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UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

TEXTS AND CONTEXTS OF YORÙBÁ HUNTERS' NARRATIVE PERFORMANCE

FEBRUARY, 2009

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CERTIFICATION

I certify that this work was carried out by Káyọ̀dé Ayọ̀bámi Adédùntán in the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan

……..
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DEDICATION

To **DL**

…the idea, the teacher, the mentor;

he of the gentle hands that make fine marbles out of coarse stones

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These acknowledgements, like all attempts at paying bad debts, are not a successful catalogue of all the individuals and institutions to whom I owe the final completion of this research; the limitation of human memory always moderates one's desire to write such a roll.

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ABSTRACT

Research in African cultural and performance studies, long adapted to dealing only with normative forms, had been largely inadequate in the identification and assessment of artistic forms that were not traditionally identified as such. Studies in Yoruba culture and performance had focused predominantly on standardized forms such as *ìjálá, ẹ̀sà, ìyẹ̀rẹ̀* and *àlọ́* to mention just a few, and ignored the prevalent performance culture that convolved with everyday human routine. The drama, poetry and narrative bedded in such practices as hawking, preaching and conversation were not well researched into. Related to this was the problem of taxonomy that sometimes ignored the elastic nature of many African cultural sites. Models adopted by existing works were either outright inadequate or somewhat outmoded today as a result of exigent transformation and modification in the cultural practices**.** The narratives on the exploits of Yoruba hunters were used to establish the relevance of performance to cultural sites that were considered silent and banal. This assumed silence was especially highlighted in the case of the hunters' exploits because of the cultural and professional ethic that forbade them to tell their stories at home.

The data were obtained from the hunters of the guinea savannah of Oke-Ogun area of Oyo State, and the rain forests of Oyo and Osun States. Between 2003 and 2007, 71 narratives, including live radio studio sessions of the hunters' performance, were observed and recorded on video and magnetic tape. Certain aspects of allied activities such as hunting expedition, and Ògún worship and festival in which the hunters were prime participants were also studied. Nineteen hunters were individually interviewed. The study employed qualitative approach in the literary analysis of the data.

Yoruba hunters' stories are told today and have even emerged as entertainment series on electronic media. The electronic media outgrowth of the hunters' narratives exemplified the dialectic of tradition and change in which the contemporary exigency necessitated a review and modification of norms. The hunters' narratives also provided an index to the Yoruba understanding and explanation of their world, a cosmology that negates the anthropocentric view of creation. In very literal sense, man, in this peculiar world, is equal actor with animal and nature spirits with whom he constantly contests and negotiates space. This worldview was found to have influenced the vision of even the modern literary artists such as D.O. Fagunwa and Amos Tutuola.

As mere conversational form, the narratives qualified as art in their own right. It encouraged a closer individual appraisal of texts and contexts of oral performance forms, an approach which helps to avoid pitfalls of generalization that characterized many attempts at describing the poetics of oral performance. However, more attention should be paid to the performative aspects of human activities which the literary and verbal arts purport to mimic in the first place.

Key words: Yoruba Hunters' Narratives, Texts and Contexts, Performance culture
Word count: 467

Fig 1.1 Map of Nigeria highlighting Oyo and Osun States

Source: www.google.com/images/maps/nigeria

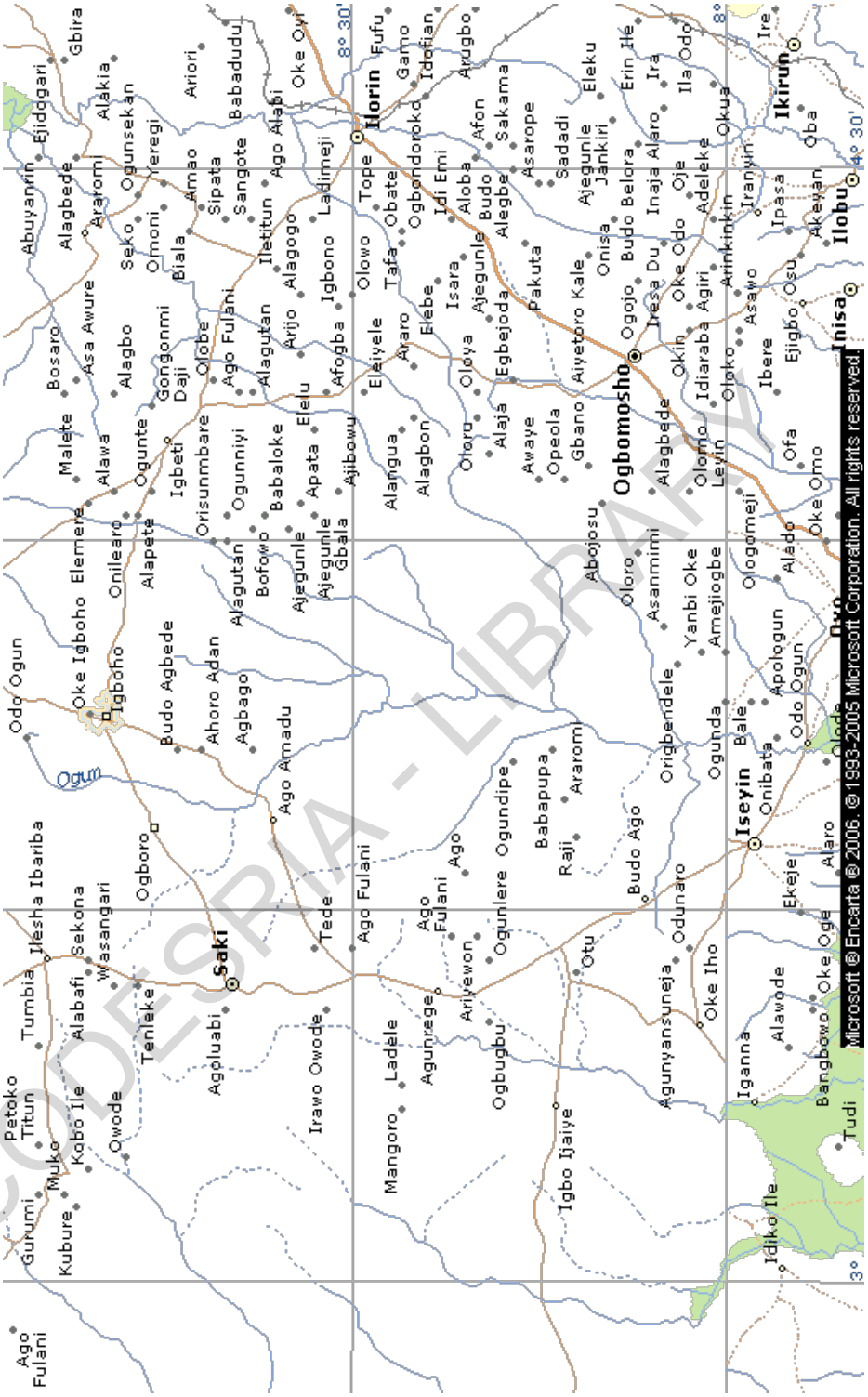

Fig 1.2 Map showing a part of Òkè Ògùn. The inserted rings describe some of the places mentioned in the thesis.
Source: Microsoft Encarta Premium 2006.

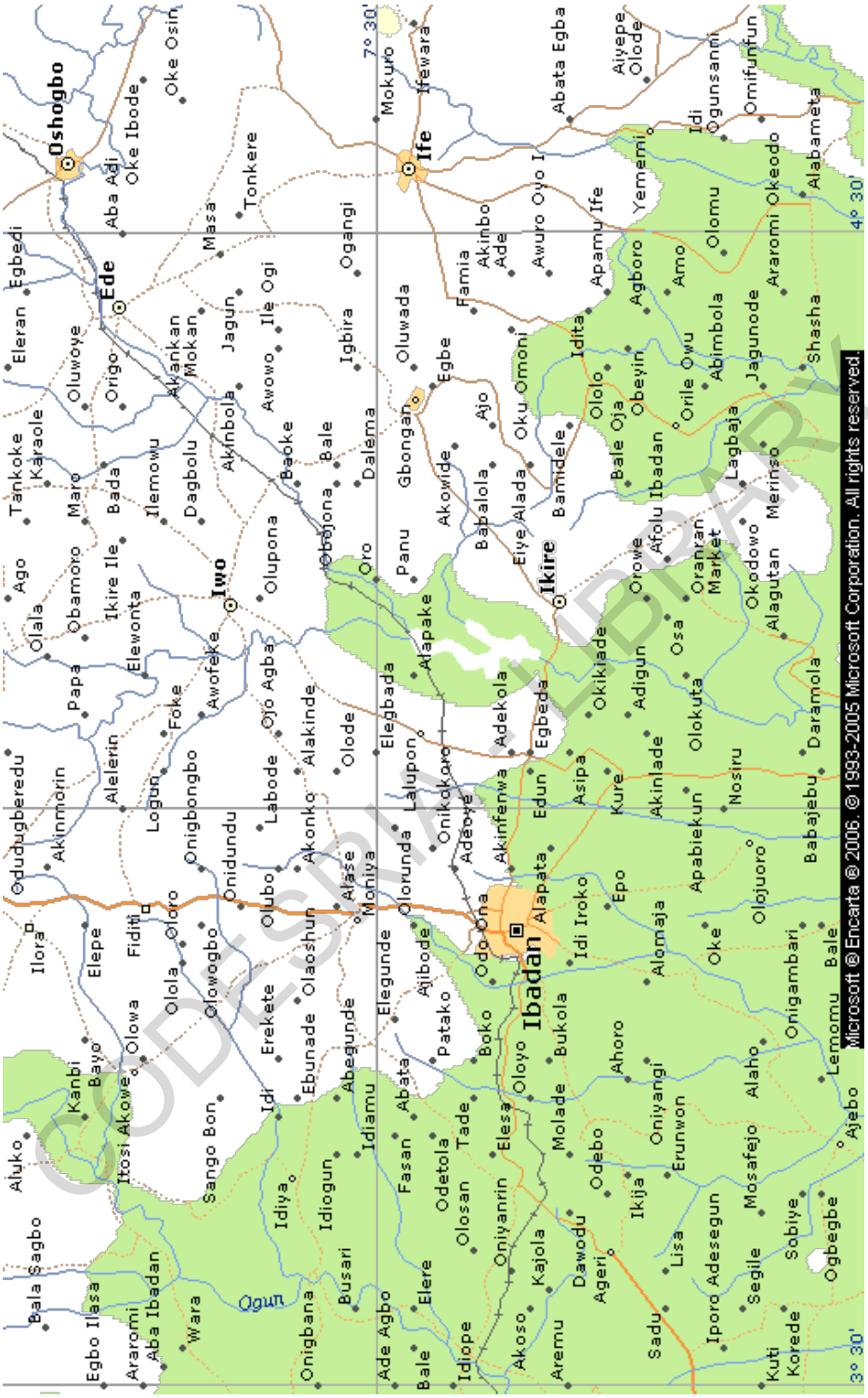

Fig 1.3 Map of the rain forest area of Oyo and Osun States. The inserted rings describe some of the places mentioned in the thesis. **Source**: Microsoft Encarta Premium 2006.

CHAPTER 1
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

1.1.1 Hunter, hunting and a Yoruba cosmology

Man has hunted animals for millions of years (K. Hill, 1982). From a mere means of subsistence, hunting has evolved into a cultural complex with different significance for different peoples. Among the San people of the Kalahari, according to an anonymous on-line writer,

> [hunting] was not…as vital for the survival of these people as is often believed, for studies have shown that meat constituted only a small part of their diet. The importance of hunting lay in its significance as a source of prestige for men and in the provision of sought-after delicacies in sharing of which social ties within the band [of hunters] were emphasized and reinforced.

For the Gwinch'in, a native American people in northern Alaska, the hunted meat is *the food* (Inoue, 2001). The Gwinch'in have additionally inscribed into the enterprise their response to the grand narrative of the occupying white hegemony:

> According to Gwinch'in, meat or edible plant which they have obtained from their land through their activities of hunting...and gathering should be considered 'real foods'... By contrast, ready-made food, which is sold in stores, is 'substitute' food. Moreover, fancy foods, such as coffee or candy, are considered to be 'poison' because they contain substances which are 'bad' for people's body and mind. (94)

In sum, hunting, like many other occupations, is a site of cultural signification for which the table is just a starting point.

In traditional Yoruba society, the hunters were the elite on whom the society depended for its security and intelligence. To date, the same nominal *ọdẹ* denotes hunter and security guard. To the Yoruba, the bush or forest is not just the habitat of flora and fauna, but as well of spirits – *iwin*, *ẹbọra*, *àmjọ̀ọ̀nú*, *sẹ̀rankosènìyàn*, *ọ̀rọ̀* and so on. In other words, the bush or forest is a realm of the infinite where the giant rat may tie up the hunter's dog, the *ìrókò*[1] tell the hunter in which direction to seek game, and porcupines organize a concert. Brenda Cooper (1998) describes this reality as "an intricate and indivisible mosaic of the universe" which "contests the divide between the human and the divine, the animate and inanimate, objects and humans" (40). Andrew Apter (1992) also notes:

> [The] bush is the place of ghosts, demons, monsters, even inverted societies which only the most powerful hunters and heroes can survive. It is also the habitat of dangerous animals and special plants used by herbalists to make *juju* medicines. In ritual, the bush shrine is off-limit to the uninvited and uninitiated. It is the domain of powers which dwell in ponds, streams, hills and trees, but which roam freely and capriciously. The bush is wild, dangerous, uncultivated – it intrudes on farms and has to be cut back. In a deeper sense, it represents the void, the unknown, the other side of social life – bad death, estrangement, unbound space, unpredictability, chaos. (175)

The hunter, therefore, as a habitué of this realm that forecloses finitude, is in the vanguard of his society's eternal quest to domesticate the unknown.

The Yoruba suppose that the hunter has been part of their world since the primordial times. In *Òsá Méjì*, an *odù* of *Ifá*, Àjàláyé and Àjàlọ́run, personifications of earth and heaven respectively, are cast as hunters (Abimbola, 1969a). These two friends both agree to hunt a particular bush. The expedition is unsuccessful as their only kill is just a palm-sized rodent. Neither of the two friends would cede the game to the other, and in the ensuing conflict, virtually the entire earthly creation

[1] A tree, Chlorophora excelsa. (Z.O. Gbile, 1984)

suffers adversity: drought, flood, fire, barrenness, mortality etc. Only a sacrificial solution, in which the vulture volunteers to officiate, later reestablishes the earth-heaven umbilical, restoring peace and stability to the earth. In another narrative variously performed as *ìjálá* or *ìyẹ̀rẹ̀*, Heaven the hunter is Gbùélè or Olúgbúèlé (Yemitan 1963) or Gbúèdé (Abimbola 1969a) and Earth the hunter is Wawa (Yemitan, 1963) or Waawaa (Abimbola, 1969a). In the ijala version, relations between the two friends break down when Earth betrays Heaven, resulting in a similar affliction. On the instruction of Olódùmarè, Ọ̀rúnmìlà, the primordial *babaláwo* and personification of Ifá, later brokers peace, and normalcy is restored. At the core of these narratives is the portrait of the hunter as an indivisible complex of the mundane (earth) and the supernatural (heaven), a cosmic system that ruptures the moment the two become isolated.

1.1.2 Some roles of the Yoruba hunter

As has been mentioned above, the hunter also doubles as warrior and guard. In many pre-colonial Yoruba societies, the hunters constituted a high percentage of the army. Where there was no standing body of such specific military designation, hunters were simply pressed into service any time the community was threatened by invasion. J.A. Ogunsina (1987)writes: "the Yoruba wars in the pre-colonial times...contributed to making the hunter prominent in the society" (142). Even today when communal wars are no longer legitimate, hunters still function in similar capacity. In communities like Tedé, Àgọ́ Àrẹ and Ṣakí, all in Òkè Ògùn area of Oyo State, the nomadic Bororo herdsmen are occasionally on the loose during the planting season, grazing their herds on farmlands. Any season that such invasion becomes as extravagant as to threaten the year's harvest, the hunters are called out to put the herdsmen to flight. It is important to note that in modern states like Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra-Leone that have recently gone through wars, "hunters", writes Melissa Leach (2000), "are being asked to play roles in defence *which reinvoke older form of hunter warriordom* now joined to modern state interests" (Italics mine, 586). And in the heat of the battle, the *kamajo's* (meaning *hunter* in Mende) "offensive came to be so devastating that the RUF [Sierra-

Leone's rebel Revolutionary United Front] had to admit that their enemy was the *kamajo*, not the army" (587).

It is in consonance with his role as a proof for his society against the Other, the unknown and the unpleasant that the hunter serves as a security guard. Thomas J. Basset (2003) writes that factors like the disappearance of wildlife, unemployment and attendant criminality have combined to resituate the hunter as a significant social actor in the twentieth century Cote D'ivoire. The hunters, reputed for their extraordinary ability to pacify the enemy, are now being recruited as security guards by banks and other institutions. In Ibadan, one of the areas considered for this study, the situation is especially so with robbers becoming more defiant of the law enforcement agents. The people have not only lost confidence in the police but have also come to view them with the same suspicion reserved for thieves and robbers. In Òké-Àdó and Bẹẹrẹ areas of the city for example, there is growing patronage for the hunter's security service from such concerns as banks and hotels. Coordinated by Kọ́lá Akíntáyò, himself a hunter, the hunters' guild in the area had gone ahead to register itself with the appropriate authorities as a security firm, *Ọdẹ Plus*. Akintayo said:

> Nígbà t'ó di wípé àwọn ọlọ́sa ya bo gbogbo ìlú Ìbàdàn, àwọn ìlú wáá ké bá mi pé kíni mo le se láti ran àwọn lọ́wọ́. Mo ní t'éèyàn bà fi irú àwọn ọdẹ tí ń p'erin tí ń p'ẹfòn yìí sọ́ àdúgbo, ọkàn ó balẹ̀ ẹ. Mo wá lọ register *Ọdẹ Plus*.
> [One time when robbers besieged the entire Ibadan city, people ran to me for help. I then thought that if one could make use of the hunters that kill elephants and buffaloes as security men, there would be peace. So I went on and got *Ọdẹ Plus* registered.][2]

The hunter as an adept at "braving dangers of the great animals of the bush and the supernatural powers that would thwart him" (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1958:29) has also been assigned the cognate role of a founder and a scout. Isola Olomola (1990) notes:

[2]Recorded interview. 17th April, 2007.

> [famous] traditions were built around notable hunters in various traditions of origin and in histories of the growth and development of various states and kingdoms of the Yoruba. The stories of origin generally depict hunters as aboriginal settlers and often as scouts and pathfinders who led the first settler-groups to the traditional homeland. (26)

Origin narratives of Yoruba towns and cities like Ògbómòṣó, Ẹdẹ and Òṣogbo are ready examples. Specifically, the Ògbómòṣó example has been popularized in the last three decades as TV drama, stage play and home video[3].

As the third eye that sees through the opaque screen between the self and the mysterious Other, the hunter – a scout and pathfinder – helps the community to access the unknown. At the end of 16th century when Ogbolu, the Alafin of Oyo, and a section of his council mooted that the capital of the empire be relocated from Ìgbòho back to Katunga, the initial site, many people, among them members of the council, were opposed to it. In the bid to checkmate the plan, those in the opposition contrived to use men masked as ghosts to scare off the emissaries sent by the Alafin to survey Katunga. Troubled by the failure of the advance party, the Alafin sent six notable hunters to reconnoiter the "ghost-occupied" Katunga. The hunters did not only unmask the "ghosts" but also brought them to the capital in fetters (Adedeji, 1981; Smith, 1988). Admitted that the men were no ghosts after all, the choice of hunters in the narrative as scouts still puts in relief their role as agency of demystification.

One implication of the danger that the bush poses to the hunter is that he, as a matter of course, has to rig himself out with medicine and magical powers. Bọ̀dé Agbájé describes this necessity:

> Yàtọ̀ sí pé àwọn odẹ a máa ṣe òògùn àwúre ẹran pípa, wọ̀n tún maa ńlo oríṣîríṣìí agbára tí wọ́n bá fẹ́ lo pa eranko abìjà. Wọ́n maa ńlo áwon òògun bí àfẹ́ẹ̀rí, egbé ati ọfọ̀. Tí egbé bá gbé ọdẹ kúrò níbi tí òhun àti eranko bá gbé wọn [sic] ìjàkadì, yóó tún ìbon rè kì kí ó tún [tó] máa to eran náà lọ láti yìn ín níbon lẹ́ẹ̀kejì. (114)
> [Apart from their use of luck charms that guarantee them good kill, the hunters also employ all sort of

[3] Lere Paimo's *Ògbórí Ẹlémòṣò*, based on this narrative, has been performed on all these media.

> magical powers to confront malevolent animals. They use such powers as charms that make them invisible, make them disappear from somewhere and appear elsewhere, and incantation. When the hunter thus disappears from the place where he has been locked in a fight with the animal, the respite allows him to reload his gun before he confronts the animal once more to fire at it.]

The above is just one index to the necessity of the hunter's knowledge of the supernatural powers. Cases abound, as shall be shown later in the study, of hunters trading one favour or the other for medicine, charms or some other power with spirits. Invariably, the hunter is then regarded as a sort of repository of herbal and magical powers, and knowledge. Ògúndélé Ògúndèjì of Ọ̀jẹ́ Owódé, a veteran hunter and guard said that "tí ọdẹ bá di ògbólògbó ọdẹ, àgbà ìsègùn ní í dà [when the hunter gets very old, he evolves into a powerful medicine man]"[4]. The hunter often finds himself playing the role of a healer therefore. In fact, there are examples of hunters who retired into full-time herbal medicine and healing practice. Narratives of their hunting days are their credentials.

It might not be possible to itemize all the roles and significance of the hunter in Yoruba society. Different cultures and different histories produce different exigencies that describe the roles their hunters play. It is however important at this point to identify one cardinal role: that of the hunter as a verbal artist. This aspect of the hunter's culture is the subject of various studies (Babalola, 1966; Ajuwon, 1981). The hunter's narrative as an exercise in "mythmaking" is considered in this study as belonging essentially in this aspect of the hunters' culture.

1.1.3 The hunter in Yoruba society

Isola Olomola (1990) identifies two types of hunters: "the amateur and the professional" (26). In Olomola's category, the amateurs are those "who were primarily cultivators [and] who in their spare time hunted in the neighbourhood or set traps and snares to catch rabbits, squirrels, antelopes and deer. Professional

[4] Recorded interview, 16th December , 2006.

hunters stalked big animals such as leopards, hyenas, tigers, buffaloes, gorillas and elephants" (26). If this neat division had ever existed in the past, it is no more there. Today, most of the hunters double as farmers, artisans, guards or employees of different institutions. Yet many of them are reputed to have killed animals ranging from squirrel to elephant. Second, though big game has some reputation that goes with it, it is virtually an axiom among the hunters that it is not so much the size of a kill that differentiates the "real" hunters from the amateurs, but the extraordinary obstacles confronted and surmounted in the course of hunting. It is in fact a popular instruction among the hunters that the so-called small animals give the hunter worse fight in the supernatural realm. In the narratives collected for this study, deer and other bovine quadrupeds, treated as amateur games by Olomola, preponderate highest as animal antagonists.

However, the merit of Olomola's differentiation is the suggestion that there are hunters and non-hunters. Among the hunters, there are those referred to as *ọmọọdẹ* (apprentice hunters) and the *àgbà ọdẹ* or *baba ọdẹ* (elder hunters). The former, as the name denotes, are those who, mostly young people, still need tutelage and guidance from the older hunters. The *àgbà ode* are mostly those who are old and experienced enough to guide the amateurs. But even this differentiation is fluid. It becomes nebulous when applied to a number of contexts simultaneously. For example, a fifty-year old with up to thirty years of hunting experience is an *àgbà ode* but also resorts to his own *àgbà ode* – called *baba ọdẹ* in this context – for material or instructional assistance[5]. It is also worthy to note that some hunters themselves do draw lines between those who are actually of the hunters' lineage and those from non-hunters families, calling the latter "Odẹ́wùmí", a label that designates them as adopted elements and therefore inferior. But as has been observed elsewhere (Adeduntan, 2003: 17-18), such claim primarily functions as a device of establishing the performing hunter as the protagonist of his narrative. In reality, lineage plays little part in the actual prominence of the hunter, a reality that has often emboldened the so-called "Ọdẹ́wùmí" to respond with the epiteth "Ọdẹòníran" [hunting has no lineage].

[5] See **Appendix I**

The above clarification is necessary in view of the description to be attempted presently. The provisional distinction to be drawn is between those who on the one hand have identified themselves as hunters and who, either as members of a team or alone, practice hunting, using especially gun, and on the other hand non-hunters who may nevertheless hunt as a team and as pastime.

In some parts of Òkè-Ògùn area of Oyo State, communal hunting expedition used to be a regular yearly exercise. In secondary schools in rural communities such as Tedé, Àgọ́-Àrẹ, and Àgọ́-Àmọ́dù, up till the 1990s, it was part of the school calendar. On an appointed day, interested teachers and students with some hunting experience lead others into the bush some distance away from the school, ferreting out animals and hounding them with dogs. A more originary type of this practice, of which the secondary school variant is evidently an outgrowth, is still extant in Ọjẹ́-Owódé, a community in the area. C.N. Okebalama (1991) has written on similar culture among the Ubakala Igbo of Imo State in Nigeria. At the time of the fieldwork (2005- 2007), no other known community in the study areas had either lined up such activity, or gone on such communal expedition in about five years. Some of the informants however disclosed that the expedition used to be an annual event but had gone into abeyance. In Ọjẹ́-Owódé, the expedition had been suspended for about two years due to the death of the Ọlọ́jẹ̀é, the *ọba* of the town[6]. It only resumed in 2006, after a new Ọlọ́jẹ̀é was installed. Now it is significant to mention at this point that the following description of the *Ìgbẹ́ Álágogo*, communal hunting in Ọjẹ́-Owódé, is attempted here as an index to the prominent place of the hunter not only in that community but arguably in many other traditional Yoruba cultures.

Ìgbé Álágogo takes place during the dry season – when there is little or no work on the farm – and it goes on for about three months with breaks on Friday and Sunday[7]. Every night – save Thursday and Saturday – a boy from the *Álágogo* house makes the round sounding a gong all over the community (see **Plate 1.1**). People call out to him from everywhere "Ìgbè ẹ́bo? [Which forest/bush?]," and the

[6] Since the *oba* is a high priest of sort, many cultural activities are put on hold when his seat thus becomes vacant.
[7] The breaks are in order to allow the Christian and Muslim participants go to worship.

boy responds "Igbó Ọba Sẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ [the Forest of Ọba Sẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀]" or any other zone that the older Alágogo himself has marked for expedition the next day.

At the Alágogo boy's end of the exchange, the signified is multiple. First, it is an identification of a place, namely the bush in which hunting would take place the next day. Other subterranean signifieds in the exchange include the time and place of the rendezvous. The distance of a forest or bush determines the time of convergence by participants at the usual place. For Ọba Sẹ̀kẹ̀rè ̣mentioned above for example, people begin to converge from 11.00 am, and the expedition begins at about 12.00 noon (see **Plate 1.2**). The people read all the details in the boy's phrasal response. The response – and this is very important – also subsumes an instruction that farmers and hunters who have traps laid out in the identified area should go to remove them early the next day. It is arguably in order to allow those who have traps time to remove them that the expedition does not always begin before noon. Failure to do so means legitimate confiscation of such trap by any person that sees it or imposition of fine on the owner in the event that a person or dog is injurred by such trap. This is one step in the process of defusing the bush – like an active minefield – in order that non-hunters might tread.

The Alágogo is a kind of prefect among the non-hunters, chosen from the Alágogo house, a family assigned that specific role. He has some experience in reading the direction of the hunter's movement through the occasional reports of their guns. As non-hunter participants in the expedition arrive, gun-totting hunters also arrive but do not converge with them. They simply go on with hunting. When all the hunters are out of sight, the Alágogo summons all the participants and gives his blessing (see **Plate1.3**). He, in addition, warns them: "Ẹ má saájú àwọn ọlódẹ̀ o" [Please, don't outstrip the hunters]. The formation of human movement in the hunt itself provides yet another paratextual mirror of the role of the hunter as the liminal cushion between the society and the "bush". Also, the two identifiable tiers of relation, to be identified shortly, further underline this and additionally create for the hunters – now in a different class – an idiom to which the non-hunter class has no access.

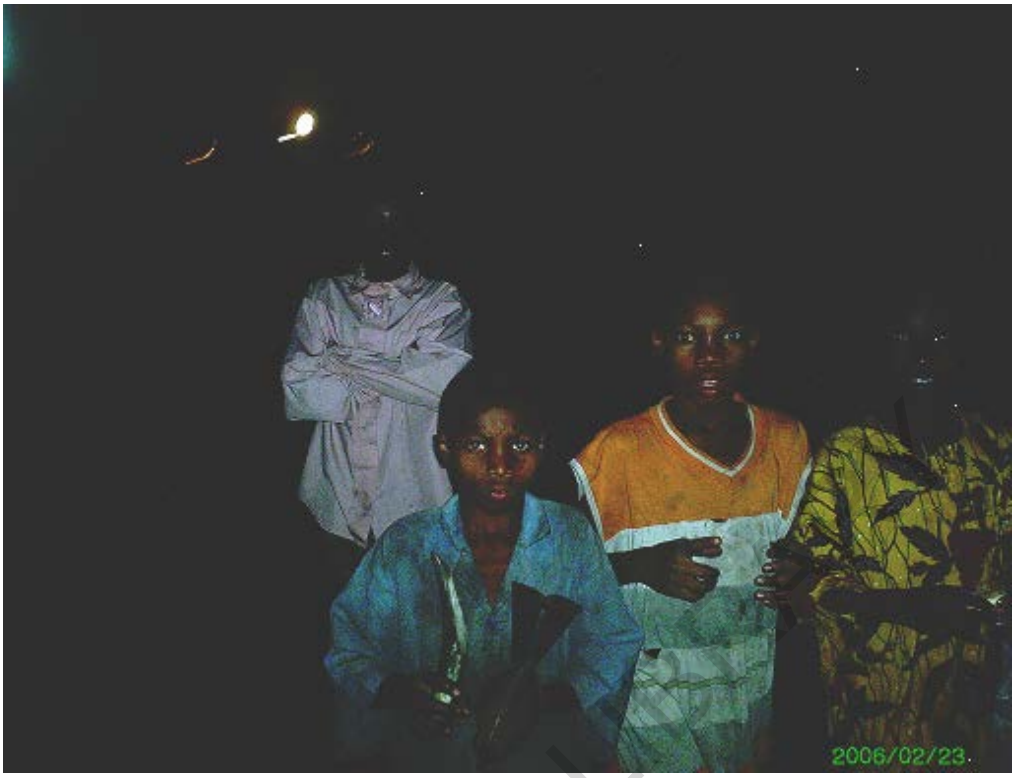

Plate 1.1. The Alágogo boy (left) and mates making the night rounds.

Plate 1.2. Participants converge as a family arrives on a motorbike.

Plate1.3. The Alágogo gives his blessing and declares the day's expedition open.

The Alágogo as guide to non-hunters in turn depends on hunters for guidance. Himself a liminal cushion in this context, he reads what the faint gunshots imply about the direction of the hunters' movement[8] and sounds out his gong in a sort of translation. The hunters constitute the avant-garde here in the most physical sense. The hunters' position recalls a myth about the position of Ogun, the primal hunter and deity of hunting in Yoruba divinity. In Wole Soyinka's rendering:

> The first actor – for he led others – was Ogun, first suffering deity, first creative energy, the first challenger, and conqueror of transition. (1976: 145)

In the Ọjẹ́-Owódé expedition, the hunters often put between their party and the Alágogo about twice the distance between the latter and the non-hunters. This doubles the guarantee that no person strays into the turf not yet covered by the hunters vanguard. Now, that the Alágogo is not physically equidistant to hunters and non-hunters threatens his liminality, and this leads to the second reading of the hunters' position in this formation as an analogue of the social class relation.

The primary role of the Alágogo is that of guide to the non-hunters. But he also adjudicates. He settles cases relating to confiscation of traps and accidents. More significantly, he impounds any game disputed over by non-hunters, his own taking in the exercise. But the hunters too are human, and in the event of multiple hit, argument over whose shot felled the animal sometimes creates animosity between even friends. In another part of the study area (Ibadan), Abdulahi Fámákindé of Abà-Kásúmù Ọ̀wọ́-Baálé in Ẹgbédá Local Government recounted how such claim over a civet almost made him shoot an intimate friend[9]. But the jurisdiction of the Alágogo does not stretch into the hunters' space. The hunters design their own system of adjudication presided over by the *àgbà ọdẹ.* Especial care is, in fact, taken not to let in a non-hunter. Now of importance to the present reading of the communal expedition is this social cordon that the hunter uses to

[8] This demands its own expertise. Most of the areas are mountainous, and confusing echoes from the rocks could lead a non-hunter in the wrong direction.
9 Ọdẹ Akọni, 27th June, 2007.

insulate himself from non-hunters. It replays the attitude of the hunter to his narratives. His world and its reality, in a manner of speaking, proscribe narrativity. Of interest here is that this attitude is like the obverse of his role earlier identified: the hunter as the third eye of his community. The hunter is familiar with the bush and a witness to its infinite weird possibilities. But some ethic forbids that he give his experience total narrative expression.

Nevertheless, the hunter's story is told. The ethic of such total silence is only manageable in a culture that is innocent of storytelling altogether. Hayden White's observation is instructive in this regard:

> So natural is the impulse to narrate, so inevitable is the form of narrative for any report of the way things really happened, that narrativity could appear problematical only in a culture in which it was absent. (1996:274)

As such, narrativity is a prime condition of human communication. Roland Barthes (1996) agrees that "under...almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society... narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there like life itself" (46). The hunters' narratives, a form mediated by the urge to tell story and ethic of discreetness, are the focus of this study.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In 1948, Amos Tutuola wrote to Focal Press. "When he wrote, he asked if Focal Press would like to consider a manuscript about spirits in the Nigerian bush illustrated with the photographs of the spirits!" (Lindfors, 1999:110-111). Whether Tutuola could later get the spirits to pose for photograph or not is not the issue here but the inference that the writer has allotted them space in the same reality inhabited by the photogenic mundane. Isidore Okpewho (1979), illustrating with African visual art, explicates on the attitude of Africans to this reality:

> But the [African] artist has a further level of realism for what has been called the "spirit-regarding order". Art critics have repeatedly and erroneously called this style of art "abstract". Not only do the components of the artistic statement not fool our recognition, as so many of mind-boggling travesties in Greenwich Village often do, the simple fact is that in this category of art the traditional artist is addressing himself not to ideas as such, or abstractions, but to spirits and deities vividly conceived. The distinction is worth emphasizing, because abstraction belongs to an age that has lost considerable faith in the perceptible real – an age, as it were, of disbelief. *Those horrendous shapes that feature in both the folk myth and the plastic arts are as real as the forests and the sequestered shrines that they inhabit.* (Italics mine, 15-16)

It is however characteristic of a section of writers in cultural studies to designate such reality as fantasy "that is typically fictional and only rarely true of real life" (Bamgbose, 1974:9). When not denying outright that Africans ever invested faith in such reality, some writers set it down as a past way of life. Brenda Cooper (1998) writes: "Tutuola's writing is 'ritual' culture. It is archaic is [sic] that it is steeped in the old ways and traditions: the mother culture of ...Tutuola is more archaic because it belongs to a tribal society" (46). This is one formation that this study intends to interrogate.

Another similar formation takes off from the observation that the modern African writing is, at least by half, an offspring of the traditional verbal art and performance. The evolutionist temper however sets in when the traditional form is seen as a slough that the modern literary form has cast off, leaving the latter in the museum to be marveled at as curio. The hunter's narrative, a form that has influenced not only D.O. Fagunwa and Amos Tutuola but also, to some extent, Wole Soyinka and Ben Okri, is not only alive but also enjoys new expression as radio series.

In the postcolonial project aimed at giving the lie to the Western grand narratives, the African scholar is sometimes, in his nationalist zeal, prone to unwittingly reading into African culture and worldview a category that

unrepresentatively mimics the Western model. Kwasi Wiredu (1998) points out that "quite lopsided results ensued" when "African thought was approached with [such] intellectual categories". He continues:

> To take only a few examples, consider such categories of thought as those contained in the following dichotomies: the spiritual versus the physical, the supernatural versus the natural, the mystical versus the non-mystical, and the religious versus the secular, being versus nothingness.

Even as the Yoruba mind is not totally innocent of binary and dichotomy, understanding their worldview entirely through such interpretive model is misleading. For example, contra John Mbiti's observation that African universe is divided into a margin and a centre with "Man who lives on earth" occupying "the centre of the universe" (1975: 38), the Yoruba example accessed from the hunters' narratives negates the anthropocentric view of creation.

Also, in the process of describing the traditional art and culture for the academic curricula and allied pursuits, the African scholar sometimes conceives them as analogues of some Western forms. Though such classification purports to enhance ease of recognition for students from other cultural backgrounds, the peculiar colour of the artistic form under study is often lost in that foreign gloss. Related to this is the energy often dissipated in the exercise to prove that, like the West, Africa has epic (Okpewho, 1979), theatre (Echeruo, 1973; Rotimi, 1981), long narrative equivalent to prose (Roscoe, 1971; Chinweizu et al, 1980), and so on, forgetting that one culture's art does not have to be a lock-stock-and-barrel copy of another in order to be art. The following exemplifies such tendency:

> Most of the work so far done on Yoruba oral *literature* is on *poetry* while *prose* continues to lag behind...
>
> However two important *genres* of Yoruba oral *prose* have so far been recognized namely, *Àlọ̀* and *Ìtàn*. Indeed, these two *genres* of oral *prose* are well known to almost every Yoruba-speaking person who must have come into contact with them during childhood. (Italics mine, Abimbola, 1969b: 1-2)

Though scholarship in culture and performance seems to have overcome much of the reductionism reflected in the above description, there still remains the tendency to concentrate on only the standardized forms like *àló, ìtàn, ìjálá* and so on. Marginal forms such as conversational narratives, dialogue, jokes and dramatic performance that defy, even in indigenous terms, naming and such neat classification abound that are not researched into. One such form is what is identified in this study as hunters' narratives.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What are the roles and significance of Yoruba hunters?

Have these roles and significance diminished or undergone transformation in the postcolonial milieu?

What is hunter's narrative?

Is it of any artistic quality?

Does it reveal anything about the worldview of the Yoruba?

What significance does the study of the hunters' narratives hold for literary, cultural and performance study in Africa?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

"Texts and contexts of Yoruba hunters' narrative performance" intends to:

- use the hunters' narratives as an instance of influential art in a non-formalized space.
- critique the performance of these narratives to assess their artistic quality.
- probe the extent of the performers' conformity with and/or deviation from certain traditional norms.
- examine a body of these narratives to describe a Yoruba cosmology.
- describe the emergence of the radio as a medium of narration, reflecting on its implication for oral performance.
- and finally speculate on the significance of the findings for scholarship in literature, culture and performance.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

As early as the 1970s, the ethnography of speaking school of ethnology pioneered by Dell Hymes called attention to the need to focus on the artistic quality of some forms of human communication that our perception, long adapted to standardized forms, has blinded us to. Even as the adherents of this call like Richard Bauman and Joel Sherzer (1975) have written to describe this site, vacuum still yawns, considering the slim volume dedicated to such specific performance forms. In 1983, Sally Yerkovich noted:

> Careful observation as well as extensive audio recording of conversational interaction is necessary for us to discover and analyze the narrative forms of folklore which are products of our everyday discourse.
>
> Still we have only begun to explore the possibilities for analysis which the social situation provides. We have yet to deal at length with the parts of that conversational process *which are artistic in their own right*. (Italics mine, 279)

This side of the Atlantic, there has been some research attempted in this area of culture and performance. Lekan Oyegoke (1994), Obododinma Oha (1998), and Sarah Young (2004) have examined testimony in the church, modern "mythmaking" and confession at truth and reconciliation commission respectively as performance forms. This study is intended as a contribution to that pool.

Closely linked to the above is the emergent modification of the concept of performance. The orthodox conception of the term invokes the modern theatre or the communal arena where easily identifiable forms like drama and dance are performed. Initial attempt at expansion of the term is also made in folklore. Elsewhere, Bauman has argued that since traditional formal performance largely imitates reality, there is the need to also engage that reality it deals with in the very process of its unfolding:

> Thus conceived, performance is a mode of language use, a way of speaking. The implication of such a concept for a theory of verbal art is this: it is no longer necessary to begin with artful texts, identified on independent formal grounds and then reinjected into situations of use, in order to conceptualize verbal art in communicative terms. Rather ... performance becomes constitutive of the domain of verbal art as spoken communication. (1977:13)

The Yoruba culture is replete with such performative communication: *ìpolówó* poetry [hawker's advertisement] (Osundare, 1991), curse and prayer in churches, political rally and campaign (Schechner, 1993), and informal radio programmes. It is presently necessary not only to identify these forms but also to examine their performativity.

In modern creative writing, Africa has produced an identifiable tradition and the canon is still growing. But with the illiterate and the largely aliterate educated population, much of the literary output remains unpopular with Africans. Only works that make the school syllabi are popular with even students of literature. Femi Osofisan, himself a writer, describes the trend:

> It is this phenomenon that I describe as "monologue", this situation of writers talking to themselves, to a privileged audience, rather than to the ears of the continent's general public. Our literature is not yet, as elsewhere, the property of our people; rather, it has remained the monopoly of fascinated coterie, made up of fellow writers and a small group of foreign critics. (1995: 323)

The situation is even doubly so for the writer in the indigenous language. Lamentable as this is, its obverse presents a challenge to the researcher in the field of culture and performance. A huge quarter of the population gets their narrative entertainment from other media such as cinema, home video, television and the radio. The radio has been very influential because of the easy and cheap access. By the beginning of the 1990s, in the Yoruba-speaking parts of Nigeria, the number of radio programmes based on personal experience narratives had risen considerably:

Ìrírí Ayé, *Òwúyẹ́*, *Àwòdì Òkè*, *Fúnwontán* and so on[10]. With the stability of civil rule and the attendant thriving of the free market economy, entrepreneurs have been jostling with one another for advertisement slots on these programmes. The result, for better or worse, is the rise in the number of freelance presenters designing such programmes for the radio. Some research has been carried out on the development of home video as a medium of entertainment in this area[11], but no such work exists on the emergence of the radio as agency of narrativity. This research subsumes a study of the role of the electronic media in the performance of hunters' narratives.

The convenient task of describing the norms and standard of cultural behaviours sometimes blinds us to some level of licence tolerable in the very culture under study. The Yoruba culture, like many other primary oral cultures, is of such elasticity that aberrant and new entries often settle in for good. Admittedly, such new development may sometimes not survive the tremor that attends it, but there are some instances of survival. For example, it has been shown elsewhere (Adeduntan, 2003) that the *ìjálá* (hunters' performance of poetry) of Àlàbí Ògúndépò upsets some of the traditional norms identified by S.A. Babalola (1966), and that the example of Ifáyẹmí Ẹlẹ́buìbọ́n negates some aspects of the model of *ìyèrè* (performance of poetry by the *Ifá* priests) described by Olatunde Olatunji (1972). This work looks at the hunters' narratives with consideration for such elements, old and new, that are distinct from the known order.

1.6 CULTURE AND ECOLOGY OF STUDY AREA

Òkè Ògùn is the bracket name used for all the Yoruba communities in the north of Oyo State. Excluding very small villages, the communities are up to thirty in number. The historical origins vary from one community to the other with some dated back to the mythical time. In common, the Òkè Ògùn people speak a dialect

[10] *Ìrírí Ayé* included reports of supernatural and mysterious encounters. *Òwúyé* and *Àwòdì* are similar. *Fúnwontán* was a largely comic narration, and representation of known personalities and habits.

[11] See for example D.A. Adeleke "Audience reception of Yoruba films: Ibadan as a case study", 1995.

of Yoruba identified by others as *Ònkò,* each group with a variation that somewhat differentiates it from other communities in the area. The vegetation in this area is guinea savannah and the wildlife includes guinea fowl, partridge, quail, warthog, rhesus and baboon. Part of the wildlife threatened by climate change and human activity includes lion, gorilla, buffalo, hyena and wolf.

In the Ibadan area – south of the state – and the parts of Osun State focussed on in this study, the dialect spoken is the Oyo Yoruba. This label, like *Ònkò,* is adopted for convenience as each population often sees itself as speaking no dialect but simply Yoruba. The prevalent vegetation is tropical rain forest, peculiar habitat to such animals as civet, fox, python, antelope, gazelle, grasscutter and anteater. Here, human activities have also led to some recession of wildlife: animals like elephant, buffalo, gorilla, boa constrictor and python are now rarities.

Though the Yoruba of the areas in focus are involved in other indigenous and modern trades and professions, agriculture is one of the principal economic mainstays. Particularly in the Òkè Ògùn area, such cultural practices as *egúngún, orò and Ògún* festivals are still current in many parts. Ibadan, capital of Oyo State, is more cosmopolitan but many of the cultural practices are also extant. Most of the data from this area were collected from the *abá,* little farm settlements considered as satellites of different indigenous compounds or families that make up the city.

1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The field research for this study was conducted between 2003 and 2007. During this time, the researcher interacted with hunters from different parts of the study area and recorded such interactions whenever permitted. In Òkè Ògùn, such areas include Agúnrege, Ọ̀jẹ́ Owódé, Ṣakí and Òtú. In Ibadan area, the researcher interacted with hunters from the following villages: Alùgbìn (Ẹgbẹ́dá Local Government), Kúseélá (Ẹgbẹ́dá), Apẹtẹ, Dálì (Olúyọ̀lé), Àjóyìnbọn (Ẹgbẹ́dá), Tọ́lá (Ìdó), and Ọ̀wọ́baálé (Ẹgbẹ́dá). In Ọ̀ṣun State, the hunters interacted with are from Ilé Ogbó (Ayédire Local Government), Obamoró (Ọlá Olúwa) and Ajagunlaàsẹ̀ (Ọlá Olúwa).

It is important to state at this point that transgression of borders is part of the Yoruba hunter's calling. He goes away from home to distant places in search of game. As such, in the process of hunting, some have either founded new settlements or settled in communities away from their places of birth. Hunters are therefore simply identified in this work by the place they lived in at the time of interaction with them.

Many of the narratives are recorded transmission of *Ọdẹ Akọni*, the weekly hunters' narrative programme presented by Kọ́lá Akíntáyọ̀ and broadcast between 9.20 and 10.30 p.m. on the A.M. radio of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (B.C.O.S.). By 2005, when this work actually became a doctoral research, *Ọdẹ́tẹ̀dó*, a hunters' community programme broadcast on the B.C.O.S. television, had gone off air. Only a video recording of two sessions of the programme was available for this study.

Only the areas of Oyo and Osun States earlier mentioned were studied. Hunters abound in other parts of the states but it is believed that the data gathered from these areas are representative of the ecological diversity – guinea savannah and tropical rain forest – and culture of the Yoruba of the two states. The study does not also consider the hunters from other Yoruba-speaking parts of the country. Lastly, and most significantly, not all the hunters interacted with agreed to narrate their experience during hunting. Many of them simply declined on the ground that it was not ethical.

1.8 DEFINITIONS

The following cardinal concepts in the thesis are understood in these terms:

1.8.1 Text

It is understood as not just the traditional graphical representation of speech and action but as any other form in which expression, especially artistic, exists and is observed and recorded.

1.8.2 Context

The various arguments against the exclusive consideration of text in the appraisal of performance are hinged on the equal importance of the sociological factors that both influence performance and by which performance is influenced. It is this interrelated condition in which performance exits that is understood here as context. It is, as shown by many scholars (Georges, 1980; Drewal, 1991 Finnegan, 1992), hardly thinkable that text can exist independent of context; it only does in literary analyses. The two major parts of the analysis in Chapter Four, committed differently to texts and contexts of the narrative performance, sometimes, therefore, naturally overlap.

1.8.3 Performance

The study adopts Margaret Thompson Drewal's definition of performance as:

> a fundamental dimension of culture as well as the production of knowledge about culture. *It might include anything from individual agents' negotiations of everyday life to the stories people tell each other, popular entertainments, political oratory, guerrilla warfare*, to bounded events such as theater, ritual, festival, parades, and more. (Italics mine, 1991: 80)

It is in this broad sense, severally prefigured in the work of Richard Schechner, that the concept of performance is adopted.

1.8.4 Performance Studies

As an academic discipline, Performance Studies regards performance in the light of the definition above. According to Drewal, the discipline "opened up the definition of performance to incorporate the practice of everyday life, defying disciplinary constraints and boundaries in order to forge a more truly interdisciplinary research practice" (8).

1.9 OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

The present chapter is an introductory description of the place and the significance of the hunter in Yoruba worldview. It further briefly itemizes the conceptual formations in the existing studies to be examined in subsequent chapters, and finally describes the nature, scope and limitation of the data of the thesis.

Chapter Two engages more elaborately the existing writings on narrativity, arts and culture. A couple of examples of fictional exploitation of the hunter's perspective in modern literature are also reflected upon in order to isolate instances of influence and indebtedness. Importantly, the review of the literature is to allow a clear view of the problematic the thesis aspires to address. In view of the ecclectic theoretic position the study adopts, the various theories from which it benefits are described, commenting on their merits and limitations.

In the description of the methodology adopted in the collection of the data, in Chapter Three, the thesis itemizes the geographical and social areas from which the data were obtained, the specific formal instruments used, the problems encountered in the process and the remedies applied.

In the analysis of the data, the work first discusses the Yoruba resolution of the stiff prescription of norm and ethic on the one hand, and the licence of narrative praxis on the other, using the hunters' narratives as a case study. In the consideration of the selected texts of the Yoruba hunters' narratives, the analysis at once examines the various patterns of conflict, and the narrative deconstruction of the idea of conflict. It further infers from the nature of charaterization and the patterns of conflict a nature of Yoruba cosmology. In the examination of the contexts of the narrative performance, the work discusses the dynamics of exigencies that determine revival, modification and subversion of cultural practices and forms. The chapter especially argues that the hunter's narrative is artistic performance by showing some figural and evocative uses of language in the collected texts.

Chapter Five aggregates the research findings and recommends consistent review of conceptual and theoretic models in view of the performativity and

impermanence of the sites they describe. Transcribed Yoruba texts of some of the narratives collected for the study and their translation into English, and a number of photographs from the research field form the appendices.

CHAPTER 2

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL APPROACH

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.1 The place of poetry performance in hunters' culture

S.A. Babalola's *The content and form of Yoruba Ìjálá* (1966) is one of the early studies on the Yoruba hunters' culture. In Babalola's definition:

> Ijala is described as aré Ògún (the entertainment of the god Ògún) and the performers are referred to as àwọn aláré Ògún (those who perform Ògún's entertainment)… Hunters predominate among the worshippers of the god Ògún, and with this is connected the believe that Ògún in his early life was a hunter and that as a god he is the controller of all iron implements, including guns, cutlasses, and swords. (3)

Divided into two, the first part of Babalola's study is an explanatory prose on the origin narratives, contexts of performance and thematic preoccupation of *ìjálá*. Further, he describes the pupilage and training of the *ìjálá* artist, and attempts an analysis of the *ìjálá* form.

Babalola's description is successful to the extent that it does not presuppose an absolute. Reading today some of his observation on the *ìjálá* text and context of performance, easily available examples upset his taxonomy. For example, he laments:

> It is sad to record that nowadays, in their bid to outshine one another at social gatherings, *some ìjálá artists shamelessly and deliberately corrupt the traditional text of [the] oríkì oríl*è *chants.* (Italics mine, 25).

Further in the chapter, he gives the excuse that "the author will exclude the examples of those vulgar jokes which many an ìjálá artist, in order to excite laughter, nonchalantly resorts to, especially when he is tipsy and unashamed to chant lewd remarks and indecent narratives" because such "broad humour is not usually found in the chants of elderly ìjálá-chanters, who employ euphemism in their references to sexual organs and sexual life" (38-39). Of note here is Babalola's puritan attitude in the assessment of the hunters' culture. Babalola's description of the ìjálá is so hard-and-fast because he does not appreciate the hunter's propensity for challenging boundaries. Contrary to his first objection, the Yòrùbá *oríkì* is not set in stone. Its performativity as *ìjálá* or any other poetic form has undermined fixity. Second, as Karin Barber (1991) points out, the *oríkì* is partly a commentary on man and event, and, to this extent, is documentary. The continuity of life from which poetry takes its material therefore presupposes that it, including *oríkì orílẹ̀,* constantly renews itself. Furthermore, though the *oríkì orílẹ̀* is a communal estate, the individual has access to it as raw material in the composition of his or her own *oríkì.* Barber puts it aptly:

> *Oríkì orílè* belong collectively to a group, but they are usually addressed to individuals. The group emblem is thus bound up intimately with individual self consciousness and self-display, and performance is to enhance the individual against the background of – even at the expense of - other, rival individuals. Individual identity is constituted out of communal identity: and at the same time it is through the salutation of the individual that group identity is reaffirmed. Because there is gradual absorption of *oríkì* into *oríkì orílẹ̀,* individual idiosyncrasy, even the most trivial, can become part of the symbolic self representation of the group. (250)

The hunter finds convenient this site where the composition of the individual myth engages the so-called fixity of *oríkì orílè* in what could be termed dialectic of performance, sometimes stretching the "mythmaking" almost to a point of profanity. It is after all part of the hunter's search for novelty as a highlight of the self, the hero.

Babalola's second observation on the *ìjálá* artist's reservation about sex and sex organs might not stand up to an example like the "elderly" Ogundare Foyanmu, one of the most celebrated *ìjálá* artists of today. In his corpus, the audio album *Ìgbáládùn Tabẹ́tabẹ́,* among others, negates this assumption with its rascally portrait of sex and sex organs in its performance of an *oríkì*. On the one hand, the significance of the obsolescence of Babalola's description pointed out here is that it shows the nature of the traditional verbal art as a form whose currency forbids stiff taxonomy. On the other hand, the speed with which the *ìjálá* updates itself in response to exigencies of the present, or simply challenges known order, invokes the hunter figure – the *ìjálá* artist – as a maverick of sort.

Bádé Àjùwọ̀n, in a series of publications, writes on the performance of *ìrèmọ̀jé,* the Yoruba hunters' funeral poetry that is preliminary to *ìpà,* the hunter's funeral rites. *Ìrèmọ̀jé* is identical in all respect, except the context of performance, to *ìjálá* (Àjùwọ̀n, 1980). Àjùwọ̀n's assessment of the influence of Christianity and Islam on not only the hunters' culture but other indigenous cultural practices in general today needs some modification. Running through the essay is an undercurrent of the Muslim/Christian-versus-the-traditional dichotomy:

> With the arrival of Christian missionaries in 1843, the performance of the *ìrèmọ̀jé* ritual, and other Yoruba traditional practices such as ancestor worship, came under serious attack. As a result of the counter-pressure of Islam, these attacks intensified, as adherents of both religious faiths mounted a vigorous offensive against the observance of traditional Yoruba rituals and religion, considered to be 'heathen' and 'unholy'… In spite of persistent attacks, die-hard bearers of the Yoruba traditional religion and its rituals survived. (67)

Admittedly, Islam and Christianity have, to a large extent, had a corrosive impact on cultural practices, but the hunter hardly situates himself in the kind of opposition drawn by Àjùwọ̀n. Unlike the Christian or the Muslim for whom faith is voluntary blinders put on to save his vision from "things unholy", the Yoruba hunter today immolates a dog every year to appease Ògún, and yet attends the

Sunday school or bears a Muslim name (see **Plates 2.1** and **2.2**). A couple of Muslim names from among the performers of the *ìrèmọ̀jé* collected by Àjùwọ̀n (1981) himself are a testimony to this ecclectism. The present researcher observed certain aspects of this ecclectism in the research field. On the first visit to the Balọ́dẹ of Saki, the follwing was observed during the short wait for the man who had gone to pray in the *mosque*. In a dark corner of the passage into the house, there was an assortment of guns and other metal objects upon all of which caked blood was still visible (see **Plate 2.3**). This was a sort of shrine where the Balode occasionally spilt liquor and animal's blood to seek Ògún's favour. Right on the outer wall of the house was a bold inscription of his name in paint, an index to the plurality of his spirituality: LAWAL…OGUNTUNDE (see **Plate 2.4**). The Ògún and the Muslim halves of his personality are legible in those two names. It is especially worthy to note that none of the names is a surname. They both refer directly to the same bearer. A narrator that introduces himself as Alhaji (a muslim title) at the beginning of his story commits himself to the guidance of Ògún as the conflict builds (**Appendix II**) in the narrative. There are many such other examples.

While responding to Kofi Awoonor's comment that "within *Ìjálá* …, the dirge may occur" (1976: 83), Àjùwọ̀n notes:

> This statement is somewhat misleading and should be put right. *Ìjálá* is the Yoruba hunters' song used either for the worship of the god Ògún, or for entertainment at occasions not specifically connected with Ògún or with hunters, such as weddings or naming of children. Dirges deal mainly with grief, morning [sic], death and loss. During the performance of *ìjálá* , whether for the worship of Ògún or for entertainment, dirges are not supposed to be chanted. Perhaps Kofi Awoonor has in mind *ìrèmọ̀jé*, the Yoruba hunters' funeral dirges. Rather than consider dirges as *ìjálá,* it would be more correct to note that dirges may contain *ìjálá* traits such as humour. (1982:12).

Plate 2.1. Kola *Tirimisiyu* Akintayo (second from left) organizes Ogun worship and festival. Oke Ado, Ibadan.

Plate 2.2. Immolating the dog during Akintayo's festival

Plate 2.3. *Lawal* Oguntunde's Ogun shrine

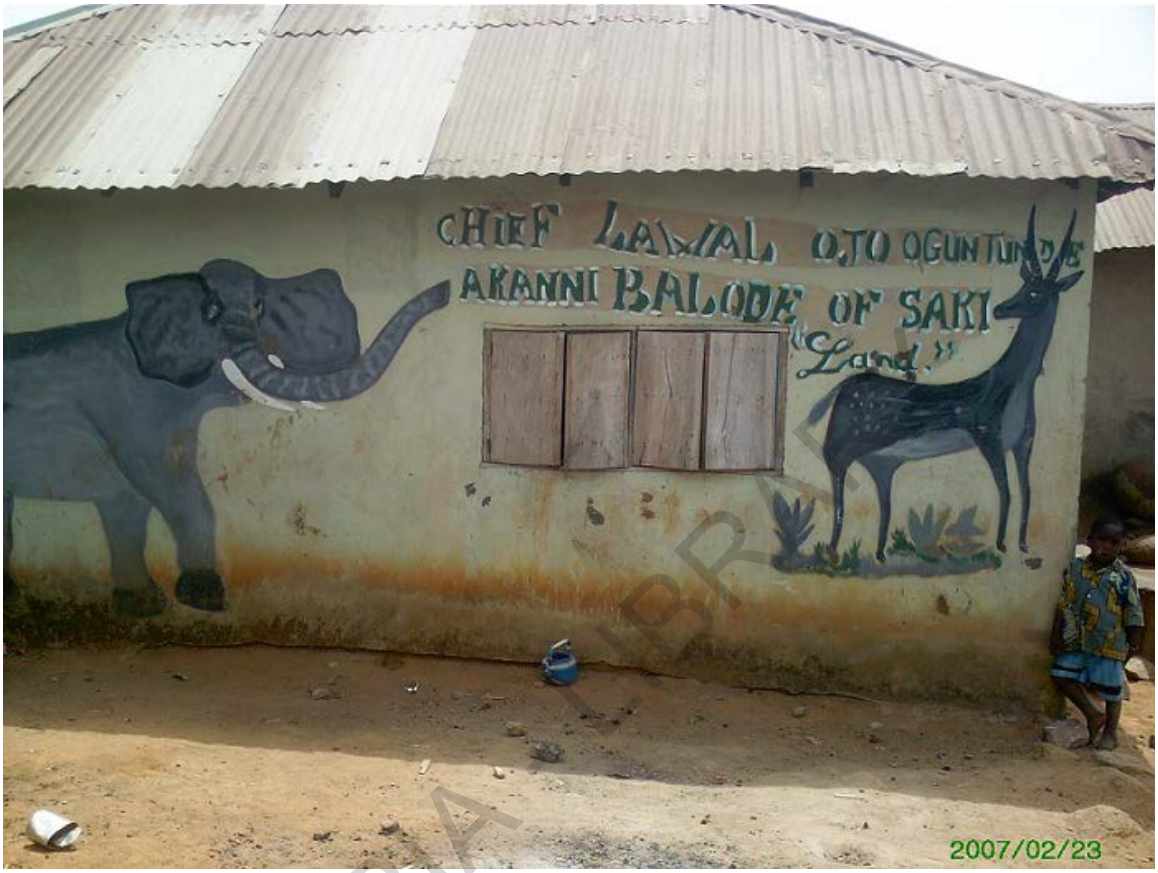

Plate 2.4. On the outer wall of Oguntunde's home

The problematic arising from the above observation is significant in two ways: first, it instantiates the earlier observation that over-reliance on Western typology – dirge, epic, ballad etc – confuses attempt at full appreciation of the indigenous forms; second, the fact that some available *ìjálá* texts upset Àjùwọ̀n's model – as shall be shown presently – further lends colour to another earlier observation that the hunter defies boundaries.

In his preliminary examination of the dirge form, Àjùwọ̀n appropriately reviews similar practices among not only African peoples but also in Western cultures like Greece, Russia and Ireland. He then observes that "[funeral] dirges or laments for the dead are an important genre of folklore. Dirges can be viewed as poems of lamentation which may be improvised by the mourners, according to the traditional formulae and themes" (1). It is the appropriation of this definition of dirge in Àjùwọ̀n's description of, and differentiation between, *ìrèmọ̀jé* and *ìjálá* that defines Àjùwọ̀n's response to Awoonor. Àjùwọ̀n maintains that though *ìrèmọ̀jé*, identified as dirge, "contain[s] *ìjálá* traits", "dirges are not supposed to be chanted in *ìjálá"*. Such theme, Àjùwọ̀n holds, is a preserve of *ìrèmọ̀jé*. But the clarification that Àjùwọ̀n seeks to make here is not without its pitfall. Admitted that *ìrèmọ̀jé* principally mourns and is performed principally on the occasion of the hunter's funeral, the situation is not outright obverse with regard to *ìjálá* in such a manner that mourning and lamentation are alien to it. Various texts and contexts of performance of *ìjálá* show that if Àjùwọ̀n's typology had ever been valid at any time, it is no more so. It suffices to point at just two examples. In his *ìjálá* record, *Ìgbáládùn Tabẹ́tabẹ́*, Ògúndáre Fọ́yánmu, the ijala artist, briefly recalls the death of his back-up performer, Dàpọ̀ Ìṣòlá, with grief. Apart from the voice that the poet successfully modulates at this point to a mournful pitch, he specifically instructs that drumming be lowered to highlight the solemnity of the dirge:

> Mọ̀ nbọ̀ wá ná, ẹ rọra sinmi ìlù díẹ̀
> Ẹ lọ́ ọ n'tínrín, ẹ tẹ̀ẹ́ mọ́lẹ̀
> Kọ́ rọra máa ró, ẹ má jẹ n mọ̀ pé 'lù ni.
> [Excuse me, relax the drumming a little
> Squeeze it [the drum thongs], lower the volume,
> Let the sound be faint, don't give me the impression
> that drumming is going on]

Early in 2007, Olú Atóyèbí, a radio presenter who was of the hunters' lineage died. Kọ́lá Akíntáyọ̀, another radio presenter, hunter and friend of Atóyèbí, in the following edition of his narrative programme, *Ọdẹ Akọni*, spent upward of five minutes of *ìjálá* lamenting his friend's death. It is needless to point out that the two performances cited here are *ìjálá* and not *ìrèmọ̀jé*, considering not only the contexts of their performance but also the fact that themes of death and mourning are not the only preoccupation of the works.

