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POSTING THE AFRICAN PROVERB: A GRAMMAR OF
YORUBA POSTPROVERBIALS, OR LOGOPHAGIA,
LOGORRHEA AND THE GRAMMAR OF YORUBA
POSTPROVERBIALS¹

“To theorize certain central features of contemporary culture as post anything, is, of course, inevitably to invoke a narrative.”

Kwame A. Appiah, “*The Postcolonial and the Postmodern*” in **In My Father’s House**, p. 140.

“Sometimes a proverb breaks within my grasp
Like the chapter of an ill-remembered dream”

Niyi Osundare, “*Bridge & gulf*” in
The Word is an Egg, p. 23.

Introduction

After presenting the final draft of “*Postproverbials in Yoruba Culture: A Playful Blasphemy*” during the 1995 seminar session in the Department of English, University of Ibadan, a colleague teaching at St. Andrews College of Education, Oyo walked up to me and asked if I had read an essay written by Olugboyega Alaba in a Yoruba journal called *Laangbasa*.² Indeed, I assumed I was treading new grounds and thought of my essay as a challenging recreation of an inventive and popular phenomenon among young speakers of the language. That chance information offered by my colleague, himself a teacher of Yoruba literature and linguistics, stimulated my interest and, albeit, the conviction in the validity of the earlier proposition about the emergence of a body of proverbs which queries or contends with the fixations of native wisdom as established immemorially in and by traditional sayings. I would later encounter Alaba’s essay entitled “Agbeyewo Owe Iwoyi” roughly translated as “Analysis of Yoruba Modernist Proverbs.”

Going through that piece, I became more convinced than ever before that the commonplaceness of post-proverbial utterances among Yoruba youth is connected with Western education and industrialization, apparently a primary factor in the colonial, neo-colonial, and post-colonial dynamics of African cultural experience. Also, I am persuaded by Alaba's essay to note that the operations and the validity of "modernist" proverbs, preferably called *postproverbials*, cannot be as simple, easy and without complex variants, as I had done in the first, original essay on the subject.³ In that introductory work, I focused on the description of the main point of difference between traditional proverbs and postproverbials by locating the area of superimposition and supplementarity, where transformation actually occurs. Given further insight, the idea of investigating this aspect of popular verbal art becomes problematized by the discovery of other levels or variations of rupture and transformation of traditional sayings.⁴

In his book, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, Walter Ong draws attention to the critical insignificance which has attended verbal art forms by noting that "despite the oral roots of all verbalization, the scientific and literary study of language and literature has for centuries, until quite recent years, shied away from orality. Texts have clamored for attention so peremptorily that oral creations have tended to be regarded generally as variants of written productions or, if not this, as beneath serious scholarly attention" (8). I believe that a descriptive taxonomy of the struggle of invented speech acts against traditional sayings is a necessary project in the heart of understanding aspects of African modernity. To turn attention to reproducible and manifested distention of traditional Yoruba proverbs is to argue for a centering of the dynamic possibilities of the verbal text; it is as well to theorize the etiology of new verbalizations.

New Alterity: Yoruba Postproverbials, or Anti-Proverbs

While considerable work has been done on traditional (Yoruba) proverbs as an example of the African verbal art, by such scholars as Vidal, Sobande, Ajibola, Bada, Bamgbose, Olatunji, Akinlade, and Kosemani, little focus has been set on the area of transformative paroemiography, that is, the study of shifts in structure and meaning(s) of proverbs.

Vidal (1852), Bamgbose (1968), and Olatunji (1984) have discussed the stylistic features of Yoruba proverbs foregrounding their brevity and terseness, their potential for word-play, lexical repetitiveness and contrast, and most importantly, the peculiarity of their sentence patterns. Bamgbose presented the four sentence structure of traditional proverbs as the simple, the complex, the sequential, and the parallel (75-80); and Olatunji paid attention to the specific ‘characteristic sentence forms’ of the proverb signifying on the preponderant use of the “parallel sentence, *ki i.* *ki* simple sentence and ‘*bi*’ complex sentence types” in the grammar of Yoruba proverbs (177).

