. These are also sometimes called or described as supernatural elements (see Bámgbóšé, 1972). The scholarly works on them cover their nature, existence and functions within the traditional Yorùbá environment. This chapter reviews the previous scholars' works in order to highlight their contributions and show the gaps which the present study sets out to fill.

2.1 Review of Relevant Literature

Belief in the existence of supernatural elements has attracted the attention of writers and scholars in Yorùbá studies. Dáramólá and Jéjé (1975) write about death and burial processes within Yorùbá society. They mention the two types of death known to the Yorùbá world: good death and bad death. The good type is said to be accompanied with good death's spirit while the bad death has to do with bad death's spirit. They also highlight the causes and types of death, dividing them into categories. For example, the born-to-die (the *àbikú*¹) and those who die at an old or ripe age and consequently are eligible to become ancestors or to reincarnate. Like Dáramólá and Jéjé, Médùbí (1997) also believes that death is regarded as an infinite spirit that can never be ended or completely destroyed. He captures this thus:

Ìgbàgbò àwọn Yorùbá ni pé tí a bá kú, ara tí ó jé àgò nìkan ló kú, èmí wa kí í kú rárá, kò sì lè kú tíí ayé àlópín (83).

The belief of the Yorùbá is that if one dies, it is the physical body that dies; our soul does not die at all and can never die.

These writers only gave the description of death as a spirit but failed to mention or discuss how the metaphysical element (death) can be explored for human advantages such as for spiritual enquiries, attainment of spiritual power and personal directives, etc.

Dáramólá and Jéjé (1975) also discuss witchcraft as a society, focusing on the definition, processes of initiation², reasons for exercising fear against those that have the metaphysical power of witchcraft and means of identifying the people who have it. They discuss the phenomenon of witchcraft under two terms: 'witches' and 'wizards'. They claim that more witches (females) are in circulation than wizards. They discuss the processes involved in initiating new members into the society, which can be through inheritance or by adventure. Dáramólá and Jéjé's contributions to the study of Yorùbá metaphysical elements may be viewed as modest. They present basic knowledge of the Yorùbá worldview on death and witchcraft, which are two essential aspects of the Yorùbá metaphysical elements. The works, however, failed to discuss other metaphysical elements, such as divination, dream, incantation, inner-head and ominous signs. These are parts of what this study is set to address.

Abímbólá (1977), to be precise, is a comprehensive analysis of Ifá divination with steps that are usually followed by Ifá diviners when visited by the client for findings. He mentions the steps involved in carrying out divination together with the functions of the Ifá paraphernalia such as the 'òpèlè' and 'ìróké'³; which are the instruments for divination and casting lots (*ibò*⁴) during Ifá divination. However, the work does not highlight the metaphysical issues embedded in divination, particularly as those instruments of Ifá divination are believed to harbour a certain spirit (spirit of revelation). It is through this spirit that accurate interpretation or reality can emerge.

Emedolibe (2013: 23) describes Ifá as "an earth-based African spiritual tradition that was conceptualized by the Yorùbá people of Nigeria, West Africa." Divination in this contribution is conceived of harbouring spirit that is useful for revelation. Writing in

the Nigerian daily *National Mirror*, Emedolibe describes the chief practitioner of Ifá as either "Babaláwo" (Ifá priest) or "Ìyánífá" (Ifá priestess). The need for the introduction of Ifá studies for its pedagogical advantages in Nigerian schools is also mentioned to deter the bad influence of foreign religions on the country's socio-cultural and traditional heritage in and outside the country. The contributions provided by the journalist towards the inclusion of Ifá studies in Nigerian schools as a means or panacea for Nigerian cultural rebirth is commendable. (See Appendix 1).

Awólálú (1981: 120) describes divination as "a means of seeking to discover the unknown and the future by manipulating some supernatural sources." This provides vital information on how the Yorùbá interact with objects and phenomena such as paraphernalia and deities within their society for the purpose of sourcing for the needed secrets. The Yorùbá, for instance, go for divination because they are inquisitive and anxious to know the causes and prescribed solutions to the existing agitating issues and also the future with regard to themselves and to those that are close to them. Hence, the common saying, '*bí òní ẹ̀ se rí, òla ò rí bẹ̀, ní í mú Babaláwo d'Ífá ọ̀rọ̀rún*' (Because each day has its own peculiar problems, the Ifá priest has to divine every fifth day). In Awólálú's classification of divination, he identifies the following: *dída obì* (casting of the kola nut), casting or throwing of sixteen cowries (*eẹ̀rìndínlógún⁵*), casting of *òpèlẹ̀* (sixteen sacred half-pods in a chain) and casting of sixteen sacred palmnuts (*ikin*). The contributions not only render divination as a source of information, communication between god and man, but also as a collection of the western lore of the Yorùbá people and means of solving their social, political, economic and other problems. Awólálú's contribution is helpful and useful to his study. This is much so as Ifá's practical efficacy is explored in some Yorùbá literary texts which is the focus of the study.

Inner-head, regarded as "man's destiny", has also been treated by Ìdòwú (1977) and Lágùdà (2006). Both writers work on it with reference to its definitions, types, features, functions and elements through which it can be worshipped and on various factors that can influence the inner-head. The above writers in their definitions and descriptions also regard inner-head as 'personality soul'. The soul, being invisible but believed to be harboured and possessed by every individual, is also regarded as an element of continuity even after death. Hence, its development into a spirit that is

believed to be existing whether an individual is alive or dead. This is very useful to the extent that inner-head is believed to have been captured by Ifá divination. For more information see Agboṣá (1989), Akinlabí (2006), Ògúnníran (2007), Agboṣá (2008).

In his work on the concept of '*Ori*' (inner-head), Oyèshílé (2002) also presents a diverse inter-tribal discourse on how '*Ori*' is conceived among the Akan, Igbo and Yorùbá peoples. Apart from describing the inner-head as "human destiny", his presentation also consists of the features, functions and the interconnectivity between the inner-head and the person bearing it. Despite all the contributions of Oyèshílé and other scholars earlier cited, metaphysical elements such as death, divination, dreams, incantations, strange signs and witchcraft have not yet been fully explored. Oyèshílé's contribution is very relevant and useful to this study but occurred to have featured one out of seven presented metaphysical elements in this study.

Awólàlú (1981) also works on incantation with reference to the Yorùbá belief in mysterious and mystical powers. Awólàlú (1981:69) refers to incantation as an act that involves "the chanting or uttering of words purported to have magical power." He further presents the various purposes for which incantation has been utilized, especially through the narration of relevant ancient stories such as the tug of war between Gbòńkà and Tìmì. This shows how historically relevant the author is in the use of incantations within the Yorùbá society.

Awólàlú (1981) also examines the concept of witchcraft, describing it as a mysterious power. He lists some essential features of witchcraft to include (i) enjoyment of secrecy, (ii) organization of regular nocturnal meetings, (iii) getting and feeding upon procured victims, (iv) level of contribution, (v) feminine leadership, (vi) various forms of acquisition, and (vii) possession of spiritual bird. He also comments on the Yorùbá belief in witchcraft. Indeed, many literary writers must have been inspired by Awólàlú's books, especially with regard to their portrayal of supernatural powers.

Olátúnjí (1984: 139-167) also focuses on Yorùbá incantations (Ọfò) and belief in the use and practice of '*Ọfò*'. Some of the beliefs highlighted in his study of Yorùbá '*Ọfò*' are presented below:

(a) Belief in sympathy: According to Ọlátúnjí, the incantatory statement on this type is anchored on how human beings can be showered with sympathy or catered for, and the positive wordings are commonly chanted in line with this. This belief is tied to the consideration of the names of the compounded herbals – some plants and objects of medicine – in the invocation or chanting of incantation. He exemplifies this with the following Yorùbá statements:

Dídùn là á bálé olóyin.
Àdùnkàn-àdùnkàn ni ti kúkùndùnkún (141).

It is all sweetness that one encounters in the house of the
honey.
Everlasting sweetness is the lot of the sweet potato.

The excerpt above provides information on how the inherent nutrients of the objects or herbals joined together to produce medicine were considered to provide names or statements for the chanting of the incantation that is relevant to the expected purpose of the medicine in question.

(b) Belief in primordial names: The Yorùbá believe that several names of people are significant, symbolic, complimentary or derogatory in nature to the extent that they contain certain powers of control. Ọlátúnjí asserts that in Yorùbá society names (animate or inanimate) and divinities possess primordial names that are useful, provided the user knows how to use such a secret name. Whoever knows those names and their usages can control their bearers and the powers inherent in them. For instance, the secret names of death and grave are given by Ọlátúnjí (1984:141) as '*Apanisígómógbé*' (killer of one into the bush without packing it) and '*Ọ̀daramógbó*' (a better resemblance of bush). He states that "if one knows the secret names of death and grave, one would live till a ripe old age."

(c) Magical power of the spoken word: Ọlátúnjí (1984) claims that "not all incantations are in accompaniment to herbal preparations, there are many which operate by the sheer power of being spoken." (145). In addition, Ọlátúnjí in his inaugural lecture⁶ titled "Beyond the Spoken Word: An African Language Literature Experience", demonstrates and describes incantation as "a particularly significant form of literature among the Yorùbá". This shows how unavoidable, germane and basic incantation is, apart from being metaphysical, in Yorùbá literature in particular.

He points out that wonders happen when some words are uttered as incantatory statements. This is due to the fact that those spoken words bring changes to human conditions, things or situations.

He presents the features through which *Ọfọ* can be identified. These include:

(i) Magical intention: Incantation is identified by its magical and mystical intentions to subject the entire world to man's wishes or hopes. The intention can be beneficial or malevolent.

(ii) Themes in *Ọfọ* (incantation): He highlights the contents of incantation with reference to the several themes on how human wishes can be accomplished.

(iii) Mythological references: He emphasizes the fact that every object or human being in existence has its or his origin. Through this content, a lot of mythical allusions have occurred.

Ọlátúnjí (1984) places emphasis mainly on incantations (*ọfọ*) and divination as supernatural elements in his presentation. Only these two are discussed in the text and this is considered inadequate considering the vast number of metaphysical elements that are readily available in the Yorùbá cosmos. However, his discussion of these two elements; *Ọfọ* and *Ifá* divination, are quite insightful and useful to the subject matter of this study.

Agboọlá (1989) in his work on witchcraft highlights the historical development of witchcraft. In his *Ifá* corpus that reveals the meeting of both the sixteen corpus and the witches, he exposes the impact of defiance on the side of one of the corpus (*Ọsá-méjì*) after the necessary sacrifice has been made by the remaining fifteen corpuses. With the writer's presentations in both prose and poetic forms, we notice the inability of the author to bring out, analyze and highlight the positive effects and relevance of witches to the people and the society in which they live at large. However, Agboọlá fails to address the issue of wizardry as metaphysical. This is also one of the gaps which this study is trying to fill.

Orímóògùnjé (1996) focuses on the definition and description of "itàn yẹ̀ǹwò" (history of divination) as it features especially in Yorùbá society. The various

purposes for which divination as a supernatural means acts are also presented in his work. He describes divination as:

Ìlànà tí àwọn Yorùbá fí n ẹ̀ ẹ̀ iwádíí-ǹnkan-kí-ǹnkan tó bá rúwọn lójú tàbí ǹnkan tí wọn fẹ́ dáwólé. Irúfẹ́ ǹnkan tí wọn á fẹ́ẹ́ mọ́ fin-in-in-idí-kókò rẹ̀ le jẹ́ ilé kíkó, oko dídá, aya-níní/ọkọ níní, ogun-jíjà àti àwọn ǹnkan miiran bẹ̀ẹ̀ ní àwùjọ aṣùwàdà ènìyàn (40).

Means the Yorùbá use to find out about confusing issues or what they want to lay their hands on. The issues in question maybe house building, farming, marriage, war and others within human environment.

It may be inferred from the above quotation that various issues inherent in the Ifá corpus are said to exist within human society, thus showing that divination has metaphysical undertones. But the author fails to present how such supernatural means are deployed in Yorùbá written literary texts.

There is also the Yorùbá belief in 'ẹ̀mí àìrì' (invisible spirit). According to Médùbí (1997) 'ẹ̀mí àìrì' means an invisible spirit or element. These invisible elements or spirits are believed to exist among the Yorùbá. He says:

Ìgbàgbọ́ nípa ọ̀rọ́ yíí mú kí àwọn Yorùbá gbà pé àwọn 'Ẹ̀MÍ-ÀÌRÌ' kan wà ní sàkání wọn tó máa ǹ tún ǹnkanṣe fún wọn. Ẹ̀mí rere ǹ bẹ, bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni ẹ̀mí burúkú tàbí ẹ̀míòkùnkùn wà. Àwọn bíi Ànjànnú, iwin, emèrè, oṣó, àjé, abbl (89).

The belief about this word makes the Yorùbá accept that there are some "INVISIBLE SPIRITS" within their environments that are beneficial to them. There are both the good and bad invisible spirits. For instance, the spirits wizards, witches etc.

It could be deduced from the above that the Yorùbá believe in the existence of supernatural elements within their vicinities and have also classified the supernatural elements into the good and the bad ones. Mention is also made by Médùbí of the supernatural beings, one of which is witchcraft. Despite the meaning and different samples of supernatural elements given by the scholar, he does not give a detailed analysis of how even the mentioned supernatural elements and other unlisted ones are explored in Yorùbá written literature.

Òpẹ̀fẹ̀yítímí (1997), in his work on incantation (*Ọ̀fọ̀*), discusses the definition, purposes and types or forms of Yorùbá incantation. He divides Yorùbá incantations into two: (i) "Ọ̀fọ̀" (proper incantation) and (ii) "Àyájọ̀" (incantation special). He describes the former type as the verbal art of prepared medicinal components while the later refers to those that can be spoken with prepared medicine or function on its own. He also emphasizes that incantation is used to invoke for good or bad depending on the context of such incantation. He therefore states that:

In sum, the notion of the metaphysical aspect of Yorùbá incantation rests upon certain beliefs. These are first, the notion of reality. In this connection, both seen and unseen forces are real to human beings. Those that are not seen are believed to be present in space. They are functional because they retain the status of human beings but more powerful than them (134).

Based on the scholarly contributions cited above, it could be argued that the issue of the existence of reality does not only occur in physicality but also in spirituality, out of which some other elements, such as the spirits of death and divinities, can be traced. For this reason, the need to relate and compare one element of metaphysics with another as discussed or used in some Yorùbá literary texts cannot be ignored.

Olúwólé (1998: 17), in her contribution to the discussion on witchcraft, describes witchcraft as "the ability of some people to affect others without physical contact or the use of medicine." This is regarded as a mental or spiritual act rather than a physical act. She also raises the question of the practical efficacy of witchcraft. She equally opines that "it is intellectually unacceptable to argue that since we have no theory which can accommodate such occurrences now, witchcraft phenomenon is a mere illusion." Her suggestion is acceptable but she has failed to show how the practical efficacy of witchcraft can be established and how witchcraft as a phenomenon or mere illusion can be debunked.

Omoregbe (1998) also contributes to the issue or realization of reality in the existence or presentation of any spiritual substance. He opines that there are two kinds of substance in reality: spiritual and natural substances. To him, reality is a major focus in the study of supernatural elements in any environment.

Death, though a natural process but a metaphysical element, has also attracted the attention of Odétókun et al. (2008) whose work is on death and resurrection after death. Their work is a confirmation of reality in the existence of death as a spiritual element. One of the general beliefs of the Yorùbá, according to them, is that death is not the end of life, hence, the saying, "*Yorùbá ti gbàgbó pé ikú kò ni òpin ohun gbogbo*" (The Yorùbá believe that death remains not the end of everything). They claim that the spirit of death can be conjured for the revelation of the cause of death.

Èwè, wọn a tún máa lọ pe Elédàá òkú tí wọn bá fura sípé ikú rẹ̀ kì í ẹ̀ ẹ̀ àtòrunwá láti bèèrè irú ikú tó pa á àtiláti mọ ohun tí wọn yóò ẹ̀ láti gbèsan. Wọn sọ pé òkúyóò dáhùn nígbà tí wọn bá pè é. Ó lè dárúkọ ẹ̀ni tó paá. Ó lè sọ ohun tí wọn yóò ẹ̀ sí ẹ̀ni náà tàbí kí ó sọ pé kí wọn fí sílẹ̀, òun ó gbèjà fúnra òun (119).

Even, they tend to conjure the spirit of somebody that died unnaturally in order to ask of the cause of the death and what to do to revenge. They say the dead would respond when they conjure it. He may mention the name of whosoever has killed him. He may suggest what to do to his killer or instruct them to leave the killer, that he will avenge himself.

Their work provides the necessary information on how the Yorùbá, especially those that are well-versed and knowledgeable about the invocation of the spirit of the dead, employ the measure for finding out the source of hidden issues or occurrences. Their work is relevant to this study because of the additional vital information they provide on the subject matter: death.

Odétókun et al. (2008) also discuss witchcraft, especially within the Yorùbá environment. They refer to people that possess the spiritual power of witchcraft as:

Awọn tí a gbó pé ó ní agbára kan nínú wọn lóhùn-ún tí wọn le fí ẹ̀ ohunkóhun tí wọn bá fẹ̀. Bí wọn ẹ̀ le fí sọara wọn di ohun tó bá wù wọn, bèẹ̀ náà ni wọn le fí agbára wọn náà sọ ẹ̀niyàn di idákudá. Wọn ní agbára débi pé bí wọn bá ń lọ sí ipàdẹ̀ tí wọn ń pè ní 'àjọ' gégé bí ẹ̀yẹ̀ ni wọn ẹ̀ máa ń fò lọ, òfúyẹ̀ ara wọn ni yóò wà lóri ibi tí wọn bá sùn sí, ẹ̀míwọn tí lọ (127).

Those that have spiritual power to do anything they like. As they can use the power to turn themselves to anything

theylike, so also, they can do to others. They possess power likebirds; when going for a conference, it is only their physicalbody that would remain where they sleep but their possessedspirit of witchcraft has gone for operation.

As seen in the above excerpt, they only focus on the definition or description of witchcraft, their indispensable positions among the available secret societies within Yorùbá society, the time and period of their meetings (midnight), the description of their possession of inner or spiritual power and the use of birds as the instrument of the spiritual power. It is not surprising that Oḍétókun et al. provide detailed discussions of witchcraft. The work is intended for students, and it is aimed at helping them to pass their school certificate examinations. Hence, the simplicity of language and in-depth discussion manifested in their work, but this study will provide a more detailed and critical analysis of seven different metaphysical elements in Yorùbá written literary texts that have not been treated by majority of the writers or scholars whose works are under review in this study.

The Nigerian national dailies are also awash with stories relating to witchcraft. An example of this is found in the *Punch* newspaper of Monday, 13th October 2014 where Àlùkò (2014: 5), a journalist, presents and captures a scenario of how a bird turned or changed into woman at Cappa Bus Stop, Oshòdì, Lagos, on Friday, October 13th 2014. The journalist states that:

The woman, who was badly burnt, was accused of transforming from a bird into a human being. Some eye witnesses claimed the woman had fallen as a 'bird' from the cable and confessed to have some metaphysical powers (5).

The above passage illustrates how those that possess the power or spirit of witchcraft tend to be capable of changing into any form or creature, depending upon what enterprise they want to undertake. The journalist also alludes to the ill-fated witch's apparent failure to be protected by the common Yorùbá prayer among the witches and wizards: 'ẹyẹ kì í fò kó forí sọgi' (a bird will not bump into hit a tree). No doubt, the journalist has shown how the power of witchcraft was displayed vis-a-vis a presentation of the real picture of the victim (the witch in question) at the scene, which is apparently a manifestation of the reality of the existence of witchcraft even in today's society. However, he fails to explain how the supernatural element

(witchcraft) can be explored and exploited in Yorùbá written literature (See Appendix 2).

Ilésanmí (2001) discusses the importance of dreams in the life of the people and the extent to which people can go in order to gain access to the meaning of their dreams. He comments on the huge amount of money people waste on interpretation of dreams by patronizing alfas, Ifá priests and pastors thus:

Gbogbo owó tí wọn ibá fí ẹ̀ ẹ̀nfaàní fún ìdílẹ̀ wọn ni wọn ti fí ẹ̀yẹ̀wò àlá nílẹ̀ aláàfáà, nílẹ̀ onífá àti nílẹ̀ aládùúrà (1).

They have exhausted all their incomes on searching for interpretation of dreams from the alfas, Ifá priests, and the aládùúrà.

This shows how seriously the Yorùbá take dreams, especially nightmares. They do not mind the amount expended on the search for the accurate interpretation and way out of any immanently bad result that may come out of it. In the same text, he also highlights and describes those who do not believe in the function and reality of dreams as ignorant. According to him:

Bí o bá ń fí ọ̀tunla méta dára ẹ̀ nínú dùn pé àlá kò já mọ̀ohunkóhun; ẹ̀te àti ẹ̀rò lásán ni; àlá ẹ̀ pàtàkì fún àbùdá ẹ̀niyàn; àwọn tó ní ìtumò ẹ̀kúnrẹ̀rẹ̀ fún kò jẹ̀ kà á sí ohun yẹ̀pẹ̀rẹ̀ (3).

If you personally believe that dreams are nothing; it's just a planless and hopeless thought; dreams are important for human characteristics; those that have deep thought of it will not take it with levity.

He establishes the existence and meaningfulness of dreams among the Yorùbá. Although Ilésanmí's work is important, useful and relevant to this study, it does not undertake a detailed analysis of how dreams as metaphysical elements have been identified and treated in Yorùbá written literature. This is so in that his focus is different from that of this study's.

The issue of dream is not also limited to different published texts; it has featured in one of the Yorùbá magazines called *Akéde Àgbáyé* (2013:5) where the negative effects of dreams (*Àlá*) on humans are presented. An event of how a resident of Lagos called Esther was accused of being the cause of Matthew's inability to marry a wife was

presented. The act of having sexual intercourse with a relation in a dream (nightmare) by somebody also appears in the magazine, resulting in Matthew's marital problem and hitting of Esther's head with a hammer by the former. According to the editor, Matthew confessed thus:

Ó ní nígbàkígbà tí òun bá ti fẹ́ẹ̀ ẹ̀gbéyàwó tí òun ti rí ọ̀mọ̀bínrín kan tíòrò àwọn sì ti wọ̀, nígbà náà ni òun yóò láláá rí Esther lójú orun. Estheryóò sì máafọ̀wọ̀ pa òun lára, yóò máa bá òun ẹ̀ré tí tí òun yóò fi máa gbá ñńkan mó ọ̀n lára kárakára, tí òun yóò sì bá a ẹ̀ré náà tí yóò tẹ̀ ọ̀unlọ̀rún, igbà tí ojú òun bá wálẹ̀ ni òun yóò tó mó pé Esther ni òun ní gbáńńkan mó lábẹ̀ lójú orun. Kò sì lè pé lẹ̀yìn tí òun bá ẹ̀ sùnlésùnlé fún Esther lójú àlá tán tí òun yóò fi pàdánù ọ̀mọ̀bínrín tí àwọn jọ fẹ́ẹ̀ fẹ́ arawọ̀n (5).

He said he usually dreamt of Esther whenever he is about and have seen a girl who is ready for marriage, that is when Esther would be playing with him (Matthew) in the dream to the extent of having sex with her satisfactorily. It was when I woke up that I would know that it was Esther I was making love with in the dream. It was shortly after dreaming of making love with Esther that I would lose any fiancé I intend to hook.

It can thus be seen that the causes and bad effects of dreams are discovered and presented as a real scenario in the magazine in question. Presentation of dreams as a spiritual phenomenon in *Akéde Àgbáyé* is a further proof that dreams are part of human experience, although the chance of a dream coming to pass is just 50-50%. This is because the dream's result in physical life may be so or not. This is why the Yorùbá would say 'àlá gò' (dream is stupid/foolish) where the dream is weird or unrealistic.

Strange signs as a supernatural entity have also been discussed and presented by various scholars, both in relation to the Yorùbá worldview and the whole universe. For instance, Ilésanmí (2009: 58) provides useful information on "Ìmòtẹ̀lẹ̀" (strange signs). He identifies and discusses the following as ominous signs:

- (i) dream as a sign of what to come or happen to a person.
- (ii) hitting the left or right foot on something, for example, solid objects as an ominous sign.

- (iii) meeting a wretched person first and early in the morning to connote impending poverty.
- (iv) coincidental meeting of a relative after he or she has just been discussed is a sign that such a person is not a bastard.
- (v) sighting certain animals in the daytime, for instance, sighting a big rat (Òkété) connotes a forthcoming danger for both the person and his community.

He concludes by stating that strange signs mean a lot to him in his own environment but fails to give the analysis of how those strange signs have affected him.

From Ilésanmí's contributions, how important the phenomenon of dream is in the life of the Yorùbá is clear. He concludes by saying that people believe in ominous signs and are guided by them in order to avert or escape an impending danger or doom. The use of strange signs abounds in Yorùbá written literature.

Fánilólá's (2010) "Dream in Yorùbá Worldview" gives various descriptions of dreams. He describes dreams as "a sign or symbol for something else." He also regards them as "a situation of reality re-presenting itself within the compass of the unconscious." This shows how signs can be interpreted to mean other things and the extent to which the dream as a metaphysical phenomenon can be regarded as a reality. Fánilólá also categorizes dreams into two basic types. There are good dreams which occur when the event and action in the dream are interpreted as good. There are also bad dreams when the actions and events in the dream are interpreted as bad. He notes that dreams can only be interpreted through three perspectives, viz:

through the ascription of direct meaning to the event or action in the dream; when the opposite meaning is ascribed to the event and action in the dream; and through the ascription of symbolic meanings to the events of a dream (1-2).

Interpretation of dreams, especially among the Yorùbá, is determined by a number of factors such as taboos, mythic-religious beliefs, superstitions and psychological attitudes to images that are life-advancing or life-negating. Fánilólá's discussion of

dreams from the Yorùbá perspective is not only insightful but also informative and is considered useful to this study.

2.2 Conclusion

In line with the above review, witchcraft as a metaphysical element seems to have attracted more attention than other metaphysical elements. This is so in that witchcraft is a popular phenomenon among African scholars in general, and particularly in the Yorùbá society, hence, the seriousness with which it is handled. Many of the Yorùbá supernatural phenomena have been addressed by various writers and scholars, such as Dáramólá and Jéjé (1975), Médùbí (1997), and Ilésanmí (2001 & 2009) who have contributed to the study of death and witchcraft. Médùbí (1997) has written on death while Ilésanmí (2001 & 2009) have written on dreams and strange signs. However, no scholar has dealt with all the prominent Yorùbá metaphysical phenomena in a single study. This study therefore aims at bringing several Yorùbá metaphysical elements into focus, in addition to investigating the extent to which Yorùbá writers have explored and exploited them for literary and aesthetic purposes.

Notes

1. This is a born-to-die child. This is the type of baby that is born two, three or more times by the same mother and dies the same number of times. See Dáramólá ati Jéjé (1975).
2. This is the act of enlisting, incorporating or accepting new members into the witches' and wizards' society.
3. This is a staff that may be made of elephant ivory and used by an Ifá priest to strike the edge of a divining tray repeatedly when chanting Ifá verses to call Ifá to be present at divination exercise.
4. This, known as casting lots, is used by an Ifá priest to further enquire details about the interpretation of the Ifá verse or poem that has been divined and identified. It is also used to discover the exact solution to the challenges experienced by the client.
5. This is a typical divinatory instrument made of sixteen processed and sacred opened or perforated cowries. It is very common among the Yorùbá.
6. An inaugural lecture delivered at the University of Ìbàdàn on Thursday, 11th May 1987 by Olátúnjí, O.O.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: Sociology of Literature and Semiotic Theory

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the sociology of literature which is the main theoretical framework for the study. For a better understanding of this theory, the relevant concepts, historical development, basic principles, and validation associated with the theory will be highlighted. Since there is no theory that is full proof or without limitations, the sociology approach will be complemented by the semiotic approach. Some concepts relevant to the semiotic approach will be discussed. At the end of this chapter, there will be a sample analysis of data to validate the two approaches that constitute the theoretical frameworks.

3.1 Sociology of Literature as a Theory

The sociology of literature as a theory is considered suitable for this study because it focuses on both the society and literature of the people living in such a society. A theory of this kind that is society-based is considered the best approach for this study. For instance, seeing a giant rat (Òkété) in the daytime within the Yorùbá society connotes an impending danger for the person or people of such an environment. This may not be the case in other societies. In other words, the theory is basically concerned with man, his society and other phenomena around him. The theory of sociology of literature has its source from two distinct disciplines: sociology and literature. As such, it focuses on the lifestyle of human beings, their beliefs and the

impacts or purposes for their living together. Sociology provides a means of answering questions such as how a society emerges and how such a society progresses or retrogresses?

Literature, which is another aspect of the theory, is also based on human beings and society. Literature examines the artistic work aimed at enlightening, promoting and bringing changes to society as a whole, including the existing phenomena therein. The theory studies the relation between a particular literature and the society. Adéyemí (2006: 31) observes that:

Sosiólóji lítírésò ni ibásepò tó wà láàrin ònkòwé, àwùjò àti
isè ọ̀nà aláwòmó lítírésò gégé bí ààrò méta tí kì í dọ̀bẹ̀ nù.

Sociology of literature means the relationship among the
writer, society and literary works are like tripod.

Sociology, apart from its connections with other disciplines such as History, Philosophy, and Psychology, is also connected with literature as a discipline of creativity among the people, society and the creative or artistic works inherent in it. Literature is therefore the creativity in the mind of the creative artist within and about a particular society.

Scholars such as George Lukacs, Lucien Goldmann, Terry Eagleton and Walter Benjamin have provided the basis for probing into the social significance of art (Luckács: 1962 and Goldman: 1964). They believe that literature should not only reflect the norms and values of any society but should also contribute positively to changing the society. The sociology of literature can be said to have emerged as a result of the study of society, human beings and all other phenomena existing in it.

The theory also examines how literature concentrates on man's social world, his adaptation to it and the desire to change it. It also shows how an author, as a member of metaphysical society (Yorùbá society), attempts to re-create the social world of man's relation with his family, politics, as well as the state of the economy and religious constructs. It is through this that the roles of man in his environment as well as the conflicts, challenges and tension between groups and social classes are delineated. Hoggart (1970) in Bámidélé (2000: 5) avers that "without the literary witness a student of society would be blind to the fullness of that society." The

employment of this theory in this study will present the literary writers as an eye-witness of the occurrences (metaphysical phenomena) within the Yorùbá environment.

The interconnectivity of such disciplines as philosophical and sociological aesthetics has become useful in textual analysis. This is so in that the term ‘metaphysics’ is a philosophical concept that also doubles as one of the main branches Philosophy, while both the literary writers and the concerned phenomena remain the properties existing within the society (Yorùbá society). The use of sociology of literature will enhance our understanding of the writers’ desires and their involvement in literary activities in society.

The sociology of literature should not be seen as a theory that solely concerns itself with the thematic analysis or literary criticism of texts. It also deals with the existence of literature in the social world. The thematic contents can only be appreciated when their reality is realized through practical efficacy and feeling within society. Sociologists of literature are interested in man, society and civilization so as to develop their societal culture. Literature should not only reflect the norms and values of any society but it should also contribute positively to changing that society. The sociology of literature focuses on the totality of society and man’s ways of life. It is therefore for these reasons that it is adopted for this study.

3.2 The Historical Development of Sociology of Literature

The sociology of literature was coined by a Frenchman called Taine, who was a social critic between 1828 and 1893. The emergence of sociology of literature was the result of an attempt to undertake a scientific study of literary works. The theory is relatively new compared with other theories such as the sociology of education, sociology of politics, sociology of sports, sociology of religion etc. Fólórúnṣó (1998: 35) notes that:

There had been sociology of religion, education, politics, sports, knowledge, language and many other disciplines in existence before sociology of literature. This shows that sociology of literature is relatively new.

Adéyemí (2006) also notes that:

Ìmò tuntun sì ló jẹ́ lágboolé èkó nípa iṣé ọ̀nà. Ìdí ni pé láti àáròlati n gbó nípa sosiólóji èsìn, sosiólóji èkó, iṣelú, eré idárayá, èdè àti imò yòókù sùgbón kò tí ì pẹ́ tí imò nípa sosiólóji lítírésò bèrè ní pẹ̀u (29).

It is a new theory in the study of artistic works. The reason is that we had been hearing about the sociology of religion, sociology of knowledge, politics, sports, language and other disciplines but the sociology of literature has just emerged.

It could be deduced from the above that sociology of literature is relatively new among its sociological counterparts, and therefore has been and still calls for critical study to determine and conceive its utmost understanding as regards its pertinence and consideration as a theoretical approach for this study.

There are two schools of thought in the sociology of literature. The first school believes in studying literature with regard to in-depth consideration of the totality of the society in which such literature emerged. Hence, literature serves as an instrument of society. Aristotle was the pioneer advocate of this school of thought which holds that literature should be studied with emphasis on society. Other proponents of this school are Aristophanes, who shared a common view with Aristotle, as well as Karl Max and his followers, who came up with the idea that literature should not be studied without considering the societal groups and settings.

The second school of thought is those who view literature as just a mere artistic work. This school of thought sees literature as the artistic work that presents aesthetics and inherent features such as theme, style, language, character, plot and figures of speech.

Another milestone in the history of development of sociology of literature as a theory was the introduction of sub-sociological theory known as the sociology of literature as propounded by Karl Max around 1840. It was the knowledge gained by both Karl Max and Fredrick Engels in a political text titled *The Communist Manifesto* that gave rise to the Karl Max theory of sociology of literature. Karl Max and Fredrick Engels believed that literature is an element or part of society. It was the followers of the above scholars who established the relation of the theory to literature, as Karl Max and Engels did not aim to present the theory for literary criticism. This group therefore holds the view that literature relates to societal economy and it is the society that determines the type of literature a society will possess. The other group, among

who is Duvignaud, regards literature as an instrument for moulding society. However, the two groups share a common view and belief that there is a relationship between literature and human ideologies. The society, human beings and all the existing phenomena are intertwined and are the foundation of literary writers' works.

Lukacs is a central figure in the history and development of the sociology of literature. Bámidélé (2000: 3) presents his views about the personality of Lukacs thus:

His ideas that literature as a discipline expresses a worldview or ideology, a whole system of values as it offers richly human typical characters, concrete situations and a multi-dimensional reality informed his study of Balzac, Stedhal and Dickens.

It is thus obvious that literature considers the people's idea of their environment. He stresses this in his *Theory of the novel* (1971) when he says that "novels offer a historical, social process or the historical social background in which specific individuals as characters struggle against a specific environment." This assertion is quite relevant to our study when we consider Àkàrà-ògùn, a major character in Fágúnwà's *Ògbójú Qdẹ̀ Nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ̀* (2005), whose left leg strikes a stone and who is also hit in the eye by the ground hornbill's arms as ominous signs for an impending danger. This shows how the character struggles to get out of his problem when he sets out for hunting at Igbó Irúnmalẹ̀. To narrow this theory down to the Yorùbá age and environment, it is very clear that the writer duly studied and understood the Yorùbá environment before exploring and exploiting the ominous signs to achieve the set goals of the literary texts.

The sociology of literature today can therefore be described as the study of the interconnectivity existing between literature and the society. This means that no literature can be said to exist in isolation, and if there is need to critically examine and analyze a typical literary work the consideration of society cannot be ruled out. As the literary artist is a member of the society so also is the artistic work itself a property of the society.

Fágúnwà's (2005) *Ògbójú Qdẹ̀ Nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ̀* was written with the main focus on Yorùbá indigenous society. The author makes use of human and animal characters to portray the society's values. The author also uses metaphysical elements, such as

dreams, ominous signs and witchcraft, to reflect the societal occurrences and illustrate the effects those metaphysical elements have on the people and society at large. The sociology of literature makes it easy to critically analyze how Fágúnwà employs metaphysical elements in his prose works.

Yorùbá scholars have employed the theory to critically analyze some Yorùbá literary texts. For instance, Akinṣalá (1988), in his literary prose *Filà Lobìnrin*, presents and manifests the relevance and importance of traditional marriage in Yorùbáland. The author realizes the roles of parents, society and the real love in which the marriage is pivoted. Olúkojú in Àlàbá (ed.) (1997) employs the theoretical framework in question to explicate how music (traditional) was used via societal birds to soothe humans and help them sleep soundly. This manifests the relationship existing between man and his society in connection with the import of animals living within the social milieu. Ògúndèjì (2013) also deploys the sociology of literature to analyse how Olábíṁtán explores Yorùbá traditional culture, politics, rights and positions, and the roles of women in Yorùbá society in Olabiṁtan's three dramatic texts titled *Olúwa L'ó Mejó Dá* (1966), *Olàṣṣè Afòtèjoyè* (1970) and *B'ó Ti Gbà* (1980).

