

Retrieving, Translating, and Archiving Hubert Ogunde's *Ayé*

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Abstract

As the rapid evolution into a globalised community progresses, translation across languages becomes a major tool of cross cultural and transnational negotiation. This study is conceived more as a translation of the libretto of Hubert Ogunde's *Ayé* for archival and literary purposes. This is with the understanding that as the contemporary world continues to move centripetally towards globalisation, translation across languages becomes more important than ever. The significance of Hubert Ogunde's works as precursor to the Nigerian Operatic *Alarinjo* (Travelling) theatre can only be preserved in translated forms that makes the performance texts retrievable. This paper is divided into four parts : an introduction to the opera of the Alarinjo School, a synopsis of the opera, an inclusion of a picture of the translator with Hubert Ogunde's statue standing before the drum he played in his life time, a sequential arrangement of the full music of the opera as produced by Hubert Ogunde in his earliest performance of the opera on stage and the translation of the full music of the opera by this author - Adedoyin Aguoru. Hubert Ogunde's theory, art and performance defined the earliest professional theatrical movement in Nigeria. The preservation of this national theatrical form through translations and storing it in a retrievable format will enhance the preservation of this national treasure.

Keywords: Archival methods, Translation, Hubert Ogunde, *Ayé*

The Opera of the *Alarinjo* School

Hubert Ogunde, without doubt, redefined the 'de-retualised' (Ogundeji 2007) performance of the *eegun alare* (the Yoruba masque performers), also

known as the *Alarinjo*. This form of performance originated from the Oba m'Oro play after the conspiracy of the *Oyo Mesi* (the King's council) to deflect the Alaafin's plan to return Oyo back to Katunga was uncovered (Ogunbiyi 1981). Hubert Ogunde drew extensively from the tenets of this itinerant masked performers in establishing his African Music Research Party (Clark 2008) His enterprise grew and evolved in to the Yoruba travelling theatre. His dramatic canon is numbered above 50, it includes :*The Garden of Eden and the Throne of God* (1944), *Africa and God* (1944) *Israel in Egypt* (1945), *The Black Forest* (1945), *Strike and Hunger*(1945) *Tiger's Empire* (1946), *Towards Liberty*(1947) *Human Parasites*(1946) *Half and Half*(1949),*My Darling Fatima*(1951), *Delicate Millionaire* (1958), *Yoruba Ronu* (1964), *Aropin N't'enia* (1964), *Oh Ogunde* (1969), *Ayanmo* (1970), *Iwa Gbemi* (1970) *Onimoto* (1971), and *Aiye* (1972) to mention a few. So esoteric and significant is *Ayé* among his folio that it was his choice of production for the Celebration of his 33 years of being on stage the Ogunde Festival '77 which held form 3rd January till 30th April 1977. *Ayé*, perhaps because of the esoteric characters and the mystical realisation of the opera on stage was Ogunde's legendary production and hit performance. The rich music and lyrics along with Ogunde's recitatives in his baritone voice would define Ogunde and his unmatched role as Osetura, the Chief Priest. The music of the opera continued to develop until the film *Ayé* was produced on celluloid.

It is crucial to state that The Hubert Ogunde school (Aguoru 2011 &2012) was a dominant influence in the springing up of the Operatic *Alarinjo* (Travelling) theatres of Duro Ladipo and Kola Ogunmola ,the Comic tradition of Moses Olaiya and the entire Yoruba Travelling Theatres. Biodun Jeyifo (1984) captured the activities of most these theatrical groups in his grandly written *The Yoruba Popular Travelling Theatre of Nigeria*. Aguoru (2019) Compares Ogunde's aesthetic ideals which are reflective of the Yoruba cultural identity and the theoretical underlying currents of his works with that of Zeami the world acclaimed Japanese theatrical theorist. Ogunde's theoretical postulation is found to be an agency in creating and nurturing his art. His emphasis on *Iwa lewa* (good character is the essence of beauty) (Adedeji and Ekwuazi 1998) purposively postulates that significance, rapport and social activity culminate in beauty and edification.

This study adopted the archival method as well as translation in accessing the text of *Ayé*, which Hubert Ogunde wrote and performed in Yoruba. Archiving, particularly in the humanities and contemporary times transcends the traditional contexts of institutional archiving with researchers themselves becoming more involved as the archivists and exploring numerous possibilities. Here, access, to this opera is *via* explication. This is with a view to ensure the preservation of the original text as well as make the cultural asset

accessible being my first attempt first attempt at pursuing the preservation of the body of the texts of the earliest professional *Alarinjo* travelling school. Within this Nigerian travelling theatrical school most of the texts of performance were unscripted and remain inaccessible in either written, translated, or digital forms. To attain and retain its place as a cultural asset, texts of the operatic tradition especially Hubert Ogunde's folio, ought to be documented, transcribed, and translated into other languages to enable them enjoy scholarly attention such works deserve and to purposely make the texts and contexts accessible to the scholars, the academic, theatrical as well as the international community (James 2002).