In discussing the value/significance of Yoruba proverbs, Olatunji introduces the generational as well as gerontological question of the ‘ownership’ of what he describes as “the wisdom lore of the race;” it is given, as he notes, that the utterance of traditional sayings requires a certain measure of competence and indigenous knowledge, therefore it is affirmed that old people are the “repository of proverbs”:

The Yoruba have great respect for age and proverbs enjoin respect for elders whose greater experience of life’s hopes and sorrows yields worldly wisdom which younger people need for guidance. When statements ought to be made on any issue, such statements have greater weight when they proceed from an elder’s lips. (171)

By implication, the discourse of postproverbials is referentially the radical discourse of literacy and modernity among Yoruba youth.

The explicatory works of these linguists have been useful in the provision of a broad syntagmatic framework of the grammar of Yoruba proverbs against and upon which present discourse could proceed. The common denomination of the presented features of the proverbs in these works is that they are peculiar to traditional Yoruba proverbs; their formalistic devices are an integral part of the oral nuances and aesthetic resources of other Yoruba verbal art forms like the *oríkì*, the *ìjálá*, the *àsà* and more relationally, the *ewì*.⁵ However, Alaba’s “Agbeyewo Owe Iwoyi” has been more useful in locating such modern Yoruba proverbs powered by contemporary sensibility and worldviews.

He established two broad categories of such modernist proverbs which are structurally comprehensive constructions of the literate imagination: the first category refers to modern proverbs which have associative connexions with traditional proverbs - 'òwe ìwòyí tó jé äyà òwe àbáláyé'; and the second category refers to modern proverbs drawn entirely from contemporary thought - 'òwe ìwòyí tó jé tuntun gan-an'. I have noted that this sub-form of the proverb is essentially powered by the modernist sensibility of Western literacy and industrialization and thus, the proposition that these "modernist" proverbs are the linguistic evidence of the banal and blasphemous and as yet the witty imagination of young and literate Yoruba speakers of the language.

My interest has been mainly devoted to that group of proverbs which draws structurally and semantically on traditional sayings for their own reproduction, those modern proverbs which assimilate ancient thoughts and observances but explode conventional meaning and deconstruct the logic of traditional sayings. These verbal inventions can be connected relatively to the notion of the anti-proverb.

Wolfgang Mieder and Anna Tothne Litovkina defined "anti-proverbs" as "any intentional proverb variation in the form of puns, alterations, deletions or additions..." (3). And in her analysis of structural transformations in European sexual proverbs, Litovkina notes that there are six major types of alterations including single word replacement, multiple word replacement, clausal changes, lexical/clausal additions, outright alterations, deliberate pun for the purpose of achieving double meaning, what she calls 'double entendre'.⁶ In many of the illustrations presented by Litovkina, transformation occurs at the phonemic or/and homonymic level; sometimes a phonemic substitution has morphemic repercussion as in the example of "Where's there's a pill, there's a way" [Where there's a will, there's a way] whereby 'will' is playfully substituted with 'pill'. However, the patterns of two particular types of 'anti-proverbs' as presented in Litovkina's essay are interestingly similar to some of the transformative categories of Yoruba postproverbials. These are Type 3 "in which the second part of the proverb is changed" and Type 4 in which "an actual text of the proverb" is retained "without any change, adding new words" (150-51). In another essay by Richard

Sweterlitsch, 'anti-proverbs' are utterances created "by adding a witty comment onto existing proverbs or by putting them into a specific context that question their universal wisdom".⁷

In contemporary Yoruba discourse, postproverbials are the recent 'posterity' of traditional sayings, the posterior reaction or response to conventional wisdom and native intelligence; post-proverbials are what I assay to call the futuristic rump of a verbal art form prone to every kind of transfigurations associated with cultural dynamism. It is important to note that Yoruba proverbs have long been subjected to influences and basic transformations as part of the evidence of the contact and interaction of the Yoruba kingdom and peoples with other peoples and religious beliefs. While classifying Yoruba proverbs into 'eleven categories', Sobande provided some groups that are direct derivatives of Islamic and Christian influences on the thought-system of the people.⁸ Indeed, the modernist tendency as well as the transformative potential of proverbs in Yoruba society dates back to the late nineteenth century during the peak of contact with other and foreign cultures. Therefore, the production of Yoruba proverbs of 'modern' imagination is reflective of cultural association, assimilation and reaction against alien ideas and cultures. It is necessary to add that the act of deliberate and playful rupture of proverbs, riddles and other speech forms in Yoruba society has always existed but was limited to particular characters – court jesters and griots – who had the rare liberty of tampering with the syntax and sense of tales and sayings. With the increase in urbanization and literacy, the phenomenon becomes pervasive and qualified as a generational as well as spatial experience so that a binary contrast of influence and usage can be located in the relation/reaction of the ancient and the modern, the old people and the youth, and evidently between suburbia and metropol.

