Twining Around Twins: The Theme of Twins in Folklore and Nigerian Cinema

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Abstract
The subject of twins is a fascinating area of study and has continued to reverberate in studies and researeh over the ages creating an age-long tradition and typology. The concept of twining is one of ambivalence, of polarities of things in co-operative antagonism yet uniting in external attacks. Twins appear in creation stories, folklores of various groups and races, in mythologies and now in cinema. There also exit a folklore and myth of the spiritual twin - the Dioscuri, Romulus and Remus in a long legendary narrative which ends with Romulus carried up to the heavens by his father, Mars, and is worshipped as the God, Quirinus. Twins are associated with certain characteristics like abnormal behavior, evil, romance with the supernatural, distaste for societal vices and a semiotic symphony of benevolence and malevolence which sounds a duality of poles and a metaphor for opposing principles. The circumstances of birth, of environment and of human relationships determine conundrums and ambivalence of light and darkness exhibited by the twins. This paper explores the arehetypal variants of twins-the reunification, the scapegoat, the symmetry, the soul mate and the duality of perspectives, the rivalry of the self- exhibited through the duality of twins as they exist in world cultures and mythologies, particularly Nigerian culture. The paper finally analyzes how the mythology of twins is grimly connected to the vicissitudes of daily life in Nigeria explored in Nollywood cinema, a fascinating transcript where narrative image coalesce with nature for enhanced understanding and sustainable development.

Keywords: twining, twins, trickster, supporter, duality, folklore, Nigerian cinema.

Introduction

Twins assuage mythological, literary and now cinematic discourses in various cultures around the world. The Igbo of South Eastern Nigeria, years ago saw twins as 'evil'. These days, the situation has changed - twins are seen as blessings from God. The Yoruba of South Western Nigeria revere twins to the point of praise songs, the Tiv of North Central Nigeria see twins as a blessing with proverb: **ave ahar wua iji**(it is with two hands that a fly can easily be killed). In Greek mythology, the twins Castor and Polyneices (Pollux), sons of Zeus and Leda were placed in the "heavens as the constellation Germinia" (Twins - Mythology Dictionary).

The term twins is used in concept in this paper to refer not only to persons born together but includes categories of look - alike or even look dissimilar, and the general twins which enlist literary pairs of characters, close friends ordinary brothers or relations. Twining refer to a thematic weaving, in this case, around brotherly devotion and antipathy poles. Trickster here refers to the benefactor-buffoon relationship between the twins. Duality means the semiotic poles of benevolence and malevolence associated with the twin myth, folklore refers to the customs and customary behavior of a group or race and Nigerian cinema refers to the distinctive cinema of Nigerian origin which captures the arehetype of the twin in Nigerian and World folklore and mythologies to films. (Leroy, 1995:34).

Before Christianity penetrated Igbo land in the 19thCentury, the Igbo saw the birth of twins and other multiple births as unnatural and therefore evil. Animals were known to have multiple births but not humans! The rarity of the occurrence of twin birth perhaps sealed the creation as humanly wrong. Twins were thus killed by abandonment into the **evil forest** or by physical attack and the mother made to undergo cleansing for purification (Mazi 1974:3-16). Although this practice never lasted long in the now Christian dominated Igbo land, the contemporary Igbo view expressed in **Nollywood** films especially on the dwarf characters, Aki and Popo, and the feminist re-incarnation, Aku and Popo Sisters re-established this 'evil' contagion perspective. In Achebe's **Things Fall Apart,** Nwoye hears "the hymn about brothers who sat in darkness and in fear seem to answer a vague and persistent question that haunted his young soul- the question of the twins crying in the bush...he felt a relief as the hymn poured into his parehed soul" (TFA:57)
In Yoruba land, the emergence of twins creates reactions "oscillating from fear and repugnance to hope and joy" (Leroy:132). In pre-modem religious times, the Yoruba, like the Igbo, used to reject, even sacrifice, new born twins but a historical reverse, probably borne out of renewed assessment and the wave of modern value assertions, changed it all as twins are now celebrated. Chapel T. H (250 - 265) believes that twins bring happiness, good health and prosperity on the family. Twins can also bring about disaster, disease and death "for which they deserve respect, love and care." Eshu, the trouble maker, magician and sorcerer with many faces can behave balefully or friendly. The first born twin, irrespective of sex, is called Taiwo - which means 'having the first taste of the world' and the second twin is called Kehinde - meaning 'arriving after the other.' Like the belief of the Tiv, Hausa, Togo and many groups in Africa and the world, the Yoruba believe that the first one is actually the younger one sent by the senior one to examine the world, and when Taiwo comes out crying Kehinde will follow in spiritual support. Kehinde is seen to be 'more careful, intelligent and reflective' but Taiwo is observed to be more 'curious, adventurous and non-chalant' in attitude (Leroy, F etal). Twins is called *Ibeji* in Yoruba, *Yan-biyu* or *Tagwaye* in Hausa, *'ejime'*in South South Igbo, *Ahina* in Tiv, *ampule* in Agatu, *nen-shaha* in Berom, *apule* in Idoma. In these areas is the mythology and reality of twins

