

Resemblance of Elements of Oral Literature Across African Cultures

Oluchi Eugenia Nebolisa

Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education
Owerri Imo State, Nigeria
oluchinebolisa@gmail.com

Ujunwa Precious Ekwenugo

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract: Oral literature is unwritten literature that was created over the years and passed down from one generation to another through word of mouth. Oral literature has its elements which include: songs, folktales, myths and legends, riddles, proverbs, etc. These elements constitute, in a real and significant sense, the literary achievement and traditions of indigenous African societies from time immemorial. They are the manifestation of traditional creative imagination, beliefs and perception of social reality peculiar to Africans. In different African cultures, elements of oral literature are similar, despite barriers of space and language. Many people wonder what brings about similarities. This is survey research. The theory adopted was migration theory. This study realized that they are resemblance in African folktales, myth, African songs, and their griots, irrespective of different countries in Africa, yet they have similar oral literature. It was concluded that similarities in elements of oral literature in Africa will bring unification of all races, which will shun racism, tribalism, hatred, and establish one universe where peace, love, happiness, justice, and equity reign.

ORAL LITERATURE IN AFRICAN SOCIETY

Oral tradition is simply those traditions handed orally to us, that is, through face-to-face contact from one generation to another. These traditions have survived in the forms of proverbs, riddles, incantations, panegyric and court poetry, chants, highly traditional imagery, folktales, and songs, among other prominent forms. These traditions are also known as oral literature and for convince called orature. Akporobaro (2001:2) in Asika & Akabuike (2014:20) defined oral literature as:

That which refers to the heritage of imaginative verbal creation, stories, folk-belief and songs of Pre-literate societies, which have been evolved and passed on through the spoken word from One generation to another. It is also the corpus of artistically significant verbal expression evolved by a group of people and transmitted orally from one generation to another. It is the Totality of verbal expressive forms and beliefs evolved in tribal societies for social entertainment and for the ordering of society and passed on orally from one generation to another. He added that it is the imaginative compositions distinguished by their beauty of forms of Expressions and local ideas developed over the years of a

people and handed down from one Generation to another by word of mouth. Songs, stories, belief and legends which have Artistic merit and cultural values and which form the cultural traditions of a people, and are as values and which form the cultural traditions of a people and are usually handed down from One generation to another.

Oral literature constitutes, in a real and significant sense, the literary traditions and achievements of indigenous African societies from time immemorial. They are the manifestation of traditional creative imaginations, beliefs and perceptions of social reality peculiar to Africans. They are modes which construct and deconstruct the social cultural milieu of the people. Before the observatory of the globe as a mere village with the help of modern information technology, Africa was seen as a large expanse of space in which people on one part see those on the other part as people who are expected to be different from the culture of another group of people. As a result of not being close or adjacent, the culture area of one group of people is expected to operate outside influence of the other. Different places that are too far apart cannot be said to have influenced one another.

Apart from space, language is another barrier to cultural resemblance. Then, if a person speaks a language different from that of another group of people, there is a high likelihood that some of them will learn from the other. Okodo (2014:514) opined that "this existed in the olden days, when the universal language like English, French, and others have not been taught by colonialists to their subjects in different parts of the world". One thing that baffles scholars of oral literature is that various elements of the oral literature of one group have some resemblance with those of another group of people, in spite of the fact that when each group told their oral stories in the olden days, they were not under the influence of another foreign culture.

The similarities are among different elements of oral literature in various cultures across political, linguistic and general cultural boundaries in Africa. There are story types like the beautiful bride who was so selective that she jilted various suitors of hers and ended up marrying a spirit, as well as the polygamous but childless king who hated one of his wives, who eventually gave birth to the king's only son irrespective of the king's effort to deny her the opportunity. Obiechina (1990:26) observes resemblance within Africa, thus.

West African Folktales also have stereotyped motifs. The same motifs occur in different Parts of Africa, as have been shown by comparative folklorists who have made a study Of folktales in different parts of Africa. Some of the folktale motifs are the stubborn child motif, the crime-does-not-pay motif, the unfaithful friend motif, the fairy godmother Motif,

the good-versus-evil motif, and the pride-goes-before-a-fall motif.

As of the similarities observed by many folklorists, their attention focused on the origins of the elements of oral literature to find out whether each of them started at different places before spreading to different parts of Africa or one of them was the product of a different cultural area, yet one is like another due to coincidence.

