

FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERN ORALITY IN POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN WRITING.

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Abstract

*Oral tradition is being re-invented in today's African literature in order to present the continent's history, its current issues and propose solutions to them. Although traditional orality elements such as riddles, proverbs, folktales, dirges, myths and legends are still pervasive in postcolonial African narrative, this latter makes use of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to be adapted to the present-day social's challenges. In so doing, some modern orality tools such as radio, television, mobile phones etc., are incorporated into the postcolonial narratives. Therefore, this study aims at revealing the mutations in oral African literature. In other words, it attempts to show how, oral African literature is getting updated and innovative by focusing on the new tools of communication. The achievement of this objective leads us to the postcolonial and intermediality theories. Both approaches allow us to fulfill that though, traditional orality is still at stake in its narrative, the postcolonial African literature also relies on the evolution of the global world, in order to bring out some new writing styles. The study focuses on two novels, mainly *Infinite Riches* (1998) by Ben Okri and *Tail of the Blue Bird* (2009) by Nii Ayikwei Parkes. In both novels, the oral features of African literature are preserved through the use of both traditional and modern aesthetic and writing.*

Key words: Tradition, orality, postcolonial, intermediality, aesthetic

Résumé

La tradition orale se réinvente dans la littérature africaine d'aujourd'hui afin de présenter l'histoire du continent, ses problèmes actuels et d'y proposer des solutions. Bien que les éléments de l'oralité traditionnelle tels que les devinettes, les proverbes, les contes populaires, les chants funèbres, les mythes et les légendes soient toujours omniprésents dans le récit africain postcolonial, celui-ci fait recours aux technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) pour s'adapter aux défis sociaux actuels. Pour ce faire,

*certains outils de l'oralité moderne tels que la radio, la télévision, les téléphones portables, etc. sont incorporés dans les récits postcoloniaux. Par conséquent, cette étude vise à révéler les mutations dans la littérature orale africaine. En d'autres termes, elle tente de montrer comment la littérature orale africaine se renouvelle et innove en se basant sur les nouveaux outils de la communication. La réalisation de cet objectif nous conduit à la théorie postcoloniale et à l'intermédialité. Ces deux approches nous permettent de réaliser que, bien que l'oralité traditionnelle soit toujours prégnante dans sa narration, la littérature africaine postcoloniale s'appuie également sur l'évolution du monde, afin de faire émerger de nouveaux styles d'écriture. L'étude se focalise sur deux romans, particulièrement *Infinite Riches* (1998) de Ben Okri et *Tail of the Blue Bird* (2009) de Nii Ayikwei Parkes. Dans ces deux romans, les caractéristiques orales de la littérature africaine sont préservées par l'utilisation d'une esthétique et d'une écriture à la fois traditionnelles et modernes.*

Mots clés : Tradition, oralité, postcolonial, intermédialité, esthétique.

Introduction

Oral tradition is part of African culture. From generations of writers till today, orality has generally been the core of all the narrative techniques. It is mainly being re-invented in today's African literature in order to reveal the continent's history, its current issues and propose solutions to its countless problems. M. I. Oshoke (2015, p.4) confirms that "for most [...] contemporary authors, the use of oral traditions serves more than a form of identification as used by first generation of authors, but also as a tool to explore society's issues". Indeed, traditional orality elements such as riddles, proverbs, folktales, dirges, myths and legends have always been the main features of African narratives. However, to these latter features, postcolonial African narrative makes use of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to be adapted to the present-day social's challenges. In so doing, some modern orality features and tools such as radio, television, mobile phones etc., are incorporated into the postcolonial narratives.

That is why this study aims at revealing the mutations in oral African literature, going from the use of traditional to modern orality features in its narrative. In other words, it attempts to show how oral African literature is getting updated and innovative by focusing on the new tools of communication. The achievement of this objective leads us to the postcolonial and intermediality theories. In fact, the postcolonial theory with some thinkers such as H. Bhabha, F. Fanon and E. Saïd is firstly a theory of contradiction and transgression, which attempts to oppose the identity construction and the demeaning stereotypes of the West against the so-called cultures of the periphery. It then leads us to the idea of rewriting the History, that reconciles Black and White, Man and the environment, culture and nature, and making use of a transnational hybridity. In one word, the postcolonial theory tries to represent and reinvent a new geopolitical, psychological, sociological and environmental consciousness. As for “intermediality” with J. E. Müller, it is an approach, a writing technique which leads to the intertextuality phenomena, meaning the use of media tools and techniques in the narrative. Therefore, both approaches will allow us to fulfill that though, traditional orality is still at stake in its narrative, the postcolonial African literature also relies on the evolution of the global world, in order to bring out some new writing styles.

