

The Fágúnwà Study Group
2019 Conference
Abstracts

Ayo Adeduntan
University of Ibadan

D.O. Fagunwa, Wole Soyinka and the Non-Human Other

The imaginative contiguity of Wole Soyinka to D.O. Fagunwa goes beyond the former being a foremost translator of the latter. They are united by a consciousness that admits to humanity's limitations. In the quest for personal and communal advancement, Fagunwa's recurrent subject, humans come to a full knowledge of themselves as a limited species. Realization of this limitation is also foundational to Soyinka's overarching mythology. Both Fagunwa and Soyinka, therefore, often call forth the non-human and the extra-human as proof of and witness to humanity's guilt. Using Fagunwa's *Ògbójú Ọde nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ* and Wole Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forest*, this paper reflects on the authors' engagement with the tension created from the encounter – through alliance and conflict – with the non-human other, and the balance sought from such encounter. It ultimately examines how Fagunwa's Christian moralist and Africanist vision and Soyinka's humanist commitment differently inflect their individual attitude to the non-human.

Arinpe Adejumo
University of Ibadan
&
Adeola Faleye
Obafemi Awolowo University

Reflections on Sustainable Development Goals in D. O. Fagunwa's Novels

A realistic approach to the study of Fagunwa's novels has established that his novels are contemporaneous. Novels of Fagunwa's tradition is distinct from other forms of Yoruba novels in style. Fagunwa makes use of metaphor and symbolic inanimate and animate archetypal objects to convey his messages. In this paper, an eclectic approach that combines the archetypal and cultural models is used to examine how Fagunwa's novels unearth and reflect the United Nations sustainable development goals. The findings of the paper reveals that exploratory technique used in novels of Fagunwa tradition affords him the opportunity of addressing the problems hindering the growth and development of the larger Nigerian society. It is argued in the paper that Fagunwa's use of cultural icons is a bid to reform the society. The paper concludes that the novels of Fagunwa, though adventurous and offers a portrayal of the world of fantasy still have contemporary relevance.

Gbemisola Adeoti

Obafemi Awolowo University

The Furry-Bearded Being and the Beardless Butcher on a Rock Promontory: Notes on Soyinka's 'Breed of hybrid Humanity' in Alapata Apata

The paper attempts critical reading of Wole Soyinka's *Alapata Apata*, with the aim of illuminating further, the influence of Fagunwa's narrative aesthetics on characterisation and setting in the play. It identifies an affinity between the protagonist, Alaba, the retired butcher and the enigmatic being called the Furry-Bearded one (*Baba onirungbon yeuke*) who dwells on the rock promontory in Fagunwa's *Igbo Olodumare* (Soyinka's *In the Forest of Olodumare*) Alaba is a satiric archetype through whom Soyinka censures the military's misrule and disruptive domination of governance in post-independence Africa. Although Soyinka acknowledges drawing inspiration from comedic (awada) arts of Moses Olaiya Adejumo (Baba Sala) in *Alapata Apata*, the paper argues that Fagunwa also maintains a significant influence on the play and if given further attention, can yield a greater insight into its panoply of symbols, pun, burlesque, irony and other communicative devices of satire adopted by Soyinka. "Rock" is significant among symbols that feature in *Igbo Olodumare*. It is also accorded a notable hermeneutic import as the setting of *Alapata Apata*. Soyinka appropriates the "rock" trope to depict the imposing lordly height occupied by political elites (represented by General and Daanielebo) who have governed Nigeria in the post-independence years. This is apart from its deliberate punning on Nigeria's seat of Presidential power in Abuja. The play shows that while in power, Military elites whom Soyinka refers to as "this breed of hybrid humanity", tower above the rest of the society socially, economically and politically. The rock is, therefore, an iconic representation of cultural alienation and political power appropriated for the pursuit of personal benefits and unethical advantages. Thus, Soyinka creates in *Alapata Apata*, a topical drama of contemporary existence marked by an uninterrupted connection between the narrative and the performative; between Fagunwa's super realism and Soyinka's encompassing social strictures.

Bisi Adigun

Trinity College, Dublin

The Famished 'Fourth Stage': The Nigerian Road and the Aesthetics of Wole Soyinka's Yoruba Tragedy