Oral literature in Africa is performed literature which depends on a performer who formulates it in words before an audience on a specific occasion. The occasion may be a gathering of jubilant women singing and dancing at the birth of a new baby, a man taking a wife, or even a bereavement. The performer is usually face-to-face with his audience. The performer takes advantage of this to enhance his performance and the content of his narration by employing gestures, facial expressions, and mimicry. If the bulky elephant, for instance, is mentioned in a story, the performer (also known as the storyteller, the narrator, oral or traditional artist) can indicate its size, clumsy movement with his gesture. The grief and unhappiness of a bereaved person is facially expressed and by the tone of his voice. He also expresses the dignity of a king through mimicry. According to Okezie (2007:7) "in doing this, the performer takes into consideration his audience. He therefore chooses his language to suit his audience, so that he does not talk down to them. A performer would, for instance, be talking above his audience if he intersperses his story for children with proverbs or uses vocabulary that children cannot comprehend". Bearing the presence of the audience in mind also allows the audience to participate either by clapping for a good rendition or joining in the sung part of a narration.

Oral narrative performance, like all other speech acts, is a communication system in which a social discourse takes place principally between a narrator/performer and an audience. Oral literature cannot exist outside of performance; it focuses on specific genres. In oral literature, a tale is not just told, nor is a poem rarely recited or sung. Like other forms of oral literature, such as myths, tongue-twisters, and anecdotes, they are consciously enacted, acted out, or dramatized, in other words, performed. Rendering a tale, for example, goes well and far beyond a mere act of telling. African oral literature is never simply a spoken art; it is an enactment, a ritual, a performance. Performance constitutes the very heart of oral literature. Without this, elements of oral literature remain dormant, amounting to no more than a moribund legacy. The oral artist cannot but be constantly influenced by the audience, who are face to face with him. In contrast, Okoh (2009:99) opined that

as Soyinka or Achebe composes in the quietude and privacy of his study, his "immediate" audience being only his pen, computer, or typewriter, and paper. For the writer, also, executing the piece of composition may be a complex

exercise, involving not just writing, but also possible pre-writing and post-writing activities. The process of composing may also involve, say, brainstorming, reading, putting pen to paper, effecting revision, alteration and cancellation. There is certain to be some intense wrestling with words; their choice, or their substitution engendered primarily by suggestions from his thesauri, or other spelling aids. In fact, the writer can summon a number of such aids to enable him effectively maneuver the slippery bends of words, stamp his authority on their nuances and subtleties, and even bring under control the waywardness, or troublesome nature of some lexical items.

Not only that, but a live audience also wields great power in oral literature, dictating largely to the performer, regarding the very character, the structuring, complexity, or modification of his materials.

IMPORTANCE OF AFRICAN ORAL LITERATURE

Oral literature can instruct us profoundly, providing knowledge of the wider world. The physical, psychological, religious, and cultural canvas of man. Such delighting and instructing provides a soothing, pleasurable means of learning, passing on information, or making us more sensitive to our world.

Apart from inculcating values, imparting knowledge, beauty, or heightening our awareness of the world around us, oral literature enables us to grow both emotionally and intellectually. Thus, it trains us in exercising our emotions in a wholesome manner, taking us through fear, ambition, tension, hatred, love, concern, regret, hope, laughter, or sympathy. According to Okoh(2008:3), "as we identify with various characters created by the performer, for example, we not only learn to acquire positive values, but also instinctively reject others which are not so noble, human or honorable".

Oral literature, then, has the capability of really shaping, influencing, and above all, humanizing us. It identifies and brings out in us such humaneness, or the quality of being "man," which clearly differentiates us from the lower animals. The African people attach great importance to oral literature, as it not only entertains them but also helps them express themselves and reflect their deep-rooted socio-cultural, religious, and economic values. Oral literature helps the African people to give accounts of the happenings and events in their surroundings as they are gleaned from stories believed to have happened at some point in time while the society was still evolving. Asika & Akabuike(2014:6) noted that oral literature "helps the African people tell their African side of the story and connects them with their past. It helps them to maintain a common and unbreakable link with their past. It is often said that a person who does not know where the rain started beating him may never know where he got dried up". In the same

vein, oral literature is stories believed to have happened in the remote past, a time when there was still a footpath under the breadfruit tree; a time the lizard was yet to grow tails; a time when the society was still evolving, and man and animals were united in a common cause. It is also a knowledge of one's past that plays a great role in his understanding of his present, and present and will work hand in hand in determining and shaping one's future. In other words, the knowledge of these folktales which are stories that happened in the remote past and the continual preservation and retelling of them, serve as a way of African people to continue to maintain the unbreakable link with their past, which serves as a way of understanding our present and which at the long run will help to structure and define our future.

