

PROJECT



WOLE SOYINKA
INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL
EXCHANGE

THEME:

**I AM
BECAUSE
YOU ARE**

www.wolesoyinkainternationalculturalexchange.com



SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY

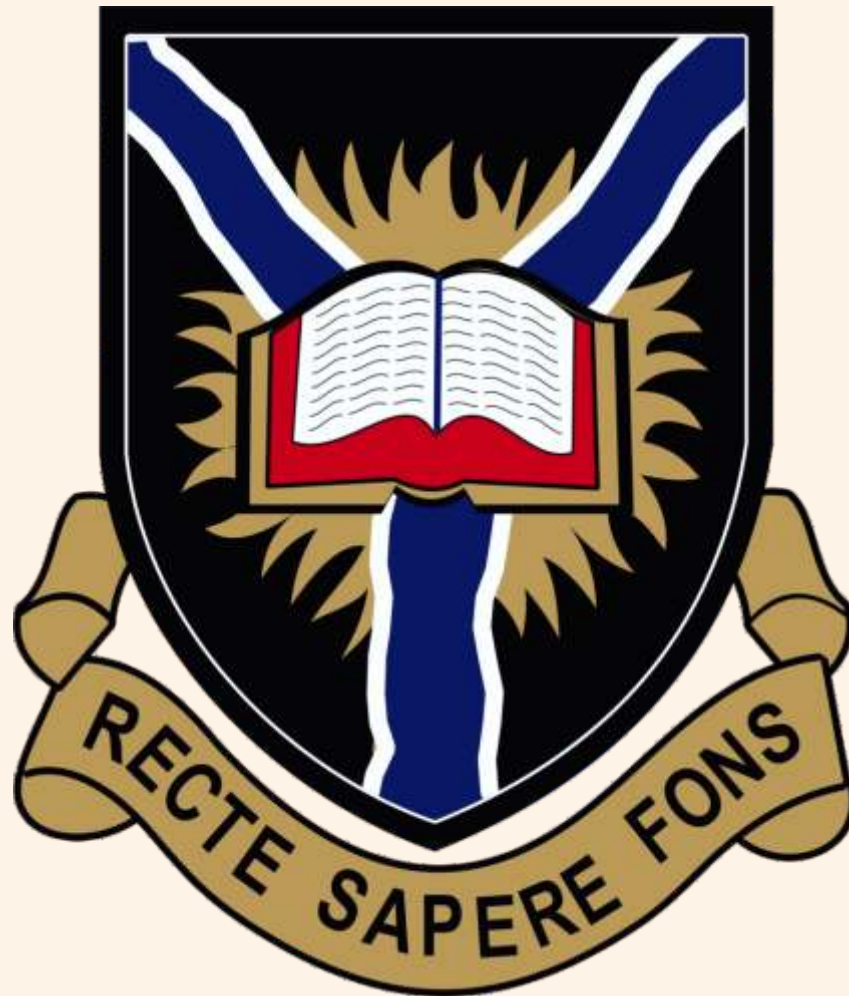
SCHOOL OF THEATRE, TELEVISION
AND FILM



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University of Ibadan

IBADAN, NIGERIA

SIU

Southern
Illinois
University
CARBONDALE

Pandemic: Six Feet Apart or Six Feet Below: Choose

These are difficult times, we know, COVID times and it will be particularly difficult for youths. Full of energy, plans. Wanting to go out, to do things and so on—this is quite normal. But this is a period which imposes discipline on all of us. And when we use expressions like, eh, “six feet apart or six feet under,” it’s not meant to be totally literal, it encompasses so many things. It just means obey the rules, obey the instructions of the health workers who incidentally have paid a very heavy price during this period; and the least you can do is recognise the sacrifice that they’ve made for humanity in general and especially, for our own immediate community.

So, “Six feet Apart or Six feet Under: Choose,” is a message which says, wear your masks, obey the injunction to wash your hands. sanitise your hands; clean surfaces which may be infected... collaborate with health workers and with your own parents who are more knowledgeable — or should be — about these matters. And remember something which many people are not yet aware of even though it’s been written about, it’s been broadcast. It is this that those who are infected do not necessarily show symptoms at the time and so they can be carriers, in other words, without showing symptoms of infection. They are capable of infecting other people. So, you see, by protecting yourself you are actually protecting other people and the people whose lives you save might be your own family, your own sister, your own parents, uncle et cetera et cetera. So, it’s a question of looking after one means looking after every other.

So, try and think of your community every time — this period will go away, but in the meantime, it requires self-sacrifice and it requires self-discipline.

Wole Soyinka
ARI
July 14.

(Being an address by Prof. Wole Soyinka to the youths participating in the 11th Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange, WSICE 2020. The recorded address was delivered on July 14th during the unveiling of the Zonal and Global winners of the essay competition, which was organised in five language zones of the world. The three-day programme started Sunday July 12 and will end on Tuesday, July 14.



Executive Producer's Notes

Teju Kareem

Thriving in the 'New Normal'



2020 shocked us all! To imagine a world where nations were almost put to a standstill: schools, universities, restaurants, airports bare. Stay home, Stay safe. The emergence of the Covid19 pandemic changed the way we live, study, work and interact. A new norm has emerged, yet humanity remains a common string that pulls us together. We have seen countries that are enemies reconcile and share relief materials to help each other combat the effect of the pandemic. Strangers have taken it upon themselves to provide for other strangers, regardless of factors like race, status, and ethnicity. The world has come together to stand for 'equality for all', a new connectedness.

This has inspired this year's WSICE, togetherness regardless of our social distance.

UBUNTU is a South African term meaning 'Humanity to others.' Project WSICE 2020 is exploring the concept of UBUNTU, I Am because YOU ARE, which epitomizes the principle of shared values that ensures the sustenance and survival of the human race/family. The theme is inspired by the compassion, philanthropy and altruistic responses of people, corporations and governments to the challenges pushed forward by the

rage of the pandemic. This year's event highlights the need to explore our shared humanity, where we let love compassion and mutual respect overrule every other debilitating inherent human trait. In particular, the obvious interdependence of our collective humanity has been brought to the fore by the effects of the pandemic.

Usually, we have over 2000 people gathered to celebrate the events surrounding the WSICE every year, but due to the peculiarities of this year, we have taken the programme online and therefore able to reach a global audience. Many like-minded academics and culture advocates from around the world will be joining us in the conversation around such sub-themes as: Pandemic: Pursuit of Individual Happiness and our Common Humanity and Reimagining Our World After Covid-19.

The essay competition this year has been broken into two categories to accommodate a wider array of students hence essays will be written and adjudged in five languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, French and Chinese.

