

YORÙBÁ ORAL ARTIST AS BIOGRAPHER AND ACTIVIST FOR PRESERVING HISTORICAL EVENTS: AN EXAMPLE OF ODÒLAYÉ ÀRÈMÚ

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Abstract

The work of Odòlayé Àrè mú has not been adequately researched. It is this paucity of scholarly work on this talented and skillful Yorùbá oral artist that informs our interest in studying his work. This paper shall therefore, in no small measure bring this important gap in scholarship. Therefore, this paper intend to explore certain work of this oral artist, with special attention on Late Alhaji Àrìşekolá Àlàó whose biographies Odòlayé Àrè mú has presented. As a prominent Yorùbá oral artist, Odòlayé Àrè mú deploys his art work to represent the biographical narratives of important personalities in society. He usually does this to establish the intersectional relationship between history and the art of oral genres. Though there are studies on this oral artist, but much has not been done on the biographic nature of his art. This paper intends to interrogate Historicism as Theoretical framework to investigate selected song of the artist, particularly on personality of Àrìşekolá Àlàó. This paper established the historicity of Yorùbá oral artist as employed in Odòlayé Àrè mú's song. It is shown that historical documentation is not limited to writing. Oracy is also a means of preserving biographic information. The Yorùbá oral artist serves as biographer and activist through whom some important historical events could be preserved and retrieved.

Keywords: Àrìşekolá Àlàó, Biographic Artist, Odòlayé Àrè mú and Oral Poet.

Introduction

Before the advent of the novel, the novella and the written short story genres, there existed in many Nigerian cultures stories that recorded the peoples' cultural experiences. These stories serve as the repository of the people's belief, social philosophies and observation about life; they also provide insightful information about their environments. In these stories, we find the peoples' attitudes to natural phenomenal as depicted the way of life of a particular community. The stories are generally educative while also entertaining the audience, they are also part of the socialization process because through them, the origin of existence and also present the lives and contributions of great personages. In addition, they create a nexus between the past and the present. Sometimes this past dates back to primordial or prehistoric era. It is from these traditional oral narratives that modern Nigerian written prose evolved. The traditional oral narratives include myths, legends, folktales and fables. Since the study is centered on biography, we shall explain the one that really shares affinity with the subject of this discourse.

Legends are biographical in nature. Legend is set in the past but deals with heroes/heroines in a known past. The link between myth and legend is that both are set in the past. However, they different in nature; unlike myth, legend has some measure of claim to history in a known past. Legend refers to a story that is passed down orally from one generation to another and has its foundation in history. They are fragments of history that help to teach morals while encouraging and inspiring members of the community. They are close to life and some of them are authentic. They tell stories of people who actually lived and the things that really happened. However, most of them are embellished to enhance the aesthetics perspectives of the stories and make them moving, fascinating and entertaining. Legends present personalities and events that are believed to have existed in the history of a

The study of Yorùbá oral literature occupies an important position in scholarship. This is not however unconnected with the fact that Yorùbá literature encapsulates the most vital elements of the peoples' cultural heritage. Olatunji (1987) opines that Yorùbá oral literature is bound up with specific cults and institutional practices. Most of the chants and songs are associated with worship. For instance, *Ìjálá* chants are associated with the worship of Ògún and the hunters' guild. Similar genres are *Ọya-pípé*, *Şàngó*, *Èşà* or *Iwì Egúngún* and *Ìyèrè Ifá* associated with *Ọya*, *Şàngó*, *Egúngún* and *Ifá* respectively. Our appraisal of the social function of *Oríkì* as legitimator of the traditional established order and enhancer of individual reputation is enriched by knowledge of the hierachichal structure of the Yorùbá society (Barber, 1979)

Biography as an art

It is a detailed description or account of a person's life. It entails more than basic fact, which may include education, work, relationships and death. A biography presents a subjects life story, highlighting various aspects of his or her life including intimate details of experience and may include an analysis of the subject's personality (Banda, 2005:16). It reveals another person through the eyes of a writer or an oral artist who has had an ongoing, face-to-face, personal relationship with the person.

Biographic is written by someone other than the subject; about the subjects life; emphasizes the birth date/place and date of death; country or city the subject is from; reiterates significant contribution to the people and society at large; problems or obstacles the subject had overcome; important events from history and also people who influenced the subject. A person's biography may be written while he/she is still alive or after death. The biographer presents the facts the person's life as he uncovers them through research, interviews and visits. However, it possible for the biographer to insert his own imaginative though, stories and appreciative comments, to bring out the life of that person. Thus unlike a scientific or technical text, a biography may consist of imagery, figures of speech, narration, description, argumentation and exposition.

Theoretical Framework

The first identified tenet of new historicism is the parallel juxtaposition of both the literary and non-literary materials. This means that new historicists do not make a serious separation between the literary and the non-literary texts.

Also, proponents of new historicism focus attention (within both text and co-text) on issues of State power and how it maintained, on patriarchal structures and their perpetuation and on the process of colonization with its accompanying "mind set". Michel Foucault (2002) opines that the discourse of an era, instead of reflecting pre-existing entities and orders, brings into the concepts, oppositions and hierarchies of which it speaks: that these elements are both products and propagators of "power" or social forces: and that as a result the particular discursive formations of an era determine what at the time accounted "knowledge" and "truth" as well as what is considered to be humanly normal as against what is considered to be criminal, or insane or sexually deviant. In essence, through the equal treatment of literature and history, political ideologies in particular are uncovered. In order words, the abstractedness of literature is concretised by situation is within a relevant historical context.