Synopsis

Ogunde's *Ayé* begins with the portrayal of the preparation for the ancient Idi Iroko Festival. The milieu is set with mystical undertones and drums are reverberating summoning revered elders that are initiated in to the sacred cult into their secret place. Before each house a sacred fire is kindles while the maidens race to the stream to fetch water from the sacred river. The Idi Iroko ceremony holds at the foot of the Iroko tree. The High Priest Osetura is considered by the villagers to be the only mediator between 'God and Man'. He is the carrier of the sacrifices and offerings made or given at the shrine, which is 'the foot of the sacred tree' to the 'gates of heaven'.

The Idi Iroko Festival commences on cue with Osetura on the sacred drums. He leads the villagers in a procession to the foot of the sacred tree. The shrine is purified by the kindling of the sacred fire and sprinkling of the sacred water on each member of the community. The worshippers present their offerings: yams, bananas, and kolanuts, palm oil, fowls, pigeons, goats, ram, sheep in veneration of the deity for being benevolent and for the prosperity, peace and happiness of the preceding year. The celebration continues amidst feasting, dancing, singing, drumming, clapping of hands. Osetura, the High Priest, stays behind after all the celebrants depart and the celebration ends to conduct other sacred ritual ceremonies.

Osetura while performing the sacred ceremony has a strange encounter. A hole suddenly opens up under the sacred tree, this is unprecedented. Three supernatural beings emerge from the enclave: large mysterious birds, coloured black, red and white. Osetura is informed of the mission of the birds: the black bird declares that there will be instant death and destruction of its victims. Red bird, he is told, symbolises demotion, losses, punishment and suffering, while white bird signifies peace, love, happiness and prosperity to the entire village and its inhabitants.

Subsequently, the presence of the two evil birds - black and red become evident. There are negative manifestations in the village. For instance, Dele, who is portrayed as a wealthy trader suddenly has a downward turn and he becomes a poor, poverty-stricken impoverished drunkard. Malomo, Dehinbo's senior wife has been married to him for two decades without an offspring. Dehinbo, not satisfied with this state of childlessness marries a younger wife Kikelomo who at the end of the first month of their marriage conceives. A disgruntled Malomo collaborates with the red bird and at the end of twenty-two months, Kikelomo is still unable to deliver the baby.

The High Priest, Osetura, is consulted. He has capabilities and can influence occurrences at supernatural levels he also has the wherewithal to neutralise the negative forces of the red bird and invoke the positive forces of the white bird for comprehensive victory. However, he must engage this supernatural ability only as a final resort when all forms of mediation fail.

The High Priest's initial pacification and persuasion fails. An open confrontation ensues between Osetura and a representative of the red bird. The black bird also corroborates with elements and now joins forces with the red. Chaos prevail in the village more incidents of death, suffering and destruction recur in the lives of the inhabitants of the village. Osetura, is necessarily under pressure, if he cannot deliver the people and the village from the evil forces he must either relinquish his position as High Priest or knowingly plan to leave the world for heaven.

The black and red forces, in their own domain, intensify their efforts. They meet regularly in enclaves, and perform rituals: dances of fire, chanting incantations of death and destruction. The evil forces without doubt remain firmly in control. Malomo, disgruntled because of her inability to conceive rejoices over the misfortune of others, particularly Kikelomo who she considers to be her rival and who has been carrying her pregnancy for twenty two months. Apparently a spell has been cast on Dehinbo and Kikelomo, they arrogantly go about in blissful ignorance and remain oblivious of the implication of their situation. Osetura's attempts to rouse them out of that state remains abortive. He eventually becomes compelled to use his supernatural powers to rescue the village and its inhabitants from the clutches of evil. The archetypal battle of evil against good is won through the High Priest's intervention and the power of light overcomes darkness.

Conclusion

This research note engages the text of Hubert Ogunde's opera, *Ayé*, as a national treasure. It seeks to ensure that the libretto as well as the text of the opera is archived by reproducing the original text, by the translation of

the libretto and explicating the text in a retrievable form. This has been approached by the introduction of the significance of the *Alarinjo* School, a synopsis of the opera *Ayé*, by Hubert Ogunde, the Translation of the Text of *Ayé*, and the presentation of the full text of *Ayé* as produced by Hubert Ogunde in his earliest performance of the opera on stage along with a few pictures from the stage performance of *Ayé*. This engagement typifies a taxonomy for the archiving: translating and placing in retrievable form the wealth of the Yoruba and Nigerian theatrical traditions that are going into extinction.