We welcome everyone from all around the world to the Virtual 2020 edition of the WSICE.

Co-Executive Producer's Notes

Segun Ojewuyi

Intermission



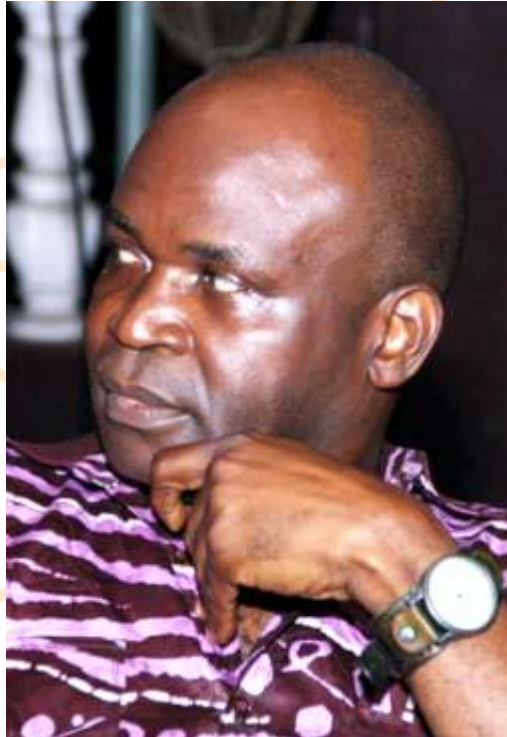
The vision behind this venture of ten years, is to thread the path of activist honor that Soyinka has laid for our present and our future. Let's face it, even he did not, could not, have seen how far his engagement with this gift of life would have touched our individual and collective humanity. So, we set out to nurture a constant renewal of our creative imagination and to court inspiration from the pure truth of his enterprise. In ten years, we have defied the odds and sincerely, we have begun to create some fluency, some authentic storytelling that pierces the darkness and illuminates the complexities of the human spirit, seemingly trapped in these failed nations of our time. We hope that in many ways we have shown how important it is to stand up, boldly, and doggedly question the supremacy of idiocy and lunacy over our nation and world. Let us bring the curtains down but let us breathe with the power of truth and ennobling consciousness that there is yet a new world, a fresh birth, a renascent humanity, an amazing promise of conquests ahead of us. Even behind our masks like new-age 'Egunguns', let us confront this virus, this COVID of the cursed year of 2019 as a mere 'intermission', two paths laid out in front of us; one of total annihilation and the other of the great opportunity for new humanity. Let us admit that we have failed the great test, yet let us take the hands of our precursors in shame and self-awareness. Let us go to the mountain top, where the congress of ancestors will guide us back to life and a

renewal of no cheap feats. There is promise, there is yet a world to build and new lives to shape for the great future ahead. While the intermission lasts and the scenery is changed, new costumes are worn, and the plot is renewed for the reciprocal relationship between cultural practice and social reconstruction; let us recognize that only the brave and daring can overpower the decay that plagues our spirit. When in 2009, I sat to write the ideas for this journey, beginning with the international tour 'African lives: Preemptive/Seven', all I had was the power of Theater as an art form, a pure homogeneity of the human spirit that could also touch societies, even at their weakest edges. The energy and resources brought to the plate of vision by my friend and Co-Executive Producer Teju Kareem, have lifted the dream from the table into these ten years of labor and pure joy. His unmatched resolve has continued to fire mine. Together we have nurtured WSICE into an artform that is most expressive of human frailties and strength in a universe of conflicts. A testimony to the rigor of vision, critical thinking and practical, physical approaches that explore diverse cultural forms, historical traditions, and contemporary life through performance. In true creative fortitude, we have rejected the stagnation that precedes decadence. We can see clearly a world beyond the pandemic, steeped in color and bold creative ideation, a world that fosters dialogue around the future. Welcome to our future!

Project Consultant/Head, Communications

Jahman Anikulapo

WE THE HUMANS... ...Stepping up to the Globe



With the vision to build a new generation of leaders by riding on the nobility of character and humanistic virtues of the Wole Soyinka persona, WSICE desires to instruct young people on noble cause to pursue.

The essence of its programming is to channel the focus of, and creative energies of the youths into more ennobling engagements. It aims to help turn the mind of young people away from vices that afflict our society; threatening the future of our Humanity.

Aside from young people, the WSICE is also engaged with instructing the adult towards path of redemption, even though they had been captured as the 'wasted generation' by the 'spirit force' behind the project, WS.

The whole essence of the 11-year old annual WSICE -- anchored on the platform of OpenDoorSeries -- is to celebrate those virtues that make us

human beings and not beasts.

Whereas the project accomplishes the engagement with the youths through the annual THE WOLE SOYINKA ESSAY competition, in which young people are given topic every year to write essay on, it realises the second objective through THE WOLE SOYINKA ADVOCACY Session -- targeted at the adult no matter their class, creed, faith, gender, or orientation.

The 2020 edition is fortuitous indeed, and a little backend story will illustrate this.

The theme *I AM because YOU ARE* is instructed by Covid19, which has to a great extent reconfigured the very notion of our humanity, and crippled the very motion of humanism.

It is essentially to explore how these ideas and concepts could help to secure the future of our collective Humanity.

What would the HUMAN family look like after all these protocols of social/physical distancing, lockdown, intra/inter border closures etc. The theme will be addressed by eminent workers in divergent disciplines -- education, faith, culture, philosophy, rights society, gender studies, policy and development theory etc.

As we step into the Global arena, we invite the patrons and new friends of the project to step up with us; join us in the World by participating in the various events. project.

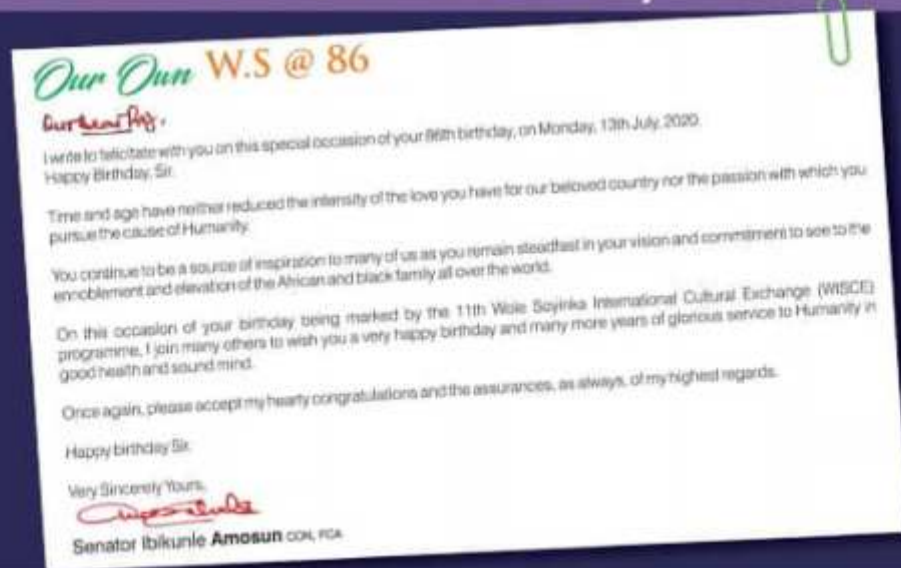
Though we are meeting in the VIRTUAL WORLD, we will still have a grand ball -- to give assurance that our WORLD would eventually be HEALED and our HUMANITY restored to SANITY.