Apart from locating the spatial and temporal distinction between Yoruba traditional proverb and its postproverbial other, the taxonomy of structural and logico-semantic transformations is of most crucial concern. Therefore, dependent on one's receptive or interpretive position, where one is in the competence-(in)competence-neo-competence axis, the binary difference in the aesthetic formation of proverbs and postproverbials can be enumerated as follows:

<i>Traditional Proverbs</i>	<i>Postproverbials</i>
ANCIENT	MODERNIST
SUBURBIA	METROPOL
PUZZLING	SIMPLIFIED
INDIRECT	DIRECT
SACROSANCT	ICONOCLASTIC
'RELATIVE FIXITY'	BOUNDLESS MUTATION

However, the conception of the 'post' in postproverbiality is to be understood as a reflexive, synchronic operation rather than a historical or datable act; in other words, sequentiality, the fact of the precedence of traditional proverbs and the contemporaneous existence of postproverbials, is only a natural relation of the binary connection of these verbal texts. Contextually, the critical focus is about the subversive connexion and alterity between one text and the other. One radical definition of proverbs is the one given by Kwesi Yankah in his description of the proverb as a performative act and as a potential site for deconstruction. The proverb is an invention, and is "subject to 'creative deformation' during performance" (34). On the other end of the discourse is the reductionist attempt to fossilize African proverbs (and their readings) as anthropological text, as static material. In *The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful: Discourse About Values in Yoruba Culture*, Barry suggests that inventiveness, or the accompanying banality, should not be considered in the reading of the African verbal act:

Africanists caution us against unceremoniously and unjustifiably transferring the banality and triviality now associated with the proverb as a form of expression in Western culture to the African context (Yai 1989, 1994). For in Africa they are said to have both a different function and level of theoretical meaning that make them key components as well as expressions of a culture's viewpoints on a variety of important topics and problems. (140)

To 'caution' is to limit the reading of scores of resourceful and deviant proverbs emanating informally from the lips of speakers of the Yoruba language at present. Certainly, *alterity*,

banality and functional triviality: these are the integral constitutive elements of the postproverbial.

I should add that postproverbials, or ‘anti-proverbs’ are, essentially, rhetorical products of a secondary orality associated with the literate imagination and chirographic reaction of the average modern Yoruba youth in the last decades of the twentieth century. At the turn of the century, the phenomenon of ‘multi-media orality’ provides the space for boundless production of postproverbial utterances.⁹ The contribution of Yoruba poets (mass media poets for specific instance) to the creation of inventive and modernist sayings with postproverbial possibilities is very notable. Witness for instance the copious production of sayings by Olatubosun Oladapo (Aroye Akewi), arguably one of the most influential Yoruba poets of the second half of the twentieth century; or access the range of patent postproverbials uttered by the character Lawuuwo in Oladejo Okediji’s play, *Rere Run*.¹⁰

The Other Writing

The essential postproverbial is a radical overturn of the traditional proverb; it functions much more strategically as a socio-linguistic marker or indicator of cultural dynamism and differences in informal discourses.

I refer to postproverbials in my 1999 essay as “alternate creations derived from and which stand against traditional proverbs” (75). As noted, the primary pattern involves the processes of excision and annexation.

Excision --- Annexation/Supplementarity --- and invariably Super(im)position

p1: _____, _____
 (a) (b)
 p2: _____, -----
 (a) (db)

Therefore, the “alternate” radical is the effect of a realignment; there’s a new translation in the same language; the alternate radical becomes the new version, an amendment and as yet a critical reception and re-writing of the originary text. I have

also noted that 'db' is the more significant clausal position of re-alignment and re-writing; both structurally and semantically, the position(s) of rupture, realignment, and re-writing subsist in the text that dual quality of differing and deferment. By the sheer characteristic pattern of 'devouring' and rupturing the 'fixed' form of the traditional proverb, the postproverbial can be posited graphically or vividly as glottophagic in structure and logorrhetic in operation; more than an alternate creation, the feature of this verbal genre inheres in deliberate breaking of the essential myths, narratives, logic and lore which form the basis of wise sayings; its other feature is the possibility of multiple alternates in place of the traditional proverb. The logorrhetic allure is one in which the postproverbial tends not only to be ametaphorical, but also too revealing, very direct and amply playful.