But more importantly, the significance of Àjùwọ̀n's studies lies in their identification and differentiation of the Yoruba hunters' role as a human on the one hand and an ancestor on the other. Writing on the importance of the entire funeral ritual of which the *ìrèmọ̀jé* is an aspect, Àjùwọ̀n (1982) observes that the rites represent

> to the Yoruba hunters a final separation of the deceased hunter from the earthly hunters' guild. It is the hunters' belief that once the deceased hunter finally loses his membership in the hunters' earthly guild, he shall no longer hunt with the living hunters. (20)

One question arises here as to why living hunters have to commit time and resources to terminating interaction with the dead hunter since all hunters straddle the spiritual and the physical realms anyway. But considering that the hunter's encounter with spirits, sometimes of the dead, is often anything but friendly, it is more agreeable to redefine relations with one's own dead so that they do not join the sundry footloose spirits that contend turfs with earthly hunters, but assume their rightful place as ancestors to whom the living hunters must relate as superiors. Layiwola (1990) writes on similar funeral rites among the Lugbara of Uganda:

> The relations, who arrive from far and near, are presented with arrows on their arrival. … The arrows are kept until the climax of the dance, when a dancer breaks out of line and shoots his or her arrow across

> the bushland to show that *the deceased …spirit is banished to the bushland.* Liminal boundaries are thus readjusted in the memory. (Italics mine, 19-20)

One other item interestingly common to these two cultural forms is the treatment of the bush as a marker of the realm to which the dead is released. It has been mentioned earlier that the bush or the forest as a realm of the infinite creeps with motley spirits. As among the Lugbara, the spirit of the Yoruba hunter is released into the bush. In a dramatization of this process, a carved figure is dressed up in the paraphernalia of the dead hunter and taken to the outskirts where the hunter's spirit is invoked by calling out his name. After the third call, an impersonator hidden in the bush answers and gunshots that follow immediately announce that the dead and his earthly colleagues have severed corporeal ties (Àjùwọ̀n, 1982).

2.1.2. Yoruba hunter in modern prose fiction

The narratives of D.O. Fagunwa, the Yoruba novelist, appropriate the consciousness of the hunter. Three of his five novels employ the hunter as protagonist. Their wandering in the bush and encounter with strange realities provide these novels a greater part of their narratives. The two novels, *Ìrèké Oníbùdó* (1950) and *Àdììtú Olódùmarè* (1961) that do not specifically use the hunter-hero nevertheless through their non-hunter protagonists explore bushlands and wildernesses that are no less perilous compared to the spirit-ridden forests of the other three hunter novels.

Igbó Olódùmarè (1949) revolves around a hunter named Olówó-aiyé, father of the implied narrator. The novel splits its story between two voices: the voice of the verbal artist telling the hunter's story to an audience rapt in attention, and the "voice" of a writer whose graphic edge is far from being mediated by the fact that it is read out by the narrator. In other words, the narratives, running through two sessions, begins with a third person perspective of the oral performer and ends in first person voice of the hunter protagonist himself as the narrator reads out the account of the hunter's adventure written by the hunter himself.

The novel begins with the resolve of Olówó-aiyé to embark on expedition to the Forest of Olódùmarè despite his apprehension that "Igbó Olódùmarè yí…ẹnití ó bá lọ kì ípadà bọ̀, nwọn a ma ti ọwọ́ ẹbọra dé ọwọ́ ẹbọra. [No one goes to the Forest of Olódùmarè and returns; such person goes from one adversity to the other in the hand of the spirits]" (9). This penchant for the precarious reflected in Olówó-aiyé's decision is the Yoruba hunter's first condition. The rating given the hunter-hero at this point does not diminish throughout the novel even when other hunters later join in the expedition. In the Forest of Olódùmarè, not only strength and magic but also diplomacy and speculation help the hunter maneuver through the onslaught and persecution of malevolent spirits and animals. Though he fights and eliminates the misanthrope gatekeeper of the forest using brawn and magic, Olówó-aiyé resorts to diplomacy in dealing with, Èsù kékeré òde, the one-eyed elf, in the Wilderness of Silence. In the novel therefore, the heroism of the hunter is not built around some sort of absolute invincibility but around the hunter's good judgment as well.

The storyteller of *Igbó Olódùmarè* is also the implied narrator of *Ògbójú ọdẹ nínú Igbó Irúnmalè* (1950). Whereas his father is the protagonist of *Igbó Olódùmarè*, the narrator is the hero of *Ògbójú ọdẹ*. What the novelist exploits here is the credence the Yoruba artists and artisans attach to expertise that is passed down from father to child and therefore "runs in the blood". The narrator boasts:

> Ọdẹ ni bàbá tó bí mi ísẹ. Olõgun ní sì ísẹ pẹ̀lú. Bàbá mi ní ẹgbẹ̀rún àdó, atọ́ rẹ́ jẹ́ ẹgbẹ̀rin, oǹdè sì jẹ́ ẹgbẹ̀ta. Ọ̀tàlúgba ṣìgìdì ní mbẹ ní ilé wa, òsanyìn ibẹ̀ kò sì se fẹnusọ; ànjọ̀nnú ní ímã ṣọ́ ilé de bàbá mi bí on kò bá sí ní ilé nítorí kò sí ẹnití íwọ ilé rẹ̀ lẹ́hìn rẹ: èwọ̀ ni… (2)
> [My very father was a hunter. He was learned in magic and herbs as well. My father had a thousand *àdó* gourdlets of spell, his *ató* gourdlets were eight hundred, and his amulets six hundred. There were two hundred and three carved images in our house, and the *òsanyìn* oracles therein were countless. Djinns watched over my father's chamber whenever he was not around, for nobody should enter his room in his absence: it was forbidden…]

The above exercise, in all its poetry and style, prepares at the base the image of the hero as a legatee of the father's powers as it heightens the audience's

expectation. The credence sought by the narrator in appealing to patrimony is further enlarged by a similar appeal to age: "Èmi ni Àkàrà-õgùn, ọ̀kan nínú àwọn ògbójú ọdẹ aiyé àtijọ́. [My name is Àkàrà-õgùn one of the very skilful hunters of old]" (2). Spanning three sessions, the story of *Ògbójú ọdẹ* is told to a gradually swelling audience, many of whom endure sitting on trees and rooftops to listen to the story of the wise old hunter told by himself. Àkàrà-õgùn, the hunter in this story explores terrains that are as dangerous as his father's Forest of Olódùmarè. With Àkàrà-õgùn, brinkmanship even rises one notch higher as he is not only aware from the start that the Forest of Irúnmalẹ̀ creeps with danger, but also returns two more times to explore the forest after surviving encounters that nearly kill him in earlier expeditions. It is in him that Fagunwa realizes the Yoruba hunter as a character balanced in the pursuit of his personal calling and as an embassy of his community on a mission fraught with peril.

In *Ìrìnkèrindò nínú Igbó Elégbèje* (1954), the Yoruba hunter is further explored as the feeler with which the society interacts with the Other, the bush. This is a theme that builds up from the last third of *Ògbójú ọdẹ* when Àkàrà-õgùn and his team of hunters embark on expedition to the heights of Lángbòdó to learn the secret of peace and good governance. The protagonist of *Ìrìnkèrindò* inaugurates his career as an embassy on a mission to seek a lost relation in the forest. Ìrìnkèrindò, the hunter protagonist, would later be solicited by his king to go to the Forest of Elégbèje and literally fetch the fruits of the Trees of Reflection and Divine Support, which ambience gives wisdom to whoever drinks of the river beside which it is planted. Ìrìnkèrindò raises a team of hunters with whom he confronts and surmounts the obstacles on the way to this communal goal. In both *Àdììtú Olódùmarè* (1961)and *Ìrèké Oníbùdó* (1950) , Fagunwa continues to examine the reaction of man in an environment away from his domestic realities, and man's domestication of the wild, the feared and the unknown. However, none of the protagonists of the two novels is a hunter.

One of the most popularly cited handicaps of Fagunwa is his Christian vision (Bamgbose, 1974; Ogunsina, 1984; George, 1997). Apart from the stilted and speechified Christian style of moralizing that sometimes threatens to ruin the

novels' prose and put the narrative flow out of joint, Fagunwa is also not totally reliable as a window to the cosmology of the Yoruba of the time depicted in all his hunters' narratives. Ayo Bamgbose (1974) and J.A. Ogunsina (1987) both usefully point out that in *Igbó Olódùmarè* and *Ògbójú ọdẹ*, Fagunwa's most engaging portraits of the Yoruba hunter, there is no single representation of a performance of any *ọfọ̀* lines, an indispensable aspect of the doings of the Yoruba hunters to date. Even as some of Fagunwa's treatment of characters and events is a revealing study of man generally and the Yoruba person particularly, the novelist's Christian blinders compel him to treat certain aspects of Yoruba culture blacklisted by the church with disdain or avoid them altogether. An instance is the representation of Àkàrà-õgùn's appeasement of *Ògún*, patron *òrìṣà* of hunting, before the former begins the day's activities in the forest. In his treatment of this event, Fagunwa deliberately avoids the mention of the *òrìṣà* and assumes, like a missionary seeing such for the first time, that the hunter is worshipping his gun, a lifeless contraption, and not *Ògún* to whom the gun serves as a makeshift altar. The author's Christian opinion on the futility of such "idolatry" is cleverly expressed in the ominous portents during and after the sacrifice, and ultimately in the hunter's capture by the weird slobbering spirit. As the hunter repentantly turns to God in captivity and is miraculously saved, the reader is made to see God in contradistinction to the "lame idol" the hunter earlier invoked

But Fagunwa's cultural education sometimes defies the Christian constraint. For example, the *àjẹ́*, a female occult institution that has capacity for both evil and benevolence, is viewed in Christianity as irremediably negative. That the *àjẹ́* (often glossed as "witch") as a woman's instrument for seeking some equilibrium in the patriarchal hegemony is not an exclusively negative construct is evidenced in such Yoruba cultural forms as *gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ́*,(Drewal and Drewal, 1990; Ibitokun,1993; Layiwola, 1998) and *ìbà* (Isola,1976), a homage that is often preliminary to performance. In all these contexts, the *àjẹ́* are not just appeased but practically solicited by the performer as animators of fertility (in *gẹ̀lẹ̀dẹ́*) or protectors and benefactors (in *ìbà*). As shall be shown later in the study, the

Yoruba hunter also operates in apprehension of this ambivalence and his relationship with the *àjẹ́* is not all the time defined by antagonism.

Àjẹ́dìran is an *àjẹ́* character and mother of Àkàrà-õgùn, the protagonist of *Ògbójú ọdẹ* and the narrator of *Igbó Olódùmarè.* She is so evil that upon losing out in a suit involving her and a co-wife:

> Ó bẹ̀rẹ̀ sí íhu ìwà àjẹ́ rẹ̀ tóbẹ̀ tí ó pa ọmọ méjọ nínú àwọn ọmọ bàbá mi ó sì pa ìyàwó mẹ́ta kí ọdún nã tó parí, ó wá jẹ́ pé ó ku èmi nìkan gẹ́gẹ́ bí ọmọ, ó sì ku on nìkan gẹ́gẹ́ bí ìyàwó. (30)
> [She started to wield her *àjẹ́* power to such extent that she killed eight of my father's children and three wives before that year ended, leaving only me as the surviving child and herself as the wife.]

But earlier in *Igbó Olódùmarè,* this character and her *àjẹ́* sister are not only responsible for the wellbeing of Olówó-aiyé but also provide the magical power which transforms the hunter into an elephant that crushes the antagonist Àjọ̀nnú-ìbẹ̀rù, the misanthrope gatekeeper of the Forest of Olódùmarè. Later in *Ògbójú ọdẹ*, Àjẹ́dìran, who is now dead and expected to be in Fagunwa's Christian hell – like Kòtẹ́milọ́rùn, another Fagunwa's character in *Àdìtú Olódùmarè* – is invoked by Àkàrà-õgùn in time of misery and despondency, and she emerges from the underworld, saintly and angelic, to help the hunter out of his present predicament. Other instances of such favourable representation of practices that are often put down in Christianity as necromancy and idolatry abound in Fagunwa's narratives.

Ayo Bamgbose's *The novels of D.O. Fagunwa* (1974) is the first monograph on the narratives of D.O. Fagunwa. In this study, Bamgbose identifies three influences on the novelist namely

> a. Yoruba folktales
> b. Literary works in English, including translations, which must have formed part of the background of educated Nigerians of Fagunwa's time, and
> c. Christian religious literature. (16)

In his explication of the Yoruba folktale sources, Bamgbose points out the visible storytelling sessions in the novels with old and/or weird sages replicated as

Bàbá-onírungbọ̀n-yẹukẹ (*Igbó Olódùmarè*), Ìrágbèje (*Ògbójú ọdẹ*), Ìtánforítì (*Ìrèké Oníbùdó*), Itandiran (*Ìrìnkèrindò*),and Mọ́gàjí Ilé Ẹnúdùnjuyọ̀ (*Àdìtú Olódùmarè*). He observes the identical traits in Fagunwa's characters in not only these stories-within-story, but also in the novels on the one hand and Yoruba folktales on the other. Further, Bamgbose points out with copious examples the influence of Western literature and the Bible. For example, he suspects that the episode of the missing hunter and his endeavour to survive through agriculture in *Igbó Olódùmarè* was influenced by Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, and that Kòtẹ́milọ́rùn in *Àdìtú Olódùmarè* is Fagunwa's domestication of Christopher Marlowe's John Faustus.

Balogun Ogunpolu (1995) contests Bamgbose's point on the extent of Fagunwa's indebtedness to Yoruba folktales and other narratives. In Ogunpolu's reckoning, Fagunwa is far more indebted to those indigenous sources than Bamgbose had realized. Ogunpolu usefully cites other possible sources of Fagunwa's stories. In sum, Ogunpolu convincingly demonstrates that Bamgbose downplays the indigenous content of Fagunwa's narratives.

Bamgbose, it is fair to admit here, states at one point in the study:

> the Yoruba believe in the world of the spirits, witches, magic and communication with the dead. A lot of the weirdness in the novels is reflection of the world view [sic]. Thus characters like àrọ̀nì, the one-legged fairy, and egbére, a short creature who always sheds tears, which are found in *Ògbójú* are not merely fictional characters but spirits believed by the Yoruba to exist in the forest…
>
> For those for whom Fagunwa was writing and who basically share this world view [sic], these aspects of the novels are realistic at the level of the reader's consciousness of his world. (84-5)

But earlier in the study, Bamgbose writes: "the world portrayed in the novels is a romanticized world of kings princes and princesses, jewelry and treasures…that is typically fictional and only rarely true of real life" (9), and that "Fagunwa's novels are mere fantasies because of preponderance of unusual and unlikely incidents which they contain" (83). Apart from Bamgbose's failure to resolve the contradiction emergent from these two diametrically opposed positions, there is

also a corollary question that in whose term is the world in Fagunwa's novels "mere fantasies" and "romanticized"? If by fantasy and romanticity, Bamgbose means "mythmaking" that is characteristic of not only all the prose fiction in the Western realistic mode, but also historiography, the contradiction is resolved. But if these terms are conceived as something totally outside reality – which Bamgbose seems most likely to mean – they misrepresent the worldview that provides background to the art of Fagunwa. While admitting that what Fagunwa distils from this world of the "unusual and unlikely" is fiction, and that he takes his materials from very catholic sources, a traditional Yoruba mind sees little or no dividing line between Fagunwa's fictional world and his/her world whose weird and untamed side is sometimes pacified through the hunter. In fact, as Wole Soyinka (2006) has rightly noted, Fagunwa the writer himself is not spared as a character in conversational narratives composed in the mode of his fiction. One such popular narrative recounts Fagunwa's compact with the water spirit to allow him the supernatural narrative muse in return for which he would give his life at an appointed time. Fagunwa's death by drowning and the rumoured disappearance of his body is interpreted in the light of this theory by such narrators[12].

In his PhD thesis, J.A. Ogunsina (1987) reviews the sociological aspects of the novels of Fagunwa, especially *Igbó Olódùmarè* and *Ògbójú ọdẹ*. He makes the important point that "Yoruba oral literary tradition is replete with stories and tales of marvellous feats and awe-inspiring exploits of hunters in battlefields and hunting expeditions", and concludes that "Fagunwa himself must have heard about and observed some of the striking attributes of the hunter" (143). The thesis accordingly reflects on the factors such as war and the society's need for security that made the precolonial Yoruba hunter the notable figure portrayed in Fagunwa's work. Considering the sequence of the two novels and their common exploration of the hunter's world, Ogunsina quips that the two works are better seen as two volumes of one novel on the exploits of two hunters (176). He also observes the weakness in Fagunwa's art resulting from his Christian bias:

[12] One such narrator is Mrs Aderoju Adeduntan of Ṣakí, a school teacher.

> He is so committed to his christian cause that though he makes abundant use of Yoruba traditional materials, he ensures that his materials are carefully chosen such that they are acceptable to the growing elitist christian audience. (151)

Ogunsina sees artistry as characteristic of not only normative verbal forms like folktale and poetry, but also the less formalized type like speech and dialogue. He observes that "[oratory] was a highly valued art in traditional Yoruba culture and even today, it is a feature of predominantly oral cultures. In Yoruba traditional discourse, how something is said is as important as what is said" (185). But naturally, for a study that sets out to discuss generally the sociological contexts of not only Fagunwa's work but also the works of two other Yoruba novelists, the thesis's engagement with hunters' culture is just passing.

Abiola Irele (1969) and F.O. Balogun (1983) have not only commented that the novels of Fagunwa describe the position of the Yoruba hunter in his society but also that Fagunwa as a literary tradition has notable influence on Nigerian writers in the medium of English. D.S. Izevbaye (1995) is particularly elaborate on this influence. Quoting Albert Gerard, Izevbaye agrees that:

> [a] complicating factor [of citizenship] is that people who belong to the same mother tongue may write in different languages. It is clearly perceptible however that works like D.O. Fagunwa's Yoruba novels, Amos Tutuola's highly idiosyncratic English stories and Wole Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forest* have more in common with one another than they have with any work produced in the vernacular by Ibo or Hausa writers. (264-5)

Izevbaye further identifies the influence of Fagunwa in later writers and dramatists like Kola Ogunmola, Wale Ogunyemi and Ben Okri. His submission would be very appropriate with the modification that Fagunwa and those other writers are better first seen as beneficiaries of a common tradition. In accordance with Gerard's position, the ghosts and animals of Tutuola's novels, Soyinka's *A dance of the forest* (1963), Kola Ogunmola's *Ọ̀mùtí*, and Ben Okri's Azaro trilogy – *The*

famished road (1991), *Songs of enchantment* (1993), and *Infinite riches* (1998) – belong in a universe to which the writers' artistic umbilicals are commonly connected. This, of course, does not foreclose the influence of one writer on others – in this case, the influence of Fagunwa on the rest of them. This influence is better seen in terms of artistry and the deployment of the indigenous oral materials in the adopted literary genre, not in terms of vision.

As can be inferred from the observation of Bamgbose already cited above and other commentators on Fagunwa, the Yoruba hunter is a regular character in narratives of various genres. In the volume of narratives collected by Melville J. Herskovits and Frances S. Herskovits (1958), a section is entitled "Hunters' stories". Although the stories were collected and are set mainly in Dahomey (now Republic of Benin), they do not just echo known Yoruba variants but, in fact, are likely outgrowths or sources of such Yoruba stories considering morphological and thematic similarities. Of significance in this regard is also the fact that up till the end of the first half of 18th century, the Aja states of Allada in which many of the stories are set were part of Oyo (Akinjogbin, 1967; Johnson, 1969). Even today, there are still Yoruba people in these parts though the colonialists' haphazard partition has located them outside Nigeria.

The hunter's position in the avant-garde of his society is the core around which all the nineteen stories in the section revolve. In keeping with the collectors' preliminary note that "nothing could be held improbable in the life of Hunter" (28), the hunter-protagonists of the stories attain heroism not only by upholding and defending the hegemony, but also by defying and upsetting it. Of the nineteen titles under which the hunter stories appear, more than half – precisely ten – have the relative adverb "why" as a marker of reason for a particular tradition or practice. These etiological narratives suppose that until the hunter appeared on the scene and turned the table, a different regime of cultural practice had been in place. For example, in "Why human beings are no longer sacrificed to rain," the hunter does not only denounce the efficacy of human sacrifice but accordingly proceeds to slay the man-eating serpents that are mistaken for the deities Dã by the Adja people. This feat is not as simple as saying "no" and killing a snake: the

hunter pits himself against a system that the people and their king have taken for granted as a verity because it is old and regular. The weight of this kind of intervention is best appreciated in view of the sacrosanctity of the type of ritual practice the Herskovitses' hunter tries to subvert. Dele Layiwola (2000), writing on a similar conflict in Tsegaye Gbabre-Madhin's *Oda Oak* in which the protagonist defies such ritual practice and is eventually damned, notes:

> In many traditional forms of justice, the penalty sometimes outweighs the offence. This is part of the irrationality of the ritual archetype because underlying motives are sometimes hidden. (119)

One extreme manifestation of this faith is in the execution of the two people who bring word that the hunter has vanquished the serpents: they are branded as liars and blasphemers. The hunter therefore confronts and pacifies the Other even when his society consider such feat not only impossible but also profane.

The close thematic and morphological similarities that many of the hunters stories in the Herskovitses' collection have with known Nigerian variants – either published or extant as oral narratives – encourage further question on the issue of African artist and influence. It is safe enough to presume that the artist is influenced by both the indigenous and exotic traditions, but it is difficult to determine the extent of such influence. The attempted update of Bamgbose's work on Fagunwa by Ogunpolu comes to mind here. The theme of Ogunpolu's rejoinder is explicit from the title "The folklore as source materials in Fagunwa's novels." But Ogunpolu wisely begins with a caveat:

> We are aware that narrartive motifs found in the tales of a culture may also be found in the traditional stories of other cultures. Since Fagunwa's drafts are not within our reach, *we can not be emphatic on which sources he actually used for his materials.* (Italics mine, 240).

Further in the essay, he points out that Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, assumed to have influenced Fagunwa's creation of loss and survival of Olówó-aiyé in *Igbó Olódùmarè*, has a parallel in the "Yoruba legend of Lagelu"(244). The significance

of this claim is dual. One, as Vladimir Propp's popular study on folktale (1968) reveals, narrative types are transcultural and no preserve of one culture. Two, it is therefore untenable to assume that a modern African writer is influenced by an exotic type when the entire corpora of the indigenous oral narratives are not - can, in fact, not be – available to individual researcher.

The above insight is useful in the reading of *Dahomean narrative*. Several stories in the collection echo known types in both oral and written modern African and Western narratives. The portrait of Ìrèké Oníbùdó in Fagunwa's novel of same name as saviour of Ìfẹ́pàdé from the man-eating snake recalls virtually wholesale the hunter story earlier cited about the Adja princess to be sacrificed to Dã, as it does the classical narrative on the saving of Andromeda by Perseus through the killing of the sea monster to which she is to be sacrificed.[13] Also, as apprehended in the introduction to the collection, many of Amos Tutuola's stories are identical to those in *Dahomean narrative*. Tutuola's story of the complete gentleman of the borrowed human parts that recalls portrait of the animated scarecrow by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1961) is far more identical with "The chosen suitor" in *Dahomean narrative*.

Expectedly, the rhetorical edge of the stories in this collection has been blunted in transcription. Worse, the Herskovitses are evidently not in fair enough command of the indigenous languages used by the narrators to be able to attempt a better appropriation in English. The wits and sarcasm that the African narrator often conveys through phrases and short minor sentences are, for example, translated with such syntactic fidelity that it results in drabness that is not always saved by the footnotes. Although the stories provide some analogues to the current hunters' narratives, their settings are so dated that many of them have almost paled into folktales. Some that are marked by such datelines as the reigns of Kings Agadja, Adjahosu and Simegba are not any more contemporary. The narrators often explicitly make the point that their stories are set in the distant past – perhaps to ensure unfettered license in their "mythmaking" exercise before an audience that hypothetically "does not know" of that past.

[13] See Robert Graves (1955) *The Greek myths* vol 2.

Comparing him to such African writers as Chinua Achebe, T.M. Aluko, Elechi Amadi, Gabriel Okara and Nkem Nwakwo, Oladele Taiwo (1976) writes:

> Amos Tutuola stands closest to first sources, to the roots of oral tradition. His…novels draw freely on Yoruba folklore… (74)

Of Tutuola's seven novels, two – *The brave African huntress* (1958) and *The witch herbalist of the remote town* (1981) – have hunter-heroes. Even though the protagonists of the remaining four novels are no hunters, they are made to pass through the bush as does the hunter, and their travails and triumphs provide the novels their stories. Gerald Moore (1975) considers the structure of "Departure – Initiation – Return" (47) as common to the entire "mythmaking" of Tutuola. This model, in a way, also echoes Victor Turner's theory of social drama, to be examined later in the chapter, which constructs the ritual of initiation as a lone human experience into the liminal "forbidden" realm, and an exercise, though individual, that is of ultimate communal benefit. Though this construct, as shall be shown shortly, is not without its weakness, it essentially hints at the paradox of the communal dimension of the hunter/quester's mission; a mission that commences as deviation and defiance but winds up as an item of value in the instruction of other members of the quester's community.

The Palm-wine drinkard (1952), like most of Tutuola's novels, employs the first-person narrative perspective. The narrator, a redeemed reveler, narrates to the implied audience the account of his journey to the "Dead's Town", a weird realm of the spirits, wraiths and odd animals, in search of his "tapster". For ten years, the "drinkard's" search for his personal embodiment of mundane pleasure leads him to encounters with all manner of adversities. Though not a hunter, like the Da-slaying hunter of the Herskovitses' narrative, the drinkard kills the man-eating Red Fish and thereby saves the prospective victims waiting to be sacrificed to it. As in the restoration of the heaven-earth nexus represented in the reconciliation of Gbùélè the hunter of heaven and Waawaa of the earth (Yemitan, 1963; Abimbola, 1969), the protagonist finally undertakes to solve the problem of famine that results from the estrangement of Earth and Heaven.

My life in the bush of ghosts (1954) underlines the idea of initiation with the character of a seven-year-old protagonist who suffers persecution from his father's wives and is eventually compelled to embark on a journey to the "bush of ghosts". He encounters such weirdness as the selfish Flash-eyed Mother, the hilarious ghostess whose humour heals the sick, and the odious Smelling-Ghosts who compete to see whose smell is the most offensive. The heroine of *Simbi and the satyr of the dark jungle* (1955) confronts the hunter's responsibility somewhat more directly and willfully. The saying "Tí ọdẹ́ bá ro ìṣẹ́, ti ọdẹ́ bá ro ìyà, t'ó bá p'ẹran, kò níí f'ẹ́nìkankan [If the hunter takes stock of all his misery and adversities, he would share his kill with no one]" is a popular figural reflection on the underside of the hunter's world. "Ìṣẹ́" and "ìyà" in the saying literally translates as "poverty" and "punishment" that Tutuola portrays Simbi the heroine as voluntarily seeking. Considering her materially comfortable background, Simbi's insistence on acquisition of knowledge through willful abnegation unites her with the defiant hunter who is aware of the peril but yet goes on to explore the forest. It is not just love for display of machismo or strength but the promise of material and spiritual salvation that sustains such resolve. Accordingly, Simbi's quest does not end at confronting and vanquishing adversities. Like the hunter whose bitter experience does not preclude the charity of sharing his kill, Simbi doubles as a social worker pitted against slave raiders, and preaching that the young people be more responsible to their parents.

Adebisi, the hunter-protagonist of *The brave African huntress* (1958), like Fagunwa's Akara-ogun, begins her story with a brief citation on her father, "one of the ancient brave hunters":

> My father was a brave hunter in his town. He had hunted in several dangerous jungles which the rest hunters had rejected to enter or even approach because of fear of being killed by wild animals and harmful creatures of the jungle. (1)

Adebisi typically appeals to her pedigree here as a preliminary to the subsequent description of her own character. Whereas the father explores the perilous forest as

an expression of manly defiance, Adebisi does to fulfill fraternal responsibility. Her quest into the forest ridden with both towering and diminutive beings is intended to rescue her four brothers held captives by the pigmies. In *Feather woman of the jungle* (1962), a wise old narrator performs a series of stories before a village audience. In the many forests of these ten stories, Jungle witch, hairy giants, the savage men, the goddess of diamond, the àbíkú, and even Death itself commonly undermine humanity's breach of their realm. It is the questers' negotiation of the resulting conflict that forms the core of the stories. The hunter-hero of *The witch herbalist of the remote town* (1981) goes in search of the medicine to make his childless wife pregnant. As typical of all the Tutuolan heroes, this quest demands that he breach the liminal realm of such weird beings as the farting squatting man of the jungle and the crazy wild man who takes off his head at will as if it were a hat.

As noted by E.N. Obiechina (1975), the Tutuolan world reaffirms the Yoruba demystification of man as a privileged creation:

> Man has to struggle to ensure a place in the universe. He must compete with the rest of animated nature. He is no absolute monarch exerting untramelled authority over the rest of the universe. (126)

As he tackles the Other therefore, man the hunter is not only fortified with strength and force, but also the useful apprehension of his limitation. In his interest, he should "know the extent of [his] own territory" (Obiechina, 1975: 128). Tutuola's spectral parade of characters and events drawn from both the ancient and the contemporary spaces has been widely commented upon (Lindfors, 1973; Collins, 1975; Obiechina, 1975; Taiwo, 1976). In *My life*, Rev. Devil oversees the church of "evildoers", Super Lady presents her man with gifts of Western clothes and wristwatch, and the town of the dead has schools, clinics and churches run by the Western-type instructors, nurses and clergy. Tutuola's universe is a commendable creation but is better not seen as a novel invention but the natural resort of the narrator to known idioms which best enhance the evocation and understanding of his performance. It is a matter of course that the narrative vision manifests itself to

the storyteller in contemporary terms that he and his audience understand. In the narrative of a hunter of about ninety years of age for example, the tree spirit requests that the hunter spare him some *aásà*, a tobacco stimulant that is no more popular with the young people. In the narrative of another hunter of about thirty, the spirit demands a packet of sugar. Likewise, the dancing porcupines in the narrative of about-seventy-year-old Jọ́ògún are dressed in the ancient *ẹtù*[14] attires, whereas the rodents in the narrative of Rabiu Òjó, a younger hunter, come in American shirts (See **Appendix V**).

2.1.3 Conceptualizing narrativity

In line with the evolutionist sensibility that pervaded writing on Africa from about the middle of 19th century, works in anthropology and folklore continued to rank low the capacity of the non-literate and non-Western mind for art and history. Lord Raglan (1939), for example, writes:

> Since history depends upon written chronology, and the savage has no written chronology, the savage can have no history. And since interest in the past is induced solely by books, the savage can take no interest in the past; the event of the past are, in fact, completely lost. (6)

With regard to his sense of art, Raglan goes on to describe this "savage":

> No [savage] storyteller has ever been known to invent anything… In illiterate communities, the people as a whole not merely do not invent stories, but they do not even tell stories. The telling of stories may only be done by recognized storytellers, and… among many tribes they may tell only the particular stories which they have a recognized right to tell. (134-5)

Showing the flaw in Raglan's supposition – a flaw that is, by now, very patent – may not bother us here. Merely citing him as a sample of that evolutionist

[14] A Yoruba traditional textile

presumption suffices. This attitude would later thaw into some kind of sympathy. At this point, the "savage" is seen as creative and retentive *in his own right*, but in a way that recalls some early stage in the evolution of the civilized *homo genus*. Bronislaw Malinowski, for example, proposes that "anthropology should be not only the study of savage custom in the light of our mentality and our culture, but also *the study of our own mentality in the distant perspective borrowed from the Stone Age man*" (Italics mine, 1998: 177).

Studies in folklore and verbal arts sometimes conceive the oral forms in term phrased by Ella Shohat and Robert Stam (1998) as that of the "Third World Toddler" (28). Oriented towards seeing the African culture as the infantile species of the Western tradition, many such studies either unrepresentatively reduce the African forms to fit into the Western typology, apprehending these forms in such familiar terms as "legend", "myth", "folktale" and so on. William Bascom (1965) proposes "prose narrative" as "an appropriate term for the widespread and important category of verbal art which includes myths, legends and folktales" (3). He defines folktales as "prose narratives which are regarded as fiction", myths as "prose narratives which…are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past", and legend as "prose narratives …which are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience" and "set in a period considered less remote" (4). Bascom cites examples from the Pacific, from among the Yoruba, the Ashanti, the Kimbundu, and the Fulani. According to him, the "Yoruba recognize two classes of tales: folktales (*àlọ́*) and myth-legends (*ìtàn*)" (11). The myth-legends, Bascom continues, are "histories" and "regarded as historically true" in contrast to the fictional *àlọ́* (folktale). Bascom's category evidently borrows from an earlier one by Malinowski (1954) on the narratives of the Tobriand Islanders where the latter identifies *kuwanebu* as "fairy tales", *libwogwo* as "legends", and *liliu* as "myths". In his essay under review, Bascom tries to address a problematic arising from his classification. He admits that his description does not cover the less-formalized types like "jokes or jest" and "anecdotes" (5). He also admits the overlap of the characteristics he has identified in such a way that "[difficulties] arise when one story partakes of the characteristics of one or two of these types" (9). As reflected

in the bonding right from the onset of "myth" and "legend" as "myth-legend" in one such situation of intersection, Bascom observes that certain examples frustrate classification. For instance, "Eskimo's stories are at times difficult to classify" (9). In another paper presented the same year but published almost a decade after, Bascom proposes verbal art as a replacement of the term "folklore". Looking through the growing studies in folklore, exemplified by the works of Alan Dundes, Richard M. Dorson and Dell Hymes, he considers this term more suitable because of the preponderance of marginal urban forms like "autograph book verse, automobile names, flyleaf rhymes…, latrinalia and traditional letters" (1973:379) now enjoying increasing attention in the Americas.

Despite his laudable exercise of caution, Bascom's description is too sweeping to provide comprehensive understanding of the Yoruba narrative forms. If Bascom is right in the definition of *àló* as fiction, the opposition to it sought in the representation of *ìtàn* is faulty. Except when employed for academic convenience as Bascom has done, the term *ìtàn* is not employed by the Yoruba in contradistinction to the fictional *àló*. In fact, *ìtàn* as a label may in certain contexts subsume *àló*. As such, the *àló* on the exploit of the tortoise and the pig could either be referred to as "Àlọ́ ìjàpá àti ẹlẹ́dẹ̀ [The *àlọ́* of the tortoise and the pig]" or "Ìtàn ìjàpá àti ẹlẹ́dẹ̀ [The *ìtàn* of the tortoise and the pig]". For example, Alabi Ogundepo in his ìjálá record, *Ènìyàn ṣòro* (nd) boasts his credential as a custodian of *ìtàn* and goes on to prove this by narrating an *àló* about the farmer and the ungrateful snake. Val Olayemi (1969) in his paper on the *àló* uses the two terms interchangeably.

Bascom's observation on the characterization, setting, themes, and contexts of performance of "myth", "legend" and "folktale" does not equally reflect the nature of the Yoruba narrative forms. With regard to his claim that myth is set in remote past, and legend in recent past, there is no clear marker of how remote the setting has to be to qualify a narrative as myth, and how recent to make it legend. The neat classification of human principal characters as a feature of legend, and non-human characters as a feature of myth does not stand up to Yoruba examples of characters that begin as men and end as deities. A version of the story of *Sàngó,* the divinity of rain, thunder and allied elements, popularized in the theatre of Duro

Ladipo, is a ready example. A culture like the Yoruba which in some of its aspects blurs the human-supernatural boundary is replete with narratives about characters that are identifiably human but operate like avatars in the realm of spirits and deities.

Many scholars – among them Dennis Tedlock (1977) and Isidore Okpewho (1983) – have contested the appropriateness of the term "prose" as employed by Bascom. The misnomer illustrates the misrepresentation that issues from the haphazard grafting of models from the writing culture on orality. Prose therefore is only relevant and appropriate in relation to writing. As Tedlock argues, "the contemporary notion of 'prose' can have no place in it except as a source of confusion. Oral cultures no more have an oral equivalent of written prose than they have motor driven-pipe organs" (513). The classification and misnomer continued to be employed after Bascom. Wande Abimbola (1969b), for example, writes of *àlọ́* and *ìtàn* as "two important genres of Yoruba *oral prose*" (Italics mine 2). Ruth Finnegan, in her popular *Oral literature in Africa* (1970), also adopts the term.

Ruth Finnegan's work raises some of the issues that have animated the discourse in culture and performance till today. In the two chapters entitled "Prose narratives", Finnegan reviews existing interpretive models of African oral narrative forms, and recommends analytic approaches. In the first of the two chapters, she critiques the evolutionist, diffusionist, and structural functionalist approaches to the study of the arts. She maintains that they downplay originality and creativity of the individual narrator. In her consideration of the reigning terms "myth" and "legend", Finnegan retains Bascom's category. She however reflects that myth as conceived by Bascom might be counter-intuitive to the understanding of the narrative forms. She instantiates such problem of classification with her own field experience:

> When I first heard a Limba story about how in the old days Kanu (God) lived with mankind but then withdrew in impatience to the sky, I at first automatically classed this in my mind as 'myth'. It was easy to see its function (explaining and justifying present state of things) and, like other

> ‘myths’, it was presumably well known and taken seriously… It was only after recording several dozen more Limba stories that I realized that this particular story was no different in style, outlook or occasion of telling from the clearly ‘fictional’ and light-hearted narratives about, say, a man wooing a wife or a cat plotting to eat a group of rats. (332)

What upsets Finnegan’s earlier conception is the overlap of elements hitherto taken for granted as a preserve of either fantasy or realism. Later findings would reveal to her that “there are…societies in which the distinction between ‘myth’ and ‘folktale’ is not observed” (328).

In the second chapter on oral narrative, Finnegan pursues the issue of similarity of motifs and determination of influence that used to be the focus of the diffusionist school. Similarity in thematic preoccupation, motifs and characterization, she holds, is not sufficient to bracket narratives together under such common headings as “ ‘animal stories’, ‘myths’, ‘legends’ etc” (343). Even as taxonomy is crucial to academic conceptualization, the plurality and impermanence of African oral narratives warrant that students approach each narrative as a peculiar form. However, in her conclusion on the presence or otherwise of “myth” as a developed oral narrative form in Africa, Finnegan violates her own earlier warning and declares that “with a few exceptions there is an absence of any solid evidence for myth as a developed literary form in most areas of Africa” (367). It should be recalled that Isidore Okpewho (1979) commits a full-length book to answering a similar charge by Finnegan and others on the absence of epic in Africa. The issue here, however, is not whether Africa has myth or not. Rather, Finnegan’s observation should be examined against her earlier warning that the sheer volume of performance forms not yet researched into forecloses such generalization. Second, after pointing out herself that the term “myth” is counter-intuitive in many African media because “there is the frequent absence of any specific term which would exactly translate *our term ‘myth’* ”(Italics mine, 365), it simply begs the question to look for an analogue of “our myth” in such cultures. While maintaining that narratives need not be carbon copies of “myths” as conceived by Finnegan and many others, this study does not

foreclose that myths, even in such Western terms, are present in Africa. Our understanding of the term, as shall be set down later, simply follows a very different conceptual trajectory.

Returning to the issue of the inadequacy of existing models, Finnegan suggests that "in trying to distinguish different categories of African oral narrations…, it may be more fruitful to look not primarily at subject matter but at context" (366). Earlier, Finnegan has pointed out one significant aspect of the Herskovitses' findings among the Fon of Dahomey, namely that there is a high preponderance of narrativity in spaces that are not normalized as performance art even in local terms. Here, the Herskovitses usefully note the presence of narrative performance outside the consciously artistic spaces, even though they miss the point by assuming that performance in such context is bereft of "art and dramatization" found in the formalized types. At the foreground of this insight, Finnegan observes apropos the Yoruba:

> These [Yoruba] histories…were not presented in as formalized or detailed a form as the corresponding praise poems. But they do seem to have had a fairly clear literary framework, which is exploited by the fashion for published Yoruba histories of towns in written form. (370)

Of significance is Finnegan's understanding of the nature of the materials she identifies as "histories". They constitute the elements appropriated from the various and different contexts of narrative performance. Another statement by Finnegan needs quoting at length to comprehensively elicit the significance of her study in the light of this:

> What is certain however is that story-telling is usually practiced by non-professionals. Leading story-tellers are recognized as possessing a certain degree of specialist skill, but this is a spare-time skill only. In most instances there is no evidence that any material reward accrues to the story-teller, however great his expertise. Though some individuals are clearly regarded as more expert than others, story-telling typically tends to be a popular rather than a

> specialist art. All, it appears, are potentially expert in story-telling and are, with some limitations, prepared to take part in the evening occasions when stories are being told and exchanged in social gatherings. (375)

With specific reference to the Yoruba form, Finnegan's observation is true, particularly if we consider hunters' narratives, the focus of this study, and other new forms of entertainment which contents are largely narrative. It is also a validation of the Barthesian maxim that human communication is essentially ruled by narrativity (Barthes, 1996). Narration in this sense is a site latent with motley creative possibilities. The individual narrator brings to bear on the enterprise his expertise in enunciation. More than it does for professionalized – and therefore largely standardized – forms like *ìjálá, ẹ̀sà and ìyẹ̀rẹ̀*, the licence enjoyed by narrators holds for the practice limitless possibility of artistic growth, even to the extent of breaking through certain normative cordons. This is true specifically of the hunters' narratives that are traditionally "better kept secret" but are today broadcast to a million listeners on A.M. radio.

Robert Georges (1969) reflects on the tendency in the 19th century anthropology to "regard stories as cultural artifacts", conceiving "them as surviving or traditional linguistic pervaded by meaningful symbols", analyzing data elicited from them "into convenient categories, and [deducing from them] striking generalizations about the uniformity of cultures and the unity of man" (315). He also acknowledges the growing awareness in the 20th century story research of the need "to study the storytellers as well as their stories, the context as well as the text, and the performance as well their stories" (315). He then accordingly suggests a comprehensive study of both the text and context of what he aptly terms "storytelling events". His adoption of this term is deliberate to avoid the fixity that "story" has come to connote. Georges' thesis was to become a part of the body of writings that prepared ground for the text-context controversy that characterized anthropology and folklore from then up till the 1980s[15]. Elsewhere, Georges calls attention to the reigning isolation of text and context, and privileging

[15] See, for example, D.K. Wilgus "The text is the thing"; Steven Jones "Slouching towards ethnography"; and Yigal Zan "The text/context controversy".

of one above the other in the study of story. He argues that a study of narrative performance should consider both. In fact, the inseparability of text and context of storytelling, Georges says, is such that it is an illusion to conceive of any controversy about it (1980).

In a model that emerges from all this, Georges (1969) points out the need to assess storytelling as an exchange between the narrator and the listener. The narrator's and the listener's roles, according to him, should not be regarded in the light of the traditional active participation of the former and the passiveness of the latter: both the narrator and the audience are contributors to the process of narrative enunciation. Through questions, prompting and affirmation, the listener becomes a co-narrator. Towards a holistic assessment of narrative, Georges also stresses the need to consider the "combination of audio and visual channels" through which the story is broadcast. Georges rejects Malinowski's popular but nebulous definition of myth as "universal phenomenon" whose "functions…, social meaning and significance are identical in all societies" (325). Malinowski's hypothesis, he argues, built from a study of a particular society, is not valid for all cultures.

As Georges himself apprehends from the outset however, even his own remedial model is not faultless. In view of the subject of the present work for example, the postulate that in "every storytelling event, there is direct, person-to-person communication between encoder [narrator] and decoder [audience]" (317) downplays the complexity of narrative performance on the radio. If the mutual creative process between the guest hunter and the presenter of *Ọdẹ akọni* for example fits into "direct person-to-person" schema, the remote audience – who are in fact the audience for whom the series is designed – do not relate to the story and the storyteller(s) in such direct manner. That hunters at home sometimes fire shots to announce to villagers that the radio session has started or to acknowledge their identification with the story does not in any way mediate the gap created by the radio as a one-way medium. The feedback through the telephone does little as a bridge as not all the listeners have the resources to make telephone calls. Even not all those who have such resources are guaranteed access to the narrator. Most

importantly, the phone-in session of this programme, in the formality of its schedule and organization, has none of the spontaneity characteristic of storytelling as conceived by Georges. Lastly, the useful advice that data "for studying storytelling must be sought in natural field situations, and every attempt must be made to capture their wholeness" through "devices such as sound camera" (327) has its limitation. As Isidore Okpewho (1983) has found out, such devices as camera and voice recorder have the potential of undermining the naturalness of the event: the storyteller in the presence of the "outsider" researcher, highlighted by his gadgets and writing pad, may either be intimidated into faltering or encouraged to impress the listener(s). With the example of the hunters' narratives which are so bound up with human conversation - when they are performed at all – that one can hardly determine or anticipate them in time to be recorded on magnetic tape and film, the researcher largely has to depend on prompting narrators to tell their stories, an approach which, though unavoidable, has whittled down the kind of natural process that Georges suggests.

Jeff Todd Titon discusses the "mythmaking" aspect of storytelling in "The life story" (1980). In this definition:

> life story is…a person's story of his or her life, or of what he or she thinks is a significant part of that life. It is therefore a personal narrative, a story of personal experience [that] emerges from conversation. (276)

Pointing out the interface of fiction and actuality, Titon reminds us that the human recollection that characterizes this narrative form happens "in a moment of vivid sensation" (280) in which "the historical imagination will sometime crawl out from the avalanche of data available…and turns its subject into a palpable human being, usually by giving him or her words to say" (281). This is where the narrator of Jeff Titon's "life story", like all narrators on earth, is guilty of fiction because "no matter how sincere the attempt, remembering the past cannot render it as it was" (290). However, the base of "life story", according to Titon, is essentially history.

Titon raises the important question of scientific investigation and argues that the tendency among folklorists towards "emphasis upon quantification…and distrust of literary evidence…in order to maintain professional respectability" (282) is ill-placed. Considering the belief that most narrators and audiences of life story have in the *myth*, "scientific explanation is irrelevant" (279). The editor of the modern written history, in Titon's reckoning, is equally an adept in "mythmaking" as his selection of events for inclusion in the chronicle to be published, and the location of ellipses and parentheses in the text are determined by the kind of "truth" he wants the reading public to know. Though Titon's term "life story" is too broad to denote the hunters' accounts, his recognition of the immanent overlap of fact and fiction is adopted in this study's definition of *myth*, even though Titon avoids the term in the essay.

The form labeled "life story" by Titon is similar to what is variously referred to as "personal experience story" (Sandra Stahl, 1986), "conversational genre" (Roger D. Abrahams, 1968; Sally Yerkovich, 1986), and "conversational narrative" (John Hayne, 1989). Sandra K.D. Stahl states: "[personal] experience stories are first person narratives usually composed orally by tellers and based on real incidents in their lives" (268). She calls attention to the challenging nature of researching into such narratives in view of the traditional conceptualization of story as a consciously artistic form. Sthal rejects the term "memorate" inaugurated by C.W. von Cydow (1948) and popularized by R.M. Dorson on the ground that it refers to story denying or validating traditional and supernatural beliefs. She chooses the term "personal experience story" because of the extra-ordinary experiences of realistic or 'secular' nature that provide her with the present data. At no point in her essay does Stahl however explicate her category with specific data; the only example used, as she herself admits, is a "memorate…text" (272).

Stahl notes that the extempore nature of the performance that sometimes diminishes the artistic quality of the narrative sometimes heightens credibility:

> …it is to the teller's advantage to appear unself-conscious in the telling; the technique of simulating spontaneous form lends an air of sincerity and

> immediacy to the storytelling, qualities that might be undermined by an extremely polished performance. (272)

Though the above observation is intended to drive further a wedge between the fiction of "memorate" and the reality of "personal experience story", it is nevertheless apt on the confidence and audience's trust that the first person medium guarantees the narrator. The narration, in this sense, induces intimacy as does any revelation in which one takes the other into confidence: "Nothing creates intimacy quite so well as some confession or exposure of the self: the storyteller offers a welcome gift to a cold world, a moment by the fire of self" (274). Stahl also mentions the functional plurality of the narrative. There is no limit to the number of services to which the narrator can press his stories, ranging from mere entertainment to didactic instruction.

Sally Yerkovich (1986) adopts the term "conversational genre". She explains that the term in its broadness subsumes proverbs, superstition, taunts, curses, charms and many forms yet to be identified. According to her, researchers into "conversational genre" should pay compulsory attention to social interaction that produces them, and carefully observe the performance process before analysis and description. Yerkovich's advice also presupposes that the context of the conversation that yields the narrative should be given attention:

> The shift to artistic conversation may be seen as a shift into performance… Here, we view performance as the actualization of the expressive or artistic potential of behaviour. There are certain ways of speaking which lend themselves to a performance mode…Performance in this case might occur as professor recounts stories of his encounters with well-known individuals in his field… [Conversation] implies an exchange among two or more individuals. *Performance in conversation, then, must be applied to that interactional exchange among individuals rather than to the speaking of only one participant.* (Italics mine, 280)

Yerkovich is an example of the growing redefinition of the concept of performance. She however overlooks the interpenetration of the forms: proverbs, taunts, curses etc. Atomistic identification of elements of conversation like these for separate analysis may undermine an encompassing study of how they are commonly harnessed by the performer in one single performative situation.

In his study on folktales – or *marchen* – Richard M. Dorson (1986) also points at the need to conceive performance in this new sense. Though the subject of Dorson's article is a narrative form that is considered fictional, some of the points raised are of general relevance. Dorson interrogates an aspect of the fixity of folktale as a received tradition. This aspect relates to the narrative performance as a preserve of a social class marked out by "isolation, illiteracy, superstition, poverty, ignorance, simplicity" (295). With the examples of preachers, college presidents and politicians – including Abraham Lincoln – as narrators, Dorson questions this stereotype. In sum, Dorson holds that "ordinarily we think of singers and dancers as performers, but the evidence now makes clear that tellers too should be classed as performers" (299).

Writing on "conversational narrative", John Hayne (1989) notes that in a field situation, the awareness of being recorded or listened to by a scholar influences the performance, an awareness that affects the assumed naturalness of such performance. However, Hayne still permits that such recording or observation can still be held to be "natural in the sense that the speaker did not compose it in the deliberate way a writer or a professional oral story-teller would" (140). Even as he employs the term "conversational narrative", Hayne cautions that "a particular text nearly always overlaps with others", thereby sometimes making inadequate "convenient labels such as 'conversation', 'narrative' and 'advertisement'" (140).

In the context of its performance, Hayne argues that a number of factors – termed "backstage factors" – determine the shape and frame of narration. Those factors are partly suggested by the cultural designation of the narrative as "preaching", "academic lecture" or "conversation". This, Hayne points out, is one determiner of the different grammars of verbal communication. Unlike in the

written text, a mere turn in intonation or a micro-second further elongation of a vowel may have significant implication for meaning-making. It is in the light of this that the reduction of narrative performance to literature constitutes a challenge. Another notorious twin of this reduction is the written summary of such narratives. Such commentative texts, like this literature review, often impose on the primary oral performance a new set of meanings.

In *Myth in Africa* (1983), Isidore Okpewho, seeking to redefine the concept of myth, critiques the definitions of early writers like James Frazer, C.W. von Sydow, Bronislaw Malinowski, Claude Levi-Strauss, Andre Jolles and William Bascom. Common to all these writers is the popular conceptualization of myth as a narrative form, although they diverge on such issues as the function of myth, and on which of myth or ritual is the causal partner in the pair. Earlier, Malinowski suggests that myth has a plastic narrative quality, and that, inferably, performativity of myth is therefore determined by the expertise of the narrator:

> [Myth] has its literary aspect – an aspect which has been unduly emphasised by most scholars, but which, nevertheless, should not be completely neglected. Myth contains the germs of the future epic, romance, and tragedy; and it has been used in them by the creative genius of peoples and by conscious art of civilization. (1998:176)

In Malinowki's view, myth therefore "lends itself in certain of its forms to subsequent literary elaboration" (176). This observation is essentially identical with the maxim credited to Joseph Fotenrose: "no story, no myth" (Okpewho, 1983:48). Claude Levi-Strauss, the structuralist theoretician and one of the writers critiqued by Okpewho, rhetorically reflects that myth "is language, functioning on an especially high level where meaning succeeds practically at 'taking off' from the linguistic ground on which it keeps on rolling" (1998: 104). The angle introduced by Levi-Strauss here pertains to the aspect of mythical imagination that challenges our normative way of seeing; the normative sensibility denoted by Eric Rabkin (1977) as the "armchair worldview."

In his work under review, Okpewho rejects one aspect of the existing definitions of myth that conceptualizes it as an identifiable narrative form. As a corrective, Okpewho offers this definition:

> Myth is not really a particular type of tale against another… It is simply that quality of fancy which informs the creative or configurative powers of the human mind in varying degrees of intensity. In that sense, we are free to call any narrative of the oral tradition a myth, so long as it gives emphasis to fanciful play. (69)

Okpewho thereby appropriates the aggregate description of some of the early writers which presumes that myth has the capacity for redefining ordinary "everyday" reality. It is this aspect of myth that Malinowski, in his structural-functionalist thesis, advises that students of culture approach with humility. Locating a dividing line between historical reality and fictive "fancy" might be inadequate if it superimposes a totally different conceptual grid on the worldview under study. This is where the weakness of Okpewho's study lies. The weakness is not in his lack of confidence in the narrator as a bearer of total truth; no storyteller of whatever genre is expected to be "truth-teller" in the absolute sense anyway. The weakness lies in his counsel that the researcher should "be bold enough to assume *an objective distance* and…recognize an honest line between what is lifelike and what is not" (italics mine, 6). It is the kind of "objective distance" advised by Okpewho that inspires what Babalola Yai (1999) terms "intransitive discourses", an attitude that largely disregards the views of the people about their own worldview and cultural practices.

Bascom (1965) notes that "the distinction between fact and fiction refers …to the belief of those who tell and hear these tales and not to our beliefs, to historical or scientific laws, or any ultimate judgment of truth or falsehood" (7). Levi-Strauss (1968), more daringly, argues that myth straddles the thresholds of fact and fiction; it is futile therefore to locate it specifically in the historical or physical plane. Levi-Strauss further insists that the constituent elements of myths, which he refers to as "myhtemes" elsewhere, may not also be classified as exactly

historical or fictional. These theses – Bascom, Levi-Strauss and others – have their own problems, many of which, today, are well-advertised not only in the discourses on the arts, but also in sociology. But Okpewho's reason for rejecting them is faulty. His rejection carries with it some chippings of the pre-colonial anthropologist complex that presumes to regard the "object" of study from a higher realm of awareness; a complex premised on the assumption that "the researcher should know better":

> We therefore need a new approach, and I suggest a qualitative one… By this I mean that we have to qualify every tale – whether in prose or verse, whatever the distinction means; whether in a sacred or secular environment; in whatever manner or belief it is held in its indigenous setting – on the basis of our own scientific recognition of the relative weight of *fact* and *fiction* in it. (59)

Before taking a definite position on the definition of myth, it will be appropriate to go a little further afield in the review of the discourse on the place of belief in the configuration of reality, and the relativity of the concepts of fact and fiction.

2.1.4 Limen of the actual and the fabulous

Eric Rabkin (1977) notes that the "fantastic" conceived as antonymous to the "realistic" is often a product of intellectual weakness. This is especially so when the observer is either ignorant of or unwilling to accept the "ground rules" at which foreground the so-called fantastic is considered a reality. Pointing out the twentieth century phenomena - such as porpoise and baboon communicating with man - that have threatened the traditional distinction between the fabulous and the real, Rabkin holds that:

> In a context combining these points of view, one could believe a report of the creation of a device that allowed people and plant to communicate. (3)

Therefore, the fantastic occurrence is education in a very literal sense because "it leads one from darkness to light, it creates in the mind a diametric reversal and

opens up new and fantastic worlds (25)". Situating the discourse within the narrative art, Rabkin gives the condition that unless the observer "participates sympathetically in the ground rules of a narrative world, no occurrence in that world would make sense – or even nonsense" (4). Language, Rabkin continues, has the potential to heighten the sense of the fantastic if the observer is innocent of its ground rules. Using the structuralist schema, he points out that accepted grammar (*langue*) and individual performance (*parole*) are predetermined by sets of rules that may not necessarily correspond: aberration in the observer's terms might be adherence for the user of language under study. It is the lazy reluctance to experience the "ground rules" which legitimizes such "aberration" that often leads to the classification of the narratives employing the "aberrant" medium as "escape" - as opposed to "serious" – art. According to Rabkin, "this is a pernicious dichotomy that derives from two misconceptions: first, that 'seriousness' is better than 'escape'; second, that escape is an indiscriminate rejection of order" (44). For Rabkin therefore, it is needless and weak to labour to reconfigure cultural idioms to fit into the expressive system supported by the external observer's hegemony. It is not absurd to affirm alterity: the Other and the self do "experience different realities, not simply the same realities in different ways" (77).

In an article reflectively entitled "What people like us are saying when we say we're saying the truth" (1988), Bruce Jackson problematizes the kind of "scientific recognition" of "fact and fiction" pursued by Okpewho. Man, according to Jackson, survives on storytelling: "Stories are the way we manage reality for ourselves and our presentation of ourselves to others" (280). But the need to present the story in a manner "acceptable" because it is "beautiful" does threaten the "truth" in the absolute sense. As Hayden White (1996) also argues with regard to historiography, Jackson acknowledges "the ability of narrators to skirt the intentional and moral character of events without uttering anything that might be a literal untruth" (282). Using the example of Pete McKenzie, an American convict on death row for ten years who avoids execution "by being declared legally insane," he argues that man may use "the storyteller's art to make the past reasonable and bearable and manageable." In such a situation, he "wasn't lying,

but he wasn't telling the truth either" (280). This is the point where language, as Rabkin also agrees, goes beyond being a medium of a message to becoming a part of it: "Diction is a component of substance, not vehicle for it" (282). But apart from the intention of the narrator as a factor in the process of "mythmaking," illustrated in the extreme example of convict McKenzie, Jackson, like Rabkin, adds that the prevalence of uncertainty in the heart of the 20th century human activities, including physical science, has considerably redefined the boundary between fact and fiction – the uncertainty that has reduced the veracity of scientific prediction:

> Uncertainty has to do with a limitation of our ability to know; ambiguity has to do with a multiplicity of meaning extant at once and without contradiction or cancellation. (283)

The immanence of uncertainty that became palpable only in the 20th century had been a primordial Yoruba awareness illustrated in the quest for the understanding of the ambiguated reality through the hunter's eye.

Even in the genuine intention to capture the scientific truth, man is handicapped, his microphone and lens not withstanding. Reflecting on his experience in the field, Jackson observes that time and the sensible need to take out the "representative" examples for presentation downplays "the infinitude of information" (285). Also, the researcher's senses do not perceive through the camera or voice recorder the reality that the senses have not been disciplined to perceive live. This is why the so-called factual field report can never attain the height "the whole truth": "You see only what they made. If you want to see what they see, go with them next time" (288).

Marilyn Motz (1998) traces the root of the Western positivist tradition that considers *belief* – "a process of knowing that is not subject to verification or measurement by experimental means within the framework of a modern Western scientific paradigm" (340) – to the 19th century industrial revolution. It was one aspect of the technocentric bias of the time to consider the domestic side of life as less important to the place of work and machines. This attitude, Motz argues citing

Michel de Certeau, survives in form of the popular research and academic practice in which traditional knowledge and practices are labeled "folkways" and held to be subordinate or outright inferior to the physical science. Building on the observation of Jean-Francois Lyotard, Motz writes that though traditional ways of knowing are "judged by criteria developed through consensus within a community and extend beyond the cognitive assessment of truth" (343), they nevertheless do not foreclose the legitimacy of the Western modern scientific knowledge. But the Western science on the other hand, long adapted to truth/falsity dichotomy, rejects traditional knowledge. This "scientific" refusal to know is apprehended here as a limitation; a limitation that the traditional knowledge has surmounted because it acknowledges scientific knowledge. But the traditional modes of perception and expression do not only survive in the technocentric world, they in fact enjoy renewal through such cultural practices as rituals, narratives and songs that not only perpetuate them but also stimulate belief in them.

Bill Hemminger (2001) more eloquently explains the rationality in the belief in the spiritual as a realm of reality. In his reading of Ben Okri – a writer that works with the same materials as the hunter-narrator – Hemminger adopts the postulation of Martin Heidegger to interrogate the positivist anthropocentric disregard and denial of the world of objects. It should be noted that Heidegger's thoughts depart from the philosophical mainstream of his time in its elastic conceptualization of *Dasein* – "being-in-the-world" – to include objects and realities that are not accessible to the mundane senses. For Hemminger, as for Heidegger, the denial of the alternative reality of the spirit world is not just sin but atrophy, for the positivist that fails to recognize the spiritual as authentic dimension of existence first denies himself relation with this reality and then, in addition, blunts his own potential for sensing it. Recalling Anthony Appiah (1992), Hemminger asserts that for the people for whom Ben Okri writes "the world of spirits is not metaphorical or imaginary; rather, it is more real than the world of the everyday" (67). But it demands keen circumspection for a mind attuned to positivism to retain a vision of the spiritual. Hemminger points out Azaro, the principal character in Okri's novels, as a validation of this:

> Azaro has foreknowledge though he makes a terrible student; in a comic way, his inaptitude for school programs that so strongly stress cognitive operations and verbal skills becomes a criticism of our own academic programs, which sacrifice intrapersonal development or musical thinking or kinesthetic intelligence for programs that valorize logico-mathematic thinking. (79)

Having considered some of the observations on the nature of reality and belief, narrativity and the impossibility of absolute truth, and myth, this study adopts a working definition that combines select strands from some of them. Okpewho's definition of myth is adopted in its sense as a narrative quality, not necessarily as a narrative form. It is, in fact, in the apprehension of myth as a quality in the narrative process that the term "mythmaking", rather than "myth", is often employed to underline performativity in which it is manifest. However, the challenge that the separation of "fanciful play" from "fact" advised by Okpewho poses is only surmountable at the cost of being subjective. Living hunters relate experience replete with events that will, using Okpewho's parameter, qualify immediately as "fanciful play". But the hunter and many of his listeners hold them as true as the palm of the hand. This study does not therefore intend to determine the actuality or fictionality of a narrative by virtue of its "life size" or weird events and characterization. It is admitted however that fictionality is an aspect of the hunter's narrative as it is of any human attempt to relive the past. "Mythmaking" as conceived here is therefore the sum discrepancy between the event *of* the narrative and the event *in* the narrative. It is the essential human selection, through exclusion and inclusion, of events in the process of narrative performance. The study shall benefit from instances of contradiction in a narrative performance or in different versions of a narrative performance to instantiate "mythmaking" as essential aspect of narrative performance.