Thank you, and Welcome to our NEW WORLD.

A CITIZEN OF THE WORLD @ 86



Professor Wole Soyinka



Congratulations
to the
WSICE on its

11th
Edition

Wishing the Team many
more years of success.



Ibikunle Amosun & Co.
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Producer's Note

Haneefat Ikharo

WE Are because YOU Are



When WSICE started in 2010, we did not envision a time when we would be unable to have a physical gathering where we usually have thousands of adults and teenagers in attendance. As the adage says, change is the only constant in life and as the world has experienced immense change in the wake of the Covid19 Pandemic, WSICE has to adjust to the terms of the time: Go digital.

What we didn't realize at first was that the pandemic was a blessing in disguise but as we progressed in planning, we discovered that, there are no limits to how far we can spread our tentacles with the help of the digital space. So, this year, as we take the essay competition and advocacy conference completely online, we have been able to encompass many other countries and people into the project.

This year, essays will be written in 5 different languages -- English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Chinese -- from 5 different regions -- Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, Hispanophone and Sinophone). There are speakers, adjudicators, academia, culture enthusiasts and advocates, journalists, influencers and more who are lending their voices from

their various stations -- to further the cause of WSICE.

The WSICE team couldn't have asked for better at a time like this. Now we can spread our ideas about preserving the sanctity of our humanity to the rest of the world and help even more young people learn that we are first humans before we are black or white, French or English, rich or poor. Due to recent happenings, we have also come to understand the fact that no one can exist independent of another. We are all interdependent, status or race notwithstanding and we need one another to survive.

I AM because YOU ARE is not just a theme for the WSICE 2020, we want it to also become a movement where people are more inclined to treat each other with respect, compassion and love and willing to help each other grow and thrive without first pondering on personal gains.

We are hopeful that along with the adults at the advocacy conference, many young people through their essay and creative ideas will also become advocates of and forerunners for this movement.

Welcome to WSICE 2020!



Consulting Producer's Note

Lillian Amah-aluko

This too shall pass...

Happy birthday to Nigeria's only Nobel Laureate. Our grand old man of letters turns 86 on July 13th 2020 and we give thanks to the Almighty for the good health and long life he has granted him thus far.

Ten years of the WSICE Project have been a rollercoaster potpourri of experiences. From WS76 in 2010 to WS85 in 2019, it has been instructive, educative, inspirational and motivational. The world we have always known came to a standstill in 2020 when the novel Corona Virus, Covid-19, brought the whole world literally to its knees. At the same time, it brought out some of the best traits in humanity. As the WS86 promotional material says so beautifully, "The theme for WS86 is I AM BECAUSE YOU ARE which is drawn from UBUNTU, the Southern African philosophy which epitomizes the principle of shared values that ensures the

sustenance and survival of the human family. The theme is inspired by observed factors and motives behind the responses of people and governments across the world to the challenges pushed forward by the rage of the pandemic. In particular, the obvious interdependence of our collective humanity has been brought to the fore in the way people and States have risen to support others experiencing the dire effects of the pandemic."

While nations and peoples support each other through this crisis, the United States of America, also known as God's own country reels from a trauma of unimaginable proportions. As the month of May drew to a close, a horrified world watched an African American man, George Floyd, lose his life underneath the bent knee of a white American Police Man. That painful event which is still unfolding as I write has also brought out the worst and the

best in humanity. While white and black join hands to protest against this unnecessary murder, others take advantage of it to loot and destroy.

The beauty I see in this very painful episode in human existence comes from the young ones who have risen to the occasion united in their quest for justice. White, black and all the shades in between, the young ones have been very vocal in asking for justice and reminding whoever cares to listen that everyone's life matters irrespective of race, color or creed. This is the objective of the WSICE....upholding the dignity of man, and this has vindicated the organizers who chose to concentrate on the youth as the future of humanity.

As we go into WS86, I say to one and all 'I AM BECAUSE YOU ARE.' Together we can be better and stronger so let's look out for one another and be kinder to one another.

IBIKUNLE AMOSUN AND CO ACCOUNTING FIRM – SUPPORTER EXTRAORDINAIRE

There is only one way to describe the accounting firm of Ibikunle Amosun & Co and the colossus behind the company.....Supporter extraordinaire.

From inception of the WSICE in July 2010, Senator Ibikunle Amosun and the accounting firm of Ibikunle Amosun & Co have stood solidly behind us. Year after year, in cash and kind, they have supported the project in more ways than we can count. It is worthy of note that the Senator and his firm are the only sponsors who have never missed a year in our decade long existence.

On this our tenth anniversary, we gratefully acknowledge Senator Ibikunle Amosun FCA and the management of Ibikunle Amosun & Co for their immeasurable support over the years.

From grateful hearts, we say a million thanks!!!

Signed.

OPEN DOOR SERIES PROJECT WS



Ibikunle Amosun & Co.
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A DECADE OF THE WSICE

The Open Door Series Project WS is an International Cultural Exchange Program designed for the purpose of using the platforms of Literature, Arts and Culture to affirm and uphold the dignity of man. Focusing on the youths as the future of humanity, the ICE seeks to foster unity among mankind regardless of nationality, ethnicity and religion.