Indeed, the idea of investigating this aspect of popular verbal art becomes problematized by the discovery of other levels or variations of rupture and transformation of traditional sayings. There are other structural possibilities of differential iterability where 'superpositional' acts take place, where new translations in the same language occur. In other words, the possibility of rupture in the main clause position of the proverb sentence shows that in a sense what was marked as an exception to the rule of supplementarity could in fact be noted as a significant feature of the modernist, postproverbial utterance.

Two key terms – *logophagia* and *logorrhea* – are loosely employed to frame the prevailing circumstance or enabling condition of postproverbiality especially in informal and semi-formal discourses in Yoruba society. Logophagia is used to describe the condition of verbal cannibalism and banalization, of cutting words into pieces, 'eating words', doing modernist savagery to native wisdom. Logorrhea refers to the potential of sententiousness, verbal diarrhea to be precise; this is (lexical) multiplication, an effect or characteristic aspect of logophagia, verbal overkill, literally speaking, that is running at the seams of the mouth, speaking too much, and blasphemously. Thus, logorrhea can then be seen as symptomatic of the logophagiac condition.

Logophagia and logorrhea are very antithetical to the ordinary quality and character of the traditional typology of the proverb; in essence, where they subsist, there lies the potential of an anti-proverb, a postproverbial or broadly speaking a postmod-

ernist proverb by default. The logorrhetic proverb is one produced or constructed with a view to simplifying the meaning of the ‘parent’ utterance for populist understanding; and in that act (of simplification), the structure becomes distended, stretched to the point of tautologic ease that literal meaning is produced within the context of the utterance. The ‘anti-proverb’/ postproverbial does exactly the opposite of the traditional: it draws immediate meaning with such urgency and directness that it probably would not qualify in the imagination of (the) puritanical speakers of the language. These terms define the position that postproverbials (anti-proverbs) are not just mere extensions or appendages of traditional sayings; they are new formations and *oppositions* which are essentially based on the populist, oral/aural and ‘defamiliarising’ strategies of speakers. The supplementary character of the postproverbial (as concept, act and in structure) can be associated to such significant terms as ‘scandal’, ‘catastrophe’, ‘infringement upon Nature’ and ‘irruption’ as employed by Jacques Derrida in *Of Grammatology* particularly in the section entitled “...That Dangerous Supplement...” (148, 149, 150). In Derridean terms, the supplement is the one which

supplements. It adds only to replace. It intervenes or insinuates itself in-the-place-of; if it fills, it is as if one fills a void. If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. Compensatory [suppleant] and vicarious, the supplement is an adjunct, a subaltern instance which takes-(the)-place [tient-lieu].” (145)

The new proverb is the *extendee*, that is the textual breach; and to use a natal reference, the real proverb is parent, while the postproverbial is *protégé*, or rather the prodigal text which overwrites its own source.

As noted by linguists and scholars of Yoruba proverbs, the structural features of traditional Yoruba proverbs show that they have the main characteristic of brevity, they are usually ‘short and pithy’, and grammatically marked by “the absence of any elaborate modifiers or qualifiers” to use the words of Bamgbose. Bamgbose highlighted the grammatical and lexical features of traditional proverbs and noted that the four main sentence patterns found in most proverbs are the simple, the complex, the sequential and the parallel. In postproverbials, brevity is not a con-

stant feature of the text. In place of brevity and pithiness, there is a great dependence on witticism and a sense directness and literariness generally lacking in the traditional proverb; and if parallelism is a general feature of the traditional proverb, verbal counterpoint is the mark of the postproverbial. Also, the aesthetic characteristics of the postproverbial include the use of irony, directness, simplicity, logical tautology, overstatement, pun, as well as the use of non-Yoruba and Western terms/words. A major significance of postproverbials is that they are a textual evidence of the interaction between Yoruba and other relating languages spoken in relation and parallel to it. The sociolinguistic phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing resulting from this interaction enable the making of the postproverbial utterance. The utterance itself is indicative of the measure of the knowledge or the ignorance (of traditional proverbs) which subsists among the Yoruba and other speakers of the language.