AUDIENCE IN ORAL LITERATURE

The audience are the listener to a narration, the spectators of a display, such as a masquerade performance, a dancing or singing group. The audience is an indispensable part of oral literature. The performer cannot avoid being face-to-face with the audience whom he exploits or is influenced by. Umeasiegbo (2000:14) noted "that usually the performer sits on a reclining chair while the audience sits on mats in front of him. The picture presented is one of a classroom situation, with the teacher on a dais". In Igboland – Nigeria, storytelling where the performer begins with an opening formula, for example, "Onwere akuko m ga akoro unu" (I have a story to tell you), the audience spontaneously responds by saying "Koro anyi ka'obi di anyi nma" (Tell us to make us happy). The aim of the opening formula is to draw the audience's attention and participation.

Okezie (2007:13) says "the audience participates actively by joining in the sung part of a narration which the narrator or performer introduces into the narrative. The audience can be exploited in the performance poetry, for example, birth, marriage, war songs. The poet acts as the leader singing and improvising the lines of the poem, while the audience acts as the chorus, sometimes to the accompaniment of percussion instruments like the 'ekwe', 'oyo', 'udu, as well as clapping and dancing. When this happens, the close relationship between the oral artist and the audience is evident and enhances the performance.

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK (THEORY OF MIGRATION)

Migration is the movement of the person or people from one place to another. LTS causes are linked to major aspects of life, such as obtaining food or getting married. It often has profound effects on a person economic, or social status, for better or worse, as well as health, language, religious identity, and education. Thus, migration is of great interest to many academic subjects and professions. According to Miller (2007:398), "Historians, economists, political scientists, sociologists, and scholars of religion, literature, art, and music have studied migration. The professions of law, medicine, education, business, architecture, urban planning, public administration, and social work have specialties that

focus on the process of migration and the period of adaptation following a move. Experts working in these areas share with anthropologists an interest in such issues as the kind of people who migrate, causes of migration, process of migration, health and psychosocial adaptations to new locations. Migration is part of the human and animal worlds. Duruaku, Abbah & Ajileye (2017:166) noted "human migration is the movement by people from one place to another with the intention of settling, permanently in the new location. Internal migration is also possible". Migration may be of individuals, family units or in large groups.

Migration is a complex phenomenon and is driven by various factors, many of which are captured in some major theories. This is a very important factor that brings about the diffusion of tales, songs, myths, etc. into different communities of LGBoland, into continents, and into nations. Okoye (2012:264) says "amongst the Igbo people, hunters and native doctors, in particular, leave the communities of their aborigine for other communities, far and near, to settle for the purpose of their professions". Each of the above professions migrates with some of the oral traditions they bring to their newfound communities. Moreover, there have been much migration in Africa both in recent and pre-colonial times. People migrate from North to South, East to West Africa and vice versa. There has, also, been migration from across the sea to the new world, especially during slave trade. Through the slave and slave merchants' handful of Yoruba, Igbo, and Efik tales and other items of oral tradition have survived in Africa.

RESEMBLANCE OF ORAL LITERATURE ACROSS AFRICAN CULTURE.

African Oral Literature resembles in the following: Folktales Myth and Songs. Folktales are imaginary stories of imaginary world usually based on human or animal experience or sometimes based on the mixture of these two experiences. Ogbalu (2013:24) noted that "the stories of folktales are set on natural or supernatural environment. Folktales are stories told not as reality but as fiction". In folktales, animals are given human qualities, and they perform human actions, but their characters portray the lives and aspirations of human society. Themes in African folktales are numerous, and they cut across every aspect of life. The themes of trial by task test the strength, character or endurance of a person. The reason for assigning tasks may be sheer wickedness on the part of the person setting them. For instance, a wicked master may set a very difficult task for his slave. Such tasks, according to Achebe (2012:12), "might range from picking a coin that fell in the river, digging a tunnel with ordinary hands, or even producing a lost object that had been forgotten." African folktales, especially trickster tales, irrespective of the kind of animals or human beings, have one characteristic, deception. Some of the folktales across African cultures are:

IGBO-NIGERIA FOLKTALES**The Tortoise (Mbe)And A Corn**

In the land of animals, the land asked the animals if anyone could marry a wife for him with just one corn; that he would share his kingdom into two and give the person one part ,and also give his first daughter in marriage to whoever got the wife for him.