Our 1st edition premiered 13th July 2010 on the 76th birthday of Professor Wole Soyinka and had 76 stars of stage and screen walk the red carpet at Muson center in his honor. Fully sponsored by Zmirage Multimedia in collaboration with Global New Haven, the ICE participants toured Nigeria, Barbados and London where Henry Foluso of Folag treated us royally and gave incredible support. With the theme "arts and culture as a tool for global diplomacy", the plays Preemptive by Niyi Coker Jnr and Seven by Rachel Hastings " directed by Co-Executive Producer Segun Ojewuyi, Professor and head of Directing at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, were apt

and very well received by the audience at all the venues. The essays for that year had senior and junior categories. The senior version had the theme of the year as its topic while the juniors wrote on "The Wole Soyinka I know". With various prizes at stake including an all-expenses paid trip to London which was won by Gbenga Adeniji (a journalist with Punch newspapers), the essay competitions were fun for all the participants. In 2011, the governments of Ogun and Ondo States joined Zmirage Multimedia Ltd and it's partner Global New Haven in sponsoring the ICE. The tours this year took us to several States in Nigeria and London. "I love my country" was the theme for that

year and "Dance of Liberation" an adaptation from Wole Soyinka's Kongi's Harvest was the play that graced our stages. In Nigeria and London, the audience giggled and asked for more as the dancers gyrated and gesticulated while the actors strutted and pontificated. This year, the essay competition took a different form as only secondary school students were allowed to compete. Aaliyah Ibrahim from Zamani College Kaduna emerged victorious and smiled home with a scholarship worth N250,000, a laptop computer and a desk top computer for her school. 2012 was a breakthrough year for us as we had our first platinum sponsor in the Ogun State government of Senator Ibikunle Amosun. Our dear Ondo State government ably led by the Iroko, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko, faithfully continued their friendship and support by again giving us substantial sponsorship. Ghana, Nigeria and a London euphorically celebrating the 32nd Olympiad were the tour destinations. The theme "The mind of a Patriot " resonated in the play "Home" by Samm Art Williams directed by Co-Executive Producer Segun Ojewuyi, which we took on tour. Prof. Robert Fox of Southern

Illinois University, Carbondale delivered the advocacy lecture with the title "From Tigrity to transcendence; The Conscience and conscientiousness of Wole Soyinka". Sopuruchi Mgbeahurike of Graceland international secondary school, Port Harcourt won the WS essay trophy and like Aaliyah before her, carted away a scholarship, laptop and desktop. WS78 came to an end with an exciting 2 day event in London with dance workshops, lectures and performances. 2013 was the start of the countdown to the 80th year mark. While working on the grandiose dreams of the duo Teju Kareem and Segun Ojewuyi to stage 80 plays across the globe for Kongi's 80th birthday, WS79 took place as usual in Lagos where the students wrote the essay on the 13th of July under the watchful eyes of the judges led by Dr. Razinat Mohammed. The "Do your own thing" at Freedom park featuring over 600 students from about 20 schools based in Lagos in addition to the 79 essay finalists who came from all over the Country also took place on the 13th. The theme for the year was "Memoirs for the Future".



Essay topics and the projects themes are selected to reflect the current happenings in Nigeria. A total of 83 (Prof. Soyinka's age that year) students from more than 20 states in Nigeria participated in the competition



On the 14th, the 79 essay finalists, the judges and officials of the ICE project accompanied by teachers, parents and officials of some State Ministries of Education all moved in convoy to the office of the Ogun State Governor where the result of the essay competition was announced and prizes presented by the Governor. From there, the convoy moved to the Ijegba estate Country home of Prof. Soyinka where the Nobel Laureate waited as usual to receive the finalists. The winner presented the trophy to him, the students and officials availed themselves of the graciously offered photo opportunity and finally, the students got the most important gift of all — a question and answer session with the great man. For a priceless 2 hours, the youths threw all manner of questions and he graciously answered every one. Nothing was out of bounds to his young guests. The action filled day was far from over. From Ijegba estate, the convoy moved to the Ogun State cultural center. They were joined by 1000 Ogun State students colorfully clad in the State's traditional fabric — adire, a gift from the Project WS79 organizers'. The youths had lunch and bonded with each other in the spirit of cultural exchange. Thereafter, Ogun State First Lady the beautiful Mrs Olufunsho Amosun accompanied by the State Commissioner for Health and son of the Nobel Laureate Dr. Olaokun Soyinka arrived. The first lady mentored the youths, there were

performances of poetry, spoken words and dances by the students and then the distinguished hosts took photos with the very excited students. 15th July, the group in convoy again set off for Osun State. On arrival, we were directed straight to the Centre for Black Heritage where we were received by the deputy governor Otunba Mrs Grace Laoye Tomori and the first Lady Mrs. Sherifat Aregbesola. After an exciting time in Osun, the Nigerian leg of Project WS79 came to an end with the 79 essay finalists departing for their homes. The tour train continued to London where Prof. Wole Soyinka, Mrs. Foluke Soyinka and Mrs Olufunsho Amosun joined several other dignitaries at the public presentation of "Memoirs for the Future" a compilation of essays from the WS essay competition over the years. That done, there was a youth summit after which the venerable Nobel Laureate took the hot seat and answered questions from adults and youngsters. In 2014, WSICE celebrated her 5th anniversary and the Nobel Laureate's 80th birthday. All events of this edition held in Lagos and Abeokuta with the theme: Education: Path to Freedom and the Future. It also featured outstanding theatre performances like Wole Soyinka's 'a dance of the forests' directed by Tunde Awosanmi and staged in the Ijegba Forest Amphitheatre. We also had 80 spoken words artists from Nigeria, USA and Trinidad and Tobago

including Javon Johnson. Mutabaruka, Efe Paul Azino and many more. The Art exhibitions showcased art works on Soyinka from many diverse artist and 80 Nigerian students competing in an essay on the theme.

2015 edition of the program was held in Abeokuta with the theme 'Justice and Freedom: Essential Conditions for Humanity'. As part of the events, there was an essay competition with 81 students participating from public and private schools in the country and a storytelling workshop with Theodora Ulerie from Trinidad&Tobago and Noma Shodipo from Nigeria.

In 2016, the theme was 'Corruption: A Battle For the Arts', which was however broken into two segments – the youth and the adult segments. The youth segment featured an essay writing competition by Ogun State students on the topic 'Challenges or not, I Love My Country', while the adult segment featured two keynotes on the main theme as well as an all-female panel discussion on 'Corruption as it affects Children, Women and our Humanity'.

'Intolerance: The Burden of our Moral and National Conscience' was the theme for the 2017 edition. Essay topics and the projects themes are selected to reflect the current happenings in Nigeria. A total of 83 (Prof. Soyinka's age that

year) students from more than 20 states in Nigeria participated in the competition. The winners were awarded numerous prizes and a certificate of participation. An advocacy event which featured religious clerics and scholars was held to dissect the topic.