Also, some literary critics such as A. Mouzet (2013), A. J. Sissao, (2013), D. Merolla (2016), E. M. Sone, (2018), to quote only those ones, have conducted some research papers on oral African literature. Their different analyses reveal the importance of orality /oraliture in the socio-educational system in Africa. They show that orality has always been the core of humanities in the world. As said by the latter one, that is to say E. M. Sone,

folklore, have a clear practical value: they teach critical and analytical thinking while at the same time stimulating the imagination and promoting ethical values. Leaders need these skills to lead, to identify problems, and to conceive creative

solutions. Citizens need them to participate actively in public life. (E. M. Sone, 2018, p.1).

Orality, particularly folklore is, thus, the basis of any subject related to human communities and existence. So, as we can notice, many other academic research papers have already shed light on this topic of orality in African literature. However, our purpose is not to reformulate those previous works, but rather to question orality insofar as it includes, today, a multidimensional aspect related to the evolution of the modern technologies in this almost globalized world.

For this purpose, the study will focus on two innovative novels, namely *Infinite Riches* (1998) by Ben Okri and *Tail of the Blue Bird* (2009) by Nii Ayikwei Parkes. Indeed, in both novels, the oral features of African literature are preserved through the use of both traditional and modern aesthetic and writing. In so doing, we will first reveal the influence of traditional orality in both novels. Then, we will show how the emergence of the modern forms of orality related the Information and Communication Technologies have impacted the narrative in those literary works. Finally, the study will analyze the aesthetic behind this new writing style and technique.

1. Traditional orality and African writing

Traditional orality is one of the main features of African writing. It is part of African writers' inspiration. In other words, as orality is common to any African cultural background, those writers are generally inspired by oral traditions while producing their narrative. In fact, even if the western writing tradition has been the predominated style in some centuries, African traditional orality is from now on one of the stylistic features employed by the authors to produce their literary works. Traditional orality features such as riddles, proverbs, folktales, dirges, myths and legends are pervasive in African narratives.

By reading *Infinite Riches* (1998) by B. Okri and *Tail of the Blue Bird* (2009) by N. A. Parkes, we may talk about a spoken and dramatized narrative. The first element that draws the reader's attention in both narratives is the oral feature. Many examples can be taken into account. One of the main elements that can be distinguished in these narratives is the history of genealogies. As asserted by K. Koné (2013, p.51), "in the oral performance of the unlettered society, the history of genealogies and the different clans or families is often recalled to the audience". In *Tail of the blue Bird* for example, the narrative reveals the main character's genealogy. The narrator recalls the genealogy of Kayo through his grandfather whose name was "Okaikwei" (N. A. Parkes, 2009, p.49) and was a very great fisherman from the village of "Ny£mashie". Like his grandfather, Kayo's father was also a good fisherman. "During his school holidays he used to go out with his mother early in the morning and help his father's team of fishermen pull their nets in." (p.54). In one word, Kayo is from a tribe of fishers. This way of narrating people's genealogy can also be seen in the traditional oral style of describing the lineage: "-my sister's husband's mother's sister's daughter, Ama Serwaa – fell in love with him" (p.25). As we can read it, this is an oral style, mainly related to African tradition. However, it goes beyond the simple oral style by being written in a narrative. This fact, not only gives to the African written literature an oral feature, but also transgresses the western writing style.

Another oral feature related to the tradition is the use of proverbs in the narrative. Indeed, proverbs are very important in traditional societies in Africa. They are, according to A. J. Sissao (2013, p.132), some statements inspired from the popular wisdom used to conclude a discussion. F. A. Anene-Boyle defends on the same view how proverbs are useful in the society:

Proverbs express some general truth and have continued to remain relevant to modern man. Literarily, they are rich sources of imagery and

succinct expressions on which more elaborate forms are drawn. They are the most powerful and effective instrument for the transmission of culture, social morality, manners and ideas of people from generation to generation. (F. A. Anene-Boyle, 2002, p.17).

Proverbs are thus, a speaking style that encompasses many social and human qualities. That is why they are generally used in African writings style to show their particular feature and importance in the community. As such, they reveal many moral lessons and educational functions useful for people life. The following set of proverbs is pregnant of meaning:

Old trees are impossible to replace (B. Okri, 1998, p.31).