2.1.5 African cultural discourse and dualist formation

In an intellectual ferment that took up the better part of last century, there was a general attention on the need to review the Hegelian category that works on the assumption that African thought and cultural practices are sites of innocence, simplisticity, lack of sophistication, savagery etc. Not only indigenous African scholars but also Europeans, some of them missionaries, variously interrogate the assumption with African examples. One example of such contribution is *Bantu philosophy* (1959) by Placide Tempels, a Belgian missionary. Tempels, in his observation of the Luba people of Congo, posits that there is philosophy implicit in the people's perception of their world. In Tempels' reckoning, the concepts of "being" and "force" are central to Bantu ontology. He calls attention to the inseparability of these two entities as opposed to the reigning Western dualist thinking:

> We [Europeans] can conceive the transcendental notion of "being" by separating it from its attribute, "force", but the Bantu cannot. "Force" in his thought is a necessary element in "being", and the concept "force" is inseparable from the definition of "being". There is no idea among Bantu of "being" divorced from the idea of "force". (50-1)

Beings, whether human, animal, divine or vegetal, operate within a principle termed "general laws of vital causality". In this system, a being, by virtue of the strength of its force, can harvest more strength from another being, or, in the obverse, lose some strength to a stronger being. Put more literally, man as a being for example can strengthen or weaken the being of another man; the being of man can also affect the subordinate being of animal or plant.

The daring of Tempels in his challenge of the Hegelian episteme that provided basis for colonialist and missionary incursion is widely acknowledged (Kagame, 1956; Jahn, 1961; Okot p'Bitek 1973; Mudimbe, 1988). But in his thesis, as in those of many after him, there is a holdover of the complex that the classical/Western tradition is a higher order of knowledge. He states unequivocally

that Bantu thought, sill inchoate, needs to be conceptualized in Western terms to become philosophy in the explicit sense:

> It is *our* job to proceed to such systematic development. It is *we* who will be able to tell *them* in precise terms, what *their* inmost concept of being is. (Italics mine, 36)

One other controversial aspect of Tempels' postulation is the cosmological hierarchy implicit in his "general laws of vital causality". The laws suggest that a rational being, represented by man or spirit, is above animal, plant and other natural objects. The exclusive attribution of rationality, and therefore superiority, to a class identified as "man" or "spirit" may distort many cultural representations. A culture like the Yoruba, for example, does not set up such neat hierarchy in which a rational "being" stands in contradistinction to the irrational and the inanimate. As can be inferred from the hunters' narratives, there is overlap in the ontological estates that would ordinarily be considered animate or inanimate. As such, a forest or a tree may be hostile in a very literal sense, or the whirlwind may try to kidnap the hunter. Also in the one-way interactive model built by Tempels, the actors are seen all the time relating in subordinate-versus-superordinate terms. This schema does not anticipate a symbiosis or compromise resulting from a counterbalance of the "forces".

In the counternarrative exemplified by Tempels, even the contributions of African scholars are prone to generalization and conceptualization influenced by Western tradition. As variously pointed out (Bewaji, 1999; Wiredu; 1998), two of Bolaji Idowu's works (*Olodumare*, 1962; *African traditional religion*,1973) attempt the description of African cosmology using the dualist interpretive grid. Idowu's work is largely aimed at demonstrating that African conception of God and deities is analogous to the Western type and therefore not inferior to it. The result is that religious and cultural elements are rationalized to show their similarity with what obtains in Christianity. With regard to Yoruba worldview, Idowu objects to the misconception that it is essentially animist. Idowu argues that the misnomer "animism" stems from the mistake of the foreign investigator that

the Africans regard natural objects as living rational entities. The African worldview is instead hinged on:

> a belief in, recognition and acceptance of the fact of the existence of spirits who may use material objects as temporary residences and manifest their presence and actions through natural objects and phenomena. (1973: 173)

Idowu is right here up to a point. There is one sense in which a material phenomenon or an object is seen as mere habitation of a spirit as there is another in which the spirit and the object in which it resides are seen as one and the same. In the effort to totally debunk the animist theory, there is the risk of creating a dualist formation that somewhat undercuts the vitality of the intercourse – or the conjunction – of matter and spirit. The Yoruba, one of the principal foci of Idowu's studies, do not, for example, sometimes conceive of spirit and the object with which it is associated as separable. In a manner of speaking, a rock or a river might be conceived in the hunter's narrative as owner of the entire "livestock" of animals in a particular forest. This, as Idowu also notes, does not mean that every tree or rock in the forest is thought of in such terms. But every such natural object through which the spirits are manifest are however seen as conjoined as man and his life. Táníátù Akéwejẹ̀ (see **Appendix II**), a hunter, holds a rock and an *àràbà* tree[16] responsible for the disappearance of the deer he shot earlier. He issues them both an ultimatum:

> Ìwọ àpáta àti àràbà, ìwọ lo gbàbọ̀dè o. T'óo bá kọ̀ láti má gbé ẹran yìí jáde láàrin àsìkò táa wa nbi'i, o 'ò níí r'éwé b'orí mọ́ o
> [You the rock and the araba tree have conspired to shield the animal. If you fail to produce it within the time of my stay in this forest, there will be no single leaf left on you as shade and protection]

The *àràbà* and the rock on the one hand, and whatever spirit they harbour on the other are considered therefore as one. It is instructive to recall that death or eviction of such spirit is often marked by atrophy of the tree. Also, generalization

[16] Ceiba Pentandra (Z.O. Gbile, 1984)

about the nature of indigenous religion and spirituality in the entire of Africa mars Idowu's work. Kwasi Wiredu (1998), for example, has shown that Idowu's – and others' – representation of the Supreme Being contradicts the Akan thought.

John Mbiti (1975) replays on a larger scale the reductionism of Idowu. Following a premise that "even where there is no biological life in an object, the African peoples attribute (mystical) life to it", Mbiti writes that such belief is now only extant in rural communities and would soon be out of fashion as "scientific ideas" are now spreading. Further in the book, he tidily, with the aid of diagram, categorizes spirits into "nature spirits" and "human spirits". Nature spirits are further divided into "sky spirits" and "earth spirits", and the human spirits into "long dead" and "recently dead" (65). But Mbiti's definition is too exact to account for the intractable nature of the spirits as conceived by the Yoruba hunters. Apart from his anthropocentric assumption that the hunters' accounts negate, his classification of spirits into human and natural estates does not stand up to Yoruba examples. As he himself notes in a caveat later, a nature spirit might be considered as having once lived as man. In the narrative cited earlier, Akéwejè claims that a particular river was a hunter in his lifetime as man and, therefore, couldn't have denied a fellow hunter of his kill. Also, there is the potential of the so-called nature spirit contracting matrimony with man the hunter, a construct that upsets Mbiti's description of nature spirits as having "no direct physical kinship with people" (70). In one of the narratives considered in the present work, a hunter, Nathaniel Ogunosun takes an animal-spirit for a wife and, by her, has three children. D.O. Fagunwa (1941) also seizes upon this potential in his characterization of Kako, a hunter of human and spirit extractions.

Wande Abimbola (1977) asserts the philosophicality of African thought. Using *Ifá* as supertext, Abimbola locates Olodumare at the apex of the cosmological hierarchy. In the malevolent half of the cosmological whole superintended by Olodumare are the *ajogun* and the *eníyán; òrìṣà*, *egúngún, orí* and *ènìyàn* occupy the benevolent half. *Èsù*, the impartial and intractable essence of Olodumare is located in the border between these two worlds. Just as Segun Gbadegesin (1998) equally reveals, Abimbola points at the individuality that

moderates the fatalism and communalism with which the African cosmology and social relations generally are often associated. Despite the legitimacy of destiny, *ìwà*, the site of man's individual attitude and behaviour, contributes to the aggregate of man's faring on earth. Abimbola's malevolent/benevolent dichotomy is not entirely valid for Yoruba cosmology. If the *ajogun* are outright malevolent, the *eníyán* (often misrepresented as witches) are a complex of both evil and good. The *eníyán* or *àjé*, as can be inferred from a number of traditional performance texts, are latent with multivalent capacities just like the *òrìsà* that Abimbola situates in the benevolent class (Adeduntan, 2007). It is needless to point out that *ènìyàn*, man, called benevolent in Abimbola's classification is one the most indeterminate. Lastly, the spirits, sometimes designated as *ọ̀rọ̀*[17] in *odù* of *Ifá* are not given any specific space in Abimbola's schema.

2.2 THEORETICAL APPROACH

2.2.1 Structuralism

The growing awareness that social and cultural phenomena are imbued with life and, more significantly, meanings is a cardinal factor in the development of structuralist thought. Ferdinand de Saussure set the template for this theory. Identifying the pursuit as *semiology*, "science that studies the life of signs within society" (1998:77), Saussure splits language between three domains: *la langue*, *la parole* and *langage*. *Langue* refers to the system which underlies the practice of language; *parole* refers to the individual specific performance; while *langage* is man's in-built faculty for language. Further, he creates a model of linguistic enunciation in which the process of communication is reducible to the signifier (sound image) and the signified (concept associated with it). It is in the understanding that the two have no link except the one that the mind has become adapted to associating with them that Saussure adopts the term "arbitrariness".

Inspired by Saussure, Claude Levi-Strauss, a French anthropologist, seeks a universal interpretive approach to human culture – especially "mythmaking" – in

[17] For example, *ọ̀rọ̀-hùnùhùnù* in *Òfún Méjì* (Abimbola, 1969: 100-105).

the configuration of oppositions through which he claims human mind creates meanings. In *The savage mind* (1966), Levi-Strauss captures the enterprise of mythmaking with a metaphor of joinery: *bricolage. Bricolage* as conceived here is the art of fashioning new machines from the parts of old ones. Pursuing this further in "The structural study of myth", he identifies the units that the narrator stitches together as a performance as *mythemes*. Upon comparison of such units from the narratives of Europe and non-literate cultures of America, Levi-Strauss submits that:

> we are led towards a completely different view – namely, that the kind of logic in mythical thought is as rigorous as that of modern science, and that the difference lies not in the quality of the intellectual process, but in the nature of the things to which it is applied. (1998: 114)

Though Levi-Strauss – as well as many structuralists before and after him – has proposed an analytic science through which human cultures could be commonly understood, he underestimates the complexity of characterization and events in narratives by relying so much on system of opposition and binary.

Much of the opposition and modification to structuralism were initiated by theoreticians within the tradition. Roman Jakobson (1998) for example cautions that the traditional border between *langue* and *parole* in linguistics is not always visible and definite. He raises the awareness that those who determine compliance and deviation do so from a subjective point of view. Also, Michele Foucault (1972) faults the growing fixation in the structuralist discourse of the time with the diachronic approach to the study of narratives. Illustrating with history, Foucault says "the history of thought, of knowledge, of philosophy, of literature seems to be seeking more and more discontinuities, whereas history itself appears to be abandoning the eruption of events in favour of stable structures" (3). The temper identified as discontinuity by Foucault translates not just to *parole* but instances of subtle revolution and outright rebellion and deviation with their attendant tremor. For Foucault, the structuralist attempt at providing human history a general interpretive tool also presents the danger of substituting one grand history for all

histories. Like Martin Hiedegger, he sees further manifestation of this in the anthropocentrism engendered by diachrony:

> Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous and making human consciousness the original subject of all historical development and all human action are the two sides of the same system of thought. In this system, time is conceived in terms of totalisation and revolutions are never more than moments of consciousness. (8)

Though Foucault has been variously criticized as anti-humanist in his position and unscientific in methodology, his thought inaugurated the awareness of the relativity of the centre. Poststructuralists would later appropriate and enlarge his thesis.

Sunday Anozie's *Structural models and African poetics* (1981) is typical instance of wholesale transposition of structuralism on African discourse. In his apprehension of the increasing criticism of structuralism's overplay of *langue* to the neglect of *parole,* Anozie cautions that critical enterprise should not lose sight of the *norms* which existence performance, even as an exercise in negation, presupposes. It is against the appreciation of the norm that the extent of innovation is determined. But he nevertheless acknowledges the need to go beyond the dualist conceptualization of orthodox structuralism. He sees remedy in the engagement by the speech act theory with performance on the one hand, and the poststructuralist "tendency towards theoretical flexibility" (235) on the other, all of which mediate the stiff oppositionism that underlies the structuralist enterprise.

But Anozie repeats the mistake of the orthodox structuralists before him. In his insistence that cultural text could yield elegantly to structuralist appraisal, Anozie legitimizes the possibility of exclusion of context, making it secondary in importance to the text. In his proposition on the model for interpreting African mask, he calls for "a semiotic study" (122) that engages the mask as artifact isolated from the masquerade and the festival arena. While admitting that contextualists are pusuers of logic of a different order, Anozie nevertheless betrays

his aversion for the contextualist demand that "in order to exist, the mask has to be seen in motion, performed". Anozie differs that this insistence,

> although logical, contextually speaking, is only the prerogative of the existential ontologist and the cultural historian. As if being motionless means non-progress! As if art objects can be less kinetic when they are most static! (123)

The rhetoric is impressive, but the sober truth is that the exegete that describes or analyzes the mask has to work in the awareness of the context – if not participate fully in it – of the performance that gave or gives breath to the mask. Else, he would simply be carving a different mask. Anozie also shows the anthropocentric structuralist assumption against which Foucault warns in *The archaeology of knowledge*. Anozie says: "although modern science can prove that monkeys and dolphins perform illocutionary acts…, there is no evidence that they can engage in rational metaphorization of their world" (220). For him, therefore, one significant merit of structuralism is its exclusive *scientific* focus on the thoughts, motives and actions of man. It is in keeping with this that he proposes a structuralist poetics of the objectivist mode:

> It is our view that a continuous evolution of knowledge and updating of information in the areas indicated above must proceed regardless of the use to which such knowledge might be put… *Any other attitude is anti-positivist and anti-progressivist.* (Italics mine, 251)

Anthony Appiah (1981), except for his rather acidic remonstration, responds appropriately to such structuralist tyrannical will to the absolute as characterizes Anozie's conclusion above. Taking off from Saussure, Appiah modifies the concept of arbitrariness. "What Saussure meant was that the way our ideas (signifieds) partition up reality is itself arbitrary, in the sense of conventional" (166). In other words, the relation between the signifier and the signified can be held to be arbitrary to the extent that it is "conventional" and not "natural" in the sense of being acquired from birth. Though true, this aspect of

Saussurian thesis, for Appiah, is not a significant discovery. Homing in on Anozie, Appiah argues:

> It is one thing to say that structural facts matter, and another to say that *every* structural fact matters. Yet the theory of structural holism amounts precisely to the latter claim. Indeed structural holism, plus the thesis that structural facts constitute the essence of signs, together entail that all and only the structural facts matter. This claim seems to me hyperbolic… (168)

Appiah also points out the failure of Saussurian linguistics to even aspire to the "holism" it presumes possible. This failure is manifested in the neglect of the study of *parole* and the privileged pursuit of *langue*. It is characteristic of the structuralist tradition, writes Appiah, to see language as one linear discourse, not paying attention to the disjunction that a close study of praxis exposes. Now Appiah does not only point out this inadequate "holism" in the Anozie's structuralism but also shows an overkill that is inspired by Levi-Strauss' wholesale application of the Saussurian model on myth. It is such antecedent that suggested the possibility of superimposing the model on the exegesis of the African mask. Like Jan Vansina (1983), Appiah argues that structuralism downplays cultural specificity and attempts to hide this fault by claiming that the proof of the oppositional nature of linguistic code is in the human unconscious. It thereby seeks to sidestep verification.

Jan Vansina's work is on the inadequacy of structuralism in the study of African history and oral tradition. The structuralist penchant for reading metaphor into every communicative idiom, he points out, allows for gross imposition of individual speculation on the essential meaning of historical text. Similar to this is the unhealthy objectivism that leads to construction of meanings that reflect only the mind of the structuralist, not that of the people under study. Therefore, "no structuralist practice takes context into account as a condition for establishing the link between image and meaning, meanings being rarely universal" (313). Also, Vansina holds that since his analytic raw materials are figures of opposition, the

structuralist rigs the data by simply eliminating those that do not validate his theory. Vansina however acknowledges that structuralism could be "a fine tool for literary criticism, provided one accepts that it deals with the resonances a given reader can read into a text *beyond* the intentions of an author" (314).

In his call for a more contextual appraisal of the oral art, Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah (1997) also considers the Saussurian concept of arbitrariness as simplistic. Invoking a Yoruba example, Na'Allah points at an instance of extra-linguistic meaning-making in which leaf stands for medicine or charm. This association, in Na'Allah's reckoning, is not arbitrary; it follows from understandable and valid experience. Even though "leaf" and "medicine" might signify two different things, they might also mean the same in a manner that negates arbitrariness if the speakers have interacted with "the forest's reality and live in the world in which the substance exists" (132). It is in view of his premise that signification is not domiciled in speech alone, and that utterance alone does not represent speech that Na'Allah insists on contextualist approach to the study of African oral arts. The "idea that any person can just isolate an oral text and attempt to explicate it by applying any modern critical modes to it borders on the ridiculous" (132).

Kwesi Yankah (1995) equally maintains that the Saussurian and Jakobsonian models do not allow for the comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of *Okyeame* rhetorics. Among the Akan of Ghana, the *Okyeame* (pl: *Akyeame*) is the communicative intermediary between the chief and his audience. Through the *Okyeame*, the chief "relays or reports his words to the audience present, whose words to the chief must also be chanelled through the intermediary" (212). Yankah awakens us here to the "simplicity of the notions of sender-receiver, addresser-addressee, as the primary categories of reference, and to the existence of more complex structures of communication" (214) exemplified in the chief-(*Okyeame*)-audience palaver. Yankah's subject is a consummate example of a narrative performed by one on behalf another. As shall be shown later, the narratives on the electronic media, at times, do invoke the *Okyeame* liminal interference that upsets the receiver-sender bilateral schema.

2.2.2 Narratology

The school of theoreticians identified with this name has structuralist pedigree. As could be inferred from the works of Roland Barthes, Algirdas Julien Greimas, Mieke Bal and others, narratologists give especial attention to narratives performed orally. They also go beyond the normative narrative forms to examine the narrativity in other areas of verbal communication. Roland Barthes' 1966 statement that "[the] narratives of the world are numberless", and are not only present in "myth, legend, fable, tale, novella" etc but also on "stained glass windows, cinema comics, news items [and] conversation" (1996: 46), typifies this aspect of narratology. Barthes, in *S/Z* (1974), both attempts to shift attention from the study of structure underlying the narrative to the individual artist as a langue in his own right, and establish that the reader of the text, like the audience of conversational narrative, is participant in the enterprise of making the story. Like Tzvetan Todorov and A.J. Greimas, he argues that "every character (even secondary) is the hero of his own sequence" (1996: 55). As such, the critic, as he surrenders in receptivity to the world of a narrative, should be circumspect. He is only accessing such world through one of his eyes; the other is the narrator's. The narrator, identified by Barthes as subject, should therefore be weighed against other actors in the narrative. As Wole Soyinka (1981) notes, it is Barthes' liberalization of the structuralist model that has made his thesis amenable to various schools of thought. The poststructuralist would, for example, later exploit his ideas as they do those of Michele Foucault[18].

Barthes' contemporary, A.J. Greimas, extends the models of Vladimir Propp and Etienne Souriau. Vladimir Propp, the Russian formalist, had written on the pattern of characterization and plot in folktales. He has considerable influence on the various structuralist schools that emerged later. Etienne Souriau studies the nature of characterization in dramatic conflict. In all, Souriau identifies six patterns of characterization in dramatic narrative namely Lion (the main move or force), Mars (the opponent), Sun (the desired good), Earth (the destined recipient of the

[18] See, for example, Paul de Man "Roland Barthes and the limits of structuralism".

good), Arbiter, and Helper. In view of the infinitude of roles and motives in drama, Souriau's model also anticipates the possibility of coupling of two or more of the characterizations. But Greimas updates both Propp and Souriau on the ground that their models commonly presuppose that "a restricted number of actantial terms is sufficient to account for the organization of a microuniverse". According to him:

> Their insufficiency lies in the character, at the same time excessively and insufficiently formal, that was given to this definition: to define a genre only by a number of actants, while setting aside all the contents, is to place the definition at too high a formal level… (1996: 81)

In his description of the modified typology, Greimas uses the term "actant" to refer to an abstract level of what a character does in one moment to refer to it. This character appreciation presupposes that pattern of characterization in narratives is dynamic. Without therefore attempting any exhaustive inventory of such actants, Greimas resolves that "each manifested actant would possess, behind it, its own semantic investment and so that we could say that the ensemble of recognized actants, whatever the relationship may be between them, are representative of the whole manifestation in its entirety"(78). Wanda Rulewicz (n.d.) further explicates:

> 1.An actant may be abstraction (God, liberty, or a collective character in ancient Greek tragedy…)
> 2.One character may simultaneously or successively assume different actantial functions.
> 3.An actant…may simply be the general abstract notion which is presented on the ideological level of the play [or narrative]. (Par 19-21).

This specific level of action in Greimas' own word is called "performance".

Mieke Bal, from the title of her work – *Narratology* (1978) – writes in the awareness of narratology as an established science in explication of narratives. Bal conceives of narrativity in three stages: fabula, story and narrative text. In Bal's schema, fabula is the premythical stage where reality yields events. Reality, it should be noted is not as linear as a well told story – or even any story at all – and events therefore have no plot in mind when they unfold haphazardly. It is the

human perception, attuned to "mythmaking," that reconfigures such events into related episodes. This stage of perception – just before performance – is identified by Bal as "story." The narrative text is an instance of performance of the story. Apparently misunderstanding this aspect of Bal's theory, W. Bronzwaer (1981) contests that "there is a fable [fabula] only because there can be consciousness only if there is something to be conscious of" (195). As such, Bronzwaer posits that there is overlap in the stages of the fabula and the story. The problematic comes from Bronzwaer's misconception of fabula. She conceives it in the sense of "[what] is being told" (195). But Bal's typology does not situate fabula at the stage of narrative praxis. Fabula forecloses narrativity. It is the infinite vista from which the mythmaker *perceives* his narrative bits.

The concept of focalization is cardinal in Bal's theory. It is conceived in the understanding that perception "is a psychological process, strongly dependent on the position of the perceiving body" (1996: 116). Bal does not speak here of only visual perception but also of other modes of appreciation of reality. The emerging concept of focalization is therefore, in Bal's word "the relationship between the 'vision', the agent that sees, and that which is seen" (188). Focalization therefore supposes that perspective invests narrative with subjective values. As Greimas' actantial category also suggests, it is, as such, expedient to study all available perspectives in the narrative performance. There is however the problem of the dominating perspective of the performer in oral narrative. The narrator as mythmaker sometimes enjoys the tyranny of choosing what his or her audience should know and is thereby capable of consciously foregrounding a particular subjective representation. This justifies Bal's focalization. The student of narrative in this case needs circumspection to access alternative representation from intractable characters that slip out of the performer's subjective orbit and those modified or added by co-performers such as the audience.

2.2.3 Theoretical positions in cultural and performance studies

As pointed out earlier in Chapter One:

> Studying the interactions, sometimes easy, sometimes tense, among the speakers in the quadrilogue is what performance studies people do. These studies are intensely interdisciplinary, intercultural, and intergeneric. Performance studies builds on the emergence of a postcolonial world, where cultures are colliding, interfering with and fertilizing each other. (Schechner, 1993: 21)

Schchner's "performance studies" – without initial block letters – is significant because it, as is employed in this work, subsumes contributions from ancillary discourses with implications for performance.

Even among the scholars of orthodox structuralist bias, the need for adjustment in the appraisal of literary art is not lost. Colin Falck (1989) for example notes that Saussarian structuralism has awakened attention to the dimension of relations between signs and language, and language institution as the primary point from which the individual user takes codes and deploys them. But "as a complete account of the nature of language (rather than as an account merely of some of the principles according to which our actual languages should best be studied) Saussarian theory is philosophically bankrupt" (30). Discourse in oral performance – an exercise that draws a great deal of its significance from the social context of its performance – apprehends the situation more specifically. Dennis Tedlock (1977), dismissive of structuralism, writes: "[we] shall never develop a meaningful oral poetics by attempting to incorporate the full dimensions of the live performance in a…structuralist scheme" (510) because in his obsession with the components of narrative as separate atoms:

> [the] structuralist…is like a mad vivisectionist, thinking he will at last discover the secret of life if the animal on the table will endure one more little incision before it goes limp. (509)

As early as 1926, Bronislaw Malinowski had written that "[text]…is extremely important, but without context it remains lifeless" (24).

Many aspects of the sociological and contextual study of the literary and verbal arts today are prefigured in the work of Victor Turner. Turner, a social

anthropologist, bases much of his studies on his observation of ritual performance among the Ndembu of Zambia. The concept of social drama is central in Turner's theory of performance. The concept denotes the dialectic of conformity and deviation characteristic of the relations between the individual and the hegemony. According to Turner, this dialectic is characterized by four phases: 1. breach of norm, 2.crisis, 3.redress initiated by the system, and 4. reintegration (1957: 91). Of specific interest to Turner is the two medial phases of crisis and redress which he describes as "liminal". Liminality is the threshold of struggle between the individual will for unmitigated expression ("orectic pole") and the institutional checks that either prevent it or "rehabilitate" the "errant" individual ("normative pole") (1975).

In this liminal phase of social drama, Turner reflects on the deployment of symbols as medium of expression during ritual. For Turner, ritual is processual, i.e. though, it is a normative design that guarantees spiritually some sort of balance, the individual, through creative deployment of symbols, signifies very particular and novel meanings. Ritual therefore provides the maverick will with outlets in form of the creative use of the symbols. When the individual creative will threatens the normative, the resulting tension is "communitas". Communitas is Turner's designation of "the liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition [and] creativity…from the normative constraints" (1982: 44). Communitas is as such the realm of liminal licence in which the individual is permitted to play against the norm. Even as the individual in the communitas is doomed to final rehabilitation, his moment of creative licence is full of suggestion for future development (Tuner, 1982).

Communitas therefore presupposes that symbol as a tool of communication is malleable. Symbols "should be considered not as constituents, essential parts, of some abstract, atemporal complex, but rather as dynamic system of signifiers, signifieds, and changing mode of signification in temporal sociocultural processes" (1975: 149). It is in performance – a prime condition for "dynamic systems" and "changing modes of signification" – that norm is both negated and entrenched at once:

> New signified may be added by collective fiat to old signifiers. On the other hand, individuals may add personal meaning to a symbol's public meaning… Such initial private "construction" may become part of public hermeneutic or standardized interpretation if the exegete has sufficient power, authority, or prestige to make his views "stick"…
>
> This property of symbols – multivocality, complexity of association, ambiguity, open-endedness [etc] – are connected with their dynamic quality. Their multivocality enables a wide range of groups and individuals to relate to the same signifier-vehicle in a variety of ways. (1975: 54-5)

Turner breaks with the structuralist mainstream by focusing on the specific instance of performance to determine how meanings are continually generated. He awakens the mind's eye once more to the reality that abstract description of the linguistic system cannot give a perfect account of licence and deviation embedded in actual performances. No such poetics exists: "On earth the broken arcs, in heaven perfect round" (1975: 146). Even in ritual, traditionally held to be proofed against innovation, human agency deploys symbols creatively.

Turner's work however betrays some holdover of structuralism. He largely uses the same system of opposition through which structuralists choose to explain all situations of/in enunciation. For example, his reading of the Ndembu colour classification is that white is associated with goodness, health, power and life. Black is associated with evil, impurity, death and disease, while red straddles life and death, good and evil, illness and good health and so on. The third liminal sign (red) added by Turner here does not diminish the opposition; like a boundary, it reinforces it. Luc de Heusch (1975), in his explication of colour as conceived by the Ndembu, argues that meaning is dependent on the context of use and contextual positionality of one to the other. From De Heusch's example, it is inferable that Turner sometimes slips into the same generalization that his particularistic approach is intended to correct.

Likewise, in the conceptualization of social drama, Turner pathologizes the agency of antistructure, the liminal rebel against the norm. He supposes that like a

medium in a trance or rock singer high on cocaine, the liminal personality would be reintergrated and become "normal" in terms set by the hegemony. His model does not suggest the potential that the hegemony could lapse into pathology, in which case the element held as transgression is actually the normal. Worse, there is no possibility of two parallel narratives – or better still, multiple narratives – in which liminality ruptures and otherness simply becomes another reality and not transgression. This is the point where Turner seems to lose appeal for postcolonial cultural and identity theorists.

Richard Schechner modifies certain aspects of Turner's social drama. In a volume of essays entitled *The future of ritual* (1993), Schechner conceives as "avant-garde" the human forces that define the nature and movement of performance and culture. This conceptualization echoes aptly the understanding of the Yoruba hunter promoted in this study. "Avant-garde" is adopted by Schechner in the same sense as "vanguard": "what is in advance of" (5). In his explication, Schchner names five categories: "an historical avant-garde, a current avant-garde (always changing), a forward-looking avant-garde, a tradition-seeking avant-garde, and intercultural avant-garde" (5). Schechner's category is better understood in terms of functionality rather than as a neat hard-and-fast classification of cultural movements. As such, the hunters vanguard as understood here combines more than one class of avant-garde.

Schechner sees ritual beyond Turner's definition of it as "a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actor's goals and interests" (Turner, 1977: 183). He pursues the more liberal definition that is nascent in the later writing of Turner. Schechner's understanding of ritual "as a process applying to a great range of human activities rather than as something tethered to religion" (Schechner, 1993: 20) helps to loosen the appreciation of art in "the expanding field of performance and its scholarly adjunct, performance studies" (20). Now conceiving ritual as "dynamic performative systems generating new materials and recombining traditional actions in new ways" (228), Schechner reflects on performance discourse:

> The relatively tight boundaries that locked the various spheres of performance off from each other have been punctured. It is doubtful if these boundaries ever really functioned, in fact. Certainly, they didn't in popular entertainments and religious rituals. The boundaries, in fact, are ghosts of neoclassical and Renaissance readings of the Aristotelian "unities". Keeping each genre in its place is a last ditch regressive action mounted by some critics and academics. (20)

Like Turner, Schechner also sees the liminal licence characteristic of ritual forms like carnival and festival as an outlet for the psychic exorcism of the feared. Dele Layiwola (1991) had earlier examined the immanence of the principle of exorcism of the feared and the unwanted through dramatic invocation of same in traditional African performance forms. With examples of dance forms among the Lugbara of Uganda, Ikaki and Udje performances among the Kalabari and the Urhobo of Nigeria respectively (and many more examples they immediately invoke), one sees the common pacifist undercurrent running through not only the indigenous ritual forms but also the contemporary ones like the informal narratives. They are all "meant to re-establish consonance, in a world which seems to have gone berserk, fleeing, as it were, the control of men" (Layiwola, 1991: 22). Man does not always stop at exorcizing his many "devils", he sometimes goes on to invoke through the same ritual his desires in order to appropriate them. In such modern rituals as wedding ceremony, political rally and street carnival, participants enact through expensive textile and ornaments, placard and drinking orgy the "not me" (Schechner, 1993: 47) which they desire.

As Turner suggests, ritual licence prefigures artistic innovation. When such innovation challenges the hegemony, the official reaction observed by Turner tends towards the rehabilitation of the agency so that the performative moment becomes for the performer a permitted therapy of extravagance from which he or she has to recover. Sola Olorunyomi (2005) observes another type of official reaction in the

> tendency in history of that factor of appropriation of cultural forms of subordinate classes by the ruling class. Such transformation, or even hijacking, is evident in religion and music. (217)

Olorunyomi's reflection is on the continuum of Afrobeat, a counterhegemonic musical genre inaugurated by Fela Anikulapo-Kuti. Olorunyomi's point is significant in the light of the various Afrobeat artists that have toned down considerably on the acidic criticism of officialdom and its functionaries, and the appropriation of the form by gospel artists. Richard Schechner reveals a third possibility in which the authorities move to define and appropriate the counterculture, and thereby unwittingly set off a rash of recalcitrant reactions in favour of unfettered creative expression. In a chapter on *wayang kulit*, Javanese puppetry, Schechner points to an instance of this possibility in the reaction of a class of Javanese artists to the official attempt to moderate their practice. Both the colonial administration and indigenous officialdom encouraged the normative *wayang* and "blacklisted" the freewheeling type "used as propaganda or to incite political action either for or against the government" as "threats to the 'tradition'" (196). What today constitute the "tradition" or the space Schechner calls "normative expectation" in the Javanese puppetry are a narrative of the Dutch powers who contrived to control the Javanese traditional theatre by redefining it. Their project is successful only to the extent that today:

> Western scholars, then as now, "improve a tradition" by privileging early or presumed originary elements. There is an investment in singularity and hierarchy, a denial of multiplicity and equivalence. Plural styles or traditions are reduced to one "best", "original", "primary" model or ideal from which the others derive or deviate. (192)

But till today, *wayang kulit*, as before the Dutch colonizers' intrusion, continues to undermine normative expectation even at the risk of being categorized as "rogue" type. Though denied official patronage, the freewheeling *wayang* nevertheless survives among ordinary people. It is in this loose perception of the "standard" that Schechner diverges from Turner. For Schechner, claims to the "traditional" or

"originary" are often suspect. They are always attempts to impose a privileged account over by-narratives. Turner's breach-crisis-redress-reintegration model works on similar principle that one particular normative space exists which all ritual behaviours, in their moment of licence, work to strengthen. Schechner however points at the possibility of simultaneous narratives:

> One of the lessons of historiography is that different versions of historical events (or tales) are possible according to whose voices are heard; and telling these different stories opens the possibility of different futures – in fact the concrete desire to live different futures is the motor driving the construction of different pasts. This…is the dynamic performative process of…"restoration of behaviour". (223)

Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) examines the potential of communication to create vent for every language – each as a carrier of specific value – in the same discourse. Bakhtin's perception of discourse as polyphonic presupposes that intercourse exists among languages. This intercourse is essential in the equalizing exercise he terms "dialogism". Dialogism is Bakhtin's term for the plurality of utterances in the discourse. Bakhtin's dialogism demotes monologism, an exactly opposite situation in which one mode of utterance is declared "standard" in relation to other modes. What Bakhtin calls "heteroglossia" is a cardinal quality of dialogic discourse. Heteroglossia refers to the variety of languages active in the discourse. Implied in Bakhtin's description of heteroglossia is a dialogic situation in which one genre of expression tries to dominate the other, and the latter, through such ploys as negotiation and subversion, avoids the former's imposition. Bakhtin also (1986) challenges generic categories like myth, tragedy and epic that ignore. In their prescription and specification of elements that form the genre, such categories not only downplay the interplay of different forms, but also often overlook expressive types that are not thus standardized.

In keeping with its dialogic nature, language, Bakhtin notes, is a product of corporate exercise. Meaningmaking is multilateral therefore. In verbal enunciation, both the speaker and the listener invest in the emergent meaning: "The word in

language is half someone else's" (1981: 291). Even literature, whose medium of enunciation is believed to have diminished its multilateral potential, is not free from this dialogic cooperation. Personal intention and disposition interlace the reader's perception of the narrated: "It is precisely in the process of living interaction with this specific environment that the word may be individualized and given stylistic shape" (276). It is in the light of this that Bakhtin stresses the consideration of the social context of narrative communication. At this point he veers very visibly from both structuralist and poststructuralist canons. It is significant to recall again that structuralism of the Saussurian genre identifies the systemic domain of *langue* and the performance domain of *parole* only to concentrate on the former. Deconstruction, major tool of the poststructuralist criticism, also iterates the impossibility of specific meaning. Common to both traditions therefore is the overlook of the specific but dynamic social arena of speech events, a prime aspect of Bakhtin's theory. Although like deconstruction, Bakhtin's "heteroglossia of the clown" (272) subverts the idea of centre or the standard through blasphemous play of one with the other's language, it does not, like deconstruction, insist that the entire communication event is characterized by such subversive temper as annuls certainty from meaning totally.

One popular charge against Bakhtin's dialogism is that its openness to all orders of discourse undermines rigour and polemics. Paul de Man (1983), for example, wonders "why the notion of dialogism can be so enthusiastically received by theoreticians of very diverse persuasion and made to appear as a valid way out of many of the quandaries that have plagued us for so long" (100). Insisting that hermeneutics as an exercise in textual understanding does not privilege alterity or plurality of meanings, de Man seems to suggest that Bakhtin's theory does not favour the kind of rigour evident in Bakhtin's own work. Dialogism, in de Man's reckoning, is pliable to all intentions: "one should perhaps ask who, if anyone, would have reason to find it difficult or even impossible to enlist Bakhtin's version of dialogism among his methodological tools or skills" (104). Though the aspect of post-Bakhtinian re-examination represented by Paul de Man and Ken Hirschkop (1985) cautions that no utterance – or, more literally,

cultural form – is bereft of subjective values, it nevertheless does not diminish Bakhtin's main point that cultural forms do not live side by side innocent of one another.

As early as the 1960s, certain issues in American folklore had prefigured some aspects of Bakhtin's theory, especially as it relates to the consideration of context in the examination of expressive forms. In an article earlier cited in the chapter, Robert A. Georges (1969) observes that

> [there] is nothing especially authentic or traditional about the messages of storytelling events generated by the interactions of the non-literate or the preliterate, for storytelling event constitute one kind of communicative even within continua of human and one kind of social experience within the network of social interrelationships among people, irrespective of their relative social, educational, or economic statuses. (323)

Thus viewing storytelling as one of many aspects of social communication, Georges proposes that other aspects of the process that run concurrently with the narrative should be considered in the study of storytelling. This obviously informs his choice of "storytelling event" to capture the entire of the social process from which narrative emanates. Georges' point is important in view of the tendency in folklore to regard stories not only as surviving artifacts from the past, but also as samples analyzable without necessarily giving consideration to their contexts of performance. Noting that no "single aspect of storytelling event can be regarded universally as primary or dominant, and no one aspect can be studied without considering its interrelationships with other aspects as a whole" (316-7), Georges says that the dynamic roles of the "storyteller" and "story listener", and the extra-contextual identities of the participants – such as narrator as father, listener as son, interlocutor as a colleague etc for example – might be crucial to the understanding of "mythmaking."

But in literary studies and folklore, analytic approaches, theories and recommendations many times rule out or subordinate context. In various essays published between the late 1960s and early 1980s, American folklorists

problematize the issue raised by Georges on the need to introduce some contextual dimension to folkloristic studies. Steven Jones (1979) maintains that emphasis on context in folklore means taking away scientificity from the discipline which has been noted for its empirical investigation. Dan Ben Amos (1979) writes a rebuttal of Jones, maintaining that the text-bound folklorists are hostile to change and pursue outmoded models. Yigal Zan's "The text/context controversy" (1982) represents most of the major points raised in the argument against contextual approach. Like the structuralist Mieke Bal, Zan considers composition of narrative as a reconstitution of "an image base". Image base belongs in the realm identified by Bal as fabula. According to Zan, "[since] image bases are equally reconstructable from either oral or written reports, the latter and the former are *identical* as far as facts and affects are concerned" (3). In other words, orality and writing are analogous media. Common to both the written and oral texts in relation to the "image base" is a sort of *second-handedness*, a quality of capturing an event from a temporal remove. Zan therefore concludes that since none of the two media recreates the image base in the most absolutely faithful sense, then there can be no talk of context of such event. Citing folklore's contributions to the structuralist corpora, exemplified by the work of Alan Dundes, he argues that "narrative portions are holistic" (4), and that "the removal of the interactive phenomena from the text/context system does not affect the proper functioning of the narrative nor its effect on the receiver" (5). Zan's proof that narrative text is self-sufficient is that it always meets "the mutual predictability criterion" i.e. components in each narrative always follow predictable order such as interdiction–violation–negative consequence etc. Therefore, "[it] can be said categorically that telling events, as observed text/context associations, do not meet the mutual predictability criterion and hence are not holistic systems" (5).

Yigal Zan's argument proceeds from a premise that folklore is science which, in his definition, "is a cause-discovering enterprise" (5). For a pair of phenomena – such as text and context – to be considered main focus of research in folklore therefore, there must be a causal nexus joining the two:

> When a causal relationship exists between two phenomena, their variability should systematically correspond to one another. However, differences and similarities exhibited by image bases do not correspond systematically to differences and similarities exhibited by contexts… Thus, we can reject the notion that context and texts are the primary causes of one another. (6)

Zan posits from the above that apart from the fact that a sole study of context cannot yield the kind of causality patent in the structural predictability of text, text and context do not, in addition, constitute a causal pair. In the light of this, context is a non-folklore subject, even though "it is but one class from an open-ended range of non-folklore phenomena which could be studied within the discipline of folklore without being the subject matter defining that discipline" (10).

The errors of Yigal Zan are multiple. First, the statement that writing and oral performance "are identical as far as facts and effects are concerned" is today a nullity considering the volume of findings in research on orality-writing interface[19]. One popularly acknowledged limitation of writing is its inability to capture the entire media – verbal and extra-verbal – of performance. Zan, in his writing-orality analogy, avoids the mention of the situation, characteristic of many research works in folklore, in which a narrative performed orally is reduced to text for ease of access and analysis. Even as such transcription is excusable on a different ground, it does not prove that the performance and its transcription "are *identical* as far as facts and effects are concerned". Particularly, the consideration of the media of writing and orality as parallel also becomes inadequate when applied to a largely oral culture like Yoruba. The power and popularity of orality is such that it is the written art that imitates it. It is therefore natural that in the attempt to poach in the preserve of orality, writing is unavoidably expressively deficient in many areas to which orality is attuned.

Also, inferable from the argument is the claim that the context of the narrated event is irretrievable. Zan is right here, but the point is that none of those

[19] See, for example, Dennis Tedlock "On the translation of style in oral narrative" and "Toward an oral poetics", and Margaret Thompson Drewal "The state of research on performance in Africa".

who advocate the study of context presume such retrieval possible in the first place. Zan's misunderstanding evidently comes from his confusing of the context of "storytelling event" with the context of "narrated event". What Zan calls "image base", and Mieke Bal labels "fabula", is not totally retrievable orally and in writing. In either case, the narrative exercise is at a contextual remove. But when the narrative is rendered orally and then written, the written text operates two removes away from the "image base": this is the point being made by Georges and others.

It is not a focus of this study to dabble in the debate about the definitions of science and folklore, and what is legitimate as subject of the latter. It is important however to identify a particular non-sequitur in Zan's conception of text as compliant with "scientific cause-and-effect pattern". The orthodox structuralist bias is patent here, and the same counter-argument that such model downplays the multiple semantic potential of oral narratives comes naturally to mind. Zan's claim that narrative text always fulfils "the mutual predictability criterion" is therefore untenable if one considers the conversational narrative performance in which the individual performer has the absolute power to reconfigure reality. It is especially so with the hunters' narratives, many of which upset the kind of "interdiction-violation-negative consequence" model raised by Dundes and cited by Zan. For example, hunter's violation of interdiction might end in untoward consequence not necessarily for the hunter but the interdictor, and neither does negative consequence necessarily come when interdiction is violated. In sum, the pattern of mythemic arrangement in the hunter's narrative is not exhaustible and therefore defies such absolute model.

In African literary and performance studies, there has not been any specific debate on the relevance or otherwise of context in the consideration of performance. In fact, there is growing awareness that both the consideration of aesthetics and sociological background are equally necessary in the study of performance. Nevertheless, the question of primacy of either often arises. In such situation, the tendency is always to privilege aesthetics over social context. In his introduction to *The oral performance in Africa* (1990), Isidore Okpewho writes:

> although there is clearly room for co-operation between the two disciplines [literary studies and sociology] in the study of the oral performance, an aestheticist model is not exactly the same thing as sociological model. When a literary scholar investigates an oral narrative event, he should of course explore the social circumstances as an aid to contextual insight, but he is really more interested in probing the aesthetic basis for the effectiveness of the devices used in the performance. (7)

Okpewho's fiat seems to rule out the possibility of a 50/50 balance of the two approaches. It raises a question about whether both the literary and the sociological models could not be employed in such a way that the resulting insight is both significant for history and art. Sola Olorunyomi's *Afrobeat!* (2005), a monograph on the musical art of Fela-Anikulapo Kuti, for example, manages this kind of balance.

The counternarrative project in the American diaspora is peculiar for its employment of deconstruction in the engagement of the grand narrative. Deconstruction is the major subversive tool in poststructuralism, hinged on the notion of impermanence and semantic uncertainty (Gates, 1983). In different essays published between 1985 and 1992, and collected in a volume entitled *The location of culture* (1994), Homi K. Bhabha argues the ambivalence and hybridity of colonial and postcolonial cultural spaces. He denies that cultural boundaries – such as between Self and Other, past and present, and indigenous and exotic – exist actually; it is an illusion that today appears true because successive narratives have promoted it. Bhabha opens the study on the note that cultural forms are not set in stone. Historical imperatives continuously foist overt and sublime mutation on them. Especially, the cultural models do not often represent adequately what they attempt to describe because they lose sight of the complexity and performativity of culture:

> Terms of cultural engagement are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of *pre-*

> *given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference…is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. (2)

Bhabha argues that "fixity and fetishism" of cultural and identity categories are not only false but also dangerous because they are hinged on the downplay of both creativity and analytic sincerity (9). As can be inferred from Victor Turner's theory, the liminal phase is one such space that defies fixity. It is a space in which the agency is neither Self nor Other but, most importantly, at its most creatively unrestrained. It is the performative space, identified as "cultural interstice", that Bhabha holds as intractable to normalization. Also, he equates the in-between space to the "unreal neutral space of the Third Person…who witnesses the debate from an 'epistemological distance' and draws a reasonable conclusion" (24). In this positioning of analysis and judgement in "the interstice" – which is "neither here nor there" – Bhabha indicts exercise in cultural interpretation that promotes fixed ideological representation.

Bhabha work supposes that affirmation of alterity is an exercise in entrenching illusion. The so-called "Self" lives in the eternal apprehension of the so-called Other, and the former is therefore defined by the latter and vice versa. In fact, in the attempt to consciously assert itself, one often ends up creating an analogue of the other. This point and an earlier one on the interstitial nature of interpretive discourse recall Tejumola Olaniyan (1995). Olaniyan points out that the same supremacist temper that characterized the colonial mission runs through postcolonial narratives that conceive of cultural forms as pure because they are fixed: "The Other, in this context, remains fixed as an atavistic category of the Same" (Olaniyan, 1995:30). Bhabha designates this class of discourse as "mimicry". It is in what Bhabha calls "hybridity" that binary formations like Self/Other, colonizer/colonized, past/present etc break down. In "the margin of hybridity" (207), cultural border is continually displaced and cultural items resist specific alignment as they show up in different places, sometimes at once.

In conclusion, Bhabha recommends, like Michele Foucault, that discontinuity, ambivalence and hybridity are legible not in grand narratives but in "*pétits recits*, imperceptible events, in signs apparently *without* meaning and value…, in events that are outside the 'great events' of history" (243). It is in this site that discordant narratives, even of the same history, continually displace borders and relocate them. In place of "cultural diversity" – "a radical rhetoric of the separation of the totalized cultures" (34) – Bhabha proposes "cultural difference":

> a form of writing…that is inimical to binary boundaries: whether this be between past and present, subject and object, signifier and signified. (251)

In his poststructuralist emphasis on ambivalence, hybridity and territorial impermanence, Homi Bhabha overlooks the grim reality of colonialism and the cultural subalterns it created. Kyun-Wong Lee (1997) appropriately observes that the urge to blur reductive binaries in Bhabha's study results in "a linguistic feast with little regard to the stark history of European colonialism and its cultural representations" (90)[20]. The condition of the enslaved or colonized person in the Diaspora, from where Bhabha speaks, readily and naturally invokes ambivalence and hybridity. That is why the selected texts – Derek Walcott, Toni Morrison and Salman Rushdie – all issuing from historically- or self-imposed in-betweenness validate Bhabha's thesis. It is highly doubtful if works like Chinua Achebe's *Things fall apart* (1958) and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Weep not, child* (1964) would be amenable to such reading. Yet, Bhabha usefully calls to question the cultural formation that is built on stereotype. The lone but very significant lesson is that a culture is not a fossil. Its traditionality is only valid to the extent that our memory can go back in history; the tradition, after all, started as a new, perhaps borrowed, culture. It also takes on new elements as it journeys through time. Richard Schechner (1993) writes on the reinscription of the Christian Passion by the Yaqui, an Indian tribe in Arizona, US. In this ritual, called *Wahema* in Yaqui language,

[20] See also Simon Gikandi (1996)

Judas the Betrayer is redeemed in a manner that confers his portrait with better reason that the orthodox Biblical representation. Rather than as a traitor, Judas is invoked in this ritual as a scapegoat whose duty of compelling Christ to undertake his ordained responsibility is seen as significant. But while the Yaqui, like the Rastafarians of Jamaica, appropriate the Western narrative, the seal of alterity is still embossed in their performance of it. "[Until] today, the Yaqui struggle to remain Yaqui [against the homogenizing threat of mainstream America] expresses itself most clearly in the need to perform Wahema" (95). Overtly proclaiming Wahema "our own way of life", the Yaqui forbid tourists and researchers – all of the "Othered" space – from desecrating the ritual with their cameras and voice recorders. Therefore, though shifting borders make cultural cartography a daunting task, each performative instance nevertheless indicates where to draw the line.

2.2.4 Conclusion

Evident in all the review of the theoretical positions attempted above is a kind of tension between the need to systematize all cultures, and the exactly opposite imperative of underlining the specificity of not just each cultural form but different instances of its enunciation. This quandary has been labeled "critical double bind" (Gates, 1991). Solely taking either theoretical position opens one to either the charge of reductionist suppression of the peculiar creativity of each oral form or performer, or the obverse charge of atomistic ascription of different model to every instance of performance and therefore inhibiting cross-cultural and cross-generic understanding.

The theoretical approach adopted in this study is eclectic. In the examination of the narrative texts in Chapter Four, the structuralist indentification of opposition is employed in the understanding of conflicts. It is at the foreground of such conflicts that the variables that negate the very notion of narrative conflict are also pointed out. This deconstruction of the idea of conflict and permanence is partly an adoption of poststructuralist theoretical framework. Further, the awareness that culture is manifest in not just different but diverse forms to different hunters takes off from this theoretical premise. In the appraisal of the

contexts of the narrative performance, the study benefits from Victor Turner's theory of social drama – and Schechner's update of same – and Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism.

While the performance culture under study is a *peculiar* Yoruba form, it nevertheless invokes comparison with other cultural practices in not only Africa but, as shown earlier in the review of relevant literatures, other parts of the world. Also, as Barry Hallen (1997) notes, there is the need to adopt some sort of common denominators in critical analysis for the purpose of understanding across divides. Caliban may appropriate Prospero's idiom, if only to curse the latter with.

CHAPTER 3
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research was conducted between 2003 and 2007. The hunters interacted with were from the northern part of Oyo State (widely identified as Òkè Ògùn), satellite villages of Ibadan, and some parts of Osun State. Field activities included interviews, and participant and non-participant observations of narrative sessions and cultural activities. Through key informants, the researcher identified occasions of hunters' cultural activities like festival and hunting expedition, and participated in them. The work also involved the consultation of existing essays and monographs not only on hunters' culture but also on culture and performance generally.

3.2 STUDY POPULATION

The hunter *qua* hunter thrives mainly on trespass of all sorts of borders. Therefore, the attribution of specific geographical locations to those observed in the study is not without some qualification. Since it is part of the hunter's calling to wander far away from home, some of those interacted with were not natives of the places where the researcher met them. This is not to deny the fact that many of the hunters were sought, found and interacted with in their very native homes. But even in such a situation, the events recounted were sometimes set in forests and bushes far away from their homes or bases. For convenience, the hunters whose narratives and reflections are examined in the study are identified by the places where they live, the landscape they hunt or their native home town. Each of these designations is determined by the context of reference.

This work focuses on the narratives of the hunters of the guinea savannah of Oyo State, and rain forests of Oyo and Osun States. The hunters interacted with in Òkè Ògùn were based in Ṣakí, Tedé, Òjé-Owódé, Agúnrege, Òtu and Àgó-Àrẹ. In

Ibadan, the hunters, at the time of the fieldwork, were based in villages like Dálì, Olókùúta, Abà Ìsàlè, Ọ̀wọ́ Baálé, Tọ́lá, Ẹlẹ́nuṣónṣó, Kúṣeélá, Alápó, Akínẹ̀rín, Àjóyìnbọn, Ṣágbẹ́ and Arárọ̀mí. In Osun State, the hunters observed came from Ìwó, Ìkirè, Ilé Ogbó, Ajagunlaàsẹ̀, Ìgbínjẹ, Ifẹ̀ Ọ̀dàn and Látúndé. All the hunters, except two, are Yoruba of Nigeria. One of the non-Yoruba hunters is Beninoise and the other a Nupe.

3.3 RATIONALE FOR THE CHOICE OF STUDY POPULATION AND LOCATIONS

This thesis tries to question certain generalizations in the description of cultures and cultural forms of Africa. It supposes that one corrective to the inadequate generalization is the specific consideration of not only each cultural form but also instances of its performance. One such form is the informal conversational narrative; and the hunters' stories and their performances present us with peculiar instances of discontinuity from several known models, some of them already taken for granted as fixed Yoruba cultural codes. The hunters as avant-garde are naturally positioned to seek and discover newness.

The choice of Yoruba hunters also followed the need to specifically home in on a culture for thorough examination. The researcher is relatively familiar with many dialects of the Yoruba language and some aspects of the people's culture. The landscapes of tropical rain forest and guinea savannah, the hunters of which were interacted with, represent the vegetation of the west of the south of Nigeria where the Yoruba are settled. The choice of Òkè Ògùn and Ibadan in Oyo State, and some communities in Osun State was informed by the need to attempt some representative consideration of the landscape on which hunting activities take place.

3.4 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

The research employed an assortment of Participant Observation, Non-Participant Observation, Focus Group Discussion, In-depth Interview and Key Informant Technique. Each situation of interaction naturally suggested the method

used to elicit the data. All the hunters and non-hunters interacted with were male, and their ages ranged between 20 and 90.

3.4.1 Participant Observation

The researcher participated in discussions with hunters in the selected areas. It is naturally in the process of conversation that narratives ensue, and the researcher, as such, most of the time encouraged the performance. He achieved this by exploiting his role as an interlocutor to ask questions, exclaim or enourage the narrator whenever the latter pursued the narrative aspect. The discussion, most of the time, took place in informal and convivial settings in which the participants were relatively relaxed.

Participant Observation was also employed in the study of allied hunters' cultural practices like communal hunting expedition and Ògún festival. In Ọ̀jẹ́-Owódé, Ṣakí East Local Government, Oyo State, the researcher participated for two weeks in the two-month-long communal hunting expedition and recorded certain aspects of the activity. Ògún, patron deity of hunters is individually and communally appeased and worshipped. Participant observation was employed in the study of an instance of communal Ògún worship and festival in Ìkirè, Osun State, and an individually organized Ògún festival in Òkè Àdó, Ibadan, Oyo State. The researcher profitted from this environment to interact with hunters and elicit narratives from them. Thirty-two narratives were collected using participant observation.

3.4.2 Non-Participant Observation

This method was unavoidably resorted to in the observation of certain aspects of the hunters' culture that the researcher was not statutorily eligible to participate in. One such activity is the hunters' weekly meeting. The researcher observed proceedings from a safe distance and debriefed hunter-informants after close of the proceeding. Certain ethic of broadcasting did not also permit the researcher to participate actively in the narrative sessions observed in the radio studio. Non-participant observation was therefore used to access the narratives

broadcast on the BCOS Radio1 hunters' narrative series, *Ọdẹ Akọni*. The researcher was present in the studio on six occasions of the broadcast and was permitted to record on video and magnetic audio tape three of the sessions. Between 2003 and 2007 however, the researcher carried out remote recording of the radio narratives, using a transistor radio and cassette player/recorder set. Thirty-nine narratives were thus recorded.

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion

Two categories of participants featured in the Focus Group Discussion: hunters and non-hunters. Different discussions were organized for each class of participants. The discussions with hunters took place in Balóde's compound, Sakí; Asípa's compound, Ọjẹ́-Owódé; and Òkè Àdó, Ibadan. The participants' ages ranged between thirty and eighty, and they were all male. The Sakí and Ọjẹ́-Owódé discussions were held in the courtyards where men relaxed and discussed in the evening hours of the day. In Ibadan, the discussion took place at the office of *Ọdẹ Plus*, a consulting concern that specializes in the recruitment of hunters as security men. The issues and questions raised in these discussions were structured. They include:

- beliefs about the alternative spiritual reality.
- hunters, narration and the ethic of silence.
- the new manifestation of hunters' narratives as radio and T.V. series.
- rules, conformity, violation and redress among hunters.
- Yoruba conceptualization of being as it relates to man, animal, spirit and natural phenomena.

The second category of participants was interacted with at a palm wine joint in Orogún, Ibadan. They include a university graduate student, a tutor in a college of education, a technician with the maintenance department of a university, a technician with a local government, a commercial driver, a commercial drivers' guild (NURTW) functionary, and two men, in their fifties, who declined giving personal details and being photographed.

This discussion, unlike the one conducted with the first group, was not scheduled. The researcher, familiar with some of the participants, simply came to the joint and sought the audience of the men present. The idea of focus group discussion and the theme of the present one were explained. Eight men volunteered to participate. The extempore nature of the discussion was to discourage a kind of reservation that a relatively long time of reflection and consideration could engender. The issues and questions raised border on the following:

- the popularity of the hunters' narrative series on radio.
- their individual take on the genre of reality described in these narratives.
- their resolution of the hunters' ethic of silence and the imperative of electronic broadcast.
- the place of the hunter in the 21st century cosmopolitan society.

3.4.4 In-depth Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with hunters and non-hunters. The interviews were conducted with hunters from the areas under study. They were structured to elicit from the respondents their beliefs and individual opinions about such issues as

- the state and nature of being, and the Yoruba universe.
- the hunter's ethic of silence, the imperative of conversational narrative performance, and the involvement of the electronic media of broadcast.
- the roles and significance of the Yoruba hunters in the past and today.
- rules and reality of social relations among hunters.

3.4.5 Key Informant Technique

Prior to the collection of data, the researcher had familiarized himself with certain individuals in the different areas selected for the study. These persons were familiar with the areas and therefore identified with ease hunters of note in their respective domains and nearby communities. Through these informants, the researcher also got early notification of events like hunting expedition and Ògún

festivals and worship. Elaborate plan could therefore be made to participate in and observe these activities. The field activities commenced with three key informants. Three more were subsequently enlisted. In the course of dealing with the informants, it was found out that those who insisted on a sort of payment either did not show up again after such payment or performed below what was expected. However, all the informants that were finally engaged never demanded any form of payment. In one particular instance, a key informant provided the researcher with hotel accommodation and transport.

3.5 PROBLEMS OF DATA COLLECTION

As has been noted above, the first impediment encountered in the field was the sublime and overt demand for monetary remmuneration by some informants. Even as the researcher actually paid in most of such instances, absolutely all the informants thus paid either "deserted" or did not give any useful information. *Some* of the respondents and participants also either demanded remmuneration in cash, or were voluntarily paid by the researcher. But in the aggregate, a considerably high percentage of the persons with whom the researcher worked and interacted selfessly obliged without hoping to be paid.

It has been suggested in many aspects of the previous chapters that the Yoruba oral narrative performance is inseparable from the larger ouvre of human communication. It is therefore difficult to rein the respondents and participants during interviews and discussions into being solely descriptive in one instance and being narrative in another. Narratives as such abound in the recorded texts of the Focus Group Discussions as they do in those of the interviews. The Yoruba, like many other peoples, illustrate with narratives. The hunter is especially vulnerable to this imperative because he describes a reality that demands some sort of domestic analogy to be comprehended. In addition, it is by situating his interpretation of reality in a specific narrative instance that makes the hunter comprehensible and his reflection *logical*. In sum, the narratives studied in this thesis were accessed not only from the narrative sessions prompted by the reseacher, and the electronic media sources. A few of them came up during

interviews and discussions. This therefore upsets any hard-and-fast diferentiation between discussion and interview on the one hand and narrative performance on the other.

Many hunters held tenaciously to the belief that "the hunter does not tripe". This is a maxim that forecloses total narrativity of the hunter's experience; it prevents or tones down the ogreish and scary details of the Other. The hunter is, in fact, a liminal facility the society employs to do just this. Pa Ogunjimi of Aṣípa compound, Ọjẹ́-Owódé, when prompted to give the account of the experience of his hunting days, said "Ohun a bá rí n'íjù, kò séé sọ n'lé [Whatever is seen in the jungle is better not recounted at home]" and kept menacingly quiet for a moment before demurring:

> Àmọ́ toò, ayé wáá d'ayé e ká f'ọ̀rọ̀ wàni l'ẹ̀nu wò l'èyí t'áa sọ̀ yìí. B' áa bá pé aá ròyìn ijù, b'áa bá l'ọ́mọ kékeé, kònìí lè lọ mọ́… T'ọ́mọ bá kéré báyìí, t'áabá nròyìn ijù, t'ísẹ̀ ẹ baba a wá bá dé, t'áa bá gbe lé e l'ọ́wọ́, kò ní lè d'ẹ́nu odi.
> [But now that everything in the world is now being subjected to investigation, we may consider telling you some of the things… For when we reveal those things without caution these children growing up [points at a group of children playing nearby] would be too scared to even go as far as the town's gate whenever they are called upon to take up their ancestral responsibility.][21]

In many cases, the requests for audience were simply turned down. Two elderly hunters, sought in two different locations, specifically grumbled about "these Ibadan people" turning private hunting matters into radio business. Already indicted by his visible writing pad and recording gadgets, the researcher could not get this category of individuals to agree to even an unrecorded interaction. Related to this is the problem of getting permission for recording and photographs. Many respondents who had earlier consented to being interviewed and interacted with simply backed down when the researcher showed up later with camera and voice recorder. Some of such situations were however remedied by the assurance that the interaction could still go on "off record".