2018 edition started on a high note on Thursday 12th of July. The theme for the year was 'The Pursuit of truth: Lies and the National Psyche' and unlike previous years, all events of the WSICE for 2018 took place at the Ijegba resort. This beautifully rustic resort still under construction at the time by Zmirage Multimedia Ltd comprises of a one story glass and wood centrally located tree-house VIP reception area, guest chalets with toilet and shower facilities, an open air amphitheater, a mammy market complete with vendors stalls and a man-made lake separating the amphitheater from the rest of the resort. This cultural retreat is set in the lush forest behind the Kemta Estate home of the Nobel Laureate Professor Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka, whose name was borrowed by the project and whose ideals the cultural exchange seeks to inculcate in the student participants year after year.

Day 2, the birthday of the Nobel Laureate dawned bright and sunny as the pilgrimage to Ijegba Resort commenced. By 9am, all the students, teachers, parents and



we wish to engrave in the hearts of the youth the uncommon view that education, arts and culture are authentic panaceas to fear, violence and their resultant erosion of individual will and self-actualization



officials were seated awaiting the adjudicators. The lead judge Dr. Razinat Mohammed arrived with the consulting Producer Lillian Amah-Aluko and addresses the students who had been nicely seated by Lynda Amadi – Associate Producer Children’s Program and the Project Producer Haneefat Ikharo. They were later joined by the Associate Producer Performance Dr. Tunde Awosanmi accompanied by international participants Susan Harrocks and Baretta Chullen from the USA who were led by Co-Executive Producer Prof. Segun Ojewuyi. Time flew by quickly and soon the poetry analysis exercise came to an end.

The two international participants had been co-opted to grade the papers along with Dr. Awosanmi and Dr. Razinat. Otunba Dayo Adeneye Ogun State Commissioner for Information and Strategy accompanied by Mr. Alistar Soyode CEO BEN TV UK and Presidential Aspirant in the 2019 general elections visited and toured the Ijegba resort and were introduced to the officials and the participants. They applauded young master Mercy Sobande the 10 year old writer whose published book ‘Princess Sarah and other stories’ had taken the State by storm. The participants were taken on a tour to the famous ancient Olumo Rock. There were poetry performances facilitated by the poets from Association of

Nigerian Authors (Ogun State Chapter), poetry workshop attended by 1000 students from Secondary Schools in Ogun State and musical performances by Edaoto, Footprints of David and Chief Udo Mariam.

The 2019 edition which marked the 85th birthday of Professor Wole Soyinka took place in Lagos, Ogun and Ondo states with 85 participants from over 20 States in Nigeria. The advocacy session took place in Lagos at the Kongi’s Harvest Art Gallery, Freedom park, Lagos and was attended by students from secondary schools in Lagos. The speakers spoke on Rights, Honour, Respect, Tolerance, Truth, Justice, Patriotism and Humanism of the citizenry. Stage dramas were adapted from some of Prof. Wole Soyinka’s books. The photo exhibition segment was facilitated by Publisher of Asiri Magazine Oludamola O Adebowale. The theme and essay topic ‘Freedom, Justice, Equity: Children’s Intervention in The Renewal of the Nation’ was written by over 200 students from the 6 geo-political zones in Nigeria. Six participants emerged as the winner from each zone. The prizes were awarded by Prof. Wole Soyinka who also mentored the students alongside his sister Professor Folabo Ajayi-Soyinka. The events took place at the Ijegba resort Amphitheater in Ogun State and rounded off at the

Ondo state where the Executive Governor Arakunrin Oluwarotimi Akeredolu and the First Lady Mrs. Betty Anyanwu Akeredolu who was ably represented by the Commissioner for women affairs Mrs. Olatunji Omowunmi addressed and mentored the students and participants.

As our vision for the project states, “we wish to engrave in the hearts of the youth the uncommon view that education, arts and culture are authentic panaceas to fear, violence and their resultant erosion of individual will and self-actualization”. The youth hold the key to change and prosperity in Nigeria and the world. It is our duty to engage them and ensure their mindset and priorities are in the direction of progress for the motherland and humanity. According to the Executive Producer Teju Kareem, “At WSICE we are blind to race, color, language barriers, religion and class. This is what we teach all the children that pass through our process. Ultimately, being able to tolerate each other’s differences is the key to a better human existence.” This very apt quote has played out several times in the last decade proving beyond any doubts that together we are always stronger. Senator Ibikunle Amosun FCA is the biggest and most consistent individual donor to the project in it’s ten years of existence. As

governor of Ogun State, his administration also became our first platinum sponsor. Mr Jahman Anikulapo, Project Consultant and Head of Media and Communication has worked tirelessly year after year from inception of WSICE to ensure visibility for the project. His editorial skill has also come in handy in our various publications. Another major milestone was the first ever live painting of the Nobel Laureate. Conceived and organized by Olu Ajayi Art Gallery, the session had Prof Soyinka posing for several artists painting simultaneously. This culminated in a 10 day exhibition at WS 80 in 2014 curated by Mr. Olu Ajayi. While many States have supported the project over the years, the Federal Government of Nigeria showed support early on when the then Minister of Information and Culture Abubakar Sadiq Mohammed received project participants and officials at his office in Abuja.

The 10th anniversary of the project also got the support of Their Excellencies Dr Dapo Abiodun of Ogun State, Arakunrin Rotimi Akeredolu of Ondo State and Okezie Ikpeazu of Abia state. A fitting end indeed to the first decade.

As Teju Kareem said during WS 85 last year, “with all humility, I say that after 10years, we have been able to contribute to proffering solutions to the numerous issues that plague our beloved country, and our collective humanity.”

A portrait of an older man with a grey beard and glasses, looking slightly to the right. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. The word "goodwill" is written in a sans-serif font, with "good" in white and "will" in pink.

goodwill





Ise ya a

Ise ya a a
Ise ya a a
Omo Ogun ise ya a
Olodumare ise ma ya o e e
Ise ya
Enyin omo Ogun e se giri
Ise po fun wa lati se e e
Omo rere ki isa se e
Omo Ogun ki i s'o le e
Ebere gb'eru o o
Olorun mbe fun wa
E tera mose o o
Ise ya
Omo Ogun ise ya a



His works affirm Human Vitality

CELEBRATING THE HERO

A Tribute Delivered by the
Governor of Ogun State, Prince Dapo Abiodun MFR
 to mark the 86th Birthday of Professor Wole Soyinka

Different people celebrate a man in different ways. This is because the man means so many things to very many people. I have only tried to apply the same literary skills that Professor Oluwale Akinwande Soyinka, an emeritus Professor is known for.

To the literary world, he is Kongi. To others, he is simply WS. And to the dictators, enemies of democracy, he is a fiery civil defender. Some say he is Ijebu; some say he is Egba; but Wole Soyinka himself has cleared the air that he is "Ijegba," a combination of both Ijebu and Egba. For us, he is a beloved son of Ogun State of whom we are very proud. We have a proud son who studied a language; began to teach it to the owners, and invented words which they had never heard of and the words have become part of the regular lexicon.