grimly brought to the fore of discourse on dualities in their binary diffusions and relationships to each other and to others in contact with them. This is irrespective of whether the twins are fraternal twins, conjoined twins, identical twins, Siamese twins, Carlson twins, or two brothers or sisters as this paper projects.

Twins' Researeh Around the World

Fascinating researeh in folktales, mythologies popular culture and cultural studies twining around twins across the world exist and will continue to be undertaken using varying ideological perspectives, thematic focus and multi -dimensional inter-disciplinary approaches. The theme of twins offers the semiotics of binary diffusion inherent in age- long human existence such that it has found a valuable narrative space not only in literary but also in the technology - driven sphere of cinema, particularly the Nigerian cinema. In literature, folklore and film, twining around twins represent a dialogue with the self, a brother neighbor and even spiritual relations, which make twins an interesting and universally enviable subject of study. An overview of twin mythologies around the world will reveal this transcript and how the narratives are projected in Nollywood, Yorywood and kannywood cinemas in Nigeria.

Romulus and Remus were twin brothers and their father was Mars, the God of war; their mother was called Rhea Silvia, a vestal Virgin and daughter of King Numitor. Numitor's brother, Amulius had taken the throne from him and forced Rhea Silvia to become a vestal virgin when the boys were born. Amulius kept the boys in a basket and threw them in the River Tiber, hopeful they will be drawn. The boys were rescued by a She - Wolf who fed the babies with her milk. They grew up and the shepherd, Faustulus took them in. One day the boys found out their true identity and killed Amulius. They decided to build a city of their own but could not come to consensus where to situate it. Romulus killed Remus in the heat of an argument and become the first king of Rome in 753BC (imelda - almqvist-art.com, A. H Krappe 1923: 152). The legend ends with Romulus being carried up to the heavens by his father. Mars and worshipped as the God, Quirinus.

In America, they are called *'hero twins' 'warrior twins'* or even *'twins of the sun'*. In the actual world, we have *Minnesota twins, Bentley twins, Bernaola twins, Carlson twins, Siamese twins, conjoined t\vins, identical twins* and *fraternal twins. Twins are brothers, two chiccan, two Eb, two Goddess.* (Gifford 1980, Karsten 1932, Radinl972, twin-mythology.html).

In Mexico, the Aztec killed one twin at birth in the belief that the death served the life of a parent, and the surviving twin was said to have evil power. Like the Tiv of North Central Nigeria, "the Tarascans regard twins as gifted in the matter of medicine."(Gifford: 1980:192-5) The Apache of North America "have their heroes in the twin - child- of -the -water and killer of Enemies,"(Karsten 1932:78-9) the Winnebago "have stories of the hero twins, flesh and stump,"(Radin 1972:124) the Tiv have stories about the hero twins, the Hare and his friend, the trickster and the tricked (Bergsma H and Bergsma R 1969). In South America, the Bakairi twins, kame and keri ate the moon and the sun respectively personified, (twins-mythology- dictionary, Wilbert(ed.)1977:48). The widespread theme of twin is in the duality of character - one being clever and strong, the other stupid and clumsy, one being benevolent, the other malevolent, one being good and another evil on possessing natural and the other supernatural powers, - basically of opposing principles and of symmetry principles, and no third party accommodated in their opposition to each other!

Arehetypal Variants of Twins

The twin arehetype is considered as the 'forefather of all twins' and twins represent duality and polarities of perspectives, a phenomenon of creation used in literary discourses to sort out human and environmental predicaments, for greater understanding, better living, growth and development (Ward l968:405).