3.3 Basic Concepts in the Sociology of Literature

Four prominent concepts considered germane to the theory are discussed in this segment: sociology, society, literature, and the relationship between sociology and literature. Sociology connects literature and society in a relationship that is considered inseparable.

(i) Sociology

The term 'sociology' is traceable to the work of Auguste Comte (1798-1851). Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), a follower of Comte, noted that credit should be given to Henri de Saint-Simeon (1760-1825) to whom Comte served as secretary for years. Comte started as secretary to Saint-Simeon in 1817. Comte's boss was impressed by the intellectual wizardry of Comte, especially in the course of discharging his duties at that time. Most of the revolutionary works done by Comte usually bore the name of Saint-Simeon for security reasons. However, in 1824 the master and secretary parted

ways owing to a misunderstanding between the two over the authorship of some articles.

Comte started gaining popularity and his work in sociology could not be underestimated due to his high intelligence and perfection about the explanation of the nature of human beings and society at large. Comte coined the word 'sociology' from the earliest name 'social physics'. He also acknowledged society as essential to humans for interactive and survival purposes. Àdùfẹ́ (2002: 1) notes that “the work of Comte in Sociology was further brightened because of his belief in the perfectibility of human society.”

The coinage of the term 'sociology' came from one of the six volumes of Comte's works titled *The Course of Positive Philosophy*. Sociology was derived from the combination of two words which have their origin in Latin and Greek, namely, *socius* (Latin) meaning society and *logos* (Greek) meaning science. Sociology can therefore be defined as the 'science of society'. It is therefore regarded as the scientific study of human behaviour, attitude and culture in the society. Ajuzie (2011: 1) views sociology as:

a behavioural science which studies social systems, actions and interrelations in groups and collectivities of individuals in the society. It seeks to explain the nature of the social order, social disorder and the factors characterizing the social life of man.

It is a discipline that deals with all things or phenomena existing within the society and the essence of man in interacting and coping with those phenomena. It is a discipline through which the stand or status of both man and the social groups or society he resides in can be explained or talked about.

A sociologist studies the behavioural attitudes of man, the social systems, actions, interrelations of people and the phenomena existing within society. Sociologists can conveniently predict social occurrences considering that individuals in similar social situations will behave similarly (Ajuzie, 2011). This assertion is supported by the fact that the Yorubá tend to have similar reasons, thoughts, knowledge, experience and reactions about the metaphysical elements in their society.

In seeking to distinguish his own views from those of other intellectuals, Augustus Comte introduced sociology as a discipline to describe the subject he wished to establish. Comte had hoped that the new field could yield ideas and knowledge about society on the basis of scientific evidence. He regarded sociology as the last science to be developed, after sciences such as Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Comte regarded sociology as the most significant and complex of all the sciences. He also believed that the discipline should contribute to the welfare of humanity through the prediction and controlling of human behaviour together with phenomena existing in society.

Contemporary sociology studies the total behaviour of individuals and groups of people, as well as existing phenomena and entities, including rivers, hills, rocks, statues and metaphysical elements, be they benevolent or malevolent, such as divination, ominous signs and witchcraft. Sociology investigates social order and the changes occurring within society, as a dynamic entity. Àdùfẹ́ (2002: 2) notes that “sociology is a science which attempts an interpretative understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its cause and effects.” Regarding cause and effect, the Yorùbá believe that there is a cause for every incident. For instance, *'Kowéè'* a spiritual bird, cannot fly into a human residential area without an occurrence, be it positive or negative. It is an ominous sign that has a cause and effect.

Sociology covers many areas of life such as social stratification, social change, social psychology, population, revolution and also both physical and metaphysical elements such as death, divination, dreams, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, witchcraft etc. In other words, sociology covers a wide area of life and connects with other disciplines, such as economics, geography, history, literature, and politics, hence the existence of disciplines such as the sociology of education, sociology of geography, sociology of history, and sociology of literature. It is in consequence of all this that this society-based theory is considered relevant to this study, especially in the analysis of metaphysical elements in the Yorùbá written literature.

(ii) Society

Society is said to be a system or organization whereby a set of people live together in communities. Ajuzie (2011: 44) defines ‘society’ as “an organized system of human organization with distinctive cultural patterns and institutions.” This presents society

as a place where human beings reside to display and exhibit their cultural norms and traditions with the aim of doing things in groups. The agglomeration of people in villages and towns led to the emergence of families and tribes that constitute the larger society, hence the evolution of sociology as a discipline. For instance, Ibn Khaldun's (1332-1402) contribution first recognized the society rather than the individual. He saw man as a social animal that needs the co-operation of others for different meaningful endeavours. He therefore emphasized social cohesion for the continued existence of society.

In this study, the society under focus is the Yorùbá society that has been studied and discovered to be consisting of people and various phenomena (living and non-living), including metaphysical elements. The metaphysical phenomena have also been observed and studied to the extent of being reflected in some of the Yorùbá literary texts. This was done for deep understanding of the environment or society and realization of reality about the existing phenomena. However, it is society that incorporates every creature, together with changes in the scope of the society in question. Therefore, for a society to exist, it must recognize people as well as metaphysical elements for the purposes for which they exist, in addition to the changes they bring about.

(iii) Literature

Literature as a discipline has been defined by various scholars and writers to the extent of providing its originative source. Literature is known to be concerned with the norms, culture, traditions, etc, of a particular tribe or race. Babalola (1991: 150) describes literature thus:

Although the word 'literature' is derived from both the Latin word '*litteratura*' ('writing composed of letters; that which is written') and the Latin word '*Litera*' ('a letter of the alphabet'), non-literate or pre-literate communities do have oral literature consisting of tales and poems fashioned entirely without any resort to pen and paper.

This means that every culture has its literature either in the oral or written form. Welleck and Warren (1949: 94) define literature as "a social institution, using as its medium language, a social creation." Although language is used by literature to

explain the society, it is the literary artists that utilize the norms, conventions and several other traditional literary devices inherent in language to express and present the society that owns the literature. Therefore, literature serves as an embodiment of societal properties.

A study of human beings or the tribes living together within particular vicinity with their culture cannot be complete without the recognition of their literature. This shows how valuable literature is in considering the status of any society. The study of a particular tribe's literature enhances the appreciation of the aesthetics inherent in the literature of the tribe in question. Eagleton (1996: 3) observes that "literature has no didactic function, it only exhibits those aesthetic ornaments." Eagleton's assertion here is unacceptable, particularly within the African/Yorùbá cosmos. Yorùbá literature is appreciated not only for its aesthetic value but also for its message, especially in the light of the physical and metaphysical elements incorporated in it. Like other world literatures, Yorùbá literature exists in both the oral and written forms. According to Ìbítólá (2009: 1), the term literature is "a subject that mirrors people, their customs and traditions for others to see and learn from." The idea about the culture of a community is identified, studied and understood in line with the people and other phenomena existing therein. To be sure, many Yorùbá literary works capture the Yorùbá essence, such as *Ojú Rí* by Òní (2001) and *Ògbójú Ọḍe Ninú Igbó Irúnmalẹ* by Fágúnwà (2005), which are prose narratives. Others include *Àkójopò Ewì Abáláyé* by Ọlábímtán (2005) and *ÀwonOjú Odù Mèrẹ̀rindínlógún* by Abímbólá (2008), which are poetry, while *Àrẹ̀-Àgò Arikúyeri* by Ògúnníran (2007) and *Iná Ràn* by Ọlátéjú (2009) are drama.

Written literature is regarded as discourse that is presented by various writers and is read at both near and far places. This means that there is a relationship between literary writers and their readers (Babalólá, 1991: 150-151). Literature serves as a means of providing necessary information for society, as it comments about society in such a way that the existing phenomena within society are highlighted and understood. *Iná Ràn*(Ọlátéjú,(2009) shows how incantation can be used for revolutionary purposes, for example, as a means of freeing oneself from bondage or for neutralizing the power of government officials. Literature also performs entertainment functions, as people often read literary texts and watch dramatic

performances for pleasure. The linguistic armoury of readers is also strengthened by literature as their vocabulary grows.

(iv) Sociology and Literature

The Encyclopedia Britannica defines sociology as

The human behavioural science that investigates the nature, causes, and effects of social relations among individuals and between individuals and groups. It also studies customs, structures, and institutions, as well as the effects on participation in groups and organizations (928).

It could be inferred from the above definition that sociology focuses on society, how a society emerges, the way societies are structured, the effects of some societal phenomena on both the people and the society itself and all that make up societies. Worthy of critical study is any society where people cohabit with phenomena such as death, divination, dreams, incantation, inner-head, strange signs and witchcraft. As such, the need to study the cultural norms, values, and traditions of the Yorùbá cannot be regarded as unrelated to literature since the latter focuses on issues that concern people and society.

Understanding the relationship between sociology and literature deepens one's aesthetic response to a work of art. Therefore, the need to understand the social milieu and the extent to which the artist reacts to the work of art cannot be underestimated when dealing with sociology and literature. This opinion is premised on the point that literature cannot stand without connecting to the society in which it develops on the one hand and the people through which it develops, on the other hand. This is because literary artists, especially Yorùbá literary writers such as Abímbólá, Fágúnwà, and Ògúnníran succeeded as literary artists because their works reflect the events of the society of their day. The link between sociology and literature rests on the fact that the various occurrences of society are the target of both literary writers and sociologists. As long as literature maintains its link with the society, all the various phenomena existing in society, especially the various metaphysical elements, will continue to be explored and exploited in literary texts.

Sociology presents how literary imagination and sociological imagination coalesce. The genre of prose, for example, is an exhibition of art that is life-communicating. Novels that contain metaphysical elements are seen as not only conveying life but also revealing something about life and the pattern of life. For example, Òní (2001), in *Ojú Rí*, presents how dreams are explored to predict future occurrences for Ògúngbè mí in the novel. Ògúngbè mí's refusal to heed his wife's (Rúùtù's) advice not to go to work and his turning down of the spiritual message received by him (Ògúngbè mí) in the dream result in his having his arm cut off by the printing machine. This shows the physical and social life of the major character (Ògúngbè mí). His pattern of life changes as he has failed to be positively affected by the existing metaphysical element in his environment or society.

A similar situation occurs with sociology and drama. For instance, Ọlátéjú (2009) employs incantation to achieve revolutionary goals in *Iná Ràn*. He uses incantations to narrate historical events within the ancient Ìbàdàn metropolis, showing how the people utilize incantations to subdue oppression, misgovernance and tyranny of the local government authorities. Poetry also reflects society (sociology). Poetry has several forms or sub-genres such as *Ìjálá* (hunters' chant), *Ìrèmòjé* (hunters' funeral dirge/chant), *Ifá* corpus, and praise poetry. Metaphysical elements such as death, divination, dreams, incantation, inner-head, ominous signs and witchcraft thus reflect in many poetic works. For instance, Àlàbá's (1993) *Onírúúrú Àròfò*, Adébòwálé's (2003) *Ìgbàlonígbàákà* and Abímólá's (2008) *Àwọn Ojú OdùMéréèèrìndínlógún*, all deploying metaphysical elements to portray the Yorùbá society, identifying and utilizing metaphysical phenomena within their Yorùbá society to achieve societal goals or objectives.

3.4 Basic Principles of the Sociology of Literature

The sociology of literature does not only recognize and consider literature as just a mere socio-cultural norm and value; it also studies and presents the writer's work as a source of information to the reader and the whole society. For instance, Ìşòlá's (2003) *Èfúnşetán Aníwùrà* provides information about the Yorùbá socioeconomic system, as the text portrays the traditional system of buying and selling of slaves. It also depicts

the tyrannical rule of Ẹfúnṣetán. The text thus gives a picture of the system of government in olden times among the Yorùbá.

The sociology of literature also examines the society from which a literary work emanated. For instance, the Yorùbá use the divinatory practice of Ifá to express their yearnings and aspirations. Secrets about the intents of the clients of the Ifá priest are also revealed. Indeed, Ifá is believed to be the custodian of all knowledge and is expected to be consulted, especially when one is at a crossroad in life.

Olábímtán, in his novel, *Kékeré Ẹkùn* (2005), shows how Àdùfẹ́ (second wife to Bádéjọ) and her friend consulted Ifá for the solution on how to have a baby:

Iná kú f'eerú bojú,
Ògèdè kú fọmọ rẹ rópò
Ló dífá fún Ẹlémọ̀rò.
Nígba tí ó n lálàsí ọmọ.
Ifá l'ẹlémọ̀rò, kíló n pa ó lẹkún?
Ẹlémọ̀rò, kíló n tẹrí rẹ kodò kiri?
Şebí bíná kú eerú ní í fí í bojú.
B'ògèdè kú ọmọ rẹ ní í fí i rópò... (80).

When fire dies it replaces itself with ashes.
A rotten banana is replaced with its sucker.
Ifá divination was made for Ẹlémọ̀rò.
When seriously in need of child.
Ifá asked Ẹlémọ̀rò, what is making you to cry?
Ẹlémọ̀rò, why are you continually thinking?
When fire dies it is replaced with ashes.
A rotten banana is replaced with its sucker....

It could be inferred from the above Ifá verses that Ifá provides solutions to people's problems.

The sociology of literature also accounts for metaphysical elements in society. For the Yorùbá witchcraft exists and its effects can either be benevolent or malevolent. The theory equally accounts for the changes an artistic or literary work can bring about on people and other phenomena in the society. Witchcraft is generally believed to be a powerful spiritual force employed by both males (wizards) and females (witches) to either cause benevolent or malevolent acts on any member of society or society itself. Agboólá (1989) views witchcraft among the Yorùbá as an inflictive element which

may, however, be appeased to avert impending danger. Its malevolence causes negative changes to people and society, although sacrifice, as a means of appeasing its possessors, positively changes the people and the entire society.

In assessing their artistic works, the literary writers are also being studied so as to determine their ideologies and the overall messages they are passing across. Òní (2001) examines dreams as a metaphysical element in *Ojú Rí* to predict an unbearable occurrence or misfortune for Ògúngbèní, the major character. The use of this metaphysical element re-affirms the authenticity and reality of dreams in the Yorùbá cosmos, especially when Ògúngbèní thereafter loses an arm to the printing machine.

3.5 Validating the theory of Sociology of Literature

The act of validating a theoretical framework enhances one to establish a reliability coefficient about such approach. Giddens (2003: 11) notes that “we can only develop valid theoretical approaches if we are able to test them out by means of factual research.” The validity of a theory used for a particular study will enable the researcher to effectively execute their research. The validity of this theory is in how relevant and dependable it is in analyzing the identified metaphysical elements in the selected texts. The excerpt below, from Adéyemí's *Kò Sáyè Láàfin* (2008), is used to test the validity of the sociology of literature as a theory:

Ó dáa, màá fún yín ní ilòpo owó tí wòn san fún yín.
Àlùwó gbé ibon rẹ, ó kẹ ẹ sùgbón kí ó tó fa ikéwọ rẹ,
Gbadé kiwọ sápo sòkòtò rẹ, ó gbé owó tùlù tuulu kan
jáde, ó jù ú síwájú Àlùwó. Bí Àlùwó ti bèrẹ mólẹ láti gbé
wó náà ni Gbadé ti bèrẹ sí pofọ wúyẹwúyẹ, ó n wí pé
Kánún ní selénini ilasa, èyin ọdaran wọnyí, ó yá ẹ máa
selénini ara yín.
Ìsekíse ni tomi íkan
Ìlòkulò ni tomi ọjò.
Ìlòwòsí làá lo omi ẹro.
Afajáṣoḍe eja n se aṣedànù... (15).

Okay, I will double the payment for you. Àlùwó attempted to trigger the gun but Gbadé brought out a bundle of money and threw it to Àlùwó. Gbadé started an incantation when Àlùwó attempted to take the money thus “potash is the enemy of okro, melon remains the enemy of okro leaves. You these criminals, be enemy of one another.

Fermented maize water is misused.
Rainwater is misused.
Tap water tends to be misused.
He who hunts fish with dog wastes his effort.

Gbadé deploys incantation and medicine to suppress the hired killers sent to kill him. The hired killers quarrel with one another till their intents are disrupted by the arrival of policemen who rescue Gbadé from them. Taking the existing societal phenomena into consideration, the theory of sociology of literature proves the relationship between man and metaphysical elements and the effects such metaphysical elements have on human beings.

The Yorùbá people have a strong belief in the existence of 'ori' (inner-head), hence their worship or appeasement of it as a deity. This is shown in Ògúnníran's (2007) *Ààrẹ-Àgò Aríkúyẹrí*. Ààrẹ-Àgò worships, appeases and prays with reference to Ifá corpus thus:

Kẹ-kẹ-kẹ ni wọn n kan Kósó,
Gùdùgùdù ni wọn n lu Àrán òòsà;
Bí Babaláwo méji bá rí'ra wọn
Wọn a ẹ'rùkẹrẹ wọn yẹturu, yẹturu.
A dí'fá fún Orí,
Tí n t'Ìsàlú ọrun bọ wá'lé Ayé.
Wọn ní kí Orí ẹ̀tùtù,
Kó ba à lẹ d'ẹni àpésin.
Orí rúbọ, ó di ni àpésin (9).

Gently, they beat the Kósó drum,
Impatiently, they beat the Àrán òòsà drum;
When two Ifá priests see each other
They greet with their staff of office.
Divination was made for inner-head.
That's arriving from heaven to earth.
Inner-head was advised to make sacrifice,
To become a worshipped entity.
Inner-head made the sacrifice and became
a worshipped entity.

This reflects divination as a means through which the inner-head as deity is praised and worshipped for the determination of individual destiny, prediction of the future and prescription of a way out for the possibility of impending success.

Ultimate reality is a major basis of metaphysics. This occurs in relation to dreams through which future revelation can come into existence. Owólabí's *Ìsújú Ọsanyìn* (1983) shows how Şègilọlá's dream comes to reality when she sees Adéjọbí as a visitor after waking up. Şègilọlá engages in a dialogue with her house-maid called Sùnnbò, by asking her of the visitor that has asked for her (Şègilọlá). The maid replies that nobody has come to ask for Şègilọlá while she was sleeping. Şègilọlá wanted to know whether her dream had come to reality or not. Sùnnbò comes in and says: "*È jòwó mà, àlejò n bẹ̀rẹ̀ yín. Áwọ̀n bàbá Ọ̀ke M̀aso ni*" (Owólabí, 1983: 15) (Please ma, a visitor is asking for you. It is an elderly man from Ọ̀ke M̀aso). Dream, in that context and as a metaphysical resource, has been deployed by the author to reveal a future occurrence.

The sociology of literature also helps to prove how the deployed metaphysical elements are believable facts and reality by all through the advantages derivable from them. A typical advantage derivable from the use of sociology of literature is the submission of a literary or artistic work to scientific interrogation. Empirical evidence is highly considered, recognized and focused in scientific subjects to prove the result of a test. In considering and handling metaphysical issues, especially in Yorùbá literary texts, reality is the major focus.

Ọ̀gúnsínà (1987: 16) refers to the establishment of sociology of literature as a means to achieve a goal, that is, "to submit literature and art to the same research methods as those employed in the physical and natural sciences." It is evident in the above excerpt that reality or evidence does not only appear in scientific disciplines; it is also applicable in literary works that incorporate and treat metaphysical phenomena. For instance, Fágúnwà (2005) in *Ọ̀gbójú Ọ̀dẹ̀ Nínú Igbó Irínmalẹ̀* proves how the spirit of the dead comes into physical life. This is shown when the dead mother of Àkàrà-ògùn comes and rescues her son from captivity. The dead woman prays for Àkàrà-ògùn, gives him bean cakes and rescues him from the captivity of demons. It is also through the spiritual white stone given to Àkàrà-ògùn by his dead mother that he is able to find his way. The use of death as a metaphysical element in the text is an empirical evidence of death in Yorùbá society and the validity of the presence of the act of communication between the living and the dead.

Regarding societal change, the sociology of literature is a useful exploratory prism. Changes may occur in a society through some elements. For instance, the Yorùbá strongly believe in inner-head (*orí-iní*) otherwise known as destiny, which may also be identified as good or bad. It is also evident among the Yorùbá that a bad destiny can be changed to a good one through the influence of divination, especially the Ifá divination. That is why the Yorùbá refer to the deity as '*Èlérìí ipín*' (witness to the destiny). The changes that occur to bad destiny to render it good may be through sacrifice, rituals and so on. Moreover, the Yorùbá believe in societal continuity, progress and change. This is evident in the proverb '*bí òní ẹ̀ se rí òla le má rí bẹ̀ẹ̀, ní mú Babaláwo d'Ífá ojojúmó*' (the way today is, tomorrow may not be like that; this makes an Ifá priest to consult his oracle every day). Divination is therefore recognized as a major means of determining the stand or status, changes occurring to the society, as well as life's various challenges and the solutions to them.

Abímbólá (1977, 2008), Agboólá (1989) and a host of other Yorùbá literary writers present divination as an element that brings good or desirable changes to Yorùbá society. This is evident through the sacrifices, rituals and even the medicines that are used in divination. The import of the theory is that since the metaphysical elements are not strange to the human experience in the Yorùbá cosmos, their appearance in literature is therefore easily understood and appreciated. Besides, they are a veritable proof of their existence and reality in real life.

3.6 Semiotics as a field of study.

The most notable and highly recognized initiators of semiotics as a field of study are Charles Sanders Pierce and Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure was known to have associated with a subset of semiotics called semiology after posthumous work in 1915. The propounders of semiotics are of high relevance to the study of metaphysical elements, most especially in Yorùbá written literature. Therefore, advocates of semiotics like Guirand, Abrams, Eco, Pierce, etc treat semiotics and semiology as the same disciplines, but semiology has been referred to as a sub-field of semiotics.

Semiotics is defined as the science of signs. It is regarded as anything that can be taken as a 'sign' (Eco: 1976:7). It also has a specific focus on the signification and

dynamism of the process of meaning and establishment of sense in relation to a particular meaning.

The idea or study of sign is very relevant to Philosophy in which metaphysics remains one of its major branches. Some of the advocates of semiotics are Hippocrates and Stoics, Plato and Aristotle, Saint Augustine and Descartes, Leibniz and Locke, Hegel and Humboldt, etc. Semiology is part of the studies that the study of sign (semiotics) has engendered. It was Ferdinand de Saussure (Swiss Linguist) that referred to the science as ‘Semiology’ while Charles Sanders Pierce referred to it as ‘Semiotics’. The Saussure’s perspective concerning the treatment of Semiology is philosophical and linguistic while that of Pierce is philosophical and logic.

It is obvious that not only human beings communicate among themselves, rather, animals have also been studied to be involving in communicative behaviours. Therefore, the field or scope of semiotics is extensive beyond human range. Ogundeji (1988: 10) presents that:

The communicative behavior of animal (zoo semiotics) to the analysis of human bodily communication (Kinesics and proxemics) olfactory signs (the “code of scents”) aesthetic theory and rhetorics.

(Hawkes: 1977: 124)

It could be inferred from the above and also in relation to the cultural study of animals within the Yorùbá cosmology that some strange signs are exhibited by animals. For instance, ‘kowèé’ (a spiritual bird) in Yorùbá vicinity may perch and chirp on the house occupied by humans without palliation. If this occurs, it connotes a sign of future bad occurrence within such environment.

The issues of ‘signification’ out of which ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ are traceable cannot be ruled out at this juncture and in this theoretical framework (semiotics).

Signification (‘signified’ and ‘signifier’): This is also known as “codification” (Guirand, 1971) as it features in (Ògúndèjì, 1988:24). It is also referred to as the process of forming sign or otherwise sign formation. The ‘signification’ in question is the act that binds both the signifier and signified. The product of this act (signification) is referred to as the ‘sign’.

Both of the terms ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’ are coined out as terminologies by Ferdinand de Saussure. Other scholars have given other names like “signan” and “sign vehicle” for signifier, while they refer to signified as “signation”, “signification”, and “sign function”. Another means of understanding the process of sign formation is to see it as “a triadic relation which can further be categorized into three dyadic relations.

Signifier is referred to as the immediate perceptible aspect of the sign standing for or referring to the signified which may not be immediate. In this, however, the main problem is in what constitutes the signified and not in what constitutes the signifier. Some people see or perceive it (signified) as the object to which the signifier refers, while others see it as the idea or concept itself. There is the possibility that a signifier can be making reference to an object, so also, it is true that not all things that can be signified are objects (Eco1979: 66-68).

One needs to state that there is dialectic relationship between the ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’. Code is regarded as the correlation between the ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’. Code also remains what the society agreed upon before a concerted or unanimous decision or common saying can be in existence. Therefore, code can be regarded as a societal property. Signification can be said to be a conventional process. Hence, the laws of signification are regarded as the laws of culture so far it is culture that binds up the entire society.

Pierce refers to semiotics as an abstract entity that lays emphasis of signs as something that represents or stands for other thing(s) or somebody. The interpretant, that is, the person that uses a sign, is also the person that brings interpretation of a sign into limelight or recognition. For instance, being pursued by a cow in the dream is a symbolic sign that connotes or can be interpreted as a nightmare and also an indication of a witchcraft encounter, especially among the Yorùbá. Ògúndèjì (1988:8) also points to some scholars for referring to semiotics and semiology as the same disciplines, but one needs to reiterate that semiology is a branch or subset of semiotics.

The meaning of an object; sign or symbol, is determined by the contextual usage of such object, sign or symbol. In Yorùbá worldview however, the casting of Ifà on the

third day of a baby's delivery stands as a sign for the metaphysical quest for the future inherence of the newborn baby in question. Hence, it has further become a cultural tradition among the Yorùbá to further uncover the dos and don'ts of daily living or life encounters. Semiotics is therefore considered to combine anthropology and sociology. For this reason, however, semiotics is employed in this study to complement our adopted model: sociology of literature.

Elements of Semiotics

The need to understand the various elements of semiotics as a theoretical framework cannot be underestimated in this study. This is so in that they serve as modes of signification in Semiotics. There are three types of signs, viz; (i) symbol (ii) icon, and (iii) index. Therefore, the three semiotic signs are symbolic sign, iconic sign, and indexical sign.

Symbolic sign (symbol): This indicates a sign in which the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, unmotivated and ordinarily conventional (Ògúndèjì: 1988). This implies that the signified has nothing in common with the object it represents, e.g. god/goddess, human beings, progenitors, etc, and there is no direct resemblance between them. Òkékáńdè (2017:22) describes symbol as a “sign which is determined by its dynamic object only in the sense that it will be interpreted”. For instance, Ikin Ifá (Ifá sacred palm nuts), that was known to be handed over by Òrúnmílà for making divination, is also recognized as an object that symbolizes Òrúnmílà. The Ifá paraphernalia are also items of metaphysical revelation of the intents of Ifá. This is so in that they are materials used by the Ifá priest to discover the exact meaning, interpretations, causes, and solutions to the requests or intents of the client on visitation to the Babaláwo (Ifá priest).

Iconic sign (Icon): This is a sign that is similar to what such a sign signifies. For instance, the portrait or emblem of ‘Orí’ (inner-head) which may be in form of head-shape and made by cowries in Yorùbá worldview stands as an iconic sign or representation of the god of destiny (Èlèbùibò, 2004). The images of late Mòremí, a powerful woman, at the palace of Òni of Ifè, Òşun State, that of the Şàngó at Race-Course, Lagos State, with a staff (Osé) of office at hand, Èyò statue along Lagos-

Ìbàdàn express way, etc represent the icons of the deads, powerful and historic personalities among the past Yorùbá when they were alive.

Indexical sign (Index): This indicates how the sign is in some ways directly connected to its object. For instance, in the Yorùbá setting, the echo or palliation of a spiritual bird known as ‘Kowéè’ is an indexical sign of an imminent positive or negative occurrence. To this end, the sounds, voices or actions of some metaphysical elements or objects are studied and interpreted for the purpose of attaining deep understanding of the people, phenomena (metaphysical elements) and the entire society.

In sum, semiotics is a methodology for the analysis of ‘texts’ in so far as a text serves as a preserved message existing between the sender (author) and the receiver (reader). Semiotics, as a pertinent approach that also doubled as a complementary theoretical framework to the use of sociology of literature in this study, has been used by scholars and professional researchers as a method to interpret the meanings attached to signs and symbols.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented the sociology of literature as one of the theoretical frameworks for this study. The theory is adopted because it is a social theory. In establishing the principles of the theory, the interconnectivity between sociology, literature and the selected phenomena were also discussed. Semiotic theory was also presented to explicate its relevance to the investigation of metaphysical elements in this study. The chapter also highlighted the historical development of each of the relevant theories together with the contributions of some prominent sociologists and semioticians to justify the appropriateness of the theories.

Notes

1. A kind of spiritual bird
2. Religious stage, irrespective of the type or denomination
3. The stage of understanding and providing the explanation of the realities in spiritual occurrences.
4. The stage of explaining the social phenomena with the use of scientific principles like observation, experimentation and verification.
5. This concerns with or concentrates on large-scale phenomena or entire civilization or society.
6. It is the concentration on the study of individuals or small groups.

CHAPTER FOUR

METAPHYSICAL ELEMENTS AND THE YORÙBÁ WORLDVIEW

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, a detailed discussion of the Yorùbá worldview or belief system on the selected metaphysical phenomena is undertaken. Also, the nature, characteristics as well as the modes of interpretation and categories of the identified Yorùbá

metaphysical elements will be discussed in details. The purpose is to reveal their literary and cultural significance and other purposes for which they are used in Yorùbá written literature. The metaphysical elements will be discussed as follows: death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs and witchcraft.

4.1 The Metaphysical Elements

For this study, the selected seven metaphysical elements are death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, and witchcraft. They are here discussed in relation to the Yorùbá worldview.

4.1.1 Ikú (Death)

Death is a universal phenomenon which all humans and living organisms shall eventually experience. Unah (1998: 277) defines 'death' as "the ending of that which lives." In other words, death is inevitable and will be the end of all beings.

According to an Ifá verse; *Ọ̀yẹ̀kú-méjì*, Death, as a metaphysical element did not initially emerge as a wicked element but believed to have come into existence due to an incidental reason. It was the death's mother that was unjustly and impatiently killed at 'Èjìgbòmekùn' market that prompted death to start killing individuals irrespective of one's status, age, sex, etc (see Abím̀bòlá, 1968: 37). So, death, despite being regarded as a wicked phenomenon, was also believed by the Yorùbá, since years immemorial, to be carrying out Godly assignment of killing till today. This is because death has been regarded as a universal phenomenon and a means through which individual life will be terminated. Therefore, its origination could be traced to his revenge of his mother's untimely death which later turned out to be his usual duty: termination of one's life. Several traditional religious denominations are acknowledged by the Yorùbá with a sole religious emphasis on both partial reincarnation and life continuing in the hereafter as it is in this life here. Awólàlú (1981:54) even reinstates that "people view death not as an extinction but as a change from life to another". This view is held by the Yorùbá as nothing than primarily regarding death as a transitional stage and position from one world to another with a belief in the sameness of existence. This is reflected in a Yorùbá saying that 'ikú kó lòpin ẹ̀dá' (death remains not the end of human life).

Among the Yorùbá, death may be regarded as good or bad, depending on the circumstances surrounding its occurrence. Dáramólá and Jéjé (1975), Adéwọyin (2005) and Oḍétókun (2008) comment on the different types of death, such as natural death, suicide and death that occurs via thunder. Natural death is deemed good death, as it normally happens to those who lived to a ripe old age. The young may also experience natural death via illness. When an elderly person dies, whether on the farm or in the village, their corpse is brought home with certain rituals in which 'adiẹ ìràṅà' (a fowl held and whose feathers are removed in front of the corpse for cleansing when bringing the remains home) is used. The 'adiẹ ìràṅà' ritual is simultaneously performed to give a clear passage to the world beyond for the dead and for the spiritual welfare of the living. Today, however, modernity and the influence of foreign religions have made people to abandon the 'adiẹ ìràṅà' ritual. While the Yoruba will attribute the death of old people to a natural cause, the death of children and young adults are attributed to unnatural causes. Accident, illness, suicide, sorcery, magic, and witchcraft have been identified as causes of unnatural death.

Death by suicide also happens when people take their own lives for reasons ranging from mental to social and economic misfortune. Such deaths tend to come by hanging, ingesting poisonous substances, and drowning in a well or river¹. This type of death is deemed to be bad among the Yorùbá and the corpse of the departed is usually handled by devotees of the Orò² cult, especially in the case of victims that hanged or drowned. It is in fact expected that a drowned victim must be buried at the riverside or bank after performance of the necessary rituals or sacrifice to appease the river goddess. Death may also come via a thunder strike. This kind of death is believed to occur for a reason, as victims of thunder and lightning are mostly believed to have offended Şàngó (the god of thunder). Therefore, the victim is usually buried by Şàngó devotees (Dáramólá & Jéjé, 1975: 148-149). Death, regarded as a bad one, also brings pain, sorrow, and unwanted crying to people within the society. Such death may be a premature one or of those whose life are exterminated by gods like 'Ayélála' (a kind of river god), Şàngó (the god of thunder), or Şànpònná (the god of smallpox). The relevant gods/goddesses are believed not to unnecessarily exterminate one's life unless such victim has committed an offence or the other. Therefore, they are not commonly blamed for their actions. Hence, a Yorùbá saying testifies to this

that 'Şàngó kì í jà kó má mọ ààlà' (Şàngó will never strike unjustly). It could be inferred that life in the body is ephemeral, whereas death is a transitory process of life to a renewed life. The Yorùbá cultural belief considers death as separation of the soul from the body. The Yorùbá believe that death is only a transition. It is only a means of passing from the world of men to the world of the spirits.

Yorùbá also accord much dignity to a good death among them. A person that lives a respectable old age or life is usually given a befitting burial and clothing. Therefore, a rich, wealthy or well-mannered and someone that bears children in his lifetime is rated, treated and given a befitting burial. No wonder why Yorùbá are of the song that:

Òkú olówó oşù męta,
Òkú ọlọrọ oşù męfà,
Òkú ọlómọ àşenşetúnşe.

The burial of a rich lasts three months,
The burial of a wealthy lasts six months,
The burial of the blessed with children remains everlasting.

The above song manifests the Yorùbá belief of how they rate and value human status and children within their society.

Among the Yorùbá, once a person is certified dead, the next thing to do is to make necessary arrangements to bury the body. The type of arrangements to be made, however, depends on the age of the deceased. If an elderly person dies, the burial will be elaborate, sometimes taking three days to a week. Usually, a befitting coffin is provided and considerable expenditure is made on clothes and merriment. However, the burial of a young person is usually a very solemn affair, as it is regarded as 'òkú ọfọ' (unhappy or mournful death). The fear of death and the belief in life after death are universal phenomenon.

Death, in its characteristic features is also known to possess the senses of seeing, hearing, and feeling, just like living human beings. The nursing of this belief by the Yorùbá brings into existence their saying that 'gbogbo ohun tí à n şe lókú ọrun n rí' (death sees all what we are doing). Death, in Yorùbá worldview, is given human attributes such as being dark in complexion, short, wicked, unfriendly to human beings, etc. Hence, a popular Yorùbá Àpàlà musician in person of late Àyínlá

Ọmọwúrà presents a song titled Àyínlá Ọmọwúrà Àlùjọ mix 2 to paint death in different human colourations or attributes thus:

Orin: Ikú, Ọpònú, Olódi, abara-dúdú-họhọ.
Kò ní'hun rò ju kó máa jù wón lóḡḡ kiri.
Gbogbo ojú pón koko,
Gbogbo ara rẹ ló n d'ẹrù bà'yàn.

Song: Death, a stupid and dark in complexion element.
His only business is clubbing people around.
All his eyes are deeply red.
He is highly intimidating in appearance.

Death's various attributes are manifested in the above excerpt to the extent of being regarded as the most wicked phenomenon that has no other enterprise than exercising its usual killing. Some people also invoke the spirit of dead for divination or spiritual findings. Generally speaking, Yorùbá believe that human beings do not permanently die like that but die to transform in another realm. Hence, they come out with befitting statements such as 'sùn' (sleep), 'ròrun àrẹmọbò' (go to heaven without coming back), 'rẹwàlẹ àṣà' (go into deep ground), etc.

It is a universal belief among the Yorùbá that death is a phenomenon that binds every living organism. It terminates one's life irrespective of age, sex, status or position. Death is regarded as the omnipresent possibility that binds and stabilizes human existence (Azenabor in Unah, 1998: 278). Yorùbá also testify that 'gbogbo wa la dágbadá ikú' (everyone is born to die).