Wole Soyinka is a flag-bearer, lifting up the banner of excellence for which our dear State is revered among the comity of States in the Nigeria Federation. Today, Ogun State

is a famed point on the global map. The name of Oluwale Akinwande Soyinka is one of the compasses pointing to our dear State.

I have read so many books in the three genres of literature; drama, poetry and prose. The Lion and the Jewel; The Jero Plays; A Play of Giants; Death and the King's Horseman; Madmen and Specialists; The Strong Breed; A Dance of the Forest; The Forest of a Thousand Daemons; A collection of Black African Poetry and, depending on what side of the intellectual divide or debate you are, The Man Died. And so on. These pieces are Kongi's footprints in the literary world. Rather than simply pleasurable reads, these great books are signatures of ingenuity and evergreen works of art and commentary on our religious, political and economic systems, defining us as humans, acting and feeling beings with an intellectual history. If life is a void in which we spend our existence finding meaning, then Wole Soyinka has contributed to our understanding of the human essence. His works of art probe the darkness, affirming human vitality, autonomy and the conquest of freedom which is essential to human reality. This earned him the award



of the Nobel laureate in Literature as the first ever black man to be so honoured. Today, the entire World celebrates Professor Wole Soyinka at 86. The Government and the people of Ogun State celebrate intellectual accomplishment, integrity, the defence of civil liberties and all what this august son of our land has accomplished not just for himself but for our nation. When Nigeria celebrates its fledgling democracy, Wole Soyinka remains one of the planters of the seed which has grown to bear a bountiful harvest with people-oriented governance. WS, the World celebrates you as you attain a new age.

As an Administration, the gospel of a free, fair, just and egalitarian society that provides a conducive environment for individual and collective prosperity and growth; and the development of humanity in general, what Kongi preaches is not lost on us. Right from the beginning of this Administration on the 29th of May, 2019, we have continued to provide an environment that engenders development for our dear State, and enhances prosperity for the people and all those who have made Ogun State their home, irrespective of their geographical location, gender, religious or political affiliation, ethnicity or social stratifications. These are the values and ideals we live by.

We will continue to celebrate this worthy Ambassador as our Administration deepens its governance structures for the benefit of the people. We remain committed to the

moral standards exemplified by this icon who always fights for a fair and just society. We believe such efforts based on his own legacy of forthrightness and honour are the best way to celebrate our own Oluwole Akinwande Soyinka. The greatest reward for this freedom fighter is to witness and enjoy the fruits of his sacrifices, the well-fought war for a better Nigeria. Professor Oluwole Akinwande Soyinka, Kongi himself, has always acknowledged our common humanity and rightly invested himself in the perennial struggle to deliver self-sovereignty and free expression for all. Today, as always, we salute his creativity, his resourcefulness, his passion, his art, his candour, his choices and unwavering patriotism all of which make him a man to emulate. WS, Kong, Ijegba man, today, on behalf of the Ogun State government and the people of Ogun State, I wish you a Happy 86th Birthday.

I thank you all for listening and God bless.
"Igbega Ipinle Ogun, ajose gbogbo wa ni o!"

Prince Dapo Abiodun MFR
 Governor of Ogun State
 Monday, 13th July, 2020



He serves Humanity at every Opportunity

*(Special Tribute in celebration of the 86th birthday of Soyinka, by
His Excellency **DR. KAYODE FAYEMI**, CON,
Governor, Ekiti State)*

It gives me a great pleasure to write a tribute in honour of one of Nigeria's most celebrated personalities, Africa's most iconic literary maestro and one of the world's most influential citizens. With his ageless physique, it is almost difficult to acknowledge that our own Oluwole Akinwande Babatunde Soyinka, affectionately called KONGI by his numerous admirers, is 86! Even though 86 might not be a remarkable milestone, it was in 1986 that the Nobel Prize came, hence the reason for its remarkable reckoning.

For me, WS is not the unfathomable mystery that many perceive from a distance and he is not the mythological pantheon that exists in the realm of the gods in the imagination of many. He is a mentor, a role model and a thought-leader with whom I have had the rare privilege of sharing a great moment of significant historic importance in my life.

Even though I had known Prof. Wole Soyinka since my days in Nigeria as a young man before I left for the UK, our path crossed in 1994 while I was living in the UK, shortly after the completion of my doctoral degree. My familiarity with WS however preceded our opportune encounter. My first interaction with him was in his memoir, *The Man Died* which I first struggled to grasp in 1975. While the motif of the book was a seductive topic of interest, the inscrutable elevated language and discursive point of view of the book made it a hard nut for me at the time. Since then, I have not only read all his other writings I have come across, I have gobbled them with obsessive enthusiasm. His writings and public advocacy for good governance, social justice, democracy and freedom had always made him a distant godfather and mentor whose association I had deeply coveted.

An opportunity happily came my way in 1994, when Prof. Soyinka who had become familiar with my work as a pro-democracy activist in the UK through the New Nigeria Forum and its journal, *Nigeria Now* which I edited, and through my friendship with his son, Dr. Olaokun Soyinka, invited me to be part of the newly established National Liberation Council of Nigeria (NALICON) as Director of Communications.

Even though my initial attitude to NALICON and its objectives was not enthusiastic, I jumped at the rare opportunity to work closely with Africa's only Nobel Laureate in literature. I had reasoned that his international reputation, connection and clout would greatly enhance our struggle for the return of democratic order in Nigeria. And I reasoned right! As I indicated in my memoir of the exile years, "I came close to being labelled a passionate enthusiast and defender of the Soyinka mystique, especially having shared his worldview of the Nigerian struggle as one between authoritarianism and democracy, and not purely an ideological fixation between socialism and capitalism" (Fayemi, 2005:210). Throughout his living in exile in the 1990s, I worked closely with him on numerous projects — the most popular of which was the Radio Freedom and Radio Kudirat.

There is no doubt that I have always shared an ecumenical ideology and kindred spirit with Kongi. His natural spur to resist oppression, instinctive spontaneity to defy authoritarianism and his impregnable commitment to civil liberty makes him my natural ideological mentor. In both the youthful and sagely Soyinka, has been a consistent resurgence against brutality and inordinate absolutism. As he often opines, "justice is the first condition of humanity".



His resentment against state terror and abuse of power burns like the inferno of the mythical hade.