The full text of *Ayé* (in Yoruba) as produced by Hubert Ogunde in his performance of the opera on stage; transcribed and translated into English by Adedoyin Aguoru

Ẹyẹ Ire

*Alélé tó lé ò tí rékojá o
 Òkùnkùn tún paradà ó ò dimólẹ o
 Mo gbóhùn ẹyẹ Olódùmarè tó n kẹ
 Ire!... Ire!...Ire!...*

*A! ẹyẹ ire o
 Ẹyẹ Olùgbàlà Òjísẹ Olódùmarè
 Ẹyẹ olóhùn méjì tibi tire ló n kẹ
 Orí mi o gbègbòdẹ ire ni mo yàn.
 Jísẹ owò ò jísẹ omo, jísẹ ilé ò jísẹ aya
 Jísẹ ayé ẹrò bí ayé omi
 Pèsẹ pèsẹ bí etí odò
 Mo ti gbóhùn Ẹlédá mi
 Pé ire lóni ò o mo yò ò
 Òtá alábòsí ẹ paré láilái
 Amoni šeni, afàimọnišeni
 Ašeni bánidàrò ò, ẹ mà ti já ku lẹ o
 Lálái fòtá pè o ire n wolé mi
 Ẹyẹ ire ti rò, ó ti kẹ sòrò tèmi
 Ọ̀sèrèsèrè o! ọ̀sèrèsèrè o!
 Orí ẹ pèlẹ Ẹlédàá mi
 Kó gbé ire kòmi lónà o*

*Bí mo jí lówúrò o...Ire!
 Títí yíò fi dalé o...Ire!
 Èdùmarè kí o ye Ẹlédàá mi
 Jàre gbé ire kò mí lónà o
 Lónà àjò mi... Ire
 Níbi iṣé òjòdò mi, Iré
 Lóni dandan Ẹlédàá mi
 Ní kí ó gbé Ire kò mi lónà o*

*Wọ̀n ní kangó kangó o
 Bèyẹyẹn là á gbóhun agogo
 Kangè kangè bẹ yẹn là á gbóhùn àjà
 A kì í fàjá kó wọ̀n lálẹde ilú
 Agogo l'Ọ̀ba fi n kó wọ̀n jọ
 Adáratán ọ̀lájinni
 Èyí reṣú reṣú tí n teṣ ọ̀gà ọ̀gbà mólẹ
 Njẹ ire ni mo kò, ire ni mo jí rí*

Ire tóróró o dórí mi o
Ire ti tòòrun Ògbèrì ò mò o
K'ókò má mà kú o
K'áya má mà kú o
Tòmòtòmò kíà síré dalé o
Ire tóróró o dórí mi o
Ire ti tòòrun Ògbèrì ò mò o
Áwá mà di pèrègún o o
A di 'gi àlójè o
Ire tóróró o dórí mi o
Ire ti tòòrun Ògbèrì ò mò o

Eye Ire - Benevolent Bird

The night has fallen and darkness has given way to light
 With clarity I hear Olodumare's bird screeching goodness! Goodness!
 Goodness!
 (Symbolizing peace, prosperity and pleasantries)

Ah! Benevolent bird
 Regenerating bird, Messenger of Olodumare
 Two toned bird proclaiming goodness and evil
 My head conspires not against me,
 but procures goodness for me.
 Deliver riches, deliver children, deliver wives,
 Deliver peace like a calmness as of the riverside.
 My creator's voice I hear declaring:
 Today guarantees much goodness,
 I rejoice.
 Enemies, mockers, vanish forever!
 Conscious and non-conscious evil doers.
 Friendly foes, who afflict yet offer
 sympathy you have finally fallen.

Not taking cognizance of the enemies
 Goodness follows me (inhabits my abode).
 The benevolent bird has cried in my favour:
Oseresere o! Oseresere o!
 My head be patient, my spirit
 see to it that goodness coincides with me on my paths

Waking (rising) up in the morning...Goodness!

Till night falls...Goodness!
 Edumare will not betray my spirit.
 My plea is that you ensure that goodness
 Coincides with me on my paths.

Kango, kango; sounds reverberating from gongs.
Kange, kange; the tone of the rattle staff.
 The rattle staff has not the wherewithal to enslave the citizens of a town.
 The gong, it is, that the king employs in gathering his subjects.
 Hence, I coincide with goodness,
 I rise up in the morning to encounter goodness.

Refrain; Goodness flowing upon my head
 The simpleton cannot comprehend spiritual blessings
 such as prosperity or procreation.
 Goodness flowing upon my head,
 The non-initiate cannot comprehend such spiritual blessings.

May untimely death elude husband,
 May untimely death elude wives,
 With our off springs, may we perform till
 A good old age
 (Refrain)
 We have become living trees
 (Refrain)

A,B,D, Ayé

È bá mi kálo o
È bá mi k'a,b,d Ayé
A,b,d aláwòrán mi
A,b,d Onídòjé mi i
A,b,d,gb, a,a,a,a...
Ayé ò fẹ́ ki a s'ori ire
Ayé ò fẹ́ a rẹ̀rù a sọ o
Bí ó bá báyé sọ̀rẹ̀ ò'ń bikú siré
Bí ó bá báyé jà a ò dán iṣẹ́ Ọlórún wò
Ìrin àjò lawà jẹ́ n ẹ̀ tẹ̀mi o
Láyékáyé ò ẹ̀ kí tiwa mà já sí yà
A k'a d ki d, Ayé e ... ò ... ò ...

