

Form and Contents of Yoruba Photoplay Magazine: The Yoruba Photodrama Example

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Introduction

Photoplay magazine was a notable serial publication produced by West African Books Publisher in Lagos between 1967 and 1991. It was the only print media which was employed as a secondary media of dramatic performance by Yorùbá theatre practitioners. It was therefore an ancillary media.

For construct clarity, it must be stated that there was a magazine founded in 1911 in Chicago, United States of America called *Photoplay*. It was one of the first film fan magazines in America (Doyle, 2010 in Akangbe, 2014). It was this same year that J. Stuart Blackton founded a similar magazines which he titled *Motion Picture Story*. A reputable publication, *Photoplay* began as a short-fiction magazine which was mostly concerned with the plots and characters of films at the time and was used as a promotional tool for those films. The popularity of the magazine was engendered by the rising interest of the public in the private lives and exploits of celebrities. It is on the strength of this that *Photoplay* magazine was credited with unending celebrity media (www.pophistorydig.com/?tag=photoplay-magazine.history). So there is a remarkable conceptual, technical, and functional difference between the western *Photoplay* magazine and the Yorùbá photoplay magazine. Primarily, the Chicago-based western photoplay magazine was a fan magazine for film stars and it was the first of its kind in America.

A fan magazine is a periodical which publishes information and gossips about celebrities. According to www.merrian-webster.com/dictionary, fan magazine is “a magazine devoted to the exploitation of popular interest in the personalities of the sports or entertainment world (as movie, radio, TV)”. The magazine therefore was a publicity medium for the film stars as well as for the producers. As corroborated by www.mediahistoryproject.org/fanmagazines, “Fan magazines gave audiences a way to experience the magic of the movies beyond the theatre. The magazines also gave producers a way to promote their stars and coming films.” In terms of format, *Photoplay* was fictional; content-wise, it gave sketchy presentation of the plots and characters of films; and reputation-wise it was popular and widely accepted. So virtually, the western *Photoplay* magazine was by definition, outlook, content and preoccupation remarkably different from Yorùbá photoplay magazine. This paper discusses the form and content of Yorùbá photoplay magazine and *Atòka*, the foremost photoplay magazine in Yorùbá,

is our case study. The paper is discussed under the following sub-headings: introduction, concepts of form and content, the form of *Yorùbá* photoplay magazine, the contents of *Atòka* photoplay magazine, the drama, the *Atòka* additives, and conclusion.

Concepts of Form and Content

The concepts of form (*ètò*) and content (*àkóónú*) are literarily mutual. Mishra (2011:1), in his exposition on form and content, noted from Formalists' perception that, 'form' dictates 'content' as such 'content' is at the mercy of 'form' while Genre Critics otherwise known as Chicago Critics, hold the view that the relation of 'form' and 'content' is in the manner of cause and effect. The cause is 'content' and effect is 'form'. Our own perception is that form and content are dependent on each other. Form refers to the appearance of a written piece. This refers to the way a piece of writing is presented. Form is physical, therefore the quality of appeal is one of its key indicators. On the other hand, content refers to what is expressed in a written piece. This, in other word, refers to the message. When form and content are situated in print media, form simply translates to mould, frame, outline, structure, or arrangement of the publication while content refers to the issues, topics, subjects, or messages contained in the publication. On the premise of this, it is our view that in publishing, form is extrinsic while content is intrinsic. The relationship between form and content is symbiotic as the two impinge on one another since what is said cannot be divorced from how it is said.

The Form of Yorùbá photoplay magazine

Yorùbá photoplay magazine has a very unique form. It is professional and axiomatic for a magazine to meet certain conditions and comply with some standards. Groth (1920) in Esimokha (2011: 11 - 12) itemises a number of characteristics which are pertinent to magazine publications. Pertinent among these conditions are production frequency, timeliness, mechanical production i.e. it must be produced through a mechanical device, multifarious contents, and accessibility to the magazine by the readers. The Form of *Yorùbá* photoplay magazine are examined under format i.e. paper and size, design and layout, typography, columnisation, page extent or volume, numbering, production schedule and quality.

The *format* of *Atòka* photoplay magazine which is the case of this study is unique. The format refers to the dimensions or size in which it appeared on newsstand. Its format was about size. It adopted A3 size. It was printed on newsprint all through its existence. Newsprint is a low-cost paper consisting mainly of wood pulp. It is commonly adopted for printing newspapers and magazines. An edition of *Atòka* contains thirty-two pages with the drama section bearing pictures of various sizes. A page could take between two and six pictures depending on the sizes assigned to each picture. Each page of *Atòka* takes a maximum of six pictures.¹ Other pages can take five pictures, four pictures, three pictures and two pictures. The formation of a six-picture a page is 3.8" x 3.5" all through while in five pictures a page, the formation is 3.8" x 3.5" in four places and 7.5" x 3.5 once. For a four-picture a page, the formation is 3.8" x 5.1" in four places while that of three-pictures a page is 7.8" x 5.5" in one place, and 4.9" x 3.8" in two places. For

a two-picture a page the formation is 7.8" x 5.3" each. The editor usually considered the topicality of the action in a photograph in assigning size to it.

Design and layout is another indicator of the form of *Atóka* photoplay magazine. Design and layout is technically called 'Make up'. This refers to the process of designing a magazine by carefully selecting and arranging headlines, stories, pictures and other elements to make a unified and attractive whole (Esimokhai, 2011:127). According to Akangbe (2015:2), "... design is a creative process which entails conception, planning, specification and expression of the physical and visual components of a publication. Design and layout entails of technical interplay of text, graphics (images) and space. In the view of Broekhuizen (1995), for a publication to effectively perform its communicative function, it must have the potential to attract the attention of readers, be legible and makes lasting impression on the audience. In magazine design therefore, issues of legibility, clarity, aesthetics, and lasting appeal on readers are critical and paramount. *Atóka* adopted a very simple and attractive design with functional layout. In its age, it was of very high standard with its colourful and beautiful front and back cover in art paper. Quality wise, it was of good standard. Presenting the best of what the available technology of its time could offer, *Atóka* maintained legibility and clarity.