Fame is often a devourer of the best things in our spirit (B. Okri, 1998, p.88).

When you begin to fall in love with a place that you have wounded in some deep way, maybe it's time to leave (B. Okri, 1998, p.181).

And when fear catches you, it returns you to screaming, your first language (N. Parkes, 2009, p.21).

One does not turn away from an elephant to throw stones at a small bird (N. Parkes, 2009, p.120).

Indeed, though the above quotations are paramount at the moral and educational levels, they may be a real tight for a non-African reader; we might even say some African readers to decode them. As we can read them, they are drawn from the old African wisdom and way of speaking, and convey many moral and educational values. For example, the first, fourth and fifth ones reveal the importance of culture for people in the world. They show how it is always useful to keep and preserve the tradition from one generation to another. In fact, traditional ways of living and the mother tongue of people are still important in nowadays societies. They are still fruitful of meaning for older and younger

generations of people. As said by E. M. Sone (2018, p.2), “as Africans, to envision the future, we need to understand the lessons of our past, and to act in the present; we must be sensitive to current cultural complexities enshrined in our folklore.” In other words, tradition including orality must be the basis, the reference of any people that want to be productive in today’s world. Moreover, the two other proverbs reveal some socio-ethical values. They castigate the malevolent aspect of “fame” on people. In one word, they teach people on the ethic value such as humility that must guide their life in the community. In so doing, they are showing how flouting the oral tradition can lead to the loss of socio-ethical values in a given community. This fact demonstrates that oral tradition is the core of any society that wants to build a solid social background.

Next to the proverbs, the narrative by B. Okri and N. A. Parkes shows other forms of traditional orality, mainly the myths. The first one that draws the reader’s attention is about “the spirit – child (that) knows the wondrous destiny of human being beyond the earth” (B. Okri, 1998, p.355). Indeed, the story about the spirit-child is the main one in Ben Okri’s trilogy, meaning his three novels from *The Famished Road* (1991), *Songs of Enchantment* (1993) to the last one, *Infinite Riches* (1998). In this trilogy, Azaro, the main character is a mischievous child who is in-between the living and the dead. He keeps going and coming in-between both, the spirit and living worlds. He has got some supernatural powers that make him a particular and disintegrated child in his community. This story is, in fact, of paramount importance in African culture, mainly in the Igbo tradition from Nigerian. This spirit-child called the “abiku or ogbanje child” in Yoruba/Igbo tradition plays important roles in the society. The “abiku” children appear in the Nigerian mythology as the ones who control the beginning and the end of the earth. They enlighten the cosmology of the Igbo people from Nigeria. Sunday Ilechukwu summarizes the qualities and socio-cultural representations of these spirit-children:

Ogbanje/abiku refers to people who are believed to cycle rapidly and repeatedly through birth and death. A consecutive familial sequence of births and deaths of infants is construed as the same child dying and being born over and over again. The Igbos believe that ogbanje results from subversion of human destiny by willful alliance of the newborn with deities who guard the postulated interface between birth and pre-birth (spirit) existence, while the Yoruba attribute many abiku to possession of a pregnancy by spirit pranksters most often referred to as emere. (...). The Igbo believe that an ogbanje has ties with deities or agents of deities who are said to guard the interface between birth and a postulated pre-birth state and who are believed to mediate life processes. (...). Five entities are intimately involved in the ogbanje myth: (1) Chiukwu (Great God); (2) Mmadu, the human or physical person; (3) Chi, the human personal spirit; (4) Nne-mmiri (Water mother); and (5) Onabuluwa (“he who shortchanges destiny”). (S. Ilechukwu, 2007, pp. 239-240).

As stated by S. Ilechukwu, the spirit-child’s myth reveals the whole cosmology of African people, particularly the Nigerian communities. It shows how African people have also got myth about the creature of the whole universe and its functioning. As we can notice through this myth of the creation, animals, the environment, the spirits, human beings and every natural creature communicate. This fact unveils the way African people can rebuild the universe; a new and more beauty and integrated world, in which the environment, the animals and any other creatures are protected. This literary representation calls for a world of harmony, peace, love and charity. In one word, this in-between feature of the spirit-child provides, as stated by H. Bhabha (1994, pp.1-2), “the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal –that initiate(s) new signs of

identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself”.

