

Traditional African Nidation in Works of Selected Contemporary African Poets

¹Chizoba Bartholomew **AKPAH**
akpahbartholomew@yahoo.com

²Olatoyese Samson **JAYEOBA**
jayejaye2017@yahoo.com

&

³Simeon Olufunso **SONDE**
funsoosho@yahoo.com

¹*Department of English,
KolaDaisi University, Ibadan,
Oyo State, Nigeria*

²*Department of General Studies,
The Polytechnic Ibadan,
Oyo State, Nigeria*

³*Department of English,
Tai Solarin University of Education, Ijagun,
Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State, Nigeria*

Abstract

The growth of African poetry written in English medium has been credited to a number of African pioneer poets whose verses have been published in English. These poets have modeled their verse artistry to Eurocentric style though with traces of African oral tradition. The contemporary Nigerian poets, however, have continued to implant oral traditions in their works in a bid to sustain the values of traditional and cultural heritage of the African society. The paper, therefore examines, instances of imaginative engravings of traditional myths, legends, symbols, images, proverbs, rituals, and other oral traditions in contemporary Nigerian poetry. While focusing on eclectically selected poems of Nigerian poets, the study probes into the sustenance of aesthetic values of oral tradition into the scripting of verses published in English expression. Using the structuralism with its cultural strand, the study further

investigates how the aesthetics of oral tradition of performance, the communal spirit of the verbal art, resonate in written and published poetry in English. The study discovers that female poets also contribute towards the recreation of traditional verbal poetics in their verses. The study concludes that contemporary Nigerian poets have continued to implant the abundance of traditional oral heritage into their scripted verses in English. It submits that the borrowings from oral cultural identity have helped to bridge the gap between oral verbal art and the written expression in the received language.

Keywords: Traditional, African tradition, works, African poets

Introduction

Contemporary African poetry of English, French or Portuguese expression draws immensely from oral traditions and cultural practices. Instances of such borrowings manifest in the imaginative use of African traditional myths, legends, symbols, images, proverbs, ancestral heritage, rituals, religion as well as other cultural artifacts into their poetry creation. Despite the accusation that trails pioneer modern African poets as being Eurocentric, a close look at some of their works portrays evidences of traditional heritage. In Wole Soyinka 's "Death in the Dawn", "Season" and "Idanre", there is the deployment of images of *Ogun*, the Yoruba god of iron, *Sango* god of thunder and lightning as well as *Ifa* divination. Adrian Roscoe (1971) observes that:

An essential point about Soyinka and one which firmly marks him off from his fellow West African poets is that he is still working within a traditional system; a system which allows him to explore the problems of creation and existence from a philosophical home base (50).

Also, Wole Soyinka and J.P Clark's versions of "Abiku" derive from the Yoruba traditional myth of "*Abiku*", the spirit child that dies and keeps returning to die again. Such child causes pains and agonies especially to its mother. The "*Abiku*" myth is not only limited to the Yoruba alone, the myth of the dying and returning child is one of the most popular myth in most African traditional societies, though with different names.

The history of contemporary African poetry can comfortably be traced to their oral performance. This is in agreement with the story of man's creation. It is therefore wrong to assume that the ancestral traditional oral performance of African poetry is primitive when

compared to the written poetry. In furtherance of the argument between orality and literacy, Walter Ong (1982) insists that “all the religions of mankind have their remote origins in the oral past and they all make a great deal of the spoken word”. He states further that:

In Christian teaching, the second person of the one God head...is known not only as the son but also as the word of God. In this teaching, God the father utters or speak his word, his son. He does not inscribe him (179).

Even in the book of Genesis, we were told that in the beginning there is the word and the word is with God... and God said “Let there be light” This means that the word (oral performance) is the foundation for man’s further creations.

Lionizing oral traditions of African poetry is not to legitimize it for the growth of contemporary African poetry. Ong (1982:175) rightly said that “oral cultures today value their oral traditions and agonize over the loss of those traditions”. Thus, to preserve oral poetry and to derive the aesthetic effects of oral traditions, contemporary African poets, tapping from the technology of new media, have continued to deploy elements of traditional heritage into their works. Niyi Afolabi (1998) declares that:

The African society from which poetry draws nourishment and inspiration is equally an oral culture. Between the spoken and the scribal, orality is an unbroken tradition. The legacy of writing makes the transition from oral to written both a necessity and a challenge to contemporary writers. The craft of the oral poet is essentially performative while technology compels the literary artist to translate memory, thought and stories into words.