Typography is a critical element of form which is quite basic to design. Typography implies the style and appearance of printed matter. It is a process and an art. Typography hinges on style, organization and appearance of letters as a process; and as an art, it is the technique of arranging type in such a way that brings about clarity, legibility, and beauty in written texts. In typography, types are purposively utilised for effective composition. There are different types, and each type has its own unique outlook which is otherwise called 'face'. *Atóka* employed different types of desirable sizes in its design. Each typeface has different size which is measured in numbers. This is technically called type size. Types can be classified in to two which are *body types* and *display types* (Togunwa, 2009:241). Body types are used for typesetting the main body of a publication and it is usually not more than 12points or 14points. Display types are the types that are employed for cover design, headlines, title page, heading, and for special effects and emphasis in publication design. These are usually set between 14-72 points. *Atóka* employed effective typography for its publications as it effectively deployed a combination of body types and display types in various font sizes in normal, bold, italics, capital and lower cases to communicate its messages.

Columnisation is actively engaged in *Atóka*. Its notable columns are in its additives namely: *Ìtàn àròsò* (narrative fictions), *Ewì* (poetry), *Òré òkèrèrè* (pen pals), *Ìròyìn kàyééfi* (comic news), *Àwòrán èfè* (cartoons), *Ìpolówó ojà* (advertisements), *Agbòràndùn* (general counselling column) and *Àntí Ayò* (love counselling column). *Volume*, another determinant of the form of *Atóka*, refers to the page extent of the magazine. Consistently, the magazine maintained a regular thirty-two pages. *Numbering*, which is technically called 'folio' has direct bearing with page extent or volume. It is customary to number documents either in roman numerals or arabic numerals. *Atóka* maintained consistency in its adoption of arabic numbering

system. The numbers are placed below the pages and are alternately put on either left or right side of the page as appropriate.

The registers employed in labelling *Atọ́ka* publications were *Volume*, *Number*, *Series Number* and *Apá*. A play in *Atọ́ka* was labelled as a Volume and it was devoted to a particular story which was sub-divided into parts. A Play/Volume therefore covered an independent play with its multiple parts. The sub-division of a Volume was labelled as Number which translated as *Apá*, and the amount of Numbers under a Volume would depend on the length of the story. *Apá* is the Yorùbá equivalent of Number and it is indicated in a boxed ring under the play title. Series Number refers to the number which a particular *Atọ́ka* edition occupied serially. Series Number therefore was a sequential numbering of *Atọ́ka* in order of publication. In all, *Atọ́ka* photoplay magazine had 120 volumes and a total series of 430 editions.

The contents of *Atọ́ka* photoplay magazine

The contents of *Atọ́ka* photoplay magazine can be broadly classified into two: the drama, which is the primary and mainstay of the magazine; and series of supplementary materials. A lot of secondary materials are included in each edition of *Atọ́ka* to make it a standard and complete magazine. These secondary materials are what we refer to as additives. The additives are medley of add-ons or supplements which feature regularly and are meant to flavour and enrich the publication. These additives are *Ìtàn àròsọ* (narrative fictions), *Ewì* (poetry), *Ọ̀ré òkèrèrè* (pen pals), *Ìròyìn kàyééfi* (comic news), *Àwòrán èfè* (cartoons), *Ìpolówó ojà* (advertisements), *Agbòràndùn* (general counselling column) and *Ànti Ayò* (love counselling column).

The Drama

The drama component of the magazine constitutes the basic content of the publication hence its being called photoplay i.e. play in photos. The primary material is the story which *Atọ́ka* tells in drama. The stories are different and diverse. They range from love stories to crime, religion, social, historical and folkloric. The plays are from different theatre companies and as such they are clearly different in many respects. However, majority of these stories are predominantly from the same source which is the Yorùbá folklore. The Yorùbá folklore entails verbal lores such as poetry, folktales, fables, myths, festivals, etc. and non-verbal lores like governance, law, marriage, dressing, dietary, games, etc. African and indeed Yorùbá literature is heavily suspended on oral tradition which constitutes its water and blood. According to Barber (2004: 176), In Africa,

Orality is treated both as a source – the origin and precursor of “modern” literature – and as a resource – a rich heritage or fund of themes, motifs, images, and techniques upon which the “modern” author can draw.

Irele (1990: 63) submitted that the authenticity of African writings in European languages lies in the quantum of orality exhibited in such piece. According to him,

the distinctive mark’ of written African literature in European languages is “the striving to attain the condition of oral expression, even within the boundaries established by western literary conventions.

If African writings in foreign languages display a high level of Africanness by retaining its orality, then the level of infusion of orality into writings in indigenous African languages can only be imagined. This is quite true of *Atóka* plays. Its plays draw materials from folktales, myths, history and religious traditions. As a matter of fact, this was the stock-in-trade of the Yorùbá popular travelling theatres who were the sole producers of *Atóka* plays. Yorùbá popular itinerant theatre...

...in actual fact and practice appeared predominantly oral, in the sense that the plays were improvised, unscripted, and collectively produced by the collaborative interaction of performers with each other and with audiences, drawing on repertoires of accumulated idioms and strategies of characterization". (Barber 2004: 176).

So the practice of the theatre companies was to give a synopsis of their plays to West African Book Publishers. It was the sketch of the story that the editor received as manuscript.

Classification of Atóka plays

We classify the plays in the repertoire of *Atóka* photoplay magazine into three namely: mythical plays, historical plays and non-historical plays. Each of the classification as a composition however may exhibit different historical emphasis which could be religion, politics, social behaviour, love, sex, crime, etc. This is graphically represented in Figure 1.