Furthermore, a new historicism tries it 'defamiliarise' the canonical literary text, by detaching it from the accumulated weight of previous literary scholarship and seeing it as if new. Here, a literary text is being remade. New historicism, which emerged in the late 1970s, rejects both the traditional historicism's marginalization of literature and new criticisms enshrinement of the literary text in a timeless dimension beyond history. For new historicists, therefore, a literary text does not embody the author's intention or illustrate the spirit of the age that produced it as traditional literary historians would have us believe; nor are literary

texts self-sufficient arts objects that transcend the time and place in which they were written, as new critics believed. Rather, literary materials are cultural artifacts that can tell us something about the inrpla of discourses, the web of social meanings, operating in the time and place in which the text was written. For new historicists, the literary text and the historical situation from which it emerged are equally important because text (the literary work) and context (the historical conditions that produced it) are mutually constitutive; they create each other. And like the dynamic interplay between individual identity and society, literary texts shape and are shaped by their historical contexts.

Moreover, the focus of new historicism is on how the literary text functions, itself as a historical discourse intersecting with other historical discourses, which are circulated at the time and place in which the text is set at the time and text was published, or at later points in the history of the text's perception. Therefore, new historicism is not really interested in the historical events as events, but the ways in which events are interpreted, with historical' discourses, with ways of seeing the world and modes of meaning. In opinion of Lois Tyson (1999: 292):

“Events are viewed by new historicists not as facts to be Documented but as “texts” to be “read” in order to help us Speculate about how human cultures at various historical Moments have made sense”.

New historicists contend attests that we cannot really know exactly what happened at any given point in history, but we can know what the people involved believed happened. Thus, through the participants' account, we can understand the various ways in which they interpreted their experiences and we can interpret those various interpretation.

In addition, to the historicists, the literary text, through its representation of human experience at a given time and place, is an interpretation of history. As such, the literary texts maps the discourses circulating at the time it was produced and is, itself, one of those discourses. In other words, the literary text shaped and was shaped by the discourses circulating in the culture in which it was produced.

BIOGRAPHY OF ALHAJI ARİŞEKÓLÁ ÀLÀÓ

Born on 1945 to Abdul Raheem Àlàó and Qlátutu Àlàó, Aríşekólá attended St. Luke's Primary School, Àdigún and ICC Primary School. He studied Arabic Studies. In 1960, he was with the Ògùnpa-Òyó Commercial Centre before venturing into full time business a year later. His traditional commercial focus is in Auto sales, Flour mills and Oil marketing through his Lister Brand. He also developed interest in Real Estate, Insurance Banking and Publishing. Originally, he came from humble background, joining his uncle as an apprentice in Gbági market in Ibadan in 1960s, he left in 1961 to sell Gamelan 9 vide and later became an agent of Imperial Chemical Industries. But the 1970s he was a dealer of Motors undle Lister Motor.

Şèyí Olókoqba (2013) in an article “Àarç Mùsùlùmí of Yorùbáland: A Detribalized Nigeria! Aríşekólá Àlàó attested to the generosity of Aríşekólá beyond imagination and tribal sentiment. In the 1970s and 80s: Aríşekólá was serenaded by the Jùjú singer, Ebenezer Obey around the late 1970s while later being conferred with the title of Ààrç Mùsùlùmí of Yorùbáland by the league of Imams and Alfas from the region in 1980. In 1990, he was co-chair of a committee interested in promoting cross fertilization of ideas and inter-religious understanding between Christians and Muslims. Aríşekólá doubles as the president general of the Grand Council for Islamic Affairs and member of the Board of the Nigeria Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, NSCIA.

Odòlayé Àrènmú often insisted that he did not or condemns people just for the sake of doing so but affirmed that individual person's activities in the society determined the songs

he composed for that individual (Na'Allah 2011). Thus, in a record he released in December 1990, on EMI label titled "Olówemòwe", the poet attempted to clear himself of double-dealing. He sings:

Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú
 Ajá Kwara kì í déédé gbó lásán
 Bí ò bá rẹ̀ranko
 A sì rí àtàtà èyàn
 Bèyàn ò ẹ̀un
 A á ní pé ó ẹ̀un
 Bèyàn ò ẹ̀yàn
 A ò ní pọ̀ ẹ̀yàn
 Àwa náà ò màrà ní figbá kan bọ̀kan n nù
 Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú

Kwara Dog does not bark without a cause
 If it has not seen animal
 It must have seen human being
 If someone does not exhibit good character trait
 Such would not be seen as a person of good character
 If someone is not good
 He would not be reckoned with
 I will not be hypocritical
 Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú

The foregoing validates what Chidi Amuta (1989; 177) proposes about the basic preoccupation of an African poet in his cultural milieu:

In the African world, this historical necessity, in which the poet
 As a man of culture devotes his art and life to the pursuit of
 justice and freedom has become part of the very legitimacy of
 the poetic undertaking.

Therefore, Odòlayé was not unconscious of his poetic direction and was already declaring literally that he was the "Dog" keeping guard on Kwara State. This is an indication that he was not just a poet, but also a watch-Dog whose poetic vision lies in ensuring a better human society. Like the police Dog, the night watchman's Dog going after thieves, the "Goat" and the "human being" referred to in Odòlayé's songs are the metaphorical thieves and social miscreant whom the police run after.

Alhaji Arìşekòlá Àlào is a well-known Philanthropist. Odòlayé himself is one of the numerous beneficiaries of Arìşekòlá's kind gestures. According to the Poet:

Gbogbo ọ̀jọ̀ ayé
 Nígboro Ibàdàn
 À n jẹ̀ lódò ọ̀kọ̀ mí
 Arìşekòlá pẹ̀bọ̀ bí i Erin
 Aásikí Ibàdàn

Everyday
 In the city of Ibadan
 We do eat in my husband's place
 Arìşekòlá offers sacrifice like Elephant
 The influential personality of Ibadan.

The above shows that Arísekólá Àlàó is a generous man whose munificence is extended to everyone. The Poet uses first person plural pronoun - “à” (we) to show that he is also a beneficiary of Arísekólá’s generosity. He further reinforces the high level of philanthropy by likening it to Elephant Skin. In other words, cannot ascertain the quantity of animals being killed (sacrificed) in Arísekólá residence daily to feed the less-privileged troop that always visit him.