In Okot P'Bitek's "Songs of Lawino," Lawino laments the poverty which voters are subjected to after every election. She bemoans the politicians who abandon the masses, and are never to be seen again until another election. The politicians /who have fallen into things/ throw themselves into soft beds/ while the hip bones of the voters/ grow painful sleeping on the same earth/ they slept before uhuru! This aspect of the

poem talks about insensitivity of political leaders in most African states. Also, Okot P'Bitek condemns Africans and their rush for anything European at the expense of African traditional values. This is seen in Lawino's tongue lashing of Clementina. Thus, P'Bitek deploys more African symbols, images, proverbs and myths in "Songs of Lawino" than "Songs of Ocol." For instance, the poem borrows the traditional Acholi symbols of the horn, the bull and the spear to condemn the loss of traditional heritage.

In Uganda, and in some other East African countries, the horn, though a musical instrument, also functions as a ritual object connected with initiation into adulthood. Also, among the Acholi, the spear symbolizes a ritual essence. Whenever a man dies in Acholi, the tradition demands that he should be buried with his spear as a symbol of masculinity. Lawino utilizes this symbol to lament Ocol's impotence and alienation from tradition.

When you have gained your full strength
Go to the shrine of your father,
Prepare a feast...
Beg forgiveness from them
And ask them to give you a new spear
A new spear with a sharp and hard point.
A spear that will crack the rock
Ask for a spear that you will thrust...
Ask them to restore your manhood! (119)

In castigating politicians who abandon the electorate after each election, Lawino borrows the image of the kite from Acholi oral song to portray the exploitative behaviours of the African politicians who "return to the countryside for the next election:

return to the countryside for the next election
Like the kite
That returns during the dry season (P.110).

The use of proverbs in the poem is seen in Lawino's warning to Ocol not to abandon or destroy the old tradition that nurtured him as he blindly embraced western ways of life and attempts to destroy the

African tradition. The main proverb is weaved around the pumpkin in *Songs of Lawino*. The proverb “The pumpkin in the old homestead/must not be uprooted” is a popular proverb among the Acholi people. Thus, the pumpkin in the homestead represents the old tradition which must not be uprooted.

In Okigbo’s *Labyrinths*, the poet having purged himself like a prodigal son seeks for purification. Okigbo captures this scenario by deploying traditional images and symbol of purification. This is evident in the three parts of “Lustra”. For instance, the traditional prescribed objects of purification such as vegetable offerings; chalk, long drums as well as cannons are symbols of ritual purification in the poem. In “Heavensgate” also, the images and symbols like “weaver bird”, “town crier”, “palm grove”, “sacrificial ram” and “the hornbill in the poem are all elements of oral tradition deployed in the poem as a reflection and manifestation of the traditional culture. In “Hurrah for Thunder”, Okigbo borrows the traditional praise poem, as seen in the second stanza, by describing the strength of the elephant which is a metaphor of the Federal Government:

The elephant tetrarch of the jungle:
With a wave of the hand
He could pull trees to the ground
His four mortal legs pounded the earth
Whenever they treaded,
The grass was forbidden to be there (67).

The description of the mightiness of the elephant is borrowed from the Yoruba traditional *Ijala* chant.

Contemporary African Poetry and Oral Engraving

Though works of Soyinka, Okigbo and Okot P’ Bitek have been used in this work to provide the background of oral elements in written poetry, it is pertinent to note that the emphasis of this work shall be on the works of contemporary works of Nigerian poets such as Ademola Dasylva, Ezenwa Ohaeto and Ifi Amadiume, as specimens representing contemporary African poetry.

To Tanure Ojaide, (1996:59) “contemporary African poetry is poetry written by African in our time”. The contemporary poets attempt to “decolonise” African poetry by avoiding Eurocentric styles such as

rhymes, obscurantism or regular stanzas in most of their poems. The themes of contemporary African poetry are a departure from the theme of culture conflict and romanticisation of African culture associated with the pioneer poets, particularly of the negritude strand. Beyond the pioneer poets, poems, written by the “new” poets are usually coloured with elements of traditional heritage in line with modernization.