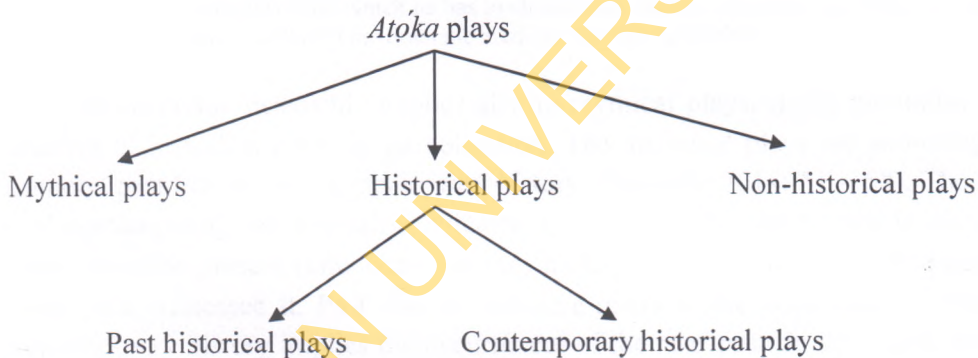


Fig. 1. *Classification of Atóka plays*

Mythical plays: Mythical plays centre on myths. A myth is an ancient story, a traditional story about heroes and heroines or supernatural beings, often attempting to explain the origins of the natural phenomena or aspects of human behaviour.

Afigbo (2000: 79 – 80 cited in Adeleke 2004:181) states that:

myth addresses the action of men, of other animate and inanimate objects, of the natural and the supernatural, of the physical and metaphysical, of the real and the fictional, at times in a context beyond time and space.

The plays in this category therefore tell the story of heroes/heroines, account of origin of the world, existence of man, supernatural deeds and attainments of gods and goddesses, etc. There is appreciable number of mythical in the repertoire of *Atóka* photoplay magazines. These include *Móremí*, *Ọba Kòso*, *Ajagun ílá and Ọba Mórò*, all produced by Duro Ladipo which Ògúndèjì (1988:3) classified as mythico-historical plays. Others are *Èsù Ọdàrà* by Kólá Ògúnmolá; and *Àjàsorò* and *Ìpadàbò Odùduwà* by Oyin Adéjòbí

Historical plays: These are dramatic stories based on either the past or contemporary history. Historical plays are traceable to a particular happening or event with identifiable personalities who were major players or characters in such happening or event. In historical plays, playwrights fictionalise history. Historical plays can either retain the names of the lead players and locations or places in such history or modify them. As Işola submits,

Playwrights of historical drama are not loyal to strict historical details. The Yoruba historical playwright, like his counterparts in other literatures, is not a historian. He is an interpreter of history. His interpretation of history may be subjective and the reasons of the subjective stand varies from writer to writer (1981: 402 – 403).

This is also applicable to the historical plays and of course mythical plays in *Atóka* photoplay magazine. Ògúndèjì contends that writing historical plays is more challenging than writing non-historical plays. This is because of the fact that, according to him,

Though the playwright has the liberty to modify history for dramatic purpose, there is a limit to how far he can go without being accused of falsifying history. The materials from which he has to choose may also be enormous; yet there is a limit to how much of it the dramatic medium can take (2008:26).

This characteristic ostensibly applies also to mythical plays. *Atóka* photoplay magazine has a number of historical plays in its collection. The historical plays are sub-categorised into two namely: past history and contemporary history (Ògúndèjì 2014: 51 – 58). The concepts of past and contemporary are basically indicated by time. While past history is distant and very far away from the present time, contemporary history is nearer in time to the present and we may even have witnessed it. Past history therefore refers to the occurrences of the far-past while contemporary history implies the occurrences of the near-past. In this study, any history within five years is regarded as contemporary history, beyond five years, it has become past history. “Contemporary historical plays belong to an elusive class because all plays that depict contemporary time and treat topical issues at a point in time would necessarily become historical plays some few years later” (Ògúndèjì, 2014:56 -57).

Past historical plays include drama based on past history such as *Başòrun Gáà* by Ségún Olubukun, *Afónjá* by Rafiu Balógun, *Efúnsetán Aníwúrà* by Işola Ògúnşolá and *Olúmọ* by Omilani. In the category of contemporary historical plays are Hubert Ogunde’s *Yorùbá Ronú*, *Ológbòdúdí*, and *Kèhìnsókun*; and Fẹ́mi Adéyẹ́mọ’s *Kúrà*. Contemporary plays exhibit two features: they are topical and they are transient. Their topicality lies in their currency, newsworthiness and contemporaneity. Similarly, their transiency resides in their fleeting span

and transitory nature. Today, all the above mentioned plays which belonged to contemporary historical play category then have become past historical plays, and have thus transited from temporary and impermanent class to a permanent one.

Non-historical plays: Non-historical plays are dramatic compositions of feasible history which are imagined by the playwright. They are recreation of the experiences of the contemporary day-to-day life and living. In non-historical plays, the playwright picks on a slice of life, interprets and dramatises it. In non-historical plays, fictional stories are historicised, flavoured with realities and coloured with appearance of historical truths. Even though the stories are mere imaginations as they never happened, the historicisations make them real and authenticate them as historical truths. Non-historical plays are diverse in form and content. They can centre on love, sex, crime, religion, politics, social vices, ritual killings, metaphysics, housewife rivalry, bribery and corruption, etc. and their forms can be tragic, comic or tragic-comic. Essentially, non-historical plays historicise fiction and fictionalise history.