Having lived in England for nearly five years, Wole Soyinka returned to Nigeria in January 1960 to redefine, from an African perspective, tragedy as it is known in the west. Consequently, Soyinka travelled the length and breadth of Nigeria, "probing its ritual tissues for a contemporary theatre vision or perhaps a mere statement of being" (*Ibadan*, Methuen, p.197) Nigerian roads are, however, notoriously dangerous. It is in every Nigerian's psyche that the motor road is a flesh-eating, blood-sucking predator waiting to pounce on its hapless victims at any given time. Hence, the Yoruba prayer: *Ka ma rin ni ojo ti ebi n pa ona*, which appears in Soyinka's *The Road* (1965) as: "May we never walk when the road waits, famished" (*Collected Plays 1*, Oxford, p.199) But the propensity of the Nigerian road to kill indiscriminately inspired more

than *The Road*, it also provided Soyinka with the fillip with which to theorise his Yoruba tragedy. This paper argues that Soyinka's voyage all over Nigeria, "worrying out dramatic forms from the mold of rituals, festivals and seasonal ceremonials" (*Ibadan*, p.71), was wholly unnecessary, because the Nigerian motor road on which he journeyed was itself a 'numinous abyss' upon which the aesthetics of Yoruba tragedy is predicated. Thus, what Soyinka went all the way to Sokoto to obtain could also be found in the pockets of his *sokoto* (trousers).

Kayode Niyi Afolayan

University of Ilorin

Interfaith Dialogue in Selected Plays of Wole Soyinka

It is a known fact that security has remained one of the issues that has continued to receive global attention today. In Africa, and Nigeria in particular vices that threaten mutual existence have sporadically increase, consequently there is now a proliferation of troubled spots in a way that defies the security architecture of the nation. This study, using some selected works of Soyinka like *Trials of Brother Jero* (1973), *Death and the Kings Horseman* (1975) *Requiem for a Futurologist* (1985) and *Alapata Apata* (2011) examines Soyinka's engagement with the crises of faith which has now become a major threat to human existence in Soyinka's country and other parts of the world. Similarly, the paper, within the overall social conditions and the frictions, occasioned by contact of worldviews mirrored in the plays under study, critically examines the essence of religion in Soyinka's milieu. The paper identifies the dramatist's prescription of polytheism and the fusion faiths as panacea to the crises situations relayed but raises concern over the practicability of the playwright's thesis. The conclusion of the paper gives reason for continuous dialogue that will give birth to mutual understanding and cohabitation of adherents of all faiths.

Tolulope Akinwale

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Of State, Stranger, and Progress: A Soyinkaesque Reading of Ryan Coogler's Black Panther

In more ways than critics have mentioned, Ryan Coogler's critically acclaimed *Black Panther* (2018) holds a vibrant conversation with Wole Soyinka's mythopoetic orientation. But apart from Ryan Coogler's ventriloquist reference to "The Fourth Stage," Soyinka's most important theoretical essay, *Black Panther* confers with Soyinka in many other interesting ways. Chief of these is its take on the state. Reading *Black Panther* against Soyinka's "The Writer in a Modern African State" and "The Fourth Stage," I argue that for all its sterling promises of a better Africa, Wakanda seems headed in the direction of many failing African states on two counts. First, the obvious absence of the philosopher-poet in Wakanda is disconcerting; and second, Wakanda's progress is suspicious where the most important state resource is in complete control of the ruler. I posit that although the movie ends happily, Wakanda does not hold up to a Soyinkaesque scrutiny. In this paper, I show the points of convergence between Soyinka's mythopoesis and the movie, and then interrogate the fictive African state portrayed in the movie with attention to

Soyinka's explication of the burdens of a writer in a modern African state and Tejumola Olaniyan's (2017) delineation of the state as a stranger.

Adetayo Alabi

University of Mississippi

The Praiser and the Praised: Panegyrics and Threnody in Wole Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman

This paper will explore the interactions between the praise singer and Elesin and the consequences of their encounters for the threnodic essence of Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*. It will also address the larger question of the traditional role of the praise singer in Yoruba society and discuss how the praise singer fulfills that role and propels the play's conflicts. As well, the paper will consider the contemporary relevance and implications of the praise singer's responsibility in the play and the community. Some other tangential issues to be considered include the effects of the praise singer's praises on Elesin, how the praises compel Elesin to perform or partake in certain activities, what we learn from the praises about Elesin's character and the conflicts in the play, and the significance of the meetings between Elesin and the praise singer for the Yoruba panegyric tradition.

Awam Amkpa

New York University

Wole Soyinka's Collection of African Art

Wole Soyinka's composite work is profoundly influenced by visual art from different parts of Africa. It is not surprising then that he has been dedicated collector for a very long time. This presentation, illustrated with images from Soyinka's collection, introduces the art that inspires a great writer, and the productive intersection of African verbal and visual arts.

Chima Anyadike

Obafemi Awolowo University

Myth and Rationality in the Dramaturgy of Soyinka and Brecht

As myth focuses attention on intuitions, essence and wholeness within the same symbolic order in its methods, rationality is devoted to dialectical changes in natural phenomena and continuous configurations of new possibilities. Both are at work in the dramas created by Soyinka and Brecht with one or the other given control in their respective plays. The products may be different but they provide interesting perspectives on the larger drama of existence. From the analyses of selected plays of these two playwrights, this paper attempts a support of the view that the two perspectives are not mutually exclusive and so are often called upon by the same person as situations demand in a world, the beginning and end of which remain uncertain.