Mo rántí rẹ o Ayé o
A! ... ẹrù bà mí
Kò sóhun tó dùn
À fi kí a gbá t'Olórún rò
Mo k'a, b, d ayé
Kí ilẹ máse yò mi pa
Mo k'a, b, d ilẹ o,
Kí ilẹ máse yò mi o
A, b, d, gb, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o,
O!áò, áò, áò...
P, r, s, ş, t, u, w, y
O!yáò, yáò, yáò...
Láyékáyé ò şé kí tiwa má mà já síyà o

A k, a, b, d, ayé ò.
B'ígún bá jẹbo, a jòò igbá o
B'ákàlà bá mepo, a fawo ilẹ
Şé mo fún ríúríú ẹ mà á şe t'íkú
Màrìwò ẹşı ma n fún ríúríú òpe
Şé mo mò róóróó ẹ mà á şe t'íkú
Màrìwò ẹşı ma n mò róóróó lórùn òpe
Mo jéwé ikú derin àpáta...
Mé mà ní bá wọn kú ẹji
Mé mà ní bá wọn kú ẹẹrùn o
Tí tí laiyé lọ o...
Ẹ mà jẹ n şe tẹmi o
Ayé, ayé, ayé!
Ẹ mà jẹ n şe tẹmi o
Títí layé lọ o, Ẹ mà jẹ n şe tẹmi o

ABC of the World (Fundamentals of the Universe)

Come along with me,
 Sing along with me A b d *Ayé*.¹
 A, b, d my portrait maker
 A, b, d my praise singer
 A, b d gb, a, a, a, a
Ayé .does not desire our success,
Ayé 's desire is for our mission to be unaccomplished.

1 A, b, d are the first three Yoruba alphabets. All other alphabets are also from the Yoruba alphabets and sounds.

Comradeship with *Ayé*. is death in disguise.

Contending with *Ayé*. is tempting God's creation.

We are on the journey of life allow me to accomplish my mission.

In this world or in the next may our lot not be suffering.

A k a, d, k, d, Ayé o o.

Merely remembering you, *Ayé* o!

Ah! I tremble with fear

Nothing is on its own worthwhile

except we consider the things of God

I salute the rudiments and fundamentals of

the universal forces

May the witches not destroy me in secrecy

I salute the rudiments of the earth

May the earth never become slippery under me

A, b, d, gb, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o

O! ao, ao, ao

P, r, s, s, t, y, w, y

O! Yao, yao, yao

In this world and in the next may our lot not

be suffering

I salute the *a, b, d* of the universe

When a vulture devours a sacrifice, it lets go of the dish (the calabash used to prepare it).

My freshness and flourishing is not unto death.

The fresh raffia leaf blast flourishes like a crown on the palm tree.²

My sparkling cleanliness is not unto death.

The fresh raffia leaf-blast sparkles.

like a crown on the palm tree.

I roll back and forth, but not unto death.

Fresh palm fruits roll back and forth on the palm tree.

I shall not experience sudden and untimely death forever

Let me carry out my responsibilities

Ayé, Ayé, Ayé

Let me carry out my responsibilities

Ayé, Ayé, Ayé

2 The palm tree is of great significance among the Yoruba in the Yoruba scriptures .It is the tree upon which the deities descended from the other world. It is also a source of wealth to its owner or wherever it is planted because all the parts of the tree are useful for consumption and for trade

Let me carry out my responsibilities

Ọ̀ṣẹ̀túrá

*Igbó Ewèlè! Írókò Ìmòrìṣà!
 Írókò Ìmòrìṣà tí ńbẹ̀ lókè Ẹ̀ pèlẹ̀
 Omọ aráyé ẹ̀ se bí Igi ni,
 Igi kọ o ẹ̀rò ni
 Írókò ti wa tí kíi so èlè.
 Ẹ̀rò gbèdègbèdè ni ilé Elédúmarè
 Gégé bí àti ẹ̀ rojú ráyè
 Tí a ẹ̀ ọ̀dún ọ̀dún yì
 Bèè gégé ni kí a jẹ́ kí a rójú ráyè ẹ̀ tí Ẹ̀míràn
 Àmọ̀dún, kí ojú pé
 Kí ẹ̀ ẹ̀ pèlẹ̀...
 Ìgbàmúrèn ká tún wá
 Ìgbàmúrèn ká tún wá o
 Àṣẹ̀yí sàmọ̀dún o' lamurèn o
 Ọ̀gèdè dúdú olóde gbòde
 Ewùré, jẹ́ oko tán e è mọ̀na ilé
 Àgùntàn jẹ́ oko tán e è mọ̀na ilé
 Eégún erémi pàrìpà ilẹ̀ mi
 A-wón-rí-wón dùjádùjà
 Ẹ̀gbèwá orí ẹ̀ ti ma fowó
 Hé è éé- ré ééé...
 Ẹ̀ran wọ wọ lẹ̀ ku
 Atètè oníran
 Olú ta ńgarùn wò ò
 Ọ̀ fògàfògà ... Ọ̀gbògagbògà...
 Ó rẹ̀n n e lujù èè fetí ko
 Ẹ̀yẹ̀ abidẹ̀ ọ̀rùn gbakogbàkò
 Ó gbòde ooo*