A part from myths, one of the oral tradition features is the folktales that are pervasive in the narrative. In oral traditional societies, folktales are a very important source of information and inquiry. K. Koné (2013, p.77) would have confirmed that “contrary to some other source of inquiries which elicit knowledge from those who possess it through interviews, research, folktales are forms of any spontaneous artistic and cultural products (...). Through them, scientists can learn much about community with any interference and biased interpretation.” By so doing, they tackle some socio-cultural, historical and political predicaments in the society. “Dad’s legendary chair” (B. Okri, 1998, p.366) in the narrative of Ben Okri’s trilogy, identified by the narrator as a “three-leg chair” is the symbol of socio-political break up in Africa. In fact, people are living in a disappointed post-colonial society that misses a direct and stable guide line. People don’t know how to reconstruct this continent of “tribal dreams, civil war, colonial rules” (p.12) and where “the road kept opening and shutting” (p.16). This post-colonial society is led by leaders that are imbued with their personality so that they despise and kill their own people and destroy the environment and its component. The tale about the “chief who killed the frogs” (p.93) is a justification of these selfish leaders. As narrated, after ordering the killing of the frogs from his kingdom, there was a revenge of the frogs, supported by the toads, snakes and a strange “disease from the forest (that) killed many people” (p.94). This folktale revealed how the natural orders, animals are united, contrary to the post-colonial society in which wickedness and division lead human being. This narrative shows the disappointment of the author about leadership and unity in post-colonial societies.

At the scientific level, folktales appear, as already mentioned, as some sources of information and inquiries. This is the case in

Tail of the Blue Bird by N. A. Parkes. The tale about the cocoa farmer Kwaku Ananse is pregnant of meaning for this purpose.

Kayo held up his hands. The palm wine was making his head spin, but he was sure he had the opportunity to dip deeper. ‘The cocoa farmer in your story, Kwaku Ananse, his daughter left him like Koffi Atta’s daughter left him’.

‘Yes, his daughter also left him’. The hunter nodded.

‘But you know who the daughter is.’

‘Yes, Mensisi.’ The hunter held out his hand. ‘I told you in the story.’

‘It’s true. He told us’ Garba confirmed. (N. A. Parkes, 2009, p.172).

The above passage is firstly a dialog, showing a direct speech between characters. This is, in fact, an oral style in the writing process. However, our analysis is focused on the tale about the cocoa farmer. Indeed, during the inquiry of the policemen and Kayo in the village, they were guided by the old man, the hunter. This latter helps them in the inquiry by telling them the tale about the cocoa farmer. In fact, he uses this tale to give more details to the investigators. Unfortunately, as they are not accustomed to this language style, they were lost since the beginning of the story, because they thought of a simple folktale. It is, thus, at the end of the conversation that the investigators came aware of the aim of the hunter’s story. The two last quotations of the conversation show the goal of the tale. The hunter, instead of using a real language style, uses the oral tradition to give details about the inquiries of the police. That is why he gave the answer to the question of Kayo by asserting: “I told you in the story”. As such, we can conclude that folktales are useful in modern societies, particularly for the understanding of natural, unnatural and some scientific facts. Not everything can be understood by scientific facts. As confirmed by the old man, the hunter, while talking to Kayo, “it is not everything we can understand, my friend (...). Your machine can be

understood, so it can be tricked, (...) but if you learn to watch a man, you can always tell what he's thinking" (N. Parkes, 2009, pp.97-98). So, oral tradition, mainly folktales can be seen as some aids in the scientific investigation process. They, thus, reveal the limits of science in some domains of people's life. They attempt "to explain problems as well as mysterious phenomena, through recourse to a theory of supernatural or mystical causability (...) while realities are apprehended scientifically within literate tradition" (E. Obiechina, 1975, p.34).

Therefore, both oral and literate traditions are interchangeable and interdependent. It is through this union that Africa will be able to overcome the hurdles to its development and be at the core of this global world. However, since the introduction of literacy has brought new habits and new technological skills that tend to upset the African oral tradition and collective memory, the following point will show the way African oral literature is trying to be updated according to the global vision of the world.