Many of the *Atóka* plays fall under the non-historical classification. The list of non-historical plays in *Atóka* is very high. These include *Àròpin n Tènyàn* by Hubert Ogunde, *Kúyè* by Oyin Adéjòbí, *Àdìitú Olódùmarè* (an adaptation of D.O. Fágúwà's novel titled *Àdìitú Olódùmarè*) by Kólá Ògúnmólá, *Igbèyìn á dùn* by Oyin Adéjòbí, *Eni a fẹ́ lamò* by Kólá Ògúnmólá, *Ojú Eni Maa là* by Jimọ Aliu, *Rírò ni Tènyàn* by Akin Ògúngbè, by Àyìnlá Olùmègbón, *Èdá* by Duro Ladipo, *Fowó Rakú* by Oyin Adéjòbí, *Àsikò Nàà Tó* by Ségún Sófowótè and performed by Işólá Ògúnşólá, and *Ohun ojú wá lojú ri* performed by Kólá Ògúnmólá. It is remarkable that non-historical plays constitute the highest in *Atóka* photoplay magazine.

The Cover Concept

The cover is the outermost layer of a publication. It is usually meant to protect, preserve and project the title in particular and the whole production in general. The cover is indeed a promotional tool and as such it is designed with that intention. All these are true of the cover of the photoplay magazine.

A publication cover has three units: the front cover, the spine and back cover. The front cover must be made attractive and enduring. It is designed with a concept in mind. The design must be meaningful, arresting and irresistible. The spine is the 'spinal cord' of a publication. In most cases, periodicals such as magazines, newspapers, bulletin, newsletter, etc.; may not have discernible spine especially when the page extent is low as it is with *Atóka*. The spine is not well formed to bear the author's name, publication title and the publisher's name or logo that are conventionally registered on it.

The back cover is the concluding part of the cover. Like the front cover also which is quite attractive, the back cover must also be beautifully designed.

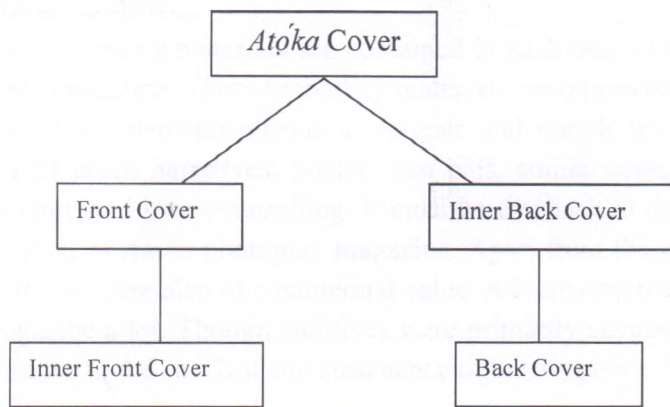


Fig. 2: The Cover chart of *Atoka* photoplay magazine

In *Atoka* photoplay magazine, the cover was also designed with special attention. The cover page is divided into two unequal parts. The first quarter of the upper part is further divided into two which bears the publication history. The other part bears the title of the play and *Apá* which is the Part or Number of the play. The contents of the beautiful, attractive and coloured cover include the name of the magazine *Atoka* in capital white-out print on black background at the top left-hand corner of the front cover. It is under this that we have other publication history such as the series number, volume, month and year of publication and the price listed. Also on this segment we have the logo of the magazine which is a bird named *atoka* elegantly standing on a tree branch. The name given to the magazine was actually derived from its logo - *eye atoka*. On the top right-hand side is the title of the play also in bold prints and under it is the name of the theatre company that produced it and also the part (i.e. the number) of that edition, be it part one, part two, part three, etc. The parts: *Apá kinni*, *Apá kejì*, etc are usually boxed. All these occupy one quarter of the entire cover page up while the cover picture occupies the remaining three quarter of the page. One can ask: why the inbalance in the dimensions of the upper section (devoted to the publication history and the title) and the lower section devoted to the photograph? Why are they not of equal size? Why are the titles consistently on a black background? All these are for professional and aesthetic significance. The inbalance is to lay emphasis on the drama component which is the mainstay of the magazine by projecting the photograph vividly. The effect of this is to attract the readers/buyers and also beautify the magazine generally. It is therefore for promotional purpose. The name *Atoka* is always on the black background because the black will throw it up and make it very legible. It is therefore for clarity. This brings the semiotics of colours to the fore as the interplay of colours is carefully employed to effect harmony and cohesion. It must be emphasised that each part of a title comes with its own different cover.

The *Atòka* Additives

A lot of secondary materials are contained in each edition of *Atòka* to make it a standard and complete magazine. These secondary materials are otherwise called additives. The additives are medley of supplements meant to flavour and enrich the publication. The *Atòka* additives comprised prose narratives, poetry, pen pals, comic news, cartoons, advertisements, general counselling, and love counselling. It must be emphasised that the additives contributed a lot to the survival of *Atòka* photoplay magazine. Apart from the educative and entertainment values, the additives were also of commercial value. Advertisements in particular helped the survival of the magazine a lot. Though additives were primarily supplements, they were of high economic significance to the survival and sustenance of the magazine. These are discussed in turn below.