The Yorùbá believe the spirit of the dead sometimes wanders around human precincts, even appearing in dreams or as apparitions. At death, a person ceases to breathe and becomes incapable of any movement. The living are wont to signal knowledge of a person's death with expressions such as 'erin wó' (an elephant has fallen), 'àjànàkú sùn bí òkè' (the elephant sleeps like a hill), 'awó lẹ' (an initiate has departed), 'bàbá re'lé' (father has gone home) etc. In Yorùbá cosmology the spirit of the dead may wander around the earth if the person died young. The Yorùbá believe that anyone who dies young will not go to heaven directly and their spirit will be forced to roam the earth for as long as necessary. The spirit may also reincarnate, hence the belief in the existence of 'àkúdàáyà'(a living dead) in the Yorùbá worldview. Moreover, the spirit of a dead person may also appear to family members or friends in dreams. It is

therefore not uncommon for people to dream of seeing a dead grandparent or parent instructing them on an enterprise. Interestingly, the spirit of the dead is believed to be capable of appearing and disappearing. It may appear to people in order to reveal secrets to them, to intimidate them or to show them the way out of particular challenge(s), and so on. Some people also invoke the spirit of the dead through divination for information or revelation of secrets relating to their death.

Although there are many expressions among the Yorùbá to indicate the act of dying, such as 'kú' (die), 'sùn' (sleep), 'ròrun àrèmòbò' (go to heaven without coming back), 'rèwàlẹ̀-àṣà' (go into deep ground) etc., the Yorùbá believe that existence does not terminate at death, as the dead merely transits to another plane of (spiritual) existence. The Yorùbá also have many sayings and proverbs such as 'ó dàrinnàkò' (till we meet on the way), 'ó do'jú àlá' (till we meet in dream), 'báa kú làá dèrè, èyàn ò sun-òn làyè' (it is when we die that we become an idol), 'ẹ̀sẹ̀ mẹ́fà lòpin ẹ̀dà' (six feet is the end of human) etc., which apparently signal the finality of death.

For the Yorùbá, untimely death can be averted or suspended till God's time (Agboólá, 1989: 68-69). The termination is focused as a means of providing medicinal and spiritual security for one to escape the untimely death. If a person is spiritually troubled in the dream, such a person may be relieved of such uncomfortable unrest via Ifá divination that will definitely proffer a means of averting such trauma.

For every occurrence there must be a cause. For this, Yorùbá hold the belief that death does not unnecessarily exterminate human life without a particular reason or cause. Hence, Yorùbá tend to say 'ikú kì í dáàyàn pa' (death doesn't kill without a reason or cause). Therefore, Yorùbá believe that too much of the love of money can lead to untimely death of someone. Though, Yorùbá are of the common saying that 'owó ni gbòngbò ẹ̀sẹ̀' (money is the root of sin) or 'owó ni kẹ̀kẹ̀ ihìnre' (money gives rise for effective evangelism), but they believe that women are usually found to be too greedy of money which can eventually lead to untimely death. To showcase how women at times remain the killers is pointed out in Yorùbá saying that 'ikú lobinrin' (women are death). Abímbólá (1968:38) also testifies to how women are dubious, trickish, and unreliable elements and eventually take bribes at the expense of life termination thus:

Obinrin lẹ̀ké,

Obìnrin lẹ̀dàlẹ̀.
 Kéèyàn mọ́ finú hàn f'Óbìnrin.
 A díá fún Olójòngbòdú,
 Obìnrin Ikú.
 Wọ̀n pẹ́ é lóòórọ̀ kùtùkùtù,
 Wọ̀n ní kín ni ikú ọ̀kọ̀ rẹ̀ ò gbọ̀dọ̀ jẹ́,
 Tó fí n pọ̀mọ̀ ọ̀lọ̀mọ̀ kiri?
 Ó ní kín ni wọ̀n ó fún òun?
 Ó ní òun ó gba igba ọ̀kẹ́ lẹ́wọ́ wọ̀n.

Women are pretentious,
 Women are betrayers,
 One should keep secrets for women.
 Ifá is divined for Olójòngbòdú,
 Death's wife.
 They called her early in the morning.
 They asked her of what death must not eat,
 That makes death to kill everyone.
 She asked 'what would she be given as bribe'?
 She then asked of two hundredthousands of money.

The above manifests women characters towards causing untimely death for fellow beings via greed and bribery. Aside these feminine characters, Yorùbá also believe that individual cannot die without causes like illness, accident, attack, carelessness, etc. This manifests in Yorùbá saying that 'ikú ò lè pa ni kó má dirẹ̀ mọ́ nńkan' (death does not kill without attaching to something) or 'ikú kì í dááyàn pa' (death does not kill alone).

Yorùbá's caring for the death cannot be overemphasized in this aspect. This is so in that taking care of the corpse which involves a tepid bathing with clean water and soap, wrapping with clean white garment, and mat afford the dead an acceptability and having a place with the ancestors. If the dead is denied of such caring, the spirit in question may be sent back to real life and be wandering about aimlessly and may tend to be called 'iwin' or 'isèkú' (Awólàlú, 1981: 55).

Yorùbá has a specific way of keeping themselves aware of the death of someone and this information dissemination is in line with the social status of such personality. Music singing, dancing, and feasting usually come up after the dead has been laid in state. The death of important personalities such as Ọ̀ba (king), chiefs, hunters, warriors, etc are commonly announced via the booming of guns, drumming of talking

drums, beating of town's gongs etc. This connotes the sign of respect of the deceased and means of disseminating information about such death to all and sundry.

Yorùbá hold a strong belief in the hereafter and in the power of ancestors. With this belief system the deceased is believed to be going on a journey into another realm or where he or she joins the ancestral father and mother. The people at the point of burying the dead or any special time, send messages to the ancestors which they believe will be passed and delivered by the dead to the appropriate spirit. In addition, death is also conjured for divinatory purpose so as to have an accurate finding. Yorùbá, in their conjure of the spirit of death for divinatory findings believe the spirit can see and reveal all hidden things to human beings.

Death, in its responsibility to humans, is not limited to running errands for the livings alone, rather, it exercises protective and disciplinary influences on their children. Protective measure is provided over the family concerning the maintenance of family affairs, traditions, customs, and several activities of the family. Family offences against the forefathers are believed to be policed by the spirit of death with an aim of inflicting punishment on the culprits. This is the reason why Yorùbá believe in their usual saying that 'òkú òrun ó dá a' (death will definitely judge it accordingly), especially when family affairs such as land disputes, properties' sharing, etc come into existence.

Death, apart from being regarded as a wicked and destructive element, is also termed to be the protector or keeper of human secrets. This reflects in a Yorùbá saying that 'ikú bàṣírí' (death covers up). A human being that fails to encounter prolonged illness before death ends his or her life can be said to have been saved from unnecessary pain and financial encounters by the victim's family.

Yorùbá hold a strong belief that there is no creature without its dos and don'ts. However, as death is destructive in its doings (killing) so it is that death has its don'ts as means of curbing death's malevolent endeavours. Ifá divination also reveals the don'ts of death such as not eating rat (eku), fish (eja), duck's egg (eyin pèpèye), and 'eléburé' (a kind of vegetable) (Abímbólá, 1968: 38). Yorùbá believe that the moment all those ingredients or materials can be used for sacrifice or appeasement, one will be saved from untimely death. This is the reason why Yorùbá are of the proverb that 'ikú

kì í jẹun ẹni kó pani' (death doesn't kill after eating one's meal). It is also within the Yorùbá belief systems that one is not expected to cover or wrap a dead person with red cloth. It is highly forbidden that red cloth should be used on the last day of burying a corpse. This belief is in accordance with what Ifá corpus states in Abím̀bòlá (1977: 48-50). Different don'ts are in existence in Ifá divination system to manifest what death hates to take and to desist from what can hamper the smooth running of spiritual message delivery by the metaphysical element (divination).

In conclusion, death is not handled with levity among the Yorùbá even as they regard it as spiritual and highly unavoidable. To be sure, death may be good or bad and untimely death may be avoided through traditional medicines, sacrifice, rituals and divinatory acts.

4.1.2 Yẹ̀nwò (Divination)

Divination is an act that is performed by human beings with or without the use of instrument(s) to determine the hidden issues, the causes of an event and the necessary solutions towards the foreseen event. Some acts of divination are carried out through the geometric system in some countries, particularly in Africa and also in other parts of the world such as Brazil, Cuba and America.

One cannot talk about divination without tracing it to the relevance of deities or divinities. It is however pertinent to state that each of the Yorùbá divinities like Ifá (god of wisdom and destiny), Şàngó (god of thunder), Òşun (river goddess), Òsanyìn (tutelary god of medicine), etc, is charged with particular responsibilities or the other. It is obvious among the Yorùbá that they perform some rites (spiritual findings) before laying their hands on different endeavours (Simpson, 1991: 73). They do this in order to rule out regression. Hence, they are of the saying that 'àbámò ká má şe é dára ju ká şe é kó d'aápon lẹ' (not to do it is better than doing it and be regretting). Ifá is believed to know all the hidden secrets of the entire world. This is the reason why Ifá is mostly and commonly approached for authentic spiritual enquiries. The emergence of Ifá divination was traceable to the refusal of Òrúnmilà to come back to earth, and instead gave sixteen palm-nuts as a representation for Ifá divination anytime every human being wishes to make spiritual findings on anything (Abím̀bòlá, 1977: 2-4, Olatúnjí, 1984: 100, and Agboólá, 2008: 9-12). Since then, Òrúnmilà has replaced himself with

sixteen sacred palm-nuts (ikin Ifá) and people have been using it for divination. Yorùbá, since then, have strong belief that Ifá is the way-out to doubting air. Hence, Ifá/Òrúnmilà is regarded as 'Òmòràn tí m'oyún inú ìgbín' (a profound diviner). Yorùbá also believe in periodic consultation of Ifá to discover the future or plans for foreseen contingencies. Hence, Yorùbá usually say 'b'óniṣe rí ọ̀la ò rí bẹ̀ẹ̀ ní í mú babaláwo dífá ọ̀rọ̀rún' (today cannot be like tomorrow and this prompts an Ifá priest to be casting Ifá every five days interval) (Awólálú, 1981: 121).

Among the Yorùbá of the south west Nigeria, there is variation in the types, instruments or tools and methods used for divination. Divination does not only hinge on Ifá divination but has its diversified forms such as palmistry, which is the type of divination conducted by reading and interpreting the lines and the structure of the palm. Geomancy is another form of divination in which objects such as sacred cowries are used for divination. Èṣrindínlógún (sixteen sacred cowries) is an example of this form and the Ifá Òpèlẹ̀ (Òpèlẹ̀ casting divination) also falls within this form of divination. Hydromancy and Botanomancy are also other forms of divination; the former describes divination with the use of water while the later involves plants. Nevertheless, the most important aspect of divination is the accuracy of client's intents and the provision or prescription of the appropriate solution to the client's problem. Ifá is known to have documented every fact of life and provided means of handling it. The various means or types of divination systems present in Yorùbá setting provide them with different means of their handling spiritual encounters or challenges. This reminds us of the Yorùbá saying that 'ònà kan kọ̀ ni à ñ gbà kádiẹ̀ abẹ̀ àkà' (domestic fowls are not packed and kept in the same way). The fact of a particular spiritual finding in different places remains that a same result must be revealed via all spiritual means carried out over such issue.

Various divination means are identified in the Yorùbá cosmos. However, Ifá divination is recognized as the most paramount. The following are the features of divination, according to Olatúnjí (1984), such as (i) diagnostic structure, (ii) narrative essence and continuity, (iii) its symbolism, and (iv) wordplay. Its diagnostic feature as a feature reveals the chronological and systematic arrangement of the verses in Ifá corpus. The arrangements are in line with the segment of each of the thoughts existing in Èṣẹ̀ Ifá (Ifá verses). This characteristic feature presents step-by-step sub-themes

existing in Ifá verses. The narrative essence and continuity as an identified feature in Ifá divination system manifests the embedded story present in Eṣe Ifá no matter how short or long such Ifá chapter or verse is (Ọlátúnjí, 1984: 133). The relevant story narrated by the Babaláwo (Ifá priest) to the client on ground paves way for more understanding of the Ifá priest by the client in question. This is one of the reasons why Yorùbá regard Babaláwo as 'Òpitàn iwásẹ̀' (ancient mythologist). Most of the historical facts are traceable to Ifá contents. Yorùbá hold a strong belief in the exactness or appropriateness of things, which serves as the main essence of making spiritual findings over an agitating issue. So far metaphysics through its element such as divination is all about the ultimate reality, we can then point out symbolism as presented by Ọlátúnjí (1984) as a very special feature of Ifá divination. Symbolism in Ifá divination directs our mind to the exact verse relevant or answerable to the client's intents or challenges when Ifá is divined. Out of the severally chanted verses by the Ifá priest, the exact or relevant one is believed to have made the Babaláwo hit the point or focus of the client. It is this exact verse that symbolises the reliability and reality of Ifá divination system among the the Yorùbá and even beyond nowadays. This feature enhances the Ifá priest a befitting prestige and the priest is regarded as a truth-sayer. A reference to a relevant saying among the Ògbóni cultists (a Yorùbá traditional society) goes thus:

E jẹ́ á sòtító.
 E jẹ́ á sòdodo.
 Eḍá tó bá sòtító ni 'mọ̀lẹ̀ ó gbè.

Let's say the truth.
 Let's say the truth.
 Whosoever says the truth shall be favoured by the deity.

It could be deduced from the above that Ifá itself is regarded, among the Yorùbá and beyond, as a deity that upholds and values truth. Hence, its devotees are expected to maintain the same stand (truth-saying), and it is this truth that will credit them. It is not only in traditional religions that reality as the focus of metaphysical elements is upheld but also among the christians (see John 8: 32). Wordplay is also another feature discovered in Eṣe-Ifá. Ifá priest tends to play on some key words or syllables within the Ifá verses. Such words may be names of person, place or otherwise some verbal key words. The repetition helps to identify a specific 'odù' in which an 'Ifá'

verse is derived. The plays on words also arouse the concentrative interest of the client on the chanted Ifá corpus or verse. It also manifests the rhythm or verbal dexterity of such word play. In the course of casting Ifá, be it 'ikin' (palm-nut divination) or 'òpèlè' (chain divination), the principle of duality (Adébám̀b̀ò, 1998) cannot be ruled out. Ifá, being a geomantic system, contains the act of marking figures or lines on two roles or sides for the identification and bringing out of the exact name of 'odù' (Ifá corpus) that is cast (see Adébám̀b̀ò, 1988:38 and Agboolá, 2008: 17-18). This characteristic feature is similar to symbolism of Ọ̀látúnj́ (1984) but still deeper by showcasing the practical efficacy of printing or drawing two lines or dots when it remains a palm-nut at hand and drawing one line when it remains two palm-nuts during the casting, as in the case of 'ikin Ifá' (palm-nuts divination system). In addition to the characteristic features of Èṣẹ̀ Ifá (Ifá verse) is idioms or idiomatic expressions that are present and common in it (Ọ̀látéjù, 2005: 13-15). Ifá divination system contains the use of idioms/idiomatic expressions by the Babaláwò (father-of-the-cult) (Ọ̀látéjù, 2005: 5). This feature is a regular one that may be in forms of nouns/nominals e.g. 'ajogun' (one that wages war on a person), 'eniyán' (an evil person), etc or expressions such as "akérémodò wẹ̀wù iràwé" (the small streams wear clothes of dry leaves), "àgàn ò tọ̀wọ̀ àlà bosùn" (the barren has no babies to cream with camwood lotion), etc (Abím̀b̀ólá, 1968: 1-5). The use of idioms or idiomatic expressions in Ifá divination manifests the presence of language styles which provide deep-rooted words and expressions that have acquired meanings other than what they are supposed to mean ordinarily. Hence, Ifá is an embodiment of expressions that calls for deep thinking of words and expressions that may be communicative in nature.

The Yorùbá hold various beliefs about divination. They believe that a diviner, especially an Ifá priest, plays different roles within the society (Adébám̀b̀ò 1998). In traditional Yorùbá society it is believed that God ought not to be approached directly. As such, people approach God through an intermediary. According to Ọ̀látéjù (2005: 2),

The strange voice, in any case, has to be interpreted or decoded by no less a personality than the priest himself for effective communication between god and man. Given the socio-cultural and religious contexts under which he

operates, the Ifá priest is both a spiritualist as well as a literary artist. In other words, the Ifá priest, as a literary artist, is a poet, storyteller and an entertainer.

It could be deduced from the above that an Ifá priest's role of interpreting what Olatéjú (2005: 1) refers to as “speaking in tongues” presents the diviner as an expert in charge of explaining God's intents to humans. Thus, the Yorùbá regard an Ifá priest as a spiritual interpreter and reliable soothsayer. It is also believed that a diviner or Ifá priest also plays the role of a medicine man who knows the accurate traditional medicine to prescribe for their clients. This means that it is not only sacrifices or rituals that are prescribed for the client's encounters. The priest does not only engage in mystical and religious performances but also functions as a political intervener or head, as his position is linked with human rule and spiritual governance. Indeed, in Yorùbá society the installation of a king is never done without consultations with Ifá. The 'Babaláwo' (Ifá priest) and the king of a town work together for the good of the community. To be sure, the Eṣe-Ifá plays important roles in religious and cultic practice. According to Olatéjú (2005: 1):

Eṣe-Ifá, the Ifá literary corpus, is a specialized Yorùbá traditional oralpoetic genre, religious in essence and cultic in practice. The religious or spiritual essence of Eṣe-Ifá (the Ifá verses) lies in its association with the worship of Ifá or Ọ̀rúnmìlà, the Yorùbá god of wisdom. Eṣe-Ifá represents the voice of the wisdom deity through whom the Yorùbá relate with the Almighty God.

A Yorùbá proverb states thus: 'gbígba ọ̀gbón ọ̀lọ̀gbón ọ̀gbón ni kì í jé kí á pe àgbà ní wèrè' (The ability to share from others' wisdom is the reason why elders are not called fools). This signals the power of Ifá as a major source of knowledge and wisdom. Its cultic nature requires that Ifá divination would involve “speaking in tongue” (Olatéjú, 2005: 1), hence the uniqueness of its literary language among other African methods of divination.

It has been universally ascertained, without any doubt, that divination, as a metaphysical element, provides various advantages in its functional dispensation such as its usefulness for discovering hidden issues, provision of necessary solutions to the waging challenges, which may be in forms of sacrifice, rituals, appeasement to one

divinity or the other and story narration, entertainment provisions (Ọlátéjú, 2005: 2), and even the prescription of traditional herbs as remedy for any particular ailment encountered by the people or society at large. All these are parts of the derivable dos of the metaphysical element, which are traditionally believed can be executed by a well-versed Babaláwo (Ifá priest). Hence, a relevant Yorùbá saying testifies to this that 'àìgbófá là ñ wò'kè, Ifá kan kò sí ní párá' (it is lack of knowledge that renders an incompetent diviner to be looking at the ceiling for no Ifá narration or chanting is situated there). In the course of having effective and thorough dispensation of Ifá panegyrics and processes, the need to understand the don'ts of Ifá can not be underestimated. This is so in that Yorùbá believe there are some materials expected not to be used for appeasing the Ifá emblem among which is 'àdí dúdú' (palm-kernel oil). It is generally believed that palm-kernel oil should not be given to Ifá and its paraphernalia. If such is done to any of the forms of Ifá emblems, the wrath of it will definitely befall on the worshipper of such Ifá or whoever involves in such misdeed. Therefore, it is believed that accurate response can not be tapped from a typical Ifá that is given 'àdí'. Hence, a Yorùbá proverb corroborates this that 'ọbẹ tí baálé ilé kì í jẹ, iyáálé ilé kì í sè é (forbidden soup by the husband should not be provided by his wife). Another material expected not to be used to appease Ifá oracle is the head of big rat (orí òkété). Yorùbá traditional worshippers, especially the Ifá devotees are found of singing thus:

Òkété o ò,
O bá'fá jẹ,
O bá'fá mu,
O bá'fá mulẹ,
O da'fá o

Big rat,
You dined with Ifá,
You wined with Ifá
You also have covenant with Ifá,
You still betrayed Ifá.

The above song mythologically manifests how 'òkété', despite his covenant with Ifá, betrayed Ifá who consequently cursed 'òkété' (big rat) not to be completely used as a material for appeasing Ifá oracle. Hence, its (òkété) head should be cut off while the remaining part of the 'òkété' should be used. Since then, it has become an abomination for an Ifá priest to even put big rat's head on Ifá emblem or oracle. If such forbidden step is taken, such Ifá priest will be spiritually dealt with and such Ifá divination will seize in the course of revealing the exact spiritual information requested by the diviner.

In sum, when the Yorùbá reach a cul-de-sac in confronting the challenges of existence, they approach the spiritual world for knowledge through Ifá divination. Divination is a spiritual means of enquiring and revealing messages for human and non-human benefits. Through divination, the Yorùbá are able to better understand their world and reshape their destiny.

4.1.3 Àlá (Dream)

Dream is a universal phenomenon. Omoregbe, (2001:64) defines dream as "the free wandering of the mind during sleep, the uninhibited wandering of the imagination in the subconscious state of sleep". This means that dreams occur when one is sleeping and the dreamer is likely to be unconscious about the state of his or her mind. Another important thing about dream is that the person that had it only experienced it. So, other persons cannot help someone to dream.

The emergence of dream as a metaphysical element can be said to be years immemorial or otherwise since the inception of homo-sapiens. The scientific study of dream, otherwise known as oneirology, is not limited to the film theorists but also

conceived by the philosophers across the globe. Dream in Yorùbá belief system is also regarded as a development or element coming up during sleep unconsciously. Though, Yorùbá are of the saying that 'àlá gò' (dream is foolish) but they don't take dream with levity. Hence, they do not only have series of dream but go far on the search for the accuracy and interpretation of various dreams dreamt via means such as divination systems like Ifá divination, palmistry, kolanuts divination, hydromancy, etc. Sigmund Freud was the first and reknown scholar to present a comprehensive and scientific study of the nature of dreams. He therefore published a classic text on dreams in 1913 titled *The Interpretations of Dreams*.

There are so many incidences believed to have led to the occurrence of dreaming. Some people have been identified and known to have been initiated into cults in their dreams like those initiated or incorporated into witchcraft society via dreaming. Hence, Yorùbá tend to say 'ó ti gbàjé láti ojú orun' (she has been initiated into witchcraft society when sleeping). On the other way, some have been spoken to by God in their dream. This may lead the dreamer to change from his or her bad attitudes to good ones and Yorùbá may also refer to the person as 'eni tó ti gbọ ohùn Ọlórún láti ojú orun' (one who has received the voice of God via dream). Yorùbá also nurse the belief that if someone is medically strong or powerful enough, such a person won't be conquered in the sleep, especially when experiencing nightmares. It is believed that apart from being medically upright in real life, the person in question is also spiritually powerful when sleeping. This is because the person possesses the capability of resisting any challenge fashioned against him or her in the dream. Hence, the person may be regarded, especially when asleep as 'eni tó sùn sílẹ̀ tó ń ba ara rẹ̀ lẹ̀rù' (one who is fearful when sleeping).

There are different types of dreams. The basic ones will be examined. They include semi-conscious dream, waking dream, lucid dream, pre-cognitive dream, to mention but few (Fánilólá, 2010). Semi-conscious dream is a dream that occurs when the dreamer has some memories of the dream dreamt. This type of dream does not really relate to a single or particular dream but to any dream that one has some memories of after one has woken up. For instance, a person dreaming of seeing somebody in the dream begging him for money and at the end giving that beggar some money may also find it difficult to recall the whole dream's scenario. Waking dream is quite

different from semi-conscious dreams. The dreamer in this type is alert and conscious but does not realize that he or she is dreaming until he or she wakes up. For instance, one may dream of a daily activity or duty being regularly carried out by one when sleeping and thereby having it in mind as if one is carrying out the exercise in real life (Bronte, 2010:2). Lucid dream is another type of dream in which the dreamer possesses a clear and easy understanding of the dream. This shows how the dreamer fully and effortlessly recalls the dream after waking up. This is to say that the dreamer's dream is remembered after waking up but not physically seen or brought into existence as it is the case in waking dream. For example, someone may dream of a building under construction but after waking up could not see any building under construction. Other type of dream is pre-cognitive type of dream. This is the kind of dream in which a person acquires a particular knowledge or information about something that is going to happen before such a thing actually happens. In other words, the dreamer is fed or informed ahead of the occurrence. Precognition is the ability to know and experience a future event before it ever occurs. The dream types are not limited to those discussed above. There are others like shared dreams, nightmares, lucid pre-cognitive dreams, recurring dreams, warning dreams, and prophetic dreams. From the above, it is clear that some dreams actually portray reality or that they can actually come to pass.

Dreams have a number of characteristic features. The features of dreams are forgetfulness, non-realism or weird nature, personal and interpersonal nature, futuristic nature, etc (Fániólá, 2010). A dream has the feature of being forgotten, especially after waking up. Not all dreams can be remembered or recalled when one wakes up. Non-realism or weird nature of a dream indicates that a dream may be mysterious in nature. A person may dream about something that is not or will not be true in natural life. It is for this reason that people regard dreams as false and unrealistic. In dreams, impossibilities do happen, such as a person flying, animal speaking or having an encounter with spirits, wild animals and dead relations. Personal and interpersonal nature as a feature of dream presents the dreamer to be dreaming of or about himself or about another person. For instance, a person may dream of having sexual intercourse with another person. This shows the dreamer himself and other person he engages in the dream. Some dreams are also futuristic in

nature. Dreams may reveal an impending event or occurrence. This is the feature of a pre-cognitive dream. For instance, a pregnant woman's husband may dream of having baby twins before the delivery of twins by his wife.

Yorùbá also hold the belief system that dreams is a phenomenon that has to be interpreted. This is so in that it is not every dream that can be accorded a direct meaning or interpretation by the dreamer or other person. Hence, the need to call for a specialist for the accurate interpretation of such dream. Therefore, and according to Fánìlólá (2010), dream's interpretation is focused and explained from three perspectives, namely from (i) ascription of direct meaning (ii) ascription of opposite meaning, (iii) ascription of symbolic meaning. In the ascription of direct meaning as a means of interpreting dreams direct meaning is ascribed to the events or actions in the dream. For instance, if someone dreams that an individual is sick, the person later becomes sick; definitely, such dream has a direct meaning to the event in the dream. Ascription of opposite meaning is when the reverse of the event in the dream occurs in real life. For example, when someone dreams of counting money in the dream, but in real life he is experiencing poverty; definitely, it is the opposite of the dream dreamt. The interpretation of dreams by the ascription of symbolic meaning is based on metaphorical or connotative connections between the sign and its referent. For instance, if one dreams of being pursued by masquerade in the dream, actually, the masquerade as a sign represents the symbol of the witches or wizards used for fighting people in the dream. Though, it is true that no single method can be employed to explain or interpret all kinds of dreams since there are different types of dreams and each with its own means of interpretation (Omoregbe, 2006: 68), but this is limited to the western experience of treating or interpreting dream. However, to maintain traditional and religious stands is to state that Yorùbá belief in approaching Babaláwo (Ifá priest), palmists, soothsayers like those that invoke the spirit of the dead to make spiritual findings, etc for the interpretation of dream. Yorùbá tend to approach the Ifá priest by saying 'ẹ yẹ'mí lówọ kan ibò wò lóri àlá tí mo lá' (kindly divine for me over the dream I dreamt). This is also similar to the Christians, especially the white garment attendants like celestial, and cherubim and ceraphim believers when they approach the 'àlùfàà ìjọ' (the church's pastor or prophet) for the interpretation of their dreams. The prophet in charge tends to say 'ẹ kúnlẹ, ẹ jẹ ká gbàdúrà láti sọnà fún àlá tí

ẹ lá' (kneel down and let us pray to spiritually discover the interpretation of the dream dreamt by you). Yorùbá belief systems about dreams' interpretation manifest in their consultations of Ifá before embarking on things so as to determine the causes of dreams dreamt and necessary solutions towards curbing unforeseen consequences of any traumatic dream they might have experienced.

Despite having different types of dreams, Yorùbá still value various usefulness which dreams of different kinds can fetch human beings. Dreams proffer solutions to some encountered challenges by the human beings. It also assists in giving an insight into a new idea by being guided on how to initiate or formulate new ideas or ideologies. Dream may also serve as a warning measure upon something not to be done by the dreamer or otherwise by a close relative to the dreamer. Futuristic endeavour is also delivered or revealed via dream. Even though, a Babaláwo with the use of 'ònmọ' (traditional detector) can dream of forthcoming visitor and his or her challenges or complaints before such client's arrival. Such dream usually assists the Ifá priest in his accurate delivery of his spiritual findings. To corroborate this function is to make reference to how Bámgbóşé (2007: 103-104) presents dual functions of dream device on how dream is used to achieve some measures of realism and for futuristic predictions. These, as part of the existing functions of dream, remind us of how the focus of metaphysical elements is on the totality of reality. Therefore, dream, as a metaphysical element in Yorùbá worldview is regarded as a natural gift for human direction of life. Hence, Bámgbóşé (2007: 103) regards dream "as a pointer to future events". It is true that Yorùbá belief in the existence of dream and its various usefulness or functions can free somebody from any bondage of life but in contrary to this belief system is also the nursing of the belief that there are some human characters that can hamper the free flow of dreaming. Yorùbá hold a view that if someone involves in a forbidden act or food taking, which may contradict one's destiny/inner-head, or religious norms and values, such a person may experience the wrath of it by having traumatic dreams like having sexual intercourse, eating poisonous food in the dream, doing marriage in the dream, etc, to the extent of nursing various ailments in physical life. Yorùbá may refer to such unfortunate person as 'ẹni tó ti jèèwọ lójú orun' (one that has eaten a forbidden thing in the dream). For instance, an 'Ọşun' (river goddess) devotee who dreamt of drinking guinea-corn could

be said to have spiritually involved in a religiously forbidden act. This has reminded us of a Yorùbá traditional religion statement among the Ọ̀ṣun worshippers thus 'ẹ́ má fí ọ́tí'kà lẹ́ mí nítorí pé ọ́lọ̀ṣun nì'yáà mí' (don't give me guinea-corn meal for my mother is an Ọ̀ṣun worshipper). This shows that Yorùbá believe that it is not only in physical realm that an element of realism exists, rather it also occurs when one dreams. This kind of dream in question is therefore regarded as a nightmare for it can lead to harzardous incidence.

4.1.4 Ọ́fọ̀ (Incantation)

In the Yorùbá worldview God is the Supreme Being and the creator of the entire universe, hence, the saying 'ọ̀rọ̀ la fí dá'lé ayé, ọ̀rọ̀ si la fí d'Ótu-Ifẹ̀' (the world was created by God via words, so also Ọ̀tu-Ifẹ̀). It also reminds us of a Christian/Biblical saying that 'let there be light!'. Ọ̀pẹ̀fẹ̀yítímí (1997: 132) avers that "words (ọ̀rọ̀), according to Yorùbá people, constitute the most important phenomenon with which Olódùmarè created the universe." This underscores the importance and relevance of words to human. Therefore, in words there is power, called 'àṣẹ' (command/authority). And incantations are words with fearsome power. According to Ọ̀pẹ̀fẹ̀yítímí (1997: 132) incantations are "verbal utterances with which natural and supernatural forces plus objects and ingredients of prepared charms are communicated with." This shows the interconnectivity between incantation and medicine. Fádáhùnsi in Momoh (1988: 41) also presents incantation to connote "ritual recitation of verbal charms or spells to produce a magical effect." This indicates how incantation is employed as supplement to traditional medicines for the purpose of bringing into existence the practical efficacy of the use of magical words that is also known as incantation.

Incantation can be said to be a phenomenon or element that has been in existence since the inception of human beings. Hence, Fádáhùnsi in Momoh (1988: 39) testifies by stating that "incantation seems to be a lifelong traditional practice of the African peoples and most in particular the Yorùbá tribe". This shows how the metaphysical element has dated back to human age. It can also be regarded as traditional concept that cannot be separated from one's traditional, cultural, and religious behaviours.

Incantations (Ọfò) are of various types. According to Ọpẹfẹyítímí (1997), there are proper incantations and incantations special. The proper incantation is a type or category of incantation referred to as ‘ọfò’. This category of incantation is the verbal utterance that can serve as supportive element for the function of medicine. Ọlátúnjí (1984) gives an example of this thus:

*Itún ló ní kẹ ẹ tún mi ẹ.
Ifà ló ní ẹ fà mí mọraa.
Àbèrè ló ní kẹ ẹ foun rere bẹ̀rè mi (164).*

It is the itún bead that says you should improve me.
It is the ifà bead that says you should draw me to yourselves
(befriend).
It is the àbèrè fruit that says you should on account of good
things ask for me.

The above incantation serves as a verbal art that assists a kind of love medicine or medicine for making abundant sales to function effectively. It is therefore believed that without such additional incantation the medicine in question may not be effective. The incantation special is another division of incantation traditionally known as ‘àyájó’. The incantations under this category are those spiritually powerful utterances spoken with prepared medicinal components but could also be used on their own merits. Secret names of objects or phenomena are used in chanting this typical incantation. Ọlátúnjí (1984) illustrates this type with the following:

*Olóbe lorúkọ tá à á pèwọọ’na.
Iná, oríkì rẹ ní n jẹ Olúororo.
Olúòràrà n̄ loókọ tá à pèwọ ò̀r̀̀n (142).*

Olóbe is the name we call you, fire.
Fire, your praise name is Olúororo.
Olúòràrà is the name we call you, sun.

This shows that the primordial secret names embedded in incantations are apparently convincing, symbolic, and thereby expose the intended objectives of the enchanter. Attempt to deviate from the use of signified and secret names in incantations will definitely render such metaphysical utterance ineffective. It is also obvious that different writers and scholars take various dimensions in categorizing incantation. For instance, Fádáhùnsi in Momoh (1988: 40) gives a broad categorization of incantation

to be "incantations for fortune and misfortune". This shows how some incantations are aimed to cast a good spell on animate and inanimate objects while some other incantations are used for malevolent undertakings. In the course of considering 'òfò' from its efficacious perspectives within the healthcare context among the Yorùbá, Orímóògùnjé (2018: 106-122) scholarly presents the roles of 'òfò' and its sub-types such as 'àyájò' (myth-like incantation), 'èbè' (verbal propitiation), 'èpè' (curse), and 'iwúre' (supplicatory blessings). All these are various forms or types of Yorùbá incantation which can be utilized for both benevolent and malevolent encounters.

There are several characteristic features of incantations (*òfò*). Olátúnjí (1984) gives the following as features of 'òfò' (incantations), namely; characteristic element, symbolic wordplay, repetition, and personal nature of incantation. In characteristic element of incantation, 'òfò' consists of some elements like invocation, problem, assertions, and the application. Invocation entails the summoning of the incantatory agents through special names like spirit, deities, and witches. Problem as another element in 'òfò' contains the statement of the enchanter's challenges or problems. Incantation also contains assertions that explains the enchanter's observation, assumed truths or beliefs that may be positive or negative in nature. Application consists of the wishes, request, and appeal of the enchanter of incantation. Symbolic wordplay as a feature deals with the play on the sound of a lexical item of a particular class of word and another word of another class similar to the former. For instance, a word that is noun may be similar to that of a verbal class. Olátúnjí (1984) exemplifies this with the following:

*Irú ló ní kó mọ ọ ru sí mi nínú.
Iyò ló ní kó mọ ọ yò sí mi lókàn
Epo ló ní ó mọ ọ po sí mi lẹnu (160).*

It is the locust-bean that says it should ooze into my mind.
It is salt that says it should slip into my heart.
It is palm-oil that says it should ooze into my mouth.

In the above excerpt, play on words such as 'irú' (locust-bean) and 'rú' (ooze), 'iyò' (salt) and 'yò' (slip), and 'epo' (palm-oil) and 'po' (ooze) exist to show symbolism as a result of the connection between the two contrasted words of similar sounds. Repetition as a feature can be either partial or full. This means that part or full line of

the incantatory poem may be repeated. This feature shows the semantic value of the repeated items and structure. Personal nature of incantation (ọfọ) as a characteristic feature of incantation presents the enchanter of the incantation as a director of his own power of utterances for his own benefits. He at times includes his name in the incantatory contents, especially when making demand.