[21] Personal interaction (16/12/06)

K.S. Goldstein (1964) suggests three possible settings in which performance could be observed: “natural” setting, “artificial” setting, and “induced natural” setting. The “natural” setting suggested in Goldstein’s category is desirable and suitable for this kind of study. It, at least in the very absolute sense, proved impossible however. The hunter’s narrative enterprise is conjoined with other aspects in the larger matrix of social communication. The narratives thereby often come up extempore as illustration of a lesson, explication of a point or just entertainment within conversation among hunters. It is exactly as inseparable from conversation as any other conversational narrative that presumes to report life. It is overwhelmingly daunting, if not impossible, to identify in advance a situation of such “natural” performance and prepare to record it. There were a couple of instances when the performances were observed in such “natural” settings. But both ethics and lack of preparation foreclosed the possibility of recording such “natural” performance. That most of the narratives considered for this study were prompted or, to use Goldstein’s term, “induced” therefore threatens an absolute claim to their “naturalness”. This problem is especially threatening if one considers that the context of narrative performance is an essential aspect of this study. However, the unrecorded exposure to the natural settings through personal interaction is relied upon in the consideration of context.

The immediate aim of doing video and audio recording of some of the field activities was to allow for subsequent more painstaking study and analysis of the recorded data. A Sony TCM-150 voice recorder, and an SVP DC-12V still photo camera, video and voice recording set were used. But these gadgets, as Bruce Jackson (1988) notes, heard and saw only what their handler made them hear and see. They, in fact, in this situation heard and saw less than the researcher. The entire of the universe in which the hunters’ narratives, or even the larger hunters’ culture, come to live was rather impossibly large. This was one instance in which the electronic gadgets were handicapped. Also, these gadgets, as Isidore Okpewho (1983) cautions, have the adverse potential of making the informants and respondents “sit up” and behave in a manner different from their usual ways. The researcher tried to mitigate many such situations by engaging the respondents in

friendly conversation until they thawed considerably and were more relaxed. The video camera, one device that brings the awareness of being observed and recorded menacingly home to the observed person, was also sparingly used. Video recording was limited largely to communal and corporate activities like expedition and ritual.

Age is the major determiner of seniority among the Yoruba. Karin Barber (1991) observes the extent of the individual assertion of such seniority:

> "You are a small boy to me", "I had given birth even before you married", "I was walking before you were born" are comments that are heard continually as hierarchy of seniority is produced in daily life. (183)

This aspect of the culture comes with some subtle intimidation of the younger person from asserting himself before an audience of older people. One group of hunters interacted with in Ọjẹ́ Owódé was made up of six people, five of them between the ages of sixty-five and eighty-five. The sixth person was a man of about thirty-five (See **Plates 3.1-3.5**). Even as there was recognition of seniority among the five oldest participants, they perform their narratives without any fear of appearing boastful or arrogant before the elders. In the two sessions held with the group, Ògúnlékè, the youngest participant, virtually was "looking over his shoulders" throughout, and told no story except to give credence to what "àwọn bàbá a wa [our fathers]" had said. In a discussion held with another group in Ibadan, the result was virtually the same with the exception that an older hunter and his son jointly occur in a narrative performed by the former.

In Ṣakì, however, the method was deliberately redesigned to allow the younger hunters some license. The hunters selected for interaction were approached individually. This approach also suffered some preliminary hitch. Òkèlọlá Julius, a man of about fifty years and the first hunter approached, would not entertain any discussion until same had been held with Lamidi, his senior and the Balọ́dẹ of Ọ̀tún, Ṣakí. Lamidi, in turn, demanded that the older Balọ́dẹ of Saki be briefed and interacted with before he would make himself available (See **Plates**

3.6-3.8). So, the individual discussion sessions previously designed for participants in progressive order of their ages was inverted with the older respondent coming first.

But the main objective of the discussions was realized. The hunters thus interacted with spoke with confidence. One partcular instance of different opinions between Balọ́dẹ Ọ̀tún Làsísì and Balọ́dẹ Lawal Ògúntúndé is an appropriate index. Balọ́dẹ Ògúntúndé held that the "nkẹnkínkẹ̀n [odd things][22]" existed in the gone old past. "Àmá kò s'írú ẹ̀ mọ́ nîisìn'í. Nkẹnkínkẹ̀n ò sí mọ́. Gbogbo ẹ̀ ni ọkọ̀ọ̀ ti lé lọ [But there are no more such things today. Odd things are no more. Automobile has driven them all away]". Lasisi, oblivious of the claim of the older Balọ́dẹ, to whom he would always defer, responded to the researcher's query about whether spirits exist:

> Às'ọ́mọ kékeré ni ọ́, ọ̀ọ̀ mọ nkẹnkẹn… T'ẹ́ẹ̀ npé n'gbà ọkọ̀ọ́ pọ̀, òórùn ọkọ̀ [lé wọn lọ]; irọ́ ni o. Wọ́n n bẹ o. Wọ́n n bẹ o. Wọ́n bẹ o.
> You are such a naïve youth… Some do say the smell of automobile [has driven them away]; that is not true. They still exist. They exist. They do exist.

Transcription emasculates oral performance. No amount of annotation can redeem the performativity of an oral narrative reduced to written text. But transcription nevertheless mitigates the immediate problem of literary appreciation of performance. Some of the narratives collected for the study are transcribed for analysis and as appendices. It is impossible to represent the entire performative ambience and turns with the stroke of a pen. The analysis therefore relies largely on the audio and video recordings of all observed activities. The transcription takes into consideration the individual and dialectal peculiarities of all the narrators and respondents, and tries to set them down accordingly. No attempt is made to re-convey the narrators' and other respondents' words in "standard" Yoruba. The transcription attempts to represent the words as they were articulated.

[22] Spirits

Plate 3.1 Ògúnjìmí

Plate 3.2 Jọ̀ògún

Plate 3.3 Ọláògún

Plate 3.4 Ògúndélé

Plate 3.5 Ògúnlékè

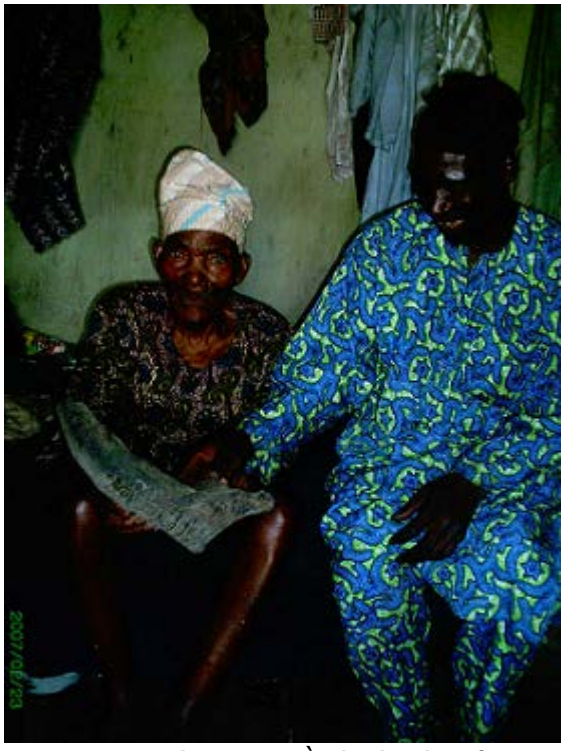

Plate 3.6 Balọ́dẹ Lawal Ògúntúndé (left)

Plate 3.7 Balọ́dẹ Ọ̀tún, Làsísì (seated, right)

Plate 3.8 Julius Òkèlọlá

If transcription emasculates performance, translation of the transcript does many times over. The medium of the present writing demands that all the examined texts are translated into English. In the translation of the texts invoked in the analysis and those appended to the thesis, there is an effort to save the message and the poetry in the original. The result is that one-to-one translation of words, phrases, and even sentences is not guranteed. In the present study, the retention of the artistry and the overall message of all the studied texts are considered above any absolute lexical and syntactic fidelity of translation to the parent text.

CHAPTER 4
4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 Hunter, the ethic of silence and the imperative of narrativity

The thesis of the study is the identification of art in non-formalized expressive types such as conversation and speech, focusing especially on the narrative aspect. The hunters' narratives oppose, in a manner of speaking, the consciously performative exemplified by such normative types as the Yoruba *àlọ́*, the Kalabari *ikaki*, the Zulu *izibongo*, and the Akan *Anansesɛm*. For a number of reasons, the Yoruba hunter, even in the thick of narrative performance, acknowledges the virtue in taciturnity and total silence: "Tí ọdẹ́ bá ro ìṣẹ́, ti ọdẹ́ bá ro ìyà, t'ó bá p'ẹran, kò níí f'ẹ́nìkankan [If the hunter takes stock of all his adversities, he would share his kill with no one]." This maxim – and the reflection of some of the hunters interacted with – suggests that the hunter considers contrary realities "that would thwart him" (Herskovits & Herskovits, 1958: 29) as his individual allotment of the communal destiny. The word *rò* in the above maxim more readily suggests "take stock of" or, more literally, "think of". But it also translates as "recount" or "narrate." To narrate therefore is to highlight the hunter's experience as the travail of an individual, a consequence that presents the risk of severing the umbilical that joins the hunter and his community. Narrative in such sense individuates to the point that it alienates an organ from the entire system.

In another sense, the weird reality that the hunter's narrative recounts challenges our conventional perception. It is true that the Yoruba universe has a place for rodents in three-piece (See **Appendix V**) and deer taking off its skin like a jacket (**Appendix III**), yet when sensed at a very close range, the velocity of that turn of reality is nevertheless abrupt and scary. One immediate consequence of narrating totally the hunter's experience is that the narrative rings the hunter with a

halo of fearsomeness. Ogunjimi, the Aṣípa Ọdẹ of Ọjẹ́-Owódé described one manifestation and implication of such fear:

> Ohun a ba rí n'íjù kò seé sọ n'lé… B'áa bá pé aá ròyìn ijù, báa l'ọ́mọ kékeé, kò níí lè lọ mọ́… T'ọ́mọ bá kéré báyìí t'áa bá n ròyìn ijù, t'ísẹ́ baba wa bá dé, t'áa bá gbé e lé e lọ́wọ́, kò n í lè d'ẹ́nu odi.
> [Whatever is seen in the jungle is better not recounted at home…For when we reveal those things without caution, these children growing up [points at a group of children playing nearby] would be too scared to even go as far as the town's gate whenever they are called upon to take up their ancestral responsibility].

One other manifestation of the fear is the allergy the narrative may set off against the hunter and his trade. This potential is inscribed in a proverb: Òòjọ́ n'iyì ọdẹ afifìlàperin [The glory of the hunter that killed an elephant with a mere swat of his cap lasts but for a day]. The full interpretation is realized in the muted half of the proverb which supposes that after the immediate and spontaneous admiration of the hero-hunter, he is later labeled as dangerous and accordingly avoided. Such phobia also has the potential of endangering the hunter's business. The consumer may not find particularly appetizing a diet of half-human civet or rodents that were human babies just before the hunter fired at them (**Appendices V** and **VII**). This is the sole argument of those opposed to the explicit narrative performance of the hunter's experience, especially through the electronic media. On the 2nd of October, 2005, a woman, identified as Ìyá Àmẹ́ẹ̀dì, the chairperson of the bush meat sellers in Ibadan, brought a petition to the authorities of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS) that the producers of *Ọdẹ Akọni* should tone down on the ogreish details of the narratives, or remove them altogether. Coming from a family of hunters herself, her reason was that the awareness of the weird world from which the animals emerge would discourage consumers. In her appeal, broadcast on the day's edition of the programme, she confessed her total belief in the reality but held that the hunter's experience was better kept secret; that, in her reckoning, was the ethic as inherited and bequeathed by her forefathers.

In some of the narratives, even the home front, represented in the hunter's wife and kids, is sometimes insulated from the intercourse between the hunter and the forest Other. Writing on the Mende hunters of Sierra Leone, Melissa Leach (2000) describes the woman as a sort of indiscreet vent through which the human world eavesdrops on the hunter:

> Linked to the concern with women's inappropriate sexual behaviour is the common refrain that women cannot be trusted with hunters' secrets, as they would be sure to reveal them. Hunters ceding their secret to fickle women or even animals who have shape-shifted into female form is a recurring theme in folktales on hunters' woes… In Mende thought, the idea of uncontrolled talk and uncontrolled sex are closely linked, with the same word for both tongue and clitoris. (583)

The terms defining relations between the hunter and the Other sometimes spell that the hunter keep sealed lips. In the narrative of Kìlání Alápó (**Appendix III**), the deer, transformed into a beautiful woman therefore seeks a secret audience of the hunter. Four of the hunters' stories collected by the Herskovitses (1958) explicitly dwell on the hunter's sin of indiscretion exemplified by letting out to the wife the details of their interaction with the spirits and animals, each ending in woes for the hunter.

But even in the most traditional of villages in which hunters are the most taciturn, the ancient narrative impulse does create seepages through which the stories leak out. Looking over his shoulders to make sure women and children are out of sight, the hunter, in a discussion with other male adults, may quickly illustrate a point with an account of his experience. For example, in the narrative of Kìlání Alápó, briefly cited earlier, the narrator declaims that "àwọn ọdẹ a máa gbé ọ̀rọ̀ ọ́′nú [hunters are adept at keeping secrets]": he tells no one of the strange deerskin in his custody – *except his babalawo and a couple of friends.* It is as such widely known in every community which hunter once took elephant turned woman for a wife or the one once beaten up by a gang of ghosts.

One popular resolution of the quandary implicit in the hunter's ethic of silence and the imperative of storytelling is that the ethic does not totally proscribe

narrativity. This interpretation purports that the hunter may *tell* but must be careful and selective in his choice of audience and details in the narrative. The ethic, as such, intellectually tasks the hunter as a mythmaker. The need to exclude "sensitive" details from his narrative demands a lot of circumspection considering the spontaneous nature of its performance. However, the ethic of silence is sometimes exploited as a device to imbue the narrative with value. The awareness that the listener is witness to a guarded secret creates curiosity and ensures attentiveness.

4.2 TEXTS OF YORUBA HUNTERS' NARRATIVES

4.2.1 The hunter and the Other in agonistic relation

The forest is the realm of infinite possibilities (Andrew Apter, 1992). At once, it holds for a comer death, life, trophy and atrophy. Although its temper is indeterminate, the forest is immediately perceived at the human end as an agonistic half of man's world. The hunter, through whom man explores and defines the unknown, sometimes starts to describe his role as agent of pacification through the very name he assumes. Dele Layiwola (1993) considers the portrait of the hunter-characters in Fagunwa's *Ògbójú ọdẹ*, which is retained in Wale Ogunyemi's dramatic adaptation of it, as illustrative of the eternal imperative to balance the "Manichean halves" of existence. He points out that the roll-call of the major hunters commissioned for the Langbodo assignment immediately reveals this. D.S. Izevbaye (1995), in a critique of Fagunwa, also observes the "Yoruba genius for endowing persons and ideas with poetic life, the same trait that created the *oriki* genre" (261). He sees the process of personal identification through naming among the hunters as a manifestation of this.

Many Yoruba hunters, in this manner of speaking, take names that define them in agonistic relation to the unknown realm of existence they are called upon to explore. These names, called occupational pseudonyms by Izevbaye, often become more popular than the hunters' original names. Músílíù Àlàgbé, a hunter from Ìwó in Ọ̀ṣun State is thus named Fìríàáríkú [At-close-quarter-with-death]. He disclosed during an interaction:

> N náà sì ni gbogbo Ìwó mọ̀ mí sí t'ée dé Ọlá Olúwa. B'éèyàn bá béèrè Músílíù tí wọn ò bá dáákọ Fìríàáríkú, ẹ̀ẹ̀ lè rí i.
> [That is the name all the people in Ìwó call me, even up to Ọlá Olúwa. If you identify me as Musiliu, without adding Fìríàáríkú, you might not be able to get to me]. (See **Appendix VI**)

Such names therefore preponderate among the Yoruba hunters observed. They include Òkútaòtutù [He that is hard as rock], Ajíjààgùn [He who starts the day by wielding magical power], Améringùn [He who mounts the elephant], Àkámọ́ọ̀pẹ̀kùn [Difficult to corner like the leopard], Àpátaárorò(-olókodáasí) [The malevolent rock that forbids the farmer to come near it], Yáwọ́ọrẹ́ [He who is quick to flog], Ikútíídẹ́tunhà [Death that breaks the duiker's ribs], Paramọ́lẹ̀(-tọ́kọ̀rọ̀ọ̀wòsí) [The viper that condones no abuse], Pabíẹ̀kùn [He who kills like the leopard], Lákátabú [The Elephant], Amìrókò(-bíọ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀) [He who shakes the iroko as if it were a mere banana stem], Agbérinmì [He who swallows the elephant], Fàdápabíọ̀sẹ́tù [He that kills with machete in the absence of gunpowder] etc.

Also some of the forests explored by the hunters are situated in a nominal class that counterbalances the hunters' names: Yaríyarí [That which swells the head], Olójúoró [The stern-faced one], Ìkookò [The wolf], Onígbàágó [Forest of thorns], Ọlọ́mọ́namọ [He that flogs own child], Ògìdán [Leopard], Fẹ̀jẹ̀bọ́jú [He that washes face with blood] etc.

4.2.2 Man the hunter as pacifier of the wild

Now the *prima facie* bush-versus-homefront opposition, first of all, portrays the hunter as an antagonistic quester. Since he emerges from a space that exists in contradistinction to the forest, his exploration is often appreciated as a sort of incursion. In the narrative of Músílíù Àlàgbé Fìríàáríkú of Iwo (Ọlá Olúwa Local Government, Osun State)[23], the hunter explores Oníwòrò, a forest, like Fagunwa's Olódùmarè and Irúnmalẹ̀, notoriously peopled by malevolent supernatural beings bent on liquidating all human intruders. Kọ́lá Akíntáyò evokes:

> Igbó Oníwòrò yí, ẹnìkan ìí dẹ̀'gbẹ́ lọọ'bẹ̀ k'ọ́ bọ́ o. Igbó burúkú gbáà tọ́ l'ágbára gbáà ni.

[23] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (01/08/04) and personal interaction (07/05/06)

> [No hunter goes to the Forest of Oníwòrò and returns.
> It is evil and indeed very malevolent.]

Fìríàáríkú himself corrborates that "ọdẹ kan ọ́ dẹ́gbó hun kọ́ bọ̀ rí… Kọ̀ s'ọ́dẹ kan tí ọ́ dẹ́gbó hun tí ọ́ bọ̀. [no hunter ever hunted into that forest and returned…No hunter would go into that forest and return alive]." As such, as in the cases of defiant Olowoaye of *Igbo Olodumare* and the protagonist of *Simbi and the satyr of the dark jungle*, tension builds very early in the narrative as Fìríàáríkú sets out to hunt in Oníwòrò. The hunter's adversity in the forest begins as he runs into a woman seated under a big tree, mute and not responding to the hunter's greetings. Now the narrator's designation of this character, who is immediately established as antagonist from the point when she spurns the hunter's overture, as a woman is merely nominal, for it is nigh impossible that a woman – or a man for that matter – would go unaccompanied to a forest that notorious and far away from home. Even though none of the two narrators specifically refer to her as such, she is immediately realized as a spirit.

If any doubt existed about the woman, it clears as the hunter goes away from her and ends up coming back to the spot where she sits. The strangeness of this is actually in that on those three occasions when the hunter decides to go away from the spot where the woman sits, he takes different routes in opposite directions. In fact he crosses a river in one of these instances, thereby precluding the possible theory that he must have been explicably caught in a labyrinth. Upon being thus frustrated the third time, "Mọ wáá t'ọwọ́ bọ'kùn, mọ fà'bínú yọ [*I put hand in my gut and brought out a fit of anger*]": the hunter takes out a charm from his cloak, applies it and "ojúù mi wáá yà [my eyes opened]." He thus liberates himself from the "woman's" spell and connects a road that leads him to Ògbògbò, near Ìjèbú-Òde.

> Bí 'ọ̀ bá jẹ́ pé mo múra lọ́'ọ́ láti núu'lé pé n'torí a'ìí mọ̀, ah! eégún ọdẹ ọ̀ bá fẹ́ẹ̀ gbé ọ̀jẹ́ n'jọ́ náà o. Ọ dàbí nkan.
> [Had I not equipped myself properly from home, *the hunter's masquerade would have perished in the grove* that day. It was a wonder.]

Akéwejẹ̀ (youth leader), the occupational pseudonym of Táníátù Akínkúnmi of Ikire (Osun State) right from the beginning of his narrative puts the narrator-protagonist not only traditionally in the vanguard as a hunter but also in the very frontline of that vanguard. His portrait as the most prominent member in his hunting team is further inscribed on his gun which report differentiates it from other guns used by his mates. Akéwejẹ̀'s first narrative is set in the Forest of Sasàá (**Appendix II**), during a corporate hunting called *wawàá*:

> Igbó t'áa ma n pè ní wawàá ni tí ìkan n'nú àwọn ọmọ ọdẹ tàbí àgbà ọdẹ bá fẹ́ se ìnáwó, tó bá wáá bẹ ìgbẹ́, aá kó ajá, kó ìbọn, aá si kó àwọn èèyàn lẹyìn, aá lọ s'óko.
> [*Wawàá* is the corporate hunting that we do, using dogs and guns, to help a fellow hunter, young or elderly, who is planning to celebrate an occasion source for meat.][24]

From his position during the watch, Akéwejè does not *see* but rather *perceives* that a deer is before him. That the deer stands in front of him and is not covered by the foliage guarantees that it should be visible to the hunter. But in the case of the present animal, "kóóko ò bò ó, *but* mi ò rí i [it was not covered by the foliage, yet I did not see it]". It is with this suggestion of invisibility that the narrator first establishes the supernatural status of the antagonist. The hunter later shoots the deer and "ọta hóró kan ò s'òfò lára a rè [all the bullets found their right target]", yet the deer simply walks away.

The premise that Akéwejẹ̀, the protagonist, could perceive the invisible deer has also established his capacity to sense beyond what the mundane facilities of eyes and ears permit. When he later converses with the river, the rock and the tree, it is in keeping with the dialogic order earlier established. The protagonist leads a search for the fleeing deer to a river, wades in and asks: "Ìwọ odò, tọ́ bá jẹ́ se pé ìwọ lọ gbàbọ̀dè ẹran yìí, èmi ti pa á o [River, if you it is that shields this animal, be informed now that I have killed it]." But the hunter feels anyway that the river could not have taken his animal since "a'íí jọ́ọ́ da'lẹ̀ araa wa [the river and I had been

[24] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (13/06/04)

trusted allies].” The hunter is however attracted by the fretting of the dogs around an àràbà[25] tree and a rock nearby. Upon inspection, he discovers the footprints of the animal leading to the base of the two, not away from it. The corollary suggestion is that the animal has escaped *into* them. He therefore approaches the antagonist pair – àràbà and rock – with the assurance of a detective catching an offender *en flagrant délit*:

> Ìwọ àpáta àti àràbà, ìwọ lọ gb'àbọ̀dè o. T'óo bá kọ̀ láti má gbé ẹran yìí jáde láàrin àsìkò t'áa wà nbì'í, oò níí r'éwé b'orí mọ́ o.
> [You rock and araba tree, you are shielding a fugitive. If you do not evict the animal at this very moment, no single leaf would be left on you as shade].

Unlike in the first monologue, the hunter describes a very identifiable battle line between himself and the araba-rock. He speaks with the conviction that the pair has his deer, and he would have it back even if it means confrontation. Perhaps intimidated by the hunter's threat, the araba-rock releases the hunter's kill but in a totally decomposed state. What is strange in the event is that a dead deer does take up to six days before it starts to go bad. But the present animal's decomposition is so rapid that the no tissue is left on the third day when it is discovered.

For the hunter, the tree and the rock are responsible. He therefore, goes back to the tree and the rock with *èpè* [a malediction spell], and curses them. As the tree withers and dies at the end of the story, the hunter ultimately emerges triumphant, boasting:

> B'írin bá kan'rin ni àwọn t'án bí wa ma n wí, ìkan ọ́ tẹ̀ fún'kan.
> […*when two iron bars are locked in a fight*, so say our fathers, *the weaker gives way*].

For Akéwejẹ̀, the hunter fights to the finish. Initial failure should not deter him in his exploration of the realm of the Other. In another episode of his narrative, Akéwejẹ̀ confronts the Other in form of Oníkùkùté, a forest notorious for

[25] Ceiba pentandra (Gbile, 1984)

checkmating hunters. The conflict begins with a ritual symbol: three duck's eggs placed in a shard. The hunter, fluent in the medium of signification of the wild, confidently concludes that the items are primed and placed there to thwart him. Duck's eggs and a shard of pottery – items from the human world – readily establish the mystery on which the narrative anchors its indictment of the forest-spirit. The hunter therefore begins the day's exercise in the awareness that he has an antagonist to contend with – an awareness that he demonstrates as he commits himself to the guidance of Ògún, the hunter's patron deity. In this expedition, the forest antagonist subdues the hunter. Akéwejẹ̀ loses mental consciousness and wanders, insensate, in the bush for about two hours. He only comes to when he exits Oníkùkùté and enters another forest called Olúbàdàn. But Akéwejẹ̀ returns to Oníkùkùté the next day:

> Mo wá pe gbogbo àwọn èèyàn wa níkọ̀ọ̀kan pé kán jẹ́ ká wá lọ d'ẹgbó yẹn l'ọ́sàn-án. A wá sígun lọ. Ẹran t'ó p'óhun ò níí fi ílẹ̀ l'óru, a wáá bá a mú mẹ́ta kúrò níbẹ̀ ní ojú gbangba.
> [I called all my people out to go and hunt that forest. So there we went that afternoon, all in arms. Out of those animals the forest was reluctant to let go in the night, we took away three in the daylight.]

The narrative of Múrítàlá Àdìgún Gbọ́dẹníyì of Tọ́lá village, Ìdó Local Government of Oyo State is set during preparation for an ìpà, a hunter's funeral ritual[26]. The corporate expedition in which the events unfold is always done before the ritual. This is not only in order to source for meat but more importantly to procure the animal – usually the favourite kill of the deceased hunter – to be used in the rites. Now it is a mark of honour for a hunter to be the one to kill such animal. The sense of competition is heightened in the present instance because the hunting party is made up of hunters from two rival communities, Tọ́lá and Sàngóòbọn. After about twelve hours of hunting without any success, Gbọ́dẹníyì suggests to his mates that they go over to Májàsán, a forest known by all of them as "stingy" and difficult. They therefore demur: "N b'ọ́ọ mọ̀ pé Májàsán kèé fẹ́ f'ẹran rẹ̀ ẹ́

[26] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (03/06/07) and personal interaction (03/06/07)

lẹ̀. [But you know for sure Májàsán hardly let go its animals].” Gbọ́dẹníyì then volunteers to be assigned the Májàsán tunnel, the most feared area of the forest, to watch. Only then do the other hunters accede to go.

From his position, Gbọ́dẹníyì sights a deer and makes to fire at it but the gun fails. This failure of the gun provides the hunter a basis for the following feat. He simply dispenses with the gun, whips out his machete and goes after the deer. This chase is epic in the context of the tropical rain forest under study. Apart from the difficulty of running through the thick forest undergrowth, animals like deer, gazelle and duiker are rather too fleet-footed to be pursued on foot. The hunter often negotiates this difficulty by using gun and dogs. Also, in corporate hunting of this type, in which many hunters fan out into the forest, such chase may be possible because the animal becomes winded and tired before running through all the waiting hunters. But in the present case, only Gbọ́dẹníyì sights the quarry. None of the hunters on watch nearby raises any alarm that an animal is in flight. It is therefore extraordinary that Gbọ́dẹníyì sights, pursues and catches up with a deer unaided by other hunters and dogs.

The hunter seizes the deer at the very mouth of the tunnel. With its body already halfway in, a character identified as “ẹlẹran [the owner of the animal]” simultaneously seizes the animal, and struggle ensues. There is a sense in which certain forest beings are considered owners of the animals. This is identical to a perception of the same relation among the hunters of Côte D’Ivoire (Basset, 2003):

> Humans are intruders into the domains of …spirits. One hunter compared the relationship between the bush spirits and wild animals to livestock owners and cattle. The bush spirits herd wild animals as if they were their domesticated animals. (3)

Like the slobbering spirit encountered by Fagunwa’s Akara-ogun, the antagonist is an unidentifiable silhouette in the dark tunnel. As the struggle for the deer gets tense, the hunter invokes his father with an incantation. Even though the father does not appear materially, the hunter has enlisted him. He completes the ritual by putting in his mouth a charm bequeathed him by the patriarch. And the spirit is

vanquished. The hunter then dispatches the animal by slitting its throat. Thus slaughtering a deer in the same manner as a domestic animal registers the hunter's capacity to domesticate the wild. This feat, apart from the coincidence of being the ritual kill, also rubs off on other Tọ́lá hunters before their Sàngóòbọn colleagues. The protagonist is henceforth called Gbọ́dẹníyì [He who brings honour to other hunters].

In the narrative of Yèkínì Ọláwuyì Omítóògùn Améringùn of Ọ̀dó village, Ìdó Local Government of Oyo State, the hunter literally wrestles with the spirit[27] (**Appendix IV**). The Heights of Jayéadé, like Fìríàáríkú's Oníwòrò, is a taboo. The hunter's exploration into it is therefore an instance of defiance. Having hunted a nearby forest without any luck, Améringùn decides to try the forbidden mountain. The first deer he sights foreshadows the preternatural encounter he would later have: its antlers are alive with hornets and its eyes are rather too big for a deer. The hunter fires at it anyway and moves to carry the body. "Mọ fẹ́ẹ́ bẹ̀rẹ̀, olówó ẹ̀ yọ. Ibi nkán ti dé nù-un [But as I bent down to carry it, its owner emerged. That was where the trouble started]." Améringùn evokes the physique of the antagonist "owner":

> Àh! Èwo ni mọ ha rí yìí? Ojú u rẹ̀ báyìí, ó tó 'kúùkù… Irun ẹ̀, b'ó ti rí nìí gàn-ùn-gan-un. Ibi ọ́ bá gún ù'yàn báyìí, olóde ó sú n'bẹ̀ ni.
> [What manner of visitation is this? Each of his eyes was as big as a human fist… The hair on his body was as brittle as this [indicates with an index finger]. Wherever it touched on the human body, rashes came out.]

It is with this fearful creature that the hunter struggles. "Mo ní 'Nîhín kọ́. Lónìí, aá jọ kú pọ̀ ni è' ['No way', I said. 'It's going to be a fight to the finish today']." This palpable dimension of contact between the human hunter and the spirit, identical with many of Fagunwa's hunters' similar confrontation, demotes the conception of spirits as intangible entities (Gbadegesin, 1998; Wiredu, 1998).

[27] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (12/09/04) and personal interaction (22/04/05)

In the ensuing wrestling with the spirit, the hunter's gun is of no use as it has not been reloaded after the last shot. This sort of handicap presents the protagonist with an opportunity to demonstrate his strength and resourcefulness. Améringùn accordingly primes his hand with charm and breaks into incantation:

Dàwódàwó níí s'ọmọ ewúrẹ́
Dàwódàwó níí s'ọmọ àgùntàn
The tender ewe is never surefooted
The tender lamb is never surefooted.]

Having been dealt a slap with the hand, the spirit releases his grip and tosses about in pain, allowing the hunter some freedom to load his gun and shoot him.

The conflict does not end with the physical struggle however. It continues on a more sublime but equally tense plane. Apart from the rash of smallpox that the contact sets off on the hunter's body, the spirit, now invisible, pesters the hunter to his very home. The deer is gutted and cut up, and the hunter discovers in its stomach three gourdlets and four smooth pebbles. This mystery renews the hunter's observation earlier in the narrative that upon close examination "Mọ wáá ri i pé ẹran yìí, osóran ni [I discovered it was an evil animal]." For the narrator therefore, the deer and the spirit – like Akeweje's deer, rock and araba – are one actant. The items found in the deer's stomach activate at home a hail of stones raining every night on the hunter's roof and the neighbouring houses.

> T'ọ́ bá di l'álẹ́ báyìí, gbogbo òòlé méfèèfà tó yípoò mi, òkúta ni l'órí è… A à mọ'hun tí n fọ́nkúta á lù ú.
> [In the nights, stones were pelted on all the six roofs surrounding my house. We did not know who it was throwing them.]

There is already an implicit awareness built into the narrative that the gourdlets and the pebbles are in the same actantial class with the deer and the spirit. So, the hunter's insistence on keeping them for the two weeks that the stoning lasts is an expression of defiance. His uncle, also a hunter though superannuated, is educated in such matters. He instructs the hunter to surrender the items:

> N ò ti'ẹ́ fẹ́ kó o ó'lẹ̀; bàbá mi ní n ó kó o ó'lẹ̀ ni sẹ́. "Sé n ọ́ b'abà jẹ́ ni?" Mo ní n ọ̀ bẹ'Lọ́un k'ábà ọ́ bàjẹ́.
> [I initially did not want to let go the items but for my father's [uncle's] insistence. "Do you want to throw the village into crisis?" he asked. I said I did not.]

The conflict is therefore resolved only when the hunter is compelled to give up the pebbles and the gourdlets, and the items are appeased and released into the river. This old uncle's intervention saves the hunter's portrait in the narrative as a defiant character from losing shine. In the gerontocentric and patriarchal social structure in which the hunter operates, giving in thus is not seen as inability to hold out in a fight but a noble deference to an older relation.

The stone-throwing one also haunts the hunter in the narrative of Yísáù Okùnọlá Abọ̀kè of Abọ̀kè village, Lágelú Local Government, Oyo State[28]. Like Akéwejè, Abọ̀kè has lost a hare to the ìrókò[29] tree. The hare has evidently been hit by the hunter's shot as some parts of its intestine are seen on the ground. But the animal nevertheless flees in the direction of the ìrókò and disappears. Abọ̀kè confronts the ìrókò and warns it to release the animal or face repercussion. The next day, the hunter finds the dead hare under the tree, but as he makes to take it, he is assailed with volleys of stones by unseen "persons". Bloodied, the hunter flees, leaving his bag behind. The encounter is repeated when the hunter returns to retrieve his bag. This new pattern of conflict, even as the hunter triumphs in the end, significantly challenges the stereotype of the hunter as a figure before whom all antagonists immediately give way. Only after a series of ritual invocations is the hunter able to go to the spot, take his bag and return home unharrassed. Emboldened by this success, Abọ̀kè returns once more with a magical spell and sawyers to curse the ìrókò and cut it down.

Ràfíù Ajísefínní Alájáníbọn of Ìdó village in Ìdó Local Government of Oyo State confronts the tree-spirit in human form.[30] During a corporate hunting, identified in the narrative as *ìlàko*, the hunters ferret out a deer and chase it towards

[28] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (19/09/04)
[29] Chlorophora excelsa (Gbile, 1984)
[30] Personal interaction (25/09/05)

an ọ̀gbùngbun[31] tree. Now the ọ̀gbùngbun is established in the narrative as stingy and notorious for frustrating hunting. This very day:

> Bí wọn se yìnbọn sí ẹran hun tó, èyìn igbá ni wọn n yín'gbàdo ó sí. Sùngbọ́n èmi sọ fún u, mo ní: "N'jọ́ onímí bá su'mí è é'lẹ̀, n'jọ́ náà ni wọn ọ́ kọ̀ ọ́. Taní ó su'mí è é'lè tán tí ó kó o 'ápò? Kò seése. Èyin kiní igi yìí, ẹ kọ ẹran yìí fún mi lónìí".
> [Many as the shots fired at the animal were, none hit the target. But I spoke to it: "When a man defecates, he leaves it and walks away. Does anyone defecate and put the waste in his pocket? No way. You this tree, cede this animal to me today in the same manner".]

Ajísefínní, positioned very close to the tree, later sights the deer escaping towards the tree, galloping through a hail of shots with none as much as even grazing its skin. Just then, he sees an *ọ̀rọ̀* (a tree-spirit) emerge from the tree, raising alarm: "Ẹ̀è gbọdọ̀ pa mí l'ẹ́ran o [Never you kill my animal, I warn]." As the deer gets close to the ọ̀gbùngbun, Ajísefínní fires at it and hits it. The spirit immediately disappears and a colony of ants suddenly covers the dead deer so that it becomes impossible to see or have access to it. There is also a swarm of bees, putting to flight all the hunters who have arrived to cut up the animal. At this point, Ajísefínní resorts to magic, "nkan àwọn baba wa tí 'án fún wa [the thing bequeathed to us by our fathers]", to fight back the army of ants and bees before claiming the kill.

Not all the encounters with the spirits and the animals end in straight victory for the hunter. The narrative of Múfútáù Fákáyọ̀dé Kúkúndùkú of Álúgbọ̀ Olúwo in Ẹgbẹ́dá Local Government of Oyo State illustrates a situation in which the antagonist and the protagonist match in strength.[32] Kúkúndùkú, during night hunting in the Forest of Afami, is accosted by an extremely tall and brawny spirit. "Ìwọ ọdẹ yìí [You hunter]", the spirit calls, "má dé inú igbó yìí mọ́. Ìkìlọ̀ ni mo fi se fún ọ o [never you hunt in this forest anymore from now on, I warn you]." But Kúkúndùkú, as defiant as Faguwa's Olówóayé before the spirit gatekeeper of Olodumare, retorts: "Taa n'ìwọ?... Gbogbo ohun t'ọ́ọ́ bá se, èmi ọ́ maa dé'núu'gbó yìí wáá dẹ̀'gbẹ́ o... Tí wọ́n

[31] Botanical name not known
[32] Personal interaction and *Ọdẹ Akọni* (27/07/07)

bá bí ọ dáa, ijọ́ tí n bá wáá d'ẹ̀gbẹ́, wáá pàdéè mi, oó rí i pé'lẹ̀ ọ́ la'ná [Who the hell are you? … Do whatever you will, I shall continue to hunt in this forest… If you are a *man* enough, stand in my way and see the very ground under you explode as we fight]." Soon after they part way, the hunter sees a duiker and fires at it. The spirit hears the report of the gun, bounds towards the hunter and challenges him to a fight. Like the attritive wrestling between Olówóayé and Ànjọ̀nú Ìbẹ̀rù (Fagunwa, 1949), both the hunter and the spirit are exhausted and have to retire. As the spirit returns to his base, Kúkúndùkú takes home the duiker and instructs his wife to cook the animal's offal for his breakfast.

But early that morning, a challenge to a fight voiced in a familiar baritone wakes the hunter from his short nap. The spirit is back in company of six other colleagues, equally tall and brawny, brandishing heavy clubs. "Ẹ̀tu mi dà? N'bo lọ gb'ẹ́tu mi sí? [Where is my duiker? Where did you put it?]", the spirit shouts and challenges the hunter to another round of fight. At the end of that fight, the hunter has been clubbed so hard that he becomes sick for about three months. The noise arising from the fight alerts the neighbours who promptly come to the hunter's house. But even as they see the hunter struggle and hear the noise of the fighting parties, the spirits are invisible to them. Elder hunters are consequently summoned and the spirits are forced to retreat under their spell.

As pointed out by Melissa Leach (2000), the bush does not simply exist in definite contradistinction to the human world. It is sometimes, even as the agonistic half, a commentary on the human world. The hunter as *man* confronts in the bush the complication that results from the activities of his genus. Domestic matters, as such, replay themselves in the hunter's encounter. A vindictive *àjé* woman, still seething from the hunter's offence, may show up in form of strange deer, bent on killing the hunter. By shooting the male of a mating deer-couple, the hunter may have shot his wife's lover. It is the acknowledgement of this "consubstantiality" (Leach, 2000: 582) between the tame Self and the wild Other that informs the Yoruba hunter's self-admonition that the hunter conduct himself honourably at home. One hunter sees this bush-home symmetry in terms of human interpersonal relation:

> …the hunter kills in the village before leaving for the bush; that is, you must be correct to your family at home and to those you live with; if you are not correct with those in the village you will not kill in the bush. (Leach, 2000: 583)

Yẹ̀kínì Iyìọlá Aróyèhún of Ilé Ogbó, Ọ̀ṣun State rudely dismisses a woman who wants to buy his first kill of the day.[33] Aróyèhún admittedly has ready patronage from certain meat sellers whom he does not want to disappoint, but the hunter's rude dismissal of the woman so much exercises her that she threatens to "deal with him." Now *àjé* is the Yoruba construct of the woman's supernatural energy directed at counterbalancing the patriarchy. At once malevolent and benevolent, woman deploys the *àjé* power to visit misery on man for reasons that could be petty or justified, or to help anyone she considers dear. D.O. Fagunwa's treatment of Ajediran in *Igbo Olodumare* and *Ogboju ode* partly illustrates this construct. Àjẹ́dìran, disappointed by the patriarchal system of justice, resorts to procuring the *àjé* power with which she decimates her erring co-wives and their children. The woman in Aróyèhún's narrative confronts the hunter in form of a duiker. When the hunter sights and fires at it, the barrel of his gun bursts, injuring him. But the animal is also hit. As the animal falls, the offended woman also falls into a sickness that ends in death. The narrative connects the two incidents as it closes: on her hospital deathbed, eighteen pellets of the same sizes and number as the one fired at the duiker are extracted from the woman's side, the very point where the hunter had aimed and shot at the duiker.

Agboọlá Alájáníbọn Dẹ́tunhà of Dáli village, Olúyọ̀lé Local Government of Oyo State confronts the *àjé* for a different reason.[34] Sàfúrátù, the *àjé* character in the narrative, has made some advances to the hunter. Spurned, she boils with anger and a resolve to either compel the hunter to have her or destroy him altogether. She also manifests herself in the form of a duiker. Dẹ́tunhà's duiker however comes with a portent more telling than that of Aróyèhún: it is white. It is established

[33] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (17/09/03)
[34] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (20/02/05)

among the Yoruba hunters that duikers do not come white but reddish with dashes of white. A totally white duiker is therefore a nigh-impossible rarity. One popular device the Yoruba hunter employs to undermine the evil aimed at him in form of animal is to share the meat of such animal among the people, rather than benefit from such meat himself by eating or selling it. This action does not deflect the antagonist's attack to such people, but rather neutralizes it. Having thus accordingly shared the white duiker's meat round the village, Sàfúrátù falls ill and, nearing death, confesses that she had tried to enchant the hunter with the white duiker. However, Sàfúrátù does not die. Ògún àjọbọ, a communal worship of the deity, is organized on her behalf. About fifteen pellets fired at the duiker are recovered from her breast.

Ràsákì Àlàó Adúpè of Kúseélá village, Ẹgbẹ́dá Local Government, Oyo State also rebuffs the solicitation of an unnamed woman.[35] The sort of liaison proposed by the woman involves the supernatural empowerment of the hunter in return for which he would reward her with constant gifts of meat and reverence. Adúpé, having spurned the woman, has set off the conflict. The woman's proxy in this conflict is a civet. The civet, after being shot, charges at the hunter and almost bites him but for the machete's blow with which the latter finishes it off just in time to stop it. At that point the hunter is struck dumb and rashes break out on his body. Respite only comes through his father, with whom he is hunting, who applies some medication that relieves him. As the animal is gutted, an *ọpẹ̀lẹ̀*, a major instrument used in *ifá* divination is found in the civet's stomach. Both the hunter and the *àjé* antagonist emerge from the conflict with neither bowing to the other. But much later, when the woman dies, seven holes that other hunters swear are healed bullet wounds are found on her side. Adúpé claims in respect of that night of the civet: "Àhàyá méje náà n'mo sì e k'îbọn l'álẹ́ ọjọ́ náà [And my gun was loaded that night with seven pellets]."

In the largely amoral world of the Yoruba hunter in which the hunter may choose to have a love affair with the wife of a non-hunter, it is a sin for the non-hunter to have such affair with the hunter's wife, or contemplate taking her for a

[35] Personal interaction (20/02/05)

wife. It is even more ignoble for a hunter to have an affair with the wife of a fellow hunter. The following ìjálá lines performed by Kọ́lá Akíntáyọ̀ are revealing[36]:

Kèé se pé k'ọ́dẹ ọ́ má fẹ̀bìn'in ééyán lá n wì
Ẹ̀yin ẹ sá ti má f'ẹ́bìn'in ọdẹ
Ẹ mọ̀ ọ́ níwà ọdẹ, ẹ dà á s'ọ́dẹ lá'a
Ẹnìkan là á kọ̀'wà à'bàjẹ́ fún, ọdẹ ẹ̀'lú ù'Bàdàn
Torí ẹni tọ́ fẹ́bìnrin ọdẹ ò jìnà s'íkú
Ikú ò jìnà s'ẹ́ni ọdẹ bá gbà l'óbìnrin
Tor'ẹ́ni ọdẹ bá pa bí ọ̀ bá fi kú
Oko o rẹ̀ yíó d'îgbòrò.
[There is nothing wrong about the hunter taking your wife
But you never take the hunter's wife
The hunter's weakness is flirtation, just forgive him
It is noble for one to forgive the other, oh hunter of Ibadan
For whoever took the hunter's wife is not far away from death
And death is not far away from he whose wife the hunter has taken
For whomever the hunter tried to kill and is not dead
His whole business goes to ruin.]

The narrative of Bándélé Ọlọjẹdẹ of Ìta Màyá, Òkè Àdó, Ibadan further illustrates the enormity of the love triangle involving the hunter's wife[37]. Bándélé and Bámgbóyè, both hunters, are friends. The narrative evokes the degree of intimacy between the two with the preliminary detail that they do go hunting together. This is intended to show the mutual trust between them. Even as a hunter may participate in an expedition with other hunters including his sworn adversary, virtually none would hunt with his enemy in a two-man party. Equally, the hunter's wife (name not given) is portrayed as the hunter's consort who "wo'lé dè mí [held fort for me]" whenever the hunter is not at home. The narrative is then hinged on a probe of the two relationships. Bándélé, during a lone expedition in the Forest of Fátùké, sights a pair of mating deer. Among the Yoruba hunters, there is a belief that whenever the animals of the antelope family mate in the full glare of the hunter it is a portent that the hunter's wife is unfaithful. It is also believed that the hunter is at liberty to do to the mating pair whatever he wants to happen to the unfaithful wife and her lover. Bándélé shoots the male deer dead and the female escapes with bullet wound. At home, Bándélé meets his wife writhing in pain.

[36] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (29/04/07)
[37] Personal interaction 29/05/07

Word also comes that morning that his best friend, Bámgbóyè, is seriously ill. If the audience is uncertain about the complicity of Bámgbóyè and the hunter's wife, the doubt clears as the narrative closes. As the wife's illness worsens, Bándélé calls in the *babaláwo* and the elders who, after a sacrifice of four goats, reveal to the hunter that the wife had been having an affair. During the medication and ritual that follow, six shrapnels fall out from the woman's body. Bámgbóyè, who had since taken to bed, complaining of having been shot in his dream, also confesses at the point of death to having an affair with Bándélé's wife.

4.2.3 Negotiating and surviving the formidable

It is argued in Chapter Two that in many ways, the Yoruba worldview does not privilege an absolute superordinate status of man in relation to all other earthly creation. The assumption about the position of man as the centre of earthly creation (Mbiti, 1975) is a formation thrown up by the received cultures of Europe and Arabia. Wole Soyinka, dramatist, poet and social interventionist, many times exploits this Yoruba anti-anthropocentric consciousness as part of his recurrent thematic premise that man is vulnerable, sinful and in continuous need of redemption. *A dance of the forest* (1963), Soyinka's play that examines the underside of human history in a decade when African nations rapidly gained political independence and the resulting hysteria inhibited introspection, requires humility and self-appraisal of man as he enters the politically independent half of his history. This is not negotiable if he craves redemption. Deities and spirits collaborate in the play to expose the hubris of man, both living and ancestral. It is from the acknowledgement and proof of man's weakness and inadequacy that the quest for salvation draws its raison d'être.

His largely anthropocentric Christian vision not withstanding, D.O. Fagunwa's treatment of man the hunter in relation to other active players in the Yoruba cosmos considerably demotes man's claim to superiority. Encountering Èsù-kékeré-òde, the stout one-eyed elf for the first time, Olowoaye, the hunter-protagonist of *Igbó Olódùmarè* retorts to the spirit's challenge:

> Ẹni ti o fi aṣẹ gbe ojo o tan ara rẹ jẹ; ẹni ti o duro de reluwe, yio ba ara rẹ ni ọrun alakeji; agba ti o ri ejo ti ko sa ara iku l'o nya a; ẹranko ti o ba fi oju di ọdẹ ẹhin ãro ni yio sun: ẹniti o gboju le ogun fi ara rẹ fun oṣi ta; ẹbọra ti o ba f'oju di mi yio ma ti ọrun de ọrun ni, emi ọkunrin ni mo wi bẹ, *oni ni ng o sọ fun ẹyin ẹbọra Igbo Olodumare pe, nigbati Ẹlẹda da ohun gbogbo ti mbẹ ninu aiye tan, o fi enia ṣe olori gbogbo wọn.*
> [Whoever fetches water with a sieve deceives himself; anyone who stands on the railway is courting death; a man who stands in the way of the poisonous snake is tired of living; the animal that defies the hunter will end up cooked; a lazy man that relies on inherited wealth has handed himself up to poverty; any spirit that dares me will die many times over, I, a strong man, assure you. *Today, I shall prove to you all the spirits of the Forest of Olodumare that after God created all the things on earth, he made man their lord.*] (Italics mine, 16)

The subsequent wrestling between the spirit and the hunter does not favour the latter's declamation above. In that struggle, the hunter realizes that he does not stand any chance with the impregnable elf. He therefore resorts to diplomacy through poetry sung "tanutanu [pitifully]" (19). Only then is Esu-kekere-ode appeased and the hunter allowed to go. Fagunwa might have meant to insist on man's rational superiority with Olówóayé's sagacious resort to diplomacy when brawn fails him. Olowoaye and Fagunwa's other hunter-protagonists however arguably only survive on their immunity as heroes in the narrative; it is the conventional immunity they require as fictional constructs to live till the end of their different narratives. Many other hunters that are not major characters are not that lucky. In *Ogboju ọdẹ*, Lamọrin, a hunter and friend of the protagonist is devoured by Tẹ̀mbẹ̀lẹ̀kun, a cannibal spirit, without being able to put up a fight, while the protagonist himself, through stealth, barely escapes with his life.

In the Yoruba hunters' narratives, man is constantly reminded of the precarious impermanence of his position in the dialogic community where participants contest, sometimes mortally, for primacy. It is part of the hunter's calling therefore to design and deploy strategies not only to subdue the Other but also to sometimes recognize the latter's equality - or even superiority - of status as

a way of negotiation. The narrative of Kìlání Alápó of Alápó village, Ibadan, Oyo State operates at the foreground of the awareness that the powerful Other must be tamed through negotiation, not confrontation (**Appendix III**)[38]. Early in the narrative, it is established that the hunter has, for the past eight years been killing a python annually under a particular *àràbà* tree in the Forest of Ẹlẹ́rè. In the ninth year of Alápó's annual "harvest" of python, the hunter does not see any python under the *àràbà* as has been the usage but instead finds an "awọ ìgalà [deer's skin]". The preternatural aspect of the skin is that it comes whole as if the life and flesh in it had simply liquefied and seeped out through the eyeholes, leaving the skin intact; no cut, no seam. The narrator quickly modifies the name of the item in view of this, saying "Tàbí kí nsọ́ wípé *àwò* ọ̀'galà n l'ọdẹ bá n'bẹ̀ – àwọ̀ ọ̀'galà t'ígalà bọ́ọ́'lẹ̀ torítẹsè [Or better put, the hunter saw a slough cast off by a deer]." "Àwọ̀ [slough]" therefore equates the item to the layer of skin naturally cast off by snakes, highlighting the abnormality, as it is not known that living bovine animals shed their skin in such a manner.

There are Yoruba narratives of various genres about animals similarly shedding their skins in order to transform into man. Two hunter stories in *Dahomean narrative* (Herskovits & Herskovits, 1958) relate the hunter's confiscation of such slough and the subsequent marriage between the hunter and the animal turned beautiful woman. In a version of the story of the wedlock of Ọya, a Yoruba deity, and Ògún set down by C. Adepegba (2008), Ògún, the primordial hunter and deity of hunting, likewise confiscates Ọya's *àbíkú* costume of buffalo's hide and horns. She is therefore bonded in marriage to the hunter in whose custody she "keeps" her real form and her secret. In all these narratives and many other known types considered, the hunter-animal liaison ends in woes for the hunter. Even as the hunter comes out alive, he often loses his wife and children in the emergent struggle with the vindictive animal bent on annihilating the hunter's family to avenge the latter's sin of indiscretion and/or insult. As Alápó therefore goes home with the slough, he does so with the full understanding of the capacity of a "human" out of animal's skin to visit misery on the hunter. It is in his

[38] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (28/09/03)

resolution to take home the slough nevertheless that his bravery is inscribed and that is where it ends. His apprehension of the possible adverse consequence of keeping the slough later makes him so uneasy that he resorts to consulting the *babálawo*. He is warned by the diviner to keep the slough safe, for "aláwọ̀ ọ́ wàá bééré áwọ́ [the owner was coming back for her slough]."

On the seventh day, a beautiful fair-complexioned woman arrives at Alápó village requesting to be shown to Kìlání Alápó's house. Her arrival is greeted by frantic baying and barking of dogs who "pa kuuru ú mọ́ ọ [charged at her as if they would attack]." In camera with the hunter, the woman goes immediately to the subject of her visit: "Ẹdákun, àwọ̀ mi t'ẹ́ẹ̀ kó, mọ fẹ́ k'ẹ́ẹ̀ kó o fún mi [Would you please return my slough?]." The hunter concedes to returning it at another appointed time and place. He schedules another meeting with the woman under the *àràbà* in the night. In order to ensure confidentiality and prevent human intrusion, the hunter sets out for the appointed place rigged out as if on his regular hunting routine. He finds the woman waiting and hands over her slough back to her. The deer-woman rewards Kìlání Alápó for his faithfulness. She promises the hunter a deer each every year. For the past fifteen years, the hunter has killed a deer each every year under the tree. He will gladly oblige anyone who wants to come with him to see him "harvest" the next season's deer.

Whereas Alápó is rewarded for knowing his place as *man* with limited strength, Nathaniel Ògúnlékè Ògúnọ̀ṣun gets the hard knocks.[39] In the narrative of Ògúnkúnlé Òjó of Agúnrege in Oyo State, Ògúnọ̀ṣun, the narrator's master marries a buffalo. The narrative is adjusted very early to the hunter's magical reality as Ògúnkúnlé, the hunter's understudy, travels a distance of forty-five miles on foot just under three minutes to report to his master at home that he had felled a buffalo. As they both return to the forest, about a mile to the spot, "àfi pẹ̀kí n la bá pàdé ẹran lọ́nà, èyuùn ìyàwó. Arẹwa obinrin ni [we ran into the animal, that is, the wife. She was a very beautiful woman]." The narrator's compounding of the animal and the woman as one entity implies that the felled animal has transformed

[39] Personal interaction (11/02/2007)

into human. Just like Olowoaye, enchanted by the *àjé* woman he runs into in the Forest of Olodumare, Ògúnọ̀ṣun makes advances to the woman.

It is the same principle of domesticity that underlies the hunter's insistence that nothing is wrong in putting an animal killed in the most strange and weird condition on the table that also normalizes liaison between man and animal turned woman. As in A.J. Greimas' actantial construct, the principle presupposes that the present estate of a being determines the pattern of relation with it. A deer that had been, ten minutes before, an old woman is good meat just as a beautiful woman transformed from a rhesus monkey does well as a second wife. This may revolt a non-hunter, but it is nevertheless one of the bases upon which the hunter is considered the communal limen between the Same and the wild preternatural Other.

Ògúnọ̀ṣun woos the woman, asks for her hand in marriage and the latter agrees with an already familiar condition:

> Nlọ p'ọ́ọ́ fẹ́ òhun yìí o, t'íjà bá dé o, n'jọ́ t'ọ́ọ bá p'òhun l'ọ́mọ ẹranko, n'jọ́ náà ni títán dé bá ọ ò. Ọ̀ báà nà'hun, k'ọ́ọ sá'hun l'ọ́gbẹ́ k'ẹ́jẹ ọ́ máa jáde l'ára òhun, kò s'íhun tí ọ́ sẹlẹ̀.
> [Now that you insist on marrying me, be informed that the day you, out of anger, call me an animal, that day would be your last. It would not offend me as much if you hit me so much that I am wounded and bleeding.]

This interdiction sets the basis for the subsequent conflict. The buffalo-woman remains the hunter's wife for long enough to bear him three children. Then, a quarrel ensues between the couple one day and the hunter explodes: "Àb'órí ì rẹ burú ni, ìwọ ọmọ ẹranko yìí [You good-for-nothing unlucky daughter of an animal]" and "ibi wàhálà ti dé nùun [that was where the trouble started]." The woman is at once seized by a paroxysm of anger in which she is transformed into a buffalo, bristling with vengeance. The hunter, now helpless and a fugitive, runs towards ìgbàdì, a mountain in the outskirts of the village believed to be of pre-historic origin, where the buffalo catches up with him and gores him badly before fleeing into the forest

never to return. The hunter survives the attack but limps from the resulting fracture till his death.

Ásìmíyù Ògúndépò Pabíẹ́kùn of Ìdí Ògún village, Ságbẹ́, Ibadan, Oyo State, wrestles with a female spirit (**Appendix I**).[40] As in Ògúnkúnlé's narrative, the classifiation of the antagonist as female, well outlined in skirt, enhances the attenuation of the status of man the hunter whose machismo ordinarily subordinates the woman. The narrative is set in the night beginning with the hunter's initial failure to sight any game in a particular unnamed forest. He later resorts to go to Olókè Forest. In Olókè Forest:

> Igi ahùn kan n bẹ n'bẹ̀, àbáláyé ahùn ni; rábátá bàyíí l'ahùn náà. Àwa bá a l'áyé ni. Àwọn t'ó jù wá lọ gaan bá a l'áyé ni.
> [There was an ahun[41] tree, so ancient that it was older than even our own elders, and very big too].

Under the tree, Pabíẹ́kùn sights a duiker and shoots it. As he makes to carry the animal, "ìyá hun bá b'óóde t'òhun ti tòbí n'dìí [a woman in skirt emerged]." Even as the narrative does not exclusively categorize the "woman" as spirit, her occurrence at that place and time immediately qualifies her as one. Subsequent events in the narrative more convincingly establish this. The woman accuses the hunter of wanting to steal her animal, and stands in his way as if to prevent him from going with the game. The resulting struggle lasts for a couple of hours with neither of the fighting parties gaining the upper hand. At some point, the hunter fumbles for his cutlass and makes to cut the animal in two that he may go with the upper part and leave the spirit with the hindquarters. Pabíẹ́kùn's resolution is an admission of his inability to subdue the woman. But the spirit, rather than have the hunter split the animal in two, makes an appeal. In her appeal, she discloses that her husband is the owner of the duiker, and

> Ọkọ ọ'hun, òhun u rẹ̀ 'ọ̀ jọọ gbé'núu 'gbó yìí. Ọ̀tọ̀ n'ibi t'ọ́kọ ọ'hun ngbé. Ó sì ti rìn'rìn àjò. T'ọ́ bá sì e dé tí ọ̀ bá e bá ẹran yìí tàbí t'óhun ọ̀ bá r'ókù u rẹ̀ gbé fún u pé

[40] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (24/12/2006
[41] Alstoria boonei (Gbile, 1984)

> nkankan lọ́ p'ẹran yìí…inú ọkọ ọ́'hùn le é'pọ̀ o. Lílé ní ó lé 'hun b'óóde o.
> [her husband lived separately in a different forest. He had, in fact, gone on a journey. If he returned, she continued, and found the animal missing, and she could not show him the body to prove the animal had been killed, that would be the end of their marriage. Her husband was so mean. He would simply throw her out.]

The spirit then makes an offer:

> Ó ní'hun t'óhun lè se fún mi t'ée pé t'ọ́jọ́ ọ'kú ee dé, òhun ó fún mi tí ọ j'ánfààní. Nítorí i p'ẹ́tu yìí, t 'óhun bá yọ̀nda ẹ̀ fún mi, pátápátá, ijọ́ márùn-ún, ijọ́ mẹ́fà, kí n fi jẹ ẹ́ àt'èmi àt'àwọn arán ilée mi. Sùgbọ́n oore àjẹ̀èjẹ́tán l'òhun ó fún mi.
> [She then said that there was a favour she could do me that would profit me till death; for this duiker will not last me more than five days or six, I and my household. But what she would give me in its place would be of eternal benefit.]

The spirit then fetches a gourdlet from inside her skirt and offers it to the hunter**.** According to her, the content of the gourdlet is a charm for hypnotizing animals. She describes its application:

> Gbogbo ibikíbi t'ọ́ọ́ bá ti dé lọ́sàn-án, tí èé s'òru o, t'ọ́ọ́ bá ti r'ójú ẹsẹ̀ ẹran, irú ẹranko t'ọ́ yẹ ọ́ jẹ́ l'áyé, t'ọ́ọ́ bá e sí àdó yìí, t'ọ́ ọ gbọ̀n ọ́ s'ójú ẹsẹ̀ ẹ rẹ̀, lọ wá'bìkan jókòó sí. Ìgbà tí ọ bá e tó ìdátọ́mì márùn-ún, ẹran hun ó rín wá bá ọ. Ọ ọ́ kàn pa à n'ípakúpa ni.
> [Whenever you are hunting in the daylight – not in the night, please – any footprints of an animal you see, put some of the content of the gourdlet on it and find a place to mount watch. Before long, the animal would come to you. You would kill it as easily as that.]

Having handed the hunter the item, she vanishes with the duiker, leaving the hunter in a momentary daze and cold shiver. The next day, Pabíẹ́kùn tries the charm and accordingly kills a duiker and an antelope. In *Ogboju ọdẹ*, Akara-ogun, the protagonist, mischievously wangles a similar charm from árọ́ní, the monopedal spirit.

Moses Ògúnwálé of Ifẹ̀ Ọ̀dàn, Èjìgbò Local Government, Osun State comes out of his experience with a similar souvenir but more humbled (**Appendix VIII**).[42] He admits that "wọ́n le jù mí lọ [they {the spirits} are tougher than I am]". Hunting the Heights of Ọbaálá on a Sunday night, a pair of deer's eyes reflects in the hunter's light. The hunter shoots at the animal only to see those reflecting eyes multiply into fourteen, which equal seven deer. He then trains his light more intently on the animals and fires at the smallest of the herd in the middle. As it falls, the rest of the eyes disappear. When Ògúnwálé goes to inspect the animal, he is accosted by hands whose owners are identified as "awọn irunmọlẹ" or "awọn iwin inu u'gbo [the spirits of the forest]" with whom the hunter is forever engaged in contestation. In a struggle that lasts till the early hours of the next morning, the spirits are not just after denying the hunter the kill but, more importantly, apprehending him as the police do a petty thief. The hunter is eventually dragged into a vast subterranean settlement, the village of the spirits:

> Nínúu kòtò hun, mọ b'áwọn èèyàn n'bẹ̀. Àwọn èèyàn hun 'ò wá ga tó wa. Sùgbọ́n wọ́n sanra… Ilé nbẹ, gbogbo ẹ̀ nbẹ… Ilé hun rí pẹkutupẹkutu bí ilée Fílàní báyìí.
> [In this underground place, I met *people* there. But they were not as tall as we {humans} are. But they were fat… There were houses and all… The houses were as squat as the Fulani huts.]