In Ademola Dasylvas *Songs of Odamalugbe* (2006), the poem “my hoe nips at mother earth” makes a profuse borrowing of traditional heritage such as Yoruba proverbs, symbols, and images. For instance, the poet deploys the Yoruba proverb to justify his closeness with renowned poets:

The child that learns early to wash his
hands sits with elders:

One evening, Oja Legunja, Ogunba, Oba Areje, Agbada,
Ishola, Olatunji, Osundare, Omamor, Okafor, Okinba,
Higo, Irele-e-e-e e

Dara and Ibitokun had invited me to a dinner In Baba
Faleti's House; there the sayings of our elders had
tasted like pounded yam! (29)

The first line of the fourteenth stanza of the poem is borrowed from Yoruba traditional proverb “Omo to ba mowowe, a ba agba jeun” (a child that learns the ways of the elders, sits with elders). We can also see the deployment of traditional heritage in the poets’ borrowing from the myth of *ogun* the god of iron.

In borrowing from oral tradition, the contemporary poets no doubt faces herculean task in the translation process. This is seen in Dasylva’s *Songs of Odamolugbe* where the aesthetic function or meaning of the original expression may be lost in translation to English. We can argue, therefore, that the poet’s use of code switching whereby such words like *Kango-kongo*, *Kange kange*, *Odamolugbe*, *Oloshunta*, *Kongi onire* retain their Yoruba original form in the written English expression. While paying homage to his mentors, the poet still criticises the failure of the state in the area of infrastructural facilities especially, the nation’s hospitals which have become a “*hosi'battoir*” that is, a hospital that is more or less an abattoir.

Interestingly, employing indigenous language as a stylistic effect by contemporary African poets is one feature in the process of transporting oral tradition to written poetry of English expression. In Ezenwa Ohaeto's *The Voice of the Night Masquerade* (1997:25-26) the poet deploys Igbo proverb as a refrain in the poem "The month of the night" Can I recognize laughter

In this womb of night
Can I touch joy
In this dark night
When I stumble against it,
Abali di egwu!

Dogs grow horns at night
Their backs are not swallowed,
Abali di egwu!
It is the water beneath the soil
That kills the tender yam tuber,
And which father to save
Seduces own dainty daughter,
Abali di egwu!

The expression "Abali di egwu" in Igbo means "night is terrible". It is an Igbo proverb, an element of oral device which the poet borrows to warn against activities in the darkness. The technique of using indigenous language promotes eloquence, audience involvement, music and songs associated with oral performance. The troika, Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike (1980) argues that:

The incorporation and development of traditional techniques of orature should go a long way towards infusing eloquence into our poetry, which would also be the continuation of traditional forms with a pouring of new wine into old bottles... in order to help catalyse new forms and techniques suitable for rendering new aspects of the contemporary African reality (259 – 261).

In consonance with oral implantation, particularly the use of indigenous language, contemporary African poets whose indigenous languages have continued to occupy spaces in their written verses are Atukwei Okai, Kojo Laing, Niyi Osundare, Kofi Anyindoho, Femi Osofisan, Tunde Fatoba, Nelson Fashina, Bayo Adebawale among several others. Tanure Ojaide (1996) posits that:

Lines in indigenous languages “serve as refrains. This again particularizes the audience and reaches the not too educated more.... The audience from the same language area tends to identify more with the poet, who is propagating his or her culture (87).

Thus, indigenous languages as oral elements in contemporary African poetry function as a synthesis, creating harmony of cultural identity between the poet and his/her people. Similarly, Olubode Olusesan (2017), acknowledged the import of Bayo Adebawale’s *oriki* (praise poetry) in the promotion of traditional Yoruba oral aesthetics in contemporary literature. He writes:

The fact is that every Yoruba person has his or her own personal praise name that can be any of Akangbe, Alamu, Ejide, Alabi or many more. There are also praise names given to children born in unusual circumstances. That is why while twins have their own set of *oriki*, an Ige – the child who comes out legs – first during birth – has his own. But another major type of the panegyrics is the *oriki orile*, which is the usually lengthy, winding and witty ones for different lineages. These include Opomulero, Olofamojo and Iloko Omo Arelu (<https://www.google.com/amp/punchng.com>)

Also, a reading of Remi Raji’s textual playfulness in “post proverbial in Yoruba culture: a playful blasphemy” (1999), reveals tapping into the rich Yoruba oral tradition to reflect on a brand of subversive proverbial art. Remi Raji-Oyelade (2013:15) further argues that post proverbial is a “dynamic act of cultural deviant...” It presupposes, therefore, that the orality of the Yoruba proverbs proves to be raw source of Raji’s poetic creativity.