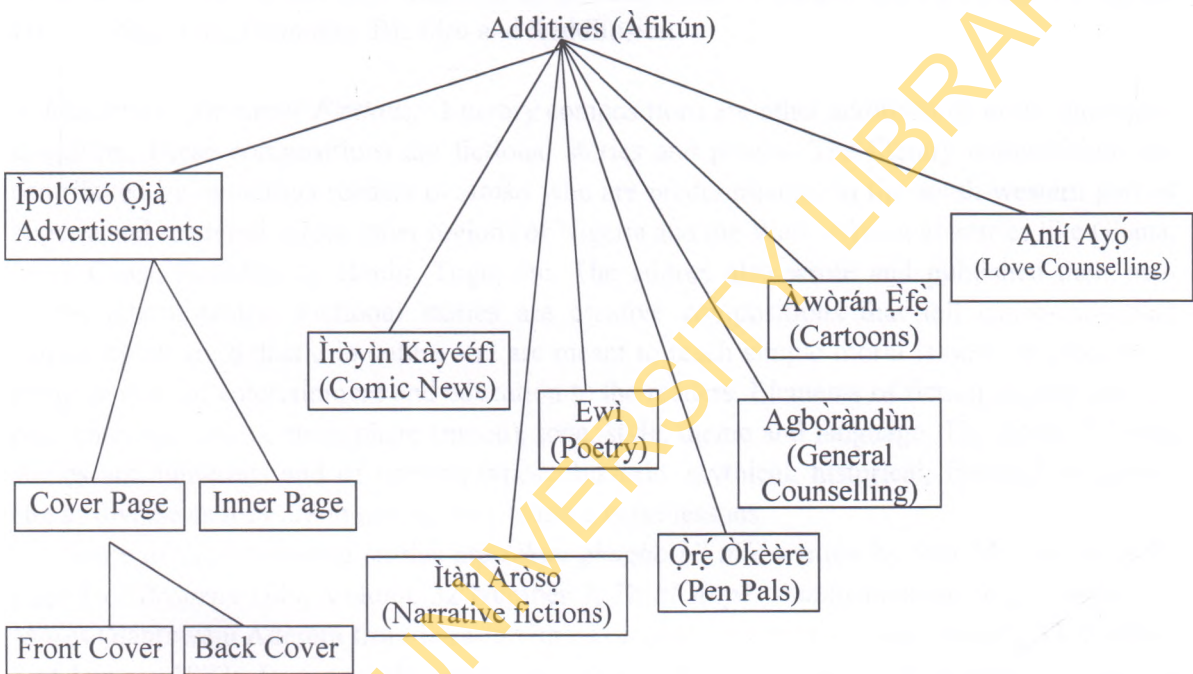


Fig. 3: Graphical representation of the additives in *Atòka* Photoplay Magazine

1. *Advertisements*: Advertisement is a major secondary material which is the major source of profit to *Atòka* photoplay magazine. Pride and Ferrell (1985: 142 cited in Odemena 2004: 25) see advertising as “a paid form of non-personal communication that is transmitted to consumers through mass media, television, newspapers, magazines, direct mail, mass transit vehicles and outdoor displays.” Advertising is a well-patronised form of promotion essentially because of its pervasiveness. It is a cost-effective method; it attracts consumers’ attention; and acts as a catalyst to sales generation of print and electronic media. It is not surprising therefore that many famous companies and industries choose to place adverts for their products in *Atòka*.

WABP benefited significantly from the fame and business connection of Academy Press Limited which was its printer and sister company. *Atòka* was distributed by Drum Publications

(Nigeria) Limited which was located at Èbúté Mèta in Lagos State. Drum Publications had Academy Press Limited as its printers so it was quite easy to enter into marketing arrangement. Moreso, Drum Publications was the producer of the famous *African Film*, the publication that influenced the production of *Atòka* significantly; the existing marketing structure of *African Film* was therefore readily employed for distributing *Atòka*. West African Book Publishers Limited also employed the offer of translating adverts to Yorùbá freely for their clients. Having the adverts in Yorùbá was novel and endearing to most companies so there was constant patronage for adverts. Series of advertorials were placed regularly in each edition. These included toiletry like Asepso; detergent like Blue Omo; creams like Jeleen and Venus; balms like Robb and Zorro; and drugs like Cafenol, Epitone, Multivite syrup, Novalgin, Junivite, phosferine, A.P.C. *Elérin* and Andrews Liver Salt. Others included dairy products by Samco Dairies (Nig) Ltd., Guinness, Bic biro and Reddifusion.

2. *Ìtàn Àròsọ (Narrative Fictions)*: Literary compositions are other additives in *Atòka* photoplay magazine. These compositions are fictional stories and poems. The literary compositions are contributed by numerous readers of *Atòka* who are predominantly in the south-western part of Nigeria and scattered across other regions of Nigeria and the West African countries like Ghana, Ivory Coast, Republic of Benin, Togo, etc. The editors also wrote and published their own stories intermittently. Fictional stories are creative compositions that tell cause-and-effect stories which are didactic in nature and are meant to teach simple moral lessons in addition to being sources of entertainment and education to the readers. Elements of fiction include setting, plot, characterisation, atmosphere (mood), tone, style, theme and language. The *Atòka* fictional stories are numerous and of varying types: folkloric, mythical, historical, fictional, religious, etc; as diverse as they are in nature, they teach diverse lessons.

Some of the interesting stories are *Ohun gbogbo kii tólè* written by Saji Michael Ìsòlá on page 1 of *Başòrun Gáà*, Volume 32 Number 3; *Ta ní sọ pé yànmùyánmú kò le jà?* written by Moses Olánrewájú Adélera from Ijara-Igbómìnà on page 1 of *Àwa Ara wa*, Volume 33, Number 2 of January 1972; *Asooremásikà* written by Sunday Akíndélé from Zaria on page 1 in *Àwa Ara wa*, Volume 33, Number 3 of January 1972; *Fijà Fólórun jà* written by Ezekiel Olúşégún Pópólá from Porto Novo, Republic of Benin on page 1 *Fáriorò*, Volume 29 Number 4 of July 1971 and several others.



3. *Ewì (Poetry)*: Poetry is a genre of literature and it is quite famous among the Yorùbá people. In *Atòka*, contributors sent their poems to the editor to be published. The editors were also writing their own poems which were published at intervals. Like the fictional stories, several poems were written on diverse issues by different writers. Alàgbà Láoyè Egunjòbí, the editor of the magazine between 1968 – and 1978 – had a column titled *Ayé Àwọn Akéwì*. Himself a renowned and famous poet, Láoyè Égúnjòbí wrote *Bánkà* on page 1 of *Başòrun Gáà* Volume 32 Series 90 Number 2. In the narrative poem, he lampooned the habit of gambling. The lead character in the poem was a school teacher who came from the village to the city only to lose all

his earning on gambling. He could not pay the dowry of his betrothed which was the primary reason why he came to the city from his village before disappearing from the city in great sorrow. The *Ewì* component of *Atòka* photoplay magazine is highly didactic and entertaining.