The underground, just like the trees and rocks, is also home to spirits. Bernth Lindfors (1973) writes that in the narratives of Amos Tutuola, the underground is one of the major settings portrayed as home to spirit characters. The human characters fall or stray into them and are thereby pitted as intruders against the spirit residents (62). Countless other examples abound in the work of Fagunwa, one very memorable example being the multitude of elves summoned from the underground to fight the hunters by Ògòngò, the avian monarch.

Ògúnwálé is detained underground for seven days, surviving on the hunters' emergency provision such as roasted corn and plantain. Even in detention, the hunter still considers himself a man of strength, for as the spirits inspect him from

[42] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (10/12/06)

afar as men do an apprehended notorious burglar being paraded, none is able to venture near because "ọgbọ́n àwọn àgbà tí n bẹ l'ára ọ̀ jẹ́ wọn ó le súnmọ́ mi [the ancient magical power I had been fortified with did not allow them to come near]." Perhaps out of pity for the hunter's condition – for he has declined to eat the unidentifiable meal served him by the spirits – his captors release him on the seventh day with a stern warning never to come near their livestock anymore. Though like a detained recalcitrant, the hunter continues to defy the spirits in his retort that God, not the spirits, is the owner of animals, he is at that point a beaten man. Before he is magically transported overground, the hunter is given two gourdlets: the first contains a medicine that heals hemorrhoids and the second a medicine for healing ulcer.

For the Yoruba hunter, alternative life and consciousness are not found in terrestrial spaces like tree, river, rock and the underground alone. The aerial world also shares boundary with man and partakes of the dialectic of confrontation and negotiation with him. Kọ̀bọmọjẹ́ Àlàdé of Látúndé village, Ìdí Ayùnrẹ́, Ibadan, Oyo State strays into one such aerial territory, survives and returns home grateful for his life.[43] The Heights of Ẹbẹdí in Ìsẹ́yìn (Òkè Ògùn area of Oyo State) creeps with choice games but is forbidden from being hunted at night. Kọ̀bọmọjé, a hunter settler from Ibadan, has been accordingly informed by his Ìsẹ́yìn colleagues that certain malignant spirits would thwart any hunter that does, sometimes fatally. Kọ̀bọmọjé however steals to the mountain one night. After hunting for many hours without success, he sights a pair of eyes reflecting his light. As he aims and makes to shoot, he hears sound of bells in the air far above, getting louder as it speedily comes towards him.

Kọ̀bọmọjẹ́, just like any other Yoruba hunter, is informed that *àjà*, the spirit of the wind is manifest in jingles and whirlwind: "a à ti mọ̀ p'áàjà ló ni saworo? [who does not know that *àjà* comes in jingles?]." He also has heard narratives about humans abducted by *àjà*, and fed on only seven seeds of alligator pepper daily for seven years of their incarceration in space. And Kọ̀bọmọjẹ́ does not want any of that, so he flees. But even in flight, the hunter still considers his nocturnal

[43] Personal interaction (07/10/07)

foray into that zone and safe return a feat. He credits it to the magical protection bequeathed to him:

> Ọlá àwọn tí'án fi mí l'ọ́kàn balẹ̀ pé kò s'íbi tí mo lè lọ, kò níí s'éwu, wọ́n gbé lú'a ẹ̀ lọ nù un.
> [If not for the assurance I had been given that wherever I went, no evil would befall me, I would have ended up taken away by the wind.]

Even then, he is not under any illusion that he stands any chance before Whirlwind. He promptly renounces going to Ẹbẹdí henceforth, even in the daylight:

> N 'ò dé'bẹ̀ mọ́ o. N 'ọ̀ gbọdọ̀ p'aró n'íwájú Ògún o… Tọr'ẹ́ni ààjà bá gbé lọ, bí ọ̀ bá pẹ́ẹ́'pò ní ọ́ l'ọdún méje… Ataare nìkan náà ní ọ maa jẹ f'ódidi ọdún méje hun.
> [Let me not lie to you, for Ogun sees me; I stopped going to hunt in that place… Whoever is taken by *àjà*, mind you, is kept away for at least seven years… And such person would be fed on a sole diet of alligator pepper those seven years.]

The admission that the hunter is sometimes powerless before the Other is demonstrated in the ritual sacrifice he sometimes offers before entering a notorious forest. Músá Ìbàrìbá of Àgọ́ Àrẹ́, Oyo State, appeases the spirits of Aláàáyá Forest in such manner[44]. But even then, every animal he shoots vanishes no sooner than the bullet hits it. Having hunted for six days without luck, he dreams on the seventh day that he is being led by his babalawo into the forest, but a particular truculent spirit refuses them entry, insisting, despite the old priest's entreaties, that they go back or face consequences. Ìbàrìbá reads the dream as a warning from a stronger contender. He promptly returns home.

Also, Yaríyarí Forest hunted by Omíjàyí Àtàndá, the Olúọ́dẹ of Ajagunlaàsẹ̀ town in Osun State is equally intimidating:[45]

> Igbó yìí, igbó abàmì gbáà ni. T'ọ́dẹ ọ́ bá d'ẹgbó yìí, ọdẹ gbọdọ̀ s'ètùtù.
> [The forest is very strange and weird indeed. The hunter has to offer a sacrifice before hunting in it.]

[44] Personal interaction (23/05/07)
[45] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (05/11/03) and personal interaction (22/11/06)

Like Músá Ìbàrìbá, Omíjàyí offers the sacrifice before beginning the day's hunting but fails nevertheless to kill any animal. Returning home at about two o'clock in the afternoon, the hunter stops over at a stream in the forest to have a quick bath. He meets two other men he thinks are hunters at the stream. After the bath, he shares their pomade before setting out for home. As the hunter gets closer home, none of the people he meets on the way either greets him or responds to his greeting. At home, the hunter is not met with any of the customary enthusiasm of relations happy to see him return from another expedition; no one welcomes him. So, Omíjàyí goes to the bedroom angry and wondering whether his late return from hunting is such an enormous offence. Irked by the rude treatment, the hunter, after a moment of rest and a change of clothes, visits his elder brother living in the adjoining compound to report his offending family members. There, nobody, including the brother, recognizes his presence with as little as a stare. Leaving the place more angered, he heads for the house of his best friend. There, he is equally ignored.

In the meantime, members of the Omíjàyí family have started to fuss at home about the failure of the hunter to return from the forest. Meeting them in deliberation on how to deploy men to look for him on his farm and in the forest, Omíjàyí, still sulking, tells them Sé èmi lẹ̀ nwáá lọ? Èmi rèé o. Ẹnìkankan ọ́ má wá èmi lọọ́bìkankan o [What is this nonsense about looking for me? I am right here. Let no one waste his time looking for me]." No one responds. At this point, it dawns on the hunter that his material presence is no longer felt. For three days, he follows the different search parties dispatched to look for him, distraught and miserable, shouting himself hoarse "Èmi rèé, kínní n se yín gan-àn? Ẹ ̀ìí màá s'èèyàn daada à. Mo l'émi rèé. Sé gbogbo yín pawọ́pọ̀ nítorìí mi ni? [Here I am. Is anything the matter with you? See me here. Has everybody conspired against me?]." Frustrated in his bid to be heard and seen, the hunter returns to the Forest of Yaríyarí, and, after two days of wandering, retires to the river bank. The two men from whom Omíjàyí took pomade five days ago come by again, greet him and acknowledge his response. Relieved to

find the first human companionship in five days, Omíjàyí plunges into a torrent of complaints about his present condition. The men, surprised themselves, quiz him:

> "Sé ìwọ t'ọ́ọ gbà'para, séèé s'araa wa ni?"
> "Ara a yín b'óo?"
> "Àwa èé s'èèyàn bíi t'iyín."
> "Ẹ̀hn! Ẹ'ìí s'èèyàn? Ẹdú'ó, sé ìpara tí mo fi para ni ọ jẹ́ wọn ó rí mi n'lé?
> "Eèé s'ará ayé mọ́"
> ["Were you not one of us before you took the pomade?"
> "One of you?"
> "Yes, for we are not human as you are"
> "You are not human? Wait a minute; is it the pomade that I used that has made me invisible at home?"
> "Yes, you are no more of the human world".]

With the issue thus clarified, Omíjàyí profusely prays the "men" to revert his present state. Moved, the two "men" collect some herbs and instruct the hunter to take a bath, sponging with them. Omíjàyí returns home after the bath and is jubilantly welcomed by relations and friends already frustrated in their futile search for him. He could only convince them he had been home with the clothing he presently has on, which is not his regular hunting gear.

Hunters continually apprehend that they poach in a forbidden territory. Often, when confronted with the accusation of "stealing" from this other territory, they deflect the responsibility to Ògún, their patron deity. When, for example, the brawny spirit, accompanied by his six mates, takes the battle to the homestead of Fákáyọ̀dé Kúkúndúkù and asks the hunter to produce the duiker he "stole", the hunter quickly reminds him that the animal belongs to the deity, and the deity it was that shot and killed it. This is one device the hunter regularly employs to fend off collision with the vengeful Other. Sometimes however, the antagonist Other disregards the hunter and his god. The *àjé* is one such character. Dele Layiwola (1987) reveals that Olódùmarè, the Yoruba Supreme Being, has ceded to the *àjé* a measure of energy to relatively allow them a place in the same supernatural corridor with the deities even while denying them actual divinity. It is therefore not profanity as such when the woman agent of the *àjé* power disregards the Ògún

immunity the hunter claims to have since she somewhat belongs in the same plane with the god. The hunter character in the narrative Ọláníyì Ọládèjọ Yáwọ́ọrẹ́ of Ọ̀bọ̀dà village, Ẹgbẹ́dá Local Government Oyo State knows this and his management of the conflict with an *àjé* character in the narrative illustrates the hunter's acknowledgement of the *àjé* as a formidable force.[46]

Yáwọ́ọré is on the trail of a notorious deer that has for many years eluded other hunters. Finally sighting it breastfeeding its ewe, the hunter aims the gun at it. But as he makes to fire, he is struck by dizziness that blurs his vision. By the time he applies charms and incantation to fight the "attack", the deer is already alerted and in flight. The hunter nevertheless gives it a chase and finally fells it. Having customarily cut the tips of the animal's ears as proof that he killed it, the hunter goes to invite his mates to help with gutting and cutting up. On their arrival, the animal is found on its feet, bristling and ready to gore anyone that comes near. The animal's cut ears are enough evidence to the other hunters that the deer has gone through one "death", so none of them bothers to shoot it the second time. Yáwọ́ọré however whips out an *óndè*, a charm belt, from around his waist and flogs the animal with it, killing it instantly.

After flaying the deer and cutting up the flesh, the hunter spreads out the skin in the open at home to dry. This is the point where the *àjé* character comes in. As briefly mentioned earlier in the chapter, there is the possibility of liaison between the *àjé* and the hunter – or the *àjé* and any other person for that matter – through which the hunter becomes successful and is protected against all contrary forces. The hunter is expected in turn to be humble and respectful not only to women, any of whom could be an *àjé*, but to everybody. It is also one term of such contract that the human beneficiary should not be extravagant in the display of his success. While for certain hunters, the *àjé* represents a devil not worth dining with even with a long spoon, some believe the *àjé* energy could be managed positively to the hunter's advantage. For example, Julius Okelola of Saki holds that the *aje* is a finical ally who would certainly turn into an animal and devour the hunter in the end, for when the hunter dissatisfies her, "lílọ t'ọ́ bée lọ, t'ọ́dẹ nì ọ̀ bá múra, wọn ó

[46] Personal interaction (14/08/05)

gbókùú ẹ wá'lé ni [the next expedition he embarks upon would be his last if that hunter is not well fortified]."[47] Kọ́lá Akíntáyọ̀, a hunter and presenter of *Ọdẹ Akọni*, reflects differently on this *àjé* complex:

> B'éèyàn bá l'óhun ò níí júbà àwọn tó l'ayé kó tó maa jẹ'nje ayé, irú wọn a kú n'ígbà tí' ọ̀ tọ́'jọ́... B' ó tí waa wú kì wọn wà lẹ́yìn èèyàn tó, èèyàn gbọ́dọ̀ níwàà'rẹ̀lẹ̀, torí oníwàà'rẹ̀lẹ̀ l'àwọn ìyá hun.
> [Anyone who does not acknowledge those who control the world and yet wants to poach in their territory risks untimely death… But however firmly they {the *àjé*} support a person, such person must continue to be cool-headed and respectful, for those women value respectfulness a lot.][48]

Yáwọ́ọ́ré's action – flaying the deer and spreading its skin out in the open – is seen by the *àjé* as arrogant exhibitionism. The woman, confident of the justness of her petition, first approaches Ọláifá Àdìgún, the Olúọdẹ (Head of hunters) of the village, advising him to call Yáwọ́ọ́ré to order. Having eventually sought and found the hunter himself, the woman reproaches:

> Lóòtọ́ lọ p'ẹran. A sì fún ọ pa ni. Kí ló dé t'ọ́ọ wá n fi awọ rẹ *sóò*? Kí ló dé t'ọ́ọ wá lọ rèé kan awọ rẹ mọ̀'ta gbangba? Sé ò n se gàárù nù-un pé ìwọ l'ọ p'ẹran? Sé'wọ lọ p'ẹran ni àb'aa fún ọ pa? Ọ ọ́ mọ́ pè awọ t'óo gbéé'bẹ̀hun, asọ tiwa lo fi nhàn fún gbogbo ayé hun?
> [I know you killed a deer. But you did because *we* wanted you to. Now why do you show off with its skin? Why did you spread it out, pegged to the ground outside? You sure want to show the whole world that you it was that killed the animal. Were you the one who actually killed the animal or *we* gave it to you? Don't you know spreading out the hide in the open that way is exposing *our* clothing to the mundane world?]

Yawọ́ọrẹ, at this point, resorts to the hunter's regular line about Ògún, the hunter's deity, being the killer and the culprit. The woman boldly rejects the hunter's claim: "Ògún kọ́, a yọ̀nda ẹ fún ọ ni o [*We*, not Ògún, allowed you to kill it]." Dazed and

[47] Interview (16/12/06)
[48] Interview (17/04/07)

mortified, the hunter submits by prostrating and apologizing. He promptly removes the skin and takes it in.

The forest spirit as conceived by the hunter sometimes ranks as formidable as the hunter's own deity. In the narrative of Olúfẹ́mi Àjàó Agbérinmì of Tọ́lá village in Ìdó Local Government of Oyo State, the hunter, having invoked the deity to no avail, is pressed into seeking a peaceful resolution.[49] Agbérinmì shoots a duiker in the Forest of Daramola. Though mortally wounded, the duiker struggles to a nearby ọ̀bọ̀bọ̀ tree,[50] on which trunk a door appears, opens, admits the wounded animal, closes and disappears. The hunter, in whose full glare all this has happened, immediately understands it as a checkmate by the tree-spirit. Angry at having hunted all night only to lose his only kill to a miserly dryad, the hunter is determined to beat the spirit into submission. In vain, he curses and casts spell of atrophy on the tree. Once more, the door to the tree appears and opens, and the spirit confronts the hunter:

> S'óo rí gbogbo ìgbìyànjú ẹ pátápátá, kò leè sisẹ́. Kí ló dé? S'ólè ni ọ́ ni?... 'Hun t'ó n gbé é lọ, ìwọ l'ó n sìn í? Ó d'ij'óo t'óo gbé èèrí wá fún wọn
> [I have seen all your efforts; they are bound to be futile. What do you want, you thief? Are you the owner of the animal you want to go with? Are you the one that feeds them?]

Agbérinmì, at this point, also tries the "Ògún-killed-it" line and the humorous spirit retorts with "Eb'Ógùn ní n sin ẹran; k'Ògún ọ́ maa gbé e lọ ọ̀ [Oh, since Ògún it is that owns the animal, let Ògún come for it then]." Thus beaten in the battle of strength and wits, the hunter apologizes and offers the spirit a hand of friendship. The spirit takes the offer but instructs the hunter to first go to town and buy him a packet of sugar as a mark of friendship. The spirit, after taking delivery of the sugar, later releases the shot duiker to the hunter. He further promises the hunter that whenever he plans to celebrate any important occasion and therefore needs meat:

[49] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (05/08/07)
[50] Ficus mucuso (Z.O. Gbile, 1984)

> Máa mú páálí súgà kan, máa wá s'ìdí émi igi ọ̀bọ̀bọ́. T'ọ́ bá d'alẹ́, gbé'ná à rẹ. Ìdí igi yìí, o ó yin ìbọn, ọ ọ́ pa ẹtu kan n'bẹ̀. Bánkà ni.
> [Come with a packet of sugar to me the ọ̀bọ̀bò tree. Then, take your hunter's light the following night and come to the tree. You will surely shoot and kill a duiker under it. I assure you.]

Not all the antagonists are successfully won over by the hunter's solicitation. The narrative of Akínwándé Akíntáyọ̀ of Àjóyìnbọn village, Ẹgbẹ́dá Local Government, Oyo State illustrates such unresolved impasse in the hunter-spirit relation.[51] It also diverges in its presentation of the antagonist not as owner but parent of the animals. Akíntáyọ̀, the Olúọ́de of Àjóyìnbọn, hunting with his friend in the Forest of Àlùgbó, shoots and kills a monitor lizard. As among certain classes of human beings, certain animals are believed to have the potential of becoming "*iwin* [spirit]" by virtue of their age. For example, when the deer carries the hornets' nest in its antlers and barks instead of bleating, or the cobra grows crest and crows like a cock, or the python grows a pair of horns and simulates rainbow, it is believed to have attained with age some of the super-animal power that situates it in the realm of the spirits. The monitor shot at and killed by Akíntáyọ̀, like the deer killed by Ameringun, is evidently in this category: it has aged so much that it has no finger on any of its legs. The hunters leave the lizard hidden somewhere and continue with their expedition, thinking to come for it on their way back home.

But as they return to retrieve the game, they find an old woman waiting. She charges at them:

> Ẹ mà l'áyà a! Ẹ tùn padà wá. Ẹ dù'ò nà, ij'òo l'áwa wáá ba yìn n'ígboro yín? Ẹ sì tún l'áyà, ẹ tún wá, ẹ sì wá pa mí l'ọ́mọ. Aáh, ẹ̀ẹ̀ daa o.
> [Oh, what insolence! You still have the guts to come back. Wait a minute, how many times have *we* intruded in your matters, you humans? Yet you came so boldly and killed *my child*. Oh, you are wicked indeed.]

[51] Ọdẹ Akọni (08/05/05) and personal interaction (05/10/06)

As the hunters retreat in confusion, having failed to convince the old woman that they killed only a lizard and not a child, she puts a curse on them: however hard they probe the forest, may they never shoot to kill. It is after months of unsuccessful hunting that the men begin to take the woman's pronouncement seriously. They consult the babaláwo who reveals to them that "ẹni tó jù wọ́n lọ n ní n bá wọn ọ́ jà [s/he who is stronger than them is at war with them]." To revert the jinx, the priest prescribes a sacrifice to Ògún. Only after the sacrifice are the hunters able to kill animals.

4.2.4 The forest as indeterminate kaleidoscope

It is only convenient to appreciate the hunter's position in relation to the forest in agonistic terms. The fabula that is the forest promises too much in drama to be seen solely from such perspective. Admittedly, quite many of the hunters' narratives configure their events to favour a sort of hunter-versus-Other dichotomy, but quite a few also come in patterns that do not favour conflict. To therefore appreciate the hunter-bush positionality as a definite instance of struggle under-represents the forest's infinitude. The hunter himself sometimes realizes the subjectivity of his position as a mythmaker who rearranges events from the jumbled past into a rather neat – and suspect because they are neat – story. He therefore begins sometimes with the reminder that that forest of fabula is too thick for his human memory:

> Mélòó l'aá sọ n'núu'gbó?... Torí ẹni tọ́ bá ní òwú 'ọ̀ t'ẹ́rù, 'hun tí ée tanná ló mú.
> [Can we recount all we see in the forest? No… It is like the cotton wool you consider light because you carry the little you need as wick.][52].

In the narrative of the hunter quoted above (Àmẹ́ẹ̀dì Kókó-by-this), even though there are instances of confrontation in the two early episodes, the last part, independent enough to be a narrative on its own, dispenses with such conflict. The

[52]Tàọ̀fíkì Àmẹ́ẹ̀dì Kókó-by-this, Akínẹ̀rín village, Ìwó Osun State. Personal interaction (20/11/05)

first episode treats the hunter's encounter with an elusive deer that usually slips through the hunters' watch by barking and thereby putting its hunters under spell. Kókó-by-this does not only thwart the deer's spell and kill the animal but also survives the postmortem attack that comes in form of headache and cold. His final triumph is represented in the successful appropriation of a gourdlet found in the animal's stomach and kept in the custody of his father – his master and protector.

Next, he traces a duiker a week later to an *àìdan* tree where he is pitted against a spirit that wrestles with him for about ten minutes before the hunter throws him and the spirit disappears. This is where palpable conflict seems to end in Kókó-by-this' narrative. As he hunts farther, he becomes tired and decides to rest on a particular rock where he eventually falls asleep. He wakes up later to find a covered calabash beside him. As he returns home with the item, he sees an old woman in red shorts and white jumper – a spirit evidently – who begs him for meat that she and her children might not starve that day. The hunter hands her a civet, his only kill for the day. The woman reciprocates the hunter's kindness by revealing to him the significance of the content of the calabash in his possession: it is used to free a woman from the visitation of àbíkú[53]. The hunter has the calabash to this day. By neglecting the pursuit of the linear initiation of conflict and its resolution, the last third of Kókó-by-this' narrative seems to mirror with considerable fidelity the coarse fabula from which fine narratives are sculpted. It is this texture of narrative that the magical realist fictions of Ben Okri and Kojo Laing aspire to in their unfettered release of events that are not necessarily organically coordinated.

The narrative of Àpémọ̀ Kínche of Hounkoko village, Savé, Republic of Benin opens with some promise of conflict[54]. The hunter shoots and kills a buffalo and an eland, resorting to "ìbora [spell of disapperance]" to make himself invisible as one of the animals rages after been wounded. Back home on the fourth day, the hunter's wife reports that two sturdy women visited and informed her that Kínche had killed a buffalo and an eland. They also left word that:

[53] Yoruba spirit-child that torments its mother with its own repeated birth and mortality
[54] Personal interaction. Kínche currently lives in Ìgbínjẹ̀ village, Ilé Ogbó, Ọ̀sun State.

> Ẹran tí ẹ pa o, ẹran abàmì ni… Àwọn òwo ẹran yìí, gbogbo ẹ̀ n kẹẹ ́ kó sí'dìí Ògún o. K'ẹẹ ́ rì í mọ́'lẹ̀ n'bẹ́ k'ẹẹ ́ máa bọ ọ́ o.
> [The animals you have killed are strange ones… Put their horns in the shrine of Ogun. Bury them there and offer sacrifice to them.]

The hunter later seeks clarification from his *babaláwo* who reveals that the visitors are the very animals the hunter had killed. If he adheres to their instruction, says the *babaláwo*, he will be lucky in his expedition after such sacrifice. Kínche tries the ritual and finds it true:

> Lóòtọ̀, bẹ́ẹ̀ sì ní n rí. Tí n bá ti súre n'bẹ̀ látàárọ̀ tàbí l'álẹ́, tí n ba ti gbé'bọn, ẹran ó kú.
> [Truly things happen accordingly. Whenever I offer the prayers there {at the shrine}, be it in the morning or night, and take out my gun, an animal certainly will die].

A conundrum emerges as regards the rationality of the animal, expected to be an antagonist because the hunter shoots and kills it, making an inexplicable volte-face to become the hunter's ally. The hunter himself hardly always claims to comprehend totally the "strange ways of the forest". He only sees, survives, marvels and continues with his expedition.

There is an expectation of conflict at the beginning of the narrative of Olúsẹ́gun Àkànjí Kúlakùla of Arárọ̀mí village, Aperin, Ìbàdàn, considering the initial delineation of the characters of the hunter and the animal: Kúlakùla is a hunter who once, failed by his gun, killed a python with his bare hand; and the deer, old and wild, has eluded hunters for many years.[55] It is considered invincible by the people of Sàngópidán community. In their reckoning, "ìgalà yìí l'ágbára. Àpáta kan ní n sìn í [The deer is strange. It belongs to a rock]." Kúlakùla's narrative has none of the wrestling, shooting and casting of spells that usually characterize the hunter-spirit face-off. Having failed to fell the deer with the first shot, Kúlakùla pursues it to the very base of the rock and kills it there. The potential of a face-off offered in the hunter's flagrant defiance of the rock at its own door is never developed in the

[55] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (18/11/07)

story. The hunter simply goes home with the kill and cooks its offal for lunch. Three days later however, he is accosted by an old man in rags who identifies the hunter by his name. The old man further tells him:

> Ìgalà t'ọ́ọ pa n'jẹta, ẹran àwọn àgbàlagbà ni o. Sì rí i p'óo s'ètùtù rẹ̀ daadáa. K'ọ́ọ wá obì funfun olójú mẹ́'ndínlógún, obì pupa olójú mẹ́'ndínlógún.
> [The deer you killed three days ago belonged to the powerful ones. Make sure you carry out its ritual appeasement properly. You must look for a white cola nut of sixteen lobes and red one of sixteen lobes.]

The old man might be seen in the mode of Ettiene Souriau's helper come to warn the hunter-hero before the spirit-deer opponent arrives in vengeance. But that equilibrium is unsettled by the fact that the deer, the supposed opponent, doubles as the helper. According to Kúlakùla's *babaláwo*, "ìgalà t'ọ́ọ pa n lọ́ wáá pàdé è rẹ. Àwọn ètùtù yìí, lóòtọ́ l'oó se é. [it was the very deer you killed that came to you {in human form}. You must carry out the prescribed ritual accordingly]." There is therefore a rare situation of the potential antagonist virtually telling the hunter how to contain it.

The hunter himself is sometimes mere witness to the forest's prismatic weirdness in the manner of an audience of the cinema's narrative. In the narrative of Jọ́ògún Áládè of Òjé Owódé, Oyo State, the hunter is a mere youth not yet old enough to wield the gun.[56] In company of his father during night hunting, the young hunter keeps watch over a tunnel under the light of the full moon. Just then, drumming and music rends the air; a choir of porcupines files out of the tunnel all dressed in "ẹ̀wù ẹtù [ẹtù[57] ceremonial attires]", singing and dancing to dùndún[58] and ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀[59]. The older hunter does not shoot at the animals as little Jọ́ògún watches in fear from his position. The father will later tell Jọ́ògún and his brothers that he would have shot at the animals if he had wanted but for the fear that they too might want to do the same in future, an action that might prove fatal for them. From that

[56] Personal interaction (16/12/06)
[57] A Yoruba traditional textile
[58] Yoruba talking drum
[59] Yoruba rattler made of gourd and cowries

day, the father forbids them to watch the tunnels, whether in his company or alone, and commences an elaborate process of fortifying them with supernatural powers.

Akínwándé Akíntáyọ̀ of Àjóyìnbọn village, as shown earlier in the chapter, has had an unplesant encounter with the "shape-shifting" Other. It is important to recall that his antagonist in the earlier narrative, set before the one being reviewed presently, is at once man and animal: an old woman sworn to avenge the murder of her monitor-lizard-child. Just like Jọ́ògún, Àjóyìnbọn, while hunting in the Forest of Ilẹ Pupa, sights rodents from a high vantage, dancing on their hind legs round an anthill. Here, dancing and standing on two legs once more connect man and beast. Also, the spatial movement of the body and the temporal succession of sounds define the rodents' activity as dance and music in human terms. Apparently made shy by the bitter experience from the incident of the monitor cited earlier, the hunter reserves shooting and simply diverts himself seeing the rodents perform.

4.3 CONTEXTS OF YORUBA HUNTERS' NARRATIVES

4.3.1 Hunters' narratives, economy and the electronic media

The hunter's narrative *per se* belongs in the same category of dialogue and conversation with such stories as a professor's account of a bank robbery or the lumberjack's description of an incident of a tree magically rising again every time it is felled. But more than in any of these types, there is a sort of ethical query on the appropriateness of its narrativity. As examined earlier, a number of factors are responsible. But the hunter's story is told. It is in the performative breach of this ethic imposed by the hunter himself that narrativity reveals its immanence. The possible contexts of the hunters' narratives, as in many other conversational types, are infinite. The narrative of Fìríàáríkú, for example, aetiologically emanates as an explanation of the hunter's name. The hunter, making the point that *màsìà*, the gemsbok, should not be dealt the machete blow or flayed, also buttresses his claim with the story of Umoru Zuru who is presently dying of unknown ailment on account of such violation.

At the start of this century, the imperative of economy and mass communication technology further and decisively breached the illusion of silence with which what is identified in this study as hunters' narratives had been associated. First, in the early 1990s in Yoruba speaking parts of Nigeria, there had been a considerable shift in the broadcast of narrative performance on the radio from excerpts of fictional literary works to extempore narration of events considered and presented as real life experience. Narratives of such supernatural themes as the *àjẹ́* afflicting a man and a man's visit to the town of the dead started to enjoy popular audience. Kọ́lá Ọláwuyì's *Ìrírí Ayé* and Kọ́lá Olóòtú's *Òwúyé* belong in this genre. According to Claude Bremond (1996), the index of the success of a narrative is not just the sum of aesthetic devices deployed in its performance but, significantly, the volume of attention it generates. These radio series enjoyed so much audience that in the last half of the 1990s, many of their presenters disengaged from their salaried employment in the media houses to establish some kind of independent practice.

The Nigerian entrepreneur values advertisement on the electronic media. He also knows that certain programmes command more popularity than others and therefore apprehends the advantage of exploiting them for advertisement. These programmes, to which the largely aliterate Yoruba-speaking population has turned for entertainment, in addition to the home video, thereby became one choice avenue through which entrepreneurial concerns of different types competed to advertise their businesses. It was the stark prospect of ensuring better income through independent broadcast of such narrative programmes that naturally enticed many broadcasters from their salaried jobs. The success of Kọ́lá Ọláwuyì after his dismissal from Radio Nigeria, Ibadan allayed any immediate fear of commercial failure of such independent project. At the time of his death in 2007, the broadcaster had built a viable business empire in its own right that presented narrative programmes on not less than four radio stations and three television stations.

In March 2000, *Ọdẹ Akọni,* the hunters' narrative series was debuted on the A.M. (Amplitude Modulation) of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State.

Since then, it has been broadcast every Sunday between the evening hours of nine and eleven. Kọ́lá Akíntáyò, the presenter, a hunter himself, described his vision:

> 'Hun tó mú èmi bẹ̀rẹ̀ ètò *Ọdẹ Akọni* ni wípé ètò ìsẹ̀se kò wọ́pọ̀ lóríi réédíò mọ́. Bíi kí wọ́n ọ so p'áwọn fẹ́ so ìrírí ayé, kí wọn ọ́ máa mú osó, kí wọn ọ́ máa m'ájèẹ́; lágbájá l'óhun ọ́ pa lágbájá, o sì ti fẹ́ẹ́ pa á o [àti bẹ́ẹ̀ bẹ́ẹ̀ lọ] ló pọ̀ l'órí afẹ́fẹ́. Mo wáá wò ó pé àwọn ohun t'ójú u tèmí maa n rí tí n bá d'ẹ̀gbẹ́ lọ, ó tó ìrírí fún ará ìlú.
> [What made me start *Ọdẹ Akọni* was the dearth of indigenous cultural radio programmes. There had been preponderance of {narrative} programmes in which people were indicted as wizards, witches, murderers {and so on}. So, I reflected on some of the things I myself experienced as a hunter during expeditions and concluded that they were good materials for entertaining the listeners.]

Akíntáyò's indictment of the existing narrative programmes is best understood at the foreground of the belief that most of the Yoruba audience invest in the stories. It is conflict that usually imbues narrative with the energy with which it commands human interest. In these existing programmes, therefore, such conflicts expectedly manifest in such forms as the *àjé* grandmother afflicting the helpless grandchild or the unholy church pastor who ensures optimum patronage by sealing the soul of the church's congregation in a hermetic talisman jar. The characters in these narratives are sometimes brought on air to narrate from their different points of view. But unlike in well-wrought fiction, conflicts are not usually resolved in these narratives. It might continue as a court matter with the presenter himself sometimes getting warned or fined for defamation. Akíntáyò's vision of relocating conflict to the forest therefore works consonant with the hunter's calling as a mediator and pacifier of sort. His project twins with the hunter's primordial preoccupation of keeping in the wild all that is wild so that man may be "correct with his neighbours" (Leach, 2000).

The cultural avant-garde such as the hunters' pushes further the existing boundaries and extends the frontiers of knowledge (Herskovits and Herskovits, 1959; Schechner, 1993). Victor Turner (1975) points out that even rituals thought to be fixed are pliable to the manipulation of human agency. He also identifies the

tension that sometimes results from the engagement of the individual's will for expression (orectic pole) and the contrary established order (normative pole). As noted earlier in another chapter, the hunter features prominently in the avant-garde that seeks positively to upset the norm. The hunter's story is still believed till today by many as better not told. When *Ọdẹ Akọni* began to broadcast, there were a number of petitions, culminating in the bush meat sellers' appeal cited earlier. It is in the midst of this opposition that the radio series began and gradually established itself.

In the type of tension identified by Turner, created by the struggle of the aberrant individual with the establishment, the individual is ultimately "reformed" and compelled to revert to the normative *status quo ante*. The *Ọdẹ Akọni* example does not fit into this aspect of Turner's typology. Despite opposition from a quarter of the hunters' population among whom Akíntáyò intended to draw performers for the series, the programme started and continued with no visible checkmate. According to the presenter, "'hun tọ́ jẹ́ kọ́ rọrùn f'émi jù ni'ípé ọdẹ ni mí… Ọ̀pọ̀lọpọ̀ tí mo n gbé wá s'órí ètò gan-an, èmi gan d'ègbé j'ẹlòmîî lọ [what made it easy for me was that I am a hunter myself… I am, in fact, more experienced than some of the hunters I feature on the programme]." As such, the hunter occurs once more as an innovator who discovers at the cost of breaching the cultural walls from within, exposing himself to a charge of treachery.

One principal factor that guarantees Akíntáyò's programme its formidable lifeline is the capitalist economy with which it twins in symbiosis. The audience loyalty it enjoys is exploited to trade advertisement slots with entrepreneurs who sometimes struggle to procure them. A hunter television discussion program, *Ọdẹ́tẹ̀dò*, emerged on B.C.O.S. television in 2003. Its main focus was not narrative and, arguably as a result, did not secure the kind of popularity enjoyed by *Ọdẹ Akọni*. It was yanked off the air in the middle of 2005.[60] Throughout about three years of its broadcast, it featured no commercial advertisement. Lekan Babatunde, the programme's producer, in a personal discussion, disclosed that the production could not secure any sponsorship. On the other hand, *Ọdẹ Akọni* is assured airtime

[60] *Ọdẹ́tẹ̀dò* resumed on B.C.O.S. on 13th March, 2008, now spiced with some narratives.

Plate 4.1. *Ọdẹ Akọni* : Pabíẹ́kùn (right) performing his narrative while Báyọ̀ Adébọ̀wálé (background) interjects with flute and Kọ́lá Akíntáyọ̀ (left) listens

Plate 4.2 Ògúnwálé (right) performing while Akíntáyọ̀ (left) ḷistens

as long as the advertisement bill is settled. There were, in fact, occasions when the A.M. station ceased transmission and the programme had to be broadcast on the F.M.

Richard Schechner (1993) says that when "unofficial culture worms or bullies its way…into public outdoor spaces", its need for breath of life might leave it vulnerable to "capitalism's appetite for profit" (48). In such a situation, the cultural form is not only at the mercy of the capitalist estate but is also deliberately redesigned to suit its commercial interests. Brenda Cooper (1998), drawing from the works of Jean Franco and Victor Beilis, also writes on the exotification of cultural items to generate tourist appeal. For her, the narrative of Amos Tutuola is far more acceptably "'archaic' is [sic] that it is steeped in the old ways and tradition: the mother culture of…Tutuola is more archaic because it belongs to a tribal society" (46). It is at the background of this observation that the Third World writers in the magical realist mode such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez are viewed as not just asserting alterity as a form of protest but because such assertion has a high commercial appeal. Cooper means that even as these writers have commendably adjusted themselves to the postcolonial expressive climate, they do not boast of the same type of cultural rootedness exhibited by Tutuola and Fagunwa (49). What the school represented by Schechner and Cooper does not seem to engage soundly enough however is the dynamics of renewal, innovation and adaptation built into the indigenous forms themselves. In many Yoruba cultural forms, inlet facilities exist through which the so-called exotic is admitted in permissible mass that does not efface the principal essence of the host culture.

An experience in the research field for the present work might serve as some illustration here. On 27th February, 2007, the researcher visited Lawal Ògúntúndé, the Balọ́dẹ[61] of Ṣakí to interview him and conduct a group discussion with some of the hunters he mentored. As the voice recorder came on and the first question was to be asked, about five men came into the living room and stopped the session. They demanded that the patriarch be paid some sort of honorarium before the interview commenced. The old hunter's feeble protest did nothing to hold off the

[61] Head of hunters.

young men. After settlement and departure of the young men, the old man rationalized the contretempts:

> B'aa s'ọ̀fẹ́ Ọlọ́'un ó m'óhun t'ólúwa ẹ ọ́ jẹ wá; b'aa s'owó, Ọlọ́'un ó m'óhun t'ólúwa ẹ ọ́ jẹ wá… Gẹ́gẹ́ bí ohun tí wọ́n wí nì, towótowó nẹ́ẹ̀ ni gbogbo nkẹn níìsiínyií. Ohun t'ẹẹ bá gbọ́ l'énuu wa, ọ́ l'éni ẹ̀yin nẹ́ẹ̀ tọ́n lọ̀ n wí fún. Wọ́n sì n'íbi t'aa jìyà làá j'oore.
> [Whether we charged money or not, God would definitely not let us starve… But as the men noted, everything has now gone commercial. Whatever you people hear from us, you definitely have some people somewhere you also tell it to. And the saying goes that wherever a man has toiled he should also thrive.]

Even in his realization that the modern human relation is rather unpleasantly determined by mercenary interests, the old man means that the hunter, rather than forswear participation totally, negotiates and survives it. For him, the culture, of which he is a vendor, is already structured to tolerate and contain such mutation without any visible damage to its core. He understands the interview as an item of some commercial value to the researcher and the hunter as a vendor. The same commercial principle that runs through the hunter's sale of the bush meat underlies the interview as an exercise in exchange. Lest the researcher think the commercial temper is an entirely modern phenomenon, the clever old man began his discussion on the nature of intercourse between the hunter and "*nkẹnkínkẹ̀n*[62] [odd things]" by pointing at its essentially commercial nature. The hunter-*nkẹnkínkẹ̀n* relation is additionally understood in the old man's reflection as a phenomenon of "ayé ìjeèló [the gone old days]":

> L'áyéè'jeèló, nkẹ́kínkẹ̀n bí àwọn àjọ̀ọ̀nọ́, wọn a maa fún àwọn baba wa ní nkẹn.
> [In the gone old days, odd things such as the spirits used to give our forefathers "things".]

The old hunter expatiated that the hunter of old, as a matter of course, always entered the forest with *aásà* (ground tobacco) as part of his provision. The item is

[62] Spirits

believed to be a stimulant of high value to the spirits. It is therefore one of the things that the hunter trades for a favour from the spirit. The aspect of commerce is further highlighted by the suggestion of risk. The hunter is in danger if *nkẹnkínkẹ̀n*

> Bá kò ọ́ l'ọ́nẹ̀, t'ó ní o bùn hun l'áásà mọ, t'óo gbé e le e l'ọ́wọ́…, ó lè t'ibẹ̀ bun'lúwa'ẹ̀ l'óògùn daadaa t'ólúwa ẹ̀ nẹ́ẹ̀ ọ́ mọọ fi jẹ'un… Àmọ́ t'ólúwa'ẹ̀ ọ̀ bá fi rí áásà nì, ó lè se'lúwa'ẹ̀ lése.
> [meets you on the way, asks you to spare him some tobacco to chew and you oblige him…, he may, as a result, give you a charm from which you will profit … But if one does not have the tobacco, he may hurt you]

Just as the old hunter constructs the ancient batter and the modern economy as a healthy continuum, so does Akíntáyò regard the radio series. Even as he admits that the hunter's story is public entertainment today because "ayé ti d'ayé ọ̀làjú [modern civilization has taken over]", he nevertheless regards it as "èto ìṣẹ̀ṣe [a primordial indigenous form]."

4.3.2 The performance art of hunters' narratives

Acccording to Dan Izevbaye (1993):

> …the strong faith in the reality of those characters and events that are described as historical hardly ever depends on the strength of available evidence of facts but on the imaginative power with which the past is evoked. What we often accept as historical is that which is successfully propped up and sustained by the creative power of imagination… (120)

It follows that though the narrator is engaged in the conventional process of communication, he, according to Ropo Sekoni (1990), is also aware of "the additional factor of entertainment or the creation by narrator of a product that is pleasant to experience by the listeners" (139). Locating the the narrative performance in the context of conventional communication such as conversation comes with the advantage of giving the narrative some veracity. It does not come immediately through as a conscious art, and therefore downplays the idea of creativity with which fiction is associated. Dennis Tedlock (1977) notes that

among the Quiche Maya of New Mexico, "stories occur to people only when conversation or chance events bring them to mind: they never set aside an occasion for them. In the midst of a conversation about crocodiles and iguana, someone says, 'Well, there's a story about that' and proceeds to tell it on the spot (515)." But even in this context, the narrator deploys various verbal devices to ensure "captivation of audience, retention of audience and the transfer of cognitive experience to the audience" (Sekoni, 1990: 140) so much that the ensuing product often qualifies as a work of art.

Ìbà (acknowledgement and appeal)

Ìbà is the Yoruba expression of acknowledgement and/or admission of inferiority before powerful human and supernatural forces. As part of songs and poetry, the performer's intention is to appease the identified class of superordinates in order to appropriate their power or forestall antagonism (Isola, 1976). *Ìbà* occurs in the performance of many of the hunters' narratives. In *Ọdẹ Akọni* especially, which tends towards some kind of formalization because of its structured radio-programme nature, *ìbà* is a regular introduction. Chanted as *ìjálá* or voiced in speech mode, the presenter, before the narrative session commences, often addresses *ìbà* to the following forces: God, man, woman, àjé, nature, deities and merely legendary representation of certain ideas of value to hunting and elocution. At the foreground of the *ìjálá* refrain, sung in fùjí[63], Akíntáyò, the presenter of *Ọdẹ Akọni,* commences the day's programme with a flattering submission to Olódùmarè:

> Ọlọ́'un ọba à mi, mọ màmà tún dé o. Èmi tí n ò mò ọ́ wí rè é, t'Ọlọ́'un Ọba à mi maá n báá wí i ní gbogbo Sunday-Sunday… Toò, èmi tí n ò jẹ́ nkankan rèé o, Ọlọ́'un Ọba à mi ìbà.
> [O God my King, here I am again, bereft of eloquence but always given voice by God himself every Sunday… Here I am nothing before him… God I pay homage.]

[63] A Yoruba modern musical form that emerged from the Islamic rites of Rammadan

Akíntáyọ̀ always thereafter goes on to acknowledge the genus man and the *àjé*:

> Mo tún júbà ọkùn'in, mo júbà obìnrin. Mọ wá júbà èyin àjẹ́ẹ Tẹ́ẹ́rì t'ẹ n j'áyé o: èyin abapá wẹẹ, abẹsẹ̀ wẹẹ, abìrìn àsà l'ésẹ̀ mejèèjì, ẹ káalẹ́ sẹ́ẹ̀.
> Now I pay homage to man and to woman. I then pay homage to the àjẹ́ of Tẹ́ẹ́rì, the mysterious ones: you the sleight-handed and the flight-footed ones of the elegant walk, good evening.

The hunter naturally covets any power, skill and luck that would predispose him to killing animals everyday. *Ìkookò*, the wolf, is one of the hunter's embodiments of such endowment. The hunters suppose that in the mythical past, *Ìkookò* had consulted Kíndìnrín and Jàndímọ́lẹ̀, both babaláwo, for a ritual that has since invested him with the power to kill animal for food on daily basis. So Akíntáyọ̀ the hunter often appeals to the same team of diviners:

> Ìbà Kîndìnrín awo Ìdọ̀ha, Jàndímọ́lẹ̀ awo Ìlàrẹ́: àwọn ni wọ́n tẹ̀'Kookò n'fá tí ò fi gbọdọ̀ j'ẹran kàsì.
> [Homage to Kíndìnrín the diviner of Ìdọ̀ha and Jàndímọ́lẹ̀ the diviner of Ìlàrẹ́[64]: these were the ones who performed ritual for Wolf so that he {killed everyday and therefore} does not have to eat stale meat.]

The structure of the immediate community in which the Yoruba hunter operates is rather gerontocentric. As pointed out earlier in another chapter, age and professional seniority are of high value. As such, a hunter measures his own formidability by the power of the master-hunter to whom he pays homage. An *ìbà* to such master-hunter is additionally composed to flaunt the hunter's rich pedigree. In the narrative of Moses Ògúnwálè, the narrator describes the hunter's amazement at seeing the small deer he felled earlier become big (**AppendixVIII**). The premonition of the coming danger compels him to invoke his father and master. At that point in the performance, the performative energy invested in the *ìbà* to the hunter's father relocates it from the fictive realm to the here-and-now. Ògúnwálè, in that performance, exploits the ìbà scene in the narrative not just to relive the event

[64] Ìdọ̀ha and Ìlàré are mythical towns, home to each of the babaláwo

but to pay homage. The presenter tries to stop him in order not to lose sight of the story, but Ògúnwálè ignores him and continues:

> Kò níí sòro ó se. Mọ bá f'ìbà sí i. Mo júbà baba à mi. Adélẹ́kàn Àjàó. Ọ̀rún u're rẹ o. Ìbà: okó t'ó dorí kodò tí 'ò ro; ìbà: ìyámọ̀pó t'ó d'orí kodò tí 'ọ̀ s'ẹ̀jẹ̀. Ìbà ni n ọ maa f'òní jú. Má jẹ̀ẹ́ ó sú mi í se o. Má jẹ n sìse n bẹ̀ o. Má j'átùpà Ògún ó t'ìdí jò mọ́ n lọ́'ọ́ o.
> [There would be no problem. I paid homage. I paid homage to my father Adelekan Ajao. May your heavenly rest be peaceful. Homage to the penis that droops and yet does not drip and the vagina that opens downward and yet does not bleed. Homage shall I pay you all for the whole day. Do not let me tire. Do not let me fail. Save me from the accidental burst of the Ògún lamp {gun}.]

Evoking the code of silence

The hunter does always make the point that his story is better left untold. Ògúnjìmí, the reluctant old hunter interacted with in Òjé-Owódé, Oyo State, demmurred that he would have declined narrating his experience but for the two acquintances of his in whose company the researcher had visited, and for the fact that "ayé wá d'ayée ká f'ọ̀rọ̀ wá ni l'énu wò [it is now a world of investigation]." Tàòfíkì Àméẹ̀èdì Kókó-by-this, interacted with in Akínẹ̀rín village, Òkè Ọbà, Ìwó, cast a suspicious look at the researcher and proceeded to address the researcher's guide with whom he was familiar:

> Tí èé bá se èyin, èmi èé so'rú è ẹ… Mélóò laá so n'núu'gbò? Isé ọdẹ 'ò *easy*. Torí ẹni t'ọ́ bá ní òwú ọ̀ t'érù, 'hun tí ée tanná ló mú.
> [But for your sake, I do not tell people such things… How much of the forest experience can one relate? It's not easy to be a hunter. Whoever considers the cotton wool light carries just the little s/he needs as wick.]

Besides this portrait of the forest as one thick inexhaustible fabula of narratives, the narrator also thus imbues his story with the value of a curio. It is the same device that Akintayo employs by constantly reminding the audience that "ìwọ̀nba

t'ẹ́ẹ́ lè gbọ́ t'ẹ́ẹ́ fi r'óorun sùn ni mọ̀ọ́ maá sọ l'órí ètò [I only narrate the little tame part that would let you have a sleep free of nightmare]." On 23rd June, 2007 edition of Ode Akoni, he applies the device more direclty as he introduces the guest-hunter, Múrítàlá Àdìgún Gbọ́dẹníyì:

> 'Hin t'ójú ọdẹ n rí n'ígbó, tí ò lè dé'lé kọ́ sọ f'óbìn'in rẹ̀; hin t'ójú ọdẹ n rí n'ígbó tí ò lè dé'lé kọ́ sọ f'ọ́mọ rẹ̀, gbogbo rẹ̀ ni wọn nsọ l'órí ẹ̀rọ réédíò tí gbogbo ayé n gbọ́.
> [All that the hunter sees in the forest and does not tell his wife at home; all that the hunter sees and does not tell his friend at home; all that the hunter sees and does not tell his child at home, they tell the world on this very radio programme.]

Thus made to feel that they are about to be let into the most guided secret in the closet of the hunter's heart, the audience sit up and listen attentively.

Familiarization and defamiliarization

The hunter's translation of the forest's alternative reality aspires to some contemporariness with the reality of the human world. *Aásà*, the tobacco stimulant cited by the old Balọdẹ is no more a fashionable stimulant with the younger generation. The spirit in the narrative of Agbérinmì, a hunter of about thirty-five, therefore requests for a packet of sugar. Whereas the dancing porcupines in the narrative of Pa Jọ̀ógún are dressed in the old *ẹtù* attires, one of the giant rats in the narrative of Rábíù Òjó (**Appendix V**) puts on the American shirt. In the narrative of Àkámọ́ọ̀pẹkùn, the dead woman turned deer transforms back into a beautiful woman and

> ó gbé báágì lọ́'ọ́, ó kó òòka s'ọ́wọ́, ó fi sèèénì ọ́rùn, ó tún d'irun rẹ̀ l'óndodo.
> [she carries a handbag, puts rings on her fingers, wears a necklace and spots a very beautiful hairstyle.]

In fact, the narrative of Àkámọ́ọ̀pẹkùn partly exemplifies the theme of self reappraisal and redefinition as precondition for participating in the dialogic intercourse that involves man and the Other.

The hunter however also portrays the Other in a manner that rattles the pedestrian sensibility of the non-hunter audience. A performer of the narrative of Fìríàáríkú, for example, exclaims:

> Igbó Oníwòrò yí, ẹnìkan ìí dẹ̀gbẹ́ lọọ́bẹ̀ k'ọ́ bọ́ o. Igbó burúkú gbáà tọ́ l'ágbára gbáà ni.
> [No hunter goes to the Forest of Oníwòrò and returns.
> It is evil and indeed very malevolent.]

But whereas some narrators thus evoke awe through such description, some others merely downplay the Other's formidability, a narrative device that proves equally successful in eliciting awe. Richard Schechner (1993) notes a similar willful downplay of importance in the Wahema, the Passion and Resurrection performance among the Yaqui of New Pascua, Arizona, Mexico. In this performance, the local audience is not attentively absorbed in watching the drama; their occasional sidelong glances at the Wahema reinforce the ordinariness of the carnival to the average Yaqui. "[The] Yaqui way is to observe by means of glancing, avoiding intense frontal gazing… [Those] who press in hardest, most anxious to 'see it all' are usually outsiders" (108). In the extreme, the Yaqui pursue their abnegation of absolute audience involvement by forbidding the tourist to record the performance. The result is that the very spectatorship which the tradition seems to downplay is ironically encouraged; the seemingly disinterested local audience that relates with the performance as ordinarily as the everyday routine only creates another level of performance for the curious, remote foreign audience.

Táníátù Akínkúnmi Akéwejẹ̀ paints the forest and its weirdness in such dull colours that the familiarity with the Other which his portrait invokes excites the listener more than hyperbole (**Appendix II**). He so ordinarily describes his dialogue with the river that it is only when another dialogue between the hunter on the one hand and the antagonist àràbà and rock on the other ensues that the

bewildered audience is moved to ask whether river, tree or rock do speak. In the same manner, Akéwejẹ̀ treats his initial failure to sight the invisible deer so ordinarily that a listener thinks he must have meant that the animal is covered by foliage. It is only when the question is asked and the narrator clarifies that "Kóóko ‘ò bò ó, *but* mi ‘ò rí i [No it wasn't covered by the foliage, but I did not see it]" and "ọ̀ta hóró kan ‘ò sòfò lára a rẹ̀ [all the bullets found their target]" that the audience realize in awe that the protagonist is faced with a deer that is both invisible and proofed against gunshot.

In the narrative of Bilaminu Babátúndé Ajíjààgùn of Alùgbín village, Ẹgbẹ̀dà, Ibadan, the hunter, during a night hunting, stops over under a palm tree to drink the wine left for him by his tapper. He starts in surprise when someone calls him but is later relieved upon identifying the intruder: Ọ̀rọ̀ ọ́gi tiẹ̀ ni. Kíní a n bọ̀ wá se níì'ín? [Oh, it's only a tree spirit. What's his business here?]." Treating one of the most formidable antagonists in the hunters' narratives thus ordinarily enhances the hunter's portrait as a veteran in dealing with spirits. It is the same casual attitude that makes Fagunwa's hunters, especially Akara-ogun, very prominent. Though the entire of the hunters' narratives are an exercise in making the weird Other comprehensible to man, the above represents the consummate immersion of man in the Same-Other dialogic complex with such depth that the audience can only marvel.

Proverb

Proverb is one of the most exploited devices of elocution not only among the Yoruba but in most African cultures. It is employed not only in the normative arts of poetry, singing and drumming but also in conversation (Olatunji, 1984). It is unavoidably a major device in the performance of the hunters' narratives, the most recurrent being "Tí ọdẹ́ bá ro ìṣẹ́, ti ọdẹ́ bá ro ìyà, t'ó bá p'ẹran, kò níí f'ẹ́nìkankan [If the hunter takes stock of all his adversities, he would share his kill with no one]." The Yoruba *òwe*, considered as proverb here, is not a cold tablet of inherited aphorisms but short witty figural expressions performatively employed, modified, and/or composed to convey the present message of the performer. In fact, there is a

sense in which the Yoruba may see an entire length of narrative as an *òwe* – synonymous in such sense with parable.

Músílíù Àlàgbé Fìríàáríkú begins his narrative with the hint that the protagonist's supernatural power saves him from peril with a statement half literal, half figural: "Bí ọ̀ bá jẹ́ pé mo múra lọ́ọ́ látinúu'lé pé n'torí aìímọ̀, áàh! eégún ọdẹ ọ̀ bá fẹ̀ẹ̀ gbé ọ̀jẹ́ n'jọ́ náà o [Had I not equipped myself properly from home, *the hunter's masquerade would have perished in the grove* that day]". The metaphor in which the proverb is couched – masquerade perishing in the grove – reflects the dialectic coexistence of man the hunter and the forest. The hunter is destined to explore the forest as the egungun belongs in ọ̀jé, the primal grove. But the way is fraught with peril and he has to depend on his individual sagacity to negotiate his passage.

There is an instance of a proverb commonly employed in the narratives of Ajísefínní Alájáníbon of Ìdó, Ìbàdàn, and Àmẹ́ẹ̀dì Kókó-by-this of Òkè Ọbà, Ìwo:

> 1. **Ajísefínní:** Ẹn' bá l'ówùú ọ̀ t'ẹ́rù, ìwọ̀n tí èe tanná ló mú. Òògùn n bẹ. Gbogbo ẹnu n mo e sọ ọ́; òògùn nbẹ.
> [*Whoever considers the cotton wool light carries just the little he needs as wick.* There are magical powers. I confidently say so; there are magical powers]
>
> 2.**Kókó-by-this:** Mélòó l'aá sọ n'núu'gbó? Isẹ́ ọdẹ 'ò *easy*... Torí ẹni t'ọ́ bá ní òwú ọ̀ t'ẹ́rù, hun tí é e tanná ló mú.
> [How much can one recount in the forest experience? Hunting is not easy… For *whoever considers the cotton wool light carries the little needed as wick*]

The proverb draws its primary logic from the observation that cotton is as heavy as brick, ton for ton. The latter's supposed lightness is popular because the item often comes in small pocket quantities; those who ply cotton in large quantities know the weakness of such assumption. It is important to recall that both the narratives of Ajísefínní and Kókó-by-this favour the character of the hunter; they empower it so that it emerges triumphant all the time. Prompted, Ajísefínní confirms that hunters have magical powers they use to fight off antagonists. But, most importantly, he considers such question unnecessary; to him, the answer is patent enough, except

to those who, like the researcher, do not know the hunter enough – i.e. those who come by cotton wool in pocket quantities. As a narrator, Kókó-by-this does not only exude the hunter's confidence and pride but also virtually demands that the audience know and acknowledge. The proverb as employed in his preliminary instructs that the forest transcends absolute narrativity. It is by implying that the forest landscape in not totally narratively navigable that he as a hunter and a habitue of that landscape stands out in relief. He therefore follows the proverb with "Àwọ̀bọ̀ yàtọ̀ sí àjẹ́bí. Wọ́n jẹ́ bí mi ni. [Learning a trade is different from being born in it. I was born in it]."

The hunter does not just appropriate and modify the proverbs. He generates his own epigram. What is considered as epigram here belongs in the category of the Yoruba *òwe*. Akínkúnmi Akéwejè uses known proverbs as he employs extempore original epigrams. He points out at the end of the conflict in his first narrative that "b'írin bá kan'rin ni àwọn t'án bí wa ma nwí, ìkan ó tẹ̀ fún 'kan [*when two irons are locked in a fight*, so say our fathers, *the weaker gives way*]" to simply connote that the hunter vanquishes the antagonist because the former is stronger. Akéwejè also uses original epigrams. They are considered original because no Yoruba person interacted with in both the performer's area – Ìkirè, Osun State – or other parts of the study area identified the sayings as established or familiar. Most tellingly, the context of their performance shows their originality: they are partly lexically generated from the very questions asked by the interlocutor:

> **Akíntáyò:** Ṣé'gi lè sọ̀rọ̀ ni t'ẹ́ẹ̀fi ní 'ò fún u yín lésì?
> **Akéwejè:** Hẹn, b'áa bá f'igi lu'gi, à maa gbó'hùn u'gi.
> **Akíntáyò:** Ṣ'ódò lè sọ̀rọ̀?
> **Akéwejè:** B'éèyàn bá wẹ̀ d'énú odò, odò ọ́ sọ̀rọ̀.
> [**Akíntáyò:** Does a tree speak? Why did you accuse the tree of not responding?
> **Akéwejè:** *When you speak the language of the tree, you hear the tree speak.*
> **Akíntáyò:** Does a river speak?
> **Akéwejè:** *If you swim upriver enough, you hear the river speak.*]

Akéwejè's saying is an instance in the hunter's recognition of the possibility of man-nature dialogic relation. Translated literally, the first epigram reads "when

you hit one tree with another, you hear the voice of the tree". It denotes that attuning the mundane human facilities to the language of the flora and fauna requires the prerequisite acquisition of spiritual or magical powers which *igi* [tree] (i.e. herbs) represents in Yoruba. The idea of "swimming upriver enough" is also connotative of that dialogic possibility. After all, the hunter and the said river, according to the story, are such close friends that one does not betray the other.

The hunter does not also only appropriate, modify or create witty sayings; he sometimes undermines existing proverbs. It is by creating this trope of rebellious divergence that his stature as a maker of new myth acquires some shine. Àmẹ́ẹ̀dì Kókó-by-this once engages the proverb in such term that the ensuing saying stops short at profanity. The Yoruba believe that when a fleeing deer barks, as do dogs, it magically eludes the hunter for that day, hence the saying "Ijọ́ àgbọ̀nrín bá gbó l'ọjọ́ ikú u rẹ́ ẹ́ yẹ̀" [When the deer barks, it postpones its death]." In the narrative of Koko-by-this, the hunter defies the barking deer:

> Wọ́n ní'jọ́ tí àgbọ̀nrín bá gbó, n'jọ́ náà l'ọjọ́ ikú ẹ̀ẹ́ yẹ̀. N'jọ́ tí àgbọ̀nrín bá gbó l'ọ́dọ̀ mi, n'jọ́ náá l'ọjọ́ọ́'kúu ẹ̀ pé.
> [It is said that when the deer barks, it postpones the day of its death. When a deer sees me and barks, it dies that very day.]

It is in the juxtaposition of the existing proverb and its subversive review that the hunter thus advances a personal myth.

Aderemi Raji-Oyelade (1999) dubs this subversive temper "postproverbial". He considers it as "the effect of the interplay of orality and literacy-modernity, the critical correspondence between an older puritanistic generation and younger disruptive and somewhat banalistic generation" (75). While concurring that the performative subversion of the logic of proverbs is popular among the youth, it is important to point out that the Yoruba culture, Raji-Oyelade's focus, itself does not only tolerate modification and subversion of seemingly set linguistic idioms, but also subversive mimicry of revered icons and institutions. There are existing proverbs with in-built caveats that seem to initiate

their own review.[65] The Yoruba egúngún alárìnjó that satirize both the king and revered deities also illustrate this licence.

Oríkì

The Yoruba *oríkì* is the poetic description, essentially panegyric, of a man, animal, place or object. Karin Barber (1991), using the Yoruba town of Òkukù as a case study, notes that *oríkì* are evolved around both the individual and the lineage. The factor of the individual genius in the composition of personal oriki is especially strong among the Yoruba hunters. An average Yoruba hunter has a set of personal praise names and epithets that he or another performer readily loads into the extempore praise of such hunter at any opportune moment. As a matter of course, declamation of the personal oriki noticeably characterizes the hunter's attempt to relate his story. Regularly on *Ọdẹ Akọni*, Kọ́lá Akíntáyọ̀, apart from invoking his lineage *oríkì*, "Ìkìrun Àgùnbẹ́ Onílẹ̀ Obì", salutes himself with about half a dozen other praise names. They include "Irúnmọlẹ̀ tíí gbé'gboro; kóóko l'ódò ab'àwọ̀ lọ̀ọ̀lò [The spirit that lives in town; the lush grass of the river side]"; "Ọ̀jọ̀gbọ́n onílájálá tíí yin aré Ògún bí ìbọn [The learned *ìjálá* poet that fires the Ògún performance like gunshot]"; "Sèdíwonkokokóògùnsí, ọkọ Sàádátù [He-whose-haggard-waist-is-used-to-carry-charms, the husband of Sàádátù]."