Incantation, in accordance to the Yorùbá belief system, can function as an assistance to the prepared traditional medicine. A medicine that deserves incantation as complement but used without the required incantation is like a medicine without its complete ingredients. Such medicine cannot function effectively. Hence, Yorùbá usually say 'òògùn tí kò jẹ ewé rẹ ló kùkan' (an ineffective medicine definitely lacks an ingredient). Also in line with this belief system is to make reference to some traditional medicines that might have been swallowed long ago but have their incantations reserved and unused pending the time there is call or need for such incantation usage. Yorùbá therefore believe that the enchanter only needs to recite the incantation of the already or long time swallowed medicine, especially when danger is imminent, to invoke the spirit or magical power of the swallowed medicine to varnish for safety (Fádáhùnsi in Momoh (1988:42). Yorùbá also hold a strong belief in the secret or spiritual names of animals, plants, and inanimate organisms present in their locality. These names are used in 'àyájọ' (myth-like incantation) (see Orímòògùnjé, 2018: 108-111) and can be utilized to summon or carry out the wishes of the enchanter of incantation. Fádáhùnsi in Momoh (1988:42) also exemplifies this by stating that "the hunters use 'àyájọ' to summon animals to be killed in the wilderness after they may have wandered in vain hunting for the animals to kill." The kinds of animals killed in this situation are usually referred to as 'àpaàlédò' (animals-killed-without-liver) in Yorùbá context. Various materials employed to produce a medicine are also mentioned by the enchanter in an incantation and this paves way for the effectiveness or efficacy of such medicine. Attempt for the enchanter not to mention the names of all or key embedded ingredients of the medicine may result to the inefficacy of such medicine. This manifests the continual mention of the ingredients of the medicinal preparation and the address in which the spiritual agent of the medicine is told and commanded by the enchanter what is to be done (see Fádáhùnsi in Momoh (1988:42) and Ọlátúnjí (1984: 141-145). It could be recalled that

incantation is also believed by the Yorùbá to contain magical power of words. Hence, the Yorùbá saying that 'agbára nì bẹ̀ nínú ọ̀rọ̀' (there is power in words), for 'ọ̀rọ̀ la fí dá'lé ayé' (world was created by words). The magical words are believed to be delivered via air that contains the spirit that will render such incantation effective. Fádáhùnsi in Momoh (1988: 43) testifies to that thus; "it is believed that spirits travel by the wind and whoever encounters them will be paralysed." This shows that some incantations cannot be enchanted, especially when given or exchanged in the midst of other fellows except in-between the giver (enchanter) and the receiver of such incantation and only to be exchanged or enchanted in the bush and for a living tree to be in-between the giver and receiver, and out of which such tree will die immediately and continue drying off after the chanting of the powerful incantation. This shows how magical and dangerous some incantations are. The belief that such incantation can exterminate human life, especially when over-heard by a third party or when there is the absence of defensive materials such as tree, animals, etc that will suffer the threat. Yorùbá study the characteristic and behavioural attitudes of some animals before making use of those materials for relevant medicines. It is generally believed that cat don't usually lie on its back. Hence, the common saying or incantation, especially among the traditional wrestlers, that 'olóńgbò kì í já ní párá kó fẹ̀yìn-kanlẹ̀' (cat doesn't fall from the ceiling and lie on its back). It is therefore believed that herbalists make use of cat or its body parts to produce medicine for fighting. This is so in that they (traditional herbalists) study and look at the characteristic behaviours of cat before making use of it for medicine and going ahead for the enchanting of relevant incantation in which cat's attitudes shall be manifested. In sum, the choice of this metaphysical element (incantation) lies in the efficacy of it and people's belief that its workability has been consistent, reliable, and efficient.

4.1.5 Orí-inú (Inner-head)

Inner-head is regarded as unavoidable in determining the personalities of individual human beings, especially in the traditional Yorùbá setting. It is thereby taken as an integral part that needs to be divined and determined immediately after a baby is born. Ìdòwú (1977) and Danoye (2006) describe inner-head as 'personality soul'. In Yorùbá cosmology, there is the belief that the inner-head rules, controls and guides the life and activities of the person possessing it. This shows the interconnectivity between

man and his inner-head, which the Yorùbá call '*Orí*'. The concept also features among the Akan and the Igbo, who call it 'Okra/'Okara' and 'Chi/'Uwa', respectively (Oyèshílé, 2002: 107-114). The inner-head is also categorised into two types, viz: (i) good inner-head and (ii) bad inner-head. Either type determines the destiny of individuals (Lágùda, 2006). Inner-head, being referred to as 'ori-inu' in Yorùbá cosmology, is a paramount deity among others that are believed to have descended from heaven to earth for appeasement or appropriation by the human beings. Hence, inner-head is more worshipped at any time by individual possessing it. It is a deity through which one tends to approach and communicate his or her destiny. It is otherwise known as the deity of destiny (Agboṣá, 2008: 76-79).

It is generally accepted that inner-head (*orí-inú*), apart from descending from heaven, is also the master-minder of every human endeavour, achievement and downfall. It is believed that nothing can be achieved without the consent of '*orí*'. Hence, it accompanies every human being right from heaven down to the earth. Agboṣá (1989: 35) testifies to this belief system by stating that:

Wọ̀n ní gbogbo ire gbàà pátápátá wọ̀n ní lódò orí ni ó ti máa jáde. Orí dé ilé ayé; ẹ̀ni bá lówó, wọ̀n a ní orí 'ẹ̀ ló mà dá a, ẹ̀ni láya, wọ̀n a l'orí 'ẹ̀ ló dá a, ẹ̀ni bí'mọ, ẹ̀ni kólé. Ẹ̀ni tí tiẹ̀ bá kù diẹ̀ k'ò tó, wọ̀n a ní orí 'ẹ̀ nàà ni.

They said all goodness come from inner-head. Inner-head got to the earth; whoever is rich, it is so for he or she has a good inner-head, whoever has wife, it is by his or her good inner-head, whoever has child, whoever possesses house. Whoever lacks, it is due to his or her inner-head.

It could be deduced from the above excerpt that inner-head is not an earthly originated element but believed by the Yorùbá to be an heavenly emerged metaphysical element that dictates individual's destiny; be it good one or ill-luck when alive.

Yorùbá believe in the dual categorization of inner-head as a metaphysical element. Lágùda (2006) categorizes inner-head into two types, namely; (i) Good inner-head and (ii) Bad inner-head. Each of the types will determine the destiny of individuals. Good inner-head has to do with a typical personality that is successful and prosperous in life. It is universally believed that whosoever seem to be successful in physical life has already taken or made an appropriate or otherwise a better choice

when choosing or being given a destiny. Bad inner-head is the opposite type to the former one. This means that the personality of this type of '*Ori*' (inner-head) possesses ill-luck or otherwise not progressive or successful in physical life. Lágùda (2006:78) also avers that "the man whose life is going from bad to worse is referred to as '*Olóri burúku*' (one which has a bad '*Ori*').

Various means have been in existence through which inner-head can be identified. Therefore, the following are the features of inner-head as suggested by Ìdòwú (1977) and Lágùda (2006), namely; object of worship, embodiment of individual personality, God's creation or handiwork, highly ambivalent, individualism, etc. First and foremost, inner-head is identified as an object of worship by the human beings. The inner-head in Yorùbá religious conception is taken and believed to be what individual should consult and propitiate before laying his or her hands on any endeavour. Therefore, '*Ori*' (inner-head), according to Lágùda (2006:80) is "worshipped during activities such as marriage, naming ceremony, hunting or travelling expedition, etc. It also serves as an embodiment of individual personality. Human beings are characterized with various actions and behavioural attitudes in life and the inner-head is often venerated because it (*Ori*) serves as an embodiment of individual's personality that must be properly taken care of. Hence, it is identified as a stock or storage of individual characteristic behaviour in real life. Another characteristic feature of inner-head is regarding it as God's creation or handiwork. There is no doubt to say that almighty God, regarded as the Supreme Being, remains the architect of individual inner-head. Though, inner-head is invisible and believed to sojourn in the physical head that is owned by each person. Hence, '*Ori*' (inner-head) is recognized as the handiwork of almighty God. Inner-head is highly ambivalent. The individual inner-head is characterized with two opposing features, namely; good features and bad characteristics. Inner-head is believed to be the messenger of the individual owning it and thereby sent into the world to fulfill a particular purpose. This purpose in question is in accordance with the type of '*Ori*' (inner-head) individual has chosen in heaven, that is, either good or bad one. Individualism is another feature of inner-head. This points to the fact that each individual has his or her own inner-head right from inception³. Each person is said to have chosen his or her inner-head for the determination of his or her destiny and display of it in the physical world. Inner-head

is even regarded as individual divinity that is supposed to be appeased ever before any other god or goddess.

There are various means through which inner-head can be communicated with or interpreted. This is otherwise the ways through which we can understand the intents of inner-head which include the followings, viz; (i) through appeasement, and (ii) through sacrifice. Inner-head, having been regarded as a deity that even supersedes other deities, can also be appeased by the use of materials such as kolanut, fish, fowl, animals like goat, rat, etc to determine and understand what inner-head has in stock for the bearer (Ìdòwú, 1977:173). The inner-head can also be communicated with or otherwise interpreted through the presentation of sacrifice to the spiritual head. This may involve the use of materials such as lobes of cold pap, palm-oil, water, kolanuts, dried or fresh fish, rat, etc. These materials are packaged inside a traditional pot or plate, prayed to and thereby divined with the use of four-split kolanut to determine which designated place is expected to be approached or used as the venue for the spiritual acceptance of the sacrifice.

Yorùbá, in their belief system that 'orí' should be worshipped, also have in mind and their practice of the worship of inner-head some elements of worship of their inner-head. Therefore, Ìdòwú (1977) and Lágùdà (2006) present the following as elements of worship of '*Orí*' (inner-head). Firstly, the use of concrete traditional materials is very important in worshipping 'Orí'. Traditional materials; both living and non-living, are in use for appeasing to inner-head for different purposes in human life and thought. The materials include; kolanut (four-face kolanut), electric fish (ẹja òjiji), water (omi), guinea fowl (ẹyẹ ẹtù), ram (àgbò), fowl (adiẹ), etc. (Lágùdà, 2006:81). A conical object mostly designed and decorated with more of cowrie-shells is also recognized as symbolic representation or emblem for the worship of 'orí-inú' (inner-head) (see Appendix 4). These materials are used for consulting, appeasing and praying to individual inner-head for the satisfaction of human wants and needs. Outer-head also serves as another element of worship of 'Orí'. This is also known as the physical head that each individual being carries along or holds. The outer-head is tangible and visible in nature to be touched, held and prayed to. For each individual to appease or consult his or her inner-head, the concrete materials meant for prayer e.g. kolanut, fish, water etc are held and used. Another element of worshipping inner-head

is sacrifice. This is otherwise known as 'ẹbọ' in Yorùbá life and thought. It is usually packaged in earthen pot or plate in which materials such as cold or lobes of pap, palm-oil, dried rat, snail, etc are put. This sacrifice is prayed into for the purpose of carrying the message of the owner to his or her inner-head and almighty God for final approval.

There are several functions noticeable of 'Orí' (inner-head) in Yorùbá worldview. Inner-head serves as an essence of personality. With this function however, inner-head is recognized as the personality soul by several authors and scholars like Ìdòwú (1977), Oyèshílé (2002), Lágùdà (2006) etc. With this notion, it is believed that inner-head serves as determinant angel for individual ways of life, otherwise known as individual personality. It is inner-head that dictates for what individual personality will be. It also serves as a guardian/protector. According to Ìdòwú (1977:173) and Lágùdà (2006:86) the inner-head serves as 'guardian angel' in not Yorùbá worldview alone but also in Igbo's. Inner-head as personality soul guards and protects individual human being against external attack. It serves as personal god of individuals. Inner-head is regarded as a personal god or deity of every human being having it. There is also the common saying among the Yorùbá that shows the high esteem the Yorùbá have for inner-head that *'Orí là bá bọ, ká f'Òrìṣà tó kù silẹ̀, nítorí nígbà t'Órì n gbe'ni, ibo lòrìṣà wà?'* (it is inner-head that is supposed to be appeased and leave the other gods or goddesses for where are gods and goddesses when inner-head is providing for one). Inner-head, in its dispensation of duty regulates the influence of gods/goddesses on individual life. This is certain of inner-head in that it monitors every individual owning it and thereby suggests what to do for the individuals in question. It is whatever a man's inner-head has sanctioned that gods or goddess can sanction. We can infer that inner-head can be described as a spiritual, inseparable and unavoidable element in every individual's life. It has positive and negative attributes, with significant import for its possessor. The inner-head, though invisible, is also recognized to be felt, realized and believed to manifest in every human life's endeavours. It could be recalled that Ifá is equivocal, especially on the consideration or determination of one's 'orí'. With the aid of Òrúnmilá, that is, via Ifá divination, someone's happy destiny may be preserved or an unhappy one rectified (Ìdòwú, 1977: 176).

4.1.6. N̄nkan Abàmi (Strange signs)

A strange sign may be described as any sign that indicates what is going to occur in the nearest future. Ilésanmí (2009: viii) describes strange signs as “*n̄nkan abàmi*” (metaphysical entity) or “*ìmòtélé*” (something that one had foreknowledge of), hence, the proverb “*ìmòtélé ní í jé ara fu mí*” (an ominous sign is similar to self-awareness). This suggests that every sign or symbol that is strange is pregnant with meanings or implies references to things that are likely to happen in the nearest future. For instance, it is a strange sign to have a multitude of bees settling at the outer ceiling of a residence. This, in Yorùbá traditional belief and especially among the Şàngó worshippers, means the presence of the god of thunder (Şàngó) in such a house or vicinity.

Yorùbá hold the belief that strange signs have been in existence right from the inception or creation of both living and non-living organisms like human beings, animals, plants and other inanimates. From this point of view however, they categorize strange signs into different groups. To put the discussion of the ominous sign’s categorization in proper perspective, mention has to be made of the following: humanistic strange signs, animalistic strange signs, plants strange signs, and mammal strange signs, etc. (Ilésanmí, 2009). Humanistic strange sign has to do with human beings, whether male or female. It naturally occurs, regarded as unplanned and unpremeditated among the Yorùbá. For instance, a man experiencing itching at either of his hands, especially in the morning, should be expecting money that very day. Animalistic strange signs are the signs that relate to animals like birds, goats, cows, cats, rats and so on. For example, when a bee flies into a house; room or parlour and scrolls its back on the ground for a while before flying out of such house, the house's owner should be expecting a special visitor that very day. Another type of strange signs is plants ominous signs. Some trees like *ìrókò*⁴ (African teak-chlorophora excels-moracea), pawpaw (male type), and *osè* tree have been identified to be harbouring spirits that are likely to be evil and invisible. An *ìrókò* tree, seen with a light like that of hunter, is identified as a tree that harbours invisible spirits. Such *ìrókò* tree that harbours spirit is believed by Yorùbá to be a bad one and they, in relevance to this belief, maintain a stand by saying that ‘*ìrókò tó bá gbàbòdè bíbẹ́ la ó be’* (an *ìrókò* tree that harbours evil spirit shall be cut off). In mammal strange signs

some amphibians are said to possess some spiritual characteristics. The Yorùbá people are endowed with deep knowledge about different animals, especially those living inside water and even on land. For instance, if rainbow appears in the sky while there is slight rain, it is assumed that the big python has vomited a powerful and spiritual tiny calabash at the bank of the river and is swimming. This sign keeps the hunter that sets out for hunting to be aware of the danger ahead and how he (hunter) is expected to prepare for the hunting.

It is also within the belief systems that strange signs can be identified through time, sex, colour, and so on. Therefore, the characteristic features of strange signs cannot be underestimated in this study. Time is studied and attributed to some incidents. Because of this, some incidents or objects have been identified with some times as regards the presence of strange signs. In Yorùbá setting, especially among the traditional people, big rat (òkété) roaming about in the daytime serves as a strange sign. It means that something deadly and harmful is about to occur to the people within the environment in question. Hence, Yorùbá tend to say 'a kì í r'èwúlóde òsán' (it is forbidden to see a big rat roaming in the day time). This is an indication that there is a spiritual connotation in seeing a big rat during the day time. Also, the chirping of the bird, 'Kowéè', is ominous among the Yorùbá. Colour is another element among the Yorùbá in determining the meaning of strange signs they see in their various localities. Commonly, they attribute danger, hazard, bloodshed, etc to colours like red, evil and devil to black colour, while they attribute peace and tranquility to colours like white, blue, and green. Another means of identifying strange signs is sex. The Almighty created, especially, human beings to be both male and female in nature and each creature is identified with some attributes which can later be regarded as signs that are strange. In Yorùbá traditional setting, if a male child falls down from his mother's back when she later mounts him, it is generally believed that such male child will experience the death of up to nine wives, one after the other, when he grows up to marry in his life. The falling down of the baby in question predicts the impending bad omen for the male with the attraction of nine as figure or symbolic number attached to male.

Various modes of interpreting strange signs are ideal to be discussed in this study. The modes include the interpretation in relation to the tone and voice, interpretation

by relating events or signs to good or bad results, and relation of event or sign to real action. First and foremost, the interpretation in relation to the tone and voice is the act of giving meaning to strange signs by determining or studying the tone or voice of such sign or element. For instance, if *Kowèè* chirps without ending it softly, there is a looming bad occurrence, but if it ends softly the impending bad occurrence will be averted. Hence, Yorùbá tend to say 'kowèè tó ké tí kò ha, ewu n bẹ' (if *kowèè* chirps without palliation, there is danger ahead). Relation of events or signs to good or bad result is when the strange sign ends up in good or bad result. For example, if one sets out with an aim to go and collect money or something from another person, and one stumbles or hits a stone with one's left leg, one will get the money collected. The hitting of stone with the left leg quickly serves as a sign for the person that sets out to go and collect the money. Contrarily, strange sign may result in bad consequence. For instance, when a newly born baby first shoots out the fore upper tooth, a bad omen for both the baby and the parent is connoted. Another mode of interpreting strange signs is through the relation of event or sign to real action. This is when the strange sign is interpreted in line with the physical action believed to have featured with the element of the sign. For instance, if a chameleon bites somebody, such an action and injury connotes spiritual infliction on such victim. Yorùbá believe that chameleon don't usually bite someone unless caused by spiritual attack. The injury sustained from the chameleon's biting will be difficult to cure if not medically or spiritually treated or handled.

It could be inferred from the above that, though, various signs exist especially in the Yorùbá cosmological settings, but some signs bear spiritual undertones. The Yorùbá read insightful meanings into various occurrences of life and they describe those with spiritual inherence as 'nńkan abàmi' or 'imòtẹ́lẹ́'. Clearly, understanding the meaning, types and characteristic features of various strange signs in the Yorùbá worldview will definitely help in presenting the critical analysis of how strange signs are employed in Yorùbá written literary texts.

4.1.7 Àjẹ/Oṣó (Witchcraft/wizardry)

Witchcraft is known to be a special skill of attempting to exhibit or carry out some inimical or invisible activities in a disembodied or spiritual form. Some of the

activities carried out by people with such skills are poisoning somebody, inflicting pain on people, sucking of blood, holding of nocturnal meetings, eating of human flesh, promoting human progress, securing human life and so on (Ilésanmí, 2009). The Yorùbá believe in the existence of three types of witchcraft: white witchcraft (àjé funfun), black witchcraft (àjé dúdú) and red witchcraft (àjé pupa) (see Dáramólá & Jéjé [1975]; Awólálú [1981]; Agboólá [1984]; Olúwólé in Unah [1998]; Egbéróngbé [2003]; Agboólá [2008]; Èlẹ̀buiḃon [2008]; and Ilésanmí [2009]).

The existence of witchcraft in line with the Yorùbá belief is conceived that witches and wizards emerged from heaven since the inception of man. The witches and wizards were said to have come to the earth as when the sixteen Ifá corpus were also coming to the earth but without cloths to cover their bodies. The refusal of 'Òsá-méjì' (a main Ifá corpus) to sacrifice its only cloths in heaven earned the witches and wizards the opportunity of seeking assistance of being covered with cloths by 'Òsá-méjì' which later boomeranged by regretting its step (Agboólá, 1989) This is the reason why 'Òsá-méjì' corpus is referred to as 'Òsá-ẹ̀ḃẹ̀ḃ' (Òsá, the owner of witches) (see Agboólá, 1989: 136-137).

Yorùbá, in their belief systems, categorize witchcraft into different sections or group. They refer to each set (witches' and wizards' sets) of the group as both members of the witchcraft society. The categories of Yorùbá witchcraft could be traced from the African's widespread and common superstition. Most Yorùbá people believe witches and wizards are real. Dáramólá and Jéjé (1975:137) and Ilésanmí (2009:15) categorize witchcraft into three, namely: white witchcraft, black witchcraft, and red witchcraft. White witchcraft as a category of witchcraft, known among the Yorùbá as '*Àjé funfun*', consists of both witches and wizards that are identified to be doing well in their spiritual acts. Black Witchcraft as a category is known as '*Àjé dúdú*' in Yorùbá worldview. It consists of people that commonly display series of wrongdoings and evil acts. The spirit of this category of witchcraft also tolerates devilish undertakings that can commonly be carried out in the darkness. The black mysterious bird is used by those who harbour this category of witchcraft. The witches and wizards in the red witchcraft category are also known to display or be involved in bad actions such as sucking of blood, harming of others, stopping of others' progress, and so on. Ilésanmí (1998:15) also testifies to this by mentioning the series of colours possessed by the

mysterious birds of the witches thus; "*Àwọ̀ oríṣiríṣi ni àwọ̀ ẹ̀yẹ̀ àjẹ́ - dúdú, pupa, funfun*" (The colour of the witchcraft's bird is multi-different; black, red, white). The colour of this group, that is, 'red', connotes danger and dreadfulness on the part of those possessing the spirit.

There are various means through which Yorùbá believe that witches and wizards are identified. The following are the features of witchcraft, namely; unisex in nature, weird nature, colour representation, harbouring power, common operation in the darkness, and organization of regular meeting. The metaphysical power is harboured by both males and females. In Yorùbá cosmos, for instance, there are members of the association or society identified with the use of this spiritual power. Men that use this spiritual power are known as 'oṣó' (wizards) while their female members are named 'àjẹ́' (witches). Both sets play joint and distinctive roles in their spiritual society. Witchcraft is believed to be a human metaphysical element in Yorùbá cosmology since it is humans who harbour it. People who harbour this power also form associations across the global space. In Nigeria there is the Witches and Wizards Association of Nigeria (WITCAN). In a news report in a national daily, the secretary of the association, a certain Dr. Okhue Iboi, urged Nigerians to stop persecuting their members. The weird nature of the element is another feature noticeable of witchcraft. Those with this spiritual power are also mysterious in their spiritual undertakings. They are wicked and thereby regarded as dreadful members of the society. Their mysterious nature or habit may not be physically noticed; it is inherent in them. Colour representation is another characteristic feature of witchcraft. Different categories of witchcraft have different colours. Those with white witchcraft use white colour. Their whiteness symbolizes peace, harmony, and progress in their endeavour. The black witchcraft representation has black as its colour. Those identified with this spiritual power usually make use of black identities, such as black cloths and black mysterious power as their instruments of operation. Those with red witchcraft maintain redness in their various means of identification. It is generally known that members of the witchcraft society harbour power. Without the possession of the spiritual power of witchcraft, one cannot refer to someone as either 'àjẹ́' (witch) or 'oṣó' (wizard). It is the spirit of witchcraft harboured by someone that gives such a person the capability to operate at will and in accordance with the directives of 'Egbé

àjé' (witchcraft society). The Yorùbá believe that a witch or wizard can appear or disappear at will because of their supernatural or metaphysical power and their activities are nocturnal. Hence, the saying 'iyi ni àjé n fi fífò lóru se, tó bá fò lósàán baba ta ni yòò rí i?' (It is for prestige that a witch flies or operates in the midnight. If she operates in the daytime who will see her?). The Yorùbá believe that the ability to disappear allows for the spiritual transformation of witches and wizards. As such, it is believed that a witch can transform into birds of the kind that especially operate or fly in the night or darkness. They (witches and wizards) engage in this transformation either when they are going for meetings or heading for spiritual encounters or operations. However, during transformation or in the course of operation, some spiritual birds of witches have been found trapped either as a result of misdeeds or opposing encounters within the Yorùbá society. It was recalled that such kind of scenario occurred at Cappa Bus Stop, Oshòdì, Lagos (see *The Punch* newspaper of 13th October 2014). Common operation in the darkness is very rampant for witches and wizards to carry out their spiritual enterprises. The evil spirit which they usually employ, parades in the night when there is darkness. Organization of regular meeting is another feature of witches and wizards. Both witches and wizards involve in their acts of having regular nocturnal meetings. They have specific time of holding their meeting, especially in the mid-night. This meeting is usually carried out in spiritual form while their physical bodies remain at home.

Witchcraft appears to be a universal phenomenon as they can also be found in the Western world, hence, the saying 'àwọn òyìnbó nàà lájèé' (the whites also possess the spirit of witchcraft). It is thus clear that witches are not bound by the limitations of time and space. According to Egbéróńgbé (2003: 43):

'Witches' occupy a class in the realm of 'spirit'. It should be recognized that witches of African origin are unlike the trained self-proclaimed witches of other foreign lands. The ability to shoot evil at long range to harm their unfortunate victims makes them stand out in the class of bad spirits of the world.

What the above implies is that witches in the Western world usually have to undergo training. It is not only the witches of the Western world that are trained before operating but also African witches and wizards, who have to undergo training for

certain periods of time before being promoted in the spiritual world. This is the reason why some Yorùbá who are spiritually or medically inclined regard those under witchcraft training as 'iránńşé àwọn eleye' (witchcraft trainees). If this is the case, why may we not regard those in possession of this metaphysical element (witchcraft) as human metaphysical elements? After all, they hold abstract or spiritual power which can only be utilised by the human beings that harbour them.

The means or modes of operation by the witches and wizards can not be underestimated in line with the Yorùbá belief system in this study. The means of operation can be through: (i) invocation, (ii) dream, (iii) signs and symbols, (iv) medical source. Invocation as a means of witchcraft's operation implies that the spirit of witchcraft can be conjured up by the members of the society when needed. The invocation of the spirit is in accordance with the delegation of authority by the witchcraft society. The spirit will only be invoked under the instruction given by the society before the metaphysical power can be utilized either for good or bad enterprise. The mode of operation can also be through dream. This means that witches and wizards also appear in somebody's dream. They have power to change their human structures to animalistic ones, like cow, snake, and horse. One can also dream of seeing a masquerade, either being pursued or prayed for. The metaphysical element can also be operated through signs and symbols. Signs and symbols are very important within the spiritual realm. Witches and wizards maintain their stands of operation in odd numbers or terms. They do not singlehandedly plan and execute an enterprise. They meet and assign spiritual duties to members in the numbers of three, five, seven, nine, and so on. Medicinal source also serves as a means through which witchcraft can be operated. This metaphysical power (witchcraft) can be in operation through the use of voodoo. Medicines are used, especially by the specialists, to call the attention of the spirit of witchcraft.

In Yorùbá society there are several deities whose devotees are opposed to those harbouring witchcraft powers, although, this does not mean that such devotees are totally opposed to those harbouring the spirit of witchcraft. For instance, even though Òşun devotees and members of 'Egbé Òrun' (Comrades of Heaven) oppose the practice of witchcraft because of its dominant negativity, they insist that they are

permitted to participate in witchcraft provided they do so with the aim of ensuring progress, happiness and well-being of human beings (Eḽébuibḽon 2008: 35).

The power of herbal therapy in Yorùbá society cannot be underestimated, as traditional medicine remains a primordial means of healthcare among the people. The Yorùbá thus believe that the effective function of a particular traditional medicine or trado-medical care can only be in existence via the approval of the metaphysical power of 'àwḽon iyàmi' (my spiritual mothers, i.e. witches). This attracts a common Yorùbá trado-medical song thus:

Béwé bá n jé ó d'ḽwḽ iyàmi.
Àijé ewé ó ḽwḽ iyàmi.
Lḽlá iyàmi ewé wa á sḽ máa jé.

If medicine functions, it is the wish of my spiritual mother.
Non-functioning of a traditional therapy remains the handi-
work of my spiritual mother.
With the power of my spiritual mother our medicine shall
be efficacious.

The above song recounts both the good and bad influences of the metaphysical power of witchcraft on the function of any traditional medicine or therapy. Hence, the common saying 'òḽgùn kan ò lè dá jé léyìn eḽeḽe' (no medicine can be efficacious without the approval of witches). This shows that the roles of witches and wizards in Yorùbá traditional medicine cannot be overruled.

There is also a strong belief in the existence of retribution as regards the utilisation of witchcraft power among the Yorùbá. It is believed that whatever a witch or wizard carries out or commonly embarks on in his or her operations will determine his or her end of life. When a witch performs an inimical act, it is believed she will reap the consequences of her misdeeds or wrongdoings, hence, the common saying 'àjé máa n kà' (a witch recounts or confesses her wrong doings). However, any witch caught in this kind of situation is very likely to be stoned to death. Therefore, the Yorùbá hold the belief that witches and wizards need to be careful in their exercise of the metaphysical powers and if any of the members misuses the given power such metaphysical power will be withdrawn from such member and the member will also be punished by the society in question.

The metaphysical power of witchcraft may also be inherited. Èlẹ̀buibọ̀n (2008: 127) avers that “a man may pass it to his child just as a woman to her daughter,” hence, the common Yorùbá saying 'ó gbẹyẹ lówó iyá è' tàbí 'iyá è fi rópò ní' (she inherited the spiritual bird from her mother or her mother spiritually presented her as replacement). Considering these sayings and in concomitance with the belief system of the Yorùbá about inheritance, the Yorùbá generally believe that witchcraft power can be inherited.

The Yorùbá are known for their cultures and traditional religions through which their thoughts, values and beliefs about witchcraft are expressed (Adégòkè [2000: 123], Agboọ́lá [2005: 25], Agboọ́lá [2008: 98], Èlẹ̀buibọ̀n [2008: 127], Ọ̀pẹ̀fẹ̀yítímí [2009: 49-51]). Such beliefs can be said to have been enshrined and codified in the Ifá corpus, Yorùbá incantations (Ọ̀fọ̀) as well as in some Yorùbá mythological cognomens of witches and wizards. However, the belief about the existence of witchcraft power can also be traced from both the Christian and Islamic points of view. For instance, James (2001: 181) in the book of Galatians 5: 20-21 of the Holy Bible states thus:

- 20: Idolatory, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,
- 21: Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they, which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

The excerpt above encourages the act of rebuking witchcraft together with other vices in Christendom. Another cross-reference on witchcraft may be cited from the Islamic Holy Quran, which describes witches as “Ayn” (those with evil eyes) (See Surah al-Falaq and Surah an-Nas of the Holy Quran). Furthermore, Islamic articles, textbooks and Hadiths (Islamic books that present details of Quranic contents) have paved the way for accurate and detailed explication of the Quranic contents. Therefore, Saalih al-Munajjid presents a Fatwa (verdict) on the "Repentance of a Witch" in Fatwa No 69914 thus:

A practitioner of witchcraft may do something that makes him an apostate, so he commits Kufr⁵ and should be executed for his apostasy. Or he may practice witchcraft by doing something that does not constitute Kufr.

It is obvious from the above excerpt that the power of witchcraft can be discharged ambivalently. This is in concomitance with the beliefs about witchcraft as held by traditional worshipers, Christians and Muslims. These cross-references reflect the universal belief in the existence and reality of the power of witchcraft as a metaphysical element.

It is also obvious that witchcraft, as a metaphysical phenomenon, is not only experienced or featured in Africa but also practised in the western worlds like England, Scotland, etc. In a Shakespearean text (Macbeth) there are predictions by supernatural elements (witches) on how Macbeth would become the Lord of Glamis, Lord of Cawdor, and next king in Scotland. The witches' disappearance after the predictions manifests one of the characteristic features of witches and wizards. The prediction in a short while comes to reality, even though, via atrocious means, and this invariably showcases the existence and reality of the metaphysical element (witchcraft) in question.

4.2 Roles of Metaphysical Elements in Science and Technology

Science and technology is known to be means through which human beings present or display their skills; be it via physical or metaphysical means. This shows that it is a means through which we do anything (Rivers, 2015). So far we employ these metaphysical elements for different purposes as they have been deployed by Yorùbá literary writers in their literary texts, it could be argued out that human beings and metaphysical phenomena's relationship with science and technology is a revelation of our desires to be and means to satisfy our wants or needs.

The inception of science and technology brings about the presence of social change within our society. It is no more a news nowadays that there has been an exodus of white men into Africa, and especially into Yorùbá vicinity, for the learning of Ifá divination. This has brought about the promotion of Yorùbá socio-cultural heritage throughout the world. Ifá divination, via science and technology, has also been promoted to the stage of digitalization. Hence, the attempt for the introduction and incorporation of Ifá geometric operations or corpus in the computers and the internet. This has paved way for more scientific and technological advancement.

Dream, being one of the metaphysical phenomena that also serves as one of the veritable sources of information in our society, is globally considered to be a means through which several people, irrespective of their ethnic groups, acquire vital information on how to discover new inventions or otherwise necessary solutions to particular technological challenges as at when to provide the needful. This spiritual phenomenon (dream) is thereby regarded as a contributive measure towards the development of modern science and technology.

The development of modern science and technology reflects in the presence of film production nowadays. Several and different films have been produced to showcase the existence and reality of some metaphysical elements. Some of the Yorùbá films in question are titled 'Òsá ẹ̀lẹ̀yẹ̀' (Òsá: the witches), 'Orí' (Inner-head), and a host of others. Some of the films directly present and reveal secrecy about some hidden facts concerning metaphysical elements such as witchcraft/wizardry, inner-head, divination, etc. The presence of modern science and technology has given rise to the inventions of television, radio, film, etc., which in turn provides means to have a

wider coverage and publicity of these metaphysical phenomena in and outside our society.

Incantation, as a verbal art, has been discussed by several writers and scholars like Awólàlú (1981), Adéníjì (1982), Olatúnjí (1984), Fádáhùnsi in Momoh (1988), Òpèfèyítímí (1997), Oríloyè (2009), Orímóògùnjẹ (2018), etc., to the extent of pointing out its definitions, types, features, and various advantages derivable from such metaphysical phenomenon. It has also been studied, observed, and confirmed to be useful in contemporary science and technology simply because it has been discovered to be in use as supplementary to some of the trado-medical aids or otherwise known as alternative therapy in providing panacea towards healing different diseases or challenges encountered by people cut across the entire globe. For example, Adéníjì (1982) presents ‘Ìgèdè irinnà’ (Journey verbal art/incantation) along the chewing of one cereal of alligator pepper thus:

Iná roro ní sawo ojú alẹ.
Òòrùn yànyàn ní sawo Àgbálẹde.
Ìkarara kànkà ní sọmọ Yèyè Olókun.
Ojú Ìkarara kànkà kú rí’bi lálẹ odò.
Ìrẹtẹ-òfún máà jẹ kójúù mi ó rí’bi lóde ilẹ yí.

Burning fire is the priest for night.
Shining sun is the priest for Àgbálẹde.
Ìkarara kànkà is the offspring of sea goddess.
Ìkarara will never see evil in the sea.
Ìrẹtẹ-òfún (an Ifá corpus/chapter) should set me from seeing
evil in this town.

It could be inferred from the above that the alternative medicine together with its incantation can be attained and this consequently serves as a protective measure, especially when one is about to set for a journey to any destination. This can be regarded as one of the African means of protecting, insuring or securing one’s life against any impending danger or accident. This can also contribute immensely to the promotion of African and modern science and technology.

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have identified and examined the seven selected metaphysical elements that were selected for the study; viz: death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, and witchcraft/wizardry in relation to the Yorùbá worldview

or belief systems. Some characteristic features, types, origin, means of interpretation, modes of operation, functions, etc., of each of the metaphysical elements have also been identified and discussed.

It is obvious that these metaphysical elements exist and are realistic in nature. In the consideration of the existence and reality of the metaphysical elements, beliefs or otherwise belief systems of individuals or society matter most. It is the individual belief that tends to affect one's ways of life, interactions, attitudes, behaviours, reactions, etc. For instance, it is a societal belief among the Yorùbá that people are not expected to eat vulture (igún). That is the reason why people are of the common saying that 'a kì í pa'gún, a kì í jẹ'gún, a kì í fi'gún bọ'rí' (it is forbidden to kill vulture, it is forbidden to eat vulture, it is forbidden to use vulture to propitiate inner-head). This is in accordance with the norms of the Yorùbá society, while reverse may be the case when taking another society into consideration.

It is also within the belief system of Yorùbá that some of these metaphysical elements can be utilized in public places like 'oríta' (T-junction), market place, along the road, river bank, etc. Even though, some incantations can only be effectively discharged in the mid-night, at open places like 'T' and 'Square' junctions, either as supplements to medicine or singlehandedly utilized. It has also become a common habit among some internet fraudsters, popularly called 'Yahoo boys' that they use incantations with some traditional concoctions as rituals, even though at open or market place, to attain their financial means.