In addition, the Poet; - biographer compares Arísekólá with a very big covering clothe (wrapper) that clothes indigene of Ìbàdàn:

Aṣo ọ bora Ìbàdàn
Táwọn ọmọ Olúyòlé ní dàbora
Ènikan ṣoṣo tí ẹ tójú ilu ọmọ Àlàó
Èkún kan ṣoṣo tí ẹ mí gbogbo títi kan
Ọmọ Ọlátutù ní Ìbàdàn

The covering clothes of Ibadan
That offspring of Olúyòlé use to cover their bodies
The only one who cares for the whole indigene, the offspring of Àlàó
The only Tiger that shakes the whole city
Offspring of Ọlátutù in Ìbàdàn

Alhaji Arísekólá is devotedly committed to taking care of his people. Through his assistance, many people who would have been naked got their nakedness covered, nakedness is metaphorically to explain the extent he helps people financially. The poet enables us to know the kind of person that the subject under discussion is in Ibadanland. Although, he is a Muslim Cleric, yet his generosity is not tribal bias. This is why Odòlayé refers to him as the wrapper that covers all the people of Ìbàdàn. Therefore, Arísekólá is painted as someone who does not practice sentimental or tribalism.

Subject of biography are usually linked to people’s origin. Odòlayé emphasizes the family relations of Arísekólá in whom he must have made positive impact. This implies that the subject of this biography proved that he is a responsible man within and outside. Many people are only good and known outside while they are more of less venomous vipers at home. From every indication, Arísekólá is a responsible family man. Some of his kith and kin mentioned include Abu Bákàrè (his friend) Ọláoyè (elder brother) and Ọlátutù (his mother).

Abu Bákàrè ní kọ?
Ọrẹ rẹ ni
Ọláoyè ní kọ?
Ègbón rẹ ni
Ràsákì rẹ ní kọ?
Ọmọ Ọlátutù ní Ìbàdàn.

How is Abu Bakare ?
He is your friend
How is your elder brother?
How is Rasaq?
Offspring of Ọlátutù in Ìbàdàn

In the same vein, the above authenticates the fact that the artist has a full knowledge of Arísekólá, it will be impossible for a biography without knowing fully the subject to offer

a panoramic and detailed view of such a person. The Poet, therefore knows Arišekólá relations.

Odòlayé mentioned the position occupied by Arišekólá in the society.

Arišekólá
Alhaji Arišekólá
Ààrẹ̀ Mùsùlùmí

The good nature exhibited by Arišekólá is also eulogised. Some rich men always envy one another as if they are in a competition. This is not so in the case of Arišekólá Àláo. The artist sings:

O ò pé kólówó ó má lówó
O ò pé kí wòfà ó kọ̀ tówó rẹ̀ wá
O ò sì pé kẹ̀ni ó bímọ̀ rẹ̀ ó má jẹ̀rẹ̀ ọ̀mọ
Arišekólá, Alhaji Arišekólá, Ààrẹ̀ Mùsùlùmí

You did not say that the rich should not be rich
You did not take what belong to the slaves
And you did not say parents should not enjoy the reward of their labour
Arišekólá, Alhaji Arišekólá, Ààrẹ̀ Mùsùlùmí

It is not impossible in contemporary human society to find people who do good for selfish, fetish and ritual purposes. Some people give items so that the recipient (s) can be vulnerable. This is the view of Odòlayé in the above excerpt. Arišekólá does not envy his fellow rich men. At the same time, those who work under Arišekólá as laborers also become great in life; he never prevents anyone from making it. Many Arišekólá employees have benefitted from his kind gestures.

Furthermore, as a wealthy personality, Arišekólá does not involve in class snobbery. This means that he does not discriminate against other members of the society. He opens his arm for all categories of people in the town. In fact, the so-called riffs – raffs find a place in his arm Odòlayé sings:

Erú n ẹ̀ se ti ẹ̀ ó bá wọn se é
Ìwòfà n ẹ̀ se ti ẹ̀ ó bá wọn se é
Ará ilé n ẹ̀ se ti ẹ̀ ó bá wọn se é

Slave are embraced without discrimination
Labourers are embraced without discrimination
Neighbours are embraced as well without discrimination

In this quote, the artist mentioned three set of people- the Slaves, Labourers and Neighbours. It is a gainsaying that many influential people have nothing to do with people from humble background like those mentioned in the excerpt because they feel that nothing would be benefitted from such group of people. Moreover, Arišekólá's generosity is not only felt in Ìbàdàn, his town, his tentacles is spread all over the places. The poet declares:

Ìlọ̀rin n ẹ̀ se ti ẹ̀
Ó bá wọn se é
Ògbómòsọ̀ n ẹ̀ se ti ẹ̀
Ó bá wọn se é
Ìbàdàn n ẹ̀ se ti ẹ̀
Ó bá wọn se é

Ègbá ní ẹ̀ ti ẹ̀
 Ó bá wọ̀n ẹ̀ é
 Ìjẹ̀bú ní ẹ̀ ti ẹ̀
 Ó bá wọ̀n ẹ̀ é

Ìlọ̀rin people are seen like your own people
 You helped them
 Ògbómòşò people are seen as your own people
 You helped them
 Ìbàdàn people are seen as your own people
 You helped them
 Ègbá people are seen as your own people
 You helped them
 Ìjẹ̀bú people are seen as your own people
 You helped them.

Thus, this personality is not a localized rich man. He ensures that he touches different people and places positively. As a matter of fact, Aríşekólá generosity is not limited to those who are close to him. Aríşekólá is a fortunate person in the sense that he became very rich at his tender age:

Ọ̀ba mi òkè
 Ọ̀ba mi isàlẹ̀
 Yóò sì bá wọ̀ náà ẹ̀ ti ẹ̀
 Ọ̀mọ Ẹ̀lào tí ó dàgbà
 Tẹ̀ ẹ̀ ní şégi à ẹ̀ e kà á nile.