All the animals knew it was an impossible task but tortoise said he could do it. The king gave the tortoise a corn, and he bargained for this journey. He walked for a very long time, he went into a compound that also had a poultry; if he could spend the night in his compound, he still has a long way to go. Tortoise said he will be crossing:

dience:"Agu na asaa"(seven farms and seven seas)

Narrator:Mmiri na asaa"(seven rivers)

Audience:Agu na asaa"(seven farms)

Before he reaches his destination, the owner of the poultry agreed and he spent the night. In the morning when the tortoise woke up, the tortoise found out that the chicken has eaten the corn. The tortoise started crying and he was singing

Narrator:"Oka eze oka eze'(kings' corn)'

Audience:"Nzimiriza"

Narrator:"Agam akoro eze gini"(I will tell the king)

Audience:"Nzimiriza"

Narrator:Nyem oka eze ka'm laa (give me king's corn I want go)

Audience:"Nzimiriza"

Narrator:"I nyeghim oka eze m"(if you fell to give that corn)

Audience:"Nzimiriza"

Narrator:"Nye m okuko kpuuru ya"(then give me one cock)

Audience:"Nzimiriza"

He was still crying and the owner of the poultry felt that since he was looking for the chicken that ate his corn that he will give him one chicken. The tortoise collected the chicken and set out again. He went to another town, and he saw where they were rearing cows. He went there and told them that he wants to spend the night with them and that the next day he will continue his journey that he is crossing

Narrator:Mmiri na asaa (seven farms and seven seas)

Audience:Agu na asaa (seven farms)

Before he reaches his destination. The man was so touched with him. The man gave him a comfortable place to stay with his chicken but at night he took the chicken and kept it where the cows were. In the morning the tortoise found out that th give me king's corn I want go)

e cow has killed the chicken. The tortoise started singing again.

Narrator: "Okuko eze okuku eze" (kings' corn)

Audience: "Nzamiriza"

Narrator: "Agam akoro eze gini" (I will tell the king)

Audience: "Nzamiriza"

Narrator: "Nyem okuku eze ngaghi ana" (give me king's cock I will not go)

Audience: "Inye ghim okuku eze mju" (if you fell to give me king's cock I will not go)

The man asked him what will be done about it, he said he should give him the cow that killed the chicken and the man gave him the cow. Tortoise continued his journey with the cow when he saw a very beautiful lady who died and wanted to be buried. The tortoise told them to give him the dead body and take the cow, so that they would gain more, because the girl was already dead. The family agreed and gave the tortoise the body. Tortoise went to another kingdom. The king had beautiful daughters. The tortoise told the king that he and the king's daughter (the dead body) are going to a town, and they will cross.

Narrator: Mmiri na asaa (seven seas)

Audience: Agu na asaa (seven farms)

The king accommodated the tortoise and the dead body. The next morning, the tortoise woke up and said that the king's children had killed the daughter and the king would replace the daughter. The king pleaded but the tortoise started crying and singing:

Narrator: "Nwa eze Nwaeze" (king child, king child)

Audience: "Nzamiriza"

Narrator: "Aga m akoro eze gini" (what will I tell the king?)

Audience: "Nzamiriza"

Narrator: "Adaeye Adaeye" (king daughter, king daughter)

Audience: "Nzamiriza"

Narrator: "I ga akwu m ugwo ya" (you will pay for child)

Audience: "Nzamiriza"

The king was so confused; he couldn't do anything about it. He gave the tortoise one of the king's daughters to replace the dead daughter. Tortoise took the girl to his own village and handed the girl to the king. That was how tortoise married a girl with one corn. By Asika and Akabuike (2014:109).