In sum, beliefs have become part of our life and usually affect it too. This invariably affects people's social life. Individual and societal beliefs thereby play major roles in the determination, affirmation, and consideration of the reality of metaphysical elements. This will assist in presenting the analysis of these metaphysical elements as they are explored and exploited by the literary writers in Yorùbá written literature in the subsequent chapter and for what effects and purposes.

Notes

1. A river/ocean in Lagos where various people have committed death via drowning or jumping into the Lagos Lagoon. For instance, a medical doctor, in person of Dr. Allwell Orji, committed suicide by jumping into the Lagos Lagoon on the Third Mainland Bridge on Sunday, March 19th, 2017 (See *Daily Post* of 21st March 2017 by Şeun Òpéjòbí and *Daily Trust* of March 22nd, 2017 by Yàhàyá Ibrahim and Eugene Agha).
2. One of the ancestral gods known not to be watched or seen by woman.
3. The time when individual was undergoing creation by God. That is, before one was born to life.
4. A well-known tree among the Yorùbá that is equally believed to be harbouring evil spirit. It is a sacred tree because some spirits reside in it as their abode, hence, some traditional worshippers and medical practitioners use it for the placement of their sacrifice. It is also used in carving or sculptural designs.
5. Kufr means disbelief. For instance, in Fatwa No. 69914 (Islamic verdict), learning witchcraft and practicing it constitute Kufr (disbelief).

CHAPTER FIVE

REFLECTIONS OF METAPHYSICAL ELEMENTS IN YORÙBÁ WRITTEN LITERATURE

5.0 Introduction

This chapter critically examines metaphysical elements in Yorùbá written literature. The aim is to highlight how metaphysical elements are explored and exploited in Yorùbá written literature and for what effects. Emphasis is on the seven selected metaphysical elements such as death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs and witchcraft.

5.1 Death

Death is perhaps one of the metaphysical elements frequently deployed in written Yorùbá literature for various purposes or goals by authors. Such goals might be to reflect the Yorùbá culture and worldview or to help a particular character out of a difficult predicament. One of such writers who explores and exploits this metaphysical resource is that versatile Yorùbá writer, D.O. Fágúnwà. In his novel, *Ògbójú Ọḍẹ Nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ* (2005), Àkàrà-ògùn, the prime or main character is in detention and so needs help to get out of the trouble. At this point, his dead mother appears to bail him out. Àkàrà-ògùn narrates his escape mechanism thus:

Lẹhìn èyini ni ó mú àkàrà dídùn kan fún mi tímo sì jẹ ẹ. Nígba tí mo jẹ ẹ tán ó ní kí n tẹlẹ òunmo sì tẹlẹ e, a kò sì rìn jìnà púpọ tí a fí dé ibiihò kan. Ibi ihò yí ni ó ti kí ọwọ bọ inú àpò rẹ tíó mú òkúta kan fún mi, òkúta náà n dán ó sì funfun bí ègbòn òwú. Ìyá mi náà sì fí àṣẹ fún mi bá yí pé bí òun bá ti lọ tán kí n sọ òkúta náà sínú ihò yí kí n sítẹlẹ e ní bíkíbi tí ó bá n yí lọ. Ó tún wí fún mi pẹlúbáyí pé bí mo bá ṣe bẹẹ n kò ní pé yojú sí gbaṅbaní apá ibòmíràn nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ níbití èmi yóòti bá ọḍẹ miràn pàdé tí ó ti sinà láti ojọ tí ó ti pé (40).

After this, my mother gave me a sweet bean caketo eat. She asked me thereafter to follow her andI did. We did not walk far before reaching ahole. It was at this point she brought out a stonefrom her pocket and gave it to me. The stone wasshining and whitish. My mother gave me thestone and instructed me to drop the stone, after herdeparture into the hole and follow it as it moved.

She also told me that I would get into the open placeof igbó Irúnmalè where I would meet anotherhunter that had missed his way a long time ago ifI adhered to her (my mother) instruction.

In his study of Fágúnwà's novel, Báṁgbóṣé (2007: 10) claims, in line with the belief of the Yorùbá, that the spirit of the dead “can reappear in their erstwhile human shape and help those they love.” Although, Àkàrà-ògùn does not say it is his mother’s spirit but her physical self which appeared to him. Of course, Fágúnwà's work is fiction and anything can happen as in Yorùbá folktales. Fágúnwà uses this device for keeping the story going and it is partly an acceptance of a plausible action based on Yorùbá belief (Báṁgbóṣé, 2007). Fágúnwà's exploitation of this is in consonance with the Yorùbá belief system that death is an invisible spirit that can reappear to communicate and solve human problems.

Caring for the dead is taken seriously by the Yorùbá. In Yorùbá culture, before a dead person is buried a grave has to be dug and the body has to be washed and covered with six yards of white cloth, hence the saying 'eni gbélè ní n pòkú mó, eni tí n sun'kún ariwo lásán ló n pa' (it is he who digs the ground that takes care of the dead; the one who is weeping is only making a noise). All of these preparations are made to help the dead person’s spirit to find refuge in heaven. Ajéwólé's (2013) narrative text, *Ìgbèyìn Laláyò Ní Ta* reflects this scenario in his narrative text when Òbìṣẹ̀san dreams of seeing a heavy heap of 'ilèpa' (red soil dug from a grave). The author presents this thus: “Ní fẹ̀rẹ̀ tí mo sì ní kí n tòògbé lọ náà n kọ, ẹ̀bí ilẹ̀pa ni mo lá àlá rí, tí wọ̀n wà á tì láti inú kòtò tí ó ga gègèrè tí ó sì pọ̀n rẹ̀súrẹ̀sú” (pg. 5) (As I was dozing early in the morning, I dreamt of seeing a heavy heap of red sand dug from a grave). The act of seeing 'ilèpa' is an indication or sign that Òbìṣẹ̀san's father, who has been ill, will definitely die soon. 'Ilèpa' itself is soil dug out of a grave. Therefore, the 'ilèpa' in this context represents an indexical sign of the impending occurrence of a metaphysical element (death). In the excerpt, Òbìṣẹ̀san's dream as an index of death is

employed by the author in the narrative text to pass information about the likely event of death that is about to happen in the family. In the Yorùbá society or culture 'ilèpa' is metaphor for death.

It is not only among the Yorùbá that there is life after death. Christians also hold the view that life continues after death. They (Christians) are of the view and saying that 'àjínde wà léyìn ikú' (there is resurrection after death). Ládipò (1970) in *Ọba Kò So* presents how death remains not the end of human life in accordance with Yorùbá traditional belief. This was manifested when the death's spirit of Şàngó (the then king of Ọyó Empire) appeared via the presence of thunder and lightning to the people of Ọyó Empire. The death's spirit of Şàngó then voiced out to people of Ọyó thus:

Şàngó: (látòkè) Bí mo ti şe f'Álára t'ó fi gún o,
 Bí mo ti şe f'Àjerò t'ó fi jò fún un,
 Bí mo ti şe t'Òràngún ilé Ìlá o
 T'ódee rẹ fi tòrò kinkin!
 Èmi Şàngó l'ó n sòrò o! (*Àrà n sán.*)
 Ará Ọyó àt'òmọ'lẹẹ Yorùbá o,
 È máa sìn mí lọ l'átóní lọ.
 Ñ ó bá yín şe é o, ñ ó bá yín şe é!

(Ohùn Şàngó kò sàjèjì sí wọn; gbogbo ará Ọyó sì gbàgbò pé Şàngó kò kú, Ó lọ sí ọrun ni. Nítorí nàà ni àwọn şe ké ní ohùn rara pé....)

Olori: Ọọọọba kò so oooo oooo!
 Ọọọọba kò so oooo oooo!
 Ọọọọba kò so oooo oooo! (60).

Şàngó: (from above) As I did for the king of Ará and made him prosper,
 As I did for the king of Ìjerò and made him wealthy,
 As I did for the Ọràngún of Ìlá
 That his town was peaceful!
 It is I, Şàngó, who is speaking! (Thunder strikes).
 Citizens of Ọyó and natives of the land of Yorùbá,
 Be worshipping me from today on!
 I shall help you.... I shall help you!

(Since Şàngó's voice did not sound strange to them; the Ọyó townspeople believed that Şàngó was not dead and that he had gone to heaven. That is why they cried aloud, with fervour,.....).

Wives: The king did not hang himself....!
 The king did not hang himself....!
 The king did not hang himself....!

The above excerpt shows how death remains not the end of human being in life. This is so in the case of Şàngó, despite dead, he still exists within human society and since then he had been regarded as one of the Yorùbá traditional gods that is worshipped by the traditional believers. This means that the spirit of death can visit someone or be conjured for any purpose people intend to carry out or manipulate it for. Hence, the common saying among the Şàngó worshippers that 'Şàngó kò so' (Şàngó didn't hang) or 'Ọba kò so' (King didn't hang). In sum, the spirit of Şàngó is still believed to be existing and felt among the people or believers of it. The author employs this metaphysical device to reinstate the Yorùbá belief in resurrection, invocation of spirit, and worshipping of deities.

It is obvious that a dead person may appear to living soul in both physical life and in dream. Such type of scenario occurs as Owólabí's (1983) *Ìsújú Ọsanyìn* presents how Sègilọlá is tormented physically and even in the dream by the spirit of Adéjọbí until she (Sègilọlá) died. This is due to the involvement of Sègilọlá and Adéjọbí in the act of making traditional medicine to rob people and banks to enrich themselves. Along the line, the traditional medicine 'ìsújú ọsanyìn' (invisible medicine) fails and Adéjọbí is caught and killed at the end but Sègilọlá escapes without knowing that the spirit of the dead of Adéjọbí would revenge by killing her (Sègilọlá) at last. The author says:

Òkú Adéjọbí: *Sẹ-gi-lọ-lá o dalẹ. O ò rántí Ìsújú Ọsanyìn mọ?
O rí owó o ẹ 'kú pa mí. Segilọlá, gbéra ní'lẹ
k'ó o dide. Iràwé kii dájó ilẹ k'ó sun òkè. Ó yá
dide, a jọ n lọ ni. Ẹwọ, ẹwọ Sègilọlá, o dalẹ mi,
o fi ìyà jẹ mí l'áyé tíí lọ dé ọrun. Ó yá dide nílẹ
o jé á máa lọ. (67-68).*

Sẹ-gi-lọ-lá, you betrayed me. Didn't you remember
Ìsújú Ọsanyìn (medicine for disappearance) anymore?
You killed me because of money. Sègilọlá, rise up.
Dry leaf will not seize to fall. Rise up, we are going
together. You, you, Sègilọlá, you betrayed me, you
punished me from earth to heaven. Rise up now and
let us go.

Owólabí shows that the dead can talk, command, and kill a living soul to revenge an unbearable event or past misdeed. This metaphysical element is also used to caution anybody that may intend to indulge in any form of wickedness, treachery and evil acts. Without being invoked, death is even considered as a metaphysical element that

can, on its own, judge or effect normal justice on whatever case on ground. For fairness and equity to reign in justice dispensation among the Yorùbá, the spirit of the dead can be invoked or conjured for necessary spiritual enquiry. The author therefore employs this device (death) for revelation, justice dispensation and revenge so as to discourage evil doers to desist from all forms of social ills.

Death is also a common feature in poetry. For instance, Adébòwálé (2003) in "Ikú", a poem that features in her anthology, *Ìgbàlonígbàákà*, presents death as a debt and must for all and sundry thus:

Gbèsè níkú.
Gbogbo wa la ó san án.
Bó pẹ̀ àkùkọ́ á kọ́ lẹ́yìn ọ̀kúnrin,
Bó yá àkùkọ́ á kọ́ lẹ́yìn obìnrin,
Gbogbo ayé l'okoo baba rẹ̀ yòò dìgbòrò gbẹ̀yìn.

Death is a debt.
Everybody will pay it.
Later, death will end it all.
Sooner, death will end it all.
Individual heritage shall be abandoned.

The point being made by the poet here is that death is an inevitable end and a debt for all to pay. This is in consonance with the Yorùbá belief that 'kò sẹ̀ni tí ò ní kú, kò sẹ̀ni tóko baba rẹ̀ ò ní dìgbòrò (everybody will die). This confirms the existence and reality of death. Besides, the excerpt emphasises death not only as a universal phenomenon but also as being universal and democratic in the sense that all humans will die, and the farm of everyone's father will become desolate. Death is also painted as a democrat because male and female, rich and poor, old and young etc. will die. In other words, death is a great leveller that spares no one. Hence, death will kill everyone.

There is the general belief that death comes to every individual at any time and any point. This showcases that there is a democratic thought about death. This indicates that everyone will share out of the cake or portion of extermination of life allotted by ikú (death). The issue or operation of death can be said and expected to be circulating to all and sundry, hence, it is not aristocratic for some of the people but remains democratic for all. Everybody will die; rich people will kick the bucket, likewise the

poor, elderly people will definitely answer the Supreme Being's call usually discharged by death, so also the younger ones will not escape from the hands of death. Death can therefore be described as the usual stigma put on every individual.

Despite the universal consideration of death as an invisible spirit that kills and makes people unhappy, Ọlábíńtán in *Áádóta àròfò* (1978:57) holds a contrary view that, though, death as a spirit could be regarded as an enemy to human beings and all other living organisms, it should be appraised. Hence, the poet sees death as human saviour that has saved uncountable people from witches and wizards, wickedness, illnesses, and so on. The poet states that:

*Bí ẹ bá ń joró, mà tan yín lóró.
B'áyé ń fí yín ẹẹfẹ, mà gbà yín silẹ.*

If you are suffering, I would relieve you.
If you are mocked, I would save you.

The poet also presents death as the spirit that saves human beings from the wrath of witchcraft and all forms of inflictions thus:

*Èmi ikú tí ń gbà yín lówó oşó.
Èmi ikú tí ń gbà yín lówó ikà.
Èmi ikú tí ń gbà yín lówó isẹ, lówó àrùn.*

I am death that saved you from the wizards.
I am death that saved you from the wicked.
I am death that saved you from poverty, from the sickness.

Death is seen not only as a disastrous metaphysical element, but also regarded as a relief from all human life predicaments such as suffering, mockery, witchcraft's infliction, poverty, illness, etc. It is evident from the above that death can also save one from continual sufferings of all kinds. Death is employed to stop the evil things. The author therefore employs the metaphysical device for safety purpose and to create in living people a sort of psychological relief. Yorùbá, in this context, usually refer to a dead person in this kind of situation as 'eni tó lọ sinmi' (one who has gone to rest).

Death, as a metaphysical element, is acknowledged not only as a must for every individual but regarded as a wicked spirit that doesn't only kill in one or few but extend its destructive tentacle to multiple killing. Therefore, Balógun's poem titled

"Ikú Akọgun" in Ọpádọtun's (2010) *Àwọn Akéwì Ẹ̀sà̀arò* presents how death is regarded as a wicked and merciless phenomenon. This is because it didn't spare the braves (the forces) that were on national assignment. This occurred in plane crash as when the forces were on their air trip. Death is described and presented to be in human physiological structure but doesn't take apology as at anytime it is about to exterminate life. The poet implored the dead ones to come back. Balógun in Ọpádọtun (2010:48-51) presents death in his poem thus:

Bàálù ló já lẹ̀fọ̀ ẹ̀lù,
 Wọ̀n sìpẹ̀ fún'kù, ikú ò gbọ̀pẹ̀
 Etí ọ̀tún ikú di
 Tòsì ẹ̀dá burúkú yìí ò gbọ̀ràn
 Aláilàànúlójú ikú kò sẹ̀ kò sẹ̀ ní.
 Ikú lòpin ẹ̀dá láyé, ẹ̀ jẹ́ á sẹ̀ sùúrù.
 Gbogbo akọgun tó kú ẹ̀ yalé wá.
 Ẹ̀ má ẹ̀sù̀ngbàgbé.
 Tawúsá ti Yìbò takọgun Yorùbá,
 Gbogbo ẹ̀yà pátá, gbogbo akọgun tó bọgun bààálù rìn,
 Ẹ̀ tètè wálé kẹ̀ ẹ̀ wá yà lódò ọ̀mọ.

It was plane that crashed that caused the sorrow.
 Death was appealed but remained adamant.
 Death remained deviant.
 That devilish agent is also deviant.
 He was so wicked to all and sundry.
 Death remains the end of human being, let us be patient.
 All the dead forces should reincarnate.
 Don't forget to do so.
 All Hausa, Igbo, and Yorùbá forces.
 All dead forces in the plane crash.
 Should quickly reincarnate.

The author therefore utilizes the metaphysical element to manifest the characteristics of death (wickedness and mercilessness). It is also used to showcase the existence of reincarnation as a means to revamp the hope of the dead's families.

5.2 Divination

A Yorùbá proverb says: 'àìgbófá là n wòkè, Ifá kan ò sí ní párá' (It is lack of knowledge that makes one gaze at the ceiling before rendering Ifá's panegyrics). Ifá, as a repository of knowledge and wisdom (Abímbólá [1976: 272-273]; Ẹ̀lẹ̀bùibọ̀n [2004: vii]), involves the use of codes as a meaningful system that organises signs to correlate signifier and signified (Òkẹwáńdẹ̀, 2017: 27). These codes are termed as

Odù Ifá (Ifá corpus) and are manifested in both main and sub-corpus varieties. It is generally believed that not all babaláwo (Ifá priest) are well-versed in the panegyrics of Ifá corpus and in such a situation any Ifá priest present at such scene may properly take over to rescue the situation. This scenario occurs in Adéoyè (1982: 35) when 'òkété (giant rat), who was mythologically reported to be an Ifá priest from heaven, expertly took over Ifá panegyrics from a non-knowledgeable Ifá priest at a yearly Ifá celebration at Ibùgbé kejì (second village). 'Òkété', in his expertise, presents the Ifá praises by bringing out its contents such as childbearing, success and enjoyment of life. The symbolic sign for 'Èjìogbè' (a main Ifá corpus) which surfaced on the Ifá tray was also printed by 'Òkété' to prove his mastery of the metaphysical element (divination) to all and sundry. Hence, the writer reflects the above in his narrative text thus:

Bí babaláwo tí wọ̀n bá lódò Oníbodè ti n d'Ífá, bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni Ifá n sunko; àṣé babaláwo ni kò mọ̀ odù t'ó jáde l'ójú ọ̀pọ̀n. Ọ̀rọ̀ yíí rí òkété lárapúpọ̀ bí ó sì tilẹ̀ jẹ̀ pé àlejò kì í ṣe òbéré, òkété bọ̀ sí iwájú Agbọ̀nmì-rẹ̀gún, ó sì kí àwọ̀n jànmọ̀ọ̀n; ó ní, 'Èyin oníbodè, ohun tó dára ní nájade l'ójú ọ̀pọ̀n, ṣùgbọ̀n ẹnì tí ẹ̀ pé kí ó wá d'Ífá yíí, kò tii mọ̀ awo, l'ómú un kí ó dàbí ẹnì pé Ifá n sunko. Èjìogbè l'odù t'ó jáde l'ójú ọ̀pọ̀n'. Bá yíí ni òkété k'ẹ̀nu bọ̀ Ifá t'ó sì bèrẹ̀sí í kì í pé:

Ọ̀tọ̀tọ̀tọ̀, ọ̀rọ̀rọ̀rọ̀, ọ̀tọ̀tọ̀ l'áá j'èpà,
 Ọ̀tọ̀tọ̀ l'áá jẹ̀ 'mumu,
 Ọ̀tọ̀tọ̀ l'áá f'olú esunsun s'ẹ̀nu.
 Ohun t'orí n̄'t'orí, ohun t'ẹ̀sẹ̀ n̄'t'ẹ̀sẹ̀.
 Ohun t'orí l'áá fún Ọ̀bamọ̀kin l'óde 'Ráyè,
 K'ólè baà f'ọ̀tọ̀tọ̀ ẹ̀niyàn ta 'ni l'òrẹ̀:
 L'ó dí'á f'ógo tẹ̀rẹ̀rẹ̀,
 Tí n gb'ogun rẹ̀'lú Gbẹ̀ndùgbẹ̀ndu;
 L'ó d'Ífá f'Oníbodè ọ̀mọ̀ ajeṅgbẹ̀rẹ̀mògún,
 Tí yóò gb'ójú kan j'ifà ayé.

The Ifá priest divining for Oníbodè was not an expert for he couldn't even recognise the Ifá corpus that surfaced. This situation irritated Òkété (giant rat) and he stepped forward to present the accurate panegyrics of the surfaced corpus. He greeted all and recounted that it was a good Ifá corpus that came into existence that day but the fault was as a result of the incapability of the previous Ifá priest. It was Èjìogbè that came into appearance on the divining tray. He presented the Ifá panegyrics thus:

Ọ̀tọ̀tọ̀tọ̀, ọ̀rọ̀rọ̀rọ̀, we eat groundnuts one after the other,
 We eat tiger-nut one after the other,

Léyìn èyí ni ó tún wá kojú sí àwọn Òrìṣà tí ó wà ní ìdí Osè, ó bèrè sí wúre. Léyìn náà ni ó mú obi tí wọn ti gbé sídìí igi náà nínú igbàádèmu funfun kan báyií, ó là á, ó sì fí ọwọ̀ òsì kó o; ó fí ọwọ̀ náàsí apá ọ̀tún àti sí apá òsì, ó sì da obi náà, lóòró. Gbogbo agbo kùnlọ̀ hùn nígbà tí obi náà balẹ̀. Kò yàn rárá (pg. 136).

He thereafter faced those gods at the baobab tree and started praying. He started praying. He later took a kola nut from the covered calabash placed at the bottom of the tree with his hands, splitting it and taking it with his left hand. He waved his hands to both right and left and then threw the kola nuts while standing. Everybody sighed when the kola nuts were thrown to the ground. Indeed, the throwing of the kola nut was unfavourable.

The sinister intents of the priest and the entire people of the town were thwarted when the reverse side of the cast kola nut shows up. This indicates that the god is not in support of human sacrifice and unjust dispensation of justice. Nowadays Yorubá culture forbids human sacrifice but it has to be noted that the divinatory process remains a thorough and reliable means of divination. The rejected tone of the cast kola nut upon human sacrifice attests to the fact that such means of divination is reliable and serves as a means to ending illegal killing within the society. The people's humming also manifests the linguistic rejection of the unwanted killing or human ritual by the majority of the society. This is so in that the victim has been seen to be innocent of the levied crime.

The future is believed to be revealed through Ifá divination and this is not only processed or executed via 'òpèlẹ̀' (Ifá divining chain) but in company of 'ìbò' (Ifá paraphernalia). Ifá paraphernalia consists of pieces of animal bones, tied or sown cowries and broken ceramics, etc. As Èṣù (the errand deity for all other deities) remains an assistant to Ọ̀rúnmilá (the god of wisdom and divination) in his priestly or sacerdotal duties, so is the Ifá paraphernalia to 'òpèlẹ̀' or 'ikin Ifá (Ifá divining nuts) which the babaláwo (Ifá priest) casts for findings and revelation of secrets (Ọ̀gúndèjì in Fálọ́lá & Akínyemí 2017). Ọ̀lábímítán (1993: 179) reports in *Orilawẹ̀ Àdìgún* during a periodic Ifá divination for the king of Owódé that there would be a change of government. In other words, the present government would be toppled. The exact day of the change of government was accurately discovered via the Ifá paraphernalia. The author presents this scenario thus:

Bàbá Lawẹ̀ ni ó ta á lólobó. Kì í ẹ̀ pé òun súnmọ̀ àwọn ológun, ó ti; Ifá Ọ̀rọ̀rún tí Kábìèsí Owódé máa n dá ni ó júwe ị̀ş̀lẹ̀ ọ̀hún. Ifá ni Ị̀jọ̀ba yóò yípadà. Ị̀gbà tí wọn ìbò láti mọ̀ àkókò tàbí ị̀gbà, ìbò mú ọ̀jọ̀ kẹ̀ta tí wọn dífá. Ị̀lẹ̀ ọ̀jọ̀ náà kò sì sù tí ị̀ş̀ ẹ̀ bàbá Lawẹ̀fi kan ọ̀mọ̀ rẹ̀ lára. Ẹ̀ş̀ẹ̀ş̀ẹ̀ tí Lawẹ̀ ti gbọ̀ ị̀ş̀ ẹ̀ bàbá rẹ̀ ni ó ti mọ̀pẹ̀ àwọn ológun ni yóò gba ị̀jọ̀ba nítorí kò sí ẹnì tí ó le gbà á bẹ̀nì pàjáwírì àfi àwọn ológun.

Lawẹ̀ was informed by his father. Lawẹ̀ is not close to the military, no; the message about the incidence was revealed through a periodic Ifá divination by the king of Owódé. Ifá revealed that there would be a change of government. The exact time of the change was determined to be the third day of divination by the Ifá paraphernalia. It was that day Lawẹ̀' s father sent a message to Lawẹ̀ of the forthcoming event.

As soon as Lawẹ̀ got the message, he definitely knew that the government would be toppled by the military because nobody else could quickly topple the government like that.

The above confirms the reality of Ifá divination as one of the existing means of foretelling future events. Although Ifá may be divined by an expert, its exact interpretation is decoded through its 'ìbò', which is a symbolic sign that reveals and interprets the spiritual inheritance or messages from Ifá via the babaláwo (Ifá priest) to the client (oníbèèrè). The divinatory process is systematic, logical and symbolic in nature. Ifá divination as a geomantic system is popular not only in Yorùbáland but elsewhere nowadays, hence, the attempt by the author to explore and exploit divination as a metaphysical element which popularises and proclaims the socio-cultural heritage of the Yorùbá as an ancient people whose reach spreads throughout the universe. The import of the use of the Ifá paraphernalia is to bring out the exact response to the client's request, yearnings and aspirations and proffer necessary solution to any challenge facing the clients on board. The absence of these paraphernalia or its use may render the diviner to be in a state of disarray or guessing, hence, the client may be misled.

Apart from Ifá divination via the use of divining chain for foretelling future and other purposes, the use of kolanuts is also employed by Yorùbá for divinatory acts. In Fágúnwà's *Ògbójú Ọ̀dẹ̀ Nínú Ị̀gbó Irúnmalẹ̀* (2005), Àkàrà-ògùn uses split kola nuts to find out about his adventure into 'Ị̀gbó Irúnmalẹ̀' (*The Forest of a Thousand*

*Daemons*²). The use of split kolanuts, a simpler version to the use of the divining chain which is a more elaborate system, is practised by Àkàrà-ògùn as he comments thus:

Mo mú ọ̀kan tí ó tóbi jù nínú wọ̀n mo bó o, ó jẹ̀ ajóòópá,
mo sì paá, ó ní awẹ̀ mẹ̀rin. Nígba tí ó sì ti jẹ̀ pé irú obì bẹ̀ẹ̀
dára fún pípá ọ̀bọ̀bọ̀n, mo gbé ọ̀bọ̀n mi tì, mo fí obì ọ̀bọ̀n,
ş̀gbọ̀n nígba tí mo da obìnáà, kò fọ̀ rere; ş̀é, bí yòò bá fọ̀
rere, ó yẹ̀ kí awẹ̀ méjì da ojú dé kíméjì si ojú sí? Ş̀gbọ̀n kò
rí bẹ̀ẹ̀ fún ọ̀n (pg. 22).

I took the biggest among the kola nuts, I removed its coat, split it and found it to be of four lobes. So far such kola nut is good for divination, I used it for divination but when the kola was thrown result. If the kola nut will forecast goodwill it would have been two lobes of it face down and two lobes face up.

The way and manner in which the Yorùbá use kolanuts for divination is shown in the above excerpt with the sole aim of finding out and understanding future occurrences metaphysically. The employment of this kind of divinatory means is a confirmation that it is not only one kind (Ifá divination) of divination that Yorùbá people have in resolving their life challenges or making spiritual findings. This invariably shows how diversified Yorùbá people are in their knowledge and practice of divination. An individual can employ this practice for self-guidance.

Divination has also been employed in Yorùbá literary texts for achieving specific goals. As noted earlier, Ifá is the wisdom lore of the Yorùbá and Ifá priest is a priest, poet, medicine man (traditional healer) and visioner. People go to him for consultation or spiritual guidance over their problems and what they desire from God, known as Olódùmarè. Ifá divination is copiously employed in Yorùbá written literature. For example, in Ọ̀lábímtán's (2005) *Kékeré Èkùn, Àdùfẹ̀* (Bádéjọ's wife), who had a baby late in life, goes to consult an Ifá priest for a solution to her apparent barrenness. The Ifá priest recites the following to Àdùfẹ̀ from the Ifá corpus:

Iná kú f'èerú bojú,
Ọ̀gèdè kú fọ̀mọ̀ rẹ̀ rọ̀pò
Ló dífá fún Èlẹ̀mọ̀rò.
Nígba tí ó n lálásí ọ̀mọ̀.
Ifá l'èlẹ̀mọ̀rò, kí ló n pa ọ̀ lẹ̀kún?
Èlẹ̀mọ̀rò, kí ló n tẹ̀rí rẹ̀ kodò kiri?

Şebí bíná kú eérú ní í fí í bojú.
B'ógèdè kú ọmọ rẹ ní í fí í rópò (80).

When fire dies, it covers itself with ashes.
Rotten banana is replaced by its sucker.
Ifá divination was performed for Èlémọ̀rò
When seriously in need of a child.
Ifá asks Èlémọ̀rò, what is making you to cry?
Èlémọ̀rò, what makes you think always?
It is when fire dies that it is covered with ashes.
If banana dies it is replaced by its sucker.

Through Ifá divination the priest is able to diagnose Àdùfẹ́'s problem to be barrenness. Having discovered the source of the problem through divination, the Ifá priest provides a solution, which in this case entails an offering of sacrifice. Subsequently a baby boy called Àjàyí is born. This confirms the role of the Ifá priest not only as a diviner but also as a physician. The literary effect of this device is to show or demonstrate Ifá divination as an effective cultural practice aimed at solving virtually all human problems among the Yorùbá. Besides this, the Yorùbá believe that ẹ̀şẹ-Ifá constitutes the wisdom lore of the people.

In *Kékeré Èkùn*, Ayawo, Àlàbí's mother, in her struggle to have more babies, follows a relative to Ràìmì Ewédọ̀gbọ̀n (an Ifá priest). Ràìmì Ewédọ̀gbọ̀n engages in Ifá divination thus:

Òpómúléró, ọmọ Akin,
Àdimúlà awo Ifẹ,
Wòntíwòntíwòntí, kàkà k'á bí ẹgbẹ̀rún ọ̀dẹ,
K'á bí ọ̀kan ọ̀gá, ó tó.
L'ó dífá fún ààso
Nígba tí ó n wá ẹnì kún'ra.
Wọ̀n ní Ààso, ọ̀kansa l'ọ̀gá.
Ààso, má mà wá méjì o.
Ààso ni k'Órúnmílà má ẹ̀'bi
Rere ni kó ẹ (72).

Òpómúléró, the offspring of Akin,
Àdimúlà, the priest of Ifẹ,
Wòntíwòntíwòntí, instead of bearing thousands of stupid ones,
Having a supreme one is better.
Divine for Ààso
When finding partners.
They tell that a supreme is the best.
Ààso, don't look for a partner.

Ààso tells Ọ̀rúnmilà not to do bad things.
He should do good.

Unlike the previous occasion when the Ifá priest was able to help Àdùfẹ́ (Bádéjọ's second wife) out of her problem of barrenness through Ifá divination, Ayawo is not as lucky as she is informed that she is destined to have only one child in life. Through divination, she is assured that her only child (Àlàbí) is worth more than a thousand children, as he will live to become great and survive her. Thus, Ifá is here presented not only as the wisdom lore but also as a guidance counsellor and spiritualist.

For every occurrence or incidence, whether benevolent or malevolent, there must be a cause. This is one of the reasons why Yorùbá tend to make spiritual findings over every occurrence. Divination is employed in Ọ̀pádòtun's *Ìyàwó Ifá* (2005) on various occasions among which an Ifá corpus, ọ̀wọ̀nrín méjì (a main Ifá corpus) and ọ̀túá-òríkò (a minor Ifá corpus) was casted by Baba Awo (an Ifá priest) to reveal the causes of accident that occurred to Fáníyì in which Stella, Fáníyì's personally chosen better-half), lost her life. The Ifá priest revealed that two reasons were responsible for the hazards, namely; (i) Fáníyì has been deviant to Ifá (ii) Fáníyì has also offended his parents. The author presents this via Baba Awo's Ifá panegyrics thus:

Baba Awo: Nígbà tí mo dá Ifá, ní àkókó a rí Olúàgàgá.
A tẹ ẹ lésẹ kan òsì Ọ̀wọ̀nrín.
Lẹ̀ẹ̀kẹ̀jì, a rí Ọ̀túáraríkò.
A rí ikò ikò n sá.
A ríhun tí n ẹ ni a tún n bèèrè.
Tí n bá ní puró, tí n kò sì ní ẹ̀kẹ́ (P. 73-74).
When I divined, firstly, I saw Olúàgàgá.
Ọ̀wọ̀nrín, as a mark on the left side.
Secondly, we got Ọ̀túáraríkò.
We saw a representative; the representative was running
away.
We knew our problem but still asking of it.
If I will not lie, and will not be dubious.

Though, the Ifá corpus divined above is a short one but loaded with what led to the hazard (accident) that occurred to both Fáníyì and Stella in which Stella lost her life. It is very glaring that Fáníyì had been mandated by Ifá (deity) before to marry Fáníkẹ̀ẹ́ but Fáníyì defied the instruction, which resulted in sequence of hazards and irregularities in Fáníyì's life. The above Ifá corpus is a flashback to the previous

instruction given to Fáníyì. The knowledge and lesson shared from the metaphysical element (divination) employed in this context is that one has to be obedient and humble to his or her parent or otherwise the elderly ones. It also manifests that words of Ifá usually come to reality irrespective of when its fulfillment will be in existence. Hence, such metaphysical device is utilized for discovering the secrets or causes of an incidence and also serves as a warning measure against disobedience.

Ifá divination is one of the popular metaphysical elements that does not only contain panegyrics about human beings but also concerns with animals. Therefore, Ògúnníran (2007) employs divination to explain and juxtapose the behavioural attitudes of two animals (snake and big rat). The author presents this thus:

- Ààrẹ-Àgò:** O ò mò p'óriire s'agbà inúure?
Ire nìkan l'oriire kó bá 'ni,
O 'ò rántí b'áwọn babaláwo tí s'enu rere k'ifá.
Wõn a ní:
'Báa bá n'inúure l'áníjù
Ibi l'omọ aráyé fi í sù 'ni:
A díá fún Òkété
Tí n lọ rẹẹ tẹ ọkà n'Ifá!
- Jagun:** Bẹẹ ni. Ọkà fíbi sù olóore. (5).
- Ààrẹ-Àgò:** You don't know that good luck supersedes generosity.
Good luck brings only success to somebody,
You don't remember the way Ifá priests divine.
They will divine thus:
If we are too generous
It makes people to be ingrate to us:
Ifá is divined for big rat
When going to initiate cobra!
- Jagun:** Yes. Cobra subsequently became ingrate.

It could be deduced from Ifá corpus above that it is not only human characters that are identified and known in Ifá but the behavioural attitudes of animals such as snake and big rat are pointed out. The divination employed manifests and preaches an act of ingrate which is also noticeable and common of human beings as a bad attitude existing in the society. It therefore teaches us to be generous and kindhearted. In addition, good inner-head (oriire), regarded as a kind of inner-head (a metaphysical element), is also mentioned in the excerpt and placed over kindheartedness or generosity. Hence, the belief of Yorùbá in the supremacy of inner-head among all the existing gods, goddesses or deities in Yorùbá cosmology is clearly affirmed. The

author therefore employs divination for pedagogical purpose of teaching and preaching good characters and eschewing an act of ingratitude.

It is not only in biblical version that we have 'omọ onínàákúnàà' (prodigal son) (see Luke 15: 11-32) but also occurring in Yorùbá traditional religion. In Olábímtán's *Àádóta Àròfò* (1978), Aníwọnikùn, despite being warned by the Ifá priests, makes sale of all his properties but regrets his action at the end. The poet narrates this by saying that:

*Agbéléta, awo Ogbó.
Agbónàtà, awo Mèsò.
Asohun-iní-nù-bí-òkò, awo isun.
L'ó difá fún Aníwọnikùn.
Nígbà tí ó gbé ilé àt'ònà sórí àtẹ.
Ifá l'ómọ Akin, má ta ilé, má ta ònà.
Nítòrí ẹni talé á d'eni itanù.
Eni ta ònà, á d'eni àbùkù.
Eni talé tònà a d'eni itilẹ l'áwùjọ. (40-41).*

The seller of house, the Ogbó priest.
The seller of property, the Mèsò priest.
One who throws away the property, the isun priest.
They performed Ifá divination for Aníwọnikùn.
When displaying property for sale.
Ifá instructed him not to sell the property,
Because he who sells property will be isolated.
He who sells property shall be embarrassed.
He who sells property shall be relegated in the society.