Osetura (The High Priest)

Ewele Forest! Iroko shrine,³ Emblem of the gods
 Iroko shrine upon the Epele Mountains.
 Humans erroneously take it for a tree
 A tree, it is not, a refuge, a succour, it is.
 Our Iroko that does not bear hardship

3 The impression made here is that the Iroko does not bear the fruits such as hardness, strain or fatigue. Its essence is neither complex, complicated nor ruthless. The tree symbolically bears fruits of comfort, peace and soothing succour.

A soothing succour is the habitation of Eledumare
 As we have been privileged
 To worship upon your sacred mount this year
 Enable us to enjoy the same next season
 Next season the faces here will be present
 The feet here will increase
 May we be present at another festival day
 May we be present at another festival day
 Yearly may we celebrate you
 Unripe plantains abound this season.
 Goats eat and forget their routes home.
 Sheep eat and forget their routes home.
 Abundance in the season.

Ejubona

Èjùbòná kò ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire o o
Èjùbòná kò ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire
Ko mà mà jẹ́ ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀
Ìwọ̀ Èjùgbòná ayé rẹ̀ é
Èjùbòná kò ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire oo
Èjùbòná kò ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire
Èjùbòná kò ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire o
Èjùbòná kò ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire
Bó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ gèrẹ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ooo
Bó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ gèrẹ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ó alá rẹ̀ a sọ o
Ìwọ̀ Èjùgbòná ayé rẹ̀ é
Èjùbòná kí ò ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire o
Èjùbòná kí ò ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire
Èjùbòná kí ò ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire
Èjùgbòná awo ire o o o
Awo o ò kí ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire
Èjùgbòná awo ire o o
Awo o ò kí ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire
E e e kí ò mà mà jẹ́ ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀
Kó mà mà jẹ́ ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀
Kó mà mà jẹ́ ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ o yẹ̀ ẹ̀
Ìwọ̀ Èjùgbòná ayé rẹ̀ é
Èjùbòná kí ò ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire o
Èjùbòná kí ẹ̀ ẹ̀fẹ̀ ire e

Ejubona (The Sacred Song Rendered only Once in a Year)

Ejubona propitiate goodness o o.
 Ejubona propitiate goodness.
 Do not let it cease
 You Ejubona
 This is the world
 Ejubona propitiate goodness ooh!
 Ejubona promotes goodness.
 Ejubona priest of good omen,
 O priest do propitiate good.
 Do not fail to take advantage of providence.

Ayé

Ayé! Ayé, Ayé ò ò ò
Ayé l'ohun ànítunmò o o o
Ayé! Ayé, Ayé ò ò ò
Àwọn tó n wá ọ kò rí ọ o, Ayé
Àwọn tó rih ọ kò mọ ọ
Àwọn tó n wá ọ kò rí ọ o, Ayé
Àwọn tó ri ọ kò mọ ọ
Ayé dúdú bí aró ò ò ò
Ayé pupa bí èjè ò ò ò
Ayé funfun ni tẹmi Olórun
Olúgbhùn gbóhùn mi o
Ayé èrò ni tẹmi Olórun
Olúgbhùn gbóhùn mi o o o
Ayé, Ayé, Ayé ò ò ò
Jéjé layé gbà a o o o
Ará mi ...
È jé a máa fura
È jé ara máa fu ni
Ifura lòògùn àgbà o
Ilé ò fura, ilé jóná
Agbón ò fura, kò lóyin
Ọbọ ò fura, kò dènìyàn
Àgbà tih ò fura bí i kò m'òsá
Kí ó mọ pé ará ilé ẹni ní n ẹni
Ayé, Ayé, Ayé ò ò ò
Ayé È má ba a yò mi jé o
Ayé, Ayé ò
Ayé l'ohun ànítunmò Ayé ò
Ayé ò ò! Ayé ò ò ò