My King above
 My king beneath
 Would also help you
 Offspring of Ẹ̀lào was very young
 But became rich at early stage of life

Some people are born with silver spoon but end up in penury because they could not maintain the wealth but for Aríşekólá Ẹ̀lào, despite the fact that he became rich at a tender age, still maintain the wealth till date, so diligent and as industrious.

In this biographic analysis, we have seen a religious leader who uses his wealth to serve God through humanitarian services. To him, being generous is an act of worship to God.

Conclusion

This paper has been able to examine Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú as an oral biographer and activist for preserving historical events through his presentation of the life and times of Aríşekólá Ẹ̀lào as a case study. In this biographic analysis, we have seen a religious leader who uses his wealth in serving God through humanitarian medium. To Aríşekólá Ẹ̀lào, being generous is an act of worship to God.

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EPISTEMOLOGY IN YORÙBÁ WORLDVIEW AS ENCAPSULATED IN D. O FÁGÚNWÀ'S ÒGBÓJÚ QDÉ NÍNÚ ÌGBÓ IRÚNMOLÈ (FOREST OF A THOUSAND DEMONS)

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Abstract

A unique characteristic of D.O. Fágúnwà's novels is the manner in which they invoke the framework of ideas and beliefs through which the Yorùbá interpret the world and interact with it. Previous works on D. O. Fágúnwà's novels have extensively discussed themes, styles, characterization, the use of symbols and language with little reference to the Yorùbá worldview about man, nature and society. This paper therefore examined epistemology in Yorùbá worldview as encapsulated in D.O. Fágúnwà's Ògbójú Qdé nínú Ìgbó Irúnmolè (Forest of a Thousand Demons). Plato's idealism, as captured in his general philosophy of man, nature and society was used as the appropriate theory for the data analysis. The paper adopted textual and in-depth analyses of data as primary source. Language plays an affective role in Fágúnwà's oeuvre. Yorùbá worldview is presented as environmentally determining with a continuous interaction between flora and fauna, whether at the folkloric level or the natural world. These interactions take place within a well-defined ecosystem. Fágúnwà also depicts a Yorùbá worldview that explores and exploits native intelligence as an epistemological model for confronting the various challenges of life. In sum, his philosophical ideas, based on the Yorùbá worldview are Platonic with reference to ethics, the existence of a supernatural world, and indigenous knowledge, but different with respect to cultural ecology and social practices. Fágúnwà's works show the interrelationship between literature and philosophy.

Keywords: Epistemology, Yorùbá Worldview, Philosophy and Literature, Yorùbá Novels, D.O. Fágúnwà

Introduction

Literature is a reflection of society. It documents the lifestyle, belief system, political and economic activities of people at a given point in time. Hence, literature is the 'historian' of a people that can be consulted in order to trace the people's origin and cultural foundation; it gives account of a people's beliefs and practices at a certain period. In literature, words are constantly moved from one context to another, giving various shades of meanings as they travel along genres, themes and domains.

According to Agyekum (2007), literature serves as a databank for the storage of language and culture, as well as the embodiment of socio-political, economic, religious and philosophical aspects of a people's way of life. It is through the proper analysis and interpretation of literary work that we see one of the most important values of language apart from being a medium of communication. Fictional presentation in literature is, however, made up story, non-natural and unreal product of the human imagination devoid of the 'truth' or fact. It is an imaginative work (that is, a narrative) made up of a sequence of events. It is a narrative writing drawn from the imagination of the author rather than from history or fact.

Fáṣẹkẹ (1998) also notes that of all Yorùbá novelists, Fágúnwà is accorded eminent position because of his impressive use of beautiful expressions in Yorùbá language. Thus, this study is designed as a philosophical interpretation of the classical novels of the Yorùbá

The appearance of Fágúnwà's novels marked an important stage in the development of Yorùbá written literature. This work intends to examine the Yorùbá worldview in his novels in order to see the influence of Yorùbá philosophy on his work.

Notions in Literature

Literature can transform and shape the mood of a person either positively or negatively. Literature acts as a satellite on the society and gives us a reflective picture and truth image of human behavior and incidents in the society. In no doubt, literature exposes mankind to understand the day-to-day concerns of human life and what goes into it. It tells us things we would not otherwise have known about the humanity of which we form a part. In reality, literature can obviously take the place of many things; of travel or sojourn in foreign lands, of direct experience, religion, nature, politics, economy and vicarious life and it can be used by historians as a social document (Agyekum, 2007:11). Obviously, literature is not archaic, it has survival and it is a living microscope and effective key to life. This is so because literature is empty and baseless if it has nothing to do with man and his society. In other words, literature is baseless if it is detached from society.

Ogden (1997:125) defines literature as imitation, a form of expressing one's feeling through a medium containing explicit didactic elements. It is obvious from this definition that literature is a mirror that reflects the views and ideas of individuals. All works of literature have some relation and reflection with time. Since literary artists do not create in vacuum, their works are temporarily bound on certain social context. The period in which the artist finds himself dictates to him what to write or compose.

Encyclopedia Americana (1980) describes literature as: "an imaginative form of expression whose major feature is creativity and having an element of style". Ukoyen (1980:48) defines it as: "imaginative and artistic recreation of experience ... a work of art whose principal appeal lies in its aesthetic excellence and emotional catharsis". So, literature usually deals with experience. Philosophical ideas may be discussed but they are most often presented in terms of personal experience, they normally reflect the experiences of the entire society over a period of time.

According to Ògúnṣìnà (1987), "Literature is concerned with man and his society, it is an art composed of words in such a way that it proffers entertainment, enlightenment, and relaxation. It attempts to develop, elevate, expand and transform the experience of its audience". Literature functions as a continuing symbolic criticism of social values. As a virile vehicle of human expression, literature seeks to investigate man, his behaviour in society, his knowledge of himself and the universe in which he finds himself. So, literature is part and product of the society. Its nature is essentially social, it has no independence from man, for it is produced by people living together. It is a structure of words and ideas which are shared and understood by members of a community. Literature of a people is thus the catalogue of their lively experiences, living, hardships and encounters in life. Hoggart's assertion cited in Ògúnṣìnà then underscores the point that a knowledge of a society's literature is essential for a full meaningful understanding of that society.