The author in the above poetic excerpt utilizes the device to reveal the extravagance of the client, for warning purpose and for the prediction of the future unbearable results of one's lavish spending. The client's defiance to the priest's advice goes thus:

*Ẹ jù mí sílẹ.
Ẹ jẹ kí ñ ta'lé bàbá mi. (41).*

Leave me alone.
Let me sell my father's house.

This creates suspense for the reader who is interested in knowing what will be the implication of being defiant. The consequence of the client's stubbornness and defiance reflect in the following:

L'ómọ Akin bá bínú.

*L'ó bá Ifájà.
È jòórè, ẹ jẹ o tẹ. (41).*

And the brave guy became angry.
He fought with Ifá.
Leave him, let him be disgraced.

The client's irrational act led to his being disgraced as predicted in the Ifá corpus. Therefore, the metaphysical element employed predicts futuristic event, gives advice and warning on any form of indiscipline or misdeed.

Divination as a metaphysical element is employed by Ológundú (2009) in such a way that the poet describes the status of Ifá within Yorùbá society. The poet reveals how Ifá is appraised, addressed and regarded as an overseer of every endeavour in life. The author presents thus:

Ifá Olókun, asòròdayò.
A tórí ẹni tí ò sunwòn ẹ.
Iwájú ọpọn o gbó,
Èyìn ọpọn o gbó,
Olùmú lẹ̀tùn-ún, ọlẹ̀kànràn lósi,
Ààrin ọpọn ita ọrun.
Má fíbi pe ire,
Má fire pe ibi,
Má fòlòlò fohùn.
Bó bá ti rí ni kó o wí.
Ìwọ awo, òun awo, èmi ọgbèrì. (62).

Ifá, the owner of the sea, he who makes one happy.
The mender of one's destiny.
Listen, the frontage of divination tray,
Listen, the back of divination tray,
The chooser at both right and left sides,
The centre of the divination tray and heaven.
Don't misinterpret bad for good,
Don't misinterpret good for bad,
Don't hide for me.
Just hit the point for me.
You are a priest, he is a priest, but I am a layman.

The above excerpt shows the importance and relevance of Ifá divination among the Yorùbá. It is regarded as the pathfinder for all human endeavours or challenges. This manifests how popular and paramount Ifá divination is among the Yorùbá. It is also observed that it is through one's destiny (Orí-inú) that one's fate can be determined

and provided with necessary needs. This could be interpreted as a means (Ifá divination) through which human beings can be relieved of their psychological upset. The metaphysical element is employed by the author as a fact-finder and means for revealing futuristic events.

Divination is also employed in Awé's (2010) *Àpótí Alákàrà* to find out the reason for psychological disturbance encountered by Àbẹ̀ò (Àńwòó's mother) when Àńwòó was found wanton and not seen at home for two months. The author presents this when Fágbohùn (Ifá priest) chanted an Ifá corpus thus:

Fágbohùn: Pa igúnnugún bọfá,
 Awo ilé Alára,
 Pàwòdì bosè,
 Awo òkè Ìjerò.
 Pàtiòro bọgún,
 Aláyà bí ọ̀bẹ̀ ikunran.
 Agbọ̀nmi ní í wólé ẹ̀ja.
 Apàjùbà ní í balé àparòò jẹ,
 Òlùgbóngbó tìrìlà la fi í sẹ̀gun ògúlùntu.
 Bá á báá jẹun gbọ̀ningbọ̀nin,
 Ìlẹ̀kùn gbọ̀ningbọ̀nin là á tì.
 A díá fún Ọ̀rúnmilà
 Níjọ́ t'Ífá ó joyè oòjìire.
 Ọ̀ba aládé, o ò jìire lónìí bí?
 Àbó o ò jìire?
 Ọ̀pùùrùpuuru àparò,
 O ò jìire o.
(Ó wò sùn diẹ̀ kí ó tó tún sọ̀rọ̀.)
 Ọ̀rọ̀ kan ló n dún ọ̀. Ó dà bí ẹ̀ni pé wàhàlà ọ̀mọ̀ àbí tọ̀kọ̀
 n dà ọ̀ láàmú. (77).

Fágbohùn: Kill vulture to appease Ifá,
 The priest of house of Alára.
 Kill hawk to appease girth tree.
 The priest of Òkè-Ìjerò.
 Kill tassel bird to appease the god of iron.
 One who has chest like meat knife.
 Water drainer destroys the fish abode.
 Weed cutter destroys the partridge's residence.
 Club is used to conquer the sand mould.
 If we intend to face a challenge,
 We need to be fully prepared.
 Ifá divination is made for Ọ̀rúnmilà.
 On the day he will attain the chieftaincy post of good-day.
 Crowned king, do you wake up well?

Or you don't wake up well?
 The flight of partridge,
 Hope you wake up well.
(He pauses before talking more.)
 You are pondering on an issue. It seems as if you have
 childor husband's problem.

The employment of the above metaphysical element assists the client (Àbẹ̀ọ) to find solution to how Àńwòó, her lost daughter, would be seen. This invariably heightens and brightens the hope of every individual that divination (Ifá divination) is a means through which human irregularities or challenges can be corrected or solved. Therefore, the author uses the metaphysical element for revelation and provision of solution to the client's challenges. Hence, such metaphysical device serves as a means towards possessing psychological relief over nagging encounter.

5.3 Dream

Dream can also be employed as a narrative device as it has featured in Fágúnwà's novels by Báṁgbóṣé (2007). It has been explored and exploited by several other Yorùbá literary writers for different purposes. For example, Òní in *Ojú Rí* (2001) employs dreams as a means of foretelling the future and for symbolically portraying Yorùbá traditional beliefs. In *Ojú Rí* (2001), the protagonist, Ògúngbè mí, dreams of being so heavily drenched in the rain to the extent that he almost goes deaf. He takes this to be a bad dream and narrates it to his wife, Rúùtù, who then advises him not to go to work that day to avoid the danger already revealed in the dream. However, Ògúngbè mí ignores the advice. As the narrative goes:

Ojọ burúkú èsù gbomi mu. Ni ojọ yíi ku òlá,
 Ògúngbè mí lá àlá kan. Ó rí ara rẹ nínú òjò. Òjò pa á,
 etí rẹ fẹ́rẹ́ di lójúran. Ó mò pé àlá burúkú niyí. Ó mò
 pé òrán ẹkún àti òṣé yóò ṣẹlẹ́ nílẹ́ òun láipẹ́ sùgbón kò
 mò ògangan ibi tí yóò ti yọ gan-an. (16).

It was a bad day. A day to the incident, Ògúngbè mí had a dream. He saw himself in the rain. He was so heavily drenched in the rain that he almost became deaf. He knew it was a bad dream. He knew a disastrous occurrence was imminent in his household, but he did not know it will happen.

Further, the narration reads as follows as Ògúngbè mí narrates the dream to his wife, Rúútù, who advises him not to go to work:

Nígba tó jí tó rọ àlá ọ̀hún fún iyàwó rẹ̀, eléyíi ùn ní kò gbọ̀dọ̀ lẹ̀ ibi-iṣẹ̀ lójọ̀ nàà. Ògúngbè mí kọ̀. (16).

When he woke up and narrated the dream to his wife, the wife instructed him not to go to work that day. Ògúngbè mí refused.

Ògúngbè mí will later regret his refusal to heed his wife's warning. In this case the dream had been a source of information and warning to Ògúngbè mí and a source of suspense for the reader. Obedience, as part of Yorùbá traditional ethics, is thus preached in the employment of the dream, which symbolizes an impending bad omen and a warning sign for Ògúngbè mí to take caution and heed other's advice. Hence, a Yorùbá adage says 'fifi ọgbọ̀n ọ̀lọgbọ̀n ṣọgbọ̀n ni kì í jẹ́ kí á pe àgbà ní wèrè (It is because an elder heeds advice that we regard him as wise). Against this backdrop, Ògúngbè mí ends up a victim of his own dream by having his hand amputated by the printing machine at his work place the following day. The author, apart from using the dream to foretell the future, also employs the metaphysical device to show the importance of obedience and the repercussion of stubbornness and disobedience.

Dreams also bring pleasant information. For instance, in Ọ̀lábímtán's *Kékeré Èkùn* (2005), Bádéjọ dreams that Àdùfẹ̀ (his second wife) gave birth to a baby boy whom he named Àjàyí. The writer narrates this through Bádéjọ thus:

Lálẹ̀ ọjọ̀ kan ó lá àlá. Àdùfẹ̀ bímọ ọkùnrin, ó sì sọ ọmọ náàní Àjàyí. Nígba tí ó jí, ó sọ àlá rẹ̀ fún Àdùfẹ̀, inú Àdùfẹ̀ dùnpúpọ̀. Ṣùgbọ̀n bí ó ti n rọ̀ àlá nàà ló n rántí àwọ̀n nńkan t'óti gbàgbé (92).

One night, he dreamt Àdùfẹ̀ gave birth to a boy and he named the baby Àjàyí. When he woke up he narrated the dream to Àdùfẹ̀ and Àdùfẹ̀ was highly delighted. But as he was narrating the dream, he was also remembering all that he had forgotten.

This is a good dream that foretells the coming of a bouncing baby boy into the family, thus transforming Àdùfẹ̀ from barrenness to fruitfulness. The narration reads thus:

Okùnrin ni Àdùfẹ́ bí. Àjàyí ni wọn sọ ó nítorí pé ó dojúdéni nígbà tí wọn bí i, orúkọ isàmì rẹ̀ sì ni Júliòsì.(123).

Àdùfẹ́ gave birth to a baby boy. The baby was named 'Àjàyí' because he was face down at birth. His Christian name was Julius.

The dream about the sex and birth circumstance of the baby paints a picture of traditional Yorùbá society. Owing to his being born face down, the boy is named Àjàyí; such a name is known as 'orúkọ àmútòrunwá' (in-born or natural name) since the child's natural birth circumstance is unusual. In the text the deployment of dreams is part of the author's intention to promote the sociocultural heritage of the Yorùbá

One may also be guided through dreams. In Owólabí's (1978) *Ori Adé Kì í Sùn'ta*, for example, the author employs a dream to predict the challenges that will confront voyagers heading for Gbékúba from Igbódolà. One of the voyagers, Ládépò, dreams of a big physical encounter in which several lives are lost. According to him:

Ní ojú àlá ni mo rí i pé ìjà òlá kan bẹ̀ sílẹ̀ nínú ìrìnàjò wa yí. Ìjà náa kì í ṣe láàrin wa o, ṣùgbọ̀n láàrin àwa àti àwọn èlòmírànni. Nínú ìjà yí òkú sùn lẹ̀ bẹ̀rẹ̀, ibi tí àwọn ọ̀tá tí ò lé mi tí èmináà sì ti ò sáré àsádíjù, ṣùgbọ̀n síbẹ̀ tí ọ̀wọ̀ wọn fẹ̀ tó mi ni mo tìkẹ̀ já sí ayé bẹ̀ (26).

I dreamt of seeing a big uproar in our journey. The fighting was not among us but between other people and us. In the fight, many lives were lost. I woke up as at the time the enemies pursuing me were about to capture me.

This dream, though nightmarish, foretells the dangerous encounters the voyagers are going to have in their journey, although they will be victorious in the end. The author thus uses this dream to prepare the voyagers for the task ahead. A dream in which the battle had been lost would have lowered their spirits, the result of which would have been a defeat in the battle.

In Délànò's *Aiyé D'ayé Òyìnbó* (1970) Àṣàbí dreams of seeing Abòdẹ̀rìn (Àṣàbí's neighbour), who directs her (Àṣàbí) to take particular paths in the dream. Àṣàbí, also in her dream, sees Ọ̀báfúnkẹ̀, her deceased sister, who asks whether Àṣàbí has met their father along her way and also advises her to be humble and extremely careful always. The author presents this thus:

Lí ojú àlá mi mo rí Abòdẹ̀rìn, ọ̀dẹ̀ erin, tí ń gbé ìtòsì ilé wa. Mo kúnlẹ̀, mo kí i, ó kí mí, ó wí pé: "Àṣàbí ọ̀gò". Mò ń lọ. Mo dé ikóríta tí ó loádúgbò ọ̀mọ̀ iyá ọ̀lọ̀bàtálá. Mo tẹ̀ṣẹ̀ dúró síí, mo wo ẹ̀yìn, mo tún ríAbòdẹ̀rìn, ń kò mọ̀ pé ó ń tẹ̀lé mi láti ẹ̀ẹ̀kan; ìgbà náà gùn púpọ̀ lójú milójú iran náà, ó tilẹ̀ fẹ̀rẹ̀ tó odidi ojọ kan. Àlá mà gò o. (11-12).

I saw Abòdẹ̀rìn, an elephant hunter, our neighbour, in my dream. I knelt down to greet him and he reciprocated by calling my name: "Àṣàbí ọ̀gò"(a praise name). As I was going, I got to a three crossroads leading to the area of Ọ̀lọ̀bàtálá's child. I saw Abòdẹ̀rìn again without knowing he was following me all the while; it seems it was a long period in my dream, almost a full-day scenario. Dreams are foolish.

Àṣàbí's dream progresses thus:

Léyìn náà mo pàdẹ̀ baba mi, mo kí i, ọ̀un náà kí mi, ó kì mí délé, orí mi siwú ràgàjì. Ó kojá lára mi. Mò ń lọ síbẹ̀. Lẹ̀hìn náà, mo pàdẹ̀ ẹ̀gbọ̀n mi Ọ̀bà-fùnkẹ̀ tí ó kú níjẹ̀lọ̀, lójú iran náà kò jọ ẹ̀ni tí ó kú, a jọ kára, a yọ kára. Ó bimí bí mo pàdẹ̀ bàbá wa, mo ní kété nísinsin yí ni mo pàdẹ̀ rẹ̀, ọ̀un náà ni à ń wo ipàkọ̀ rẹ̀ lọ yí.

Thereafter I met my father. I greeted him and he responded. He showered me with praise poetry to the point of inclination. He bye-passed me. I didn't stop going. After then, I met my sister (Ọ̀bàfùnkẹ̀) who died some time ago. She didn't resemble a dead person. We exchanged greetings. She asked whether I met our father and I replied, "I just met him; in fact, he's the one walking ahead."

The author in the above excerpt employs dream to showcase how pedagogical it is. This is so in that the lessons on how to be humble, cautious, and obedient were taught. The teaching by a deceased sister to Àṣàbí indicates the appearance of the dead not only in real life but also in the dream, which earns a function of dream that information can be delivered through a dream. The metaphysical element is thereby employed for warning purpose and futuristic information dissemination.

The Yorùbá are a people endowed with a rich culture and a language that calls for deep thoughts and interpretations. In *Délànò's Aiyé D'aiyé Òyìnbó* (1970), Àṣàbí had a dream in which some Yorùbá proverbs were revealed thus:

Ní alẹ̀ ojọ̀ nàà ni mo sùn, mo lá àlá kan. Mo rí bàbá mi Balógun, ó rojú sími, mo kí i, ó dáhùn díẹ̀ báyii, mo súnmọ̀ on, mo ní; "Bàbá kí ni ẹ̀ tí ẹ̀ ẹ̀bẹ̀ẹ̀ sí mi?" Ó ní: "Kòkòrò tí ó jẹ̀ ẹ̀fọ̀ jàrẹ̀ ẹ̀fọ̀, iwọ̀nba ní ewéko dára mọ̀". Mo ní itumọ̀ òwe yìí? Ó tún dáhùn pé: "Bánúso má bá èniyàn sọ, èniyànkò sí mọ̀, ayé d'èké". Mo fẹ̀ tún bèrè itumọ̀ òwe nàà ni mo tají. (91).

I slept on the very night and dreamt a dream. I saw my father (Balógun), who frowned at me. I greeted him and he slightly responded. I moved close to him and asked, "My father, why did you react in such a manner to me?" He said, "The vegetable insect was not to be blamed for grazing the vegetables. "I asked of the meaning of the proverb and he replied", "Keep your secret to yourself" As I was trying to ask for the meaning of the proverb, I suddenly woke up.

Balógun is trying to tell Àsàbí in this dream, through the proverbs, that she should be extremely cautious in life. In the dream there is also a prediction of what will happen to Àsàbí and her husband (Baálẹ̀), as the Chief British Officer (Ajẹlẹ̀-àgbà) has plans to arrest, try and punish Baálẹ̀. Baálẹ̀, however, makes light of the dream after Àsàbí narrates it to him. According to the story:

Ìgbà tí ilẹ̀ mọ̀, a dá ọ̀rọ̀ nàà sọ. Şùgbọ̀n Baálẹ̀ kò pè é ní ñnkankan danindanin. Ó ní a máa ẹ̀ni bẹ̀ẹ̀ nígbà mírán" (92)

When it is morning, we discussed the issue again, but Baálẹ̀ took it with levity. He said it sometimes happens like that.

Unfortunately, Àsàbí's dream comes to pass as Baálẹ̀ is actually arrested and handcuffed. This turn of events suggests that dreams do come true and are sometimes a way of warning us to prepare against imminent danger or an impending negative occurrence as seen in the dream. Therefore, the device is employed to give advice, warning, guidance, and create awareness for the bearer to beware of enemies. Furthermore, the exploration and exploitation of dream in this context is an indication that an impending problem is already solved. People say 'ogun tó ti sẹ̀ ni a fí n hàn lójú àlá' (a solved problem is the one revealed in the dream). This gives a kind of psychological relief and confidence to the victim so that he can match on to victory.

As noted already, dreams may be interpreted in different ways. While some dreams have direct meanings, others have opposite meanings and yet others have symbolic meaning. Against this backdrop, Awóyèlé's (2007) *Omọ Oníyán* has an account of how Tinúkẹ dreams of seeing their house on fire. Tinúkẹ saw his father (Dẹwẹ) setting fire to roast a yam but nobody was aware of how such fire led to an inferno that engulfed the whole house. The author presents this thus:

Àlá ẹ̀rù kan ló ti ọ̀mọ wọ̀n nídii tó fi wá sí Ayégúnlẹ̀. Pẹ̀lú irírí rẹ̀látẹ̀yìnwá, ó rí i gbaṅgba pé àlá òun máa n ẹ̀. Nínú àlá tó lá lórumọ̀jú ọ̀jọ̀ tó wá sí Ayégúnlẹ̀, ó rí i pé ilẹ̀ àwọ̀n jóná ráúrúú ni. Nínúàlá nàà bàbá rẹ̀ ló dá iná kan tó fi n sun iṣu jẹ. Kò sì sí ẹnì tó mọ̀ bíiná nàà ẹ̀ gbà dé orí òrùlẹ̀ tí ilẹ̀ nàà jó dànù. (26).

A fearful dream propelled their daughter to come to Ayégúnlẹ̀. From experience she knew that her dream was likely to come true. In her dream, she saw that their house was totally consumed by fire. In the dream, it was her father's attempt to roast yam which nobody knew about that led to the inferno.

Tinúkẹ's dream of an inferno clearly signals an impending incidence. Moreover, this metaphysical resource (dream) is deployed symbolically. In other words, this is not really a physical fire but a symbolic representation of the kind of marital unrest Dẹwẹ brings into his household by dating Bùnmi, a student. The dream, thus, serves as a hint for impending domestic crisis. Considering the dreamer's age, it is clear that there is no age limit for dreaming. If Dẹwẹ had taken the import of the dream more seriously, the unfortunate scenario in his household would not have played out. As the Yorùbá say, 'ọ̀wọ̀ ọ̀mọ̀dẹ̀ ò tó pẹ̀pẹ̀, t'àgbàlagbà ò w'akèrẹ̀gbè' (A child's hand cannot reach the roof, while that of an adult cannot penetrate into the gourd).

As noted earlier, when dreams are malevolent they are better described as nightmares. In a nightmare, a person may be confronted by fearsome animals such as cows and snakes or be pursued by masquerades and unmasked humans etc. For instance, in Ojúadé's (2014: 33-34) *Àdìitú Layé*, Bíyíí has a dream in which he is pursued by a masquerade. He tries to seek refuge with Bāñjí but the latter turns him down and the masquerade mercilessly beats Bíyíí. Bíyíí fights back and uncovers the masquerade only to find it has Tóórera's face. The scene is narrated as follows:

Bíyí sùn ní alẹ̀ ojó yí, Tóórera ni ó fi ẹ̀ ẹ̀ alá lá. Ó rí eégún kan ní ojú iran, iyẹn sì bẹ̀rẹ̀ sí lé e lọ. Bí eégún yí ti n lé Bíyí lọ, ó rí Bǎñjíní òkánkán, ó sì n sá lọ sí ibi tí ó ti rí Bǎñjí kí ó le gbà á sílẹ̀, bí ó ti fẹ̀dì mọ̀ Bǎñjí, iyẹn yẹ̀ ẹ̀ sílẹ̀ bẹ̀sẹ̀. Bíyí sì dojúdẹ̀ wìtì bí òkòtó. Eégún yí bọ̀ ó mọ̀lẹ̀, ó sì bẹ̀rẹ̀ sí nawọ̀ iyà sí Bíyí. Ó lù ú bí așọ òfì, șùgbónbí a bá lé ewúré tí tí ó bá kan ògiri yóò sẹ́rí padà sódò ènìyàn. Nígba tí ọwọ̀ iyà ba Bíyí ó gbiyànjú láti gbẹ̀san, bí ó ti gbé ọwọ̀ ikúùkù lé eégún lágbárí bá yí, ẹ̀kú eégún sí láti orí, kí ni yóò rí? Ojú Tóórera ni ó rí, bí ó sì ti n kígbe tí ó ní "Tó-ó-re-ra". Ojú ayé ni ó lajú sí.

Bíyí slept that night and dreamt of Tóórera. He dreamt of a masquerade that pursued him. Bíyí suddenly saw Bǎñjí when the masquerade was pursuing him and decided to seek refuge with Bǎñjí but the latter dodged him (Bíyí) and he fell down completely. The masquerade then mercilessly and relentlessly beat him like a traditional attire (așọ òfì). Bíyí decided to revenge by boxing the masquerade on the head to the extent of uncovering the masquerade's mask. What did he see? He saw Tóórera's face and as he was shouting Tóórera's name, he woke up.

In the nightmare recounted above, the masquerade, as a semiotic code, represents the conflict that later ensues between Bíyí and his friend (Bǎñjí). Hence, the dream is employed for revelation of future occurrence and a showcase of symbolic representation of human with masquerade.

There is a Yorùbá adage which says 'ogun àwítélẹ̀ kì í parọ̀, arọ̀ tó bá gbón' (to be forewarned is to be forearmed). This reflects in Ișòlá's (2003) *Efúnsetán Aniwúra*, Itáwuyí dreamt of engaging in marriage with Adétutù in a large hall. He also dreamt of seeing seven big ground-hornbills that ate all the food meant for the couple. As Itáwuyí attempted to pursue and drive away the ground-hornbills, one of them hit him in the eye with its feather and he became blind. When he regained his sight, he saw Adétutù pursuing one of the ground-hornbills with stirring stick but all to no avail. The author presents this in the following affected person's statement:

Itáwuyí: *Àní mo lá alá kan ní ijeṭa. Èmi pèlú rẹ̀ wà ní ilẹ̀ nílá kan, à n ẹ̀ igbéyàwó wa. Àwọn ènìyàn pọ̀, oúnjẹ̀ sì pọ̀ pèlú. Bí a ti fẹ̀ máa jeun ni mo gbójú sókè. Kíni mo rí? Mo rí àwọn ẹyẹ̀ àkàlà méje tí wọn n fò bọ̀ lójú òrun. Wọn mbọ̀ wá sí ọdọ̀ wa tàrà, wọn tóbi ẹ̀rù kò sì bà wọn. Wéré, wọn fò wolé, wọn sì fi ohjẹ̀ nàà jẹ̀ tán pátápátá. Inú bí mi, mo dide, șùgbón òkan nínú wọn fi iyẹ̀ gbá mi*

lójú n kò sì ríran mọ́. Nígbà tí ojú mí là, mo rí ọ́ tí ò n fi orógùn ọ̀kà lé ọ̀kan nínú wọ̀n lọ. Mo pè ọ́ padà títi, ẹ̀gbón iwọ kò gbó bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni iwọ kò sì padà. (22-23).

I had a dream. We were in a big house having our wedding. People were many, food was also surplus. As we were about to eat, I looked up what did I see? I saw seven ground hornbills flying from heaven towards our side. They were big and fearless. They quickly flew in and ate all our food. I was furious, I stood up, but one hit my eye with its feathers and I lost my sight. I saw you pursuing one of the ground hornbills when I regained my sight. I called you several times, but you didn't hear and also refused to come back.

The metaphysical element employed above provides ahead information on the spiritual attack experienced by Ítáwuyì over his attempt to marry Adétutù. Seeing seven ground hornbills in the dream has the significance of number (seven) which is spiritual in Yorùbá worldview. That is, for the ground hornbills to have eaten all food meant for the couple simply connotes a great loss or separation foreseen between the couple. Ítáwuyì's calling on Adétutù without response signifies total separation between the two of them. However, it could be said of this metaphysical element that it has been employed to further feature other metaphysical elements like strange sign, as in the case of 'seven' and 'ground hornbills' that symbolize or have spiritual attachment with the operation of the power of witchcraft. This refers to the fact that odd numbers like three (3), five (5), seven (7), nine (9), etc., are often observed among the witches and wizards. Even though, Yorùbá are of the belief that a man has or is made of nine bones while woman is created out of seven bones. Dream is used here to predict future events and achieve some measures of realism. This is because, at last, Adétutù was later killed by Ìyálóde after the marital secrecy has been leaked.

5.4 Incantation

The Yorùbá believe in the magical power of the word, otherwise known as incantation (Ọfọ). In Adéyemí's drama text *Kò Sáyè Láàfin (2008)*, a situation warrants the use of incantation by a character (Gbadé) when he was invaded by gang of thieves in his house. Gbadé uses the metaphysical device to command and subdue the physical power of the hired killers. The author presents thus:

Káún ní şelénìní ilá, ègúsí ní şelénìní ilasa, èyin
 òdaràn wònyíí, ó yá ẹ máa şelénìní ara yín.
 İšekúşe ni tomi íkan.
 İlòkulò ni tomi òjò.
 İlòòwòsí làá lo omi ẹrọ.
 Afajásọde ẹja n şe àşedànù (15).

Potash is the enemy of okro, melon is the enemy
 of okro leaves. You these hired killers, start fighting
 one another.
 Uncooked cold pap water is misused.
 Rainwater is misused.
 Tap water is misused.
 He who hunts fish with dog wastes his efforts.

The incantation provides the enchanter security and protection, as he manages not only to escape the assassination attempt but also to overpower and capture the assassins. Therefore, this device is employed by the author to showcase how incantation is used for protection, security, and to render the enemies powerless. The metaphysical element is also utilized to safeguard the enchanter from encountering impending and unexpected danger and injury that should have been sustained from the hired killers.

Incantation is also deployed in Owólabí's (1978) *Ori Adé Kì í Sùn'ta*, when Òşoògùntán chews alligator pepper and makes an incantation as he and his colleagues were about to enter Òşìkà Town (Town of the Wicked) on their trip to Gbékúba. The incantation became necessary after a frightful voice informed them that visitors passing through the town in question would be killed. Òşoògùntán's incantation runs thus:

Yaríya abì'dí yaa,
 Pọnrípon abì'dí pon,
 İran agbe wọn a máa ti ibi rọrọ gun ọdán,
 İran àlùkò wọn a máa ti ibi rọrọ m'ọdán gùn;
 À-si dúró ni ti gbégi;
 À-sí gbè ni ti ilèkùn ààsè;
 Bí-ó-ba 'lẹ, bí-ó-ba 'lẹ, ni labalábá n şe é wọ'gbó.
 A kì í torí gbígbó pa ajá,
 A kì í torí kíkàn pa àgbò,
 A kì í torí wérewèrè p'òbúkọ;
 A d'eni ọwọ, ẹ jẹ k'ómọ ọlówọ ó máa lọ!
 A d'eni ọwọ (29).

Yariya with its opened bottom,
 Pɔnrípɔn with its covered bottom,
 The offspring of blue touraco climbs the Bayan tree through its mane.
 The offspring of red touraco climb the Bayan tree through its mane.
 Stubborn grass is uprooted in firm standing;
 The entrance door is opened to and fro;
 About-to-perch, about-to-perch, so is it till butterfly gets into the bush.
 A dog is not killed for its barking.
 A ram is not killed for its butting.
 Nobody kills a He-goat for its fornication.
 We have become people of honour; let the honourable ones now pass!
 We've become people of honour.

This incantation which starts with primordial names is meant to secure protection and easy entrance into the Town of Wickedness. In the incantation, there is figurative repetition of the word “òwò” which connotes the ultimate need of absolute respect by the people of Igbódòlà. In the Yorùbá worldview, therefore, incantations provide the needed security, protection, respect and other means to pass through a difficult moment.

Potent as incantations might be, they sometimes fail as in the case of Jagunlabí in Owólabí's *Ori Adé kì í sùn'ta* (1978). Jagunlabí fails to make light supplant darkness in the thick forest of 'Àríkògbón' (Ijù Àríkògbón), where darkness had suddenly taken over. Jagunlabí's incantation is presented below:

Aféfé lélé orúkọ tí à n pe oyé,
 Asú dúdúdú orúkọ tí à n pe òwòrẹ;
 Ọmọ oyé wọn kì í gbóná k'alé,
 Ọmọ òwòrẹ wọn kì í gbóná k'òòrùn wọ;
 A d'áyé lu tí ó gbé 'lẹ fi yẹ̀pẹ̀ s'osùn,
 Àwọn ni wón s'ẹ̀rú Ọlágbẹ̀gi.
 Oko Ọlágbẹ̀gi kún ẹ̀ bọra 'lẹ kí ẹ̀ máa ro ó.
 Bí iwọ̀n, bí iwọ̀n, ní í ẹ̀ ìròmi l'ójú omi;
 Orin tí àkùkọ bá lé ni àwọn ẹ̀gbẹ̀ rẹ̀ í gbè;
 A kì í dá 'rí sọ apá,
 A kì í dá 'rí sọ 'ròkò,
 Ọmọdẹ̀ kì í jẹun yó tán kó dè'nà d'ẹ̀kùn,
 Ọ̀nà là k'ólónà ó máa lọ, ọ̀nà là!
 Eyẹ̀ kì í fò kí ó fi orí sọ igi,
 Ọ̀nà là k'ólónà ó máa lọ, ọ̀nà là! (35-36).

Breeze is the name given to harmattan,
 Dark cloud is the name given to rainy season;
 The offspring of harmattan will not be hot till night,
 The offspring of the rainy season will not be hot till dust;

The earth diggers that live and rub their bodies with sand,
 They were the servants of Ọlágbègi.
 Ọlágbègi's farm is bushy, be ready to be weeding it.
 The water insect is impatient on the river.
 It is the lead song of the cock that is chorused;
 Nobody dares Apá tree,
 Nobody dares Ìrókò tree,
 Younger ones will never waylay a leopard.
 Let the path clear up for the owner to pass!
 The bird will never fly and hit a tree.
 Let the path clear up for the owner to pass

The Yorùbá believe that incantations fail only when the chanter fails to observe the complete ritual for it, hence the saying 'òògùn tí kò jẹ ewé rẹ ló kù kan (a medicine will be effective if it is missing even one herbal ingredient). But in this instance the incantation fails apparently because of the stronger forces inhabiting the evil forest. Considering that the voyagers eventually regain their freedom through fervent prayer, it therefore seems that the author is more interested in proving that incantations or juju may fail and that it is best to rely absolutely on God. No doubt, the supremacy of God is a key part of Yorùbá belief, hence the saying 'ìgbékẹlẹ̀ èyàn asán ni' (reliance on humans is vanity).

During incantations which involve powerful encounters, the chanter invokes agents, personages or objects and mentions the special or primordial names of such agents or personages (Ọlátúnjí 1984: 153-154) such as 'Etí k'áyé' (Liberal listener), 'A-tẹ-má-mì' (One-who-bent-but-unshakeable), 'Atilẹ́jáwé' (one-who-plucks-leaves-via-ground), etc, to summon the incantation spirit and for the purpose of achieving set goals. In this regard, Owólabí (1978) depicts the efforts of the Igbódọ̀là people to gain final entrance into the forest of Gbékúba. Their efforts were very laborious and cumbersome due to the final attack they experienced through a junior brother to Èşù Ọ̀dàrà (Satan's brother). In the course of finding a lasting solution to the challenge at stake by then, Jagunlabí Şẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀oògùn, out of annoyance, brought out a medicinal chain and struck the evil creature with it. He thereafter started an incantation to subdue and conquer the satanic element thus:

Etí k'áyé orúkọ tí à n pe Ifá;
 A-tẹ-má-mì orúkọ tí à n pe Èṣù Ọ̀dàrà;
 Ọ̀gbòró ní orúkọ tí Ṣàngó n jẹ.
 Ọ̀kòró a-kọ-'là-má-yọ-òbẹ,
 Orúkọ tí à n pe Ọ̀balúáyé.
 Atilẹ́jáwé, at'òkè wa'gbò,
 Orúkọ tí à n pe àwọn ìyà mi Ọ̀ṣòròngà.
 Ajígbóhùn l'alágbèdẹ ọ̀run n jẹ,
 Njẹ àwa èrò Ijù Gbékúba mọ orúkọ yín:
 E jẹ á máa lọ!
 A d'eni ọ̀wọ, e jẹ k'ómọ ọ̀lówọ ọ máa lọ!
 A d'eni ọ̀wọ!
 Oṣó ni, àjẹ ni, iwin ni,
 A d'eni ọ̀wọ!
 E jẹ k'ómọ ọ̀lówọ ó máa lọ
 A d'eni ọ̀wọ! (49-50).

He-who-hear-over-the world is the name given to Ifá;
 One-who-bent-but-unshakeable is the name of Èṣù Ọ̀dàrà;
 Ọ̀gbòró is the name of Ṣàngó.
 Ọ̀kòró the one-who-circumcises-without-using-knife
 Is the name of Ọ̀balúáyé.
 One who plucks the leaves from the ground, and uproots from the top,
 Is the name given to witches.
 Ajígbóhùn is the name of heaven blacksmith
 We the adventurers of the thick forest of Gbékúba know your names:
 Let us pass!
 We become honourables; let the honourable ones pass!
 We become the honourable ones!
 Wizards, witches, fairies,
 We become the honourable ones!
 Let the offspring of the honourable ones pass.
 We become the honourable ones!

Apart from Owólabí's use of the metaphysical device for supportive purpose, the metaphysical element is also employed to forestall respect, protection, and safety from enemy's harms or injuries. This invariably gives opportunity for the voyagers to further continue their journey with a sense of courage.

Among the Yorùbá, the role of verbal art ('ọ̀fọ') towards the efficacy or some traditional medicines is not in doubt (Orímóògùnjé, 2005). This manifests in Ọ̀lábímtán's (1993: 19) *Orilawẹ Àdìgún* when Lawẹ uses incantations as supportive measure to establish the effectiveness of traditional medicine in the presence of Àlùkò and the later becomes invisible and invincible. When Àlùkò uses the medicine without its incantation he fails to get the desired result. This shows the

interconnectivity between traditional medicine and the spoken words (Fádáhùnsi in Momoh [1988] and Orímóògùnjé [1996]). The author presents this thus:

'Bí òru ní í ṣaláṣọ dúdú.
Bòṣòṣò l'ágùntàn íwò.
Béwúrẹ́ bímọ́ lóòjọ́, a dide.
B'ágùntàn bímọ́ lóòjọ́ a rìn.
Ó dī bírí bírí.
Òkùnkùn máa bò wọ̀n mọ̀lẹ̀.
Biri.'

'It is like darkness for who covers up with black cloth.
Sheep usually looks foolishly.
A goat's kid walks on its delivery day
A lamb walks on its delivery day.
It must be dark.
Darkness should cover them.
Darkness.'

This incantation aids the medicinal preparation in achieving its intended effect. It equally serves as a traditional means of providing security for a person, especially on the day of uproar or danger. Therefore, such incantation symbolises a metaphysical agent of protection and a means for attaining one's will or averting unwanted occurrences. As human beings are born to encounter various challenges, so do they have incantations to use for achieving their spiritual goals in all aspects. The incantation is used to showcase and complement the efficacy of the invisible medicine (àfẹ̀ẹ̀rì).