Tunji Azeez
Lagos State University

Trees of Life and Forests of Death: A Spirito-Physical Reading of Six Yoruba Artists

Trees and Forests are imbued with anthropomorphic, metaphoric and existential qualities and properties thereby making them regular characters and motifs in creative works across time and space. In Yoruba oral tradition, culture and cosmology, trees and forests serve different purposes from the physical to the spiritual as evident in the everyday life of the people. In the animist world of these people, trees and forests interact constantly with humans just as some of them were believed to be once humans. In fact, the duality of the sexes is also captured in the vegetal world as the Yoruba have male and female trees with each representing different things and serving different purposes in their physical and spiritual lives. Also, forests connote several things to the Yoruba; it is the sacred grove of the initiate; a hiding place for criminals; a home of spirits and ghosts; a hunting ground for survival; a sanctuary for the banished, needy and homeless; a place with abundant wealth; a place where courage is tested and; a place where life and death cohabit. It is, therefore, not surprising that Yoruba oral, literary and visual artists across generational divides employ trees and forests as motifs in their works. While the works of some Yoruba artists like D.O. Fagunwa and Wole Soyinka have been individually studied to reveal how each of them represents these phenomena, Yoruba artists who employ trees and forests as motifs have not been collectively studied. This study, therefore, fills this gap. It adopts a combination of history of ideas and intertextuality to critically examine the works of D.O. Fagunwa, Amos Tutuola, Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Tunde Kelani and Ben Tomoloju to reveal the place of trees and forests in the life of the Yoruba people both traditional and modern. The study reveals that despite the difference in the media of expression as well as the generational divides of these artists, these phenomena remain constant in their works. Key words: Yoruba culture, Trees, Forests, Animism, Motif

Femi Dunmade
University of Ilorin

Ritual Consciousness in Wole Soyinka's Idanre: A Phenomenology

Scholarship on Wole Soyinka's 'Idanre' is fairly rich and massive but not full. It focuses on the poem's epic form, its heavy freight of the myth of Ogun and Yoruba cultural matrix, and its suggestiveness of Soyinka's preoccupation with the question of political leadership and responsibility. The studies however skirt the margin of the ritual, which enacts the myth of Ogun in the poem. Therefore, 'Idanre' merits another study. In this study, the theory of phenomenology, otherwise called the criticism of consciousness or essence is adopted to examine 'Idanre'. It is found suitable for the study because it offers tools to discover the deep structures and the recurrent patterns of themes and imagery in the poem and reveal their essence. The study establishes that the plinth of 'Idanre' is a voyage initiaque and a ritual, that the poem is on communion rites, ancestral rites and rites of expiation and that the three rites are suggested as rites de passage. It establishes also that the poet accentuates the ritual theme with the motifs of passage and the road, pilgrims and pilgrimage and deploys invocation, incantation, repetition and

symbolism of seven, night, dark(ness) and light to advance the esoteric theme. It concludes that 'Idanre' grows out of a ritual consciousness and is framed by ritual aesthetics.

Key words: Idanre, Soyinka, phenomenology, ritual, initiation,

Ainehi Egoro Glines

University of Wisconsin, Madison

Fragmentation as Form in Amos Tutuola's The Palmwine Drinkard

In working out the terms of Yoruba tragic aesthetics in "The Fourth Stage," Wole Soyinka repeatedly returns to images of fragmentation. Ogun undergoes a "fragmenting process," which Soyinka links to "the elemental fragmentation of Orisa-nla." Towards the end of the essay, he cites the ritual-dramatic practice of sacrificing a dog, the carcass of which is "literally torn limb from limb." In Amos Tutuola's *The Palmwine Drinkard*, a story about an Ogun-esque protagonist, fragmentation is an organizing principle. Bodies are presented as a collection of disjointed parts. Space in the forest is discontinuous. The story itself is rambling and episodic. Using Soyinka and Tutuola as starting points, this paper looks at fragmentation as an element of Yoruba storytelling.

Denis Ekpo

University of Port Harcourt

Soyinka, Hegel and the Coming New Africa: The De-Africanisation of Art and Culture in a Post-African Era