4. *Òré Òkèèrè (Pen pals)*: This column which was introduced by Mr. Múritálá Oyewòlè Olówómójùrè¹³ is another major supplement of *Atòka*. Pen pals are friends made through letter writing; either of the two people, usually in different locations, who become friends through exchange of letters, may never meet. *Òré Òkèèrè* is a column in which interested persons seek friends through the magazine. The patronisers of this column who are dominantly youths and predominantly students and artisans wrote in from their stations to the editor. The information required from friend-seekers was name, full address, occupation/status, age and towns from where friends were wanted. Every request must be accompanied by a passport photograph. It is interesting to note that contributors wrote in from virtually every part of Nigeria, and West African countries while towns from where friends were wanted were virtually everywhere where *Atòka* was being circulated.

In the *Òré Òkèèrè* column on page 12 of *Ìyá Aládùúrà*, Volume 87 Series 292 Number 1 of June 1981, S. Alalade wrote-in from Kano, Akójèdè Emmanuel Àjàyí from Sokoto; Eman Ayò Ìdòwú from Ìlòrín; Tóyìn Tòmátò from Àpápá – Lagos, Sàkà S. Adéolá from Kìsì in Oyo state; Alhaji Saliu Tairu Ademus from Ajégúnlè – Àpápá; Símiátù Sánńí from Ìtírè – Lagos; Alhaji Núrénì Búsàrí from Àpápá – Ajégúnlè; Emman Délé Adéníyì from Sabongari – Kano; Sumaila Olá Azeez from Èbúté Mèta, Lagos, Bàsírù Lagoro from Ìbàdàn; and Moses Olúfémì from Ìlá-Òràngún. This edition showed the diversity of *Atòka* readers and the extent of its circulation. *Atòka* was being read in other parts of Nigeria particularly the North, East and South as much as it was being read in the West. The composition of *Atòka* readers was also diverse as shown by the profiles of the friend-seekers in the edition which is serving as our guide.

One remark that must be made here is that *Atòka* was a product of age of active writing and reading. Letter writing was the vogue of the period and having pen pals was an indication of enlightenment and civilisation among youths. Post offices in different towns and localities were

ÒRÉ - ÒKÈÈRÈ	
	<p><i>Orúko:</i> S. Alalade <i>Adirèsi:</i> U.T.C. Maraba P.O. Box 365, Kano</p> <p><i>Isẹ ẹ mi:</i> Oniṣe Owọ <i>Ojo Ori mi:</i> Mètalelogun <i>Mo nṣe ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Gbogbo ibi ti Atòka nde</p>
	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Simiatu Sanni <i>Adirèsi:</i> 9, Ayeye Street, Itire, Suru-Iere, Lagos</p> <p><i>Isẹ ẹ mi:</i> Onisowo <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Mejilelogbon. <i>Mo nṣe ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Oyo, Ibadan, Iseyin, Ìlòrín, Abẹkuta, Eko.</p>










	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Akojedé Emmanuel Ajáyí <i>Adiresi:</i> P.O. Box 73, Kwwani Street, Sokoto <i>Iṣẹ ẹ mi:</i> Awako <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Mètalelogun. <i>Mo nṣẹ ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Gbogbo ilu ti Atọka nde</p>	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Alhaji Nureni Busari <i>Adiresi:</i> 18, Idewu Street, Olodi, Apapa, Ajegunle <i>Iṣẹ ẹ mi:</i> Akeko <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Mejilelogun. <i>Mo nṣẹ ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Gbogbo ibi ti Atọka nde</p>	
	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Eman Ayo Idòwú <i>Adiresi:</i> P.O. Box 56, Ilorin. <i>Iṣẹ ẹ mi:</i> Ayaworan. <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Ogbon <i>Mo nṣẹ ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Ibi gbogbo ti Atọka nde</p>	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Emman Dele Adeniji <i>Adiresi:</i> 2, Freetown, Sabo Ngari, Kano <i>Iṣẹ ẹ mi:</i> Tẹwetewe <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Ogun Odun <i>Mo nṣẹ ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Ilesa, Ijeda, Iloko, Kano</p>	
	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Tóyin Tòmátò <i>Adiresi:</i> 21, Baalẹ Street, Ajegunle, Apapa, Lagos <i>Iṣẹ ẹ mi:</i> Awako <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Merinlelogun <i>Mo nṣẹ ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Gbogbo ilu ti Atọka nde</p>	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Sumaila Ola Azeez <i>Adiresi:</i> 78, Glover Street, Ebute-Metta, Lagos. <i>Iṣẹ ẹ mi:</i> Akunmota. <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Mi o mo <i>Mo nṣẹ ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Oyo, Iseyin, Ibadan</p>	
	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Saka S. Adeola <i>Adiresi:</i> Ile Afariagbe, Esake, Agede Kisi, Oyo State <i>Iṣẹ ẹ mi:</i> Awako <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Metadinlogun <i>Mo nṣẹ ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Okeho, Ago Are, Ibadan, Oyo</p>	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Basiru Lagoro <i>Adiresi:</i> c/o S.O. Iyanda Joas Trading Tech.19, New Court Road, Ibadan <i>Iṣẹ ẹ mi:</i> Onise owo <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Meedogbon <i>Mo nṣẹ ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Iwo, Ibadan, Ondo, Ile ife</p>	
	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Alhaji Saliu Tairu Ademus <i>Adiresi:</i> 21, Salami Street, Ajegunle, Apapa <i>Iṣẹ ẹ mi:</i> Atunmotosẹ <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Metadinlogun <i>Mo nṣẹ ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Ondo, Akure, Ikaramu, Owo, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti, Ikare</p>	<p><i>Orúko:</i> Moses Olufemi <i>Adiresi:</i> C.M.S. School, P.O. Box 33, Isedo Area Ila Orangun. <i>Iṣẹ ẹ mi:</i> Akeko <i>Ojo-Orii mi:</i> Mejidinlogun. <i>Mo nṣẹ ọrẹ-Okeere ni ilu wonyi:</i> Ila Orangun, Oraa, Osogbo</p>	