Barber (1978) claims that in the Marxist perspective literature is more than being a part and product of society:

It also reacts on society. It plays an important part in shaping or crystallizing the views held by the member of the society; views about the world, about man, and about society. And it is in the light of views like this that the social order is both maintained and changed.

Literature is reflective of the society; thus, the novel, which is the major literary genre in many literate societies, has been seen as a faithful attempt to re-create man's social world,

to produce a fictional universe akin to his social institutions, his aspirations and tensions. Thus, it can be seen that literature treads a common social, economic and political ground as sociology. But as art, literature transcends mere objective and scientific analysis of society. Literature offers an opportunity for enlightenment, enjoyment and relaxation. It breaks the monotony and strain of day-to-day concerns. When a work of art and literature functions successfully, pleasure and utility coexist effectively. It is therefore not surprising that most forms of literature works are therapeutic and can heal the wounds of the trembling soul.

Agyekum (2007: 12) says 'clinical psychologist advise people who are stressed up and filled up with pent up emotions to listen to good music, jokes and humour and watch some interesting films and read good fictions books'. Obviously, the world would have been boring without literary language and work.

Ukoyen (1980) defines literature as:

The mirror of day-to-day life of a people, the in depth study of man and his life, the study of his fortune and misfortune, the living experiences, the study of communication of man with himself, his fellowmen and the unknown.

Ogunmola (1997:5) posits that literature is "a body of socio-historic events that take place in a given society, a reflection on day-to-day life; individual and collective experience; a mirror of the society". The world literature which stemmed originally from Latin *littera litterae*, meaning "letter", "writing" and "graphic signs", "places literature in the universe of graphic signs or universe of the alphabet. This is, perhaps, why Ogunmola (1997:3) defines literature as: "The body of writing by a people who uses alphabet or the body of writing on human expression characterized by esthetic preoccupation".

From all the above definitions, one can deduce that literature is the sum total of activities related to all spheres of human life.

Literature appears in two major forms, written and oral. Written literature is adopted in this study because it is the most popular form enriched by all sorts of works. It defies any special consideration because all information and documentation in this regard are in –library from the Middle Ages to the present time. The literary and sub-literary genres developed along the centuries abound in infinite number of books and other related printed matters.

Among the varied historical and contemporary definitions of literature, the broadest perhaps, according to *Encyclopedia Americana* (2004), is "anything that appears in print". Arnold and Matthew, in *Encyclopedia Americana*, say that "Literature becomes a form of universal truths articulated through powerful personal expression."

Another definition of literature given in *Encyclopedia Americana* is that "literature is a particular kind of writing, distinct from other uses of language". Literature transforms ordinary language by calling attention to its linguistic and aesthetic attribute as opposed to communicative attributes. Literature can also be seen as those forms of discourses that imitate and modify the traditional discourses which a culture has handed down from generation to generation.

However, owing to diverse views of critics on the definition of literature, there is a view that literature modifies without abandoning the universal and "objective" definitions of enlightenment. Literature allows us to understand it in terms of its universal truths, its expression of individual insight, its linguistic nature, its connection with the sacred, its conventionality, and its social function.

Literature and Philosophy

Duran (2007:1) makes it clear that literature can perform; can apprise us of the existence of issues, and can shape our attitudes in area such as morality and aesthetic.

Philosophy, especially any sort of philosophy not in the analytic tradition can itself be analysed in terms of its rhetorical content and style, and can at least in some instances be analysed along the same lines as literature. Philosophy can be thought of as a kind of writing, and since we already think of literature in such terms, it is much easier to begin an analysis of their intersection.

Dutton and Hagberg in Duran's (2007:1) explain that philosophy is about life from the broadest possible perceptive, and so is literature.

However, contemporary work has been done on the boundary of philosophy and literature precisely because so many philosophers have thought that literature has a great deal to offer on a conceptual level. It speaks to moral and even epistemological concerns.

Interaction between literature and philosophy

Duran (2007) reveals that philosophy and literature as a discipline or orientation that has to do with the *literary* treatment of *philosophers* and *philosophical* themes, and philosophical treatment of issues raised by literature. In discussing the interaction between literature and philosophy, three components of the discourse will be examined. These are the philosophy of literature, the literature of philosophy and philosophy in literature.

The philosophy of literature

Philosophy of literature is a branch of *aesthetics*, the branch of philosophy that deals with the question, "What is art"? Much of aesthetic philosophy has traditionally focused on the plastic arts or music, however, at the expense of the verbal arts. In fact, much traditional discussion of aesthetic philosophy seeks to establish criteria of artistic quality that are indifferent to the subject matter being depicted. Since all literary works, by definition, contains notional content, aesthetic theories that rely on purely formal qualities tend to over look literature.

The very existence of *narrative* raises philosophical issues. In narrative, a creator can embody, and readers be led to imagine *fictional* characters, and even *fantastic* creatures or *technologies*. The ability of the human mind to imagine, and even to experience *empathy* with these fictional characters reveals the nature of the human mind. Some fictional works can be *experiment* in *ethics*: they describe fictional characters, their motives, their actions, and the consequences of their actions. It is in this light that some philosophers have chosen various narrative forms to teach their philosophies.

The literature of philosophy - philosophical fiction

Some philosophers have undertaken to write philosophy in the form of fiction, including novels and short stories. This appears early in the literature of philosophy, where philosophers such as Plato wrote dialogues in which fictional or fictionalized characters discuss philosophical subjects. A number of philosophers have had important influence on literature. Arthur Schopenhauer, largely as a result of his system of aesthetics, is, perhaps, the most influential recent philosopher in the history of literature.