Jéjé l'ayé gbà à o o o
Àwọn tó n wá ọ kò rí ọ
Àwọn tó rih ọ kò mò ọ
Ayé dúdú bí aró
Ayé pupa bí èjè ò ...
Ayé funfun ni tèmi Ọlórún
Olúgbohùn gbóhùn mi o
Ayé ẹrò ni tèmi Ọlórún
Olúgbohùn gbóhùn mi o ... Ayé ò !
Gbédi kúrò lònà mi
Kí ẹ jé kí n hùwà orí mi
Ẹ má ẹ mi l'ẹran ijìyà a
Ìwọ Ayé ò ò ò!
Ẹran dèdè... ẹyẹ awo o o !
Ẹyẹ ire o funfun ni le mi
Mámà jé n tẹ o ẹyẹ awo
Mámà jé n rí ijàrè o ẹyẹ ikú
Mámà jé n rí ijàrè o ẹyẹ ijìyà
Ó dilé odi, ó dilé òtá,
Ó dilé Àgbébo mámà rúbo
Ó dọwó Àgùdẹ o Ó dọwó Àgùdẹ
Ó dọwó Àgùdẹ- Àgùdẹ
Olóri ẹyẹ tí n fi Olódumare síwájú
Ó dọwó Àjàgùmàlẹ
Tí n s'Olúwo ode òrun
Ẹyin lẹ pín t'ájẹ àdó
Ẹ pín t'ájẹ òtá
T'òròmọdìẹ lèmi kó
A kì í morúkọ orò k'órò pa ni jẹ ẹ
Èrán dèdè
Èrán dèdè ẹyẹ awo
Ẹyẹ o wó ò ẹyẹ omo
Ẹyẹ òkun é, è ẹyẹ ire
Ẹyẹ àlàfià, ẹyẹ ire
Mámà jé n tẹ o o ẹyẹ awo
Mámà jé n ráhùn ẹyẹ awo
Lójó idánwò ayé o, ẹyẹ ire
Mámà já mi tilẹ o, ẹyẹ awo...
Alélé tó lẹ ó lé t'igbó eré ko wá
Òkùnkùn tó kùn, ò ti bi tire léselése íbò o
Ó difá fún barà mi Àgbònnirègún,

Baba n lo gbé n lé pètúpètú n'Ífẹ́ Oyelágbò
Ètùtù tá wa se léèni á fín dandan
Lèkélèké seye a lé

Àwọn olùmòná wón máì seye òkùnkùn
Eye òkùnkùn má f'ilé mi se pàdè
Funfun láúláú nilé awo
Ìbà Ìyá mi ò ò ò ò ...

Ó digbó, ò dòkèèrè
Má mà jé n rí ìjà rẹ o eye ikú
Mámà jé n rí ìjà rẹ o eye ìjìyà
Ọ ká n pà tètè lóri èbu
Àtìbà se kérékéré gbilẹ
Ọrun gbosù látète
Şèkèrè kò sanwó olóde
Dá Ọrúnmilà
Tí n lo gbé Ikú so rọ sí ilé onídiyàn o
Ñjé mo fi àdán so ikú rọ
Dain dain
Mo fi ààdè so ikú rọ
Dain dain
Mo fi àdán so ikú rọ
Dain dain
Mo fi ààdè so ikú rọ
Dain dain

Ó digbó o dikèèrèè
Mámà jé n rí ìjà rẹ o eye ikú
Mámà jé n rí ìjà rẹ o eye ìjìyà

Abèdè awo òkìrà, difá fún Ọkìrà
Tó tí n fojojúmọ sòwò àsetì
Ñjé Àbèdè ò dé lénù o, awo Ọkìrà
Èdùmàrè má mà jé n şàsetì mó o
Ó digbó o dikèèrèè
Mámà jé n rí ìjà rẹ o eye ikú
Mámà jé n rí ìjà rẹ o eye ìjìyà

Bí e bá n gbọ ayé, ayé
E má wòkèrè bí igba ibùsọ o

E má wòkèrè bí egbèrin ibùsò
 E jé ká bojú wẹ̀yìn ká w'olé ẹ̀ni
 Ká wo àyíká ẹ̀ni
 Ká mọ̀ pé ẹ̀hìnkùlẹ̀ lẹ̀tá wà
 Ilé laseni n gbé
 Ẹ̀ni bá mọ̀ ni dẹ̀lé ni n ẹ̀ni

Ayé kan ò mà sí nìbì kan
 Àwọn abínú ẹ̀ni
 Àwọn amọ̀nìsẹ̀ni
 Aṣenibánidàrò o, àwọn layé
 Ẹ̀ mà jò ọ̀ mi ayé

Gbekó gbekó ...Ayé!
 Gbekó gbekó niyín ...Ayé!
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbóyùn mi kọ̀ ... Ayé!
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbómọ̀ mi kọ̀ ... Ayé!
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbáya mi kọ̀ ... Ayé!
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbóyùn mi kọ̀ igi
 Ayé ẹ̀ mà jò ọ̀ mi mo bẹ̀rù àgbà
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbáya mi kọ̀ igi
 Ayé ẹ̀ mà jò ọ̀ mi mo bẹ̀rù àgbà