Soyinka the artist, intellectual and political activist can be said to embody in their most heightened and instructive forms both the highest achievements of the cultural/political imagination of modern Africa and the conflicts, contradictions and aporia that have defined and vitiated Africa's cultural/political modernity as a whole. The core of this conflicted self-understanding and mode of action/creation can be described as the opposition between an unrelenting cultural-nationalist fervour in defence of Africa against the legacies of the old colonially maligned image of the continent on the one hand, and a strong, unavoidable desire for the rational, orderly modernisation of the continent, on the other. I have in my work reframed this conflict as that between Afrophilia, [an undying, stubborn attachment to and obsession with an abstract, romantic picture of Africa frozen in time] and Post-Africanism [the strong evolutionary impulse to overcome Africanism/Afrophilia by reframing Africa no longer as a victimly racial/cultural native land but as an aggressive modern project aimed at a faster, orderly recovery and activation in Africa, of man's universal creative potential in the modern era. We believe that Africanism, the ontologically separatist, neo-tribal theory of Africanness or the African way of life, is mostly that which has caged the human imagination and held back for so long not only the unfolding of higher human capabilities/potential but also the universal vocation of man in Africa. The two thought viruses in Africanism that have poisoned and vitiated the unfettered creative fruitfulness of modern life in Africa are [1] a persistent nativist narcissism borne by a seemingly unfinishable cultural Afrophilia [2] an enduring anti-colonialist/anti-

modernity paranoia acquired during the ordeal of cultural decolonisation then considered as the foundation of post-colonial freedom . The combination of these two viruses constitutes what we call the Afrophiliac impulse. Art, culture [literature, drama, poetry, cinema etc] are the most obdurate carriers of the Afrophiliac impulse in modern Africa. As one the most outstanding pioneers who led the way in making art and culture into a privileged tool for the defence and illustration of the dignity and meaning of pre-colonial/traditional African world, Soyinka is obviously a co-creator of Afrophilia. But unlike many other pioneers, he is also Afropilia's critic. However, one of Soyinka's most enduring cultural/literary legacies is precisely the exuberant recreation in his drama, poetry and theory of the pre-colonial African world in terms of the self-contained ritualistic/mythic wholeness and completeness of a world of life that the colonialist mistook for a primitive half-formed world only eking a sub-human existence at the threshold of world history. As we know, Hegel was the highly influential European philosopher in whose writings the image of Africa as a continent of ill-formed man was fully enunciated and made performative. For this reason, Hegel is mostly a persona non grata in Africa's scholarly circles. However, Hegel was also a great cultural theorist/aesthetic philosopher who created what could be considered a universal template for a radically different reading of the archaic art and culture of mankind. In his study of Greek art, religion and culture, Hegel developed a theory of art and ritual that sees them not as self-contained aesthetic activity or independent representation of deities but as figurative ways of attaining human self-knowledge. Our thoughts, rituals and works about the gods are forms of reflection about ourselves. Art, ritual etc are tools for understanding the state and stage of human consciousness on an evolutionary scale. In this work, I want to confront some of Soyinka's Afrophiliac theories of traditional worldview and art [as expounded in his *Myth and the African world*] with Hegel's view of art, ritual and myth as mirrors of the state and evolution of human consciousness. While the Soyinka reading of art and ritual could easily foster Afrophiliac stagnation of consciousness, Hegel's approach opens the window to what we term the necessary de-Africanisation of the cultural artistic imagination to make it amenable to worldview switch and cultural change, both of which are indispensable for jump-starting Africa into the modern fate of man in our time. Fortunately, Soyinka's work itself already contains so many seeds of a post-African re-imagination of Africa. We will identify some of these and read them in the context of the emergence of a post-African art and culture.

Adéolá Adijat Fáléyẹ

Obafemi Awolowo University

A Semiotic Study of Selected Novels of Daniel Olorunfemi Fágúnwà on Progress, Development and Modernization

Works of art mirrors the society and project its culture. Daniel Olorunfemi Fágúnwà's novels are not an exception. His *Ògbójú Qdẹ nínú Igbó Irúnmolẹ* and other novels are rich in this respect, and have attracted scholarship on human and other fauna creatures. The novels are open to study on the novelist's exploration on the concepts of forward-tilting progress (*Ìlọsíwájú*), upward escalation - development (*Ìdàgbàsókè*), and modernization (*Ọlájú*). This paper examines these terms as a basic tripod in the novels and employs a semiotic approach. It focuses on issues relating to these concepts selectively drawn from the novels of Fágúnwà and also discusses the challenges human beings face in their need to break away from retardation, stagnation and other

unprogressive values connected to tradition and modernization. The paper argues the various meanings as projected by the author to substantiate the terms - *ìlọsíwájú*, *Ìdàgbàsókè* and *òlájú* and their connections with human existence, the teachings existence; and the teachings of Yorùbá ideologies. A semiotic approach shall be employed to analyse these concepts.

