

LARGER THAN HIS FRAME II



Further Critical Studies and Reflections on
Olu Obafemi

Edited by:
Duro Oni
Sunday Enessi Ododo

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DEDICATION

To

The eternal memory of
Pa Emmanuel Buraimoh Obafemi

and

In enduring salutation to
Mama Hannah Omorewo Obafemi,

for

Begetting 'Jagun-Gogorogo' -
A literary riddle of all times.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Some twenty one years ago, Sunday Ododo and I embarked on a project of a series of essays to mark the 50th birthday of Professor Olu Obafemi. The efforts culminated in the publication of a 350 page *Larger than his Frame: Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi*, a sobriquet that appears to have stuck with the subject of our academic enquiry. If we thought that Professor Olu Obafemi was worthy of such attention in the year 2000, his creative and academic output, coupled with growth and development in the last twenty years equate what some may achieve in fifty years! Our attempt at capturing the impact, influence and creative output of Professor Olu Obafemi, FNAL, NNOM in a second publication: *Larger than his Frame II* has been a journey across social, cultural and academic boundaries to produce an eight hundred plus publication.

In the journey, we were blessed with the kind acceptance of His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR who wrote the Foreword. Mr. Olufemi Adesina, SA, Media to the President, thanks for making this possible.

The National Theatre Management with the Governing Board is greatly acknowledged for spearheading the editorial and publication processing of this book with needed production attention.

We are indeed indebted to all the contributors to this important commemorative work; your efforts have burnished light on the intellectual and creative versatility of Olu Obafemi for the world to appreciate more.

Sola Adeyemi of Alpha Crownes, London, is of tremendous value to the actualization of this book with his extensive editorial inputs. You are well appreciated.

We also acknowledge the celebrative goodwill of Alhaji Adamu Adamu, Hon. Minister of Education, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, Honourable Minister of Information & Culture, Prof. Abubakar Rasheed, ES, NUC, Prof. Ishaq Oloyede, Registrar JAMB, Prof. S. A. Abdulkareem, VC, Unilorin and Prof. Abdulrasheed Na'Allah, VC, Uniabuja. Others are Mallam Ado Yahuza, ES, NICO, Turaki Nura

Kangiwa, DG, NIHOTOURL, Alhaji Adedayo Thomas, ED, NFVCB and Prof. Francis Egbokhare, President, Nigerian Academy of Letters (NAL).

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the goodwill and encouragement from the Olu Obafemi family: Mrs. Grace Dupe Obafemi, Mr. Dele Obafemi, Dr. Moroutodun Joseph and Mr. Lanre Obafemi.

All Glory be to God for making this feat possible once more.

Duro Oni, *fsonta*, FNAL

Sunday E. Ododo, *fsonta*, FNAL

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OO AS THE ARCHETYPE OF OOO



AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye

No flux nor mathematics, no tinkering nor illogicality: Olufemi Obafemi (OO) remains the archetype of Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO). As I proceed to write this brief tribute on Olufemi Obafemi, it is important for me to unbundle my seemingly unusual title and contextualise its main essence. The ideology of OOO has its roots in the sensibility of philosophy of being which is rooted in the branch of philosophy called speculative realism and this can be extended to human, material, immaterial, durable, real, sensual, aesthetics and world of objects (Harman, 2015, p. 403). The quintessential OO has romanced man as an unpredictable object with sprawling tentacles in the last 45 years. His romance is also served in the universe which the university offers.

My deep seated confidence in OO is an awareness of his relevance in the past, present and in the future. The investment of OO in OOO is also a lesson that will necessarily make me to illuminate more on the castle of logicity that housed Object-Oriented Ontology. Bogost (2012, p. 66) has explained and expanded on the critical relevance of Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) as it concerns the essence of living and reliving – the philosophy of being:

OOO puts things at the centre of being. We human are elements, but not the sole elements of philosophical interest. OOO contends that nothing has special status, but that everything exists equally – plumbers, cotton, bonobos, DVD players, and sandstone, for example. In contemporary thought, things are usually taken either as the aggregation of ever-smaller bits (scientific naturalism) or as construction of human behavioural society (social relativism). OOO steers a path between the two, drawing attention to things at all scales (from atoms to alpacas, bits to blinis) and pondering their nature and relations with one another as much as with ourselves.

Linking Olufemi Obafemi (OO) with Graham Harman and Ian Bogost in Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO) is very easy because all that Olufemi Obafemi lives and works for can easily be placed in the forte of Object-Oriented Ontology. I have a very brief assignment to engage and stimulate all of us on this.