Gbekó gbekó ...Ayé!
 Gbekó gbekó niyín ...Ayé!
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbáyé mi kọ̀ ... Ayé!
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbé ilé mi kọ̀ ... Ayé!
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbé iṣẹ̀ mi kọ̀ ... Ayé!
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbówó mi kọ̀ ...Aye!
 Ẹ̀ má mà pa iràwò mi dà o
 Ayé ẹ̀ mà jò ọ̀ mi mo bẹ̀rù àgbà
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbáyé mi kọ̀ igi
 Ayé ẹ̀ mà jò ọ̀ mi mo bẹ̀rù àgbà
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbé ilé mi kọ̀ igi
 Ayé ẹ̀ mà jò ọ̀ mi mo bẹ̀rù àgbà
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbé iṣẹ̀ mi kọ̀ igi
 Ayé ẹ̀ mà jò ọ̀ mi mo bẹ̀rù àgbà
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbówó mi kọ̀ igi
 Ayé ẹ̀ mà jò ọ̀ mi mo bẹ̀rù àgbà
 Ẹ̀ má mà gbówó mi kọ̀ igi
 Ayé ẹ̀ mà jò ọ̀ mi mo bẹ̀rù àgbà o

Ẹlẹyẹ èmi á wo ibi ẹyẹ ma fò ...
Ẹlẹyẹ
A kì í fí ẹyẹ igún bọ ifá o
Ẹlẹyẹ, èmi á wo ibi ẹyẹ ti máa fò
Ẹlẹyẹ
A kii fàkàlámàgbò f'òrìsà ...

Ó mà mí wù wón kí wón lè mékún sọ ...

...
Ìgbéré ojú ẹkún kò mà ní jẹ o
Ẹ mà jẹ a bẹlẹyẹ lówè s'ẹlẹyẹ...

...
Ẹlẹyẹ, èmi á wo ibi ẹyẹ ti ma fò...
Ẹlẹyẹ ...

Ayé (Theme Song)

Ayé! Ayé ! Ayé o o o.
 This world is incomprehensible
Ayé! Ayé ! Ayé o o o.
 Slow and steady is the requirement for living
 They that seek you find you *Ayé!*
 They that see you know you.
Ayé , black as indigo,
Ayé ,red as blood,
 Lord, I identify with the *white Ayé* .(the good of the cult)
 I desire a life of peace, pleasantness, Lord,
 Listener to petitions do hear my voice.
Ayé! Ayé ! Ayé o o o
 Slow and steady is the requirement to live.

My people
 Let us be vigilant.
 Elders make vigilance their charm.
 A house that lacks vigilance gets burnt.
 The wasp for lack of vigilance, lacks honey.
 Lack of vigilance it is that robbed monkeys of their humanity
 Lack of vigilance in adulthood and in spiritual matters beclouds one from
 the fact that close
 Associates are usually responsible for one's ruin
Ayé o, Ayé o, Ayé o o o.

Ayé o do not bring damnation upon my joy
Ayé o, Ayé o, Ayé o o o.
 This world is incomprehensible
Ayé o, Ayé o, Ayé o o o.
 Slow and steady is the requirement for living
 They that seek you find you *Ayé!*
 They that see you know you.
Ayé, black as indigo,
Ayé, red as blood,
 Lord, I identify with the *white Ayé*. (the good of the cult)
 I desire a life of peace, pleasantness, Lord,
Ayé o!
 Do not sit upon my affairs (to cause delay or stagnation in issues of life)
 Permit me to put my luggage on my head.
 Move your limbs out of my path.
 Let me act true to my head
 Do not make me a scapegoat.
 Oh *Ayé o o o!*

Benevolent one, cultic bird.
 The white cult is my home.
 Preserve me from shame benevolent bird.
 Preserve me from murmuring and complaints benevolent bird.
 Do not wage war against me suffering bird.
 Off to another land! off to my enemies abode!
 Off to the abode of ritualists who refuse to
 Placate with sacrifices.

Benevolent one!
 Over to Agude, Over to Agude
 Over to Aduge-Agude leader of birds,
 One that defers to Olodumare.
 Over to Ajagunmale, the *Oluwo* of Heaven.
 You it was that appointed the lot of the witches in Ado
 You it was that appointed the lot of the witches in Ota.
 It is impossible to chant the nomenclature of the *Oro* cult and be devoured
 by the cult...

Benevolent one, cultic bird,
 Benevolent bird, the white cult is my home,
 Bird of wealth, bird of procreation...

Bird of peace and goodness
 Preserve me from shame benevolent bird
 Preserve me from murmurings and complaints benevolent bird.
 When the challenges of life come,
 do not let me down cultic bird...

The night has fallen...

Darkness takes over...

Hence the need for Agbomiregun's divination in Ife Oyelagbo:

Sacrifice performed today must fulfil its purpose

Lekeleke is not a night bird

Olumona is neither a bird of darkness

Birds of darkness are not welcome in my abode

White and sparkling is the sacred cult

Reverence to my mothers o o o o.

Off to the thick woods, off to the farthest places.

May I never incur your wrath, death bird.