While writing on “The Oral Artist’s Script” in *Africa Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* (2007), Harold Schenb unmask the oral artist’s, stating that:

His materials include ancient images, his body and voice, his imagination, an audience.... So the artist must depend on his imagination and on the controlled cooperation of the members of the audience to develop the skeletal mythic image that he has drawn from a repertory of remembered images inherited from a venerable artistic tradition (98).

From the foregoing, it is evident that scripting, particularly from the oral artists would require immense borrowings from ancient history, vivid recollections of past images, and experiences. This is evident in J.O Akin Sofoluwe’s “Heroes and Heroines in African Classical Thought” (2014), where the writer recalls some classical legends of the African myths. The poet hails *Obatala*, Yoruba god of divinity and legend, in the lines below:

I am *Obatala*
Perfect purity within,
Perfect purity without;
Obatala
Upright in thoughts,
Obatala.
Ideal in deeds,
Ideal indeed,
Obatala
Unobstrusive
Not intrusive
Obatala. (43)

The lines above remind readers of a time past, particularly the Yoruba traditional society when much value was placed on good character signified by the great legend, *Obatala* who was respected for his good deeds and purity. No doubt, the lines are rich implantation of the Yoruba oral tradition. Similarly, Oyeniyi Okunoye’s thesis “Ethnic Tradition and

the African Post-colonial Poetic Imagination of Niyi Osundare and Kofi Anyidoho" (2001) investigates the overwhelming presence of African oral tradition in the poetry of Niyi Osundare and Kofi Anyidoho.

Pidginization as Oral Elements in Contemporary Verses

There is a growing trend in the use of pidgin as a cultural element in African contemporary poetry in English. This can be attributed to the fact that pidgin can be associated with people of the lower status. Illiteracy is still very high in most African states. The poor masses as well as the non-literates use pidgin as an expression in day to day activities. The poetry of Nigeria's Aig-Imoukhuede gained significant popularity when his poem "One wife for one man" was published. Mamman Vatsa, Ezenwa-Ohaeto and a few others have also experimented with the pidgin style. The origin of pidgin according to (Elugbe & Omamor 1991:21) "arose from the urgent communication needs of the contact between the visiting Europeans and their multi-lingual Nigerian hosts. Stabilisation of this contact led to the sustenance and expansion of "Nigerian Pidgin". Validating the importance of pidgin in transplanting traditional heritage in Nigerian modern poetry, Ezenwa – Ohaeto (1998) submits that:

The exploitation of oral traditions through a synthesized creative crucible enables the modern Nigerian writer to produce fresh exciting and artistic poetry. The pidgin language provides an appropriate medium for this exploitation of oral traditions in poetry, for it acts as a bridge between the orality of verbal communication and the formality of the written word (23).

The essence of Pidgin English in contemporary African poetry of English expression is aimed at de-emphasizing esoteric use of English language. It captures serious issues of national concern, satirically with a blend of sarcasm, humour, unconventional images to make its communication effective and more appealing and to accommodate wider audience. For instance, Ken Saro wiwa's poem "Dis Nigeria Sef" quoted by Ezenwa Ohaeto (1998:32) captures serious issues of national concern. The theme of the poem centres on negligent especially on Nigerian

workers, hypocrisy and loss of cultural identity of the post-colonial Nigeria. He personifies Nigeria. The exasperation of the persona, which emerges at interval, is part of the poet's technique in the addition of a folkloric dimension as he scolds Nigeria:

Oh yes, you be foolish yeye man look as you dey
laugh as if I dey talk
You think say I dey joke?
But I beg you oh, Nigeria
No talk say I dey cuss you
True to God no be say,
I no like you

Though, the poem begins by scolding Nigeria but he later introduced a deliberate attitudinal change towards the end to demonstrate his love for Nigeria.

Female Voices and Oral Implantation

The interface between oral tradition and written contemporary African poetry in English cannot be said to be an exclusive reserve of the contemporary male poets. Female poets have also deployed traditional elements into their poetry. The works of Ifi Amadiume, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie, Funso Aiyejina, and Catherine Acholonu among other female poets have successfully sprinkled some of their verses with oral and cultural artifacts.