Philosophy in literature

This is presentation of literature in philosophical ways. It applies philosophical terms in presenting facts in literature. A good number of philosophical ideology is presented in literature either fictional or non fictional. This is to say that depth knowledge of philosophy is treated in literature.

The novel as a form of literature

Encyclopedia Britannica (2005:116) defines the novel as a genre of fiction. Fiction may be defined as the art or craft of contriving, through the written word, representations of

human life that instruct or divert or both. In the view of Holman (1980:184) "A fiction is a narrative writing drawn from the imagination of author rather than from history or fact". In addition, calling a work 'fiction' denotes that it has unity and that all of its various parts cohere, and contribute to the centre. Fiction is an imaginative work often thought of as the opposite of fact but it may be based on facts and certainly includes factual material. The major function of fiction, according to Agyekum (2007:165) is not only to entertain but also to serve as a medium through which the author, individuals and the society express their views and comment and communicate about ongoing events and their visions. Agyekum identified forms of fiction to include allegory, parables, fables, anecdotes. Parables and fables teach a lesson or a moral; anecdotes generally illustrate a point or somebody's account of something, that is, a short account of an incident or event through humour.

Style of the novel

Encyclopedia Britannica (2005:122-124) classifies styles of the novel into Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, Impressionism, Expressionism and Avant-gardism.

Romanticism

The aim of romantic fiction is less to present a true picture of life than to arouse the emotions through a depiction of strong passions, or fire the imagination with exotic, terrifying, or wonderful scenes and events. (Encyclopedia Britannica 2005).

In Agyekum's (2007:121) view, 'romanticism marked the reaction in literature, philosophy, art, religion and politics from the previous literary movements like classicism and neoclassicism'.

Holman (1980:394) notes that romanticisms emphasized the individual or personal, the subjective, the irrational, the imaginative, the personal, the spontaneous, the emotional, the visionary and the transcendental. In it, the individual is of supreme importance and feeling is superior to reason. Romanticism sees the individual at the very centre of all life and all experience and art and therefore, literature becomes an expression of an individual experience that serves as a picture of a societal experience.

Fágúnwà's novels have a high function of romanticism in terms of his presentation. In terms of themes, nature became a major one in Romanticism. Nature was described in detail and valued as a source of moral lessons with a fresh size of rapport between humanity and the natural world. In looking at nature, romanticism paid attention to rural life, enthusiasm for the uncivilized, interest in human rights, sympathy with animals and plants, sorrows and haunted emotion and sentiments, love for lyrics and folk songs. All these traits are observed in Fagunwa's novels and this qualify him as a romanticism novel stylist.

Realism

Agyekum (2007:122) says, "Realism is the theory in art and literature where works are associated to real life situations and the accurate representation of man, nature and environment.'. He says further that realism looks at things from a pragmatic point of view. Thus, realists are believers in pragmatism and seek to find the relative truth of things based on pragmatic context and verifiable and provable experiences and evidence.

In terms of pragmatic value, this study may avail the readers, researchers, members of the public the opportunity to glean different philosophical strands inherent in Fagunwa's texts and, perhaps, endeavour to apply some to their day-to-day activities.

The discussed novel styles above help in determining and affirming the type of style adopted by D.O Fágúnwà in his novels. It is observed that Fágúnwà's style is more of combination of both romanticism and realism.

Theoretical Framework

Fuller (1966:1) avers that a philosophical theory is the one that explains or accounts for a general philosophy or specific branch of philosophy; while any sort of thesis or opinion may be termed a theory in analytic philosophy. Philosophical theories are not necessarily scientific theories although they may consist of both empirical and non-empirical statements in essence; the collective statements of all philosophical movements, schools of thought and belief systems consist of philosophical theories. Philosophical theories may also take the form of a life stance, religion, worldview, or ideology.

In Platonism, Raphael (1983) says, the meaning of life is in attaining the highest form of knowledge, which is the idea (Form) of the Good, from which all good and just things derived utility and value. Human beings are duty-bound to pursue the good, but no one can succeed in that pursuit without philosophical reasoning, which allows for true knowledge.

In Plato's opinion, the mind scarcely distinguishes fact from fancy, dreaming from waking, the shadow from the substance, the reflection from the original. Knowledge, according to Plato, is classified into (a) thinking through and understanding (b) dialectic or philosophic wisdom (Fuller, 1966:130-147). Therefore, Plato avers that, in the acquisition of knowledge, the thinking through the world of sense to the world of eternal forms and laws, exemplified in the flux does not bring our mental activities to their final goal.

Definition of worldview

Heylighen (2000), point to the fact that a world view is a theory of the world, used for living in the world. He attests further that a worldview is a mental model of reality - a framework of ideas and attitudes about the world, ourselves, and life.

Carol Hill (2010) defines worldview as "the basic way of interpreting things and events that pervades a culture so thoroughly that it becomes a culture's concept of reality - what is good, what is important, what is sacred, what is real".

Epistemology

Epistemology is defined by Davies as a branch of philosophy that studies the theories of knowledge. It asks questions about the origin, methods, nature, scope, and validity of knowledge. All the theories of knowledge are developed as a defence against skeptics who hold the views that it is impossible for someone to know anything. Davies, however, highlights several types of knowledge including rational knowledge, revealed or revelation knowledge, empirical knowledge, authoritative knowledge, intuitive knowledge, tradition and common sense knowledge.

Epistemology is the knowledge of what is presented to us in experience. Personal experience is acquired through the totality of man's faculties. In this mode of knowing, Platonic epistemology emphasis that all of man's faculties are simultaneously brought to bear on the object of experience (Unah, 2002). In trying to acquire knowledge of the world, the African intuities, reasons, feels, imagines all at the same time. In other words, the method through which the African arrives at trustworthy knowledge of reality is intuitive and personal experience. The African who wants to come to knowledge of the world, makes use of concepts by inspection, intuition and imagination (Unah, 2002).