May I never incur your wrath, bird of suffering.

...Which tells of the exploits of Orunmila

Who tied death up in Onidiyan's dwelling

Therefore, do I tie death up with the bat firmly?

Supernaturally I tie death up

Firmly!

Therefore, do I tie death up with the bat!

Supernaturally I tie death up

Firmly!

Off to the thick woods, off to the farthest places.

May I never incur your wrath, death bird.

May I never incur your wrath, bird of suffering.

Abede, priest of Okira, divined for Okira;

Who fails in his endeavours daily.

Abede has come today, Okira's diviner:

Edumare, see to it that I no longer fail in my endeavours.

Off to the thick woods, off to the farthest places

May I never incur your wrath, death bird.

May I never incur your wrath, bird of suffering.

If you hear *Ayé, Ayé* !
 Look as far as 200 miles,
 look as far as 800miles,
 let's turn back and look upon our homes,
 let's examine our surroundings,
 and be conscious that the enemy is in our
 courtyard and evil doers within the homestead.
 It is our closest associates that cause us great harm.
 There is no *Ayé* anywhere,
 Those vexed on our account,
 The friendly foes,
 Those who afflict and yet sympathise, they are *Ayé*
 Let me be *Ayé* o!

Oppressors, oppressors - *Ayé*
 Oppressors, Oppressors, that's who you are - *Ayé*
 Do not hang my pregnancy - *Ayé*
 Do not hang my child - *Ayé*
 Do not hang my wife - *Ayé*
 Do not alter my star (destiny)
Ayé do spare me, I revere 'elders'
 Call: Do not hang my pregnancy on a tree
 Refrain: *Ayé* do spare me, I revere elders
 Call: Do not hang my child on a tree
 Refrain: Do not hang my wife on a tree
 Oppressors, Oppressors - *Ayé*
 Oppressors, Oppressors; you are indeed – *Ayé*
 Do not hang my life – *Ayé*
 Do not hang my home
 Do not hang my job
 Do not hang my resources (riches/money)
 Do not alter my destiny
Ayé, do spare me, I revere elders
 Do not hang my life on a tree
 Do not hang my job on a tree
 Do not hang my resources (riches/wealth) on a tree
Ayé do spare me, I revere elders.

Owner of birds, I will watch for the bird flight, (to see where the birds will
 take off)

My blood is bitter for the witches.
Akalamagbo can never be an acceptable sacrifice for the Ifa oracle.
 It is desirable to hold the tiger captive,
 The tiger's fierce countenance is what keeps humans at bay.
 Let us placate the owner of birds through the bird owner
 Owner of birds, I will watch to see where the birds will take off.
 Owner of birds.

Ilé Awo Iná

E...e...e...e...e...e!
Ìyá mi òkùnkùn tí ñ kùn nínú irókò
Iná tí ñ jó níbodé òrun yé è-è!
E...e...e...e...e...e!
Ikú mà ré o onídà iná
Àrùn mà ré ò oníkùmò lórùn
E...e...e...e...e...e!

.....
E...e...e...e...e...e!
Ìyà mi òkùnkùn tí ñ kùn nínú irókò
Iná tí ñ jó geregere lóri omi
Òwìwì a dèrù bòòyè
Dúdú leyè awo, pupa leyè awo
O ju omolomọ nù sí kòtò
B'ólomọ sunkún ojù gberegberere
E...e...e...e...e...e!

.....
E...e...e...e...e...e!
Ikú mà ré ò onídà iná
Àrùn mà ré ò oníkùmò lórùn
È má mà filé mi ş'e pàdé o
Èyè awo, ó dilé odi, ó dilé òtá
Ó dilé agbégbò má mà rúbọ o
E...e...e...e...e...e!

Ile Awo Ina (The fire Cult)

E e e e e e e!
 My mother, darkness, mumbling in the Iroko tree⁴

4 The iroko tree is a hardwood tree that grows in Africa. The scientific names of the two identified species of the tree are *Milicia excelsa* and *Milicia regia*. Among the Yoruba, the tree is revered and believed to be the abode of spirits and, in the case of this work, it is a shrine of worship and route or entry point for the supernatural beings.

Raging fire at the gate of heavens *ye-e-e!*
 See death armed with a fiery sword!
 See destruction and disease with a neck slung hammer!
E-e-e-e- e.....e.....e!
 My mother, darkness, mumbling in the Iroko tree.
 Fire burning swiftly on water,
Owivi bird that scares the living,
 The black bird is of the cult,
 The red bird is of the cult,
 Casting children of the innocent into the pit.
 When the innocent shed tears, the cultist's eyes remains ever dry
E e e e ye.....ye o!
 See death armed with a fiery sword!
 See destruction and disease with a neck slung hammer
 Do not make my abode your meeting point.
 Bird of the cult, off to the strange land.
 Off to the abode of the enemies!
 Off to the abode of the ritualists,
 Who refuse to placate with sacrifices
E e e e e e!

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