Key words: *Culture, Development - Ìdàgbàsókè, Progress - Ìlọsíwájú, Modernization - Òlájú & Tripod of human existence.*

Folasade Hunsu

Obafemi Awolowo University

Literary Celebrity Culture and Self-definition: The Example of Wole Soyinka

Wole Soyinka remains one of the most outspoken and popular African activist-writers in the last six decades making him a ubiquitous literary celebrity. From his campaign against colonial imperialism to military dictatorship and in recent times, against undemocratic democracy in Africa, he has consistently shown his affinity with the masses. However, Soyinka's engagement with the genre of lifewriting reveals certain individualistic tendencies that have made his status as a literary celebrity possible. Therefore, this paper seeks to discuss his strategies of self-definition and promotion by examining his memoirs and selected interviews. It argues that gender, class, ethnicity and ideology are implicated in the movement from a masses-oriented activism to a self-oriented genre. This paper departs from Ellis Cashmore's position that a celebrity's talent is usually unconnected to their status and that their rise to fame is due solely to their media presence. It shows that Soyinka's achievements brought him to limelight and that these are connected to some underlying personal choices which call attention to the need to properly contextualize literary celebrity culture in order to understand its peculiar framework. The paper concludes that Soyinka's life provides a model in the way it underscores the need for self-discipline and sacrifice in the making of a literary celebrity.

Tolulope Ibikunle

University of Ibadan

Culture, Religion, Politics, and the State in Fágúnwà's Novels

Fágúnwà's artistry and the classical characteristics of his genre have attracted diverse academic engagement from various fields of study. Several scholars have examined Fágúnwà's novels from the historical, cultural, linguistic and psychological perspectives, with little attention paid to the depiction of state in his work. The most popular conception of Fágúnwà's novels is that they are fantasies created in the genre of magic realism. Yet, these 'fantasies' are rooted within recognizable and divivable social-political constructs, which can be located within the structures and institutions of the Yorùbá as a nation state. This paper intends to examine the relationship between Fágúnwà's themes and the form of Yorùbá state that serve as the setting in the case study novels.

Tade Ipadeola

Poet, Essayist, Translator and Lawyer

The Interpreter as Translator: Wole Soyinka and the Techne of Transitions

The vast linguistic landscape constituting the Yoruba country of the 19th century possessed a variety of thriving dialects which the work of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther yoked together (alongside others) into the vehicle which we know today as the Yoruba Bible. Nearly contemporaneously with the mode of writing which Crowther pioneered in the language was another tradition championed, notably, by authors such as Sobo Aróbíodù, which privileged the aesthetics of dialect over utilitarian/universal access. Daniel Fagunwa's chirographum, authored in the mid-20th century, and published shortly thereafter, is basically intelligible all across Yoruba land. The language had accrued capital from usage sufficiently to break beyond the boundaries of (ajami). Demonstrating how Wólé Soyinka's translations of Fágúnwà into English in the latter parts of the 20th & early 21st centuries contributed a huge fillip to the efforts to make Yoruba thoughts and imagination travel across barriers, this paper traces an outline of Soyinka's output in this regard as artist and even amanuensis. It argues, in part, that while executing his translations of Fágúnwà, Soyinka benefitted from the interpretive community created by Cowell, Crowther, Tutuola and even Fágúnwà himself and wholly argues that Soyinka's efforts are testimonial to the creative tensions between interpretation and translation, episteme and techne.

Dele Layiwola

University of Ibadan

Fagunwa, Soyinka, Bunyan and the Echoes of 16th Century Christian Reformation

There is a secondary but profound connection which cuts across some works of the three aforementioned authors namely: John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678); *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole* (1948, 1950), *Igbo Olodumare* (1949); and Wole Soyinka's *The Road* (1965). These works are, in style and content, allegories depicting particular periods and epistolary traditions driven by the emergence of Western education and the printing press. There are constant references to the written and the spoken word and undercurrents on their applications. The authors and their heroes put the responsibility of the printed word on the capacity of individuals to read and interpret works of literature in their literal, hermeneutic and epistolary states. They also impress the initiative for adventure and reformation on these heroes who migrate in search of quests and conquests. They take on the rigours of martyrdom in dimensions similar to what 16th and 17th Century Christian Reformation and the Protestant ethic outlined and championed. Fagunwa's heroes, heroines and fictive characters are drawn in striking correspondence to Bunyan's. The moral, political, social and economic outcomes of the quests and adventures are meant to reform the entire society to which the melodramatic performances are directed. In Soyinka's *The Road*, the role of Professor in the shadows of the church and the road signs are essential factors of literacy in partnership with the printing press. It also underscores that Protestant burden of self-determination as a responsibility of the individual soul.

Olanike Olaleru

Kwara State University

Wole Soyinka and D. O. Fagunwa: Navigating Yoruba Folkloric Sense of Audience

The fact of D.O. Fagunwa's prodigious achievement by his deployment of Yoruba language to pioneer what eventually developed into a veritable literary tradition is no more news. That the number of Yoruba novels he wrote, starting with *Ógbòjù Qdẹ̀ Nìnú Igbò Irùnmale* (1938), followed by *Igbò Olódùmaré* (1949), *Írèkè Onìbúdò* (1949), *Írínkérindó Nìnú Igbò Elègbéje* (1954), and *Ádíítù Olódùmaré* (1961), were instant hits with the newly literate Yoruba reading audience of his time, is also now part of a much cherished literary history. However, although Fagunwa was a household name to Yorubas, young and old, literate and non-literate alike, yet the sphere of his literary influence remained largely circumscribed within this linguistic circle, until Wole Soyinka's translation in 1963 of *Ógbòjù Qdẹ̀ Nìnú Igbò Irùnmale*, rendered as *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons*, introduced him to the larger English-speaking world.