GHANA FOLKTALES

Spider (Kwaku Ananse) wants to buy Sky. God demands an seemingly impossible price: God ordered the spider to bring the following: Onini the Python, Osebo the Leopard, Mmoatia the fairy, and Mmoboro the Hornets. Spider agrees on this price. Ananse consults his wife and gets idea on how to obtain Onini the python. Ananse tricks Onini by

tying him up and takes him to God. saying: 'My hand has touched it; what remains still remains. .Ananse consults his wife and gets idea on how to obtain Mmoboro the Hornets .Ananse tricks Hornets by luring them into a gourd and takes them to Sky-God. saying: 'My hand has touched it; what remains still remains.'Ananse consults his wife and gets idea on how to catch Osebo the Leopard.

Ananse tricks Leopard by luring him into a pit dug by Ananse and takes him to God.-God, saying: 'My hand has touched it; what remains still remains.'Ananse forgoes his wife's advice on how to obtain Mmoatia the Fairy. Nevertheless, Ananse tricks Fairy by luring him onto a sticky Akua doll. He takes Fairy, together with his mother, to God, saying: 'My hand has touched it; what remains still remains. God marvels at Ananse's skill. God releases his stories into the custody of Ananse. By Okpewho(2003:252).

GAMBIAN FOLKTALES

Leuk impregnates the King's daughter in violation of the King's injunction. After a lengthy search, Leuk is apprehended as the culprit. To preserve Leuk's life, the king demands a seemingly impossible price: a leopard skin and the hair of Kouss-le-Butin-Barbu. Leuk meets leopard near a river. Leuk tricks leopard into taking off his skin in order to take a bath. Leuk promises to guard the skin. Leuk hides the skin, lies to the leopard as to the whereabouts of the skin, and recovers it later after the leopard goes away skinless. Leuk meets elephant and his group near a stream. Leuk lies to them and tricks them into climbing on top of each other with help from Frog and Turtle. Elephants crash down, break tusks, and leuk tricks them and runs away with the two most beautiful tusks. Leuk meets Kouss relaxing under a tamarind tree. Leuk tricks Kouss into having his beard shaved so as to look handsome. Leuk shaves Kouss and runs away with the hair. Leuk meets Lion near a river. Leuk tricks lion into taking off his skin so as not to get wet and offers to guard it. Leuk tricks lion into believing his story and eventually runs away with the skin. Leuk takes all the required items to Bour the king who now marvels at his exploits. Bour spares Leuk's life and sets him free. Attempts by characters humiliated by Leuk's tricks to apprehend him fail. By Okpewho(2003:254) .

The tricksters in the stories above share the characteristic of using deception against those around them.

MYTH

Myth is a story that is not true and involves supernatural beings, or at any rate supra-human beings. Cuddon (2014:453) says "myths are concerned with creation and explain how something came to exist". Myth is about something within an environment or society. A myth, therefore, remains true as long as the rite is divorced from the myth. All myths in Africa have similar characteristics: they talk about the origin and why something came into existence. A story surrounding every myth could either be true or false. It is thus wrong for one to arrive at a hasty conclusion that 'it is true 'or 'it is false'. Examples of African myth are;

IGBO NIGERIAN MYTH

The Origin of Fire

A long time ago, a group of animals set out on a very distant journey to the land of the unseen. They were to cross seven deep rivers and seven lands. Antelope, the fastest of them, ran past all but could not cross even the first river. The elephant, the heaviest of them, got stuck in the mud of one of the rivers. Some animals could wade across some of the rivers but were stuck in the sixth or seventh. Finally, only the dog and the frog crossed all the rivers. On reaching the end of their journey, each of them was given, by the head of the inhabitants of the land of the unseen beings, a gift of fire to bring over to the world of the visible. Both messengers accepted this gift and made their way back home. On their way home, the dog proudly said to the frog, "I will run faster than you and bring fire to the world, and I will be the one known for bringing such a gift to mankind". The frog said humbly "well, I will've only at my own pace.