2. Modern orality in postcolonial writing

Following the technological progress in the world, African literature attempts to re-invent the oral tradition in its narrative. This re-invention focuses on what A. Mouzet (2013, p.32) terms the "new orality" (our translation), meaning the use of the information and communication technologies, mainly the media such as the television, the cellphone/telephone, and the radio, as well as the media techniques, the internet, the camera, the documentary, the newspapers etc. in its narrative. However, this study focuses on the television, the cellphone/telephone, and the radio, because they are related to what we term as the "modern orality" in the postcolonial literature. It will show that mediascape in the narrative, and the aims of this writing style. By reading both novels, the mediascape is pervasive in the narrative. The first media tool is the radio. In *Tail of the Blue*

Bird, “Sunrise FM” (N. Parkes, 2009, p.18) is one of the main information and communication tools. This radio unveils an overview on the mass media in Ghana. In this context, K. Boateng gives a background of this mass media in Ghana:

Radio broadcasting in Ghana started with the establishment in 1927 as an electronic mass communication medium an alternative to traditional forms of mass communication like the use of talking drums. By July 31, 1935, Station Zoy had been established in Accra, the capital of Ghana with relay stations in the regional capitals of Sekondi to the west, Kumasi in a central position to the north and south, and Koforidua to the east of Ghana. Ghana regained its sovereignty from the British in 1957, after which the existing broadcasting network came under the control of the government. Broadcasting was used for nation building. Since then, broadcasting as a political tool has been exploited by successive Ghanaian governments. (K. Boateng, 2009, p.161).

Radio as the substitute of some oral tradition tools has got a long history in Africa, particularly in Ghana. “Sunrise FM from Koforidua” belongs to the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) and commenced its service in 1935 (S. Buckley and al, 2005, p.10). According to K. Boateng, it was primarily used for colonial purposes; meaning for valuing colonizers and their cultural immersion/ domination in the country, in order to maintain the colonial project. However, with the independence of the country in 1957, “Sunrise FM” came under the leadership of the new elites of the country, meaning the native leaders. Then, other roles were assigned to the radio, mainly the propaganda of the politicians and their deeds in the country, the valuing of the cultural background, the anti-colonial fight and the nation building. As example, “Sunrise FM” broadcasted in many local languages such as Akan, Ga, Ewe, Twi, Fanti,

Nzema, Dagbani, and Hausa. That is why the old man/hunter likes listening to this radio channel. “I hadn’t even listened to my radio since the Garba policeman arrived with Kwadwo. I’m sure *Sunrise FM* played some Jewel Ackah – I like that man’s music” (N. Parkes, 2009, p.90). The old man appreciates this radio, because it broadcasts in the “Twi” language; the only language he speaks. He therefore got a feeling of nostalgia, because he missed this radio broadcasting of entertainment. He prefers this entertainment channel, since the other ones only make political propaganda, based on lies and the cult of personality. This fact also shows that “Sunrise FM” not only broadcasts cultural and political events, but also entertains people in local languages. So, it values, at the same time, the culture through the broadcasting in the local languages, and allows people to be relaxed during their spare times.

In the same perspective, the television is mainly used for broadcasting the achievements of the new leaders, as asserted by the narrator, “that’s when the Produce Buying Company used to advertise farmers on Tv, even though he didn’t think many of the farmers use TV” (N. Parkes, 2009, p.119). Many of these farmers didn’t use TV, because this public media is not at the service of the people and does not broadcast educational and didactic events; but it is used as an instrument of political propaganda and the celebration of the ruling elites. Indeed, radio and television which should replace the traditional orality instruments role of educating and informing people play an opposite role. Their use in the narrative is thus to castigate the malpractice of the post-colonial leadership in African countries. It is a manner of denouncing the appropriation and monopolization of these information and communication tools by African leaders for their own needs. It is attempting to unveil the anti-democratic system, demagoguery and handling of the mass media by the politicians. A. Coulibaly (2014, pp.125-126) asserts the same thing, while thinking that these media, mainly the radio in post-colonial Africa is used for cultural and political

purposes. According to him, this media tool is incorporated into the postcolonial narrative to criticize the psychological domination of dictators upon the people. In one word, the radio and the television are incorporated into the postcolonial narrative to reveal in one hand their role in postcolonial societies, and on the other hand, to value the modern orality features and tools in the era of globalization.

The telephone is one of the technological elements mentioned in the postcolonial narrative. This modern orality element is also of a paramount importance in today's society. It can be seen as a magic tool that allows people to interact or communicate with other interlocutors from distance places. The African novel of the postcolony also makes use of this tool among the traditional orality elements. The following conversation between two characters through the telephone is an illustration:

Joseph." [...]. „Is someone in the office?"

“No sir, sorry Mr Kayo, just me.”

“OK. Did the policeman, Constable Mensah, come to you with the samples?"

“Yes, Mr Kayo.” [...].

“Did you find the book in my drawer to help with the tests? ”

“Yes, Mr Kayo, I did them all yesterday, the tests. I stayed after six. Also I put a report on a disk for you.”