Ògúnkúnlé Òjó of Agúnrege hardly lets a mention of his wife or any of his children pass without an oriki to it. When asked the question about what becomes of the buffalo that gives him a fight in the narrative, he answers partly in poetry:

> Mo fi nkan a'nú ẹ̀ bó'ta. Ìyàwó ò mi, Áfúsátù onísàasùn ẹja, abitan bí afárá oyin, tọ́ m'ọbẹ̀ ẹ́ sè, tọ́ m'ọwọ́ ọ síbí í gbámú, òhun náà tún jẹ n'nú ẹ̀.
> [I ate it with relish. My wife, Afusatu of the pot of fish stew, she of the sexy thighs who is a perfect cook, also ate part of it.]

When asked to give his name, Agboọlá Alájáníbọn Dẹ́tunhà says:

[65] An example is "Ogun àwítẹ́lẹ̀ kìí p'arọ {tó bá gbọ́n} [Warned early, a {wise} cripple flees and survives the war]"

> Emì ni Ògúndélé Oníjìngín-ìbọn Alájáníbọn, Ikútíídẹ́tunhà baba Dúpẹ́. Ọ pà'yá ọ̀dúndún tán ọmọ rẹ̀ n s'òjòjò. Mo tún gbìyànjú mo tún m'ọ́mọọ rẹ̀ w'ábà.
> [I am Ògúndélé, He-of-the-decorated-gun, He-who-has-both-dogs-and-guns, Death-that-breaks-the-duiker's-ribs, the father of Dúpẹ́. I kill the mother monkey and its baby pines. So I take the baby to the village alive.]

Even as he assumes the role of an audience, the presenter of *Ọdẹ Akọni* designs his interlocutory queries and observations often to rein the guest performer along a linear narrative course. When the narrator, for example, briefly veers from the present narrative plot to pursue a minor by-plot not directly related to the main narrative, the presenter does not only remind him of the point where he stopped as the latter returns to the main plot, the presenter sometimes actually compels him to stop and resume the main story. Yẹ̀kínì Oláwuyì Omítóògùn Améringùn, the fiery protagonist of his own narrative, has little patience for such oversight (**Appendix IV**). As the presenter persistently puts pressure on him to return to the point where the protagonist takes possession of the gourdlets and the pebbles found in the deer, Ameringun asserts himself with intimidating *oríkì* chanted in *ìjálá*:

> Farabalẹ̀! Farabalẹ̀! Farabalẹ̀! Èése wẹ̀?
> Èmi lo rí lò n pè l'ẹ́nìkan
> [ìjálá] Èmi dá'kún jẹ má f'àágbà ọdẹ jẹ
> Apa bí aláwọ̀n, baba Ògúnmọ́dẹ́dé
> [Take it easy! Easy! Easy! What is wrong with you?
> {Ìjálá}You see me yet you take me for just one man
> I who killed and ate the ground squirrel without giving the elder-hunter a share
> I who kill animals in multitude as if by dragnet, the father of Ògúnmọ́dẹ́dé.]

The oriki incidentally becomes opportune as a momentary device of intimidation, appealing to the authority of the referent hunter who, in that description, defies the elder hunter and suffers no repercussion.

The *oríkì* of the animals are also invoked in the hunters' narratives. Ògúnkúnlé Òjó, in the narrative of the hunter's confrontation with the buffalo, highlights the animal antagonist with:

Ògbó ọmọ Akùmárọ̀; afínjú on'sàngó tíí so kele ti'ẹ̀ m'ẹ́sẹ̀ òsì.
[Ògbó the child of Akùmárò; the fashionable votary of Sango that puts its *kele*[66] beads on the left ankle.]

Ọfọ̀ incantation

Ọfò is the poetry designed to accompany magical invocation or medication (Olatunji1984). Often composed to argue the "logic" in the invocation or medication, *ọfọ̀* chant is a performance form that the hunter resorts to to prevent or hold off adversity. Beyond merely reliving the process of invocation as an experience, the hunter-narrator's reenactment of the *ọfọ̀* is intended to show off his education in such matters. In the narrative of Bílíámínù Babátúndé Ajíjààgùn, the hunter enchants a quarrelsome spirit to drink palwine to a state of stupor with the following *ọfọ̀*:

Kíndìnrín awo Ìdộ̀ha
Jàndímọ́lẹ̀ awo Ìlàrẹ́
Àwọn ni'án tẹ̀'Kookò n'fá, tí ọ̀ gbọdọ̀ j'ẹran kàsì
Gbogbo ọ̀rọ̀ tí òkété bá b'álẹ̀ sọ n'ilẹ̀ ẹ́ gbọ́…
O ó mu ú ni. Ọ ọ̀ gbọdọ̀ bá n jà
Torípé wọn èé ka léégúnlóko kún'gi ilé
Wọn èé k'ẹ̀ẹ̀rù kún nkan ọbẹ̀
Wọn èé k'alángbá k'ẹ́ran orí àtẹ
[Kindinrin the diviner of Ìdộ̀ha
Jandimole the diviner of Ìlàré
These were the ones who performed the ritual for Wolf so that he does not eat stale meat
Whatever the giant rat tells the land, the land heeds…
Drink you must. Do not quarrel with me
For no one uses *léégúnlóko*[67] wood to build house
Ẹ̀ẹ̀rù[68] is no ingridient for cooking soup
No one puts up the meat of agama lizard for sale.]

More than it does Ajíjààgùn himself as the hero, the performance of the *ọfọ̀* portrays Akíntáyọ̀, the present narrator, as learned in magic and charms. The point is not lost on the audience that Akíntáyọ̀ is the author of the present text. If Ajíjààgùn ever used the *ọfọ̀* at all, the present narrator would also have the listener believe he knows and uses it too. In addition, the first three lines of the chant usually recur in the

[66] Bead used as pectoral adornment by Ṣàngó worshippers.
[67] Psorospermum corymbiferum (Gbile, 1984)
[68] Xtylopia aethiopica (Gbile, 1984)

presenter's *ìbà* opening of *Ọdẹ Akọni*. The *ọfọ̀* is therefore one action in the performance through which the third-person performer shares glory with the hero. Rábíù Òjó relives a similar encounter with a spirit that tries to stop the hunter from going with the giant rats (**Appendix V**).

Apart from the one employed in the conflict in his story, Yẹ̀kínì Omítóògùn Améringùn's performance presents a peculiar example of the *ọfọ̀* as a mnemonic of narration (**Appendix IV**). When asked not to forget the point where he earlier stopped in the narration, he breaks into *ọfọ̀* intoned in *ìjálá*:

> Èyíi mọ bá gbàgbé
> Eéran wọn ọ́ maa rán mi l'étí gaanrangan
> B'ákùkọ bá gbọnpá, iyè e rẹ̀ yíó sì sọ
> [Whatever I forget
> Let *eéran*, the agent of recollection, bring it back
> Every time the rooster flaps its wings, its senses wake]

Améringùn the narrator thereby presumes to have enlisted some muse of recollection that will ensure the narrative exposition of every necessary detail. It is when the radio presenter continues to pester him not to forget that the narrator tells him off.

Truth, mythmaking and the management of credibility risk

The performer takes responsibility for the success or failure of his performance. There are standards, however tacit, in every culture that the performer is expected to conform with – or diverge creatively from. Among the Yoruba for example, the periodic "*Hẹn* [Yes]" refrain from co-*babaláwo* to a *babaláwo* performing the *ìyẹ̀rẹ̀* is an accent that his lines are accurate. He is stopped if he falters and another *babaláwo* made to continue the performance. It is by "this rigid insistence on the correct recital of the Ifá texts [that] Ifá priests have made it almost impossible for spurious passages to appear in Ifá literary corpus" (Abimbola, 1976: 15-16). Kwesi Yankah (1985) notes that the performer takes risks in every work he undertakes. If today, the consequence is no more as dire as the beheading of the faltering *apae* poet among the precolonial Akan (Yankah,

1983), performers nevertheless muster all possible devices to endear their performance to the audience.

In the hunter's narrative, reality is so flexible that a character may step into a mirror and hug his own image. The flexible texture of the narrated reality makes the composition look so easy that it could all have been total fiction or, more dismissively put, a lie. The hunter narrator is apprehensive that his "mythmaking" stands the risk of outright dismissal as a thought-up tale. He therefore appeals to a number of authorities to establish the veracity of his story. Kọ́lá Akíntáyọ̀ thus regularly appeals to patriarchy in order to reinforce the credibility of a claim. For example, to establish the claim that the duiker drinks water with its hooves instead of the mouth, he directs the listeners to confirm from "àwọn àgbàlagbà [the elders]." In the narrative of Kọ̀bọmọjẹ́ Àlàdé, as the jingles of the aerial spirit come closer to the hunter, the narrator pauses to inspect the bewildered listener and assures him:

> N ò gbọdọ̀ purọ́ o; ọdẹ n'îran baba à mi. Ọmọ Òròwùsì n'Íbàdàn ni mòó se… N'ílù ú 'Bàdàn, ọdẹ ni bàbá à mi, wọ́n sì l'óókọ.
> [I tell no lie; hunting runs in my paternal line. I am of the Orowusi family in Ibadan… In the city of Ibadan, my father was a well-known hunter, and very reputable too.]

Ògúnkúnlé Òjó tells the story of his master, Ògúnlékè Ògúnòṣun. His third-person perspective comes with the possibility of the doubt that his account might not be as accurate as the protagonist's might have been. The narrator therefore reminds the audience of his status as a minor character in the narrative:

> N ò gbọ́ "ẹwífúnmi"; èmi Òjó ọdẹ n bẹ n'bẹ̀ n'jọ́ náà.
> [It is no hearsay; I Òjó the hunter was there that day.]

When the antagonist transforms into a buffalo, Òjó, in order to shake off the audience's incredulity, repeats "N ò gbọ́ 'ẹwífúnmi'; l'ẹ́gbẹ̀ẹ́'leé bàbá Adémọ́lá ló ti di ẹranko,… lára Òkèè 'Gbàdì [It is no hearsay; it was by Ademola's father's house that she transformed into an animal,…beside Ìgbàdì Mountain]." By thus instantiating the event in a contemporary environment to which he points in evidence, Òjó

mitigates the risk of incredibility that comes with not only his narrative perspective but also the unusual reality that the story deals with.

The display of memorabilia from the hunter's supernatural encounter similarly is an effort to enhance credibility. Using the example of a narrator identified as Sade, Lekan Oyegoke (1994) writes on the testimony in the Nigerian churches as a genre of narrative performance. Sade, the performer, in order to convince her audience, displays a number of items used in the art of witchcraft as she evokes her "unholy" days as a witch. Rabiu Òjó adorns the costume of his *egúngún* with the hide of the animal half of the half-woman-half-civet of his narrative (**Appendix VII**). He encourages the audience to look out for it the next *egúngún* season. Pabíẹ́kùn shows the gourdlet he wins in the encounter with the spirit owner of the duiker (**Appendix I; Plate 4.3**). Moses Ògúnwálé similarly displays the *ató* and the *adọ́* gourdlets of his narrative (**Appendix VIII; Plate 4.4**). Lawal Ògúntúndé, the Balọ́de of Ṣakí, also shows his trophy in form of a horn of buffalo that almost kills the hunter-hero of his narrative (see **Plate 3.6**). Like the costume and props with which the mythmaker of the modern theatre contrives to suspend his audience's disbelief, the hunter narrator also employs the memorabilia, except that in his own case, he wants to annul disbelief altogether.

Language and the portrait of anOther world

The hunter's way with words promotes the image of a narrator with a third eye. His vocabulary is peculiar in a manner that defamiliarizes even the known world before an audience of non-hunters. For example, when the hunter simply says that "mo t'ọwọ́ bọ gbérí [I put hand in my cloak]", it is already implied that he does so to take out a charm. In the narrative Firaariku, the narrator says "Mọ wá t'ọwọ́ b'*àpò*, mọ fà'bínú yọ [I put hand in my pocket and brought out a fit of anger]" (**Appendix VI**). His interlocutor adds "Ẹ t'ọwọ́ bọ *gbérí*? [You put your hand in the *cloak*?]" evidently to situate "àpò [pocket]" in a more "hunterly" parlance, i.e "gbérí [cloak]". Ameringun takes the cue and repeats the statement in more figural "Mọ t'ọwọ́ bọ'*kùn*, mọ fà'bínú yọ [I put hand in my *gut* and brought out a fit of anger]". The hunter also refers to many other things in such figural terms that the

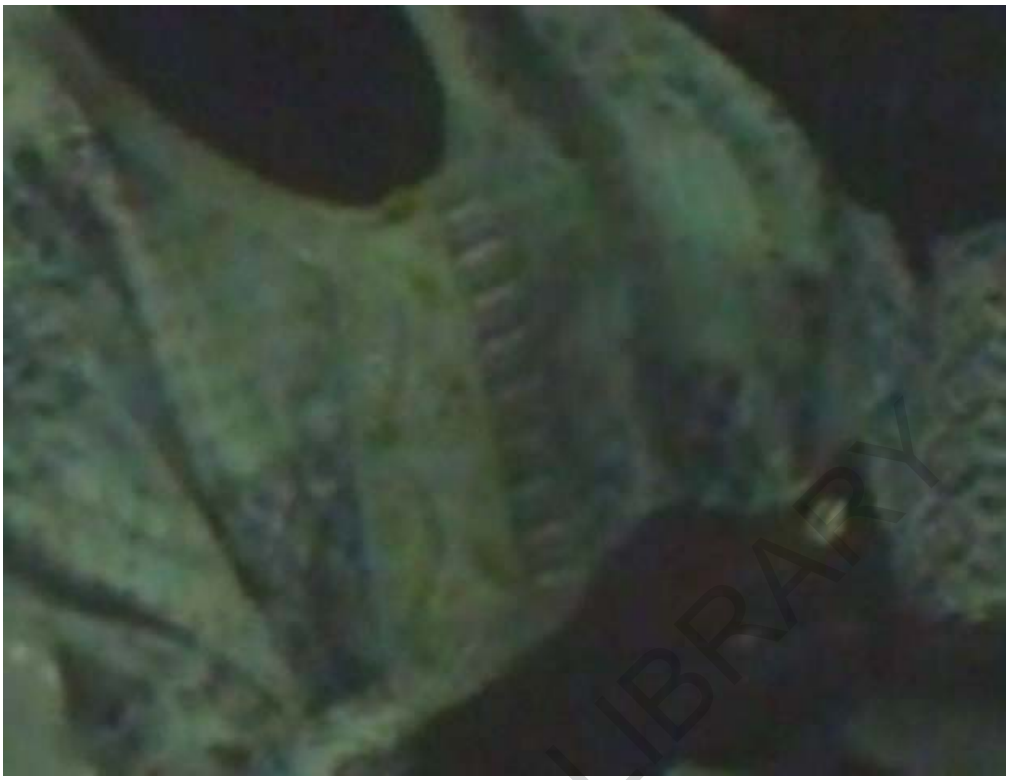

Plate 4.3 Pabíẹ́kùn shows the gourdlet the spirit gave him

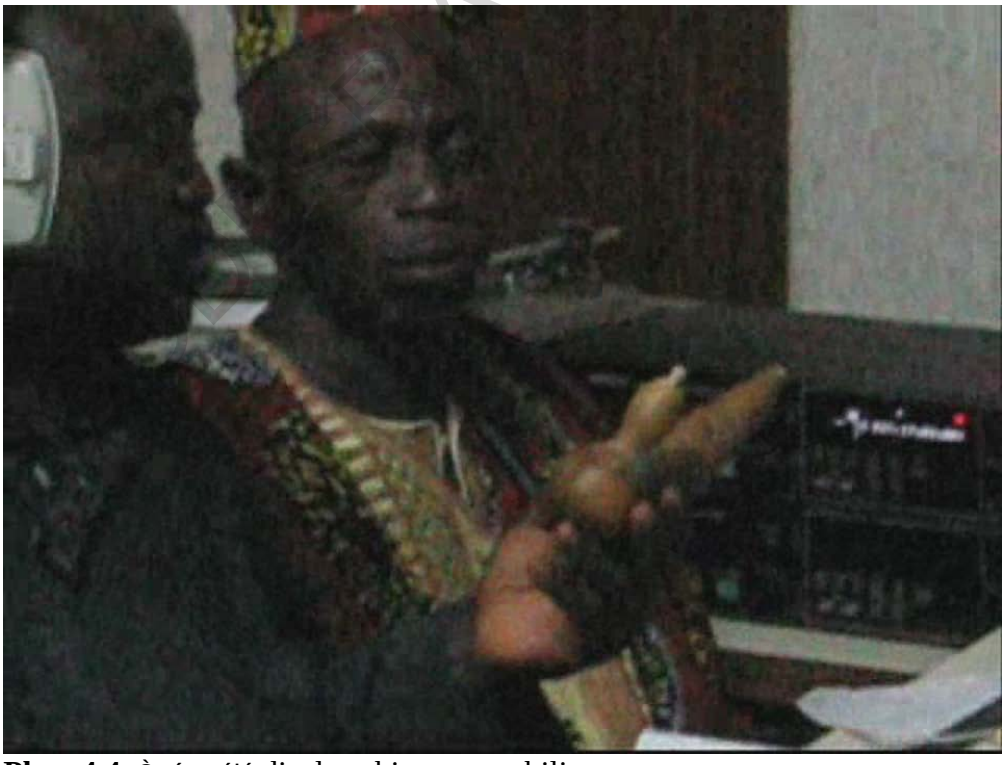

Plate 4.4 Ògúnwálé displays his memorabilia

non-hunters are always compelled to ask for clarification. Some of such terms are listed below:

Word/expression	**Hunter**	**Non-hunter**
gun	làsà, ògún, bájínátù, àtùpà Ògún [Ògún's lamp]	ìbọn
machete	ìgannà	àdá
pellet	ẹyin eyelé [pigeon's egg]	ọta
"the barrel of the gun bursts"	"ìbọ́n kú [the gun dies]"	"ìbọ́n fọ́"
"the animal has died"	"ẹrán pako"; "ẹrán sùn [the animal has slept]"	"ẹrán kú"
lion	ajá nlá [the big dog]; gúnnú; jàntá	kìnnìún
deer	ẹran pupa [red animal]	ìgalá, àgbọ̀nrín
grasscutter	ẹmọ́ [rat]	ọ̀yà
magical power, charm	aájò, mátàgbàmólẹ̀ [that which does not let the elder suffer insult]	òògùn

The sense of being in another world that the hunter's encounter suggests is further strengthened by the evocation of distance. The hunter-narrator does not only sometimes set his story far away from the place of performance, but also stresses the relatively long period the expedition takes. In the narrative of Aṣípa Oláògún of Ọ̀jẹ́ Owódé, set in 1946, the Ọlọjẹẹ, the ọba of Ọ̀jẹ́ Owódé, has recruited Ògúnjìmí, the narrator's elder brother, and another unidentified hunter to take a white man on what seems to be a surveilance tour of some forests. Oláògún describes the journey:

> Wọ́n lo ọgbọ̀n ọjọ́ àti ijọ́ méje, wọ́n wá fi n yí igbó. N'gbà a wọ́n bẹ̀rẹ̀ láti Ijù Apá, wọ́n wá gb'ọ̀nẹ̀ Odò Ìkẹ̀rẹ̀ lọ́nẹ̀è'Sẹ́yìn, wọ́n lọ sí Àbàtà Ẹ̀pà. Wọ́n ti Àbàtà Ẹ̀pà, wọ́n lọ sí Igbó Ìmẹ̀rì. Láti Igbó Ìmẹ̀rí, wọ́n padà lọ sí Odò Òkòkò. Láti Odò Òkòkò, wọ́n lù ú lọ sí apá ọ̀tún, wọ́n fi já Òkè Gòngo. Lẹ́yìn ìgbà nẹ́ẹ́ [kàkà] kí wọn ó fi yọ s'ílùú, wọ́n wá jáde sí Ìpàpó.

> [They spent thirty and seven days, going round the forests. They started from Wilderness of Apá and went through the road to Ìkẹ̀rè River by Ìsẹ́yìn to Ẹ̀pà Swamp. From Ẹ̀pà Swamp, they went to the Forest of Ìmẹ̀rì. From the Forest of Ìmẹ̀rì, they return to Òkòkò River. From Òkòkò River, they came out from the right flank and emerged at the Heights of Gòngo. Thereafter, instead of returning home, they came out at Ìpàpó.]

In the narrator's detailing of the hunters' itineration, the sense of another world created before the Ọ̀jẹ́ Owódé audience through such unfamiliar destinations as Apá, Ẹ̀pà, Ìmẹ̀rì, Òkòkò and Gòngo is further given distance in the mention of widely known places like Ìsẹ́yìn, Ìkẹ̀rẹ̀ and Ìpàpó, too distant from Ọ̀jé to be travelled on foot as do the hunters. Kọ́lá Akíntáyọ̀ similarly describes the long trek to Ìkẹ̀rè Forest, home to a half-beast-half-man misanthrope in his performance of the narrative of Múdàsírù Òjó Apàárà of Ìméléke villlage, Oyo West Local Government[69]:

> B'áa bá kúrò n'ílùú Ọ̀yọ́, t'áa dé'Gbó Olóògùn, t'áa kọjá, t'áa rìnrìn i wákàtí kan pẹ̀lú ẹsẹ̀ rínrìn, aá kan odò tí wọn ọ́ pè ní Òówé. T'áa bá dá Òówé kọjá, aá rìnrìn i wákàtí kan, aá kan odò tí wọn n pè ní Àálá. T'áa bá dé odò tí wọn n pè ní Àálá, aá rìnrìn i wákàtí kan, aá dèé odò tí wọn n pè ní Alẹ̀gọ̀. T'áa bá gba Alẹ̀gọ̀, t'áa bá gùn ú s'ókè gàràrà, a bọ́ s'ára dáàmù nù-un: dáàmù yí ni wọ́n n pè ní Ìkẹ̀rẹ̀ Daàmù.
>
> [When you set out on foot from Ọ̀yọ́ town, going through Olóògùn Forest, after walking for about one hour, you get to a river called Òówé. After crossing Òówé over, you walk for another hour and get to another river called Àálá. From Àálá, another one-hour trek takes you to another river called Alẹ̀gọ̀. When you then pass by Alẹ̀gọ̀ and go further up, you get near the dam called Ìkẹ̀rè Dam.]

It is worth noting that the descriptions are by third-person narrators. Just as in the third-person performance of the *ọfọ̀* cited earlier, the two narrators' description of the landscapes is designed to demonstrate their equal familiarity with those parts. As does Akara-ogun, the implied performer of Olowo-aye's

[69] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (04/07/04)

narrative, it is by being thus picturesque and "accurate" that the narrator subtly inscribes his own knowledge as a hunter in his performance of the story of another. The sense of distance and long journey is conveyed not only in the evocation of long trek, but through the setting of the hunter's story far away from the hunter's home or the place of performance. In the narrative of Kọ̀bọmọjẹ́ Àlàdé, the hunter goes from Ibadan to hunt in Ìsẹ́yìn. In the narrative of Àpémọ̀ Kíinche, he comes from Hounkoko, Republic of Benin. Though in these two narratives, the hunter-protagonists are settled in the settings of the stories, the distance of these fictive settings from Ibadan, the place of the present performance, nevertheless almost makes them a never-never land.

4.3.3 Radio performance and the "sin" of narrative reconstruction

The hunter's narrative is broadcast on the A.M. of the Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (B.C.O.S) between the evening hours of nine and eleven. As Isidore Okpewho (1983) observes in relation to the performance of the folktale, the presenter benefits from the eerie ambience of the night to highlight the awesome aspects of the narrative. The modes of performance on the radio can be broadly classified into three. The first involves the presenter performing the narrative either in the presence or absence of the guest-hunter and protagonist (**Appendix III**). In this mode, the hunter merely comes on air at the end of the narrative to affirm the presenter's version and answer telephone calls from the listeners. Though inquiries from callers may warrant that the hunter enlarge on certain aspects of the story, his contribution to the performance is often mostly in brief affirmation or correction than in adding a new dynamic perspective to the narrative. In the second mode, the hunter takes charge of the performance of his narrative, moderated by the prompting and queries of the presenter (**Appendices I, II** and **IV**). In the third, the presenter begins the performance and, midway, brings in the hunter to conclude the story (**Appendix III**). All these three modes of performance commonly feature a sort of audience participation through phone calls at the end of the narrative. When the hunter is present in the studios, he answers the callers' questions.

The radio performance also features a flutist. Báyọ̀ Adébọ̀wálé plays the *ekùtù*, the hunter's flute, and, in his performance, creates occasional dialogue between himself and the presenter as the latter performs the preliminary opening or the narrative. Now not only the flutist but also other traditional Yoruba instrumentalists generally are known not only to praise their patrons but also engage them in a mock confrontation, pretending to be incensing them to a fight. At the end of the narrative just before the phone-in, George Ọlábísí Gbámọ́lẹ́fàá reads out to the listeners a recipe of a charm or medicine given by a hunter (**Plate 4.5**).

Many oral performance scholars have made the point that a story twice told is two stories (Finnegan, 1970; Okpewho, 1983). It may be added that differences and discrepancies do not start from between one version of a narrative and another but, in fact, from between the real event and its narrative reconstruction. It might not be easy to probe this first level of discrepancy between the fabula and the narrative text since the hunter is often the sole witness to the former. The performance of Ásìmíyù Ògúndépò Pabíẹ́kùn however points at the possibility of this kind of slip (**Appendix I**). The hunter-protagonist in the narrative comes through as skilful and experienced when upon sighting a pair of eyes far away, reflecting in the dark, he declares "Ojú yìí, ojú akọ ẹtu nìîî [Those were the eyes of a male duiker]." As the struggle between the hunter and the spirit-owner of the animal gets tense, the narrator says "Ìyá ẹran gan l'èyí tí mọ pa yìí, tó j'óbí ẹran [the one I had killed was the nanny duiker, mother of the entire herd]", negating the earlier claim that the duiker is male. But Pabíẹ́kùn is a clever narrator. He quickly recalls that he has called the animal male and promptly dumps that mistake on the antagonist since she is the one who calls it female in the story anyway:

> Mọ l'ákọ ẹran l'èmí pa. Ó ní akọ tí mọ pa hun, ó l' "Oò ti mọ̀ wípé òhun ní ngun ìyá ẹran. Kò s'òbúkọ mìí mọ́ nù-ún".
> I replied that the one I killed was male. "Even though it was male", she said, "don't you know that is the only stud duiker that mates with the females?"

It is by thus crediting the slip to a character that Pabíẹ́kùn saves the narrative from this discrepancy.

Whenever the hunter comes on to perform the last half of the narrative or answer the listeners' calls, the presenter always asks that he point out any discrepancy between "Ohun tọ́ sẹlẹ̀ gan-an [what actually happened]" and the account he has given so far. The usual response is to affirm with such statement as "kò s'íṣẹ́ n'bi ọ̀kankan n'bẹ̀; b'ó se rí gẹ́lẹ́ n náà lẹ tọ́ka sí hun [there is no discrepancy; you narrated it the way it happened]."[70] Considered detail by detail, the radio presenter's third-person version does not only aspire to artistry through creative embelishment but sometimes becomes inaccurate with details. In the first-person performance of the narrative of Améringùn, the hunter compares the antagonist spirit's eyes to human fists (**Appendix IV**). Kọ́lá Akíntáyọ̀'s earlier sole performance of the same narrative employs a different metaphor:

> Ọdẹ́ fi yé wa wípé ojú àmjọ̀ọ̀nú yìí… Haà! S'ẹ́ẹ̀ mọ kinní iná rogodo tí wọ́n maá fi sí mọ́tò kó le baà tún rína síi? Ó ní b'ójú àjọ̀ọ̀nu hún kọ̀ọ̀kan bó se rí nù-un ròmàdòrogodo. Ó ní n ló sì mọ́lẹ̀ bíi gílóòbù alogíînì.
> [The hunter told us that the eyes of this spirit… Oh! Do you know the extra headlight sometimes affixed to the motor vehicle to improve illumination? He said each of the eyes was as big as that. He said each of them shone equally as bright, like the halogen bulb.]

If Akíntáyò's description of the eyes here is not a disingenuous but creative reconstruction, the discrepancy between a detail common to both the half of the narrative of Ràsákì Àlàó Adúpẹ́ performed by the presenter and the second half performed by the hunter is more definite. Common to both is the description of a fit of cold and immobility that the hunter suffers from upon his encounter with the antagonist civet. Akíntáyọ̀'s narration situates this fit in the moment just immediately after the wounded civet is dealt the machete blow. In Adúpẹ̀'s version, the hunter is hit at the point when the animal is being gutted. Also, in the presenter's version of the Ogúndélé Alájáníbọn Dẹ́tunhà, "àhàyá bíi mẹ́rin àbí márùn-ún [about four or five pellets]" fall from the antagonist's chest after the Ògún ritual. Dẹ́tunhà later says the pellets are more than fifteen. In the sole performance of the

[70] Ràsákì Àlàó Adúpẹ́, *Ọdẹ Akọni* (26/06/05)

narrative on the 13th February, 2005 edition of the programme, Kọ́lá Akíntáyọ̀ says that the *àjé* antagonist dies. The 20th February edition was intended to correct the goof. The antagonist, according to Dẹ́tunhà himself, survives and still lives.

The radio is about the cheapest access to broadcast in the world. Cheap transistor radio sets powered by equally affordable dry cells are the most pouplar medium through which the people have access to information and entertainment. Nigeria is no exception. The A.M. mode, because of its limited reach, is readily exploited by the electronic media to broadcast programmes of relevance to the local audience. *Ọdẹ Akọni* is one such programme. It sometimes mimics the conversation in which narrative naturally emanates to illustrate a point or simply divert listeners. It is in order to appropriately simulate the conversational feel that the narrator sometimes assumes that he addresses listeners who are physically present. Listening to narrative in such natural contexts as the church hall or the pub, one may take for granted the significance of extra-verbal signs like gestures, facial kinemes, and even silences. Such seemingly secondary factors like age, height and look of not only the performer, but also his audience might also be crucial to the eventual process of meaningmaking. Now the radio is blind. It relies entirely on the auditory channel to invoke its message. Peter Lewis (1981) quite interestingly considers this handicap a merit. He, in a manner speaking, sees the radio as a "visual medium":

> To say that radio is a visual medium when in one sense it is completely non-visual is to bring out the way in which radio encourages the listener's imagination to visualize what he is listening to, to create for himself the visual dimension he is apparently deprived of, to construct the setting and appearance of the characters from the clues that words and sounds provide. (9)

Lewis' point is significant in its observation of the radio audience as having a higher and more independent responsibility as co-mythmakers than the physically accessible audience. But Lewis' category invariably downplays the significance of the performer's physical presence with his audience, a facility that

the radio does not guarantee. On *Ọdẹ Akọni*, the guest narrators, used to the natural physical context of conversation and not educated in the electronic media translation of physical signs, sometimes mar their own efforts at signification. In his narrative, Moses Adébóyè Ògúnwálé illustrates the height of his spirit captor with that of the presenter (**Appendix VIII**). He says that even as short as the latter is, he is towering compared to the spirits. Though the audience gets the hint that the spirit characters are indeed very short, the medium has denied them visual access to the simile invoked to stress it. In his description of the mysterious misanthrope of Ìkẹ̀rẹ̀ Forest, Múdàsírù Ọdẹ́wùmí Òjó of Ìméléke village, Oyo, Oyo State, says:

> Ibi apá báyìí, awọ ẹtu ni… Ìhààyín, awọ ìgalà ni. Ẹ̀wù t'ọ́ wọ̀ báyìí, awọ akítì ni, àt'erí i rẹ̀.
> [This side of him was a duiker's skin… This part, a deer's skin. His dress was made of the hide of baboon, with its head.]

Even if the audience visualizes the character's skin and dress of baboon's hide, nothing in the description or the entire narrative text suggests the particular part of the character's body identified as "ibi apá báyìí [this side]" or "ìhààyín [this part]."

Narrators claim not only to have trophies of their encounters with the mysterious Other, they often display such trophies. This exhibitionist temper is appropriately illustrated in Rábíù Òjó's adornment of his egungun costume with the skin of the mysterious civet cited earlier. Accordingly, many hunters display the memorabilia of their encounters in the radio studios and the presenter attempts a description as he examines any such item (See **Plate 4.4**). Such attempt only leaves the listener with the option of "visualizing" (Lewis, 1981), sometimes at a distant remove from the narrator's fictive intention.

As early as 1932, barely about two decades after radio became institutionally established as a medium of broadcast, Bertolt Brecht (Trans. 1993), the German dramatist, had called attention to the handicap of the radio as a one-way medium of communication. He considers the radio broadcast as tyranny through monologue because it proscribes the listener from "talking back". Brecht ultimately identifies the need to create "an ear" for the radio to facilitate a robust

intercourse between it and the listener in order to humanize both parties. Especially, a radio programme such as *Ọdẹ Akọni* purports to appropriate the context of conversation in which the hunters' narratives emanate. The audience of such narrative is always an active one to such extent that it becomes a partner in the performance. *Ọdẹ Akọni* could be said to have resolved the problem of audience participation in two major ways, namely the role of the presenter as the immediate audience whenever the hunter himself is performing, and the final phone-in section of the programme. The programme presumes to address an audience that numbers into hundreds of thousands. It, in fact, actually does. Kọ́lá Akíntáyò as a lone interlocutor does not in any way represent proportionately the performative potential of that multitude of listeners. The radio performance, in this aspect, merely aspires to the kind of performative arena it can not afford.

The phone-in is designed as a remedy to empower the audience to participate. Its unavoidable schedule at the end of the main performance however diminishes its performative immediacy. Unlike in the role of the presenter as immediate audience and interlocutor of the hunter-narrator, the telephone does not provide the remote audience access to such adjunct performative roles as questioning and prompting the narrator and thereby contributing to the ultimate description of the final shape of the narrative text. It is also important to note that many members of the audience of the radio performance might not be able to afford the cost of telephoning. Many who have access to the telephone rarely get through to the studios. As evidenced in many of the instances, even some of the calls that get through to the studios sometimes fail midway or are utterly inaudible. Martin Shingler and Cindy Wieringa (1998) usefully awaken us to the magnitude of the presenter's power to determine which caller has access to the microphone. Even though the present data do not reveal any deliberate exclusion of certain callers from participation, Shingler and Wieringa's observation reminds one of the power of the radio presenter to determine when the calls start to come in, when they stop, and whether they are to be entertained at all in the first place.

The hunter's narrative as a radio performance is a commodified item. As an item of commercial value, the presenter is mindful of the length of story allowed in

each session. In the natural conversational form that the radio performance imitates, narrative ensues as a matter of course with the performing persons telling their stories spontaneously at the opportune moments during interlocution. The radio narratives however come in ration. The cost of seeking out hunters from remote villages, persuading them to come and tell stories on air, and providing them lodging and honoraria seems to have inscribed a high value on each of the hunters' narratives. Narrative performance as an exercise in relieving an event in a different time and space is amenable to some sort of abridgment or fleshing out in accordance with the whim and goal of the performer. In many instances, conversational narratives of relatively enduring length are sustained by description and proliferating by-plots that effectively enhance suspense. But even in such context, the narrator is visibly seen to be ambling resolutely home to the final core of the story. In the radio performance of the hunters' narratives, the presenter's insistence on stretching the story over the one-and-a-half-hour session becomes so overt that the average listener sometimes becomes exasperated. The presenter's elaborate repetition of the details given earlier in the narrative by the narrator before the last advertisement break is a recurrent example. Báyọ̀ Adébọ̀wálé, the flutist, also subtly abets the presenter. In his occasional interjection with the flute, the presenter sometimes commits more time than necessary to the ensuing mock quarrel between them. Though the exchange is mostly very rich in humour, a concentration of it, designed to pad out the narrative session, cloys listening pleasure. The rationing of the story as an item of value is best illustrated in the performance of Améringùn. The vivacious old hunter simply wants to go on naturally to narrate the story behind his name "He-who-mounts-the-elephant." The presenter cautions him that the story is better preserved for another edition. The old man, hitherto defiant of the presenter's moderation, agrees to save the story for another day. Perharps the honorarium is worth a second coming.

Ọdẹ Akọni the narrative series and the businesses advertised on it twin in symbiosis. Inferably, the advert revenue pays the airtime bill and other expenses. The capitalist institution, aware of the popularity of the programme with local audience exploits it to seek exposure. Herbal and spiritual remedies to health

problems have become more popular with the majority of Yoruba people. Factors responsible for this range from economy to disillusionment caused by the infrastructural inadequacy in the public health sector. Many practitioners of traditional herbal medicine and spiritual healing have gone on to set up well-advertised practices that thrive in different parts of the south-west Nigeria. This category of entrepreneurs preponderates among those that advertise on the radio programme. With the hunter, they presume to share the liminal space from which vantage point they offer to guide the less-sighted men. The following stunt, which creeps stealthily in with "Ẹ káalẹ́ o. Ẹ kú ìgbádùn ètò *Ọdẹ Akọni* [Good evening, I wish you a happy listening to *Ọdẹ Akọni* narrative]", represents one such attempt not only to share the arena of performance with the hunter but to exploit the hunting profession as a sort of credential:

> Ọdọ̀ àgbàlágbángbá ọdẹ̀ẹ̀ kan l'à n lọ. Ámbàlí Ọdẹ l'ògbólógbòó ọdẹ yìí n jẹ́. Ó j'ogún isẹ́ ọdẹ l'ọ́dọ̀ ọ bàbá a rẹ̀ ni. Ohun náà ti k'ojú ẹran abìjà rí. Ọ̀pọ̀lọpọ̀ iwin nínúu'gbó ni wọ́n ti jọ gbé pẹ́rẹ́gi ka'ná. Irú ọdẹ yìí wúlò f'ọ́mọ Nàìjíríà. Lọ́nà wo? Rí Ámbàlí Ọdẹ fún gbogbo àrùnkarùn tí n yọ ọ́ lẹ́nu lágọ̀ọ́ ara à rẹ, àti pé gbogbo aláwàáàrí ọ́ y'ọjú sí wọn… Ámbàlí Ọdẹ n bẹ ní Agboolé e Gbárayílẹ̀ l'Ókè Adú n'Bàdàn.
>
> [I tell you about a certain old and experienced hunter. This valiant hunter is called Ámbàlí the Hunter. He inherited hunting from his very father. He himself has confronted many ferocious animals. He has done battle with many spirits of the forest. In what way is this hunter beneficial to the people of Nigeria? See Ámbàlí the Hunter for cure to any disease you may be suffering from. Also, all those who have failed in one undertaking or the other could also consult him… Ámbàlí the Hunter is based in Gbárayílẹ̀ Compound, Ókè Adú, Ibadan].[71]

Many such advertisements punctuate the narrative sessions. At times, such break occurs as frequently as five times, intruding in the very crucial moments in the narrative, thereby creating a sort of forced suspense, created not through artistic building of tension but through abrupt suspension of narrative performance. In the instance cited above, the advertisement intrudes so rudely, and without any

[71] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (10/12/06)

preliminary apology, that the listener is first stunned by the sudden rupture in the narrative symmetry. S/he realizes only some seconds later that the intrusion is an advertisement stunt.

CHAPTER 5

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 CONCLUSION

This study sets out with an essentially tripartite focus. Its first objective is to show that art is not limited to the easily recognizable forms. Narration, one of the most fluid and ubiquitous of arts, is examined in the light of this. The Yoruba hunters' culture especially becomes suitable because it essentially taboos narrativity. An ample view of the Yoruba worldview is accessible through the hunter's eye. The study therefore secondly attempts to use the hunters' narratives as an index to an understanding of some aspects of this worldview. The ultimate intention is to add to the existing definitions. Thirdly, the work probes performance as an exercise in mediating the dialectics of tradition and change, Selfness and Otherness, and art and life.

The currency of both Yoruba culture generally and the hunters' culture in particular has made it intractable to a permanent definition. Existing studies on the Yoruba hunters' culture therefore are not exhaustive. In their attempts at describing the nature and the process of the performative aspects of the culture, the studies overlook the performer's creative propensity for breaching the norms, a feat to which the Yoruba hunter is naturally predisposed. Secondly, some of such studies do not consider the complexity and ecclectism of the composition of the hunter's person and art. Modern literary narratives have also employed the hunter's persona and/or his description of reality in their engagement of the problematic thrown up in their various thematic preoccuptions. It is in the sober realization of the status of man as partner, not sole factor, in the determination of earthly matters that these works have mostly appropriated the hunter's vision. Apart from a body of folktales in a section of Herskovits and Herskovits' *Dahomean narrative* (1958), no known work has attempted to collect and study the hunters' narratives as an alternative understanding of the universe.

In the broader area of African literary and cultural discourse, a lot of the existing analytic and theoretical models have not been entirely appropriate in their explication of the cultural forms of Africa. One instance is the presentation of stories as inherited articles set in stone and passed from many generations past. Such approach overlooks the performative imperative that imbues narrative with so much modification and, in fact, deviation that the ensuing product becomes a different work of art in its own right. There is a closely related tendency to overlook the extent of interweaving of life and narrative art. The reigning understanding that the fabulous narrative mirrors life is only partly true as far as the hunter is concerned; for him, the fabulous is life. In his world, the reality-fable borderline thins until it is hardly visible. This is exactly where the contextualist counsel that the sociological aspects of performance be considered is important. In the appraisal of such narratives as the hunters', sole dependence on text might result in a taxonomy that brackets outright fiction with narrative recollection.

The dualist interpretation is also an influential formation in many descriptions of the African cultural forms. Sharp dividing lines are put between such poles as good and evil, spirit and matter, and the real and the fabulous without due consideration for intersection and impermanence that characterize them. This formation is entrenched by the wholesale employment of the Western interpretive tools in the readings of such cultural sites.

Existing literary and cultural theories are insightful but none is exclusively appropriate as an interpretive tool. Structuralism, for example, is an elegant and neat analytic method especially where the motifs of conflict and opposition are overt and the morphological comparison of one narrative with another is necessary. It however does not anticipate a situation in which opposition is either secondary in significance or not visible. Even as its later outgrowth, narratology, seeks attention for marginal expressive forms such as conversation and military parade, its prescription does not include the consideration of specific contextual instance of performance as a way of determining performative licence. The structuralist scientificity also in a way abets the kind of objectivist and positivist attitude that sets down the alternative reality of certain narratives as alogical and

therefore inferior to modern Western realism (Rabkin, 1977; Drewal, 1991). Such concepts as Victor Turner's social drama and Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism are different attempts at remedying the context-insensitive objectivism of structuralism. Victor Turner and his pupil, Richard Schechner, thus represent the guild that seeks to establish the ubiquitousness of performativity in such seemingly fixed human activities as ritual and official routine. It is in the consideration of the individual performative instances that novelty is discovered. Bakhtin also sets off the influential theoretical trend that demands audience for every cultural and ideological expression. Dialogism, Bakhtin's term for this liberalized space, supposes that a language breathes and lives because it relates with another. Thus, opposite positions such as Self and Other, spirit and matter, and the real and the fabulous not only relate but, more significantly, influence each other. The poststructuralist cultural theories contemporaneous with Bakhtin further examine the idea of exactitude and permanence in relation to various ideological and cultural constructs. Henry Louis Gates Jr traces the origin of semantic uncertainty to many precolonial African forms and Homi K. Bhabha particularly argues that the preponderance of many interstitial spaces such as diaspora, mulatto and cosmopolis supplants such oppositions as colonizer/colonized, indigenous/exotic and so on. Their overplay of the idea of impermanence not withstanding, these poststructuralist thoughts give insight to the preponderance of intersection of different cultural spaces, thereby reviewing the formation of cultural difference and originary.

This study partly adopts the poststructuralist supposition that praxis demotes what codes often seem to immediately suggest. As such, the hunter story that is not told is told. It is suggested that the narrative breach of this ethic of silence did not start with the intervention of the electronic media. It has been a primordial part of the culture. Even in Yoruba culture where the hunter puts premium on taciturnity, he nevertheless tells his stories. The emergence of the radio as a medium of narrative performance highlights this silence-narrativity double-bind. It reveals the dynamics of the institution of norm, creative breach of that norm, and the eventual popular adoption of that breach. As the Functionalists

suggest, the factors at play are partly bound up with the contemporary socio-economic needs. In traditional Yoruba society, there were such needs as initiating the youth into the hunters' guild and thereby making him a potential warrior, endearing the hunter's merchandise to the prospective customers, and maintaining a good hunter-non-hunter relation. Unbridled narrativization of the hunter's experience jeopardizes all these needs. Today, as in the past, most of these needs persist but have been subordinated by more formidable contemporary ones. They include the need to give cultural expressions high decibels as global cultural production gets more competitive, and the sublime but more determinant economic need.

The analysis of the texts of the narratives confirms the hunter as a representation of man's attempt to pacify and domesticate the unknown and the feared. As the hunter represents the success of man in this attempt, he at once represents man's failure. The corollary definition of the world is therefore a space where actors – human, animal, spirit and vegetal – contend eternally. None is assured final and continuous domination over the rest. Symbiosis is another emergent possibility. In a situation inaugurated by conflict, resolution is not necessarily a one-side-victory-one-side-defeat coin. The Yoruba world accommodates the resolution of even mortal opposition into a beneficial alliance. As such, the *àjé*, the spirit, the animal and the tree emit the type of energy – malignant or benevolent – required by the situation of their relation with man. But the preponderance of conflict does not necessarily impute to the forest – an Other half of the Yoruba world – an absolute status of conflict zone where man triumphs, perishes or seeks diplomatic resolution. Like the human half, the infinitude of the forest surpasses total narrative understanding. For example, the animal rewards the hunter after the former has killed it (Page 146-7), and the hunter watches an orchestra of rodents perform without shooting any of them (Page 149). Such situation either aborts the nascent potential of conflict or does not even initiate one at all. It is such unfathomable disjunct that provides modern literary genre of magical realism its metalangue.

The hunter-narrator can only be said to have deviated from the norm by half. Since he sometimes sees the expressive vent as belonging in a continuum with the tradition, he also thinks himself a custodian of the tradition. As Homi K. Bhabha (1995) repeatedly notes, performativity supplants the concept of originary. All cultures breathe and thrive not only in renewal but especially in the adoption of contemporary idioms. The claim of traditionality of a particular cultural form comes therefore with some qualification. A close reading of some Yoruba forms that are considered traditional even in the orthodox sense reveals the presence of exotic elements. Òtúá Méjì, an odù of Ifá – a divination system considered by Yoruba to be of primordial origin – for example, is a narrative of the origin of Islam (Abimbola, 1969). Considering that Ifa practice is not only considered inviolably closed to infusion of new elements but also of pre-Islamic origin (Abimbola, 1976), this narrative attests to a predisposition of the Yoruba culture to new elements that advance it. Such exotic elements are not in this sense seen as importation as such but part of the permissible regeneration that began when the cultural form inaugurated itself. The growing popularity of the hunters' narrative performance in the new media even among its initial conservative opponents becomes understandable in this sense.

The example of the hunters' narrative performance is a proof that art is not limited to identifiable normative forms. What is identified in this study as hunters' narratives is so dependent on informal communication that it has no definite name in Yoruba. Yet, as shown in the analysis, the deployment of such figural devices as proverb, metaphor, *ọfọ̀* and *oríkì* as well as descriptive evocation of characters and events attest to its artistry. The popular audience it commands as a radio series is an additional proof. The performer therefore is not just the narrator of the *àlọ́*, the *ìjálá* poet or the *alárìnjó* dramatist. The bus driver who recounts his encounter with the traffic warden might equally be a performer. The quality and success of individual performative efforts vary, but many are so pleasing that the performers are sometimes asked to tell the story again some other time.

Cultural change may immediately surmount the tremor that attends it, but such change sometimes comes with its own set of limitations. There is, for

example, the popular view that writing as a medium of narration falls short of the performative fullness of the orality it aspires to represent. A related view also supposes that written and oral narratives, however much one presumes to have adopted the other, are two entirely different media. To see writing as a modern outgrowth of the oral narrative, in this view, is to downplay the equal currency and continuation of orality as an entirely different and peculiar medium of narration. There is an interesting parallel of this situation in the emergence of radio as a medium of narration. Even as the radio narration is not as entirely dissimilar from its parent as does writing, it nevertheless presents its own limitations. Considering the example of hunters' narrative performance on the radio, the electronic media, despite its merit of a higher audience population, is deficient in some areas of enunciation often taken for granted in oral communication. This is aside the economic imperatives that equally inhibit the nature of performance as the audience used to know it.

5.2 RECOMMENDATION

The hunters' narrative performance examined in this study reveals the presence of art in a performative space that is not nominally identified as art. The corollary recommendation is that literary, cultural and performance studies need to focus more intently on many more such cultural sites in order to reflect on the manner in which human communication routine not only influences art but also becomes one. Instances of such performativity abound and emerge everyday in such forms as religious sermons, radio chit-chat programmes, television reality shows, and the D.J's (disc jockey) creative selection and reworking of the musical records to retain the party audience's attention.

There are many canonical studies on specific African performance cultures. Many such studies – some as dated as half a century – have attempted commendable descriptions of the different forms they set out to examine. But as thorough and circumspect as they often are, the contemporary exigencies that continuously redefine performance have made many aspects of such studies

worthy of review. For example, S.A. Babalola's work on *ìjálá* does not anticipate the breach of tradition introduced in the refrain songs in Alabi Ogundepo's art (Adeduntan, 2003). The poetics of *ìyẹ̀rẹ̀* described by Olatunde Olatunji (1972) and Wande Abimbola (1976) is supplanted by the example of Ifáyẹmí Ẹlẹ́buìbọn who freely uses the form as a medium of social commentary. The very recent example of an *ẹ̀sà* poet, Àsàbí Òjẹ̀ Afẹ́nápa, who extensively uses songs from other forms like *ìjálá* and Sàngó worship songs, also inspires a review of Oludare Olajubu's description of ìwì egúngún[72] (1970). It is recommended therefore that rather than see such performative divergence as "rogue" types that violate tradition, essays and monographs should address themselves more increasingly to the study of such divergence.

Existing theories are fascinating but limited in their use as tools for probing the nature and performance of the arts of Africa. It is recommended that students of culture and performance apply them with care, taking notes of the areas in which they are deficient in the analysis of research data. The most advisable, though not entirely problem-free, method is to employ a combination of such theories, applying their aspects that help to explicate the form under study. Fanatic commitment to a theory numbs analytic sensitivity to other highly intellectually valuable areas.

[72] Performance of poetry of the *egúngún*.

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APPENDIX I

The narrative of Ásìmíyù Ògúndépò Pabíẹ́kùn[73]

Pabíẹ́kùn: Mọ jáde è'gbẹ́ l'óru ọjọ́ náà. Mo ti dẹ̀'gbẹ́, ó ti rẹ̀ mí. N'gbà ó tó bíi aago méjì òru, mo ní sé n ọ́ ha máá lọ abà láì níí gbẹ́ran lọọ́'lé. Láìgbọdọ̀ j'àsán, t'áwọn baba mi nbẹ̀ n'lé, t'áwọn ọmọ nbẹ̀ n'lé. N ó dé'Gbó Olókè, l'ókè Odò Ọ̀súnró. N'gbà n ó dé bẹ̀, àbáláyé ahùn ni; ràbàtà báyìí l'ahùn náà. Àwa bá a l'áyé ni. Àwọn t'ó jù wá lọ gan-an bá a níbẹ̀ ni. N'gbà n ó gbó'jú wo'bẹ̀, l'ẹ́ran bá wo'ná à mi. Hà! Ojú yìí, ojú akọ ẹ̀tu nìîì. N'ìbọn bá ké. N 'ọ̀ gbọ́ nkankan kọ́ ta wáí, mo ní há, ẹ́ran sùn níì'ín. Mo dúpẹ́ n ọ̀ j'àsán. Mọ bá gbé'bọn. Èmi sì í k'ìbọn n tó lọ rèé y'ẹ́ran tí n bá yìn wò ni. N'gbà n ó dé bẹ̀, ọwọ́ tí n ọ́ nà pé kí n gbé ẹ̀tu, ìyá hun bá b'óóde t'òhun ti tòbí ndí…

Akíntáyò: Làárin òru?

Pabíẹ́kùn: "Ẹ nlẹ́ o, ìyá".

Ó ní "Nlẹ́ o. N'bo ọ̀ ngb'éran 'hun ú lọ". Mọ l'ẹ́ran wo.

Ọ́ l' "Ẹ́ran t'ọ́ọ́ fẹ́ẹ́ gbé hun".

"Ẹ́ran t'émi pa? Èmi n gbé e lọ abà nù-un. Àwọn baba à mi nretí ẹ́ran yìí". Ó l'òhun lòhun ni í.

"Ibo lo ti'ẹ̀ ti wá, tọ ma' á bá mí se rándanràndan lọ́gànjọ́ òru. Ìwọ obìnrin." Tòbí nìkan ní mbẹ̀ n'dí ẹ̀. Èmi k'ẹ́ran l'ápá a 'wájú, òhun kó o l'ẹ́sẹ̀ ẹ̀hìn, l'abá n fà á. Àh! Eléyìí ọ́ mà gba ẹ́ran yìí tí n bá wò ó n'ran ọ́ pọ̀. Tor'émi ò sì r'ẹ́sẹ̀ wa'lẹ̀; ẹsẹ̀ kan n dùn mí díẹ̀. Mọ bá ya a gbé'bọn ọ̀ mi t'igi. Èyí 'ò se é wò n'ran. Mọ bá na'wọ́ òsì. Ọwọ́ ọ̀ mí bá kó ẹ̀tu hun, ó ti *háàngì* mọ́ mi l'ọ́wọ́ báyìí.

Mo ní "Ọlọ́'un mú ọ. Jẹ́ á jọ máa fà á". N'gbà a fà á títítí, n'gbà tí nlọ bí ọwọ́ aago mẹ́rin,

Ọ́ l' "Ọ́dẹ".

Mo ní "Òóòh!"

Ó ní "D'ákun s'á ànù ú mi"

Akíntáyò: K'ẹ́ẹ́ s'àánú u rẹ̀? Fún kínni?

Pabíẹ́kùn: "Kí n sàánú ù rẹ fún kíni?" Èmi ti'ẹ̀ ti múra kí nyọ̀'gannà n bẹ́ran méjì, kọ́ máa gbé'dajì lọ, k'émi náà ọ́ máa gbé'dajì lọ. Ó ní kí n sàánú 'hun. Mo ní sísàánú fún kíni o. Ó ní òhun àti ọkọ ọ̀ 'hun l'àwọn jọ n sin ẹ́ran à yí. Kìí sìí s'èyí nìkan l'àwọn n sìn. Ìyá ẹ́ran gan l'èyí tí mọ pa yìí, tó j'óbí ẹ́ran. Mọ l'ákọ ẹ́ran l'èmí pa. Ó ní akọ tí mọ pa hun, ó l' "Oò

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ti mọ̀ wípé òhun ní ngun ìyá ẹran. Kò s'òbúkọ mìí mọ́ nù-ún". Ó ní kí n má gbé e lọ kí n dákun.

Mo ní "Èèwọ̀ ni, èmi ó gbé ẹran yìí lọ abà o". Ó ní n dákun, kí n jọ̀ọ́. Tí n bá le yọ̀nda ẹran yìí f'óhun…torípé ọkọ̀ọ̀'hun, òhun u rẹ̀ ọ́ jọọ gbé núu'gbó yìí. Ọ̀tọ̀ n'bi t'ọ́kọ ọ̀'hun n gbé. Ó sì ti rìnrìn àjò, tọ́ bá sì 'edé tí 'ọ̀bá 'e bá ẹran yîì, tàbí t'òhun 'ọ̀ bá r'ókù ù rẹ̀ gbé fún u pé nkakan lọ́ p'ẹran à yíí… Inú ọkọ ọ̀ 'hun le é pọ̀ o. Lílé ní ó lé'hun b'óóde o.

Mo ní "Ọkọ rẹ ó lé ọ bóóde?"

Akíntáyò: Yí ó lé ọ jáde? Ibo ní ó lé e lọ?

Pabíẹkùn: "Kí lọ́ wá kan èmi pẹ̀lú ọkọ rẹ ó lé ọ b'óóde? Ẹran èyîíí, èmi n gbé e lọ ni o". Kò sí'hun tọ́ kàn mí pẹ̀lú u tì'ẹ o". Lọ́ bá ní n jọ̀ọ́ o. Ó ní 'hun t'óhun lè se fún mi t'éepé t'ọ́jọ́ ọ'kú ée dé, òhun ó fún mi tí ọ j'ánfààní. Nítoríi p'étu ù yí, t'óhun bá yónda 'ẹ́ fún mi, pátátpátá, ijọ́ márùn-ún, ijọ́ méfà, kí n fi jẹ ẹ́, àt'èmi àt'àwọn ará ilé mi. Lọ́ bá tọ'ọ́ bọ tòbí tọ́ sán á dìí, lọ́ bá na'wọ́ mú nkan ọ̀hún.

Ọ́ l' "Ọ́dẹ".

Mo ní "Hòóò!"

Ó ní "Gbà, oore àjẹẹ̀jẹtán rèé." Ó ní f'ẹtu yìí í lẹ̀ j'óhun ó r'ókùú è fi jísẹ́ f'ọ́kọ 'hun. N'gbá ọ́ tọwọ́ bọ tòbí i rẹ̀, lọ́ bá na'wọ́ m'àdó hun b'óóde. Ò ní n gb'àdó yìí. Ó ní àjẹẹ̀jẹtán oore nùun fún mi láyé àti láílái.

Mo l' "Àdó yîí?"

Ò nì "Hẹn."

"Èyì?"

Akíntáyò: Sé 'èé se p'ọ́ fẹ́ẹ́ lo ọgbọ́n àti gba ẹran?

Pabíẹkùn: Mo ní bàràndà n bẹ l'ọ́wọ́ obìnrin yìí o. Èyîí fẹ́ lù mí n'jìbìtì ẹran o.

Akíntáyò: T'ẹẹ bée gọ̀ ọ́.

Pabíẹkùn: Orí ẹran hun sì nbẹ lọ́'ọ tèmi. Èmi ò f'orí ẹran hun ú lẹ̀. Bó ti 'á f'àdó hun lé mi lọ́'ọ́, ibi ẹ̀rù ti bà mí tí mọ yọ̀nda ẹ̀ fún u nùun. Ọwọ́ tí àdó hun tẹ̀ mí lọ́'ọ́, l'atégùn hun sì fẹ́ wá yẹ́ẹ́. Ara mi sì tutù wálẹ̀ bí ìgbà tí wọn bá gbé ẹsẹ̀ èèyàn l'órí yìnyín. Mo ní kiní yìí l'àpẹẹrẹ. Mọ bá ju orí ẹtu ú'lẹ̀.

Akíntáyò: Kí lẹẹ́ wàá p'ẹẹ pa ngb'ẹẹ bá dé'lé?

Pabíẹkùn: Ẹ ẹ̀ maa wò mí n'ran. N'gbà a mo j'ẹtu'úlẹ̀, mo ní "Nlẹ́ o ìyá. Kíl'àdó yìí n sisẹ́ fún?"

Ó l' "O bèèrè ọ̀rọ̀. Gbogbo ibikíbi poo tọ́ọ́ bá ti dé l'ọ́sàn-án, tí èé sè'gbẹ́ òru o, tọ́ọ́ bá ti r'ójú ẹsẹ̀ eran, irù ẹranko ò y'ówù tọ́ yẹ ọ́ jẹ́ l'áyé, tọ́ọ́ bá e sí àdó yìí, tọ́ọ́ gbọ̀n ọ́ s'ójú ẹsẹ̀ ẹ̀ rẹ̀, lọ wá bì kan jòkó sí. Ìgbà tí ọ́ bá e tó ìdátọ́mì márùn-ún, ẹran hun ó rìn wá bá ọ. Ọ ọ́ kàn pa á n'pa sàáràà ni." Lọ́ bá f'àdó lé n lọ́'ọ́.

Mo ní "Èyîíí ó sì rí bòo ti wí, ìyá yìí?"

Ó ní “Bẹ́ẹ̀ ní o rí.”

Mo ní dú’ó obìnrin yìí. Méè gb’ẹ́tu lọ...” Mọ bá npè é. Àfi láú! Ni n bá rí i mọ́. “Ìyá yìí dú’ó. Ọ́ daa, bí n bá fẹ́ rí ọ lẹ́yìn èyí níbo ni n maa pàdé ẹ?” Ni n bá rí i mọ́. Ha!

Akíntáyò: Ẹ́ẹ̀ wàá maa wò ó p’ọ́ gbá a yín.

Pabíẹ́kùn: Sé n ọ̀ s’àseyọsẹ̀ báyìí o. “Ìyá yìí má gbẹ́ran yìí lọ. Kíni n ọ́ ha wí l’ábà?” Mọ bá n y’àdó hun ú wò. Eb’ílẹ̀ fẹ́ẹ̀ mọ́? B’ílẹ̀ bá ti mọ́ náà ni n ó rii pé mọ y’àdó yìí wò. Tí ‘ọ̀ bá e sisẹ́, Igbó Olókè yìí, ahùn yí ọ́ dá n mọ̀ pé ìran baba à mi ní í s’ọdẹ. Yí ọ́ mọ̀ wípé Afọ́lábí Àdìó ọmọ Ọ̀súngbáròyé n ni baba ọdẹ ẹ̀ mi í se. Yí ọ́ dá nmọ̀.

Mọ bá m’àdó, mọ bá fi ‘àpó. B’ílẹ̀ ti mọ́, ìyàwó kí mi, ìdáhùn mi ‘ọ̀ jọ bí àrà. N mọ bá gbéra.

“N bọ̀, arábìnrin o. Máa wá nkan t’àwọn ọmọ rẹ ọ́ jẹ o.” Mọ bá m’ádòó hun, mọ bá wọ’gbó. N’gbà a mo rìn sàà, mọ bá r’ójú ẹsẹ̀ ẹran. Ewé èg̀ẹ́, ewé kókò yìí, ẹran pupa kan lọ́ jẹ nîì’ín. Jẹ́ n dán ‘hun t’ìyá yìí wí wò. N bá m’àdó hun jáde. N bá ta á s’ójú ẹsẹ̀ ẹ rẹ̀. N bá wá’bìkan jòkó sí. Ìwọ ìbọn yìí, t’ẹ́ran bá yọ nîì’ín, tọ́ bá se pé ‘wọ lọ bá tàn n jẹ, nîì’ín ni n ó ti kán ọ. N bá jòkó. N’gbà ọ́ pẹ́, ó tó bí ìdátọ̀mì méjì, bí ìsẹ́jú márùn-ún, lẹran hun bá n yọwọ́yọsẹ̀ ẹ́ bọ̀. Ẹran mà nìí! Ẹranko ní nmà n bọ̀ yîì! Ẹran pupa. O sí dè ọ̀gangan ojú ẹsẹ̀ ibi i mo bu nkan lé hun, ló dú’ó f’imú gbóòórùn rẹ̀ báyìí. Kín màá túnwò? Iná bá ké.