They continued in their journey. Soon, the dog outpaced the frog and crossed all seven Rivers. By this time, it became hungry. As it was nearing home, it perceived the scent of dog food. It was attracted and thus diverted into the bush to find the food. When it saw the food, it immediately dropped the fire it had gripped with its mouth and began to eat it. At the end it turned to pick up the fire but discovered it was nowhere to be seen. Then it remembered that the head of the inhabitants of the land of the unseen had warned them not to drop the fire until they reached home. Meanwhile, the frog had crossed all the rivers, passed where the dog was eating and did not even perceive the smell of any food. Eventually, it was the frog that successfully brought fire to mankind. But by the time it reached the visible world, the fire had so illumed the bearer that the frog and fire had become one. The frog has turned into fire. Edeh (1985:72)IN Okoye

CONGOLESE MYTH

The myth below is an account of the origin of the white men as fashioned by the Congolese and told in their societies.

The Origin of the White People

In this story we find the first mention of the great diviner Bongenge, who is to Lianja while Merlin was to King Arthur: a protector as well as a magician.

This notion of the origin of the white people is not uncommon in the region: i.e that white men are the sons of spirit and have learned their technical tricks from ghosts in the forest, white is the color of apparitions. Obviously, whites are not normal people. Ordinarily healthy children are born chocolate brown and grow up to be as black as bilberries.

Yendembe, one of Lianja's daughters, appeared to be pregnant without being married. The girl maintained and swore that she had known no man. Lianja consulted the famous diviner of Bongenge, who pronounced: Lianja's daughter is pregnant with

twins, a boy and a girl. Their father is a god; therefore, they will be white coloured children instead of black, as human babies ought to be. Because they are not the children of a man they will want to live separately as if they were superior beings, and they will make things we have never heard of. They will be married together.'

When Lianja's daughter's time had come, she gave birth to a boy first, and then a girl, both quite white. The two kept apart from the black children and began to speak a different language. At fifteen, they asked to have a different house built for them, a sign that they wished to sever the bonds with the clan. They began to write with pens on flat surfaces. To the amazement of the black people, they started forging iron, saying they were building a boat. Who had ever heard of making a boat out of iron, which sinks like a stone? But the iron ship did not sink, and when they had added a propeller, they could travel together along the rivers without engaging rowers. They built their own house downstream, with a roof of iron, and used iron keys instead of leather thongs to fasten the doors. The white woman became pregnant and gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl, who also married each other.

CAMEROONIAN MYTHS (OKU)

How the Worship of God in Heaven started in Oku: This story will tell us how the worship of God in heaven started in Oku. In the beginning, we worshipped only our dogs, gods like Lumetu. Yinchuan awes. Then a man came, this man usually moved from house to house, playing a drum and singing that God is in heaven, even when he went to the farm. He took the drum with him. One day, as he worked on this farm, he heard a body shouting in a nearby valley. He collected some ropes, tied them together, and threw one end into the valley. The boy in the valley held on to the rope he was pulled out. He discovered that the boy was the H Fon's heir who had been missing for months.

He took him home. On the way the boy told him that if the Fon wants to reward him, he should ask for the ring on the Fon's thumb. When Fon saw the son, he was very happy. There was celebration during which the king asked the man to name what he would want to have as a reward. The man asked for and was given the king's ring. Each day before he left for the farm, he placed the ring under his pillow, and the ring would produce a lot of money. One day while he was away, the Fon sent his slaves, and they forced his wife to give them the ring. This man did not bother. He continued to move about playing his drum. One day, when he was going to the farm, he met a hunter beating his dog mercilessly for stealing meat. He paid for the meat, took home the dog, and treated its wounds. Another day, he met a man beating his cat mercilessly for stealing meat. He again paid for the meat and took home the cat.

One morning, the king sent his slaves to ask for the ring. The man told them that they had taken the ring, but he insisted that he must give it back to them. A day was set for his execution if he did not return the ring. The king's slaves mocked him and asked him to ask his God who is in heaven to save him. The cat and the dog decided to help the man because he had been good to them. They went to the king's house and forced the

rats to look for the ring. The rat started eating up things in search of the ring. That was how rat started eating things in Oku. They ate calabashes, mats, and finally saw the ring. The cat and the dog took the ring. When they were crossing a river to where the man was detained, the dog dropped the ring into the river, and a fish swallowed it. Fishermen caught the fish later in the day, removed its intestines and threw them on the shore. The dog and the cat went to eat the intestines in the evening and found the ring. They took it and hurried to the man's cell. They arrived a few minutes to the time he was to be executed. The man took the ring and was very happy. When the king's slave arrived, he asked if they really wanted to execute him. They were amazed because they knew that the ring was kept in a sacred place in the Fon's palace. They rushed back to where it was kept, they saw the things destroyed by the rats but could not find the ring. The man was set free, and people started worshiping his God. This is how the worship of God in heaven started in Oku. Asika and Akabuike (2014:109).