Arehetypal twins have variants such as re-unification, the scapegoat, symmetry, soul mates and dual polarities of good and evil (www.mythology dictionary .com)

It has been a general belief in many cultures in Africa and the world that twins were actually one, united in the womb but forced by virtue of the intransigence of one part of the whole eager to assert its principles at birth; in spite of the duality in principle and the rivalry therewith, there exist longing and belonging borne out of the desire to be re-united. The two sides thus display the opposing principles of life and the love and care inherent in nature itself. Here is nature with its introverts and extroverts, male and female, light and darkness, good and evil in duality. The twins very often depict the polarity of life and nature in their relationship to themselves and others, but also strive at unity especially during a third party intrusion into their affairs and when society do not seem to go the right way.

Another arehetypal variant of twins is the scapegoat group. The Greco-Latin myth of Nareissus, a beautiful young man who fell in love with his reflection in a pool, later died and was changed into the flower which takes his name and the Vampire in American mythology and film belong to this category.(Gifford 1980:193-0036) The scapegoat element of the sacrificial double that suffers and dies in place of another could be found in Nigerian cinema.

There is also the Symmetry category found in the pre - Incan tradition of the people of Peru, where the creator called Atachuchu, was described as "lord of the twins" Taylor (146). The lord's first creation was a magical typology of his own double. In Amerindian mythology too, we find the wife of the creature hero, a creator god, killed by jaguars that got in her womb a pair of twins. The twins grew up, discover through another animal and kill the jaguars, perform miraculous deeds and finally ascended on the chain to be the sun and the moon Gifford (193). Nollywood cinema twins, Aki and Pawpaw and Aki and Pawpaw Sisters display equal match in strength of character and might in some films creating twin symmetry.

Twins are examined as the two polarities and semiotics of human existence itself in which case they could be soul mates. They could be male or female, introvert or extrovert, benevolent or adversaries, two- prong character yet existing in understanding. Paul Radin (124) states that "this two-fold function of benefactor and buffoon...is the outstanding characteristic of the...heroes wherever they are encountered...." Nollywood cinema also shows this soul mate variant in their films twining on twins.

The most popular and fascinating twins characters in Nollywood are **Aki and Pawpaw,** real names, Osita Iheme and Chinedu Ikedieze, sometimes converted to **Aki and Pawpaw Sisters.** There exist such twining of the double in **Kannywood** Hausa home video technology in a tag called in Hausa, **Yan Biyu** or **Tagwaye** in films like **Auren Tagwaye, Madubin Dubawa, Jijjiga, Mutallab, Namijin Duniya,** and **Akirizzaman.** In **Yollywood,** the Yoruba indigenous language cinema also exist similar comic characters, Odunlade Adekola and Olaniyi Afonja, two

twins, friends in interactive home video thrillers. In other Nigerian indigenous language cinema too are such type characters who are markers for twins' existence of the self, world of experience, of our daily lives in contention with itself, with others and the society of large. As twining around twin perspectives persist as an inevitable presence of life and living, it may well reflect our strides at reconstructing ourselves for a better life and relationship and lead us to connect to our spiritual kindred truths. Varisina (59) states in this direction that:

> Very self conscious nation looks back upon it's past to revive former glories, to discover its origins to relate its history to that of other parts of the world and to arrive at a knowledge of its political, social, economic and other systems.

The **Nollywood** film **Dark Sheep** directed by Michael Jaja and produced by Ojiofor Ezeanyache, is erroneously titled against this context of constant struggle for re-unification of the self. Taken that the twins, Linus and Richard were actually meant to be one, but were separated at birth and not relenting, Linus, who calls himself **Area Chairman** and give himself the title **Okpote Okeleze** could not pass for a **'dark sheep'**but should be understood in his quest for reunification. Linus knows this well and craves for oneness when he wears his rich brother, Richard's clothes and on Richard's wife's protest, Linus defends in arehetypal rockets: "Me and Richard is one. I am Richard and Richard is Me." In clear knowledge of this fact, Richard admitting Linus in his metaphorical 'house' confesses, "we are together, Linus make yourself comfortable." Try as Linus helplessly could in a 'house' run by a third party, Richard's wife, whom Linus calls **Okeinu,** it was fruitless.

Linus decided to hire hoodlums who eliminated Richard, whom Linus after all calls "my flesh and blood" after Richard's death. The twins had earlier argued about their future. Sandra Azubuike, Richard's wife could noi understand the masnetizins. connection between her husband and her twinbrother and says in the uneasy dislocation in the house by Linus, "I have to calls Richard. He alone knows...." but Richard's driver who seeks for favour whatever "self[1] reigns cries to the police, on arrest saying, "I be Christian, I dey go Mosque." Linus twin around this inseparable dual perspective of twins when he says "I forward stockfish and clear bush meat."