Akíntáyò: Gbìnrà!

Pabíẹ́kùn: Àfi yakata.

Akíntáyò: L’ẹran bá kú.

Pabíẹ́kùn: Ẹran yìí kú. Èyîî ‘èè tîî n’ígbàgbọ́ o. Mo ní kèè dá n lójú. N ó túntún u yẹ̀wò. N’gbà a ‘lẹ̀ ée sú, ẹ̀ẹ̀mejì n mọ yẹ̀ ẹ́ wò: mee p’ẹ́tu kan, mo sì p’ẹran pupa kan lá’àárọ̀. N’gbà ọ́ dàárọ̀ ọjọ́ kejì, ọ̀dọ̀ baba ọdẹ ẹ̀ mi n mo mú u lọ, Afọ́lábí Àdìó ọmọ Ọ̀súngbáròyé. Mo ní baba mo rí nkan àrà. Báyìí kasa, báyìí kàwòdì.

Bàbá ní “Ndaa múu’á. Ọ̀ n d’ọkùn’in í lọ nùun. Ìwọ náà rí díẹ̀ n’nú nkan t’áwa náà ti n rí.”

Pabíẹ́kùn: One night I went on hunting. I had been hunting and was tired. At about two o’ clock in the midnight, I started to despair, wondering whether I would be able to get anything to take home to my father, children and all. I then resolved to go to the Forest of Oloke, just after Osunro River. Right there was an *ahun*[74] tree, so ancient that it was older than even the oldest of our elders, and very

[74] Alstoria boonei (Z.O. Gbile, 1984)

big too. Right there, I looked up and a pair of animal's eyes reflected my light. I knew immediately those were the eyes of a male duiker. Then *my gun spoke*. I heard no movement, so I knew *the animal had been put to sleep*. I was happy my next meal would not be a lousy one. I took my gun. You know, it is always my practice to reload the gun before approaching any animal I shot. When I got there and made to carry the duiker a woman in skirt emerged.

Akíntáyò: In the night?

Pabíẹkùn: "Hi woman", I greeted.

"Hi", she replied. "Where are you taking my animal?"

"Which animal?" I asked.

"The very one you are about to pick", she said.

"This very animal I killed", I said, "is going with me to the village. My father expects me with it". She insisted it was hers.

"Who the hell are you to challenge me this midnight?" I retorted. "A mere woman, you." She had only a skirt on. I held the animal's forelegs; she held the hindquarters and the struggle began. The scuffle became so intense that I started feeling I was going to lose the game to her; and one of my legs is bad, you know. I put away my gun and secured my grip more firmly on the animal.

"You are finished today", I said. "You just wait and see."

We continued with the scuffle till about four o' clock. Then she said "Oh, hunter."

"Yes", I answered.

"Please, have mercy", she pleaded.

Akíntáyò: Have mercy? For what?

Pabíẹkùn: What mercy? I had anyway resolved to take out the cutlass and cut the animal in two, so that each of us would go with a half. Now she pleaded for mercy. I asked her what manner of mercy she wanted. She explained that the animal was being bred by herself and her husband. This, she said, was not the only one. But the one I had killed was the nanny duiker, mother of the entire herd. I replied that the one I killed was male.

"Even though it was male", she said, "don't you know that is the only stud duiker that mates with the females? There is no other." She pleaded that I should not go with the animal.

"Never!" I refused. "I go with this animal to the village." She pleaded and begged profusely. She explained that her husband lived separately in a different forest. He had, in fact, gone on a journey. If he returned, she continued, and found the animal missing, and she could not show him the dead body to show that the animal had been killed, that would be the end of their marriage. Her husband was so mean he would simply throw her out.

Akíntáyò: [laughing] Throw her out?

Pabíẹkùn: "What is my business with your being thrown out?" I replied. "I am taking away this animal. I do not have any other thing to do with you." She kept on pleading. She then said that there was a favour she could do me that I would profit from till death; for this duiker would surely not last me more than five days or six as food, I and my household. But what she would give me in its place would be of eternal benefit. She then put her hand in her skirt and brought out something.

"Oh hunter", she called.

"Yes", I answered her.

"Take this", she offered it. "This is of eternal benefit. Give me the duiker that I may show the dead body to my husband." She put her hand in the skirt and handed me a gourdlet, saying it would be of eternal benefit to me.

"This very gourdlet?" I querried.

"Yes", she affirmed.

"This very thing?" I asked again.

"Yes."

Akíntáyò: Wasn't that a ploy to cheat you?

Pabíẹkùn: I also thought the woman was a swindler. I thought she wanted to cheatme out of the game.

Akíntáyò: If you dare let her.

Pabíẹkùn: No, I still had the animal's head in my grip. The moment she handed over the gourdlet, I was seized by a sort of fear and I released the animal. As I held

the gourdlet, I felt a strange breeze blow; my entire body went cold as if my feet were placed on ice. Having felt this sign, I released the duiker's head.

Akíntáyò: Now, what are you going to show them at home?

Pabíẹkùn: You just look at me. After releasing the duiker, I said "Now woman, of what use is this gourdlet?"

"Thank you", she said. "Whenever you are hunting in the daylight – not in the night, please – any footprint of an animal you see, whatever animal it could be, sprinkle some of the content of the gourdlet on it, and find a place to mount a watch. Before long the animal would come to you. You will kill it as easily as that." She then handed me the gourdlet.

"Are you sure it is going to be as you said, woman?"

"Exactly as I said", she affirmed.

"Now wait a minute. Before you go with the duiker…", I made to continue but she vanished into the thin air.

"Now, wait woman. Where and how am I expected to seek you in future if I want to see you?" She just disappeared.

Akíntáyò: You must have thought she had tricked you at that moment.

Pabíẹkùn: Have I not overreached myself now? I was thinking. Now that the woman has gone with the animal, what story do I tell at home? I started to inspect the gourdlet. It is almost daylight, I thought. I will put the gourdlet to test the moment the day breaks. If it fails, the entire of this Oloke Forest and this *ahun* tree shall pay for it. By my forefathers, this tree will surely know that Adio the son of Osungbaroye is my master. It surely will.

I then put the gourdlet in my pocket [and went home]. Early in the morning I was so offended that I did not respond well to my wife's greeting. I then set out.

"Woman, I will be back", I called out to my wife. "Take care of the children." I took the gourdlet and entered into the forest. After walking for a moment, I saw footprints of some animals. I saw the leftover of cassava and cocoyam leaves, and I knew it was an antelope. I decided to test what the woman gave me. I took out the gourdlet and applied the content on the animal's footprint. I then sat somewhere, waiting. You this gun [I thought, inspecting it], if truly an

animal shows up and you fail me, I shall break you in two today. After sitting for some time, about five minutes, an animal emerged from the bush. This truly is an animal, I thought. A real animal coming out. An antelope, the red one. When it got to the footprint on which I applied the thing, it stopped and sniffed at it. I was not slow to act. And *the fire spoke*.

Akíntáyò: Bang!

Pabíẹkùn: And down it went.

Akíntáyò: And the animal died.

Pabíẹkùn: It died. I still had some doubt, and therefore decided to put the thing to test once more. Before nightfall I tried it two times: I killed one duiker and one antelope. The next morning, I took the gourdlet to my master-hunter, Afọlábí Àdìó the son of Ọ̀súngbáròyé. I told him all the mysterious things I saw.

He said: "Let me look at it. Yes, you are now growing up, having seen some of the things that we too have experienced."

APPENDIX II

The narrative of Alhaji Táníátù Akínkúnmi Akéwejè[75]

Akéwejè: Orúkọ ọ̀ mi ni Àlhájì Táníátù Akínkúnmi tí gbogbo èèyàn npè ní Akéwejẹ̀ n'ílùú Ìkirè.

Bí ọdún méje s'ẹ́hìn, a se igbó wawàá – igbó táà ma npè ní wawàá ni tí ìkan nínú àwọn ọmọ ọdẹ tàbí àgbà ọdẹ bá nse ìnáwó, tọ́ bá wáá bẹ ìgbẹ́, aá kó ajá kó ìbọn, aá sì kó àwọn èèyàn lẹ́yìn, aá lọ s'óko. Toò, inú Igbó Sasàá la lọ dẹ ní ọ̀sán ọjọ́ náà. Àwọn táa jìjọ lọ dẹ oko: Ọlọ́dẹ Ràfíù Àkàndé…

Akíntáyò: Sasáà l'ọ́nà Arárọ̀mí, àb'éwo?

Akéwejè: Iwájú u Ọdẹyinká ló ti'ẹ̀ lù sí. *So*, pẹ́lù Tájù Ògúndèjì, Jèékọ̀ọ̀bù,… Ọ̀sán ọjọ́ yẹn, Ògúndèjì ló kọ́kọ́ yìnbọn sí ọlọ́gẹ̀dẹ̀. Ọlọ́gẹ̀dẹ̀ yẹn kú. Kò wáá pẹ́ẹ̀ rẹ̀, ìgalà kan dé'wájú ù mi, ó dúró l'áàrin bí ìsẹ́jú márùn-ún. N 'ò rí i. Sùgbọ́n mo mọ̀ pé ẹran ti wà n'wájú ù mi.

Akíntáyò: Kóóko bò ó?

Akéwejè: Kóóko 'ò bò ó, *but* mi 'ò rí i. Ó wá se díẹ̀, bó se jáde, a wá ré ọwọ́ ní ara à'bọn. Mọ sáà ri wípé ẹ̀gbẹ́ mi ló rìn kọjá.

Akíntáyò: Ìbọn ọ̀ bá a ni?

Akéwejè: Ọta hóró kan 'ò sòfò lára a rẹ̀.

Akíntáyò: Sé kò subú ú bẹ̀ ni?

Akéwejè: Kàyéefì ni. Ẹran abàmì ni.

Akíntáyò: Ẹran ò' ké "bọ̀ọ̀ọ̀".

Akéwejè: Hẹn. Kò tiẹ̀ dún. N'gbà tí wọ́n gbọ́'ròó ìbọn ọ̀ mi – n'torí ìbọn tèmi yàtọ̀ nínú gbogbo àwọn ìbọn tá a ma nlò – wọ́n wá bá mi pé ẹran dà. Mo ní èmi 'ò ri o. Wọ́n ní kí n tètè sọ'bi i mọ́ bá gb'ẹ́ran sí jàré, k'áwọn s'aáyan ẹ̀.

Mo ní "Mi 'ò r'ẹ́ran! Ibi t'ó rìn lọ rèé." La bá n tọpa a rẹ̀. A wáá r'ípọ́n. N'gbà t'áawá tọ'pọ́n yẹn, a tọ̀ ọ́ dé bèbè Sasàá.

Akíntáyò: Odò Sasàá?

Akéwejè: Hẹn, odò ló njẹ́ Sasàá. N'gbà t'áa tọ ẹran dé bèbè odò, aà rí i k'ó wọ'dò. N bá bọ́ sínu odò:

"Ìwọ odò, t'ó bá jẹ́ se pé ìwọ lọ gb'àbọ̀dè ẹran yìí, èmi ti pa á o". Aìí sìí jọ ọ́ dalẹ̀ ara wa, torí ọdẹ ni Odò Sasàá. Mo sáà dúró bí ìsẹ́jú márùn-ún, kò fún mi l'ésì. A bá jáde kúrò ní etí odò. *So*, b'áa se wá máa jáde kúrò l'étí odò, ìkan nínú àwọn ajá tí ọ́ jẹ́ ajá Tájù

[75] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (13/06/04)

Òǵúndèjì, ló bá n pààrà ara àpáta yẹn. Mo bá ní kán nìsó nídìí àpáta yẹn. N'gbà a dé'dìí àpáta, a rí ẹsẹ̀ ẹran.

"Ìwọ àpátà àti àràbà, ìwọ lo gbàbọ̀dè o. Tóo bá kọ̀ láti má gbé ẹran yìí jáde làárin àsìkò t'áawà n'bí'ìí, oò ní í r'éwé b'orí mọ́ o".

So, a wá dúró títí, kò sọ p'óhun o gb'ẹ́ran á ta, kò l'óhun 'ò gbẹ́ran á ta. A bá kúrò. Mọ wáá pe Ọlọ́dẹ Àkàndé pé t'ó bá di alẹ́ k'ó padà wá sí ídìí àràbà yẹn. T'ó bá dé'bẹ̀, ohun t'ó bá rí ní àpẹẹrẹ, kó sọ ọ́. Ijọ́ yẹn, Ọlọ́dẹ Àkàndé àti Tájù Òǵúndèjì, a jìjọ wà lóko n'íjọ́ náà ni…

Akíntáyò: Ṣé'gi lè sọ̀rọ̀ ni t'ẹ́ẹ̀fi ní 'ò fún u yín lésì?

Akéwejè: Hẹn, b'áa bá f'igi lu'gi, à maa gbó'hùn u'gi.

Akíntáyò: Ṣ'ódò lè sọ̀rọ̀?

Akéwejè: B'éèyàn bá wẹ̀ d'énú odò, odò ọ́ sọ̀rọ̀. A wáá se àlàyé yẹn fún igi, n bá sọ fún Ọlọ́dẹ Àkàndé kọ́ padà á'bẹ. Ṣùgbọ́n Ọlọ́dẹ Àkàndé 'ò lè dé'bẹ̀ ní alẹ́ ọjọ́ yẹn. Ó ní òtútù fẹ́ se fẹ́ẹ́rẹ́fẹ́ l'ára 'hun l'ásìkò t'óhun fẹ́ máa lọ sí'bẹ̀. Àti p'ó l'éwu gan f'óhun gan láti máa lọ s'íbẹ̀ torí a ti jọ kán ra wa ní róro.

Ìgbà tọ́ wá máa di àárọ̀ ọjọ́ kẹta tí Àkàndé máa dé ibi tí mo ní kó máa lọ rèé wo ẹran, nkan tó jẹ́ kàyéefì n'bẹ̀ ni pé ojú u'bi tí mo ti dúró tí mo ti yìnbọn lakọ̀ọ́kọ́, ojú u'bẹ̀ náà ló ti rí ẹran. Kàyéefì tí ó wa sẹlẹ́ ni pé b'éèyàn bá yìnbọn s'ẹ́ran, t'ẹ́ran yẹn bá kú – b'ó se 'jọ́ náà ló kú ni, b'ó se 'jọ́ kejì ni – t'éèyàn 'ò bá rí i, kó to di pé yíó bàjẹ́ – yàtọ̀ fún ẹran ẹfọ̀n tó ma n bajẹ ní bí ijọ́ kẹrin – yíó pẹ. Ìgalà 'ò kíí tètè é bàjẹ́, ẹtu 'ò kíí tètè é bàjẹ́. Sùgbọ́n ìgalà tá nwí yìí, ẹnu ohun tó sẹ́kù lára rẹ̀ tí 'ò tîì ma sun omi ni ìwo o rẹ̀. Awọ rẹ̀ tí ọlọ́dẹ f'ọwọ́ kàn, gbogbo rẹ̀ ti di omi pátápátá. Kó wa le jẹ́ ìdánilójú, ló bá gé orí ẹran yẹn. Nígbàt'ó gé orí rẹ̀, ò wáá yọ ìwo yẹn, ó wáá kó ìwo ò yẹn ránsẹ́ wípé "Akéwejẹ̀ o, Àpáta pọ ẹran rẹ̀ jáde s'ílẹ̀ o. Sùgbọ́n ó ti sọ ọ́ di ẹran ìdin o". Òfò-onílé-òfò-àlejò n ló fi ẹran yẹn se. Ìgbà t'àa wáá rí i bẹ́ẹ̀…

Akíntáyò: Ẹrán ti pinyìnkìn?

Akéwejè: Ó kọjà a p'ó ti pinyìnkìn. Ó ti di omi pátápátá ni.

Akíntáyò: Kò sì yẹ kó tîì kúkú bàjẹ́.

Akéwejè: Àwọn ágbá ọdẹ mọ́ pé t'ẹ́ran bá kú bẹ́ẹ̀, kó tóó di wípé ìsíkanrín tàbí eesin ọdẹ máa bo ẹran, ó sì n d'ijọ́ kẹta. Léhìn ijọ́ kẹta ló jẹ́ se pé wúwú u rẹ̀…

Akíntáyò: Sùgbọ́n ọ́ d'ẹ́ran yín padà?

Akéwejè: Haàà, ọ́ dá a padàa.

Akíntáyò: Kí lẹ wá se sí i?

Akéwejè: N'jọ́ táa ti kọ́kọ́ bẹ̀rẹ̀ náà la ti dìjọ b'ára wa ní gbólóhùn. Ìgbà t'ó ti jẹ́ se pé ó ti gbé e mì, ó ti lérò pé bóyá 'hun t'óhun lè tọ́jú ni. Sùgbọ́n n'gbà tí àpáta náà rí 'hun tó jù ú

lọ – bí'rin bá kan'rin ni àwọn t'án bí wa ma nwí, ìkan ó tẹ́ fún 'kan – ìgbà tó rí 'hun tó jù ú lọ, ó gbé ẹran yẹn jáde. Sùgbọ́n òhun náà wá sọ pé ọkùnrin l'òhun.

Látàrí i pé ọ́ wá ba ẹran à yẹn jẹ́, a wá tún lọ padà sọ fún àràbà yẹn wípé láti'jọ́ náà lọ o, kò tún gbọdọ̀ jẹ́ igi mọ́. *So*, àt'orí n ni'gi yẹn ti kú, kó sẹ̀ẹ́ tó wá di pé nínú u osù…

Akíntáyò: Ẹ lo agbara àwọn ọdẹ fún u.

Akéwejè: N'gbà tó jẹ́ se pé àjẹbí ni.

Akíntáyò: Ní èpè t'ó gbóná.

Akéwejè: A bá'ra a wa sọ̀rọ̀ ni.

Akíntáyò: Njẹ́ ẹ tun tí l'ánfààní láti bá iru ẹranko báyìí pàdé?

Akéwejè: Ìrírí pọ̀ l'òrìsìírísìí. Ibìkan t'ó jẹ́ se pé à n pe bẹ̀ ní Oníkùkùté… Oníkùkùté yẹn, lọ́nà a Marère ni, ọ̀nà Ìkirè náà ni. Èyí t'áa bá pàdé níbi ìyẹn ni pé a lọ sí oko álẹ́. Èmi nìkan ni mo lọ. Inú igbó yẹn, Igbó Awẹ́ẹ́rẹ́ la máa n pè é. Odò kékeré kan wà n'bẹ̀. Ẹgbẹ́ odò yẹn, àsìkò tí n maa d'ébẹ̀ sí, mo wá bá tí wọn fi àpáàdí gbé ẹyin pẹ́pẹ́yẹ ẹ́ 'lẹ̀ dè mí.

Akíntáyò: Nínú u'gbó?

Akéwejè: Nínú u'gbó l'óru. Ẹyin pẹ́pẹ́yẹ yẹn, rírí tí mo rí i… Àwọn ẹmọ́ kan n jẹ oko n'bẹ̀. Mo wá ní dandan màá sá pa nínú u rẹ̀ ní alẹ́ ọjọ́ yẹn. Ìgbà a mo dé bẹ̀, àwọn ẹmọ́ yẹn, mi ì rí'kankan yìnbọn sí. Iwájú yẹn tí mo wá tọ̀ wípé kí n mọ kí ló n sẹlẹ̀, bí mo se bá ẹbọ yẹn l'ójú odò n'ìyẹn. Ẹ̀rú bàá mọ̀ kí n padà o. Mo bá ní kóómí 'hun tó bá sẹlẹ̀ n ó g'òkè odò yẹn. Ojú Ògún tó mi. Mo gun òkè odò yẹn, sùgbọ́n láàrin wákàtí mèjí, mo sọnù n'nú u'gbò. Mi 'ò rína mọ́. Mi 'ò mọ 'bi tí mo wà nínú u'gbó yẹn. N'gbà ó wáá yá tí ojú mi sẹ̀sẹ̀ bẹ̀rẹ̀ sí í wá rọlẹ̀, mo sẹ̀sẹ̀ wà à mọ ibi tí mo wà. Sùgbọ́n ibi tí mo ti jáde, kì í se bíi máìlì mẹ́ta sí ibi tí mo wà tẹ́lẹ̀. Ẹgbẹ́ ibìkan t'a npè nì Olúbàdàn ni mo ti jáde.

Ìgbà ó wá di ọ̀sán ijọ́ kejì, mo wáá pe gbogbo àwọn èèyàn wa níkọ̀ọ̀kan pé kán jẹ́ ká wáá lọ d'ẹgbó yẹn l'ọ́sàán. A wáá lọ síbẹ̀ l'ọ́sàán. A wá sí'gun lọ. Ẹran t'ól'óhun 'ò níí fi 'ílẹ̀ l'óru, a wáá bá a mú mẹ́ta kúrò níbẹ̀ ní ojú gbangba.

Akíntáyò: Ní akẹran?

Akéwejè: Hẹn. A pa ìgalà, a pa òdù ọ̀yà méjì. *Then*, ọlọ́gẹ̀dẹ̀ t'a n pè ní ẹtà, a pa ìkan. Sítù Ọlọ́pàá àti Súlè Awólékè, àwọn méjèèjí ni wọ́n yìnbọn sí ìgalà tí a pa n'bẹ̀ níjọ́ yẹn. Ara àwọn nkan t'ó n sẹlẹ̀ nìyẹn.

Akéwejè: My name is Alhaji Táníátù Akínkúnmi, known by everybody in Ìkirè as Akéwejè. About seven years ago, we went on a wawàá expedition – wawàá is the corporate hunting we do, using dogs and guns, to help a fellow hunter, young or elderly, who is planning to mark an occasion source for meat. Now it was Sasàá

Forest that we hunted that afternoon. I went in the company of the following hunters: Ràfíù Àkàndé…

Akíntáyò: Sasàá Forest, on the road to Aráràmí? Or which one?

Akéwejè: No, it is after Ọdẹ́yínká. So, with Taju Ògúndèjì, Jacob… That afternoon, it was Ògúndèjì that first shot at a civet cat. He killed it. Not long after that, a deer emerged before me and stood for about five minutes. I did not see it. Yet I knew an animal was before me.

Akíntáyò: Was it covered by foliage?

Akéwejè: No it wasn't, but I did not see it. After a time, it came out and *I let go the fire*. But it went away passing through the place where I stood.

Akíntáyò: Didn't the shot hit it?

Akéwejè: All the bullets found their target.

Akíntáyò: Did the animal not fall?

Akéwejè: It was mysterious. It was a mysterious animal.

Akíntáyò: The animal did not even utter a bleat?

Akéwejè: Yes, it uttered no sound. Upon hearing the report of my gun – for my gun was different from all others – my colleagues came to ask me to show them the kill. I told them I could not find it. They [thought I was joking and] insisted I show them where the animal was that they might begin to cut it up.

"I can't find it", I repeated. "It went this way." So we started to trace it. We saw a trail of blood. It went on and we followed it till the bank of Sasaa.

Akíntáyò: Did it continue up till Sasàá?

Akéwejè: It almost entered Sasàá

Akíntáyò: Sasàá River?

Akéwejè: Yes, Sasàá the river. When we followed the trail up to the river bank and could not see it enter into the river, I then waded in.

"River", I said, "if you it is that shields this animal, be informed that I have killed it." Now the river and I had been trusted allies and never betrayed each other, for the river itself is a hunter. I waited for about five minutes, it gave me no response. So, we left the river bank. As we left the river, one of Taju Ògúndèjì's

dogs now started to fret about a rock. When we got to the rock, we saw the animal's footprints beside it.

"Now you rock and the araba[76] tree [beside it], you are shielding a fugitive", I warned. If you do not evict the animal at this very moment, no single leaf would be left on you as shade." We waited for a time. It neither said it was going to release the animal or not. So we left. Now I called Àkàndé and instructed him to come back to inspect that *araba* in the night and bring back word. That day, Àkàndé was present with Taju Ògúndèjì.

Akíntáyò: Does a tree speak? Why did you accuse the tree of not responding?

Akéwejè: *When you speak the language of the tree, you hear the tree speak.*

Akíntáyò: Does the river speak too?

Akéwejè: *If you swim upriver enough, you hear the river speak.* So after consulting thus with the river, I instructed the hunter Àkàndé to return later to the place. But he could not come back that evening. He was struck by a fit of cold as he made to go to the place. Moreover, it was dangerous for him to go there [without some protection] for I and the rock/araba had drawn the battle line.

In the morning of the third day when Àkàndé got to the place, he, surprisingly, found the animal on the very spot where I had stood to fire at it. Now if one killed an animal, it takes a long time before it goes bad, except for buffalo that goes bad in just four days. The deer and the duiker do not go bad quickly. But this very deer had decomposed to such point that only the horns were left. The hunter could not even see the skin. As a proof, he took off the skull and removed the horns from it. He then sent them to me with this message: "Akéwejè, the rock has thrown up the animal. But it has infested it with maggots". The rock would rather have it go rotten than let anybody else have it.

Akíntáyò: So it had gone bad?

Akéwejè: It had gone totally bad.

Akíntáyò: But it ought not to have gone bad that quickly.

Akéwejè: All experienced hunters know that before flies start to visit a dead animal, it takes up to three days. It only starts to bloat after three days.

[76] Ceiba pentandra (Z.O. Gbile, 1984)

Akíntáyò: *It* returned your animal, didn't it?

Akéwejè: Well, it did.

Akíntáyò: What did you then do?

Akéwejè: We had both exchanged words the very first day [the rock/araba took in the animal]. It must have thought it could take the animal and go scot free. But the rock met his match: *when two irons are locked in a fight*, so say our fathers, *the weaker gives way*. When it met its match, it let go the animal. It only tried to be difficult [that was why it spoilt the meat].

Now because it spoilt the meat, I went back to tell it that from that day on, it had lost its status as a tree. So, it withered and died from the top down, before, in the month of…

Akíntáyò: You applied the *wisdom* of the hunters.

Akéwejè: Yes, since it runs in the blood.

Akíntáyò: That was a very malignant spell.

Akéwejè: Just an utterance.

Akíntáyò: Have you ever had any encounter with such a difficult animal?

Akéwejè: There are a lot more of such happenings. There is a place called Oníkùkùté, on the road to Marère and Ìkirè. I was going on night hunting. I went alone, to the Forest of Awẹ́ẹ́ré. There was a stream. By that stream, three duck's eggs were placed in a shard; it was meant for me.

Akíntáyò: In the forest?

Akéwejè: In the forest, and in the night too. I saw the eggs… I had planned to hunt some rodents that were grazing that area of the forest that night. But when I got there, I could not find any animal to shoot at. It was when I moved further up that I came upon that sacrifice [of three duck's eggs in a shard]. I almost decided to turn back. But I resolved to go on and cross the river to the other side, for Ògún is my guide. When I crossed the river, I was lost for about two hours. I could not see or feel anything. When I later came to, I knew where I was. The place I later came out from was more than three miles from my initial position. I came out from a place close to Olúbàdàn.

In the afternoon of the next day, I called all my people [hunters] out to go and hunt that forest. So, there we went that afternoon, all in arms. Of those animals the forest was reluctant to let go in the night, we took away three in the daylight.

Akíntáyò: Fully grown animals?

Akéwejè: Yes. We killed a deer and two grasscutters. Then we also killed a civet. Ṣítù Ọlọ́pàá and Súlè Awólékè both shot that deer. Those were some of the things we have experienced.

APPENDIX III

The narrative of Kìlání Alápó performed by Kólá Akíntáyò[77].

Ọdẹ akọni t'alé òní níí jé Kìlání Alápó. Ọlọ́'un Ọba à mi, mọ màmà dé o. *Ọdẹ Akọni* t'ẹ é gbó l'álé yìí, ó tún l'ágbára díẹ̀. Ẹ è wá nkan f'ìdí lé, àbí k'éẹ tún f'ìdí lé nkan. B'éèyàn bá ti n gb'*Ọdẹ Akọni* lát'ijó yìí, bí 'ọ bá tún gbó t'alé yìí, ó kù ú'bìkan o.

Abà Alápó la nlọ l'álé yìí o. B'áa bá n lọ s'Ábà Alápó, b'áa bá dé Olódó – nígbà a kọjá Ìyànà Ṣóòsì – níbi i mótò ti n tóòònù, béè l'aá r'áwọn òkadà n'bè. L'aá bàá sọ fún òkadà pé Alápó la nlọ o. B'áwa se tò ó dé bé nùun. Wọn wí fún wa pé òn yìí kò mà séé tò. Òkadà laá gùn. A ní dandan, aá gb'ókò dé'bè. A rì l'ójú òn débii pé a féè lò tó ogbòn ìséjú sí wákàtí kan ká tóó yọ. Àmó toò, ẹnu u'sé ẹ wa náà ni. Ibòmîì í wà t'aálọ, tó jé wípé mótò 'ò leè dé bè, àwa á wẹ odò kọjá ni kátó lọ rèé gba ètò n'íbi taá bá lọ.

Ẹ màa gbó o. Abà Alàpò la wà l'álé yìí. Kìlání Alápó l'ọdẹ akọni l'álé yìí. Igbóo'bo ni Kìlání Alápó máa n dẹ? A máa dẹ'Gbó Òkè Òsun; a máa dẹ'Gbó Eléésan; a máa dẹ'Gbó Òlébè; a máa dẹ'Gbó Abà Òkò àti béèbéè lọ. Àwọn wo ni wón jọ máa n dè'gbé? Àwọn bíi Kàsîmù l'Àbá Òlébè, Ràfíù n'Ídìí Ọsàn àti Làmídì Èrèọlá t'óti gbésè. Ináọlájí n'Ídìí Ìrókò, wón jọ ó sodẹ ni.

Ọdẹ yìí a má p'éran bí ìgalà, etu, èsúró, eta; àìmoye òyà, olúfà, òòrè alágbòn, òòrè séé àt'àwọn eranko béè béè lọ. Seẹ rí'hun tí n selè n'íjù, ó pò. Ìwònba t'é e le f'etí gbó n l'èmi maá so l'órí ètò yí. L'étí Òsún, ibè ló s'odẹ lọ o – Igbó Elérè. Ẹ gbó mi ná: àràba kan n be nínú u'Gbó Elérè yí, b'ódẹ yìí bá ti d'ébè lódoodún níí ma á pa olúfà n'bè. O sì ti pa olúfà n'dìí igi yìí, ó ti tó olúfà méjo. Ẹ wáá gbó o: ohun tó selè, ó l'ágbára díè. Odún kèèsán pé; ode gbéra n'lè, ó tún múra àti lọ s'ídìí igi yìí. Nígbàt'ódẹ ó de bè, nkan mîì selè o. Ọdẹ mà dé'bè, ode 'ọ bá olùfá n'dìí àràbà o. Ẹ è pé kí l'ọdẹ bá nbè? Awo ò'galà l'ọdẹ bá n'bè. Tàbí kí n so wípé àwò ò'galà n lode bá n'bè – àwò ò'galà t'ígalà bóólè toríteseè. Haà! Awò ò'galà? Ta ló kó o dé'bè? Àwò ò'galà rèé, eran 'ò sí n'nú è! Kínní n selè gan-an? Àwọn ọdẹ l'óògùn. Àwọn ọdẹ gbó'wó. Tó bá jé èyin le bá àwòò'galà nìnùu'gbò, kí l'éé se? Ọdẹ ki àwò eran mólè ni, ní nbá n kó o ó lọ. Níbo ní n k'áwò eran lọ? Ọlọ́'un mà gbà mí o! Ọdẹ k'áwò ò'galà wá'lé!

"Èè p'éran bò ni?"

"Ọwó ò yá lónìí ni?"

"Ó ti ha jé t'ówó 'ò fi yá?"

A máa wá béè, a'ìí bínú."

[77] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (28/09/03)

Ọdẹ l'ọ́wọ́ 'ọ̀ yá ni. Obì'in rẹ̀ náà ní kò burú. Ọdẹ kó àwọ̀ – kọ̀ j'ẹ́nìkankan ọ́ mọ̀ l'Ábà Alápó. B'áa ti nsọ ọ́ yìí ni gbogbo ará Abà Alápó wọn ọ́ sẹ̀sẹ̀ maa mọ̀. Àwọn ọdẹ a maa gbé ọ̀rọ̀'ọ́nú. Ọ́ sọ fún ọ̀rẹ́ ẹ rẹ̀ bíi méjì:

"Ẹ dákun, ẹ má j'éèyàn ọ́ gbọ́ o"

Lọ́ bá kó àwọ̀, ọ́ lọ rèé kó o pamọ́ s'étí àjà. Kinní yìí n kọ ọdẹ yìí l'óminú, lọ́ bá lọ rèé bá awo wípé:

"Nkankan n s'emí ní hààhin!" L'awó bá gbé ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀. L'àgàdàngbá bá f'ìrù na'lẹ̀.

Ifá ní "Ẹni tó ni àwọ̀ lọ́ọbìkan ni o. Ọ́ n bọ̀ wáá gbá àwọ̀ ọ rẹ̀ o. Yaa kó o pamọ́ ni o. Nígbà ọ́ bá dé, k'ọ́ọ mọ b'oó se tù ú, t'o ó ko àwọ̀ ọ rẹ̀ fún u". L'ọdẹ́ bá tún kó àwọ̀, ló kó o s'étí àjà. Èèmi! Irù àwọ̀ ọ kìnni? Èmi èé lọ rèé kó o dà'ánúu'gbó gírangíran. Bọ́ bá j'éyin nkọ́? Ẹ̀ẹ̀ lọ rèé kó o dàá'nú u'gbó jìnàjìnà, k'áláwọ̀ ọ́ lọ rèé bá àwọ̀ ọ rẹ̀ n'bẹ̀. Àwọn ọdẹ́ l'áyà. Àwọn ọdẹ́ l'óògùn.

[Ijala] Maa p'ẹ́ni tọ́ f'ẹ́bìnrin ọdẹ 'ò jìnà s'íkú
Ikú 'ò jìnà s'ẹ́ni ọdẹ́ bá gbà l'óbìnrin.
Tọr'ẹ́ni ọdẹ́ bá pa, bí ọ̀ bá fi kú
Oko rẹ̀ yío d'ìgbòrò
Bí ọ̀ pọ́n bí iná, a sì b'óòrùn sọgba
Kọ̀ pọ́n koko, a sì pọ́n bàìbàì
Ẹni ọdẹ́ pa, bí 'ò kú
Bí n bá nrọ̀nàà'Jẹ̀bú
Kọ́ w'apá òsì, kó wo'sẹ́ t'áhàyá f'igi ìyeyè se
Ẹni ọ bá rí k'ọ́ọ lọ rèé béèrè ọ̀rọ̀ wò

B'ẹ́nìkan bá l'óhun ọ́ gbà wá l'óbìnrin
Ìsẹ́ ní ọ́ p'ọmọ ọ'gúnnugún
Òsì níí pọmọ àparò
Àlọ̀wálé, n ní ọ́ p'ọmọ àtíòro

[song] Ọ̀kan náà t'áa ní nìinì o
Ọ̀kan náà t'áa ní nìinì
Ẹni ọ́ b'ọ́dẹ f'ẹ́yàwó á gbé jombo
Ọ̀kan náà t'áa ní nìinì
B'éèyàn b'ọ́dẹ f'ẹ́yàwó á gbé jombo
Ọ̀kan náà t'áa ní nìinì
T'áa ní nìinì o, t'áa ní nìinì
Ọ̀kan náà t'áa ní nìinì.

Ẹ máa gbọ́ o: wọ́n l'áláwọ̀ ọ́ wàá bèèrè àwọ̀. Ọdẹ k'áwọ̀, ó kó o dà s'étí àjà. Ọdẹ k'áwọ̀ pamọ́. Nígb'ọ̀ọ́ d'ọjọ́ keje, nkan à míì sẹlẹ̀.

[Ìjálá] Ọlọ́'un Ọba 'ò níí jẹ́ ó yí gbogbo o wa lọ́wọ́

Gbogbo o wa l'aá gbádùn po'ogodo, pò'ògòdò, po'ogodo

Bì gbgbo o wá bí'mọ l'ọkùnrin kò níí kú

B'áa bí'mọ l'óbìnrin kò níí kú

Ikú 'ò níí p'olúmẹ̀yẹ ẹnìkankan nínú u wa. Àrùn

Kò ní í s'olúmẹ̀yẹ ẹnìkankan nínú u wa

Gbogbo o wa, aà níí p'òfo, aà níí r'òfo, aà níí t'afà s'ínú ù kuudu

B'áa ti fẹ́ ó rí n ní óòrí

Ebi 'ò níí k'ẹ́hìn ayo fún gbogbo o wa

Aà sì níí f'ọwọ́ pá'gànná ká tóó mọ'bi àá bá gbé n sún

Nígb'ọ̀ọ́ d'ọjọ́ keje, Abúlé Alápó gb'àlejò. Kìlání Alápó gb'àlejò obìn'in pupa kan l'ábà a wọn. Ẹ gbọ́ ná, mọ sọ fún u yín, ìwọ̀nba t'ẹ̀ẹ́ le gbọ́ t'ẹ̀ẹ́ fi r'óorun sùn ni mọ̀ọ́ maá sọ l'órí ètò. Àlejò obìnrin pupa kan lọ́ mà déédé w'ọ̀lú o. L'ọ́ bá l'óhun n bèèrè e Kìlání Alápó. Àwọn ajá 'ò tiẹ̀ j'ẹ́nìkan ó r'ójú u tiẹ̀. L'àwọn ajá bẹ̀rẹ̀ sí níí gbó "Gbáù! Wáù!" Àwọn ajá n gbó. Àwọn ajá npa kuuru ú mọ́ ọ. Bẹ́ẹ̀ l'àwọn èèyàn wá j'ísẹ́ fún Kìlání Alápó pé "Ọ má l'álejò o". Ni Kìlání bá yọjú sí i. Ọdẹ yọjú s'óbìnrin pupa tí'an ní n bèèrè e rẹ̀.

"Haà, ẹ nlẹ́ o. Ẹ dákun, èyin ni Kílání Alápó? Mọ fẹ́ẹ́ rii yín ni"

Ọdẹ́ ní sé 'ò sòro. Ó ní k'ọ́dẹ ọ́ jẹ́ k'áwọn ọ́ tẹ̀. Àt'òhun àt'ọdẹ, wọ́n mà tẹ̀ o. Ibi 'án ti n sọ̀rọ̀ ní bònkẹ́lẹ́, bẹ́ẹ̀ ní ọ́ bá sọ f'ọ́dẹ yìí wípé:

"Ẹ dákun, àwọ̀ ò mi t'ẹ́ẹ̀ kó, mọ fẹ́ k'ẹ́ẹ̀ kó o fún mi."

Ọdẹ́ ní "Àwọ̀?"

"Bẹ́ẹ̀ni. Ẹ dákun ù"

Ọdẹ́ ní "L'óòótọ́ ni. S'óo rí i. Ọ́ọ́ wàá maa n'só n'ídìí àràbá hun. Bọ́ọ́ bá dé'dìí àràbà, dú'ó dè mí n'bẹ̀. B'aá bàá se s'ọ̀rọ̀ aláláwọ̀ sí, aá jọ máa sọ ọ́"

Obìnrin yìí lọ o. S'ọ́dẹ wá lọ rèé pàdé e rẹ̀ l'álẹ́, àbí b'óo ni? Àsé'bi ọ́ bá le làá b'ọ́kùn'in. Ọ́ mà d'alẹ́, ilẹ̀ mà sú o. L'ọdẹ bá múra oko ọdẹ lóòótọ́, Kílànì Alápó. Ọdẹ dé'dìí àràbà. Ọdẹ b'óbìn'in ọ̀hún n'bẹ̀ o. Ọdẹ yìí bèèrè wìpè "Ẹ nlẹ́ o."

"Ẹ káàbọ̀. Mo tí n dú'ó dè yín."

" O bèèrè wípé kí n kó àwọ̀ ọ rẹ fún ọ. Tí n bá kó àwọ̀ hun fún ọ, kíloó se fún mi gan-an?"

"Ẹ kó àwọ̀ ọ mí fún mi". Ó ní k'ọ́dẹ ó kó àwọ̀ ọ'hun f'óhun, òhun ó se é l'óore.

"Oore wo l'ẹ́ẹ̀ se mí?"

Ó ní k'ọ́dẹ ọ́ maá wá s'ídìí àràbà kan náà yí l'ọ́dọọ́dún, yíó sì máa pà'galà kọ̀ọ̀kan t'ọ́ bá ti wá'bẹ̀ l'ọ́dun. Ẹ gbọ́ o: Kìlání Alápó fi yé wa wípé láti bí ọdún mẹ́ẹ̀dógún sẹ́yìn

l'òhun ti n lọ s'ídìí igi àràbà yí, t'óhun sì n pà'galà kỌ̀Ọ̀kan. Ó l'óhun tún ti pa t'ọdún yìí k'ọjà o. Papàá, b'áa bá f'ọjọ́ ọ́nà, n'jọ́ t'óhun ọ́ bá lọ rèé pa t'ọdún tí nbỌ̀, ẹnu k'óhun ọ́ sọ pé k'á wáá kí'hun ni. B'óhun bá sì ti lọ Ọ̀'dí igi yìí, òhun ọ́ pà 'galà bỌ̀.

Tonight's hunter is Kìlání Alápó. Oh God, I have arrived again. Tonight's story is strange indeed. Just sit up properly and be attentive. It is a loss to have heard all the past *Ọdẹ Akọni* narratives only to miss this present one.

Tonight we go to Alápó village. To get to Alápó village, we have to go from Olódó, past Ìyànnà Church. At the terminus, we would board a motorbike to Alápó. That was how we got there. We were warned that the road was bad, not motorable, and that we had to ride the bike. But we insisted on driving to the place. We got stuck and spent between thirty minutes and one hour before we could get out. But well, that is one of the hazards of this job. Sometimes, we do go to places to which motor vehicles have no access, and we have to swim across in order to collect stories.

Now remember we are in Alápó village tonight, and Kìlání Alápó is the hunter. Which forest does he hunt? He hunts Òkè Ọ̀sun, Eléésan, Òlébè, Abà Òkò and so on. Who are his hunting peers? They include the likes of Kàsîmù of Òlébè village, Ràfíù of Ìdí Ìdí Ọsàn, the late Làmídì Èrèọlá and the late Ináọlájí of Ìdí Ìrókò. This very hunter kills animals like deer, duiker, gazelle, civet, countless grasscutters, pythons, porcupines and so on. Now be informed that a lot of things do happen in the forest, but we broadcast just a little aspect that your sensibility can tolerate.

He went close to Osun [State] to hunt – Ẹlẹ́rè Forest to be exact. Hear this: there is an *àràbà*[78] tree in this forest, under which the hunter used to kill python every year. In all, he had killed eight pythons under this tree. Listen to the strange part: in the ninth year, the hunter rose and went to this tree. When the hunter got to the place, something very strange happened; the hunter did not see a python under the araba. Ask me what he saw. The hunter saw a skin of a deer. Or better put, the hunter saw a slough cast off by a deer, whole with head, hindlegs and forelegs

[78] Ceiba pentandra (Z.O. Gbile, 1984)

intact. Ha! A deer's slough! How did it get to the place? A slough: skin without flesh and life in it. What is the mystery behind this? Oh, hunters are powerful and learned in supernatural matters. Were you the hunter – with a deer's slough before you – what would you do? This very hunter simply took the slough and went away. Where was he going with it? May God have mercy. He went *home* with it!

"Did you bring any game?" the wife asked him at home. "No luck today or what?"

"It does happen that way sometimes", the hunter replied. The hunter hid the slough. He did not let anybody into the secret. It is only now that the people of Alápó would be hearing of it for the first time. Hunters are adept at keeping secrets. The hunter told about two of his friends though.

"Please, do not let it out", he appealed to them. He then took the slough and hid it in the rafters. Now the hunter became worried and went to his *babálawo*.

"Something disturbs me", he told the priest. The divination rites were performed. The Ifa oracle said: "The owner of the slough only went on a journey. She is coming back for her slough. Please, keep it safe for her. Plan how to appease her whenever she shows up, and give her back her slough."

The hunter then left and returned the slough to the rafters of his home. If I were the hunter, I dare not keep the custody of such a strange thing. I would rather take it to some far away bush and dump it there. What about you? Would you not throw it away for the owner to go and seek for it herself? But the hunters are brave and powerful.

[Ijala] Whoever took the hunter's wife is not far away from death
Death is not far away from he whose wife the hunter has taken
For whomever the hunter tries to kill and is not dead
His whole business goes to ruin
He becomes pale with misery.
Whomever the hunter has tried to kill without success
Let him take a lesson on the way to Ìjèbú

From the ìyeyè[79] tree riddled with the hunter's bullets
You ask and confirm from anybody.

Anyone that contrives to take our [the hunter's] wife
Poverty is the death of vulture
Misery is the death of patridge
The wanderlust bird goes away without returning home

[Song] That one is sure about us
That one is sure about us
Whoever contests a woman with the hunter is in trouble
That one is sure about us
A man that contests a woman with the hunter is in trouble
That one is sure about us
Yes, very sure about us
That one is sure about us.

Now listen: it had been foretold that the owner was coming back for her slough. The hunter had hidden it in the rafters. On the seventh day, something strange happened.

[Ijala] May God save us all from the evil of overreaching.
May we all leave in peace
All our male children will not die
All our female children will not die
Death will not visit any of our own. Illness
Will not afflict any of our own
May failure and frustration never be ours
May it all happen exactly as we want
Starvation will not come after our season of plenty

[79] Spondias mombin (Z.O. Gbile, 1984)

May we never [go blind and] grope our way through to our bed.

On the seventh day, Alápó village received a visitor. Kìlání Alápó was visited by a fair-complexioned woman. Mind you, it is only the little that would not make you lose sleep that is always broadcast on this programme. A fair-complexioned woman suddenly came to town and wanted to see Kìlání Alápó. The dogs almost made noone attend to her, for they kept barking at her "Bow-wow!" charging at her as if they would attack. Word later came to Kìlání Alápó that he had a visitor. The hunter came out to see the the fair-complexioned woman seeking him.

"Oh, hello. Are you Kìlání Alápó?" the woman greeted and inquired. "I came to see you". The hunter asked her the reason for her visit, and she said she would like to dicuss with him in private. As they discussed, the woman told the hunter "Would you please return my slough?"

"Slough?" marvelled the hunter.

"Yes, I plead with you."

"Well, it is all right", said the hunter. "Now proceed to the *àràbà* tree. Wait for me there. I will hunt towards that direction in the night. We shall meet and speak further on the issue there".

Thus went away the woman. Did the hunter go to honour the appointment or not? But a real man always tackles the impossible head on. At nightfall, the hunter truly prepared to go hunting, oh Kìlání Alápó! He got to the *àràbà* and found the woman waiting.

"Hello", greeted the hunter.

"You are welcome", she replied. "I have been waiting for you."

"Now you ask that I give you back your slough", the hunter began. "If I do, what are you going to give me in return?"

"Give me my slough", the woman pleaded. She added that she would do the hunter a favour.

"What favour?" asked the hunter. The woman promised that the hunter would kill a deer each under the *àràbà* every year. Listen: Kìlání Alápó made us know that for the past fifteen years, he had been killing a deer each year under this

àràbà. He said he had killed the one for this year. He agreed to take us along when the time comes to kill the one for the next year; he promised to invite us. He assured us that he never went to that tree every year without killing a deer.

APPENDIX IV

The narrative of Yèkínì Ọláwuyì Omítóògùn Améringùn[80]

Akíntáyò: S'ẹ́ẹ́ rántí ijó t'ẹ́yin àt'ànjọ̀ọ̀nú jà? Báwo ló se jẹ́?

Améringùn: Wọ́n wí fún mi, èmi ni n'ọ̀ gbọ́ o. Wọ́n ní bí n bá d'ẹ̀gbẹ́ títítí, kí n má g'orí Òkè Jayéadé. N'gbàtí mọ dẹ́'gbó tí n 'ọ̀ rẹ́ran pa, mo ní gbogbo kóómi... Mọ sáà n yípo òké yí. Ni mọ bá r'ọ́nà ọ̀hún tóóró báyìí. Mọ́ bá bá'bẹ̀ wọ̀ ọ́. Ìgbà tí n ó dé'bẹ̀, mo rí gbogbo igbó ọ̀hún ọ́ sá lọ sua báyìí. Mọ bá n wòó ki'i. N'gbátí n ọ́ w'ọ̀ọ́kán, tí n ó rí ojú ọ̀hún, ẹ̀rù Ọlọ́'un bà mí! Irú ojú ẹran wo l'èyí o. Gbogbo kóómí, àlá 'ìí ba ni l'ẹ́rù ká má leè rọ́ ọ, mọ sá rọ́'bọn lù ú. Mọ gbọ́ kítíkítí gírá. Mo l'ésù se ọ́. Mọ́ bá fà'gannà yọ. N'gbà a mo dé'bẹ̀, mọ sá ẹran t'áa wí yìí ládàá.

Akíntáyò: Ẹran wo l'ẹran ọ̀hún, bàbá?

Améringùn: Ìgalà ni o. N 'ò r'írú ẹ̀ rí. Mo sì rí ilé agbọ́n méjì l'órí ẹ̀.

Akíntáyò: Àwọn agbọ́n sì wà n'bẹ̀?

Améringùn: Àwọn agbọ́n sì wà n'bẹ̀. Sùgbọ́n mọ fẹ́ẹ́ bẹ̀rẹ̀, olówó ẹ̀ yọ. Ibi nkan ti dé nù-un. Àh! Èwo ni mọ ha rí yìí? Ojúu rẹ̀ báyìí, ó tó'kùúùkú. Ó ní n 'ò ní gbé e lọ. Mo ní níhìín kọ́. Lónìí, aá jọ kú pọ̀ niè. N 'ò sì tîì dúró ki ìbọn mi n'gbà náà lọ́hùún. Kàtàkàràkàtà! Ọ́ n lọ́ àdá mọ́ mi lọ́'ọ́. Mo ní haà, ìwọ. Mọ bá k'ọwọ́ b'àpó. Mọ d'ọ́gbọ́n t'áwọn baba wa ma n dá n'jọ́ kìíní àná. Mo ti m'ẹ́rọ̀, mee b'ọwọ́. Èé a se ọ́ wẹ̀?

"I-wòó!

Dàwódàwó níí s'ọmọ ewúrẹ̀

Dáwòdáwò níí s'ọmọ àgùntàn".

Ìgbànà a mo tóó sẹ̀ẹ̀ wáá rìn ẹ́yìn. N wáá n tàkìtì í ki'i ilẹ̀. Mọ wá sún m'ẹ́yìn, mọ wáá lọ rèé k'ìbọn. Mọ f'ẹyin ẹyẹlé kan sii.

Akíntáyò: Wọn ha máa f'ẹyin ẹyẹlé k'ìbọn?

Améringùn: Ọta làá pè bẹ́ẹ̀. Mo gbe lé e, "Gbẹ̀ẹ̀ẹ̀n!" Ó l' "Óróòò!" Mo l' "Óró gbé ọ". Mọ wá bọ́ ọ́ bẹ̀. Mọ sẹ̀sẹ̀ wáá padà s'íbi ẹran. Mo rí i p'óti kú dáadáa. N'gbà tí n ó dé'dìí ẹran tí mọ bá'lé agbọ́n, mo ní èwo tún l'eléyìí. Kò burú, a sì wá nkan se sí i. A fẹ́ tutuyẹ́ lù ú, àwọn agbọ́n túká.

Akíntáyò: Wọ́n túká l'órí ẹran?

Améringùn: Wọ́n túká l'órí ẹ̀. Mo ní n ó kun ẹran yìí dandan. Mọ wáá yẹ̀ẹ́ wò, mọ wáá rí i wípé ẹran yìí, osóran ni. Mọ bá mú ẹdun àárá t'émi í múú rìn tí mo fí í d'ẹgbó, mọ bá fi há a l'ẹ́nu. Mọ wá mú ẹran hun, mọ wá n kun ú. N'gbà tí n ó e kun ẹran yìí tán, otútù dà bò mí. Mo kun'ran, n'ò lè kun'ran. N'ò lè ru ẹran yìí.

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[80] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (12/09/04)

Akíntáyò: Kílódé?

Améringùn: Ọ̀wọ́ ọ wípé a jọ fi ara kín ara nìgbátì emi ẹ wọ ìjàkadì.

Akíntáyò: Ẹbọra bá mi jà, mọ b'ẹ́bọra jà, [ẹnìkan óò dé'lé f'ẹ̀rọ̀ ra 'ra]

Améringùn: Irun ẹ, b'ó ti rí nìí gàn-ùn-gan-un. Ibi ọ́ bá gún ù yàn báyìí, olóde ó sú n'bẹ̀ ni. Mọ bá fọ̀n ọ́, bàràbàrà, mo ti j'ánà. Mọ fọ̀n ọ́, ọ́ d'ọ̀dọ̀ ọ̀rẹ́ ẹ mi kan n'Ílé Ọsán, à n pè é l'Éruku, Ràímì Eruku. Ọdẹ sì ni lójúméjèèjì.

"Gbọ̀n, gbọ̀n, gbọ̀n", [Mo kan ìlẹ̀kùn].

Ó ní "Taani?"

Mo l' "Èmi ni".

Ó ní "Kí ló dé?"

Mo l' "Ó dé o. W'araà mi"

Ó l' "Èétirí?" Mo ní báyìí, báyìí lọ́ sẹ̀lẹ̀.

Ó ní "Kí lọ wá lọ orí Òkè Jayéadé? È b'áa pé ọ má gun'bẹ̀."

Mo ní "Hun ọ bá rí o wí. Ọ́yá, wọlé. 'Hun tọ́ bá n bẹ lọ́'ọ́ rẹ o fún mi." O fún mí n'para, mo e p'ara. Mọ bá fọ̀n ọ́, ọ́ d'abà wa. Bí mo ti d'ábà, mo ní wọn ọ́ lọ rèé jí àbúrò bàbá à mi wá. Ọdẹ sì ni ní ojú méjèèjì, sùgbọ́n kò leè d'ẹ̀gbẹ́ mọ́ nígbàtí àwa n dẹ'gbó. Lọ́ bá nde n'lẹ̀.

B'ó ti rí mi, ó ní "Ọ lọ rèé g'orí Òkè Jayéadé?"

Mo ní "Mo gùn u".

Ọ l' "A sọ fún ọ pé kò seé gùn kí wọn ọ́ má gùn ú"

Mo ní "Mo gùn yí o". Ó l'ọ́ daa, ó ní 'ò burú.

N'gbà a mo kun ẹran hun, mọ bá àdó mẹ́ta n'nú ẹ, mo sì bá ònkepè mẹ́rin.

Akíntáyò: Àdó mẹ́ta...?

Améringùn: Àdó mẹ́ta, ònkepè mẹ́rin.

Akíntáyò: L'ẹ bá nínú ẹran hun?

Améringùn: Mo sì kò o dé'nú u 'lé.

Akíntáyò: Bàbá, kèé se pé 'hun tẹ n sọ yìí, n ò tilẹ̀ pilẹ̀ gbọ́ ọ tẹ́lẹ̀tẹ́lẹ̀ rí ngbà a mọ wá s'ọ́dọ̀ọ́ yín. Mo sì mọ'rúu'hun t'ó tun sẹlẹ̀ l'ẹ́hìn p'ẹ́ẹ̀ b'ádòó mẹ́ta àt'ẹdun àrá mẹ́rin nínú ẹran.

Améringùn: [breaks into *ìjálá*] Òwu l'akọ́ dá o

B'ẹ́ẹ̀ d'Ówu ẹ bèèrè wò...

Akíntáyò: Ẹ̀ẹ̀ gbàgbé e'bi t'aadé o.

Améringùn: [*ìjálá*] Èyí i mọ bá gbàgbé

Eéran wọn ọ́ ma rán n létí gaanrangan

B'ákùkọ bá gbọn'pá, iyè e rẹ̀ yíó sì sọ.

Akíntáyò: Bàbá, s'ẹ́ẹ̀ rántí pé ẹ ti kó àwọn ádò àti ònkepè...

Améringùn: Farablalẹ̀! Farabalẹ̀! Farabalẹ̀! Èése wẹ̀?

[*ìjálá*] Èmi lo rí lo n pè l'ẹ̀níkan

Èmi dá'kúnjẹ má f'ágbà ọdẹ jẹ

Apabíaláwọ̀n baba Ògúnmọ́dẹdé.

N'gbà mo kó o wọ'núu'lé, kò sí ìgbádùn kankan. Tọ́ bá ti dí l'álẹ́ báyìí, gbogbo òòlé mẹ́fẹ̀ẹ̀fà tó yípo ò mi, òkúta ni l'órí ẹ̀.

Akíntáyò: Òkúta báwo?

Améringùn: Aà m'ọhun tí n fọ́n'kúta lù ú.

Akíntáyò: Wọ́n n lẹ̀'kò?

Améringùn: Hẹn. Òkò ni. Gbogbo orí ilé è mi, òkò ni.

Akíntáyò: Ẹ sáà ní baálé l'ábà.

Améringùn: Hẹn.

Akíntáyò: Ìgbésẹ̀ wo ni baálé gbé? Tani baálé n'gbànáà?

Améringùn: Bàbáà mi Sànsí tí mo wí hun náà ni.

Akíntáyò: Sé wọ́n wa pe gbogbo abà jọ ni, àbí wọ́n se mọ̀ pé ẹ̀yin lẹ k'éèmọ̀ wọlé?

Améringùn: N'gbà tó se pé ọdẹ ni. Àjẹbí ni ọdẹ tiwa. Ìran babaa tèmi, eerin ní í pa tẹ́lẹ̀tẹ́lẹ̀. Àwọn sì ti gbó, wọn 'ọ̀ dẹ̀'gbẹ́ mọ́. Wọ́n bá ní kí n kó àdó hun wá.

Akíntáyò: Wọ́n ti mọ̀ pé ẹ̀yin lẹ gbé nkan abàmì wọlé.

Améringùn: N'gbà tọ́ ha se pé mo fi hàn á. Mọ ha gbọdọ̀ má fi hàn á? Lọ́ bá kó àdó hun lọ odò. Lọ́ bá lọ rèé tù ú, àti ònkepè hun. N ni gbogbo àwọn ará abà ni wọ́n tóó f'ọkànbalẹ̀

Akíntáyò: Ó tó osù mélòó àbí ọ̀sẹ̀ mélòó tó fi di gbà-gbà-gbà òkò l'óru?

Améringùn: Ọ̀sẹ̀ méjì gbanko ni. N 'ò ti'ẹ̀ fẹ́ẹ́ ko ó'lẹ̀; bàbá à mi ní n ó ko ó'lẹ̀ ni sẹ́. Sè n ọ́ b'abà jẹ́ ni? Mo ní n 'ọ̀ bẹ'Lọ́un k'ábà ọ́ bàjẹ́.

Akíntáyò: Can you recall the day you fought with a spirit? How did it happen?

Améringùn: I had been warned never to hunt the Heights of Jayéadé, never to go there. But I did not heed the warning. When I hunted for a long time and sighted no animal, I resolved to go there. I was at first circling the mountain; then I saw a narrow path and accessed the mountain through it. When I got to the top, I saw before me a vast bushland, and I entered and searched through it. When I looked up later, the eyes I saw drove the fear of God into me. What manner of animal has such eyes in its head? I wondered. Whatever it was, *a nightmare can never be as dreadful as forecloses being told;* I fired a shot at it. The animal started to struggle

in pain. Then I knew it was in trouble. I took out the cutlass, approached the animal and finished it off.

Akíntáyò: What kind of animal was it sir?

Améringùn: It was a deer. Never seen such an animal all my life. So old that there were two hornets' nests in its antlers.

Akíntáyò: And living hornets were there too?

Améringùn: Yes, they were. Now, as I bent down to take the animal, its owner emerged. That was where the trouble started. What manner of visitation is this? [I wondered]. Each of his eyes was as big as a human fist. He said he would not let me go with the game.

"No way", I said. "It's going to be a fight to the finish today." But I was yet to reload my gun. So, in the struggle he made to wrest the cutlass from me. I put my hand in the pocket and *fetched the wisdom of our forefathers* and dispensed it as was done in the time of old. I proofed my hand against evil [and chanted as follows]:

"Fall! [I slapped him with it]

For the tender ewe is never surefooted

The tender lamb is never surefooted".

Only then did I vanquish him: he started tossing and leaping about in agony. I moved back a bit to load my gun. I loaded it with *a pigeon's egg*.

Akíntáyò: Do they load gun with pigeon's egg?

Améringùn: That means bullet. I fired at him, "Bang!"

"I am dead!" he cried.

"Yes, you are", I said. I then returned to the fallen deer and found its head invested with hornets. I then blew some charm at it and they fled.

Akíntáyò: They fled from its head?

Améringùn: Yes, they did. Now I was resolved to skin and cut up the animal there. When I inspected the animal closely, I discovered it was an evil-animal. So I brought out the special pebble I always have with me and poke it in its mouth. And I started cutting up the game. Before I could finish, I was struck by a strange fit of cold. I was too sick to even move the animal.

Akíntáyò: What was responsible for that?

Améringùn: That was the result of my body touching his in that scuffle.

Akíntáyò: When human wrestles with spirit, [it is the latter that goes home to apply antidote]

Améringùn: The hair on his body was as bristly as this [indicates with index finger]. Wherever it touched on the human body, rashes came out. So, I set out to my friend's house, Eruku; Raimi Eruku. He was a highly skilled hunter.

"Knock-knock!" I knocked at his door.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"I am", I said.

"What is the matter?" he asked [and let me in].

"There is trouble", I said. "See all my body."

"What happened to you?" he asked and I told him. "What were you seeking on the Heights of Jayeade? Were you not told not to go there?"

"Say what you will", I replied, "but go in and get me any antidote you have".

He gave me some lotion with which I rubbed my body. I thereafter set out for our village. When I arrived there I sent for my uncle. He had also been a very skilful hunter, but he was too old to practice at the time. So, he came. The moment he saw me, he declared:

"You went to the Heights of Jayeade."

"Yes I did." I affirmed.

"But you've been warned never to go up there; that it is forbidden", he said.

"But the deed is already done" I replied. So, he said all would be right.

Earlier, when I had slit open the animal, I found three gourdlets and four smooth pebbles.

Akíntáyò: Three gourdlets…?

Améringùn: Yes, three gourdlets and four smooth pebbles.

Akíntáyò: You found all that in the animal?

Améringùn: Yes, and I took them all home too.

Actually sir, I have heard this entire story the first time I visited your place. I also heard all other mysterious things that followed the discovery of the gourdlets and pebbles in the animal.

Améringùn: [Breaks into *ijala*]

Owu town is the very first human settlement

Go there and find out.

Akíntáyò: Sir.

Améringùn: Yes.

Akíntáyò: Do not lose sight of the narrative, do not forget.

Améringùn: [*Ijala*] Whatever I forget

Let *eéran*, the agent of recollection, bring it back

Everytime the rooster flaps its wings, its senses wake.