Accompanying Soyinka's translation were some protests of exactness of rendering of words from the original. This paper examines Soyinka's rendering of Fagunwa's *Ógbòjù Qdẹ̀ Nìnú Igbò Irùnmale*, as *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons*, focusing on how adequately the English version captures the essence of the Yoruba original, and maintains a true affinity with the author's style and sensibility. The paper concludes that Soyinka's rendering represents more an interpretation, rather than strictly a translation of the original Fagunwa text.

Key words: Literary tradition, Audience, Translation, Interpretation, Original.

Deji Olatoye

Partner, Lodt Law Offices, Lagos

A Forest into the Future: Ecocriticism and Eco-Literature in the Light of Fagunwa, Soyinka, and Osundare

In a 2012 paper titled 'The Changing Nature of Environmental Governance' delivered at a conference organized by the Osun State government in preparation for its participation at the Rio-2 'Earth Summit' of that year, this writer writes as follows: "In Africa, a written law might not have been recorded, but the 'forbidden' forest theme in the works of writers from D.O. Fagunwa through Amos Tutuola to Wole Soyinka is testament to the consciousness of the need to create respites and buffers for the environment in pre-colonial Africa. The Osun grove in Oshogbo... remains even more eloquent evidence of the centrality of these 'igbo aiwo' to the cosmology of our people." The paper also opened with a quote from Niyi Osundare's poem 'Ours to Plough, Not to Plunder'. Ecolit and Ecocrit – "environmental literature and ecological literary criticism" (William Slaymaker, 1999) – have evolved tropes amongst which four – forest, country, city and oil (or generally, industrial activities) – have been used to analyse African contribution to the subject (Chengyi Coral Wu, 2016). In the current paper, we use the forest setting in three literary works – Fagunwa's novel, *Igbó Olódùmaré* (as translated), Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forest* and Osundare's *Eye of the Earth* – to discuss how these writers explore the ethical attitude of the Yoruba loosely alluded to in the quote above. In demonstrating how these writers also interrogate aspects of that attitude, we show that they are engaging in

modernism and participating in a global discourse that is now coalesced in the field of sustainable development, with Fagunwa being the starting point and Osundare the highpoint in that line. Their works equally reflect the amenability to interdisciplinarity and intersectionality which is often a feature of most of post-modernist critical discourse, within which ecocriticism is currently in ferment. This is particularly significant for the study of Fagunwa who is perhaps the most marginalised of the three writers in the burgeoning field of ecocritical scholarship.

Diekara Oloruntoba-Oju

Writer & Researcher, Ilorin

Rethinking Myth Since Soyinka: Ritual Modernities in Contemporary Nigerian Popular Music

African Mythology, specifically as articulated through Yoruba epistemologies has a very crucial place in Soyinka's oeuvre. This theme is reiterated through many of his works, fiction and non-fiction alike. In a collection of Essays, entitled *Myth, Literature and the African World*, Soyinka makes a case for African myth and ritual as a framework for thinking our moralities, existence and place in the world. He argues that literature forms an important site for locating, understanding and indeed inhabiting gnostic realms and as such cannot be divorced from myth. In this paper, I situate the contemporary uses of Myth in Nigerian popular music against the background of Soyinka's artistic and intellectual vision for African mythology. Four decades after his collection was published, myths continue to play a crucial role in Literature. But how has the literary imaginary of the mythical changed since Soyinka's conception of it? Popular music, brokered as it is by the youth generation, offers immense insight into the ways in which young people now imagine rituals. Examining ritual conceptualisations such as *Sakamanje*, *Tulamania*, and *Logo Benz* in Nigerian music, I ask, how the temporalities of youth shape young people's perception of rituals and how this perception is expressed through music. If Soyinka's ritual highlights 'African traditional values', what is the functionality of ritual now that values are changing and younger generations are dancing to tunes of modernity and globalisation? Thus, this paper examines ritual modernities in contemporary Nigerian popular music and what implications they hold for Soyinka's vision of an 'African worldview' through myth.