Anyone who wants to talk about the epistemology of a specific ethnic nationality in Africa must concern himself with examining how the African sees or talks about reality (Uduigwomen, 2002). African thought is that of ascertaining whether or not what is claimed as knowledge is actually knowledge rather than mistaken opinion on the one hand, and the sources of acquiring the knowledge on the other hand (Aja, 1993). These in the context of African Traditional thought according to Aja (1993) are many and varied.

Epistemology in Yorùbá concept

In Yorùbá epistemology, the mode of knowing is majorly through intuition, oral tradition, the senses, premonition, mystical knowledge and by inference among others Dopamu (2004).

Epistemology in Yorùbá worldview as encapsulated in D. O Fágúnwà's *Ògbójú Qdẹ nínú Igbó Irúnmólẹ*

Intuition

Awolalu (1978) avers that Yorùbá epistemology is a form of knowledge of reality that is acquired through one's imagination. It is a knowledge that suddenly dawns on an individual without having ever perceived or experienced it through the senses. There is no prior logical analysis nor any rigorous empirical study of the object. In *Ògbójú*, the victory of Àkàrà Oògùn from an Antelope- turned- man is Ochestrated by intuitive wisdom. Àkàrà Oògùn says:

Nígbà tí ilẹ̀ mọ̀ tí ọ̀kúnrin yìí jáde tí ó tún gbé iṣu tútù fún mi ní Ọlórún fì ọ̀rọ̀ kan sí mi ní ẹnu tí mo ṣì beere ibéèrè kan lówó ọ̀kúnrin náà tí mo sì wí pé: Ẹ jòwọ̀, ọ̀gá, mo bè yín ẹ má ṣàì sọ ìdí rẹ̀ fún mi tí ẹ̀ kí í fì sẹ̀ iṣu kí ó tó di pé ẹ̀ n jẹ̀ ẹ̀. Ó wò mi tiyanu tiyanu, ó sì wí pé òun kò mò pé ohun kan wà ti orúkọ̀ rẹ̀ n jẹ̀ iṣu sisẹ̀. Lẹ́yìn èyí ni mo túbò láà yée pé bí ènìyàn bá sẹ̀ iṣu yóò dùn ju igbà tí ènìyàn kò sè é lọ. Lẹ́yìn tí ó sì bí mi bóyá mo lè sẹ̀ iṣu fún òun jẹ̀, tí mo sì sọ fún un pé mo lè sẹ̀ ẹ̀, ó tu mi silẹ̀. Mo dá iná, mo sẹ̀ iṣu, iṣu jiná, mo hó o mo sì fún kí ó máa jẹ̀ ẹ̀, nígbà tí o tọ̀ iṣu yìí wò, ó dùn mó ọ̀ púpọ̀, ó sì bèrẹ̀ sí bá mi sọ̀rọ̀ dáadáa. (p.26)

In the morning, this man came out and gave me raw yam, God then gave me a word, I asked him a question, I asked: please, sir, I beg you, why don't you cook your yam before you eat? He looked at me amazingly and said, I did not know there is anything called boiled yam. Thereafter, I schooled him, that cooked yam is more palatable than the raw. He asked if I could cook one for him and answered in the affirmative, he released me, I made fire, cooked yam, when done, I peeled and gave him to eat. When he tasted it, he loved it and began to converse with me.

Àkàrà oògùn did not premeditate the plan of boiled yam which eventually opened way for his deliverance but the idea just came by intuition. Àkàrà oògùn acknowledged this when he said '*Ọlórún fì ọ̀rọ̀ kan sí mi ní ẹnu...*' (God then gave me a word). There was no prior logical analysis of the workability or efficacy of the plan, nor was it that someboby has ever used that idea before for deliverance from an impending doom. It was purely intuitive knowledge which up till the present decade, the Yorùbá would say '*iyè mi déédé sọ*' (it suddenly dawn on me) while expressing themselves about a discovery that is not premeditated.

Oral tradition:

A tradition is oral if it has no written literature or sacred scriptures. In other for a thing to be regarded as tradition, it must be widely understood and practiced in a society and it must have been handed down for at least a few generation (Uduigwomen, 2002).

In Yorùbáland, oral tradition consists of myths, legends, stories, proverbs, beliefs, riddles and adages, ideas, social attitudes, conventions, institutions and customs. Oral tradition could also come in the form of arts and crafts, names of peoples, places and sacred shrines, emblems symbols and so on. The Yorùbá hand down their thought system, beliefs,

myths from one generation to another by word of mouth or by practice. The elderly and the wise-men are regarded as the purveyors of oral tradition (Bamgbose, 2007).

The stories which the hunters listened to at Ìràgbèjẹ's House for seven days in *Ògbójú Ọdẹ Nínú Igbó Irínmọlẹ* are examples of Yorùbá Oral Tradition. Ìràgbèjẹ narrates different story as the day go by. An example of such story is the one centres on morals which he narrates on the first day thus:

Ìwọ èniyàn, ìwọ bímọbímọ, tó ọmọ rẹ nígbà tí ó wà ní ọmọdé...Má ẹ jẹ kí ọmọ rẹ kó ẹgbẹkẹgbẹ, kí ó ti kékeré bẹrẹ ọdẹ ẹmu mímu... kí ó máa jó ijó èèmọ káàkiri ọde... sọ ọrọ ẹnu ọmọ rẹ, gba èké lówọ rẹ, gba òfófó lówọ rẹ...má ẹ jẹ kí ó máa sọrọ tí ó ju ẹnu ọmọdé lọ, má ẹ jẹ kí ó dí ògbó olè mọ-ọ lówọ, kí ọún di èrò ẹwọ̀n lẹyìn ọla... (p. 73).

O man, ye parents, train your child while young...do not allow your child join bad gangs, following after them that drink wine...dancing weirdly on the street,...watch what the child says, take away from him hypocrisy take him far from being informant...disallow him from saying what is beyond a child, do not allow him turn to hardened thief less he becomes a prisoner in the future.