Vampires suffer and sacrifice their lives in place of another in American mythology and films. The Nollywood cinema is also in process of this desire for sacrifice in twining around twins. The film, **Stubborn Flies** directed by Andy Chukwu and produced by Oluchukwu Nweke presents mirror image of a 'guardian angel' who sacrifices all heavenly comfort to protect Samuel who was desperate to fling himself at prostitutes by night. "Samuel, go in and sleep. I am your guardian angel. My duty is to protect you. I don't want anything to hurt you physically and spiritually." All these efforts were against the back drop of Samuel's disapproval even of what he termed the angle's "small small magic" and the angle's remark that "I have been with you all the day you were born." Indeed, Samuel calls the sacrificial angel troublesome angel saying, "foolish man, leave me alone" and lamented to God, "This Angel is not friendly, God!" In **I Think Twice** too are visual pleasures of this twin **"Double Wahala."**Ike quarrels with his mum for sending his cousin, Obinna, to the village when he bluntly states, "Mummy, let me put my own this way, Ike goes to the village and I go with him."'Mummy[1] was rendered quite helpless when the two children take a decision.

Symmetry is another arehetypal variant of the twin topology. The film **Aki** Na **Ukwa** directed and produced by Amayo Uzo Philips succinctly depicts this symmetry twining around twins, such that **Elegantus, Ogonus' wife,** says "they must have entered their mother womb from the back." The twins perfectly co-operate to do all sorts of harm and inflict suffering on members of the community, even not sparing their father and Uncle who brand them "cockroaches", "rats", "big headed termites" and "roaches." The twins disparage any deviant social behavior, like bleaching the skin, helm smoking, washing in public places and bribery and corruption. The father banished them saying, "I am no longer interested in having you people as my children.... They want to kill me; they want to send me to early grave." The twins connive to make their father fall, uncle's wife, to steal when not given, to create commotion in school when the ways of their teacher do not rhyme with theirs, to spray pepper into a lady's cosmetic powder, take away the clothes of a man bathing in a stream, take a helm smoker's bike and all sorts of unwanted behavior. Bcrilus Ogonus, **The son of Ogonus Deribe, the old soldier** and uncle of the twins, and his wife describe the twins as "little demons", "thosethings", "double wahala", "little Masquerades", "little rascal Gods who have come to punish him" (Beritus Ogonus) and "wish they are dead." This indicates the twining of twins in dual and contrary poles of life suggesting that in the divergence of groups, religion, customs, value orientation, and ideologies could be found unity and peace.

As it is similar to real life situations, the atmosphere in which the twins are born and their reception greatly determine their behavioral reaction to the very society that produces them, whether to bring fortune or misfortune. The twins themselves have their defence mostly in ways of their recognition and in the unacceptable ways society carries on with its daily business of living rough. Their defence of their action in this film attests to this assertion. For instance they wanted to shoot a man for taking bath in a public stream - a man shown soon after to have a big compound; they decided to **punish** him by taking his clothes away; people abuse them and call them "unripe banana" and they desire to show how ripe they actually are. They were denied food, "Aunty refused to give us food." (Aki Na Ukwa) They, out of necessity steal or protest by taking off a stool for Ogonus' wife, **Elega baby,** to fall; they mix pepper in a cosmetic container because they believe Fatima was acting "like a devil", for "every time breaching cream." Even for crying in solidarity more than the bereaved, which was in solidarity for their plight, they philosophically questioned Dorcas, their close associate, "Why do you want to cry more than us?"

These counters may not be necessarily appropriate defense to some aspects of the twins' unwanted creations but offers opportunity to our critical thinking of our actions in society and proffers some reasons to the twins' behavior. **Doca,** short form for Dorcas, who cries in support when their father sent them packing was rebuked with, "Do you want to cry more than us? Look at the way she is crying!" This is to castigate society's fake crying, pretences and hypocrisy in relation to glaring issues that bother others the most. However, as society cries out daily against their mental and systemic propositions, the twins adjust their contentious actions as they finally resolved, "We have come to apologize."

Tom and Jerry also expresses the twins' angst against a society which created them that **evil** way, especially to their grandfather for not training his daughter, their mother well, for which she gave birth to them without care, training and comfort.