“No time for that now, Joseph. Somebody will come for the disk, but I need some details first.”

“OK.” (N. Parkes, 2009, p.102).

This conversation reveals the oral feature in the narrative. The use of the quotation marks is the fact that we are reading a direct conversation/speech between two characters. Their words are not reported by any other character or narrator. This conversation is, in fact, held between Kayo, the forensic pathologist and one of his co-workers. The policeman, Constable Mensah was sent to Accra for the analysis of the

samples from the investigation field. Kayo was, thus, making sure that his co-worker has received the samples from the policeman for the tests by calling him on the telephone. This telephone conversation in the narrative promotes the oral tradition in present-day societies, which is held through the technological devices. It is, in one word, showing that the modern communication tools are unavoidable in today's society. Thus, this modern communication tool in the narrative is a complement to the traditional features of orality. As we can notice, these writers not only value the traditional orality in their narrative, but also the modern one. It is, in one word, a writing technique that opens the traditional oral narrative field to the modern one in order to value the idea of globalization.

3. The emergence of a new aesthetic

The postcolonial narrative reveals the emergence of a new writing style in African literature. Indeed, with the technological evolution in today's world that puts forward the idea of cultural and technological mutations, the African literature also attempts to renew its narrative aesthetic and thematic. In fact, African literature has got a long history. Before the independence of African countries, the main literary genre was the oral literature including poetry. This literary genre played an important role in the anti-colonial fights and the decolonization of the continent. However, as asserted by F. Fanon (2002, p.226), after the independence, the crystallization of the national consciousness has upset both this former literary genre and theme by creating a new audience. This latter audience was more literate. In this context, the narrative became the dominant genre during the post-independence era of African countries. In so doing, the oral literature that was the former dominated genre was getting extinct, since the narrative has got most of the audience. Therefore, to fight against the extinction of this former genre, meaning the oral literature, post-colonial novelists then try to

transgress the orthodox ways of writing the narrative left by the colonial heritage. They thus intermingle the narrative technique with other writing styles and techniques in order to create new writing styles proper to African literature. These innovative techniques are what one can term, in the case of this study, “intergenericity” and “intermediality”. The first technique is a writing style that allows the use of other literary genres in the narrative. The latter is according to J. E. Müller (2006, pp.100-102) the fact of using the mediascape (media tools) and other techniques related the media in the narrative. The above developed points are relevant to justify these writing styles in African literature. In fact, the use of oral features (proverbs, folktales, genealogies, myths) in the narrative revealed in the first point of this analysis justifies the intergenericity process in B. Okri and N. A. Parkes’s narratives. These oral tradition features are intermingled in the narrative in order to value, in one hand the African culture and tradition, and on the other hand to create a new aesthetic in the postcolonial literature. Concerning the “intermediality”, as revealed in the second point of this study, the use of the information and communication tools such as the radio, the television and the mobile phone in the narrative is an illustration that today’s novels make use of extra-literary elements in its innovative process. In this sense, K. Koné (2020, p.1) asserts that as much as the novel offers resources to the media or cinema, this latter will renew the novelistic writing to make it more accessible to the masses or audience. Therefore, the mediascape in the postcolonial narrative comes to create a new aesthetic in African literature. This fact shows the new global vision of postcolonial writers in their attempt to innovate through the borrowing of the media techniques for their artistic and literary creation. In one word, we can assert that the use of both intertextuality and intermediality in the postcolonial literature mainly aims at breaking up the fence between literature and the other genres, and renewing the postcolonial writing style.

Conclusion

This study has revealed the mutations in oral African literature, going from the use of traditional to modern orality features in its narrative. It shows that the traditional oral features such as legends, myths, proverbs and folktales are not today the only orality elements which spotlight the African narrative. Postcolonial writers also make use of the modern orality features such as the radio, the television and the telephone in their writings. That is why the study focuses on two main literary approaches, namely the postcolonial theory and the intermediality. In so doing, it reveals that traditional orality goes hand in hand with the modern orality in postcolonial African literature, in order to firstly value the African culture of orality, then to castigate the appropriation of the medias and the misdeeds of post-independence leaders, and finally to break the barrier between the narrative genre and the other ones by innovating and renewing its rewriting style and technique. The study focuses on two novels to justify the above assertions, particularly *Infinite Riches* (1998) by B. Okri and *Tail of the Blue Bird* (2009) by N. A. Parkes. Both novels encompass some relevant elements that allowed us to conduct this study.

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