For WS, humanity and its happiness are the tunnels through which he travels his mind in the visualisation of social problems. Anything that denies man his inalienable rights, is for Soyinka, an abhorrent act that must be condemned in the strongest terms. He is predictably obdurate and conscientiously unapologetic for his repetitive fidelity to the triumph of human freedom, primacy of his liberty and elevation of his essence as the sole creed that all gods must serve.

His temperament rejects every iota of practices that suborn human happiness. Even in his old age, he continues to prick the conscience of the nation with penetrating homilies that poke a revelatory finger in the nose of public decadence. WS is that bitter remedy that purges a poisoned belly of its troubling constipation. His corrective words are like the surgical knife that cuts out the malignance of a petulant lesion.

He is classical in all aspects of his artistry. For some and for his obscurantism, he is the African Homer; some others say he is the ultimate Aristophanes; some even think he is the rebirth of Socrates and not just for the accident of initials, WS is our own William Shakespeare and John Milton rolled together. He is the agglutination of literary reincarnation of the best that history can recall.

Like his ancestral forebears, WS untiringly rages against the foibles of governmental chieftains and their foreboding delinquencies. He has spoken vehemently against the cowardice of intellectual ambiguity that continues to indulge veneer characters in public places. For him, no space must be yielded to the debauchers who gorge the nation's wealth and fritter its assets in the realisation of their gluttonous hedonism.

Soyinka is impatient with the loud silence that punctuates clear cases that should strike a thunder of a mass anger. For him, until the obscurity of silence gives way to visibility of voices, any unexplained figuration about the existence of Nigeria will remain an empty indoctrination that serves the hypocritical cowardice of the nation's power barons.

Soyinka is a patriot who has used his innate talent to serve humanity at every opportunity.

His radical posture has come handy in dangerous times when only men of sterner stuff could stand. In 1967, he was imprisoned because of his audacious antagonism to the genocidal assault that the civil-war represented. Before then, he had intruded a radio station in Ibadan in 1965 to frustrate the broadcast of an electoral heist that was meant to entrench an unpopular government. The "Man" lives in Soyinka like the ageless Olumo Rock. His stout courage, broad repository and undeniable conviction radiates his writing in plays, fictions, poetry, essays and public interventions. He uses the power of words to carry out corrective surgery and as a righting atonement for the transgressed.

When he chooses his object for critical scrutiny, he deplores the elegance of humour and the pettiness of satire to disrobe the social psychopaths wherever they might be.

Soyinka is spiritual but not religious, ideological but not bigoted; for, he could not submit his intellect to the whimsical machinations of another being. He acknowledges, as he found out through his teacher, Bonany Dombree, that all spirituality sprouts from the relationship between nature and man and that the quest to create a meaning for its inscrutable foundation gave expression to the concept of deity. Thus, Soyinka's spirituality is in the primacy of humanity and the pursuit of universal egalitarianism; this, I think, is the basis upon which his ideas of the ideal is anchored. No wonder he remains a respectable voice for human advancement in the global arena.

Even though Prof. has been an unsuccessful politician in the narrow manner success in politics is defined, his contribution to the political development of Nigeria is undeniable and inspiring. Apart from constantly being in the trenches for the enthronement of democracy and rule of law, he has floated a political party in the past to advocate a set of political ideas that he believed could provide an alternative answer. More importantly, Soyinka has been one of the public moral giants who continue to point the nation to the path of rectitude in politics, constitutionalism, justice, equality and good governance. His life has been a watershed and a blessing in every aspect.

On behalf of my wife — Bisi who adores him, the Government and the good people of Ekiti State, this is wishing the iconic Nobel Laureate, an esteemed mentor and a humanist extraordinaire, a happy 86th birthday. Long live, Eniogun. Long live Prof!



He Loves his Country with Passion

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by **SENATOR IBIKUNLE AMOSUN**, CON, FCA)

CELEBRATING AN ILLUSTRIOUS ICON AT 86

I write to felicitate with you on this special occasion of your 86th birthday, on Monday, 13th July, 2020. Happy Birthday, Sir.

Time and age have neither reduced the intensity of the love you have for our beloved country nor the passion with which you pursue the cause of Humanity.

You continue to be a source of inspiration to many of us as you remain steadfast in your vision and commitment to see to the ennoblement and elevation of the African and black family all over the world.

On the occasion of your birthday being marked by the 11th Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange (WISCE) programme, I join many others

to wish you a very happy birthday and many more years of glorious service to humanity in good health and sound mind.

Once again, please accept my hearty congratulations and the assurances, as always, of my highest regards.

Happy Birthday Sir.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Senator Ibikunle Amosun, CON,

(Immediate past Governor of Ogun State, now *Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*)

Goodwill

goodwill



THE HOUSE OF ODUDUWA

HIM Ọba Adeyeye Enitan
Ogunwusi, Ojaja II.
Ọ̀ni of Ilẹ̀-Iḡẹ̀.





children section





POEM FOR

86 GUESTS

The Child before a Mirror of Strangers

I thought that this year, in lieu of our normal meeting which has been made impossible thanks to this ravaging COVID, that I'll just read you a poem which I read at the United Nations last year in honour of our children.

*The event was the anniversary of the UN declaration of the Right of the Child. I entitled it **The Child Before a Mirror of Strangers:***

As if you were never here before
As if you have forgotten that you were
What we are
But you self-betrayed raise walls of deafness
To deflect pleas of innocence
As if the world you taught has
Lost its axis, ceased to spin.
As if you have forgotten when
You watched, entranced, the
Dance of leaves and stream currents,
Your image wobbling in their depths.
As if you never chased or raced
To leave your shadow.
As if you never waved
To shapes of folklore monsters,
Heroes morphing in the clouds.
As if you ever peddled differences
Among your kind at that first
Guileless sight to knowing winks

And whispers, otherness words;
Pauper, pagan, dirty, low-born,
Turned partners in prank
--- yesterday, from closeness,
Henceforth fiends from outer space
Non-human.
As if your arms --- powered
Or orphaned. Whatever forced
To cradle ponderous arms,
Senses fused to death commands
As if your shoulders caved under
Abnormal loads to earn a pittance
On a night of slums where the
Sun is total stranger.
As if a child is not the unlisted
Heritage of Time; the one
Perennial season.
As if my presence fails to image
What you were, mirrored in
Trustful faces, like the world itself
A trusting planet,
An eternity that spins in human hands
As if
As if childhood were out of fashion
As if
As if

WS

86 Finalists of the WSICE 2020

In alphabetical order, these are the 86 longlisted from over 2000 entries submitted from 28 countries in five language zones of the World