In Catherine Acholonu's "The Spring's Last Drop", there is a dominant use of the first person pronoun "I" which function as a symbol representing the community:

I Obianuju
I shall provide my children with plenty
I shall multiply this drop
 shall multiply this drop
 shall multi...pl...p...
(The New African Poetry; P. 171)

The "I" which suggests motherhood with abundance blessing is weaved around "Obianuju" which in Igbo means "the one that cometh

with abundance". Igbo traditional names are onomatopoeic. thus the implication of the name "Obianuju" is an oral device which becomes the communal voice. The poem treats the theme of motherhood and approval for African traditional values as represented in most of her poems.

In Ifi Amadiume "Oya Now", the poet criticises women who had abandoned their economic, social and political pursuit in favour of bodily beauty. The spontaneity in which the poem is written is a manifestation of traditional exhortation associated with igbo oral poetry as seen in the last stanza:

Where is the will
to suck in your breath
pull up and tighten your wrapper
hold it well well with your oja
and say oya!
Wata don pass garri o!
Once and for all – o!
Make we settle this thing o!
Now now!
Oya – O!
Oya!
Oya now!
(The New African Poetry: 178)

Though written in both pidgin and Standard English, the poet employs wit, humour as well as repetition for aesthetic effect. Ogundipe Leslie is noted for deploying elements of orality in her poetry. For instance in “Bird – Song” which has the poetic conceit:

Nothing is joined my friend
today
and everything is joined,

The poet employs the Yoruba conversational play on words to suggest the topsy turvy nature of the modern age and contemporary conflict (Ezenwa-Ohaeto 1998).

Oral Performance Heritage and Written Contemporary African Poetics

Oral performance and audience involvement are inseparable aspects of the oral art. Contemporary African written poetry in the English language has continued to fuse these traditional heritages into their poetry. This informs some of the poems in Ademola Dasylva's *Songs of Odamolugbe* (2006). In the anthology, poems such as "if the gods must be", "Helotry", "Elephant and tortoise", "Dancing sigidi in the rain" are to be sung with musical accompaniments. The musical accompaniments are traditional instrument of oral heritage for aesthetic and communicative purposes. In "If the gods must be", the poet insists that "On the iyalu-talking drum, each unit of utterance is to be produced first on the drum before the performer repeats it:

If the gods, the gods I say, if they must be,
My people, the people must live!
Ayan, the great one whose
Thunderous drumstick engages
Trained ears in a dance of listening duel.

The great one whose leathery utterance
Drums of hidden wisdom,
Fountain of deep experience
Ayan, Ayan, isn't you 'I set my eyes first upon
This dawn of better days?
Survival, survival is war, Ayan!
The war is here; the war is now!
You must tell it to Ogun!

The Poem draws extensively from the Yoruba oral tradition of performance. For instance, *Ayan* is a Yoruba lineage name for professional drummers of the talking drum. Also, drawing copiously from the Yoruba traditional myth of *Ogun*, the poet details *Ogun*, the god of iron and war, and his journey and how he encountered *esú* a Yoruba deity for confusion. *Esú* led *ogun* to drinking into stupor, leading him to abandon his duty. He laments that the gods misdeeds have led to the peoples' suffering and warned the gods to be careful or the people would revolt against them.

The introduction of *Ayan* and the musical accompaniment is an attempt to involve audience participation which is one of the essential ingredients of traditional oral performance. It also portrays the communal spirit of collective production that prevails in most African verbal arts. Ezenwa–Ohaeto (1998) adds that:

The use of foreign words...could still be mediated in performance without recourse to the glossary of the printed page. Performances are clearly enhanced by the deployment of the whole body in service of the performance or in the service of the performer. A smile at an appropriate segment of the performance clearly supplies a lot of information. The swift gesture, the contraction of the facial muscle or the shake of the head adds to the repertoire of performance (46).

Dasyilva's use of game words: Drum it to Sango, tell it to Ogun. Drum it to Ogun, tell it to Sango (P.37) as well as the repetition and lyricism of words are oral devices used to make the performance cling to the minds of both the performer and the audience *Songs of Odamolugbe*.

Traditional Heritage and the Problem of Translation

The mode of oral poets especially the griot, bald and other traditional oral artists is mainly performance based. With the invention of writing, technology compels the literary artist especially contemporary African poets to reproduce oral tradition into written form and translate memory, thoughts and traditional stories into words.