Types of Yoruba Postproverbials

There are four broad types of the postproverbials determined by the pattern of change(s) in the sentence structure of the given traditional proverb. In each re-produced text, the value of the sign 'd' in 'db' or 'da' aptly refers to the notion of the new decibel (utterance) of the traditional verbal genre, functioning imaginistically or symmetrically as the Other face of proverb (*d/b*), (*d/a*).

CATEGORY I [p1-p2]

This is the most common category of postproverbial in current usage. As exemplified in "A Playful Blasphemy", transformation takes place in the completing clause and rarely occurs in the signal clause of the conventional utterance. There are three sub-types of this type, viz, Simple, Complex and Parallel here referred to as Postproverbial Type Ia, Ib, and Ic respectively.

Type Ia (Simple; p1-p2)

•—————,—————•
 (a) **(b)**

•—————,-----•
 (a) **(db)**

p1: Èşin iwájú, ni t'èyìn ún wò sáré.

The leading horse is an example to other racers.

p2: Èşin iwájú, ni ó gba pò kìní.

The leading horse will (surely) take the first position.

Type Ib (Complex; p1-p2x)

• —————; —————, —————.
 (a) (b) (b2)

• —————; -----
 (a) (db) (db2)

p1: Àgbàtán láá gbòlẹ; bí a dá'şo fún un, a pá láró.

The lazy man must be fully supported; when you buy him a cloth, you must also dye it.

p2: Àgbàtán láá gbòlẹ; bí a fún un loúnjẹ, a fòbè si.

The lazy man must be fully supported; when you give him food, you must provide the stew.

Type Ic (Parallel; p1-p2)

• —, —; —, —.
 (a) (b)

• —, —; —, —.
 (a-da) (b-db)

p1: Bómọdẹ bá şubú, a wo wájú; b'ágbà bá şubú, a wèyin wò.

[When a child stumbles, s/he sets his/her eyes on the destination; when an elder falls, s/he takes a backward glance].

p2: Bómọdẹ bá şubú, a sunkún; b'ágbà bá şubú, a dide.

[When a child stumbles, s/he burst into tears; when the elder falls, s/he gets up].

CATEGORY II: [p1q-p2]

This is the type of postproverbial, earlier referred to as 'exceptional', in which the signal clause itself is ruptured. The excision which occurs at this point is such that involves a word, or phrasal part of the signal clause. In the process of mutation, the keyword or phrase is either troped upon, amended or replaced. Potentially, the twisting may trigger further transformation in the completing clause. Thus, an entirely 'new' proverb with familiar lyricism is produced. Here, I note two sub-types of this category of postproverbials.

Type IIa ('Phrase in Signal Clause'; p1q-p2)

• _____, _____.
 (a) **(b)**

• (____)_____, _____.
 (da) **(db)**

p1: Àpónlé ni Ìyá Kàà, kò sèni tó wà ní Kàà tí ò lórúkò.

[It's sheer honor to be called "Court Matriarch", there's no woman who does not have a proper name].

p2: Àpónlé ni Málà, Awúsá l'Awúsá ún'jé.

[It's sheer honor to be called "Mallam", the proper name to call an Hausaman is Hausa].

Type IIb ('Keyword/Signal Clause'; p1q-p2)

• _____, _____.
 (a) **(b)**

• _____, _____.
 (da) **(b)**

p1: Orí la fi n'méran láwo.

[With (head) luck, we pick the good meat in the stew].

p2: Ojú la fi n'méran láwo.

[With (eyes) sight, we pick the good meat in the stew].

p3: Qwó la fi n'méran láwo.

[With (hand) touch, we pick the good meat in the stew].

CATEGORY III: [p1-pp2]

In this category of the postproverbial, there is a deliberate pun in the signal clause which engenders a parallel complementing clausal ending. The production of this category of postproverbial is enabled by the tonality of the Yoruba language. The kind of alteration which occurs here is such that depends mainly on the tonal potential of the Yoruba lexis. Transformation, either phonological or lexical, occurs in both clausal parts of the proverb structure.

Type III (Pun; p1-pp2)

• _____, _____.
 (a) **(b)**

• _____, _____.
 (da+2) **(db)**

p1: Èṣúrú ṣ'àṣejù, ó té lówó oníyán.

Water-yam overreaches its own sweetness, it loses the flavor of pounded yam flour.

p2: Èṣú (rú) ṣ'àṣejù, Ọlórún lú'gò dèé.

Satan overreaches himself, God waits in ambush for him.