The excerpts above is a poetic rendition on certain social norms that must be inculcated by parents in their children. It is the responsibility of parents to inculcate in their wards values such as denunciation of bad company, drunkenness, hypocrisy and the like. The issue of child training occupies a central theme in Yorùbá oral tradition.

Perceptual knowledge

This is also called experiential knowledge because it is knowledge gained through the senses. Traditional Africans believe that the knowledge of things around us comes through the senses. Just like the empiricists in Western culture (Fadipe, 1970), Yorùbá believe that knowledge of things around us comes through the senses. What one sees, touches, feels, hears, and/or tastes is taken to be first-class account of knowledge. Àkàrà Oògùn says:

...Mo fi àpò ọdẹ mí ẹ irẹrí, mo sì kí
ìbọ̀n mí dáadáa, mo gbé e sí ìgbẹrí mí.
Lẹyìn tí mo ẹ nńkan wọnyí tán, mo fi
ẹyìn lé ilẹ, mo sùn lọ.

...My hunting bag served for a pillow.

I loaded my gun fully and placed
it next to my head. Haven completed these chores,
I stretched out my back and went off to sleep.

Alana (2004) reveals that the idea of replacing pillow with a hunting bag corroborates the Yorùbá philosophy that in the absence of the sacrificial Bat, one uses 'Òbẹ' for ritual (Bàà r'Àdán à f'Òbẹ ẹbọ). In Yorùbá society, the choice of a substitute in the absence of ideal medium, is achieved through experiential knowledge.

Extra-Sensory Knowledge

This is also known as mystical knowledge, it transcends common sense. It is knowledge acquired exclusively by diviners, priest, herbalists, native doctors and other traditionalists believed to possess innate abilities that enable them to explore and manipulate the spirit world in favour of a natural world. This people act as the mouth-piece of the spirit world and as intermediaries between curious inquires and the spirit world. They are highly revered in Yorùbá land as they can use their power to manipulate forces either for good or harm the community or individual (Adesewo, 2011). The story of Àjàntálá in *Ògbójú Ọdẹ Nínú Igbó Irúnmọlẹ* reveals that an ordinary person cannot calm the act of the strange boy except those who are recognised in the society as the medicine-men. Since the parents and the entire family could not comprehend the boy's attitude, they consulted Babaláwo. The narrator says:

Babaláwo kan wà ní ilú yìí olòògùn pátápátá gbàà ni...
 ọkùnrin yìí múra, ó wọ Ẹ̀kòtò nílá kan, lẹ̀yìn èyí nì ó sán
 ibàntẹ̀ Ọ̀ògùn lé e lórí, lẹ̀yìn eléyí nì ó tó wá wọ agbádá nílá
 dúdú kan, ó dé filà okiribí, ó kó ọ̀ògùn sínú àpò ifá rẹ̀ àwọ̀n bíi
 ikoóde, Àdó, atọ, ẹ̀yọ owó, ilẹ̀kẹ̀ tí wọ̀n fí eegun ejò ẹ̀ àtí
 oríṢíríṢíí nńkan bẹ̀ẹ̀ bẹ̀ẹ̀ gbogbo, ó gbé àpò ifá rẹ̀, ó di ilé
 Àjàntálá. (p.77).

There was an Herbalist in this town, an experienced man and well-versed in magic...He prepared himself, put on his wide trousers and then wore on top of them his loincloth of charms. He threw a large black agbádá over himself, placed a round cloth cap on his head, filled his ifá bag with charms and medicines things, such as Ìkoóde, gourdlets, powder gourds, cowries, beads strung from items of that nature, took up his ifá bag and headed for the home of Àjàntálá.

The above excerpts described an Herbalist who possesses abilities that enables him explore and manipulate the world of the unseen. He is not just an ordinary person, he has such power as to manipulate unseen forces and deplore terrestrial powers to achieve one purpose or the other. One of such purpose is the taming of Ajantala, a day old boy who is already talking. It takes a man versed in extra-sensory knowledge to handle such child just like this.

Premonition

It is a lower form of mystical knowledge as it can be acquired by anybody. It is a knowledge of signs and by signs. The notion of signs in platonic epistemology is termed knowledge in *The Timaeus* because their forms are unchanging and is always proportionate to the realm from from which it is gained (Fuller, 1966:151-160). It is often said that 'Ewú/Òkété' (the big rat) does not walk in day light and that when such happens, it portends bad omen. Repeated sneezing is a sign that one's name is being mentioned somewhere for good or otherwise. A person who accidentally hits his left leg against a stone should better watch out for an impending evil. The perching of the owl 'Òwìwì' on one's roof-top is also a bad sign. Fágúnwà succinctly illustrates Yorùbá worldview on premonition. Àkàrà Oògùn in *Ògbójú* dashed his left leg against the stone and remarked that there is evil in the air.

Dí dide ti mo dide, ẹ̀sẹ̀ ọ̀sì nì mo fí kọ,
 ẹ̀sẹ̀ ìyá a mi nì, igbàkigbà tí mo bá tí fí
 ẹ̀sẹ̀ náà kọ sí nńkankan, nńkan náà kò
 ní dára. (p.23)

As I stood up, I dashed my left foot on a stone, this was
my maternal foot and whenever this happens
over any matter, that affair would not prosper.

In the above excerpts, the expression by Àkàrà Oògùn succinctly described premonition. According to him, he has acquired the knowledge that dashing one's left foot against the stone signifies bad omen, Fagunwa's works reflect the understanding of an average Yorùbá about the implication of this ominous experience, this is knowledge by premonition.

Conclusion

The volume of literature reviewed in this paper has brought to the fore some salient truths that underpinnig the philosophical preoccupation of Fágúnwà in most of his literary works. In the first place, the various manifestations of philosophical prejudices and worldviews across the different ethno-cultural boundaries (Yorùbá inclusive) in the world were examined. The relationship between literature and philosophy was also examined while philosophical theories that are related to the study was also discussed.

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