SON FG AND THEIR GRIOT

Griots are the people who sing and tell stories, history about their people and the community. They resemble the way the African griot introduces themselves when they sing. For instance, this is how Djeli Mamadou Kouyate of Guinea introduce himself when singing

This is how Mamadou Kouyate, an authentic Mandingo griot, introduces himself I am a griot. I am Djeli Mamadou Kouyate, son of Bintou Kouyate and of Djeli Kedian Master of the art of speech. Since time immemorial the kouyates have been at the service Of the keita princes of Manding The art of speech has no secret for us, without us the Names of kings would sink into oblivion; we are the memory of men; by the word, we Give life to the actions of our dead kings, for the benefit of the present generation My Word is pure and stripped of all un-truths; it is my father's word; it is my father's fathers word. Okpewho(2003:23)

Another great voice of the authentic griot tradition of the western sudan is Boubacar Tinguidiji, a celebrated Fulani griot (Maabo) from the republic of Niger. Tinguidiji was originally from the village of Tera near the Burkina Faso border. Okpewho(2003:23) says

This is how Tinguidiji, a Maabo traditionalist, respectful of his art and of himself, speaks of himself. With these remarks he is anxious to distinguish himself from those vulgar and Unscrupulous griots whose only purpose is to extort presents and favors and who, in order to reach their goal, will wield praise and insult, dithyrambical panegyric and spiteful

diatr ibe, noble language and the grossest slang with equal ease and daring. Okpewho(2003:23). Kaalu Igirigiri of Igbo -Nigeria introduces himself like above griots.; informality, the training of the singer in the Ohafia Igbo epic tradition is one of the sine qua non conditions for general acceptability. According to Kaalu Igirigiri: If you are a singer and people recognize the fact that your voice is sweet but know that You have not been trained by a person well-versed in the act of historical remembrance (iku aka) that is, a peson who says what Ohafia people as a whole accept; if you simply Lock up yourself in your house singing to please yourself, or even if you go out and sing With others, you will never be credited as singing with the voice of an experienced singer: You will never be able to sing what Ohafia people as a whole will accept. The truth is this: If you are a singer, if your voice is sweet, Ohafia people will tell you , "Go and meet Kaalu Igirigiri. He will teach you songs. Your voice is sweet." When you come to me, I will tell you All those stories which the old masters told me. If you sing these stories as told, Ohafia People as a whole will accept: women will accept, man will accept, everyone.... But if You stay in your house singing to please yourself, without any course of training under a Master-singer, your songs can never be sweet; you will never be able to sing properly (Interview, March 1976).

CONCLUSION

Having looked at the oral literature in African culture, we can see that they have a rich culture that sustains their environment. This culture cuts across various aspects of life. One must have seen from the elements of oral literature discussed that there are a lot of similarities across culture in Africa. So, it is quite reasonable that one wonders what brings about the similarities. . This led to the theory of migration. Migration is a complex phenomenon and is driven by various factors, many of which are captured in some major theories. This is a very important factor that brings about the diffusion of tales, songs, myths, etc. into different communities of Igboland, into continents, and into African nations.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

Oluchi Eugenia Nebolisa, Ph.D., essayist, literary artist, novelist, playwright, and poet, is a senior lecturer who taught Igbo literature at Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. She combined administrative work with teaching, research, and community service. Nebolisa belongs to several professional bodies including the Association of Nigerian Author (ANA), literary society of Nigeria (LSN), Igbo Scholars Forum (ISF), and Society for Igbo studies (SIS), Igbo studies Association (ISA), Otu Suwakwa Igbo (OSI), and Centre for Igbo Studies (CIS) and forum of south east academic doctors (FOSAD).

Ujunwa Precious Okafor, Ph.D., is a literary artist. A lecturer who taught Igbo oral literature in the Department of Igbo, African/Communication Studies at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Okafor belongs to several professional bodies including Igbo Studies Association (ISA), Society for Igbo Studies (SIS), Otu Suwakwa Igbo (OSI), and Center for Igbo Studies (CIS).

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