The rare example of p2 above was made by a former student during an informal, out-of-class discussion on the subject of “blasphemous” utterances; of significant interest here is the religious imagination which produced this particular postproverbial as the utterer was a born-again Christian, in fact the daughter of a very popular and highly revered leader of a Pentecostal movement based in Lagos, Nigeria. The ruptural signification here is on the tonal playing and difference between “Esuru”, a tropical tuber, and “Esu...” the actual lexical site and rough reference to the traditional Yoruba trickster god (Esu) much misunderstood and interpreted in contemporary African Christian and Islamic imaginations as Satan (and famously configured in African diasporic discourse as god of interpretation, as the Signifying Monkey.¹¹ In modernist utterance, the last syllable “ru” in “Esuru” takes devastatingly symbolic meaning as a verbalization of Satan’s destructive powers. “Ru” literally means to confuse, to destroy, and to violate a place, thing, or person. This is of course one instance in which differential iterability occurs first at the phonological level even in the signal clause serving as the basis of further rupture in the complementing clause.

CATEGORY IV: [p1+q-p2]

The structure of the traditional proverb is intact but added-on. The additment occurs as an extension of the completing clause.

Type IV (Additment; p1+q-p2)

• _____, _____.
 (a) (b)

• _____, _____- - - - -
 (a) (db) (db2)

p1: Èyin ni n di akukọ. [*The egg becomes the cock*].

p2: Èyin ni n di akukọ, ti wọn o ba seje.

The egg becomes the cock, if it is not cooked/eaten.

p1: Kòsì ẹnì tí kúù rẹ̀. [*There is no one who never tires*].

p2: Kòsì ẹnì tí kii rẹ̀; ó rẹ̀ mósálásí ó di ilé epo.

There is no one who never tires; the mosque tires, it becomes a gas station.

The typical grammar of the Yoruba postproverbial is dynamic and as yet the subject of inevitable alterations experienced in the use of ‘traditional’ wise sayings among new generation speakers of the language. It would be useful to conclude here by noting that the integral features of the making of the typical postproverbial include the condition of differential iterability, the ambivalent quality of verbal retention-departure/extension, and the overarching insistence of superimposition. The postproverbial is qualitatively a new speech act seeping into informal as well as semi-formal contemporary Yoruba lexicon and popular life.

Notes

¹ A version of this essay was first presented at the Mid America Alliance for African Studies Conference, Kansas University, Lawrence, Kansas; October 3, 2003.

² I am grateful to Funso Fatokun who provided information on Olu-boyega Alaba’s essay, "Agbeyewo Owe Iwoyi" which appeared in *Laangbasa* (1986): 51-66.

³ The essay on the phenomenon of modernist alterations in Yoruba traditional proverbs appeared in *Research in African Literatures* 30.1 (1999): 74-82.

⁴ Alaba presents a number of ‘modernist’ proverbs which are striking constructions of the literate imagination; see "Agbeyewo Owe Iwoyi" 60ff.

⁵ Among the sub-genres of Yoruba poetry are *ijálá* (hunters’ chant), *oriki* (personal or/and communal panegyric), and *àsà* (masquerade chant); more than other Yoruba poetic forms, traditional Yoruba proverbs are essentially given and fixed in structure.

⁶ See “Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child: Sexuality in Proverbs, Sayings and Idioms” [*Proverbium* 16 (1999): 141- 65].

⁷ In discussing the life and aphorisms of Henry Shaw, Sweterlitsch considers the example of retention and extension of traditional proverbs as “an ingenious technique” (325); see “Josh Billings: His Anti-Proverbs and Comic Aphorisms”, *Proverbium* 18 (2001): 319-27.

⁸ See the seventh chapter of Olatunji’s *Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry* (“Owe and Alo Apamo”, 169-91).

⁹ The choice of the term ‘multimedia orality’ is informed by current advancements and inventions in communication technology; a multimedia orality is one in which speech is a privileged act, in which orality/aurality is the significant current of much interpersonal and formal verbalizations.

10 It is instructive to note that the set of authorially invented proverbs in Oladejo Okediji's play is set aside and named eponymously as "Owe Lawuuwo".

11 For the insightful critique of the mis-representation of the Yoruba trickster god (Eḡu/Eshu/Exu) in African diasporic imagination, see Wole Soyinka's *Myth, Literature and the African World* (1975), and Henry Louis Gates's *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (1988).

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