From Humanism to the fiery dialectics of Posthumanism and from African cultural renaissance to the building of main themes and tendencies of Marxism, OO has inscribed the philosophy of being in all his plays. Even when he tries to escape the label of Marxism, the revolutionary and the unending struggles for the liberation of the oppressed sold him out! Thus, from the sub-texts to the expanse of the texts of his plays, corruption is fought to a standstill, war is condemned and derobed, social disequilibrium and inequality are twins of evils which are often replaced with egalitarianism, equity and social change. Sacredness has no place in OO's *Scapegoats and Sacredcows*, mandate of peace in the history of reliving becomes a manifesto of being in *Ogidi Mandate* while unexpected happenings, daily worries of life, dangerous, inhuman and sadistic as they were, cannot escape his prodigious and creative pen in *Dark Times Are Over?*. The beasts, quite unfortunately are hovering around us both days and nights and OO's musé in *Nights of a Mystical Beast* bellies this malady while our "overnight directors and thieving ministers" have no place to hide in his *Suicide Syndrome*. Indeed, the main thrust of his plays remains man's place in, and out of philosophy of being. OO is a realist who preaches equality and places man as an object whose doing or undoing remains tied to his interest – a fortune or misfortune in the decision he makes. OO's prose and poetry also share in the enticing but realistic archetype of man in, and out of philosophy of being which carries the DNA of rebirth, rejuvenation and reliving.

Olufemi Obafemi's profile provided us with positive, prosperous and progressive ideals that cut across professional excellence and professorial finesse. OO retains the culture of uncommon creativity, discipline and strictness noted with the second generation of Nigerian professors and playwrights that he is part of, yet, his artistry constantly retools our damaged social process by reinventing and fighting for our lost morality. This places him among the celebrated nation builders, philosophers, statesmen and leaders that we cannot ignore.

Surely, OO has globalised our local cultures, ethics and mores. His name and art, scholarship and ideological consistency have been nationalised for sustainable development. I drank – with grace and glamour, determinedly as well, from the pen of the man – OO who has recontextualised the philosophy of being and of living in the castle of OOO. I learnt, with a deep sense of pride, the dynamics and mechanics

administrative acumen, academic wizardry, dialectics and artful relationship to OOO will continue to be evergreen. Omo Ajon, the cerebral scholar of the left, your retirement is only for a season: you will come back with renewed energy and vigour to continue with a life-long journey that cannot die.

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Professor AbdulRasheed A. Adeoye is the Dean of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin.

About the Book

This collection of forty-eight essays, sixty-six tributes, five interviews and two reviews in this aptly titled *Larger than his Frame II: Further Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi* are in honour of one of the most celebrated and most accomplished writers and administrators in Nigeria today. The contributions paint an image of the man that radiates more than the blossoming flowers. In all the contributions, the brilliance of Olu Obafemi's work, his generous nature, and administrative acumen are highly praised and admired. In all, they "reflect Obafemi as a student of life and reveal his scorecard in this instructional space called life". Also included in this publication is the Acceptance Speech by Prof. Olu Obafemi on his conferment with the award of Nigerian National Order of Merit.

Professor Olufemi Obafemi was born on 4 April 1950 in Akutupa-Bunu, Kogi State of Nigeria. With the best A Level result in Northern Nigeria in 1971, he attended Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and graduated BA summa cum laude in English. He later obtained an MA degree in English Literature at the University of Sheffield, England, and a PhD at the University of Leeds on *Contemporary Nigerian Theatre: Social Vision and Cultural Heritage*. Obafemi has held many academic and administrative roles in several higher institutions in Nigeria, including the University of Ilorin and the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru. Obafemi has written several plays, collections of poetry and many academic essays and books. This volume celebrates his life's work. It's a sequel to *Larger than his Frame: Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi* (2000).

About the Editors

Duro Oni, *fsonta*, FNAL, a Professor of Theatre, is a former Deputy Vice Chancellor (Management) of the University of Lagos, Nigeria, and a former Director of CBAAC. His other publications include *Larger than his Frame: Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi* (2000), *Technical Theatre Practice in Nigeria: Trends and Issues* (2006), and *Developments in the Theory and Practice of Contemporary Nigerian Drama and Theatre: A Festschrift in Honour of Dapo Adelugba* (2011). Other publications include *Striking Expressions: Theatre and Culture in National Development* (2017) and *The Soyinka Impulse: Essays on Wole Soyinka* edited with Bisi Adigun (2019). He is currently the Vice-President of the Nigerian Academy of Letters.

Sunday Enessi Ododo, *fsonta*, FNAL is Professor of Performance Aesthetics, Theatre Technology and the pioneering Head of Department of Theatre Arts, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri, Nigeria, with students intake. Ododo is the exponent of Facekuerade Performance Theory. He is a playwright, director and scenographer. His publications include *Larger than his Frame: Critical Studies and Reflections on Olu Obafemi* (2000), *Facekuerade Theatre: A Performance Model from Ebira-Ekuechi* (2015), *Liminal Margins: Performance Masks, Masquerades and Facekuerades* (2019), *Cultural Sustainability, Performance and the Sustainable Development Goals in Time of Crisis* (2020), etc. For many years, he has edited reputable journals like *The Performer: Ilorin Journal of the Performing Arts*, University of Ilorin; *Alore: The Ilorin Journal of the Humanities*, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin; *Liwuram: Journal of the Humanities*, Faculty of Arts, University of Maiduguri, etc. He is the 8th President of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) and a serving Trustee of the society. He is the current General Manager/CEO of the National Theatre, Nigeria.



ESSAYS

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