Taiwo Oloruntoba-Oju

University of Ilorin

Rhetorical Retransmissions in Fagunwa and Soyinka

The transmission of Yoruba culture in both Fagunwa and Soyinka is inevitably sundered within the pressurizing context of an interloping western culture, in which both authors were to varied extents immersed, and notwithstanding their relative fidelities to the originating Yoruba culture. The result of this intercultural complex is manifest in the rhetorics of the cognate texts by these authors, especially Fagunwa's *Ogboju Ode ninu Igbo Irunmale* and Soyinka's translation, *Forest of a Thousand Daemons*. While theories of cultural transmission assume a general process of culture conduction through lived anthropological experiences, those of "Culture Rhetoric" and "Rhetorical Culture" specifically assume the inseparability of rhetoric and culture. Indeed, rhetoric not only

provides a framework for the analysis of culture but is *the* (principal) medium for the transmission of culture. In this paper, I propose a pattern of cultural and rhetorical retransmissions from Fagunwa to Soyinka. If Fagunwa's transmission of Yoruba culture in his novels is already one remove from the originating semantic, rhetorical and cultural universe of the originating culture, Soyinka's translation of Fagunwa is therefore two removes from that origin. I examine this rhetorical trajectory and what I prefer to refer to as the "retransmission" of both the originating Yoruba culture and the interloping western culture. I juxtapose linguistic expressions which, in my view, constitute rhetorical manifests of Yoruba and English material and spiritual cultures in both texts, against the linguistic and rhetorical, hence cultural, realities of the originating societies. While employing tools of language and rhetoric for the analysis, I also examine the literary/theoretical significances of this trajectory of rhetorical and cultural retransmissions in relation to African cultural developments.

Omotayo Oloruntoba-Oju

University of Ilorin

Aesthetics of the Perennial: Soyinka and Fagunwa

Of the many lines of intersection between D.O. Fagunwa and Wole Soyinka, perhaps none is so convergent yet simultaneously divergent as the handling of aesthetics of the perennial by the two authors. In Soyinka's reckoning, the perennial is a hallmark creative and dramaturgic profundity. While Fagunwa did not necessarily theorise the perennial in critical writings, he abundantly plumbed the depths of the perennial in his creative works. What I have described elsewhere as "Analogues of the perennial" are to be found in the numerous lores of the chthonic realm, which is why the realm manifests paradigms for appreciating aspects of real life existence. This paper attempts to a comparative look at some of the paradigms of the aesthetics of the perennial in Soyinka and Fagunwa. Granted that both writers source inspiration for their creative practice in Yoruba metaphors of existence, yet their practice of the aesthetics of the perennial differs significantly in particulars. In the paper I closely examine some of the personages of the aesthetic realm and the catalytic incidents that provoke their quests, among other manifests of the aesthetics of the perennial in both Fagunwa and Soyinka.

Fúnmí O. Olúbòdé-Sawẹ

The Federal University of Technology Akure, Nigeria

Naming in Fagunwa's Novels: Lessons for Yorùbá Terminology Development

A feminist reworking of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that concepts, through constant re-enactment in discourse, become realities in the minds of people (Cameron, 1990:14). Fagunwa's contribution to concepts of Development (Idàgbàsókè), Progress (Iló síwájú), and Òlájú (Modernization) include the naming of the hitherto unnamed, and earthing the imaginary in the Yoruba worldview. Naming is an important aspect of Fagunwa's fictional world. In his novels he conceptualises and names fantastic objects, people and places. This paper considers the methods of term creation used in five novels: *Ògbójú Qdẹ̀ nínú Igbó Irínmalẹ̀*, *Igbó Olódùmarẹ̀*, *Ìrèké Onibùdó*, *Ìrínkerindò nínú Igbó Elégbẹ̀je* and *Àdìitú Olódùmarẹ̀* as methods that workers in language modernisation for the Yorùbá language can use today. Unfortunately, Fagunwa's works

are not well known among the youthful population. The paper therefore concludes with suggestions on how to improve access to Fagunwa's works, through orthography modernisation, abridgement and text simplification.

Oladipupo Oyeleye

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Of Translation and Afropolitan Dialectics: Wole Soyinka's Cosmopolitics in Forest of a Thousand Daemons

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, in *Decolonizing the Mind*, argues that translation offers the liminal space at which languages attain equality in discourse. Several other scholars have also posited that a "foreign" language can be bent to capture a different social imaginary and the metaphysical conceit of other cultures. Doing so requires a particular understanding of mutual translatability, which presupposes what Bruce Robbins calls, "cosmopolitics." *Forest of a Thousand Daemon* projects, at the level of translation, the tripartite attributes of Afropolitanism, namely: *fluidity*, *access*, and *network*. These attributes, I argue, offer an insight into Soyinka's calibration of D.O Fagunwa's timeless classic, "Ògbójú-Oḍẹ Nínú Igbó Irúnmolè." In his translation, Soyinka looks beyond the linguistic, and cultural impediments to construct a universal narrative from a Yorùbá particularity. I also posit that Soyinka's inflection on "Daemon" points to the artful imagination of creative possibilities in which Yorùbá language becomes a generative site of inventing a new word and meaning in English. Soyinka's translation, I conclude, asserts Africa's presence in modernity outside "colonial time," to trouble the occidental anxiety in the language question that has been at the heart of many debates in African literature.