Certain animals and plants harbour spirits and can therefore manifest human traits (Èlẹ̀bùibọ̀n, 2004). In Adéoyè's *Èdá Ọmọ Oòduà* (1982: 88), Agílíntí (Salamander) is displayed for the presentation of incantation thus:

Àgbéroró n'ikún 'gb'ówó.
Àbẹ̀tì nì tì ìtì ọ̀gèdẹ̀.
Ọmọ́ kékeré kì í síwọ́ lu 'mí.
Àgbàlagbà kì í síwọ́ lù 'tò.
Fírífírí l'ojú rí'mú.
Bòṣòṣò l'ágùntàn 'wò.
Èyí tí a wí f'ọ̀gbọ́ l'ọ̀gbọ́ gbọ́.
Èyí tí a wí f'ọ̀gbà l'ọ̀gbà gbà.
Ohun tí mo bá wí pé o ṣe ni o ṣe.

The ground squirrel usually suspends its hands.
 The banana tree is usually cut and abandoned.
 The kid does not slap excreta.
 An elderly person does not play with urine.
 The nose is seen faintly by the eyes.
 Sheep tend to look foolishly.
 Whatever one instructs ogbo shall be obeyed.
 Whatever one instructs a fence shall be accepted.
 Whatever I instruct you must be done.

In the above excerpt however, Adéoyè uses personification to manifest the power and importance of 'ofò', especially, within the animal kingdom. The ways human beings can utilize 'ofò' to attack, fight, subdue and kill their antagonists so also animals can use the same incantation to wage war against animal's common enemy (human beings). Therefore, the metaphysical element is employed for safety; to be free from being attacked.

Yorùbá usually say 'igi tí ò ṣun'òn ẹ fi dáná, ọmọ tí ò ṣun'òn ẹ fi f'Ékùn pajẹ' (a bad wood should be used as firewood, a bad child should serve as a prey for the Leopard). Ládipò in *Ọba Kòso* (1970) explores and exploits incantation to display how Gbònkáà overcame Tìmi at Èdẹ when the former was sent from Ọyọ to go and launch an attack with Tìmi over his (Tìmi) rudeness to Ẓàngó in old Ọyọ Empire. Despite the medicinal arrow possessed and utilized by Tìmi against Gbònkáà, Tìmi's power was relegated to background when Gbònkáà incantates thus:

Gbònkáà: Ó tóóóóó!
 Mo ní koríko táa bá já ní ọwọ ọtún
 Ọwọ ọtún ní í gbé!
 Èyí táa bá já lósi
 Òsì ní í wà!

(Tìmi ta ọfà títi ṣùgbón ọfò àti igèdè àti òògùn tí Gbònkáà n sà kélékélé kò jẹ kí ọfà bà á. Nikeyin, Gbònkáà pe ọfò lu Tìmi; pèlú ìyanu Tìmi sùn lọ fọnfọn. Gbònkáà sì pàṣẹ kí á gbé e lọ sí Ọyọ ní didè pèlú okùn).

Fọn-fọn ni t'ifọn.
 Àsùn-ùn-paradà ni t'igi àjà!
 Tìmi, sùn!
 Tìmi, sùn!
 Tìmi, sùn-ùn-ùn-ùn. (*Tìmi sùn*). (29).

Gbònkáà: Silence....!
 I say the herb which we put in the right hand
 Remains in the right hand!
 The one which we put in the left hand

Remains in the left!

(Tìmi shoots his arrows continuously but the incantations and charms which

Gbònkáà recites quietly prevent the arrows from hitting him. At last, Gbònkáà

recites incantations against Tìmi; with surprise, Tìmi falls into a sound sleep, and Gbònkáà orders him to be tied up with rope and carried to Òyó).

Sound sleep sleeps soundly!

The rafters never move in their sleep!

Tìmi, sleep!

Tìmi, sleep!

Tìmi, sleep! (*Tìmi sleeps*).

It could be deduced from the above how incantation is used for command purpose and to achieve one's aim. Though, both Tìmi and Gbònkáà used incantation in the scenario but it was manifested that one incantation was more powerful than the other. The incantation utilized by Gbònkáà assisted him to capture Tìmi and this enabled him to bring Tìmi to Òyó. Hence, the supremacy of Gbònkáà over Tìmi at the end of the tug of war that existed between them. The import of the incantation is to showcase command, victory, and power tussle between two powerful subordinates.

A Yorùbá proverb says 'ojúbòrò kò làá fí n gbòmọ lówọ èkùrọ' (palm-kernel nut is not easily removed from its coat). This author in Owólabí's (1983) *Ìṣújú Òsanyìn* employs incantation to force out the secret behind the unconsciousness and mental derailment experienced by Sègilọlá. Ifádiran, having divined and discovered that Sègilọlá has mental challenges started the incantation together with the use of traditional medicine thus:

Ifádiran: (*Ó bu ẹ̀tù kan s'ẹ̀nu*). Ó yá máa wí máa wí ní s'awo wọn l'óde
Ìsáláyé, máa fọ máa fọ ní í s'awo wọn l'óde Ìsálú-
Òrun. Ọ̀pọ̀lọ̀ kì í kọ ohùn odò, ohun bá n bẹ nínú ẹ̀
ni ó máa sọ. Ó yá akèrègbè kò níí da ẹ̀nu kodò
k'ómi inú ẹ̀ má dànu., Ó yá. (*Ó lu Sègilọ́lál'áyà gbà
gbà gbà*). Ó yá máa sọ t'ẹ̀nu ẹ̀. (76-77).

Ifádiran: (He put a powder-like medicine in the mouth).
Now, be-voicing is their priest on earth, be-
speaking is their priest in heaven. Frog will never
defy river, voice out what you have in you. Now, a
biggourd will never be turned upside down without
pouring its water out. Now. (*He hit Sègilọ́lál at her*

chest thrice). Now, be voicing what you have in you.

The above excerpt manifests the command of Sègilolá via the use of incantation with medicine by Ifádiran. This assists in exposing the real causes of unconsciousness of Sègilolá at that particular scenario. The hitting of Sègilolá's chest thrice by Ifádiran in Yorùbá cosmology symbolizes one of the secret signs of trado-medical experts. Hence, traditional Yorùbá say 'èta ni t'awo, èjì ni t'ògbèrì' (three is the secret sign for cultists, while two is for the laymen). This incantation also serves as a supporting agent to the traditional medicine identified as "ètù" (powder-like medicine). Probably without the addition of such incantation, the medicine in use might not be effective and Sègilolá might have resisted the verbal order of Ifádiran. Therefore, to prove beyond reasonable doubt, the authenticity of the employed incantation is the reference to Sègilolá's positive reaction and confession to Ifádiran's trado-medical order thus:

Sègilolá: Èmi ni mo şe'kú pa Adéjòbí.
Èmi ni mo şe jànbá fún Kàsálí,
Àdìgún àti Babátúndé. (77).

Sègilolá: I am the one that killed Adéjòbí.
I am the one that harmed Kàsálí,
Àdìgún and Babátúndé.

It is very glaring that the incantation chanted helps us to understand the causes of Adéjòbí's death and the inconvenience experienced by other characters like Kàsálí, Àdìgún and Babátúndé. Hence, the import of the incantation is for revelation, confession, and exposure of wrong doing by the culprits.

Ìşòlá (2003) utilizes incantation to display how physical action could be subdued or otherwise brings counter-attack into existence. This occurs when Ìtáwuyì was about to revenge the unlawful killing of Àwèró by Ìyálóde. Ìtáwuyì intended to harm Ìyálóde with cutlass but Ìyálóde used incantation to counter Ìtáwuyì's physical attack thus:

Ìyálóde: Dúró níbẹ̀, àgbéro ni ikún gbọwọ.
 À-rù-masọ ni sigìdì í ru igbá ọsẹ,
 A kì í síwọ lu imí, a kì í fẹ̀sù jókòó.
 A-fọpo kì í rọwọ ọrì,
 À-rí-ta-gìrì ni tejò.
 Bíná bá rómi, a gbàgbé ilé tó fẹ́ jó,
 Bètù bá rómi, a gbàgbé ariwo tó fẹ́ pa. (69).

Ìyálóde: Stop there, Chipmunk usually freezes.
 Robot permanently never put down the soap calabash.
 Nobody slaps excreta, nobody keeps company of Satan.
 The palm-oil maker does not have a hand to scratch his head.
 We see a snake and be shocked.
 If fire sees water, it will forget the building it wants to burn,
 If gun-powder sees water, it will forget its action.

The above excerpt manifests the presence of retribution on the side of Ìtáwuyì which was counter-attacked and proved abortive with the use of incantation by Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà. However, the employment of such incantation provides a notification of the supremacy of spiritual power over the physical power displayed by Ìyálóde. One can therefore say that the author employs the metaphysical device for protection, victory attainment, instilling of fear in the opponents, and for command.

People have several reasons for making use of incantation in their encounters such as for the attainment of sympathies (Ọlátúnjì, 1984: 140-141), protection, etc. The use of incantation also features in Ọ̀pádòtun (2005) when the metaphysical element (incantation) is utilized by Níyì to seek for forgiveness and re-securing of his lost job. The author presents thus:

Níyì: Ikún ló ní kí ñ má kúnlẹ̀ wí'jọ.
 Ikún ló ní kí ñ má kúnlẹ̀ wí'jọ.
 Torí pé òkú ọ̀run kìi rẹ̀nu báláàyè wí'jọ.
 Ààrò ló ní kí ñ má kúnlẹ̀ ro tẹ̀mi.
 Ọ̀wìwì ló ní kí wọ̀n ó gbọ̀rọ̀ ẹ̀nu mi wí.
 Èni tó mọ̀ mí, tẹ̀mi ni kí wọ̀n ẹ̀.
 Èni tí kò mọ̀ mí, tẹ̀mi ni kí wọ̀n ẹ̀.
 Ọ̀wìwì ló ní kí wọ̀n ó gbọ̀rọ̀ ẹ̀nu mi wi. (79).

It is Chipmunk that forbids case for me.
 It is Chipmunk that forbids case for me.
 Because a dead person will never have case with the living.
 Hearth forbids case for me.
 Owl says I should be solicited for.

He who knows me should support me.
He that doesn't know me should support me.
Owl says I should be solicited for.

The use of the above incantation indicates that there are functioning spirits in some words or utterances people make within the society. Hence, the author employs the incantation to underscore the people's belief in the magic of names (Ọlátúnjí, 1984: 141-144). It is also used for hope restoration, command, and forgiveness.

A scenario whereby the role of verbal art 'ọfọ' is also recognized is in another literary genre; a dramatic text to be precise. Therefore, incantation as a verbal art and metaphysical element is employed in Ọgúnníran's (2007) *Ààrẹ-Àgò Arikúyeri*. Ààrẹ-Àgò utilized incantation (Ọfọ) to disappear when about to be arrested by Akódà (police). This is presented thus:

Fírífírí l'ọjú r'ímú;
Bọbọbọ l'àgùtàn án wò;
Ewúrẹ kì í gbé'nú ọlẹ ríran;
Àgùtàn kì í gbé'nú ọlẹ ríran;
Bí-òru-bí-òru kii tán ní kọrọ iyàrá. (51)

Nose is faintly seen.
Sheep looks foolishly;
Goat will never see in the womb;
Sheep will never see in the womb;
Darkness will never disappear in room's corner.

The above excerpt shows how incantation is used by Ààrẹ-Àgò to disappear with the aim of freeing from being arrested by the police and avoid embarrassment or social degradation. Contrary to Ààrẹ-Àgò's incantation and his display of power of invisibility, the first police (Akódà kìn-ín-ní) resisted via the use of incantation thus:

Akódà kìn-ín-ní: Dúdú-dúdú ní í jọba ní'lẹ Mọdúdú,
Rẹrẹ-rẹrẹ ní í jọba ní'lẹ Mọrẹrẹ;
Kò-dúdú-kò-rẹrẹ ní í jọba ní'lẹ Mọkẹfun.
Ó dífá fún wọn l'ode Ìmọlẹ,
T'ójúmọ rere ti í mọwá.
A kì í fi júú-júú ju awo l'ọjú;
A kì í fi júú-júú ju àwọn ọgbẹri;
Dúdú lọ, Rẹrẹ lọ, Ìmọlẹ dé!
(Akódà na ọgbo sí ọkánkán.)
Ajé mo rí ọ!
Ká ẹsẹ silẹ!

Tèlé mi, Ògúnmólá n pè ó! (51-52).

Darkness is the king in the land of Mòdúdú.
Faintness it the king in the land of Mòrèrè.
Not-dark-not-faint is the king in the land of
Mòkèfun.

Ifá is divined for them at Ìmólè town,
Where good day sets.

We don't deceive priest.

We don't deceive lay men.

Darkness disappears, faintness disappears,
light comes over!

(The police points club forward.)

Ajé, I see you.

Put down your leg.

Follow me, Ògúnmólá is calling you.

It is very glaring from the above that Akódà's (police's) incantation serves as a counter-attack to Ààrè-Àgò's incantation of planning to run away from justice dispensation. This also shows that every form of indiscipline has alternative measure to avert or eradicate it within the Yorùbá society. This is otherwise known as checks and balances in the traditional politics of Yorùbá people. The display of counter incantation by the first police also brings psychological relief into the mind of people (Yorùbá) and that nobody can be so autocratic to the extent of not being subdued or overcome within the society. Therefore, every individual is expected to be law-abiding within the traditional setting of the society.

Incantation (Ọfò), as a metaphysical element, is not only employed by literary poets and novelists but also by playwrights to achieve various purposes, such as for protection, healing and freedom etc. In Ọlátéjú's (2009) *Iná Ràn*, Anísééré, a major character, uses incantation to conquer the police boss in an attempt to lead his people into Agodi³ prison to secure the release of his captured people. Though, the police initially resisted and prevented the masses led by Anísééré from entering the prison but later subdued by the magical power of 'ọfò'. Anísééré's incantation goes thus:

Anísẹ́ẹ̀rẹ̀: Kánkán lewé iná n jóni, Wàràwàrà lomodé
n tóko èèsì bọ, Kánkán lewé iná n jóni,
wàràwàrà lomodé n tóko èèsì bọ, Ìràwé kì í
dájó ilẹ̀ kó sun ọ̀nà. Mo ní kí o subú (82).

The twine leaves sting without delay. The nettle
makes a young man run helter-skelter. The twine leaves
sting immediately. The nettle makes a young man
run helter-skelter. Dropped leaves will never
fail its day. I said fall down.

Despite the tug of war between the police and Anísẹ́ẹ̀rẹ̀' s people, the above incantation helps Anísẹ́ẹ̀rẹ̀ to subdue the police commander with immediate effect. Generally, incantation helps to increase the tempo of actions in a play. In the excerpt there is repetition of the names of agents. This adds to the poetic nature of the dramatic text. The agents also serve as the couriers of effects from the signifier to the signified.

Nothing seems to be impossible to some people in this life. For this, such people are of the view that difficult things can be easily conquered through the use of incantation. Yorùbá sometimes say 'ohun ọ̀wọ̀ mi ò tó ma fi gògò fà á' (difficult things must be tackled by force). Therefore, Awé (2010) employs incantation as metaphysical phenomenon through Oyè, Àńwòó's boy friend, when the former needed the assistance of the later in drug pushing. Àńwòó was initially exercising fear but later confused and convinced when Oyè incantates thus:

Oyè: Ìkọ̀ kì í kẹ̀jò lẹ̀sẹ̀.
Fínringala ladiẹ̀ n bọ̀ oko èèmọ̀.
Àyúnlọ̀-àyúnbọ̀ lẹ̀wọ̀ í yẹnu.
Bá a bá ní ká mónìí, ọ̀la là á mú.
Abẹ̀rẹ̀ á lẹ̀ kọ̀nà okùn ó tóó dí.
Èlẹ̀mùú kan ò máfẹ̀fẹ̀ rí.
Asọ̀bodè tí ó m'Élédùmarè kò ì tí ì dáyé.
Lójú gbègbugbètu.
Túó, Ó ẹ̀wọ̀. (55).

No obstruction for snake.
Fowl easily comes out of disturbing engagement.
Hands usually feed the mouth.
If we decide to capture today, tomorrow shall be captured.
Needle will pass through before the way is blocked.
Nobody can capture air.
The custom officer that will capture God has not been born.

In the presence of a command.
So shall it be.

The incantation utilized above enables Oyè to convince Àńwòó to dance to the former's tune. With the aid of medicine brought out and displayed to Oyè, great assurance and confidence are instilled in Àńwòó to the extent of joining Oyè to run unlawful dealing (drug trafficking). Reverse remained the case when the business (drug trafficking) failed and Oyè died while Àńwòó was arrested by the custom officers for unlawful enterprise. This scenario started when Oyè utilizes an incantation to escape from custom's arrest thus:

Oyè: A kì í sá ginni lógbé.
Ẹnikan kì í di bàrà lókùn.
A kì í sì í gbówó fújà sáláḡẹmọ.
Ẹnikan kì í fibon béésin jà.
Mo deesin lóníí,
Ìwọ asóbodè má yìnbọn lù mí.
Ọwọ òrìṣà la fi í wọ àfín,
Mo dọmọ òrìṣà lóníí,
Ẹ fọwọ tẹmi wọ mí. (66).

Nobody wounds spirit.
Nobody ties melon.
Nobody dares Agẹmọ masquerade.
Nobody fights fly with gun.
I become fly today.
Custom, don't shoot me with gun.
Albino is accorded god's honour.
I become god's offspring today.
Accord me my own honour.

The above used incantation by Oyè was counter-attacked and neutralized when the second custom officer incantates thus:

Asóbodè kejì: Èyí tá a bá wí fọgbọ lọgbọ n gbọ, Ohun tá a bá fọ
fọgbà lọgbà n gbà. Abẹrẹ kì í kọhùn asọ. Bẹẹ ni ipa
abẹrẹ lokùn idí rẹ n tọ. Bí gúdúgúdú bá fọhùn dùn-
dún ì í jà á níyàn. Ó yá káwọ rẹ sókè. Sẹ o fẹ yọ ibọn
lápò ni? Kí o tó yọbọn tírẹ, ibọn tẹmi ni yòò kókọ
dáhùn.

(66-67).

Second Custom: What is spoken to ọgbọ leaf shall be taken by it. What is spoken to ọgbà leaf shall be taken by it. Needle will never defy cloth's instruction. It is needle that its rope

follows. Gúdúgúdú drum will not defy dùndún's voice.
Now, raise up your hands. Do you want to bring out gun
from your pocket? Before you bring out your gun, my
gun will firstly destroy you.

It could be inferred from the above that, though, incantation may be used for security or protection but should be utilized on compassionate or lawful ground. If incantation is used for evil doing, as in the case of Oyè with the custom officer, definitely, the repercussion would be absolutely harmful or destructive. Oyè committed a crime through the wrong use of incantation and got untimely death as his wage. This teaches all and sundry how to maintain honesty and transparency in every endeavour one may embark upon. The incantations employed by the author provide a pedagogical advantage, command and security purpose in the literary drama.

Prayer is an important aspect of Yorùbá life. People tend to say 'àdùrà ní í gbà agbára kì í gbà' (prayer is the most necessary key to success). Olábíṁtán (1978) presents incantation (prayer incantation) in his poetic text titled *Áádóta Àròfò* to show respect for the elders and reliance on them. The author presents the themes such as protection enjoyed from the elders, acknowledgement, release or permission, success of enterprise, and safety assurance or security, especially in Yorùbá life and thought in the poem. The poet manifests these in the following lines:

*Mo júbà àwọn iyà mi.
Mo júbà òlómí-nílẹ̀-fẹ̀jẹ̀-wẹ̀.
Wọ̀n ní kí n máa lọ.
Wọ̀n ní kí n má mà wẹ̀hìn.
Wọ̀n ní àyíká odó kò ní p'odó, ó dájú.
Wọ̀n ní àyíká osè kò ní p'osè, èrùwò.
Wọ̀n ní wérewèrè kò ní p'òbèbè.
Wọ̀n l'álàmólẹ̀ kò ní p'omọ ọlọ.
Wọ̀n ní gbogbo ire tí n bẹ̀ nílẹ̀ yí,
Ó di wíwò lé mí (22).*

I respect my spiritual mothers.
I respect the one-having-water-at-home-but-bath-with-blood.
They permit me to go.
They say I shouldn't look back.
They say the surrounding of mortal will not kill mortal, it is certain.
They say the surrounding of Baobab tree will never kill Baobab tree.
They say uncalmness will not kill *Òbèbè*.
Striking of grinding stone on ground will not kill it.
They say all blessings in this town,
Should be mine.

The use of incantation above expresses the sign of deference and appraisal, especially for those that are spiritually inclined. According to the elders, giving respect before laying hands on a particular endeavour serves as a sine-qua-non for societal acceptability on the part of the younger ones. This renders the poem to be didactic in nature. This metaphysical element in this excerpt provides warning for the young ones that elders should not be disrespected and it manifests the high esteem the Yorùbá hold of deference, commonly at the outset of every traditional set-out or display. This is the reason why Yorùbá usually say *'Ìbà ni ñ ó kókó jú, eré⁴ mí dọla'*. (I will first show deference and suspend my play till tomorrow). The element also serves as a means or measure of beefing up security for oneself or others in any societal encounter.

5.5 Inner-head

Among the Yorùbá, it is believed that in addition to the outer or physical head, each person also has what is called the inner-head, which cannot be touched or seen but metaphysically appeased or worshiped like a god. Hence, its common name is 'orí-inú' among the Yorùbá. It is also referred to as "personality soul" (Oyèshílé, 2002). It is via the inner-head that individual destiny is believed to have been determined right from heaven. Adéoyè (1982) reflects this in his narrative text on how human beings failed a test involving the determination of appropriate judgement in a case involving a shepherd when residing in the abode of "Èsan Olódùmarè". The human beings first blamed the shepherd for his forgetfulness but later realised that there is no remedy for forgetfulness and that most would have been visited by "forgetfulness" on the day of choosing their destiny. As told in the narration:

Ó ní ohun tí ó mú kí rúkèrúdò yí şelè ni pé bàbá darandaran
gbàgbéowó rẹ s'ókè odò níbi tí ó gbé b'ọjú, t'ó gbé mu omi.
Ó gbà pé kò sí ẹni tí ìgbàgbé kì í bá, nítorí pé ó rántí pé
òpòlọpò ẹdà ni ìgbàgbé bá l'álàdèòrun lójọ àkúnlẹyàn (P.
115).

He said that the cause of the uproar was that the shepherd forgot his money in the upper part of the river where he washed his face and drank water. He accepted the fact that anybody can forget things, so far many have been met by forgetfulness in heaven on the day of choosing destiny.

The inner-head, as a metaphysical element, is thus deployed to show that each person must have chosen the kind of inner-head that contains all what he or she will be executing in life. Such inner-head is an indexical sign that symbolises all what the bearer will be doing and encountering in life, whether good or bad. The Yorùbá believe that an individual's inner-head determines the trajectory of the physical head.

Consequently, the Yorùbá recognize the power of 'Orí' (the inner-head), which they praise thus: 'Orí mi àjìkí, orí mi àjígè' (my inner-head, the appeasing and appropriatingone), etc. There is also a Yorùbá song in praise of Orí which goes thus:

Orí ẹni làwúre ẹni.
 Orí ẹni làwúre ẹni.
 Bí mo jí lówúrọ ma gb'órí mi mú.
 Orí ẹni làwúre ẹni.
 One's inner-head is one's medicine for success.
 One's inner-head is one's medicine for success.
 If I wake up in the morning I will hold my head.
 One's inner-head is one's medicine for success.

This song underscores the importance which the Yorùbá attach to Orí as a phenomenon that is superior to other deities; indeed, they worship 'Orí' as a deity. The metaphysical phenomenon of 'Orí-inú' (inner-head) is reflected in different Yorùbá literary texts.

Ògúnníran (2007) in the drama text *Ààrẹ-Àgò Aríkúyẹrí*, shows how Ààrẹ-Àgò makes sacrifice to appease his inner-head for a good life and success. The Ifá verses rendered for him by his priest in form of prayers go thus:

Ààrẹ-Àgò: Ni àwọn Babaláwo bá tún n ẹnu rere ki'fá,
 Wọn ní:
 - 'Kẹ-kẹ-kẹ ni wọn n kan kósó,
 Gùdùgùdù ni wọn n lu àrán òòṣà;
 Bí Babaláwo méjì bá rí 'ra wọn
 Wọn a ẹ̀rùkẹ̀rẹ̀ wọn yẹturu, yẹturu.
 A dí'fá fún Orí,
 Tí n t'Ìsàlú ọrun bọ wá 'lé ayé.
 Wọn ní kí orí ẹ̀ t'ùtù,
 Kó ba à lẹ d'eni àpésin.
 Njẹ, Orí rere ni t'Ìrèrè.
 Ìrèrè kò l'órí à-gb'ẹ̀rù-lé,
 Orí rere ni t'Ìrèrè'. (9).

Ààrẹ-Àgò: The Ifá priests then start to praise Ifa thus:
 They said:
 'It is softly they beat kósó drum,
 Àrán òòṣà drum is beaten loudly;
 If two Ifá priests see each other
 They exchange greetings via their staff.
 Ifá is divined for Orí,
 When coming to earth from heaven
 He was instructed to make sacrifice,
 So as to be a worshipped one.
 Tortoise is destined for good luck.
 Tortoise forbids placing load on head.
 Tortoise is destined for good luck.

In the above extract, Orí (inner-head) is appeased via the sacrifice made to it by Ààrẹ-Àgò and this is done in the hope that Ààrẹ-Àgò will become an idol that will be recognized, revered and respected in the society. He has been a successful warrior, but he wants more fame and success in life. The text presents a display of double metaphysical resources within a single realm of metaphysical presentation (divination). This is because the author employs divination to show the importance of 'Orí' (inner-head) and also as a viable aspect of the Yorùbá worldview. In that context, the inner-head symbolises individual personality or a person's characteristic features. This presentation also shows the non-limitation of the exploration and exploitation of metaphysical elements to Yorùbá narrative texts.

Regarding the inner-head, each individual is created and endowed with his or her own unique inner-head, hence, the saying 'ibi Táyé ti yan'rí Kẹ̀hìndé ò yan ti'ẹ̀ níbẹ̀' (Kẹ̀hìndé did not choose his inner-head where Táyé made his own choice). As such, it is expected that each person would appease his/her inner-head in accordance with what is revealed by the Ifá oracle. In that regard, the Yorùbá belief in 'Àkọ̀ṣẹ̀jayé'⁵ (divination concerning the destiny of an individual), which cannot be ruled out as a baby's parent will expect all the dos and don'ts of the child on the third day after birth, when it is believed that a child's destiny is determined. For example, Ọ̀lábòdẹ̀ in Adélékẹ̀'s (2001) *Wá Gbọ̀* refers to the inner-head as 'à̀yànmọ̀' (destiny) or something that an individual chose in heaven. He describes every person's inner-head as individualistic, since it is so different from others' that even twins, though born of the same parent, but do not have the same inner-head. The poet acknowledges God as the only one that is aware of each individual's destiny or inner-head. This is so in that, He

(God) was the one that programmed the individual's destiny. The poet insists that there is no medicine for inner-head's illness. Hence, 'kádàrá ò gbòògùn' (no antidote for destiny). He also differentiates between destiny and human cause. In the poem "Àyànmó Àb'Àfowófà?" he observes thus:

Àyànmó ni kádàrá èdá láyé.
 Gbogbo wa la kúnlẹ tá a yànpín,
 Tá a wá délé ayé tán
 Tójú ní kán gbogbo wa.
 Ohun a fowó ara ẹni kọ lájùlé ọrun
 Ọhun làyànmó ẹni.
 Àyànmópìn-ín kádàrá ò gbòògùn (8-10).

One's fate is his destiny in life.
 Everyone kneels to choose his or her fate.
 And when we get to the earth
 We remain impatient.
 What we wrote in heaven.
 Remains our destiny.
 Destiny has no antidote.

The lines above present the inner-head as an unseen element which accompanies every individual from heaven. According to Oyèshílé, "the Igbo and Yorùbá believe that destiny can be changed or bad one rectified." The Yorùbá believe that individual destiny or inner-head can be re-adjusted in real life if deity (Ifá) is approached for a solution towards whatever might stand against such 'Orí'. This is so because 'Ọrúnmilà' is regarded as 'Elẹrìí ipín' (a witness to one's destiny or inner-head) and he is therefore in the best position to reveal and prescribe details or solutions to any destiny or inner-head's challenge. This is why Ifá divination is highly regarded and usually consulted in relation to an individual's inner-head.

Inner-head (orí-inú), being regarded as a custodian of human destiny, is also recognized as an inseparable and unavoidable element by human beings. Therefore, Abímólá's (2008) *Ojú Odù Méré̀rè̀rìndínlógún* presents in an Ifá corpus, "Ọyẹ̀kú méjì", the place of inner-head among the deities and in the life of human being possessing it. The poet presents that whatever may be the challenges of a person such bearer should report or ask his inner-head. He states this thus:

Olóòótó tí n bẹ láyé ò pógún;
 Şikàşikà ibẹ wọn ò mọ níwọn ẹgbẹfà;
 Ojò ẹsan ò lọ tití,
 Kò jẹ kóràn dun ni;
 A díá fún ọran gbogbo tí n dun akápò
 Bẹẹ ni wọn ò dun Ifá.
 Njẹ, ohun gbogbo t'ó bá n dùn mí,
 N ọ máa rò f'órii mi.
 Oríi mi là mí o,
 Ìwọ lalágbòràndùn. (15).

The trustworthy in life are not up to twenty;
 The wicked are numerous;
 The day of retribution is very close,
 It makes one not to regret;
 Ifá divination is performed for all the challenges facing the subordinate
 Remain not the ones facing its Ifá deity.
 Now, all what remain my challenges,
 Shall be narrated to my inner-head.
 My inner-head, kindly enrich me,
 You are the confidant.

The poet uses divination to reveal the importance and relevance of 'orí' (inner-head) to mankind. This renders inner-head to be an unbeatable and unequalled phenomenon or deity among other deities and in human life. The author uses the metaphysical element to advise, implore, and direct individuals to be making spiritual enquiry from his or her inner-head before embarking on any enterprise

Every human being values and prays for good luck in life. Hence, most of the Yorùbá usually pray for their children thus 'ẹ ó s'oríire' (you will be successful). In Olayiwolá's (2008) *Akòwé Kọ Wúrà àti Àwọn Ìjìnlẹ̀ Àròfọ̀ Míràn*, inner-head features in a poem titled "Orí". The poet addresses his "Orí" (inner-head) as the one that is good and which needs to be worshipped. He regards his head as being special and different from animals or plants' heads. He thereafter appeases or prays for his head to be well with him. The poet manifests these in his lines of poem thus:

Orí mi àpésìn
 Orí mi kí sorí àwọn ẹja.
 Orí mi kò jọ tọ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀.
 Gbogbo ohun tí mo ní lórí.
 Mo ti dáyé tán kí ñ tó mọ̀wúlò wọn. (98-101).

My inner-head, a worshipped deity.
 My inner-head is not the head of fishes.
 My inner-head doesn't resemble the banana's.
 All that my inner-head contains.
 I have come to life before knowing their usefulness.

The above excerpt shows the various characteristics of inner-head. Its juxtaposition with other things such as the heads of animals and plants shows how incomparable inner-head is in human life. Hence, its supremacy among other deities in Yorùbá cosmology is acknowledged. The use of this metaphysical element therefore describes and propels individual Yorùbá not to take inner-head with levity. The import of the metaphysical element is for imploring and advising human beings to be appeasing and worshipping their inner-heads so as to be having peaceful, successful and long-lasting life.

Yorùbá, in their mode of appreciation, usually say 'eni ti a se loore ti ko dupe bi olosa ko ni leru lo ni' (a favoured but ingrate person is like a thief that stole away one's property). Ológundúdú (2009) presents a poem titled "*Mo Dúpẹ̀ Tèmi*" in *Adé Ori Òkín: Àṣàyàn Ewì Àti Oríkì pẹ̀lú Àlàyẹ̀ Lékùn-ún rẹ̀rẹ̀* to show the reason for one to be appreciative in life. The poem manifests how the poet expresses his profound gratitude to God for the position his destiny puts him. He presents this thus:

Mo dúpẹ̀ tèmi lójó òní,
 Mo dúpẹ̀ ibi orí dá mi sí,
 Ipòkípò yòowù kó jẹ̀ lójú ọmọ aráyé
 Èmi ò rángún níṣẹ̀, àdònkìá-fàdati.
 Èni kò gba kádàrá yóó gba kodoro,
 Èdá tó bá dúpẹ̀ oore ànà ní í gbà mí,
 Èmi dúpẹ̀ ibi orí dá mi sí ní tèmi o jàre,
 Èmi dúpẹ̀ ibi àyànmọ̀ tò mí sí,
 Mo dúpẹ̀ ibi ẹ̀ṣẹ̀ mi n sìn mí rẹ̀
 Orí tó gb'Áláàfin r'Ọ̀yọ̀ ilé,
 Ló gb'Alára lọ s'Árámọ̀kọ̀ Èkiti níjọ ọjọ̀ sí,
 Orí ọ̀hún ló gb'Àjerò lọ ljerò-Èkiti.
 Ibi orí dání sí là á gbé, mo dúpẹ̀ ibi orí dámi sí ní tèmi. (35).

I give thank to my destiny today.
 I thank my inner-head for the position I am.
 Whichever position it may be to people
 I don't care.
 Whosoever doesn't take to his destiny will lose,
 It is beneficial to be appreciative,
 I give thank for how I am positioned by my destiny.
 I give thank for how I am destined.
 I thank for where I am heading to.
 The inner-head that led Aláàfin to old Ọ̀yọ́ Empire,
 It is such inner-head that led Alára to Arámọ̀kọ̀ Èkìtì in the olden day.
 It is same inner-head that led Ajerò to Ìjerò-Èkìtì.
 One's position is determined by his inner-head, I thank my inner-head
 for the position I am.

The above presentation shows a kind of appreciation by the poet and the advice rendered by the poet teaches that every individual needs to be self-contented. The poem also exhibits the importance of inner-head, as being the one that determines human fate and position in life. The author therefore employs the metaphysical element as pedagogical device to teach and implore people to be appreciative, especially to one's 'orí-inú' (inner-head). It is also utilized to advise individual to be contented of what one's inner-head predestines for each person. The question we need to ask ourselves is that; should an ill-luck person be appreciative to his inner-head? We believe that a malevolent situation or an encountered challenge can be handled via proper appeasement, appropriation or sacrifice that emerges from thorough divination. In sum, the metaphysical element (inner-head) is used to underscore the essence and important value of appeasing and appropriating one's 'orí-inú' (inner-head).

5.6 Strange signs

In Yorùbá society there are different symbolic communication systems, one of which is 'àrokò' (symbolic object). Ọ̀gúndèjì (1997: 145) describes 'àrokò' as “a symbolic object or a collection of such objects usually parceled together and sent through a messenger to another person for the purpose of conveying a message to be decoded by the receiver.” This communicative means is employed as a strange sign in Ọ̀lábímtán (1993) when a parcel of six lobes of camwood powder was sent by Owódé people to Sàdiákù for the release of Lawẹ̀ and for Owódé people to adopt Nínálowó political party. The author presents this thus:

Àlùkò búserìn-ín, 'Àní ẹ má da a lóhùn. Nítorí pé ẹyin ò gbọ ijìnlẹ̀Yorùbá ló ẹ ní fí àrokò pípasú yínlójú. Egbínrínosùn mẹfà ní wònní kí á fúnunlátíOwódé. Ítumọ̀ rẹ̀ nípé kí ó fí gbogbo ẹ̀sẹ̀ tí ọmọ̀ waLawẹ̀ sẹ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀şeosùnkó fí para, kò sì jòwọ̀ fa gbogboilú Owódé mọ̀ralátise ẹgbé Nínálowó' (P. 142-143).

Àlùkò burst into laughter, 'Don't answer him. It is as result of your low understanding of deep Yorùbá that made him to deceive you with symbolic objects. We were sent from Owódé to give him six lobes of camwood powder which means that he should forgive Lawẹ̀ and urge the entire people of Owódé to do Nínálowó political party.

The six lobes of camwood from the Owódé people are meant to appease Sàdiákù, but he fails to understand their import. In passing this message semiotically, the author presents the Yorùbá as people who often communicate via symbolic means. Hence, a metaphysical element is exchanged between the signifier and the signified.