Fig. 4: Ọrẹ Ọkèrè column in *Iyá Aládúúrà*, Volume 87 Series 292 Number 1 of June

beehive of activities as patronage was high – either to post letters or collect mails from boxes. From time to time, new stamps were being introduced and those who treasured them collected them for keep. Then the print media has the predominantly available social media. In the present dispensation however letter writing had practically disappeared; electronic media, particularly the cell phone and Internet, had offered assorted social media which keep friends and acquaintances interacting actively barring distance, race and colour. In Nigeria, while Glo offers Africhat and Glo-connect; MTN, Airtel and other networks also offer their chatting services. Opportunities on the internet are limitless. Many social networking websites abound. From Facebook to Whatsapp, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Twoos, 2go, Mocospace, Skype, Yahoo

messenger, Buzz, Ttalk, Twitter, to Naijapals, etc; the list is endless. Dating sites are also countless. These include Match.com, ElitesSingles, Lumen, eHarmony, Muddy Matches, Plentyoffish.com, Tinder, Hinge, OKCupid, Freedating, Metrodate, Mingle.com, Singlesnet.com, Lavalife.com, DateHookup.com, Easyflirt.com, Match.com, Matchmaker.com, and so on.

5. *Ìròyìn Kàyééfi (Comic News)*: *Ìròyìn Kàyééfi* are news that are comical – meant to engender comic relief; weird – quite strange and appear unreal; outlandish – very unusual, bizarre, alien and foreign; metaphysical – extremely abstract, incorporeal and surreal; and jovial – funny and laughter-inducing; this category may be real. *Ìròyìn Kàyééfi* appeared sparingly in *Atóka*, there were so many editions that did not bear any. Our observation was that *Ìròyìn Kàyééfi* featured frequently in the early stage of *Atóka* during the tenure of Mr. Şégun Şófowótè (1967 - 1972) and more frequently at the time of his successor, Mr. Láoyè Égúnjòbí (1968 - 1978). Like some other additives, *Ìròyìn Kàyééfi* were also sent in by contributors and atimes generated by the editor. *Ìròyìn Kàyééfi* has social, historical and political relevance. In spite of its hilarious encasement, the stories communicate facts silently. Behind the facade of joke and fun is the real truth. It is also embedded with moral lessons. Comic news is capable of enlightening its readers on the very issues that may be affecting them. With its wide range of topics: marriage, domestic, love, religion, politics, bribery, corruption, environmental pollution, infidelity, indolence, anger, chauvinism, oppression, security, and so on; in its subtle way, comic news entertains, enlightens, informs and educates.

6. *Àwòrán Èfè` (Cartoon)*: Cartoon, in modern print media, is a piece of art usually humorous in intent. The usage of cartoon dates back to 1843 when *Punch* magazine applied the term to satirical drawings in its pages. Cartoon strips are found daily in newspapers worldwide. They are presented as series of short illustrations in sequence as a piece of art that is humorous in nature. Though humour is the subject matter of cartoons, it is also possible to find adventure and drama as the subject matter of some. In the United States of America, cartoon is known as comics or funnies. However a creator of comics – be it comic books and graphic novels – are referred to as cartoonists. The word cartoon was shortened to ‘toon’ and its use became popular thereafter till date. It should be noted that there are two basic components of cartoons which are image and text. The image is the primary while text is secondary as some cartoons may not have text though many do. In *Atóka*, cartoons (*àwòrán èfè`*) are predominantly single forms (not string of images that are in sequence), it is a one-off type which is self-explanatory and conclusive. Again, it employs both image and text whereby the latter compliments the former for holistic meaningfulness.

Cartoons, like comic news, appear sparingly in *Atóka*; it did not feature regularly like some other additives. However it was frequent during the tenure of Şégun Şófowótè (1967 – 1972) and when Láoyè Egunjòbí took over from him (1972 – 1978) as *olótúú*. The main brain behind the *Àwòrán Èfè`* column was Mr. Jide Salisu, the longest serving Graphic Artist of *Atóka*.

The initiation and fueling of the column was to his credit. On page 26 of *Baṣòrun Gáà*, Volume 32 Number 1, published in November 1971; we have a cartoon in which a woman was lamenting when she saw a fowl scattering the wig which she put on the table. The curious fowl thought the wig was edible so it was pecking and scattering it with its feet. Expressing her disappointment, the poor woman lamented that she had not fully paid for the wig. This is humorous in that in the late 70s and 80s, when weave-on, attachment, hair-perming, jerry curls, etc. were just gaining ground, it was the practice of ladies who could not readily afford modern hairdo to wear wigs so as to appear modern and current.

The *Àwòrán Èfè* in *Atòka* is a lampoon of the idiosyncrasies of the emerging modern Yorùbá society, a parody of the suffocation of Yorùbá culture in the clenches of modern traditions, and a general ridicule of the foibles and failings of the neo-Yorùbá society. On the whole, it is an effective supplement that did not only add pep to the menu of *Atòka* photoplay magazine but a functional and efficient megaphone for attaining the periodical's tripartite goals of entertainment, education, and information.