Aderemi Raji-Oyelade

University of Ibadan

Framing the Fantastic in Fagunwa's Yoruba Lebenswelt: The Translator Dilemma

D.O. Fagunwa's imagination, framed by the narrative components of the fantastic, projects the emergence of modern Yoruba literary production. This novelty, stemming from the historical intersection of indigenous Yoruba imaginarium and Western literacy, foregrounds the uniqueness of African/Yoruba creativity and the projection of what I shall call the pre-literate 'postmodern' Yoruba thought. Through the agency of the fantastic, the Yoruba *Lebenswelt* is further explored by other literary progenies – Amos Tutuola, Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, Niyi Osundare and Ben Okri who, through Fagunwa's tremendous influence, have re-invented and re-introduced the presences of indigenous Yoruba imaginarium to the world, deploying their individual creative talents. This presentation examines the framing of the fantastic – magical/animist realism, fantastic characters, liminal spaces, time warps, metafiction – in D.O. Fagunwa's narratives, with the view to establishing the existence of a pre-literate postmodern Yoruba imagination. With focus on Wole Soyinka's translations of Fagunwa's texts, the research interrogates the dilemma of translating the word/world of magic realism amidst other elements of the fantastic. It further investigates the translator's burden and privilege in the creation of character names, description of liminal events as well as creative and inventive text translations

in retrieving the individual innovative talent of Fagunwa as the progenitor of Yoruba modern narration.

Wumi Raji

Obafemi Awolowo University

You Must Break Forth at Cockcrow: Performing Masculinities in Wole Soyinka and D. O. Fagunwa

Wole Soyinka and D.O Fagunwa's perspective of *ilosiwaju*, complexly articulated as transgressing bounds, or breaking forth, is deeply influenced by the Yoruba conception of masculinities, itself a complex outgrowth of the people's patriarchal worldview. In the works of the two writers, masculinity – conceived here as a social construction concerned with the multiple and even contradictory qualities, behaviours and identities attaching to maleness - may initially be presented as a biologically given or stable endowment. However, and in the course of the unfolding of the narrative, the concept undergoes a transformation, becoming either a social role that ought to be staged, or a duty that has to be performed. The task in question may be an act of sacrifice, an adventure that is fraught with risks or an obstacle that must be surmounted. It often demands gargantuan will, uncommon determination, a generous endowment of the attributes of chivalry and a tendency for heroism on the part of the protagonist. The successful performance of this task, or at least the attitude with which the protagonist confronts it, becomes the measure of his maleness. The downside of this articulation of masculinity as heroism is that, either deliberately or inadvertently, femaleness is often presented as its negation. It is my intention in this paper to investigate the two writers' conception of masculinity using Wole Soyinka's *The Strong Breed*, and D.O. Fagunwa's *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole*.

Abimbola A. Adelokun

University of Texas at Austin

Fagunwa, Soyinka, Olukoya: Religious Figurations and the Writing of Yoruba Mythology

One of Africa's first novels, *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale*, by D.O. Fagunwa employs a framing device whereby an aging hunter and hero employs an unnamed scribe to document his experiences for succeeding generations. This epochal moment of elevating the print/written transmission of indigenous imagination over the oral has been aptly named as one of the entrance points of Yoruba writing into modernity. Since then, Yoruba writers have since gone on to stream Yoruba indigenous mythology into print, using both Yoruba and English languages. One of the most famous of these series of writers is, of course, Wole Soyinka who also translated *Ogboju Ode* into English. Although both Fagunwa and Soyinka's works are individually inventive, the aesthetic lineaments of their works have also been sponsored by their enculturation in Yoruba (religious) spirituality. In this presentation, I want to further explore the writing of modern Yoruba mythology from the perspective of Pentecostalism by looking at their books/pamphlets on demons and supernatural beings. My focus here is on Daniel Olukoya, a scientist and the senior pastor of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries who has produced

more than 350 books and pamphlets on demons and warfare against them. I put Olukoya in the long line of male modernist writers such as Fagunwa and Wole Soyinka who are famous for streaming Yoruba mythology into colorful productions. While the aesthetic and ideological architecture of Fagunwa and Soyinka's works subtly draws from their Yoruba religious heritage, Olukoya's works makes the Christian connection in the production of modern Yoruba mythology far more explicit. My goal is to make a broader historical and aesthetic case for the qualification of Olukoya's works as African fantastical imaginations wrapped within Christian narrative paradigms. While Olukoya's repertoire of writings on the diabolical operation is undeniably fueled from the Yoruba/African indigenous imagination of the spectres of the supernatural, his Pentecostal orientation also makes his inventive recreation of Yoruba folklore a critical site of contestation with older and established writers in the same tradition.