Aki and Pawpaw Sisters directed by Amayo Philips and produced by Martins Onyebuchi Onyemaobi has a record breaking conversion of Aki and Pawpaw to **"sisters"**in manner of Shakespearean plays where male could take female roles. **Aki and Pawpaw Sisters** seems to be a follow - up to their male contemporaries especially the film **Aki** Na **Ukwa.** Strikingly, both films are directed by Amayo Uzo Philips, probably, in covering the gender space and defence. Mbakwe, (Amaechi Muonagor) as ever usual father of the twins, whichever sex, had his twins re-incarnate as **daughters** and were named in onomatopoeic style just like the Bakairi twins, **kanio and keri, as Erente and Mpempe.** One elder analysis their re-incarnation from male children to female children, "Whether is the daughter or the sons oh, of Mbakwe, they are the same." As for their being labeled by their father, **Gladim** (Gladys) or others in society as **sons of the devil, half currents, wicked sons** of..., "(You) want to replace your brother Aki and Pawpaw", "you better go and look for your father because I am not your father" (Mbakwe), **"they are evil/**[1]In any case, Aki and Pawpaw Sisters, **Erente and Mpempe** have their resolutions: We **have come to stay forever oh, we are little angels, we are in our father's house oh!ʔand as long as it is our house our father will provide food for us.** Others too have their impression about these soul mates: **dem go bring you down if you cross their way, nothing is wrong with them, it is just that they are evil,** and Dorcas, the imbecile is quick to say **"I kill you"**to Mbakwe and whoever crosses the path of the twins for which their song to hail Dorcas now becomes popular. **Dorcas is a queen oh! Queen oh!. Dorcas is a queen oh! Ojentele!**

The twins being soul mates lead to twining the representative typologies of life and the polarities of perspectives. The twins are also in binary opposition, one with a good heart the other with an evil heart. The one with the good heart attains great heights with a spiritual connect and the one with the evil heart relies on the one with the good heart because of the obvious spiritual disconnect he or she generates. A good heart attracts spiritual presence, "You have a good heart and you don't like trouble...we are going to give you power to do supernatural things **like** appearing and disappearing." It could be observed that with a good heart taking charge, one in wish for Nigeria, Africa and the World, the evil heart forcefully retreats in bad conduct and both individual and society will move ahead in mutual co-existence, partnership and development.

Conclusion

It could be deduced from the mythologies, folklore and films studied that twining around twins is not necessarily twining around evil but expressing the ambivalent nature of human and spiritual existence. What lacks in one twin, in the Nigerian context, one ethnic group or religion, is empowered or partnered by the other, and when society learns the intricate threads twining around the behavior of twins or a nation and the duality of values and perspectives inherent in them, there will be unity and partnership with the self, others and with twins specifically. In fact, an examination of the theme of twins leads us to a socio-economic, political and religious connect with ourselves, our environment, even our spiritual relationship and will provide an enhanced understanding of the vicissitudes of daily life for sustainable growth and development.

The various arehetypal twins are shown to be at work in the sustainable reunification efforts at audience researeh, proper cultural depictions, globalization of local phenomenon, cultural hybridization of commercialism and the integration of the contending linguistic groups in **Nollywood** cinema, so that society should learn to confront the opposing principles in life with longing and belonging, create a dialogue with adversaries, have brotherly devotion on each other,

even in spite of the trickster and tricked motif surrounding society but which will gather dust in long symmetry. C.G Jung (1974:203) states that a twin is a "forerunner of the savior...both subhuman and superhuman, a bestial and a divine being.. .of a divine animal nature." The themes of twins strive at running a course of dialogue and sparkling resolutions continually in time and space for society to emerge closer, stronger, and attractive and in symmetrical pattern. The Nigerian cinema, tagged **Nollywood,** has done a great deal to coalesce Myth, Folklore, Literature and Cinema in inter-disciplinary relationships to generate scopes of polarities, probing in self, other and societal relationships and enhanced scholarship. In this wise, we may sing the Yoruba songs in praise of twins:

> ...they made the poor rich, they clothed those who were naked....
> And: Majestic and beautiful looking twins, natives of Ishokun
> Let me find means of eating, let me find means of drinking
> Majestic and beautiful looking twins,
> come and give me the blessing of a child.

The Nigerian, African and the World could even learn lessons from the inspiring and partnership-generating and elevating song of the twins, **Aki and Pawpaw and Aki and Pawpaw Sisters** to Dorcas, the imbecile:

> *Dorcas is a queen oh! Queen oh!*
> *Dorcas is a Queen oh!*
> *Ojen tele!*

Twining around twins is about twining around the double, the symmetry of co-existence, the duality of benevolence and adversary, trickster and tricked, longing and belonging and of the understanding that humanity, like Nareissus in the Greco - Latin myth need to sacrifice for one another and praise each other appropriately and for acceptance of the natural phenomenon of the existence of polarities and perspectives.

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