7. *Agbòràndùn (General Counseling)*: This is a general counselling column in *Atòka* photoplay magazine and its insignia is the drawing of a man with his chin on his hand, thinking. The logo indicatates a man who is deeply in thought, thinking and reflecting. He is apparently bothered by the tonnes of complaints and troubles sent to him by the teeming fans of the club. The column was introduced by Mr. Láoyè Egunjòbi when he became the *Olótúú* in 1972. It is a medium through which readers write letters to the editor on some knotty issues confronting them to which they seek advice and enlightenment. The issues to which counseling is sought are diverse. This ranged from love to marriage, religion, dating and sex-related matters, etc. This is not strange when one considers the age range of the readers which is mostly youth. The column was one of the most popular and most patronised of all the additives in *Atòka*. The column is introduced by screaming headlines like “È gba mi ololufe mi ya’ri mọ mi lọwọ” (Please rescue me, my lover has jilted me) in *Ìyako Àbèró* Volume 89 Series 306 Number 5 page 13; “Iyawo ọga mi loyun fun mi” (My boss’ wife is pregnant for me) in *Iya Aláduúrà* Volume 87 Series 292 Number 1 page 29; etc.

8. *Àntí Ayọ Love Counselling Column*: *Àntí Ayọ love counselling column* was introduced by Mr. Múritálá Oyewọle Olówómojúọrẹ² It was a rider to the initial *Agbòràndùn* column which was introduced by Mr. Láoyè Egunjòbi. It must be stated that *Àntí Ayọ Love Counselling Column* did not nullify the initial *Agbòràndùn* counselling column. While *Agbòràndùn* was for general counselling, *Àntí Ayọ* was basically on love matters. At a point in time, there was an overlap between the two columns when both appeared together.

Àntí Ayọ column is indicated by the image of a woman counsellor tagged *Àntí Ayọ*. Readers sent in letters to *Àntí Ayọ* to give them counsel on any love relationship issue bothering them. *Àntí Ayọ* would read the letters and offer counsel as appropriate. Mr. Oyewọle Olówómojúọrẹ named the column *Àntí Ayọ* and appointed a woman who had flair for

counselling to treat the letters. According to Kèngbè Ọ̀rò, the counsellor was one Mrs. Obadagboin, a staff in the paste-up artist section of Academy Press. Mrs. Obadagboin, a graduate of the University of Ifè, Ilé-Ifè was a Yorùbá woman who got married to an Edo man. All the letters for the column were referred to her for prompt counselling. It was her dedicated performance and competence that prompted the management to transfer her from Academy Press to WABP where she rose to become a director years later. The fact that she was promoted as a boss over Mr. Oyewòle Olówómojúòrè partly contributed to his early resignation from WABP. Like the *Agbòràndùn* column, *Àntí Ayò Love Counselling Column* is equally introduced by vociferous headlines. Examples include “Ọ̀rọ̀ yì toju su mi” (This matter puzzles me) in *Ìyá Aládiùrà*, Volume 87, Series 292, Number 2, page 22. The writer, Ayò Adéwùsì, from Lagos, narrated how the younger sister of her own elder sister’s late husband molested her and threatened to eject her from the house.

Discussion

Atòka project was a novel experience so it was not surprising that it gained a wide acceptance. Its development was meteoric so it became an instant success. It was novel in the sense that it had no precedence in the history of Yorùbá drama, as such, its introduction to the Yorùbá theatre-loving audience was an instant appeal to the dramatic sensibilities of the teeming audience. Apart from this, *Atòka* photoplay magazine was a reinforcement of the play productions of the theatre companies.

It must also be emphasised that *Atòka* photoplay magazine provided a ready medium of entertainment. It would be recalled that unlike now when electronic media avails us its diverse megaphones: radio, television, internet, cable networks, satellite dish, cell phones, etc; apart from radio then, with its very few stations, there was no other means of entertainment. So the advent of *Atòka* met the yearning needs of multitudes of Yorùbá audience. The varieties of the additive contents of the photodrama also heightened its attraction and raised the interest of readers of the magazine. This is because all the various add-ons, be it *Ìtàn àròsọ* (narrative fictions), *Ewì* (poetry), *Ọ̀rẹ́ òkèèrè* (pen pals), *Ìròyìn kàyééfi* (comic news), *Àwòrán èfè* (cartoons), *Ìpolówó ojà* (advertisements), *Agbòràndùn* (general counselling column) and *Àntí Ayò* (love counselling column) came with its flavour which added pep to the magazine.

In terms of production, *Atòka* was very presentable. The publication size, the layout, planning, textual and graphics arrangements, assorted columns, and quality printing all give sufficient endearment; so the physical outlook of *Atòka* was attractive, let alone its rich contents. One remarkable index of production excellence is its lovely cover in process colours. Full colour printing was not a common trait of production in the 1960s and 1970s, the beautiful covers in process colours was a factor of distinction which distinguished *Atòka* photoplay magazine from other periodicals. This quality was also a strong factor of attraction for the readers.

As typical of a periodical which must keep to its regulated production schedule, *Atòka* was able to consistently keep faith with its fortnight release date. Its teeming readers were very

sure of grabbing a fresh edition every two weeks; this ability to keep the unwritten promise also contributed to the success story of the magazine.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has examined the form and contents of *Yorùbá* photoplay magazine. The paper established the symbiotic nature of the form of *Atòka* with its varied contents thus creating a literary balance between the two. Drama, which was identified as the mainstay of the periodical, were classified as mythical plays, historical plays and non-historical plays. The additives which were variegated in nature added colour to the magazine thus heightening its educative, entertainment, and informational value of the magazine.

Notes

1. Our finding shows that each page of *Atòka* takes a maximum of six pictures with the exception of *Yorùbá Ronú* which did not have a definite structure, and this of course was understandable being the very first production. The number of pictures that a particular page can take is determined by the sizes of the pictures in question.
2. This was also stated by Mr. Múrítálá Oyewòlè Olówómójúòrè. In all, he introduced three columns namely: *Òré òkèrèrè*, *Àntí Ayò*, and *Kèngbè Òrò*.

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