Akíntáyò: Sir, do not forget that in the story, you have taken the gourdlet and the pebbles.

Améringùn: Take it easy! Easy! Easy! What is wrong with you?

[*ijala*] You see me, yet you mistake me for just one man

I who killed and ate the ground-squirrel without giving the elder-hunter a share

I who kill animals in multitude as if by dragnet, the father of Ogunmodede.

Real trouble started when I took in those items. In the night, hails of stone were pelted on all the six roofs surrounding my house.

Akíntáyò: Stones?

Améringùn: We did not know who it was that was throwing them.

Akíntáyò: Stones were being thrown?

Améringùn: Yes, stones on all my roofs.

Akíntáyò: You did have a village head then

Améringùn: Yes, we did.

Akíntáyò: What step did he take? Who was the village head then?

Améringùn: It was my father [uncle] Sansi that I mentioned earlier.

Akíntáyò: Did he bring together the entire village and quizzed them? Or how did he get to know it was you that brought in the trouble?

Améringùn: He was a hunter himself; it runs in our blood. My forefathers were hunters of elephants. But he [my uncle] was too old at the time to go on hunting. So, he asked me to hand over the gourdlets.

Akíntáyò: He knew you were the cause of the problem.

Améringùn: I showed them to him anyway. He then took the gourdlets to the stream to appease and release them, and the pebbles too. It was only then that the villagers could live in peace.

Akíntáyò: For how long were the stones being thrown in the night?

Améringùn: It was for complete two weeks. I initially did not want to let go the items, but for my father's [uncle's] insistence.

"Do you want to throw the village into crisis?" he asked, and I said I did not.

APPENDIX V

The narrative of Rábíù Òjó performed by the hunter and Kólá Akíntáyò[81]

Akíntáyò: Rábíu Òjó l'ọdẹ akọni l'álẹ́ yìí. Olúọ́dẹ Ilé Igbọ́n l'ọdẹ akọni l'álẹ́ yìí o. Ilé Igbọ́n n bẹ ní Ìjọba Ìbílẹ Lágelù ní Ìpínlẹ̀ Òyọ́ níhàáhín. B'ẹ́ẹ bá w'ọkọ̀ n'Ìwó Roòdù, ọkọ̀ Lálúpọn, Èjìokú, Ilé-Igbọ́n l'ẹ́ẹ wọ̀. Ẹ ẹ́ sọ̀ n'íyànà Ilé-Igbọ́n k'ẹ́ẹ tó dé'Yànà Ọ̀fà.

Àwọn wo ni sàwáwù ọdẹ akọni alẹ́ òní? Akinọlá Ọ̀kẹ́ n'Ílé-Igbọ́n t'ó ti s'ílẹ̀ wọ̀, Láyíwọlá Ògúndáre t'ó ti kú, Múráínà Adépọ̀jù t'ó ti s'ílẹ̀ bora, Fàsásí Aláàgbáà – òhun náà ti kú. Àwọn tí bàbá yìí í bá d'èbgẹ́ nù-un. Nínú u gbogbo àwọn tí wọ́n jọ ó d'èbgẹ́, bàbá yìí n'îkan ló sẹ́kù l'órílẹ̀ eèpẹ̀. A máa d'ẹgbó Asẹ́wo n'Ílé-Igbọ́n; a máa dẹ'Gbó Ìsẹpà n'Ílé-Igbọ́n; a máa dẹ'Gbó Ìrẹgà n'Ílé-Igbọ́n. Kò s'ẹ́ran t'ọ́dẹ yìí 'ò tîì pa rí. Ẹranko t'ọ́dẹ bá rí l'ọdẹ ẹ́ pa. Ìrírí t'ẹ́ẹ gbọ̀ọ́ l'álẹ́ yìí, *Ọdẹ Akọni* t'ẹ́ẹ́gbọ̀ọ́ l'álẹ́ yìí, ọ́ l'ágbára á'pọ̀. Lọ́ jẹ́ kí n wípé k'ẹ́ẹ wá nkan f'ìdí lé, k'ẹ́ẹ f'ìdí lé nkan, èbó Ọdẹ Akọni t'ẹ́ẹ́ gbọ̀ọ́ l'álẹ́ yìí, ọ́ kọjáa bẹ́ẹ̀. S'ẹ́ẹ̀ sùn? Oorun wẹ̀.

Igbó Yege l'ọdẹ akọni yìí mà s'ọdẹ lọ l'ọ́jọ́ t'áa wí yìí o. Gbogbo joojúmọ́-joojúmọ́ t'ọ́ bá ti s'ọdẹ lọ ní ó rí ewújù – èyun-ùn òkété – tí'ò dúró l'óòró. Mọ fẹ́ẹ́ sọ gudugbè nípa òkété l'alẹ́ yìí. B'ọ́dẹ yìí bá ti dé Igbó Yege yìí, ní ọ́ọ̀ bá òkété ní oríta. Orí ìdúró ni'ọ́ bá a. Kò sì níí jẹ́'yọ̀kan, kò sì níí jẹ́ méjì; bíi méta, mẹ́rin. N'gbà ọdẹ yìí dé'lé, l'ọ́ s'àlàyé fún bàbá a rẹ̀ p'óhun t'óhun mà f'ojú kàn rèé o.

Bàbá a rẹ̀ ní "Gba aájò yí, soọ́'núu gbérí ì rẹ̀. T'írú ẹ̀ bá ti sẹlẹ̀, hun t'óó se rèé."

Ọdẹ yìí mà tún s'ọdẹ lọ s'ínú u 'Gbó Yege o. Ọ́ mà tún dé oríta a 'bi tí maá bá àwọn òkété o. Ó tún bá àwọn òkété méta n'bẹ̀. Pabanbarìbarì ihun tọ́ sẹlẹ̀ rèé o: òkété kan, ọ́ wọ sẹ̀ẹ́tí nínú àwọn òkété yìí. Orísìírísìí asọ l'àwọn òkété yìí wọ̀. L'ọdẹ bá gbé'bọn, lọdẹ bá nà'bọn, n'îbọn ró "Gbìnrà!" Ọdẹ yìn'bọn tán, nkan à mîì sẹlẹ̀. Ọdẹ f'îbọn kó òkété mẹtẹ̀ẹ̀ta pọ̀. Ọdẹ́ yìn'bọn tán, t'ọ́dẹ ọ̀ bá sì fi gbọ́ igbe kí òkété ó ké "chíun-chíun", àfi "wẹ̀ẹ́ẹ̀n-wẹ̀ẹ́ẹ̀n", igbe ọmọ tuntun l'ọdẹ yìí gbọ́. Ọmọ tuntun àbí kí nla? Ọdẹ súnmọ́'bi t'áwọn òkété yìí wà, ọmọ tuntun l'ọ́ bá n'bẹ̀. L'ọdẹ bá lo aájò tí bàbá a rẹ̀ fún u. Ọ́ wọ́n kiní yìí sí wọn là'a, wọ́n d'òkété padà. N'gbà t'ó wò'kan l'ára a wọn, ẹsẹ̀ méta l'òkété ọ̀hún ní. Ẹsẹ̀ òkété méjì, ọ́ jẹ́ t'òkété; ẹsẹ̀ èèyàn kan; kọ̀ ti'ẹ̀ wá l'ẹ́sẹ̀ kan yòókù. Njẹ́ k'ọ́dẹ ó sì súnmọ́ 'bẹ̀ k'ó gbé òkété n'bẹ̀, nkan mîì sẹlẹ̀. [Addressing the hunter] Bàbá, ẹ kí àwọn ènìyàn nínú u'lé.

Òjó: Mo kí gbogbo ará a'lé o. Mo kí Olúgbọ́n Kìlání Oléyèdé. Mo kí Balógun; mo kí Ọ̀tún; mo kí gbogbo ilé pátápátá tí'ọ̀ sẹ́ ku ẹnìkankan, àti gbogbo ọdẹ akọni tí n bẹ n'Ílé-Igbọ́n pátápátá poo.

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[81] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (20/06/04)

Akíntáyò: Ẹ̀ẹ̀ gbó'bi i mọ s'ọ̀rọ̀ okété dé?

Òjó: Mọ gbọ́ ọ.

Akíntáyò: Èwo o mo ti fi p'arọ́ n'bẹ̀, tí mọ bá ti bùmọ́ n'bẹ̀?

Akíntáyò: Kò s'írọ́ n'bẹ̀; b'ó ti rí gaan nù-un.

Akíntáyò: Ẹ wáá gbọ́, bàbá: ẹ ti yín'bọn s'óòkété.

Òjó: Mo ti yìn í sí i.

Akíntáyò: Èyí t'ọ́ wọ sẹ́ẹ̀tì wà n'bẹ̀. N'gbà ẹ́ẹ́ dé'bẹ̀, "wèẹ́ẹ̀n-wèẹ́ẹ̀n" lẹ gbọ́ n'lẹ̀: igbe ọmọ tuntun.

Òjó: Ó n kígbe ọmọ tuntun.

Akíntáyò: N'gbà tí n kígbe ọmọ tuntun t'ẹ́ẹ̀ padà dé'bẹ̀, t'ẹ́ẹ̀ padà lo nkan tí bàba a yín fún u yín, ọ́ padà d'òkété padà.

Òjó: Ọ́ padà d'òkété.

Akíntáyò: Òkété kan wà n'bẹ̀ tọ́ jẹ́ pé ó ní ọwọ́ méjì, ó ní ẹsẹ̀ kan ti èèyàn

Òjó: Lóòótọ́ ni.

Akíntáyò: Báwo l'ẹ ti se é.

Òjó: Njẹ́ kí n bẹ̀rẹ̀ kí n kó o báyìí, l'ẹnìkan ní kí n fi í 'ílẹ̀.

Akíntáyò: Ó ní ẹ kó o 'ólẹ̀?

Òjó: Hẹn, ón' kí n kó o 'ólẹ̀.

Akíntáyò: Ẹ máa bá a lọ lát'ibẹ̀

Òjó: Ó ní kí n má ko o. Mo ní kílódé. Ó ní ẹran bàbá kan ni. "Bàbá wo?" Ó ní kí n sá má ko o lọ. Àmọ́ bí mo ti 'á nsọ, ọ́ wáá rẹ̀ mí díẹ̀. Mo ní eléyìí èé s'èèyàn. Iwinlẹ̀ l'eléyìí. Mo l'ọ́ dáa náà

"Arábìnrin."

Ó ní "Hìín."

"S'ọ́ ngbọ́'hun tí mo n wí." Ó l'óhun n gbọ́.

Mo ní "W'ojú ù mi daada." Ó l'óhun r'ójú ù mi.

Mo l' "Ọ́ dáa, wáá kó kiní'ìí sínú u kiní.

[*ọfọ̀*] Ọgbọ́ ló ní k'óo mú tèmi tí mo wí 'ìí mú

Ooro ló ní k'óo ro mọ́ mi

Ọ̀mọ̀ ló ní k'ọ́ọ̀ má m'ẹlòmîì j'èmi nìkan lọ

B'íwájú ba saájú, ìpàkọ́ níí tèle e, arábìnrin, ọ́ yá gbé e n'só n'lé." B'ó se gbé ẹran nù-un. N bá tẹ̀lé e.

Akíntáyò: Bàbá.

Òjó: Hìín.

Akíntáyò: Ẹ yí'wọ́ padà fún u ni o?

Òjó: Ọdẹ a le má yí'wọ́ padà? Kíní ó fi bò ó?

N'gbà ọ́ sá d'élé, mo ní "Gbé e ka'lẹ̀ n'bẹ̀un. Dú'ó dè mí." Mọ bá ké sí bàbá: "Bàbá, 'n tí mo rí l'óko nìí." Ó l'óbìnrin ọ̀hún dà. Ó ní n késí i pé 'ọ́ wá.

"Bàbá n pè ọ́."

Wọ́n ní "Gbé ẹran soọ́lẹ̀." O sì gbé e soọ́lẹ̀. Wọ́n ní "Máa wá lọ báyìí o, arù'wá èé w'ẹ̀yìn. Máa lọ tààràtà." Lọ́ bá sì n lọ.

Wọ́n ní "T'ọ́ọ bá dé'wájú, [*ọfọ̀*] àwómọ́lẹ̀ n'ti wówó
Àjànmọ́lẹ̀ n'tẹ̀bìtì
Tẹ́bìtì bá p'eku, a pa'yè mọ́ ọ n'nú, dà á s'ílẹ̀ n'bẹ̀." T'ó di "wororooòwórò!" t'áa gbọ́, igi nlá t'ọ́ wà n'bẹ̀, ọ́ sá tàkìtì. A jẹ ẹran hun.

Akíntáyò: Hìín!

Òjó: Bàbá ní kò sí nkankan n'bẹ̀. Wọ́n l'éléyun-un ti rékọjá lọ nù-un.

Akíntáyò: Èyí t'ọ́ l'ọ́wọ́ èèyàn nkọ́, bàbá?

Òjó: Ọwọ́ ti kú'ò n'bẹ̀, ó ti d'òkété gidi.

Akíntáyò: Rábíù Òjó is the guest hunter tonight. He is the Olúọ́dẹ of Ilé Igbọ́n. Ilé Igbọ́n is in Lágelú Local Government of Oyo State. Take a bus going to Lálúpọn, Èjìòkú and Ilé Igbọ́n from Ìwó Road [Ibadan]. You alight by the road to Ilé Igbọ́n, just before you get to Ìyànà Ọ̀fà.

Who were the hunting peers of this hunter? Late Akinọlá Ọ̀kẹ́, late Láyíwọlá Ògúndáre, late Múráínà Adépọ̀jù, Late Fàsásí Alágbàáà: these were the people with whom the man used to hunt. Of all of them, only this old man is left on the surface of the earth. He has hunted in Asẹ́wo Forest, Ìsepà Forest, and Ìrẹ́gà Forest, all in Ilé Igbọ́n. There is no type of animal that this hunter has not killed; a hunter kills whatever animal he comes across. The experience you are about to share, this night's edition of *Ọdẹ Akọni*, is a strange one indeed. Now I urge you to sit up, for tonight's narrative would beat your imagination. Sit up and do not fall asleep.

On this fateful day, the hunter went to hunt in the Forest of Yege. Whenever this hunter went to Yege, he always saw *ewúrù*, the giant rats, standing upright on their hind legs. Tonight I shall reveal to you a mystery about the giant rat. Whenever this hunter arrived at the Forest of Yege, he always saw the giant rats at the crossroad, standing on their hind legs. More than one rat; not two, not three, not four. When this hunter got back home, he reported to his father all what he had seen.

"Take this *preparation*, put it in your cloak", the father said. Whenever the incident happens again, *this* is what to do."

Then, this hunter went ahunting again to Yege. He arrived at the crossroad and saw three giant rats. Now listen to the weird part of the story: one of the rats had a shirt on; the others also were decked out in different attires. So the hunter took his gun and aimed at them. "Bang!" The hunter fired at them and something strange happened. The hunter aimed and shot at the three rats at once. But rather than the squeal of the rats, the hunter heard the cry of a baby. He was shocked. When the hunter got to the spot where the rats had been standing, he found babies there. He then applied the *preparation* given him by his father. He sprinkled it on them, and they transformed into rats. Looking closely at one of them, the hunter saw that it had three legs: two were rodent's legs, the third was human, and the fourth was missing. As the hunter made to take them, something strange happened.

[Addressing the hunter] Sir, greet the listeners at home.

Òjó: I greet you all at home. I greet the Olúgbọ́n [monarch of Ilé Igbọ́n] Kìlání Olóyèédé. I greet the Balógun, the Òtún, all the hunters of Ile Igbon and everybody at home.

Akíntáyò: You heard my account of your experience with the giant rats?

Òjó: Yes, I did.

Akíntáyò: Did I lie or add anything to the narrative?

Òjó: There was no lie; you narrated it the way it happened.

Akíntáyò: Now, listen sir: you have now shot the rats.

Òjó: Yes, I have.

Akíntáyò: Including the one that had shirt on. When you got there, it was the cry of a baby you heard.

Òjó: Yes, it was the cry of a baby.

Akíntáyò: As they cried, you applied what your father gave you and they changed back into rats.

Òjó: Yes they changed back into rats.

Akíntáyò: One of the rats had two rodent's legs and a human leg.

Òjó: That is true.

Akíntáyò: Now what did you do?

Òjó: As I tried to pick them up, one person said I should drop them.

Akíntáyò: Drop them?

Òjó: Yes, she asked me to drop them.

Akíntáyò: Now, you can continue from there.

Òjó: She asked me to leave them. I asked her for the reason and she said they belonged to a particular man.

"Who is that man", I asked, but she avoided the question and insisted that I leave the animals. As I was speaking with her, I felt a little tired and uneasy. It was then that I knew that she was not human. She was a spirit of the underground.

"Woman", I called her.

"Oh yes", she answered.

"Woman", I called again.

"Oh yes", she answered.

"Can you hear me?" I asked. She said she could. I told her to look at me properly. She said she could see me.

"Now put all these things [animals] in the container", I commanded her, [incantation] *for the* ọgbò *ẹ́ says you should do as I say*

Ooro *insists that you should abide by my instruction*

Ọ̀mò *ẹ́ insists that you listen to nobody but me*

For the face always goes before the occiput.

Now, woman, take them and go before me to my home." She arried the animals and I followed her.

Akíntáyò: Sir.

Òjó: Yes.

Akíntáyò: Did you cast some spell on her or what?

What can the hunter do without such spells? How would he cope? When she got home I said "Put down the thing, and wait for me." I then called my father.

"Father, this is what I have seen." She asked for the woman.

"Father wants to see you", I told her.

"Now put down the animals", father instructed her when she came and she complied. Go this way, [incantation] *for the carrier of palm stem never turns to look back*. Go straight, I command." And she continued to go. "After going some way", father continued. "[*Incantation*] *It is in the character of wowo tree to always crash down*

It is in the character of the booby-trap to fall

For *when the booby-trap kills a rodent, it kills its senses too*. Now crash down and fall." We then heard a very loud crashing sound: a huge tree nearby had fallen down. So, we ate the meat.

Akíntáyò: Including the one with a human limb?

Òjó: The limb had disappeared. It was now a real rat.

APPENDIX VI

The narrative of Músílíù Àlàgbé Fìríàáríkú[82]

Fìríàáríkú: Ní ọjọ́ tí mọ lọ dẹ Igbó Oníwòrò, mo rí nkan ìyanu. Bí ọ bá jẹ́ pé mo múra lọ́'ọ́ látinúu'lé pé n'torí aìímọ̀, áàh! eégún ọdẹ ọ bá fẹ̀ẹ̀ gbé ọ̀jẹ́ n'jọ́ náà o. Ọ́ dàbí nkan.

Mo ti n dẹ̀gbẹ́ bọ̀ látàárọ̀. Mọ bá ìyá yìí ní nkan bí aago wẹ̀wàá. Èmi 'ò sì d'ẹgbó yìí rí. Sùgbọ́n n'gbà mo bá a, mo rí i l'ọ̀ọ̀ọ́kán, ọ gbálẹ̀ ẹ'bẹ̀, ó jókòó n'ídìí igi

"Ẹ nlẹ́ o, màmá. Ẹ nlẹ́ o, màmá." Kọ̀ dáhùn.

"Ọ́ dáa, t'ọ̀ọ̀ bá dáhùn, ọ̀ọ̀ dáhùn náà nù-un. Èmi n bá tèmi í lọ."

Adédùntán: Ẹ̀ẹ̀ sì lè padà?

Fìríàáríkú: T'éèyàn bá padà bẹ́ẹ̀, kọ̀ dáa. Eléyuùun 'èé s'ọdẹ nù-un. Mọ bá n lọ. Mọ kọjá a rẹ̀ tán, mo ní n ọ́ já ọ̀nà kan, ọ̀dọ̀ ìyá yìí n'mo tún já.

"Haà! Èéti jẹ́? Ẹ ha pọ̀ n'nú u'gbó yìí bẹ́ẹ̀ ni?" Mọ bá tún gba ọ̀nà mîì. Mo tún lọ, ọ̀dọ̀ ìyá yìí náà n'mo tún já sí. Mọ wáá rò ó: kíni mọ fẹ́ẹ̀ se báyìí o. Mọ wá t'ọwọ́ b'àpò, mọ fà'bínú yọ.

Adédùntán: Ẹ t'ọwọ́ bọ gbérí?

Fìríàáríkú: Mọ t'ọwọ́ bọ'kùn, mọ fà'bínú yọ. Mo ní l'ágbára baba à mi, irọ́, kò ní hun mí. Mo pè é; mo pè'yá yìí. Kọ̀ dáhùn. Mọ lọ́ dáa. Odò kan sì nbẹ nítòsí ibẹ̀, mọ bá gba ẹ̀gbẹ́ odò hun lọ, mọ dá odò hun kọjá…

Adédùntán: L'ẹ́hìn ìgbà tẹ́ẹ̀ ti sàà'gùn tán?

Fìríàáríkú: Hin. Mọ dá odò hun kọjá tí mo sì mọ̀ pé mo ti dá odò kọjá. Sùgbọ́n n'gbà n ó tún wo ẹ̀gbẹ́ ẹ̀ mi, àfi bí ìgbà èèyàn sùn t'ọ́ wáá ya'jú, mọ bá tún r'íyàá yìí.

"Aàh! Ọ màmà ní nkan á bá mi í se o. Èe wa ti jẹ́?" Mọ wá rántí kiní kan tí nbẹ n'bi gbérí ì mi. Ojú ù mi wáá yà. Mo gòkè odò, mọ bá já ojú ọ̀nà kan; mọ já ojú u títì. Mo dé ìlú kan, àá pè é ní Ògbògbò, ní *area* ìjẹ̀bú-Òde.

Adédùntán: Ìjẹ̀bú-Óde lẹ ti lọ dè'gbẹ́, lát'Ìpínlẹ̀ Ọ̀ṣun?

Fìríàáríkú: Hin Ìjẹ̀bú-Òde ni. Mọ wá wọ'nú u 'lé.

Wọ́n ní "Kílódé l'átàárọ̀, baba ọdẹ?" Mo ní n 'ọ mọ̀ pé'rú nkan báhun nbẹ ní *area* yín n'bíyìí. Mọ bá sáà k'álàyé, mo se fún ẹni t'ọ́ jẹ́ bàálé è mi.

Ó ní "Haà! Ọlọ́'un mà yọ ọ́ o! Ìwọ l'à bá máa pè ní 'Fìríàáríkú'."

Mo ní "Hìín? Kí lọ́ sẹlẹ̀?" Ọ́ l'ọ́dẹ kan ọ dẹ 'gbó hun kọ́ bọ̀ rí. Ó ní kọ̀ s'ọ́dẹ kan tí ọ́ dẹ'gbó hun tí ọ́ bọ̀.

Adédùntán: Ibi t'ẹ́ẹ̀ ti njẹ́ orúkọ yín t'ẹ n jẹ́ l'ónìí nù-un?

[82] Personal interaction (07/05/06)

Fìríàáríkú: Ibè gan n mo ti n jé "Fìríàáríkú". N náà sì ni gbogbo Ìwó mò mí sí, títí tée dé Ọláolúwa. B'éèyàn bá béèrè Músílíù tí wọn 'ò bá dáákọ Fìríàáríkú, ẹè leè rí i.

Fìríàáríkú: The day I went to hunt in the Forest of Oníwòrò, I saw a thing of wonder. Had I not equipped myself properly from home, *the hunter's masquerade would have perished in the grove* that day. It was a wonder.

I had been hunting since morning. At about ten o' clock [in the night], I saw a woman. I had never gone to that forest before then. When I saw her, she sat down under a tree, and the place was well swept.

"Hi, woman", I greeted. "Hi, woman." She did not respond.

"Well, if you do not answer me, that is your problem", I said to her. "I am going."

Adédùntán: You did not turn back?

Fìríàáríkú: No going back. Whoever goes back that way is not a true hunter. So I kept going, intending to link another road. However, I ended up where this woman was sitting.

"What is this", I marveled. "Are you this many in this forest?" I left again, taking an entirely different route. But I again ended up where this woman sat. What is to be done now, I reflected. So, *I put hand in my pocket and brought out a fit of anger*.

Adédùntán: You put your hand in the cloak?

Fìríàáríkú: *I put hand in my gut and brought out a fit of anger.* I invoked my forefathers against any failure. I then called this woman again, but she did not answer. Now there was a river close to the place. I took a route to the river, and crossed it over.

Adédùntán: After that invocation?

Fìríàáríkú: Yes. I crossed the river and was sure I did. But when I looked up – just as if it had all been a dream – I saw this woman [before me].

"What have you with me?" I exclaimed. "What is the matter?" Then I remembered *one thing* I had in my cloak. [I used it and] my eyes opened. I crossed the river and took a road that led me to the highway. I got to a place called Ógbógbó in Ìjèbú Òde.

Adédùntán: You mean you went to hunt in Ìjèbú Òde? From Osun State?

Fìríàáríkú: Yes, it was Ìjèbú Òde. So, I went into the house.

"Oh hunter, where have you been all this while?" [the people at home asked]. I told them that I did not know that such a thing exists in the forests there. I reported everything to my host.

"Oh, that was really a close one", he said. "Fìríàáríkú [At-close-quarter-with-death] would be an appropriate name for you".

"Why? What is the matter?" I queried. He said no hunter ever went into that forest and came back. None had ever.

Adédùntán: That was how you got that name?

Fìríàáríkú: That was how I became Fìríàáríkú. That is the name all the people of Ìwó call me, even up to Olá Olúwa. If you identify me as Musiliu without adding Fìríàáríkú, you might not be able to get to me.

APPENDIX VII

The narrative of Rábíù Òjó[83]

Òjó: T'áa bá tí r'íbi ọlọ́gẹ̀dẹ̀ gbé n su, wọn ọ́ wàá mú'míi rẹ̀, wọn ó fi í ínú agolo. Eléyuùn, mọ gbọ́njú bá a ni, nítorí ẹ̀dọ̀ ẹran ni mọ jẹ dàgbà. Aá wàá lọ ọ'bí tí n yàgbẹ́ sí hun, ẹnìkan ó dú'ó nbẹ̀. Aá ti 'á sọ pé k'ọ́mọ̀kan ọ́ bá ni gbé kinní hun ka'ná.

Adédùntán: Imí hun?

Òjó: Imí hun.

Adédùntán: Ẹ ti bu nkan mîì sí i o.

Òjó: Aà bu nkan mîì si i. T'ọ́ bá di p'ó hó kọ̀tọ̀kọ̀tọ̀, ẹran hun ó kú'ò n'bi ọ wà, yíọ́ lọ ọ'bi tí í gbe é yàgbẹ́. T'ọ́ bá ti dé orí ibi t'ó gbéé yàgbẹ́ hun, aà gbọdọ̀ yìnbọn sí i l'órí ẹ̀. Àmọ́ tí 'ọ̀ bá tîì dé'bẹ̀ t'áa bá e yìnbọn sí i, aá pa á. Àmọ́ t'ọ́ bá wà l'órí i kiní hun, t'eèyàn bá yìnbọn sí i, èèyàn 'ò níí pa á. Eléyìí wáá gun orí awà, ó n yàgbẹ́…

Adédùntán: Èwo ní n j'áwà?

Òjó: Ibi tí wọn maá yàgbẹ́ sí hun ni. Ọ́ n yàgbẹ́. Nígbàt'ó kú'ò, njẹ́ yíọ́ maa lọ la pè é. A gbé 'bọn lé e. N'gbà a dé bẹ:

"Irun l'ó kó yìí! Ọmú rèé! Ọlọ́gẹ̀dẹ̀ la yínbọn sí, élèyîí ti jẹ́?" Ọmú n se langalanga.

Adédùntán: Ẹ bá'run dídì l'órí ẹ̀?

Òjó: Irun dídì nbẹ̀ l'órí. Ibi ìdí n'sàlẹ̀, ọlọ́gẹ̀dẹ̀ ni. Irun nbẹ̀ n'bẹ̀ papàá.

"Báwo laá ti s'eléyìí báyìí? Eléyìí 'ò seé gbé lọọ'lé." Mọ bá lọ ké sí bàbá kan t'ọ́ jẹ́ Ọlọ́ọ́dẹ̀ n'gbà náà – bàbá a t'èmi ti kúrò lórí àléfà ọdẹ̀ n'gbà náà. Mọ bá lọ rèé fi hàn á. Ó ní a máa rí bẹ́ẹ̀. Ó ní s'émi 'ò mọ̀ pé ọ́ pọ̀ n'nú èèyàn t'ó se pé ẹranko ni. N'gbàtí a wáá rí i báhun, tí a gbé e dé'lé, a ké e é méjì. Kọ́dà, awọ ọ rẹ̀ papàá n bẹ̀ l'ára eégún ù mi.

Adédùntán: Abalaa'bi èèyàn rẹ̀ nkọ́? Ṣ'ẹ́ẹ̀ b'óhun náà ni?

Òjó: Abalaa'bi èèyàn rẹ̀ kò ní bíbó mọ́, nígbà tó se pé a gé e ni.

Adédùntán: N'gbà ẹ gé e méjì, abala t'èèyan nkọ́? Báwo lẹ ṣe ṣe é?

Òjó: Mo gbé é kalẹ̀ s'ọ́dọ̀ Bàbá Ọdẹ̀ ìgbà náà. Ó ní ẹran ni?

Adédùntán: Báwo ni wọn ṣe ṣe é?

Òjó: Wọn gé e kéékèèké, wọn há a f'áwọn obìnrin.

Adédùntán: Wọn há a?

Òjó: Sùgbọ́n wọn ti fá ọmú u rẹ̀ kú'ò n'bẹ̀. Gbogbo ohun tí n jẹ́ orí hun gangan alára, wọn kó o kúrò n'bẹ̀.

Adédùntán: Orí tó d'irun?

[83] Personal interaction (22/04/06)

Òjó: Gbogbo ‘ẹ̀ ni wọ́n kó kú’ò n’bẹ̀. Wọ́n ní ẹran ọlọ́gẹ̀dẹ̀ ni; wọ́n ní kèé s’èèyàn. Wọ́n ní gbogbo ẹranko t’ọ́ wà n’gbó náà ní í maá d’èèyàn á wá’lé l’álẹ́.

Òjó: Wherever we saw the droppings of a civet, we always put such droppings inside a can. I grew up knowing this [magical ritual]. I was brought up on a diet of animals’ liver, you know. Now someone would then wait and keep watch on that spot where the civet had defecated, while another puts the can on fire.

Adédùntán: That can of civet’s droppings?

Òjó: Yes, the droppings.

Adédùntán: Would you add anything?

Òjó: No, we would not. The moment the content started to boil, the animal would leave its present position and head for its usual place of defecation. The animal must not be fired at right at the place. If we did, we would miss. But if we aimed at it before it got to the place, we would hit it. You always miss a defecating civet. Now this very civet is seated on *awà*…

Adédùntán: What is *awà*?

Òjó: That is the place where the civets defecate. This very civet was defecating. As it made to go, I fired a shot at it. When we got to the place where it fell, we saw the civet cat in braids, and with human breasts too! Wonder! The breasts dangled like human breasts!

Adédùntán: You saw braids on its head?

Òjó: Yes, the head was braided. But the lower part was a civet. Complete with tail and all.

“What are we going to do with it?” We asked ourselves in confusion. “We must not take it home.” So I took it to the man who was the Ọlọ́ọ́dẹ[84] of the time, for my father had passed on at the time – his name was Laani. I took it to him. He explained that such thing was usual as there are creatures that double as animal and human. So, we cut the animal into two. The skin now adorns the costume of my egúngún.

Adédùntán: What about the human half? Did you skin it too?

[84] Head of hunters.

Òjó: No we cut it off.

Adédùntán: After cutting it off, what became of the human half?

Òjó: I left it with the Baba Ọdẹ [Ọlọ́ọ́dẹ] of the time. He said it was edible.

Adédùntán: What did he do with it?

Òjó: He cut it up and shared the meat among the women.

Adédùntán: Shared it?

Òjó: But he had cut away the breasts and the head.

Adédùntán: The head with the braids?

Òjó: Yes. He had scraped off the braids. He said it was no more human but a civet. He said many animals in the forest often do change into human form in order to come to town anyway.

APPENDIX VIII

The narrative of Moses Ògúnwálé[85]

Akíntáyò: Bàbá, ìgbę́ t'éę lọ l'órí Òkè Ọbaálá, wọ́n ní kòtò ọ̀gbun kan wà n'bẹ̀?

Ógùnwálé: Orí Òkè Ọbaálá ni mọ̀ọ́ ma n dẹ… Ọ̀gbun n bẹ n'bẹ̀ tí 'ò lópin.

Akíntáyò: Kíl'ojú yín rí n'jọ́ náà.

Ógùnwálé: Haà! Ojú rîı. Ẹ káalẹ́ o. Ẹ tẹ́'tí, ẹ máa gbọ́ dáadáa. Ojú rí nkan. Mọ dẹ̀'gbẹ́ lọ. N'gbà ọ́ d'alẹ́ mọ fọn'ná mọ́'rí, mọ̀ n dẹ'gbó ki'i.

Akíntáyò: L'óru ọ̀gànjọ́?

Ógùnwálé: L'óru. Mo d'étí ọ̀gbún hun. N'gbà n ó w'ojú ẹran, ìgalà nì í.

Akíntáyò: Ọ́ la gíláàsì?

Ógùnwálé: Ọ́ la gíláàsì daadaa. Mo f'ìbọn tẹ̀ ẹ́.

Akíntáyò: Gbìnràà!

Ógùnwálé: Gbìnràà! N'gbà n ó tún wò ó, ojú di mẹ́'nlá, tí í se ìgalà méje

Akíntáyò: Bàbá, kò yé mi o. Ìgalà kan lẹ rí tọ́ la gíláàsì. Ẹ nà'bọn sí i, ìbọn ró gbìnrà. T'ígalà ọ̀ bá sì fi kú, b'íbọn se ró gbìnrà…

Ógùnwálé: Ojú mẹ́n'lá ni mo tún padà rí.

Akíntáyò: T'éèéfín ìbọn ọ́ l'ọọlẹ̀, ojú mẹ́'nlá lẹ rí?

Ógùnwálé: Tíí sè'galà méje. Èése? Mọ bá tún'bọn mi kì. Mọ 'á wo kékeré e 'núu wọn, mọ bá yìnbọn lù ú, "Pàà!"

Akíntáyò: Nínú u méje?

Ógùnwálé: Ínú u méje, kékeé t'ọ́ wà láàrin wọn tó s'îkeje; mẹ́ta wà ní'îín, mẹ́ta wà ni'îín. Mọ wáá yìnbọn sí t'àárin gbùngbùn, bí ọgbọ́n àwọn baba wa. N'gbà mo yìnbọn, ẹrán subú lulẹ̀, n 'ò rí ojú yòókù mọ́. Mọ bá dúpẹ́. Èmi náà bá n j'Ògún lọ. Mọ k'ọwọ́ bọ ẹ̀gbẹ́, mọ m'ọ̀bẹ, n ó kun'ran.

Akíntáyò: Èyí t'éę yìnbọn sí láàkọ́kọ́kọ́ hun nkọ́?

Ógùnwálé: N'ò rí hun mọ́. Ẹran èyí tí mọ wáá yìn gbèyìn hun, kékeé n mo yìn. Sùgbọ́n n'gbà n ó dé'bẹ̀, ọ fẹ̀ẹ́ẹ́ tó màálúù. Haà! Èwo nì'í?

Akíntáyò: Ìgbà t'éę fí yínbọn sí i, iná bó o 'ólẹ̀ kadara?

Ógùnwálé: Ó bó o 'ólẹ̀ daadaa. Kékeré ni. Sùgbọ́n n'gbà mo dé'dìí ẹ̀ pé n máa kun ẹran, ẹran nínlá n mọ bá.

Ógùnwálé: Ó ti di nlá. Èé se? Kò níí sòro ó se. Mọ bá f'ìbà sí i. Mo júbà baba à mi. Adélẹ́kàn Àjàó. Ọ̀rún u're rẹ o. Ìbà: okó t'ó dorí kodò tí 'ò ro; ìbà: ìyámọ̀pó t'ó d'orí kodò tí

[85] *Ọdẹ Akọni* (10/12/06)

'ọ̀ s'ẹ̀jẹ̀. Ìbà ni n ọ maa f'òní jú. Má jẹ́ẹ́ ó sú mi í se o. Má jẹ n sìse n bẹ̀ o. Má j'átùpà Ògún ó t'ìdí jò mọ́ n lọ́'ọ́ o. Toò, kí n máa kun'ran, ọwọ́ tí mo rí…

Akíntáyò: Há-ha!

Ógùnwálé: Ọwọ́ wo tún l'èyi?

Akíntáyò: Ibo l'ọwọ́ ti wá?

Ógùnwálé: Kó ti'ẹ̀ yé mi. Mọ sá déédé r'ọ́wọ́ ni. Èmi ọ́ gbẹ́ran mú n maa kun ú, bẹ́ẹ̀ náà n mọ r'ọ́wọ́ mîì tó dì m'ẹ́ran.

Akíntáyò: Ẹni ọ́ l'ọwọ́ hun nkọ́?

Ógùnwálé: Èé se ọ́? Kílọ wá dé'bí?

Akíntáyò: Bàbá talẹni tó dì m'ẹ́ran?

Ógùnwálé: Àwọn 'rúnmọlẹ̀; àwọn iwin inúu'gbó.

Akíntáyò: S'óhun lọ́ l'ẹran ni?

Ógùnwálé: Òhun lọ́ mà l'ẹran. A mà n lọ́ ọ mọ́ wọn l'ọ́wọ́ mà ni.

Akíntáyò: Tọ́ bá jẹ́ p'óhun lọ́ l'ẹran, kílódé t'ẹ́ẹ̀ f'ẹran rẹ̀ 'ẹlẹ̀ fún u.

Ógùnwálé: N ọ̀ gbọdọ̀ fiilẹ̀. N ni mọ wá wá.

Akíntáyò: Ẹ̀yin ọdẹ, ẹnuù mi ọ̀ gbà á p'ẹ́ẹ̀ burú.

Ógùnwálé: Aà burú náàa. 'Hun t'aá jẹ là nwá.

Ógùnwálé: Bàbá kílọ́ wá sẹlẹ̀?

Ógùnwálé: La bá bẹ̀rẹ̀ ẹ̀ 'jàkadì pàràpàràpàrà, lóru.

Akíntáyò: Ẹ̀ n jà pẹ̀lú 'win?

Ógùnwálé: A jà títítítí, ilẹ̀ n mọ́ lọ. Ọkàn mi n balẹ̀ wípé n'gbà a'lẹ̀ bá mọ́, b'óse kí n k'ọwọ́ b'àpò kí n mú wésù, n wésù, a á r'ọ́dẹ̀ mîì. Dípò kìlẹ́ ọ́ mọ́, kójú ọ́ là, kí n ta ọgbọ́n mìîì, inú ọ̀gbun n mọ b'ára à mi.

Akíntáyò: Inú Ọ̀gbun?

Ógùnwálé: Inú ọ̀gbun t'ẹ́nìkan 'ó r'ílẹ̀ ẹ rẹ̀ wò.

Akíntáyò: Kíní n j'ọ́gbun?

Ógùnwálé: Kòtò gìrìwò t'ẹ́nìkankan ò leè wọ'bẹ̀.

Akíntáyò: Kòtò gìrìwò lẹ b'ára a yín níbẹ̀?

Ógùnwálé: Mọ b'ára à mi n'sàlẹ̀ ẹ rẹ̀. N'gbà n ó wò yípo, àf'abúlé tí mo rí bí abúlée Fílàní

Akíntáyò: Nínú u kòtò hun?

Ógùnwálé: Nínúu kòtò hun. Mọ b'áwọn èèyàn n'bẹ̀. Àwọn èèyàn hun 'ọ̀ wáá ga tó wa. Sùgbọ́n wọ́n sanra.

Akíntáyò: Èèyàn gíga lèmi'îí l'ọ́dọ̀ọ wọn?

Ógùnwálé: Ẹ ga tẹ́ẹ̀ fẹ́ẹ̀ kan sánmà lọ́dọ̀ọ wọn. Toò, mọ bá dú'ó. Lọ́ bá di "Súnmọ́ ọ", "Ìwọ náà súnmọ́ ọ". Wọn 'ò lè súnmọ́ n mọ. Ọgbọ́n àwọn àgbà tí n bẹ l'ára 'ọ̀ jẹ́ wọn ó lè súnmọ́ mi. N'gbà ọ́ pẹ́, wọ́n ní "Ẹ lọ gb'ónjẹ fún u. Ibi tí ọ́ gbà lọ àwọn ọ́ maa wò o."

Akíntáyò: Ẹ dú'ó; nínu ọ̀gbun, wọ́n n se'njẹ n'bẹ̀ ni?

Ógùnwálé: Wọ́n n se'njẹ.

Akíntáyò: Ilé wà n'bẹ̀?

Ógùnwálé: Ilé n bẹ. Gbogbo ẹ̀ n bẹ.

Akíntáyò: Irúu'lé wo?

Ógùnwálé: Ilé hun rí pẹkutupẹkutu bí ilé e Fílàní báyìí.

Akíntáyò: Ọ́ gbà yín nídùú'ó?

Ógùnwálé: N 'ò leè kó ó 'bẹ̀. Ìta l'èmi ti dú'ó. Ìjókòó mi gaan, kò gbà á.

Akíntáyò: Mọ̀ n gbọ́ bàbá. Ọ̀rọ̀ọ́ yín hun n wọ̀ mí ní Akínyẹmí ara.

Ógùnwálé: Mọ bá dú'ó kà'ta. Bẹ́ẹ̀ni wọn n yọjú'úta lẹ́ẹ̀kọ̀ọ̀kan. Wọ́n se'njẹ, wọ́n ní kí n jẹ.

Akíntáyò: Irú onjẹ̀ẹ̀ wo ni wọ́n sè?

Ógùnwálé: Àmàlà ni, sùgbọ́n n ọ̀ mọ'rúu 'hun tí wọ́n fi rò ó. Àmàlà hun ọ̀ jọ àmàlà a ti'a. Ọkà tí'ọ̀ j'ọkàa ti'a ni wọ́n ní n jẹ.

Akíntáyò: Ẹ̀ẹ̀ sáà jẹ ẹ́.

Ógùnwálé: N 'ọ̀ jẹ ẹ́. Ẹ mọ̀ pé b'ọ́dẹ bá n lọ̀ọ̀'gbẹ́, ọdẹ ò lè se ọ́ má rí nkan pẹ́ẹ̀pẹ̀ẹ̀pẹ́ soọ́nú àpò.

Akíntáyò: Bí àgbàdo títa, bí ọ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀.

Ógùnwálé: Bí àgbàdo, bí ọ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀. Mo n r'íyuùun máléèjí títítítí. Ọjọ́ n yí l'ọjọ́, ìgbà n yí lù'gbà. Mọ sá lo ọjọ́ méje.

Akíntáyò: N'nú Ọ̀gbun?

Ógùnwálé: N'nú ọ̀gbun. 'Jọ́ keje n mọ jáde. Ọjọ́ọ́ Monday n mọ lọ; Sunday n mọ jáde. Sùgbọ́n n'gbà n ọ́ọ̀ jáde, mọ kàn sá déédé sojú báyìí… Wọ́n ní "Wẹ̀hìn o, alásejù. K'órí ẹ ó tún b'ọ́ọ se é, kọ́ọ f'ọwọ́ k'ẹran àwọn".

"Ẹran yín? Èyin 'ọ̀ d'ẹ́ran nîì. Ọlọ́'un lọ́ l'ẹran, ó sì ní á maa pa á ni." Wọ́n l"Óò tiẹ̀ tîì setán tọ́ọ́ lọ." Wọ́n l'ọ́ọ̀ wa w'ẹ̀yìn wo. Èyìn tí n wò báyìí, òde n mọ bára à mi. Mọ bára à mi n'dìí igi ìrókò.

Akíntáyò: Kí wáá l'akitiyan 'hun tẹ́ẹ̀ lọ se n'nú ọ̀gbun 'hun gaan, t'ẹ́ẹ̀ fi tẹ̀lé wọn wọ'bẹ̀?

Ógùnwálé: Ẹran-à hun ni mọ́ fẹ́ẹ́ gbà.

Akíntáyò: S'ẹ́ẹ̀ sì gb'ẹran bọ̀?

Ógùnwálé: Nn rẹ́ran gbà. Wọ́n le jù mí lọ. Wọ́n pọ̀ jù n lọ.

"Toò, ó di dandan k'ẹ́ẹ̀ se n l'álejò k'óo tóó t'ilẹ̀kùn rẹ o. Ẹ se n l'álejò."

Akíntáyò: Ìgbà a wọ́n fẹ́ẹ́ tì yín 'íta nùun?

Ógùnwálé: Àwọn nkan tí wọ́n fi se n l'álejò… [rummages through his trouser's right pocket].

Akíntáyò: Wọ́n wà l'ápòo yín nbẹ̀un? Ẹ jẹ́ n rí i o.

Ógùnwálé: Aà gbọdọ wá a kù. A'ìí dé'lée'kú 'á f'órí kù. Eléyìí… [shows a gourdlet].

Akíntáyò: [makes to touch it] E b'ọ́wọ́ ọ mi le kàn á.

Ógùnwálé: Ọwọ́ ọ́ kàn á. Ọwọ́ a máa kàn á.

Akíntáyò: Àdó nì'í o.

Ógùnwálé: Àdó ni.

Akíntáyò: Èkejì nkọ́?

Ógùnwálé: Èkejì náà nì'í.

Akíntáyò: Eléyìí? Atọ́ rèé.

Ógùnwálé: Atọ́ nùún.

Akíntáyò: Ẹbu wà n'bẹ̀, tor'ó wúwo díẹ̀.

Ógùnwálé: Nkan n bẹ n'nú ẹ̀.

"Toò, eyí t'ẹ́ẹ̀ kó lé n lọ́'ọ́ yìí, báwo ni n máa se é?"

Akíntáyò: Bẹ́ẹ́ se máa lò o?

Ógùnwálé: Èyí àdó yìí, t'ọ́mọ bá y'ọ̀dí, tàb'ágbà lọ yọ̀dí, ìdí yíyọ nlàá lò ó fún.

Akíntáyò: B'óo l'èèyàn ó ti 'á lò ó?

Ógùnwálé: Èèyàn ọ́ r'àdí èyan. Aá rara mú díẹ̀ n'nú òògùn hun, aá fi sínú àdí èyan, wọn ọ́ maa f'îka ọmọ́diùn yìí rò ó pọ̀. Wọn ó fi ra ìdí tọ́ yọ hun. Ní agbára Ọlọ́'un, yíọ́ wọlè.

Akíntáyò: Bàbá, atọ́ yìí nkọ́?

Ógùnwálé: Atọ́ yìí, ẹni ọgbẹ́ẹ̀'nú bá n dà láàmú n l'òhun wà fún.

Akíntáyò: Bàbá, 'hun tí wọ́n fi wáá fun yín n' kinní àdó yìí, sẹ́ẹ̀ sọ fún wọn pé ẹnití ídìi rẹ̀ yọ n'bẹ̀ ní ọ̀dọ̀ yín ni?

Ógùnwálé: Ẹ seun. Wọ́n se mí l'álejò ni.

Akíntáyò: Ẹdú'ó, sé ìdí àwọn iwin náà ma n yọ ni wọ́n fi se é pamọ́ ni?

Ógùnwálé: Mo rò pé n maá yọ. Bí 'ọ̀ bá yọ, wọn 'ò níí ní i npamọ́.

Akíntáyò: Sir concerning your experience while hunting on the Heights of Ọbaálá… I was told there is an abyss in the place.

Ógùnwálé: I always hunt the Heights of Ọbaálá… There is an abyss up there, a bottomless one.

Akíntáyò: What did you experience that day?

Ógùnwálé: Oh! It was an unforgetable experience. Now, listen. It was unforgetable. I mounted my headlight and went hunting in the night all over the forest.

Akíntáyò: In the dead of the night?

Ógùnwálé: Yes, in the night. I then got to the mouth of the abyss, and I sighted a pair of deer's eyes.

Akíntáyò: *They mirror your light*.

Ógùnwálé: *They mirror the light well*. I fired the gun at it.

Akíntáyò: Bang!

Ógùnwálé: Bang! But just then, I saw fourteen other eyes right there, which equal seven deer.

Akíntáyò: Sir, I need a clarification. You saw a deer's eyes reflecting your light. You aimed and fired at it. But instead of the deer falling as the gun sounded…

Ógùnwálé: …I then saw fourteen other eyes.

Akíntáyò: As the gun-smoke settled, you saw fourteen other eyes.

Ógùnwálé: …which is equal to seven deer. I was amazed. So, I reloaded my gun. I then selected the small one among them, and fired at it. "Bang!"

Akíntáyò: Out of the seven deer?

Ógùnwálé: Out of the seven. The smallest of the herd; the seventh. There were three here [on the right], there were three there [on the left]. I then fired at the one in the middle, in accordance with the wisdom of our fathers. So, the shot felled the animal and the rest of the eyes disappeared. I fetched my knife from its place on my waist, and I moved on to gut and cut up the animal.

Akíntáyò: What happened to the one you shot earlier?

Ógùnwálé: I did not see it anymore. But the one I shot last was a small one. When I got to the spot, it had become as big as a cow. I was marvelled.

Akíntáyò: At the time you fired at it, your light revealed its size clearly?

Ógùnwálé: Very clearly. It was a small one. But when I got to the spot to start cutting it up, I met a very big animal.

Akíntáyò: A young deer had turned into a big one.

Ógùnwálé: It had become big. What is this? [I marvelled]. No problem. I paid homage. I paid homage to my father Adélẹ́kàn Àjàó. May your heavenly rest be peaceful. *Homage to the penis that droops and yet does not drip and the vagina that opens downward and yet does not bleed. Homage shall I pay you all for the*

whole day. Do not let me tire. Do not let me fail. Save me from the accidental burst of the Ògún lamp [gun]. As I started to cut up the animal, certain hands appeared…

Akíntáyò: What!

Ógùnwálé: Whose hands are these? [I wondered]

Akíntáyò: Where did the hands come from?

Ógùnwálé: I did not know. They just emerged from nowhere? Just as I wanted to start cutting up the animal, I saw the hands holding on to it.

Akíntáyò: What about the owner of the hands?

Ógùnwálé: "What is it? What do you want here?" [I demanded].

Akíntáyò: Who it was that held on to the animal?

Ógùnwálé: The spirits. The spirits of the forest.

Akíntáyò: Are they the owners of the animals?

Ógùnwálé: They are the owners. We only contest with them.

Akíntáyò: If he is the owner, why not cede the animal to him.

Ógùnwálé: I should not. The animal was my goal.

Akíntáyò: You hunters – with due respect – are rather troublesome.

Ógùnwálé: We are not troublesome. We are only looking for what to eat.

Akíntáyò: Sir, what then happened?

Ógùnwálé: We then started to fight. We struggled in the night.

Akíntáyò: You were fighting with the spirit?

Ógùnwálé: We fought until the twilight was approaching. I was assured that upon the break of day, I would use my whistle to call other hunters to come to my aid. But rather than the day to break so that I would try another option, I suddenly found myself in an abyss?

Akíntáyò: An abyss?

Ógùnwálé: Yes, unfathomable abyss.

Akíntáyò: What is an abyss?

Ógùnwálé: A cavernous pit that no man can enter.

Akíntáyò: It was inside such pit that you found yourself.

Ógùnwálé: I found myself right at the bottom of it. I then looked round, and I saw huts built in the manner of the Fulanis'.

Akíntáyò: In that pit?

Ógùnwálé: Yes, I saw *peopl*e in there. They were not as tall as *we* are, but were fat.

Akíntáyò: Compared to them, I am a tall person.

Ógùnwálé: You would be as tall as heaven beside them. So, I waited.

"Go to him."

"No, you go first" [they told one another]. They could not come near me because I had been fortified with the magical "wisdom" of old.

After some time, they said "Go and give him food. There is surely no way of escape for him."

Akíntáyò: Now wait a minute. In the abyss, did they prepare food?

Ógùnwálé: They did cook food.

Akíntáyò: And they had houses?

Ógùnwálé: There were houses and everything.

Akíntáyò: What type of houses?

Ógùnwálé: Squat houses like the Fulani huts.

Akíntáyò: Were the houses roomy enough to accommodate you standing?

Ógùnwálé: I could not go in there. I stood outside. Even seated, it would not contain me.

Akíntáyò: Now go on. I enjoy your story to the very pith of my bones.

Ógùnwálé: So, I waited outside. They were always peeping to have a look at me. They cooked food and gave me some.

Akíntáyò: What type of food did they cook?

Ógùnwálé: It was *àmàlà*[86], but I did not know the flour it was made of. It did not look like our own type. The *àmàlà* given me was not our type.

Akíntáyò: In short, you refused to eat it.

Ógùnwálé: I refused to eat it. You know that a hunter always has a little supply of edible things in his bag

Akíntáyò: …such as roast corn and plantain.

[86] Yoruba food made from yam-flour.

Ógùnwálé: …like corn and plantain. Those were the things I survived on. The time and days went by. I spent a total of seven days in there.

Akíntáyò: In the abyss?

Ógùnwálé: In the abyss. I came out on the seventh day. I went in on Monday; I came out on Sunday. But as I was about to be released, I just looked up and they said to me:

"You immoderate being, never you come near our animals anymore in your life".

"Your animals?" I replied. "God, not you, is the owner of animals, and he has permitted us to kill them". They then hesitated to let me go. But they eventually asked me to turn round. As I turned round I found myself under an *ìrókò* tree.

Akíntáyò: Now what was the very reason behind your going in there with them in the first place?

Ógùnwálé: I followed them in to claim the animal

Akíntáyò: Were you able to get the animal?

Ógùnwálé: I could not have the animal but I got something else.

Akíntáyò: You could not get the animal.

Ógùnwálé: I could not take it from them. They were stronger than I am. They were many.

"Now you have to give me a present" [I told them at a point]. "You must give me something before you lock your door".

Akíntáyò: That was before they threw you out?

Ógùnwálé: The things they presented to me as gifts… [rummages through his right pocket].

Akíntáyò: Are they right there in your pocket? Please, let me have a look.

Ógùnwálé: I surely have it here. *You never search for too long in Death's house before you see a skull*. Now, this one… [shows a gourdlet]

Akíntáyò: [makes to touch it] May I touch it?

Ógùnwálé: You surely can. If you must not, I would have told you earlier. You can touch it

Akíntáyò: This is an àdó gourdlet.

Ógùnwálé: It is an àdó gourdlet.

Akíntáyò: What about the other one?

Ógùnwálé: Here is it [shows an oblong gourdlet].

Akíntáyò: This is an atọ́ gourdlet.

Ógùnwálé: Yes, it is.

Akíntáyò: There must be something in it considering its weight.

Ógùnwálé: It contains something.

"What am I expected to use these things for?" I asked them.

Akíntáyò: The direction of their use, you mean?

Ógùnwálé: This àdó gourd is used to cure a child or an adult of hemorrhoids.

Akíntáyò: How does one apply it?

Ógùnwálé: You put some of its content in some quantity of kernel oil and stir with your little finger. You then rub the mixture on the hemorrhoidal anus. By God's power, it would heal.

Akíntáyò: Sir, what of the atọ́ gourdlet?

Ógùnwálé: It is an antidote for curing ulcer.

Akíntáyò: Sir, how did they come to give you the gourdlets? Did you tell them you have people suffering from hemorrhoids or what?

Ógùnwálé: Thank you. It was a gift.

Akíntáyò: Are the spirits too susceptible to hemorrhoids, or why did they have such medicine?

Ógùnwálé: I think they are. Otherwise they would not keep such medicine.

APPENDIX IX

The narrative of Jóọ̀gún Àlàdé[87]

Jóọ̀gún: Ọjọ́ kẹn, èmi yìí nẹ́ẹ̀, b'émi ti mọ kékeé yìí nẹ́ẹ̀ ni… Òjò àkọ́rọ tíí kọ́ọ́ rọ̀ nì, ẹ mọ̀ pé omi mọọ́ wọ́n nínọ́ọ'jù.

Adédùntán: Bẹ́ẹ̀ ni.

Jóọ̀gún: Mọ wáá dúró níbi ihò àpáta à kẹn. Mo ní túláàsì, àwọn ẹrẹn ọ́ maa wá mọ omi níhìín. Ìgbà tọ́ pẹ́, mọ bá rí [èèyàn] bí àwọn Fílàní, ọ́ jẹ́ mẹ́ta.

Adédùntán: Fílàní mẹ́ta?

Jóọ̀gún: Obì'in ni wọ́n o. Wọ́n wá pọn'mi l'ódò ni. Bí èèyàn ni wọ́n wá pọn'mi. Mọ sáà dákẹ́; n sáà n wò wọ́n. Wọn ò rí mi o. Bí wọn se pọn'mi tẹ́n – èyìn igi nlá kẹn wáà n bẹ – wọ́n bọ́ s'ẹ́yìn igi nì, n ò rí wọn mọ́. Mọ sáà dákẹ́ títítítí. Toò, ìgbà tọ́ pẹ́, tí n wo èyìn igi nì, ìgalà ni mo rí tí wọ́n tèlé'raa wọn.

Adédùntán: Ibi èyìn igi tí àwọn Fúlàní yẹn kó sí?

Jóọ̀gún: Ibi èyìn igi tí àwọn kiní yẹn pọnmi lọ nì. Àwọn ìgalà. Wọ́n tẹ̀lé'raa wọn; mẹ́ta

Adédùntán: Ìgalà mẹ́ta náà ni? Fúlàní obìnrín mẹ́ta náà ló dẹ̀ lọọ'bẹ̀?

Jóọ̀gún: Hẹn. Àwọn mẹ́ta náà ni. Ìgbàa wọ́n dé, mọ bá yìnbọn s'íkẹn n'bẹ̀. Ọ̀kẹ́n tí mo yìbọn sí nì, tíè é bá se pé àwọn bàbá bá wa lọọ̀'gbẹ́ ni, aà lè kun ú.

Òjó: Kílódé?

Jóọ̀gún: Hun t'aà fi lè kun ú ni pé ìgbà t'ẹ́rẹn è yẹn subú lu'lẹ̀, ègbẹ́ kẹn ẹrẹn, ègbẹ́ kẹn èèyẹ̀n.

Òjó: Haà!

Jóọ̀gún: Mo dé'bẹ̀ báyíí, mọ p'èyìndà. Mọ bá họ, ó di bùdó. N'gbà mo dé bùdó, mo ní

"Bàbá."

Ó ní "Hìín."

"Mọ mà rí nkẹn."

O ní "Kílódé?" Mọ bá k'álàyé é 'lẹ̀ bí mo se se lákọọ́kọ́ nì. Ọ́ bá ní n mọ́ọ n'só n'bẹ̀. N'gbà t'áa d'ọ́ọ̀hún nìínì, ọ́ bá ní

"Araa 'hun tí àá mọọ́ wí nìinì. Ọmọ kékeé kẹn ò sí mọ́". Ọ́ bá mú aájò kẹn.

"Hẹn. Ẹ paradà. Báa bá wọ'nú eégún, à pahúndá ni." Ọ́ bá di ẹrẹn.

Adédùntán: Ó di ara ẹran padà b'ó ṣe yẹ k'ó rí?

Jóọ̀gún: Ó di ara ẹrẹn padà. A kun ú. Sùgbọ́n Baba ọ̀ jẹ́ kí á jẹ́ n'bẹ̀. N'gbà a gbé ẹran nì dé'lé, a fi tọrẹ ni.

[87] Personal interaction (16/12/06)

Jóòǵún: One day, my humble self, as little as I am… You know that water is always scarce in the forest during the first rain.

Adédùntán: That is right.

Jóòǵún: I then kept a watch by the tunnel in a rock. I knew animals would surely come to drink at the river nearby. After a time I saw some [people] who looked like the Fulani; they were three in number.

Adédùntán: Three Fulani?

Jóòǵún: They were women. They came to fetch water. They came in human form. I kept quiet and remained still, watching them. They did not see me. After fetching the water – there was a big tree nearby, you know – they went behind that tree and I did not see them anymore. I was quiet and still. After a long time, I saw deer file out from behind the tree.

Adédùntán: From behind the tree where the Fulani women disappeared?

Jóòǵún: From behind the tree where those "things" took the water to. The deer came out in a file; three of them.

Adédùntán: The deer were three? And the Fulani women were also three in number?

Jóòǵún: Yes, they were three. When they drew near, I fired at one of them. That one I shot at, if not that our father had been with us in that expedition, we would not have been bold enough to cut it.

Òjó: Why?

Jóòǵún: The reason is that when the animal fell, one side of it was animal, the other was human skin.

Òjó: Ho!

Jóòǵún: When I got to the spot, I fled in horror. I ran back to base. When I got there, I said:

"Father."

"Yes", he answered.

"I saw something strange" [I told him].

"What is it?" he asked. So I told him all. He asked me to take him there. When we got to the place, he told me:

"This a validation of what I always tell you that none of you is a little child anymore." So he took out a charm [and chanted *ọfọ̀*]

"*Now transform, for when a man puts on the egúngún costume, his voice changes."* Then, it turned back to an animal.

Adédùntán: You mean the flesh became normal as if it were a wholesome deer?

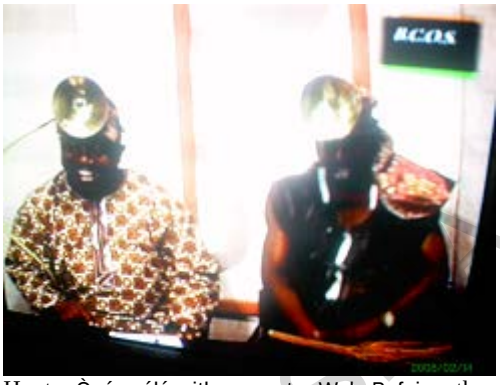
Yes, it became a normal deer. We cut it up. But Father did not allow us to eat of it. Neither father nor any of us ate of it. At home, we shared it out to people.

APPENDIX X

Some pictures from the field

Hunter Ọláifá Àdìgún on the set of *Ọ́dẹ́tẹ̀dó* (13/03/08)

Hunter Arípanla on the set of *Ọ́dẹ́tẹ̀dó* (14/02/08)



Hunter Ògúnwálé with presenter Wale Rufai on the set of *Ọ́dẹ́tẹ̀dó* (14/02/08)

Hunter Sulaimon Akínpẹ̀lú on the set of *Ọ́dẹ́tẹ̀dó* (28/02/08)

Ọdẹ Akọni production team: L-R flutist B. Adébọ̀wálé, producer D. Akinlabí, presenter K. Akíntáyọ̀, co-presenter O.G. Gbámọ́léfà, and guest hunter Pabíẹ́kùn

Inscribing the hunter in signs and images: the walls of Làsísì Balódẹ of Òtún, Sakí

A narrative session with old, retired hunters in Ọjẹ́-Owódé

Researcher, hunting (with) the hunters at Ọbaṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