Translation no doubt is a herculean task to contemporary African poets. This is because there is the potentiality of losing the ornaments, adornment and the aesthetics that is richly dominant in oral performance. Or how does the contemporary poet capture adequately the spontaneity with which oral performance is associated with. Besides, not all traditional myths, symbols, images, proverbs of the oral performance have sufficient equivalent in the written English expression. As a matter of fact, the fear of losing the aesthetic values to English expression could account for the planting of oral images, symbols, myths and other traditional concepts

in indigenous language to the written English expression. Thus, traditional myths or legends such as *Sango*, *Ogun*, *Idoto*, *Oya*, *Esu* and other goddesses have always find their way in their indigenous forms into written expression. This can be traced to the poetry of Soyinka, Niyi Osundare, Femi Osofisan, Tanure Ojaide, Demola Dasylva, Nelson Fashina among others. This is a strategy aimed at bringing out the charm and the poetic quality of the original. Isidore Okpewo (2007) in his essay "Oral literature and Modern African literature" criticises the earlier European scholars attempt at translating elements of oral tradition into English. The European critics always jeopardize the originality of the indigenous language in their bid to create harmony of sounds:

...some European collectors, in their translation of the songs that they encountered in African communities, tried to force them into schemes of versification that made music to European ears but were characteristically un-African (84).

However, the contemporary African poets employ repetition mostly as a literary device of translating songs in oral performances so as to sustain the richness of oral rendition in written English.

Conclusion

Contemporary African poets of English expression have continued to borrow from the richness of traditional oral heritage into their written poetry in English. The various implantations of oral elements from the traditional heritage are a growing trend and a mark of departure from euro-modernist adoption peculiar to pioneer poets. This affiliation to cultural identity by oral borrowing has continued to bridge the gap between written and oral performance. Nwogu (1979:32) captures the affinity between oral and written poetry as a social function both play in the society. Both are component of African imaginative activity. The traditional heritage of oral poetry can be traced to African traditional priests, elders, legends, hawkers, literate and even the non-literates. The contemporary Nigerian poets and indeed African poets have continued to tap immensely from the various sources of oral tradition to enrich their written poetry. To preserve and maintain cultural

aesthetics in translation, contemporary African poets have maintained a strong affinity with their oral tradition by retaining indigenous expressions that in most cases lack sufficient translation in English.

References

- Acholonu, C. *The Spring's Last Drop* 1985 Oweri: Totan Publishers
- Afolabi, N. 1998. Can the Poet Make a Griot? Memory and Orality in African Poetry. *Griot*. Volume 17. Issue 2. Page 20. 1974.
- Amadiume, I. 1999 "Oya now", *The New African Poetry. An Anthology* Ojaide, T., Sallah, T.M. ed. London: Lynn Rienner Publishers.
- Chinweizu, Jemie, O., Madubuike, I. 1980. "Towards the Decolonization of African Literature" Vol. 1: *African Fiction and Poetry and their Critics*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Dasylva, A. 2006. *Songs of Odamolugbe* Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Eluegbe B.O. and Omamor A.P. *Nigerian Pidgin; Background and Prospects*. Ibadan Heinemann.
- Ezenwa Ohaeto, 1996. *The Voices of the Masquerades* Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited
- Ezenwa. Ohaeto. 1998. *Contemporary Nigerian Poetry and the Poetics of Orality*. Bayreuth African Studies series ed. Breitnger, E. Bayreuth: Bayreuth University Press.
- Nwogu, D.I. *Modern African Poetry: The Domestication of a Tradition, African Literature Today, No 10: Retrospect and Prospect*.
- Olubode, O. 2017. "Bayo Adebawale's moving lines for African heroes" (<https://www.google.com/amp/punchng.com>) accessed May 24, 2017.
- Ojaide, T. 1996. *Poetic Imagination in Black Africa: Essays on Poetry*. North Carolina: Academic Press.
- Okigbo, C. 1971. *Labyrinths and the Path of Thunder*. London: HEB
- Okpewo, I. 2007. "Oral Literature and Modern African Literature" in *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory* Olaniyan, T., Quayson, A. (ed.) Oxford: Blackwell Publishing limited chapter 11 page 84.
- Okunoye, O. 2001. "Ethnic Traditions and the African Post-colonial Poetic Imagination" A PhD Thesis submitted in the University of Ibadan.
- P' Bitek, O. *Songs of Lawino* and *Songs of Ocol*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.

Raji-Oyelade, R 1999. *Harvest of Laughters*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
Remi Raji-Oyelade 2013. *Fluent Interventions Webs of the literary discipline*.
Inaugural Lecture. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press. Roscoe, A. 1971
Mother is Gold: A Study in West African Literature.
Cambridge University: Press.