Another instance of strange sign is in Òní's (2001) *Ojú Rí*, when Ògúngbèmi's left leg strikes an object as he is about to enter his cab. The cab driver experiences this as he is about to convey passengers with their load of sugar from Agbeni to Ìsàlẹ̀-Ìtaagun. As a Yorùbá man, he was confused as to whether to continue with the business at hand because he knew hitting one's left foot against an object is a sign of imminent bad luck. The incident is narrated as follows:

Ó ní kí òunbá òunkó şùgà látíAgbeni lọ Ìsàlẹ̀-Ìtaagun ní Ajéròmí. Àwòndúnàá-dùrà, owó tó sì gbà látí san fúnòuntẹ̀ òun lórùn, niòunbá tẹ̀lé é. Ibití àwòntifẹ̀ kó sínú mótò òunbáyíí, òunfẹ̀sẹ̀ òsikọ̀ dé ibipé şòkòtò ànkàrá aláwọ̀ búlúú tí òun wọ̀ sì fà̀yapẹ̀rẹ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀lábẹ̀. Araròrànfúnòun, òun sì fẹ̀ padà şùgbọ̀n ọ̀kùnrin dúdú ọ̀hún ní kò séwu. Ó ní ẹ̀ bí ọ̀kùnrin niòunpearàòun. Ni òunbá wọ̀ inúmótò, ó di Agbeni (6).

He asked him to convey sugar from Agbeni to Ìsàlẹ̀-Ìtaagun at Ajéròmí. We negotiated and I was satisfied with the fare, and I followed him. When they were about to board his car, he hit an object with his left leg to the extent of having his blue trouser torn underneath. He felt suspicious and intended to withdraw the service of driving but was confused and convinced by the dark passenger that there would not be a problem. The man also asked him to behave like a man, that is, to be courageous. And he

boarded the bus to set out for driving to Agbeni on business grounds.

Not only does Ògúngbè mí's foot hit the object; his trousers also tense underneath. Therefore, he could not but worry that something negative was afoot. And something does happen to both the driver and his passenger on Aṣẹ̀jìrẹ̀ bridge. The exploration and exploitation of this metaphysical phenomenon (strange sign) is similar to Fágúnwà's use of a strange sign to foretell the future when Àkàrà-ògùn in *Ògbójú Ọdẹ Nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ* hits his left leg against a stone and instantly believes it to be a bad omen. It is thus obvious that strange signs are used to forecast or predict what is likely to happen in the nearest future.

Like the left leg, hitting the right foot against an object is also considered to be a strange sign. For example, in Délànò's *Aiyé Daiyé Òyìnbó* (1970), Baálẹ̀, a major character in the narrative, hit his right leg against an object on his way to meet the British officer at the court. He deems this is a spiritual sign of the nature of the encounter he was going to have with the British officer. Àsàbí narrates the scenario thus:

Ní ọjọ tí Ajẹlẹ̀-àgbà wá, mo bá Baálẹ̀ lọ sí Kóòtù ní ọjọ náà nítorí pé momọ pé ibítí ó bá dúró sí kò sí ẹ̀nítí ó le yí i lẹ̀sẹ̀ padà níbẹ̀. Bí a tí ń lọ, bí asunrárà tí ń sun rárà ní Baálẹ̀ kọsẹ̀ ọ̀tún, ó wò mí lójú, ó ní: "Àṣàbí, ẹ̀sẹ̀ ọ̀túnni mo kọ, ọ̀nì yóò gbóná ní Kóòtù pẹ̀lú ọ̀yìnbó yìi. Aó fí ọ̀kúnrinhanarawa". (53).

When senior Ajẹlẹ̀ came, I followed Baálẹ̀ to the court that day because I knew nobody could change his position of standing in the court. As we were going and the praise chanter was chanting, Baálẹ̀ hit right leg against an object. He looked at me and said, "Àṣàbí, I hit an object with my right leg. Today will be tough with the British officer in court. We would not take it easy with ourselves."

Hitting the right leg on an object is a strange sign used by the author to forewarn the Baálẹ̀ that the outing of that day was not likely to yield good results. And true to this prediction, "Baálẹ̀ àti àwọnìjòyè jádení ipádé pẹ̀lú sísoríkọ̀ lójọ̀ náà" (60) (Baálẹ̀ and his chiefs came out of the meeting that day disappointed). This confirms and establishes the fact about the reality of the previous strange sign noticed by Baálẹ̀. This, in addition, helps to prepare Baálẹ̀' s mind against whatever might be the outcome of the meeting with the Ajẹlẹ̀ Àgbà (Chief administrator).

Another instance of strange sign in *Aiyé Daiyé Òyìnbó* (1970) is when a black butterfly perched on Àṣàbí's eyelids when she was dancing at the night party on her wedding day. Àṣàbí speaks thus:

Bí mo ti ñ jó lí agbo li ojò iyàwó mi tí onírúurú èniyàn ñ yé mi sí, labalábá dúdú kanbà lé ipénpéjú mi. Babalọlá rí i. Àwọniyàwó-ilé wọn, èyini ni àwọniyálé mi tí ó wà láàrinagbo lí ojò nàà tíwọnyé mi sí rí i. Babalọlá fẹ pa á, sùgbónibi tí ó wà yelegé púpò, ó gbìdánwò láti pa á sùgbón ó fò lọ. Kínìlabalábá ñ wá lí alé òní yínínú agboijó? Èyí jé ohunabàmi. Ó sì jé àmi tí gbogboàwọn tí ó rí ilójó nàà kà sí àmi búburú pátápátá (P. 19).

As I was dancing at the night party in the crowd on my wedding day, a black butterfly perched on my eyelids. Babalọlá saw it. Babalọlá compound's wives also saw it. Babalọlá made attempt to kill it but it was at the delicate place. He also struggled to kill it but it flew away. What did butterfly want today in this ceremonial environment? It was a completely bad sign to all that saw it.

This incident with the black butterfly is regarded as the cause of Àṣàbí's subsequent illness. It was believed to have been sent by Abòdẹrìn, a spiritually powerful hunter, who had earlier been offended by Àṣàbí's mother. The incident thus clearly presages Àṣàbí's illness, leading to increased suspense and tension in the families of the groom and the bridegroom.

As part of their sensitivity to the metaphysical environment, the Yorùbá pay attention to the characteristics of animals and human alike. In Fágúnwà's (2005) *Ògbójú Ọdẹ Nínú Igbó Irínmalẹ*, Àkàrà-ògùn's left foot strikes a stone and he deems it a bad omen. Still pondering this, the troubled character has an owl come at him with its feathers, and this is another bad omen for him. The narration goes thus:

Dídide tí mo dide, ẹsẹ òsì ni mo fi kọ, ẹsẹ iyá mi ni, igbàkigbàtí mo bá ti fi ẹsẹ nàà kọ sí ǹnkankan, ǹnkan nàà kò ní dára. Eléyìbà mí lẹrù díẹ, ibi tí mo sì ti dúró tí mo bẹrẹsí ronú nípa ẹsẹ burúkútí mo kọ yí ni ẹyẹ òwìwí kan fò kojá tí ó sì fi iyé gbá mi lójú: bẹ̀ni àmi burúkú pátápátá gbàà ni (23).

As I stood up, I unexpectedly hit the stone with my left leg; it is my mother's leg, any time I experience this, that thing will be bad. I was

terrified a little. It was where I stood, thinking about the ordeal that an owl hit me in the eye with its feathers: and this is completely a bad sign.

There are two strange signs here: striking his left foot against a stone, which suggests impending danger on his journey, and being hit in the eye by the owl's feathers, which is another sign of hindrance on the journey. Both strange signs are meant to warn him and make him take precautions.

The Yorùbá believe that whoever is trapped by witches and wizards is equally stigmatized with their spiritual signs, hence the common saying that 'àmi àwọ̀nàgbà ti wà lára rẹ̀' (the sign of the spiritual elders is on his/her body). The spiritual sign is believed not to be empirically seen but noticed through divination or by those that smear their eyes with traditional medicine (see Bámgbóşé [2007:28]). Wherever such a stigmatized person goes, the sign is immediately noticed by anyone with spiritual powers. Such stigma may delay or halt the person's progress in life, cause physical affliction to the person or be a sign for further spiritual punishment. However, such a sign may be neutralized through traditional medicine, rituals, sacrifice, appeasement and similar interventions. But it is also possible for a spiritual stamp to be used for benevolent purposes, e.g. providing spiritual security to a person or helping them to make progress in life. Be that as it may, the durability of such a spiritual sign is always at the discretion of those who put it on the victim's body. For example, Fágúnwà, in *Ògbójú Ọdẹ̀ Nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ̀* (2005), shows that strange signs exist not only in human society but also among animals, birds in this case. In the narration a red sign is said to exist on the forehead of the hunters in Irúnmalẹ̀ forest. The hunters were not aware of the implications of the red sign until they were arrested by the animals' police and paraded in front of the Ostrich, the king of birds. According to the narration (2005:61):

Nígbà tí àwà wọ̀ ibẹ̀ a kò mọ̀ ǹnkankan, níwọ̀n ìgbà tí ó sì ti jẹ̀ pégbogbowani ó ti sọ̀ òkò luẹyẹ̀ rí nígbà tí a wà ní kékeré, tí a sì tipa wọ̀n ní àinídíí rí, ǹnkan pupa wọ̀nyí hàn síwájú wa, a kò sì mọ̀ ǹnkankantítí àwon ọ̀lópáá wọ̀n fí mú wátí wọ̀nkó wa lọ síwájú ọ̀gòngò baba ẹyẹ̀ (61).

We knew nothing when we got there, and for the fact that everyone of us had stoned birds at our tender age, the red

sign appeared on our forehead and we knew nothing until we were arrested and taken to Ostrich; the king of birds.

The red sign appears on the foreheads of those who had ever killed birds, although it is invisible to humans but visible to the spiritual birds. Thus, the hunters get arrested based on the sign on their foreheads. The import of this metaphysical resource is that nothing can be hidden forever.

Furthermore, numbering among the Yorùbá has metaphysical undertones. Fágúnwà (2005) uses numbers as strange signs in the interactions between the king of Òkè Lán gbòdó (Lán gbòdó Hill) and hunters who were on an adventure thus:

Mo fi àwọn èbùnkékeré wònyí ránńşé sí yínní mífàméfà,
gégé bíàşà Yorùbá ní ayé àtíjò àtínígbà mírànní ayé
isinsinyí pèlú, mo şeèyí látífihànyínpé mo fi ẹfà fà yín
móra. (100).

I sent you these small gifts in six numbers, just like Yorùbá culture in the olden days and sometimes nowadays. I did this to show to you that I used six items to embrace and show you the sign of love.

The number of each of the gifts given to the hunters was six, which connotes love for fellow beings. In the Yorùbá worldview six is significant and typifies warm acceptance, mutual understanding and the need to assist one another, hence the Yorùbá song:

Ó d'èfà bí ẹfà, ẹ jé ká fa'rawa móra.

It is like six, let us embrace ourselves.

The use or presentation of items in sixes thus symbolises love, friendship and compassion. It is regarded as a positive strange sign not only for the hunters and their people but is also a good lesson on love sharing. Strange signs, therefore, constitute a metaphysical resource that can be employed to present different spiritual meanings that are attached to various numbers among the Yorùbá.

The Yorùbá are very careful and watchful in every undertaking or occurrence, hence the adage 'ifuralòògùnàgbà, páńsá ò furapáńsá jááná, àjà ò furaàjà jìn, bónílé ò bá fura

olè ni ó ko lọ'. This idea of self-awareness reflects in Ojúadé (2014:2) when Bānjí's left leg hits an object. According to the narration:

Abájo, ó tìgbàgbé ànkásìfì rẹ̀ sílé kí ó tó kúrò. Bí ó tilẹ̀ mú unlọ̀wọ̀, kí ni ó rànínú omilẹ̀ngbẹ̀ yí. Sùgbón ìbá tilẹ̀ sẹ̀diẹ̀ nìbẹ̀. Bí ó ti n woiélé rẹ̀ lẹ̀kánkánni ó kọ̀sẹ̀ pàrà. "Èsẹ̀ òsì ni mo kọ̀ yí, bóyá oúnjẹ̀ n dúrò dè mí nílẹ̀ niyẹn.

No wonder he left his handkerchief at home. If he has taken it along, what impact would it have made, anyway, considering the excessive sweat. But it could have reduced the tension. He suddenly hit his leg with an object when approaching his abode. "Since it is the left leg that is involved, maybe that is a sign for ready-made food at home".

Although Bánjì thinks this is a sign that food will be waiting for him at home, it turns out that a letter has in fact been delivered for him at home by Tóréera. Semiotically, the hitting suggests an impending occurrence, be it benevolent or malevolent.

Strange signs, among the Yorùbá, is a recognized metaphysical element noticeable for different purposes as displayed by several Yorùbá literary writers. Among the writers that have explored strange signs is Ìṣòlá in his play titled *Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà*. In *Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà* (2003), Ìtáwuyì (a slave) dreamt of seeing seven ground hornbills eating all food meant for him and Adétutù during their marriage engagement. Also, in the dream one of the seven ground hornbills hit his eyes with its feathers, which made him to lose his sight for some times. When Ìtáwuyì regained his sight, he saw Adétutù pursuing one of the ground hornbills to the extent of not coming back to Ìtáwuyì anymore. The dream portends a great danger for Ìtáwuyì as Adétutù has heart-rob as the dream is full of strange signs that are ominous in nature. The dream is narrated thus:

Ìtáwuyì: Àní mo lá àlá kan ní ìjẹta. Èmi pèlú rẹ̀ wà ní ilé nílá kan, à n sẹ̀ ìgbéyàwó wa. Àwọn ènìyàn pọ̀, oúnjẹ̀ sì pọ̀ pèlú. Bí a ti fẹ́ máa jẹun ni mo gbójú sókè. Kíni mo rí? Mo rí àwọn ẹyẹ àkàlà méjẹ tí wọn n fò Bò lójú òrun. Wọn mbọ̀ wá sí òdò wa tààrà, wọn tóbi èrù kò sì bà wọn. Wéré, wọn fò wolé, wọn sì fì ohjẹ̀ náà jẹ̀ tán pátápátá. Inú bí mi, mo dide, sùgbón òkan nínú wọn fi ìyẹ̀ gbá mi lójú n kò sì ríran mó. Nígbà tí ojú mi là, mo rí ọ̀ tí ò n fì orógùn ọ̀kà lé òkan nínú wọn lọ. Mo pè ọ̀ padà títi, sùgbón ìwọ̀ kò gbó bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni ìwọ̀ kò sì padà. (22-23).

I had a dream. You and I were in a big house engaging in our wedding. People were many, food

was surplus also. As we were about to eat, I looked up. What did I see? I saw seven ground hornbills flying from heaven towards our side. They were big and fearless. They quickly flew in and ate all our food. I was furious, I stood up, but one hit my eye with its feathers and I lost my sight. I saw you pursuing one of the ground hornbills when I regained my sight. I called you several times, but you didn't hear and also refused to come back.

Seeing seven ground hornbills disturbing and disrupting in the dream connotes eventual separation between Ìtáwuyì (the dreamer) and Adétutù, who is in love with him (Ìtáwuyì). This confirms the beliefs of the Yorùbá in regarding ground hornbills as spiritual birds. The strange sign in its content functions as a sign for losing an opportunity as noticed and exemplified in the statement that '*Wéré, wón fò wolé, wón sì fi oúnjẹ nàà jẹ tán pátápátá*' (They quickly flew in and ate all the food). This is a sign that Ìtáwuyì will lose Adétutù as wife to marry. Also, the sign serves as a warning for Ìtáwuyì and Adétutù in their impending marital engagement or dealing. The import of the metaphysical device is to foretell future and serve as a warning device against the acts of defiance and stubbornness.

Similar to the use of strange signs by Fágúnwà (2005) is the presentation of how the hitting of stone against left leg re-surfaces in Ìṣòlá's (2003) *Èfúnṣetán Aníwúrà*. Ìṣòlá presents this when 'obìnrin kẹta' (third lady) says:

*Jéjé ni mò mbò, tẹmi tojà lóri o
Mo kókó fi ẹsẹ òsì kọ,
Ara fu mí púpọ, mo ti mò pé ewu mbẹ.
Bí mo ti mbò, tí mo mbò o,
Bí mo ti dé eti ilé Ìyálóde, ó kù díẹ,
Ni mò ń gbọ ẹkún obìnrin kan.
Àsẹ wón fẹ pa á ni! (51).*

I was gently coming with load on head.
I was firstly hit at left leg by stone.
I suspected and very sure of impending danger.
As I was coming, as I was coming.
As I moved closer to Ìyálóde's house, just very close,
I was overhearing the weeping of a lady.
They were about to kill her.

The sign of the impending killing of a lady in front of Ìyálóde's residence is shown through the hitting of the left leg against a stone by the third lady that narrated the event. Apart from predicting the future occurrence, the metaphysical element also creates awareness for the affected person of the unfavourable events and the preparation of necessary step to avert an impending danger. Hence, this also serves as a signal to the reader.

Yorùbá is a tribe endowed with the knowledge about their society and all that are therein. They have studied human beings, plants and animals, especially in line with the spiritual potentialities of every species within their localities. For instance, Ilésanmí in Adéléké's (2001) *Wá Gbó* presents how "Ọmọ́nlé" (house lizard), a crawling animal, is ominous in nature. The poet in his poem titled "Ọmọ́nlé Ìránṣẹ̀ Àgbà" presents "Ọmọ́nlé" as an agent of witches and wizard. He regards it as a bad agent of witchcraft activities that can be utilized by witches and wizard to perform different forms of evil and diabolical operations such as adultery, sexual intercourse during sleep, eating when sleeping, etc. Hence, "Ọmọ́nlé" is an instrument of evil doing by both the witches and wizard. The poet exposes the characteristics of the house lizard and how it is being employed for bad spiritual undertakings in the following poetic lines:

Ọmọ́lúlé ni àwọn babańlá wa pè ọ.
 Nítórí pé àtìwọ̀ àtómọ̀ wọ̀n.
 Lẹ̀ jọ́ n gbénú ilé e wọ̀n.
 Ọmọ́nlé, iwọ̀ nikan ni alárèékèndè.
 Ìwọ̀ nikan niwà rẹ̀ yàtò sí ti gbogbo afàyàfà.
 Ìránṣẹ̀ àwọn ọ̀sìkà ni ọ.
 Olubi ni iwọ̀ pàápàá alárá.
 Ìwọ̀ ni ìránṣẹ̀ àgbèrè àrùn lójú àlá.
 Ìwọ̀ lò n po itọ̀ ayé síni lẹnu lójú oorun.
 Abájọ̀ tí àwọn ọ̀sìkà fi máa n sọ pé.
 "Àfí tí kò bá sọmọ́lúlé nilé ibi tó n sùn.
 Ni ọwọ̀ àwọn kò fi ní tẹ̀ lágbájá."(57-58).

Our forefathers name you as Ọmọ́lúlé.
 Because, you and their children,
 Are living together in their house.
 Ọmọ́nlé, you are the only rogue.
 You are the only different among the crawling animals.
 You are the agent of the evils.
 You are really a wicked animal.
 You are the agent of spiritual fornication.

You are the one that pours spittle into one's mouth during sleep.
No wonder why the wicked usually say.
"Unless there is no house lizard in the house he sleeps.
That such person will not be captured.

From the above, it could be inferred that "Ọmọńlé" is doomed with evil acts and recognized not to just be ordinary crawling animal but an animal that possesses evil spirit or otherwise manipulated for evil undertakings by both the witches and wizards. This invariably shows the interconnectivity between strange sign and witchcraft as two different metaphysical elements but related ones that operate or exist within Yorùbá society. Author's presentation of this animal assists all and sundry to understand the phenomenon (Ọmọńlé) and the spiritual roles it plays in human life. It also manifests the fact that witches and wizards have powers to make use of the animal to carry-out their diabolical or spiritual works, especially in the night or during darkness or when one is asleep. The author uses the strange sign to expose the inner attributes or otherwise the metaphysical effects of house lizard, especially on human beings.

5.7 Witchcraft/Wizardry

People tend to be scared because of the dreadful and malevolent engagement of both the witches and wizards in the society. Fágúnwà in *Ògbójú Ọdẹ Nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ* (2005) presents witches as one of the most treacherous and devilish powers/sets common in Yorùbá society. This is reflected in *Ògbójú Ọdẹ Nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ* (2005) when one of the characters, Àkàrà-Ògùn, reveals that her mother was an unrepentant witch (àjẹ). He states thus: "Ògbólógbòò àjẹ ni iyá mi í ẹ" (p. 2). Also, Àkàrà-ògùn's father, though a good person and courageous hunter, is blamed for marrying a witch as wife:

Lóòótó, iwọki í fi ọwọ arare pa ẹnikanşùgbónìwọ a máakó
iyà rejeomọ-ọlómọ: iwọ fi ojú sílẹ o lofẹ ògbólógbòò àjẹ,
nítorí ẹwà lásán, ohunrere lo ẹbí ò n ẹ? Eje àwọniyàwó ẹ
kò ha n kẹ pẹ ọ? Ẹşẹ àwọnomọreméjẹjẹjokò ha wà lórùnre?
Síbẹsíbẹ, iwọtún la ẹnure o sọpé iwokò ẹibiri! (4).

Truly, you had never killed but you let others suffered: you opened your eyes to marry a wicked witch, because of ordinary beauty, you believed you were doing well? Is the blood of your dead wives not calling you? Were the sins of your eight dead children not on your neck? Still, you

opened your mouth to say that you had not done wrong!

Fágúnwà's use of witchcraft shows the level of atrocities that were committed through witchcraft. This shows that witchcraft exists in real life. The irreparable loss or ruin caused through the metaphysical element increases the fear already present in the minds of many people. Yorùbá people go against those who possess the spirit. It is this high level of exploration and exploitation of the metaphysical element of witchcraft that makes Bámgbóṣé (2007:10) to refer to witchcraft as “a basic ingredient” in the story of Àkàrà-ògùn's father”.

A Yorùbá adage says 'lálá tó ròkè, ilẹ̀ ló n bọ' (whatever goes up will definitely come down). This can attest to the fact that witches do recount their ordeals, especially when they fail in their mystical or metaphysical operations to the extent of attaining public disgrace. A similar case of this occurs in Oḷábímtán (1993) thus:

'Gbòkò, gbòkò, gbòkò.' Lèsèkan náà ó já wọlé, ó wọ iyàrá iyá olóbi ó gbé igbá funfunkanjáde, ó sì mú iyá, ó tì í síwájú. Kíá, ariwo ta. 'Iyá olóbi ní, iyá mà ni'. Iyá pàápàá ò tilẹ̀ jiyàn, ó sì n lọ kánmá, kánmá níwájú ẹ̀lẹ̀gùnòṣà. Bí wọn ti yọ sí agbo, wọn fúnun ní obi òṣà jẹ. Ìlù n dúnkíkankíkan, gbogboèniyàn sì n garúnwo iyá olóbi. Ìgbà tí ó máa tó iséjú mẹwáá lẹyin tí iyá olóbi ti jẹ obi òṣà, ó bẹrẹ sí sọrọ, ó ní; 'Emi lẹ ní n se? Ìgbàà 'Débísí fòórùnepo rẹ lá mi lójú. Bí mo sì fọmọ mi dá àjọ sebí ohun tí èyànbá ní ló fí n seàlejò, fúnrami ni mo sá lomọ mi' (P. 4-5).

'Speedily, speedily, speedily.' He quickly entered kolanut selling woman's house, brought out a white calabash, arrested the woman and pushed her forward. People shouted aloud. 'The woman said, am a mother now'. The woman easily complied and started moving in front of the priest. The woman was given the god sacred'skolanut to eat and everybody started looking at the woman. After ten minutes of eating the kolanut, the woman started recounting her past ordeals: 'What do you want me to do? It is when 'Débísí denied me of palm-oil. What concerns anybody if I spiritually render my child as sacrifice, is it not what one has that he or she will use to entertain his or her visitor? After all, I am the owner of my child.'

Witchcraft as a metaphysical element is employed by the author to show how 'iyá olóbi' (woman kolanut seller), a witch, recounts her past metaphysical operations in such a way as to have ruined or terminated other people's lives. "Iyá olóbi", referred to as "iyá" (mother) in that context, is not only referred to as an aged woman but

rather symbolises a spiritual woman or "àwṣṣnalayé" (the owners of the world) (Elébuibṣṣn 2008:39). The deity's kolanut stands as both the mouthpiece of the appeased god and an indexical sign or object for the provision of spiritual and medical security for whoever eats it against any witch or wizard that fashions evil against the person. However, the employment of the metaphysical element (witchcraft) by the author manifests the kind of society and the existing phenomenon in it. The exploration and exploitation of the element also serves as a warning against embarking one's hands on evil acts. Hence, a Yorùbá adage testifies that 'a kì í gbinàlùbṣṣà kó hu èfṣṣ, ohun a bá gbìn ni yóò dide' (whatever one sows shall he reap).

In Abímṣṣólá's (2008) *Àwṣṣn Ojú Odù Méréṣṣèrìndínlógún*, the author presents an Ifá corpus, "Odù Ìkà méjì" (Ìkà méjì corpus), to explain how the witches possess spiritual bird and the vital position of such bird among other birds. Witches in Yorùbá society are regarded as 'àwṣṣn èṣṣeṣṣ' (owners of spiritual birds). This shows certainty about the fact that witches harbour their metaphysical powers in spiritual birds like 'òwìwí' (owl), àdán (bat), etc. The author testifies to this thus:

Ó ní atótó arére,
 Pàkòyí, babaa Mògánà.
 Bí òjò bá í rṣṣ,
 Èyṣṣ oko èé ké,
 Èyṣṣkṣṣyṣṣ mṣṣ ké mṣṣ,
 Èyṣṣ àjṣṣ gbòde.
 Adán òkè ní í ṣṣ kátàkótò
 Ni gbogbo èyṣṣ fí yára mṣṣnù dúró. (62).

Listen everybody,
 Pààkòyí, the father of Mògánà.
 When it is raining,
 Bush bird doesn't chirp.
 Other birds should not chirp any longer,
 Witchcraft bird is live.
 It is aerial bat that chirps anyhow
 That every bird stops chirping.

From the above, the poet compares and contrasts ordinary bird with witchcraft bird. He describes witchcraft bird to be more powerful than ordinary bird that doesn't harbour spirit like that of witchcraft's. This presentation shows the exposition of divination as a metaphysical element that contains or handles series of life events and witchcraft as a phenomenon that exists in human society and operates with the use of

birds via harbouring of spirit. The divinatory poem also serves as a precautionary measure to those, especially young ones that are commonly found of stoning birds unnecessarily. Hence, a Yorùbá poem by Ògbóni cultists goes thus:

Lílẹ̀: È má sò'kò làsá.
È má ma tò só'dò o
È mà tò só'dò,
Torí ẹnì bá sò'kò làsá,
Ọmọ rẹ á nù o.

Ègbè: Bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni wọn ní fọ́ l'Ákẹ́éé.
Bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni wọn ní fọ́ l'Ókòòò.
Bẹ̀ẹ̀ ni wọn ní fọ́ l'Ọ̀lààà.
Tó fi délé Ọ̀lọ̀mọ Ọ́óboyè ooo.

Solo: Don't stone eagle.
Don't urinate into the river.
Don't urinate into the river.
Whosoever stone eagle,
Shall lose his child.

Chorus: So they voice at Aké.
So they voice at Òkò.
So they voice at Ọ̀là,
Till it reaches the house of Òbóyè's offspring.

The above poem, which is in the form of song, shows that 'ásá' (hawk) in Yorùbá worldview is not just an ordinary bird but rather a bird that harbours spirit or otherwise utilized by witches and wizards to execute their spiritual operations and dealings. All these help individuals to understand, identify or determine the kind of society they are and the kind of phenomena existing in it and how human beings can be coping with them, especially with the existing metaphysical agents.

5.8 Summary of Yorùbá literary writers on the use of metaphysical elements

The table below shows the Yorùbá novelists, poets and playwrights who deploy various metaphysical elements in their texts.

Table 2: Yorùbá Literary Writers and their use of Metaphysical Elements

	Authors/Years of Publication	Metaphysical elements							Total
		Death	Divination	Dream	Incantation	Inner-head	Strange signs	Witchcraft	
1	Délànò (1970)	—	—	2	—	—	2	—	4
2	Ládipò (1970)	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	2
3	Ọlábímtán (1978)	1	1	—	1	—	—	—	3
4	Owólabí (1978)	—	—	1	3	—	—	—	4
5	Adéoyè (1982)	—	1	—	1	1	—	—	3
6	Owólabí (1983)	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	2
7	Fálétí (1993)	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
8	Ọlábímtán (1993)	—	1	—	1	—	1	1	4
9	Ilésanmí in Adélékè (2001)	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
10	Ọlábòdè in Adé- lékè (2001)	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
11	Òní (2001)	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	2
12	Adébòwálé (2003)	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
13	Ìshòlá (2003)	—	—	1	1	—	2	—	4
14	Fágúnwà (2005)	1	1	—	—	—	3	1	6
15	Ọlábímtán (2005)	—	2	1	—	—	—	—	3
16	Ọpádòtun (2005)	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	2
17	Awóyèlé (2007)	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
18	Ògúnníran (2007)	—	1	—	1	1	—	—	3
19	Abímbòlá (2008)	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	2
20	Adéyemí (2008)	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
21	Ológundúdú (2009)	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	2
22	Ọlátéjú (2009)	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
23	Awé (2010)	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	2
24	Ọláyíwọlá (2010)	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
25	Ọpádòtun (2010)	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
26	Ajéwọlé (2013)	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
27	Ojúádé (2014)	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	2
									60

Analysis

Of the twenty-seven authors in the table above, twelve are novelists, six are playwrights and nine are poets. Clearly, there are more novelists than dramatic and poetic authors and this shows that the present study presents more on the employment of metaphysical elements in Yorùbá novels. All the same, the other genres are also veritable means of portraying metaphysical elements in literature. All of these authors' works deploy the seven metaphysical elements of death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, and witchcraft. The kind of metaphysical elements deployed by each of the literary writers and the number of times each metaphysical element is employed by each literary artist is also presented in the above table. For instance, Fágúnwà (2005) records the highest frequency of six times of the employment of four different metaphysical elements, viz; death, divination, strange signs, and witchcraft. These metaphysical elements are used in this study to attain various goals such as provision of information, revelation of the future and unknown messages, justice dispensation, and making of inquiries, etc.

Ọlábímtán (1993) also employs four different metaphysical elements in four instances. He uses divination, incantation, strange signs, and witchcraft to predict future occurrences, provide security and protection, as well as presenting them as symbols and signals for forthcoming events while using them to express or uncover the secrets behind evil acts within the society. Fálétí (1993), Ilésanmí in Adélékè (2001), Ọlábòdé in Adélékè (2001), Adébòwálé (2003), Awóyẹlé (2007), Adéyemí (2008), Ọlátéjú (2009), Awẹ (2010), Ọpádòtun (2010), Ajéwọlé (2013), and Ojúadé (2014) present the exploration and exploitation of a metaphysical element each in their Yorùbá literary texts. This shows that more metaphysical elements have been explored and exploited by more narrative authors than other literary writers of other genres, namely; playwrights and poets.

The selected works in Yorùbá literature have been studied and utilized in this study for critical analysis of the seven metaphysical elements of death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, ominous signs, and witchcraft/wizardry. However, there is more emphasis on Yorùbá literary prose than on drama and poetry. Some of the metaphysical elements also feature more prominently than the others. Therefore, it has been observed, and with the aid of the presented table above, that incantation, as a

metaphysical element, has the highest frequency in different Yorùbá written literary genres while witchcraft as a metaphysical phenomenon records the lowest number of frequency in this study. However, their total contributions have enabled us to come out with evidence to establish several realities concerning the existence and authenticity of metaphysical elements within the Yorùbá society. In sum, a total number of sixty occurrences of different metaphysical elements selected and critically analyzed have been presented in this study. This gives rise for better understanding of the selected metaphysical elements and how they have been explored and exploited by the Yorùbá literary authors in their texts and for what effects or purposes.

5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, we presented the reflections of metaphysical elements in Yorùbá written literature. We highlighted the seven metaphysical phenomena of death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, and witchcraft/wizardry. A critical discussion and analysis of how they were explored and exploited in different genres of Yorùbá literature have also been presented. This chapter also provides the list of the various Yorùbá literary writers who have deployed the selected metaphysical resources in their literary texts. The breakdown and total frequencies of occurrences of the utilized metaphysical elements in Yorùbá written literature have also been presented in this study for detailed understanding of the metaphysical phenomena, especially within the Yorùbá society.

Notes

1. It is referred to as those fairies that are present in the thick forest. They usually exhibit spiritual or metaphysical powers, especially against the traditional hunters that are on their hunting game.
2. A popular area in Ìbàdàn city in Òyó state of Nigeria where a police station/custody is situated.
3. An artistic display or the work of arts, especially by Yorùbá traditional artists like ìjálá chanters, Èsà-egúngún chanters (masquerade's chanters), etc.
4. A kind of determination of one's destiny through divination, especially through Ifá divination e.g. by IkinIfá (sacred palm-kernels divination).
5. An important element of the narrative story.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study's major findings and conclusions as well as recommendations and contributions to knowledge deriving from it.

6.1 Summary of findings

This study examined seven metaphysical elements as deployed in written Yorùbá literature: death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, and witchcraft/wizardry. The theoretical frameworks were the sociology of literature and semiotic theory. Both theories were deployed for examining the use and effects of the selected metaphysical resources in Yorùbá written literature. In addition, the theories helped to validate the existence and reality of the identified metaphysical phenomena in Yorùbá society. The sociology of literature accounts for the link between society, literature and the said phenomena, while semiotics helps in deciphering the symbolic meanings of metaphysical elements that occur in the texts for the study.

The study found that the seven metaphysical elements occur more frequently in Yorùbá written literary prose. They are used for revealing secret messages, predicting future events, providing solutions to existing problems or challenges, for symbolic representation and interpretation in the society, for the exercise of power and control, for safety and security purposes, and for causing social change vis-a-vis the aversion of impending dangers or problems. Moreover, deployment of these metaphysical entities in Yorùbá written literature not only keep the readers in suspense but also help them to see how the selected elements are explored and exploited to show the different ways through which the authors achieve their set goals.

Another important finding is that metaphysical elements are regarded as natural tools through which the beliefs, philosophy, cultural heritage and actions of both living and non-living creatures are identified, appreciated and realised in the society. This suggests that several meanings, effects and changes have been created by these elements. It is important to note that the Yorùbá people identify, value, and appreciate the presence of metaphysical elements in their domains, since they are regarded as part of the societal phenomena which human beings live with and even use to satisfy their needs.

6.2 Conclusion

This study has attempted a critical study of the use of metaphysical elements in Yorùbá written literature. The study examined the exploration and exploitation of metaphysical elements such as death, divination, dreams, incantation, inner-head, strange signs and witchcraft in Yorùbá literary texts. Furthermore, the study involved a critical analysis of each of the selected metaphysical resources and highlighted how human beings cope with it as well as the ways in which they are employed and exploited for stylistic, communicative and pedagogical purposes. Indeed, they were presented as socio-cultural tools to achieve varying effects such as revelation of secrets, provision of necessary solutions to various challenges, attainment of security and societal control, display of supremacy, making of predictions, as well as manifestation and possession of spiritual powers by both human and non-human entities etc. It could also be inferred that the existence, affirmation, and validation of the metaphysical elements such as death, divination, dream, incantation, inner-head, strange signs, and witchcraft/wizardry depend on both individual and societal belief systems or worldviews.

6.3 Contributions to knowledge

This study has immensely contributed to having a holistic treatment of different metaphysical elements more than previous studies. Hence, the acquisition and expansion of more knowledge, ideas and understanding about metaphysical elements existing in Yorùbá worldview.

This study affirms and validates the existence and reality of the metaphysical elements in Yorùbá society as evident in the writers' deployment of same in the literary works under study.

The study has also enabled us to have a broadened outlook and widened knowledge about how the several Yorùbá literary authors have explored and exploited several metaphysical elements in their literary texts and for what effects or purposes.

It has been a great contribution for all and sundry to possess the knowledge about how several metaphysical elements have been deployed in Yorùbá written literature and especially across the three Yorùbá literary genres: prose, poetry and drama. This will enable other researchers to further their researches in sourcing and analysing other untreated metaphysical elements such as magic, vision, re-incarnation, etc. as deployed by Yorùbá literary writers of the three literary genres in their works.

Finally, the study is an eye-opener to other students and scholars on the existence and realities of metaphysical elements in African literature.

6.4 Recommendations

This research has worked on twenty-six Yorùbá written literary texts in which the critical examination of how Yorùbá literary artists have deployed seven selected metaphysical elements as themes were present. There are still other metaphysical elements like magic, vision, re-incarnation, etc on which future researchers can work on.

Yorùbá literary texts that featured seven selected metaphysical elements seem to be foundation areas that have been presented across the three Yorùbá literary genres and can still be explored and expanded by further researchers or scholars in the future.

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