JUNIOR



Abdurrahman Balogun
Nigeria



Abeng Bamela C. Germaine
Cameroon



Adamu Usman Garko
Nigeria



Adegboyega I. Feranmi
Nigeria



Adeoye Precious
Nigeria



Adigun Maryam Ifeoluwani
Nigeria



Adumaza Ofuje Deborah
Nigeria



Agbah Ighoyota Marvel
Nigeria



Agim Nneoma Daniella
Nigeria



Aharanwa Divine Chinonye
Nigeria



Ajayi Adejoke Omolara
Nigeria



Ashley Abena Kumi
Ghana



Awande Hadebe
South Africa



Ayodeji Oluwatomi
Nigeria



Ayuba Tehillah Haruna
Nigeria



Balogun Jacinta
Nigeria



Balogun Oreoluwa A.
Nigeria



Chloe Olufunmilayo Ejisun
Nigeria



Chukwuma C. Zhang .
China-Nigeria



Courage Elorm Kojo D.
Ghana



Danica N. Nkemdirim
Nigeria

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JUNIOR



Dare Toluwani Prisca
Nigeria



Eda Deborah Anirejuoritse
Nigeria



Ekwochi S. Chidiebere
Nigeria



Elesho O. Morenike
Nigeria



Elizabeth Iseki
Nigeria



Emily Suh
USA



Ezekiel Amarachi
Nigeria



Fredrick A. Goodness
Nigeria



George O. Muyiwa
Nigeria



Gwe Patience Kifang
Cameroon



Halliday Tamunoibim
Nigeria



Ibegbunam Olisa
Nigeria



Ibem Marylyn Anya
Nigeria



Idowu O. Modupe
Nigeria



Igabor David
Nigeria



Ike-Njoku A. Theresa
Nigeria



Irabor Stephanie
Nigeria



James Moju
Nigeria



Jawando Zainab Adetola
Nigeria



Jesuoneh H. W. Ikhenoba
Nigeria



Joseph Divine
Nigeria

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JUNIOR



Kaka Shukrah
Nigeria



Kokole B. Funlayefa
Nigeria



Kosin Joan
Nigeria



Maduforo Victor U.
Nigeria



Monalisa Chilinda
Malawi



Musiliyu Opeyemi Anuli
Nigeria



Nikhita Naidoo
South Africa



Norbu Y Shastri
USA



Nwokedi Paschal Chibueze
Nigeria



Ogie O. Emmanuel
Nigeria



Ojesola Itunu Leo
Nigeria



Ojo Adebayo Erioluwa
Nigeria



Okarike Favour
Nigeria



Okpalanma J. Chiemelie
Nigeria



Ola Alice Oyinkansola
Nigeria



Oladimeji I. Oluwakorede
Nigeria



Olonilua Taiwo Mercy
Nigeria



Olowu Dunmininu Favour
Nigeria



Oluwabukola O. Ale
Nigeria



Oluwatoniloba Adewemimo
Nigeria



Omotomilola Olaoye
Nigeria

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JUNIOR



Ononye Onyeka Henrietta
Nigeria



Onwuemeh A. Christianah
Nigeria



Oriade Adewunmi
Nigeria



Orlu Shulammitte
Nigeria



Oseni Oluwabunmi
Nigeria



Oyeyemi S. Olaoluwa
Nigeria



Oyindoubra Akika
Nigeria



Oyinkansola O.Aleemah
Nigeria



Paul Wunyun Deborah
Ghana



Rania Danella Centauri
Indonesia



Sampada Dahal
Nepal



Samuel Kapesa
Zambia



Tamara Melissa Young
South Africa



Thelma Iheanacho
Nigeria



Thierry-Hansel B. Lo-oh
Cameroon



Toluwanimi Sonuga
Nigeria



Toni Taiwo-Alimi
Nigeria



Ubesie Uchenna
Nigeria



Ugworji E. Chizomam
Nigeria



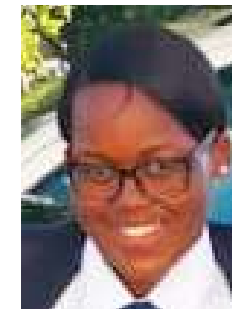
Vera Honam Anthonio
Ghana



Yahaya Mohammed
Nigeria



Yolanda Masoka
South Africa



Zubenathi Gongo
South Africa

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SENIOR



Abasiadiong Ekarika
Nigeria



Adejumo S. Adenike
Nigeria



Adewuyi Aishat Adedamola
Nigeria



Adjanor Viassi Emmanuel
Cote d'Ivoire



Agwuna Favour Obianuju
Nigeria



Aina Eniola
Nigeria



Akpan Enwongobong E.
Nigeria



Amachree Godday
Nigeria



Anigbo Stephen Chinedu
Nigeria



Aurora Valerie A. Muthemba
Mozambique



Ayo Mark Taiwo
Nigeria



Ayodele Arogundade
Nigeria



Ayotomiwa Quadri Elesho
Nigeria



Boluwaduro A. Adeyemi
Barbados



Bono Sigudu
South Africa



Chisom A. Nwaezuoke
Nigeria



Clara Jack
Nigeria



Coker Pelumi Omolola
Nigeria



Daniella Tarkumbur
Nigeria



David Iyanuoluwa Ojo
Nigeria



Délcia Da C.V. Da Costa
Angola

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SENIOR



Destiny Osarugue
Nigeria



Dorothy Omoragbon
Nigeria



Ebomoyi O. Nonso
Nigeria



Ebunoluwa O. Akinola
Nigeria



Edwin Glory Chinedu
Nigeria



Egenti Jennifer
Nigeria



Fayomi Deborah Ololade
Nigeria



Felista Biluge
Republique D. Du Congo



Jiayi Li
China



Gbulie Chiamaka Genevieve
Nigeria



Giselle Stephanie Z. Yucra
Bolivia



Godstime Akubueze Nwaeze
Nigeria



Hodonu Omotayo Seyitan
Nigeria



Ibeneme Favour O.
Nigeria



Ijeoma Salome Ogwurumba
Nigeria



Ike Chidiebube Prosper
Nigeria



Inimfon Kufre Inyang
Nigeria



Iqra Parveen Awan
Pakistan



Isiguzo Chinonso Fidelia
Nigeria



Itinagbedia Karen Efe
Nigeria



Jatto Hannah
Nigeria

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SENIOR



Jean-pierre Gnimatin
Republic of Benin



Joshua Oluwatobi
Nigeria



Pamphile Sassi Aubert
Nigeria/China



Kamdem Melanie V.
Cameroon



Leta Daniel
Uganda



Majeedat Abdulmajeed
Cuba



Mayler A. Pedraza Fernandez
Colombia



Mayra Mileidy P. Fernandez
Colombia



Mnda Shiekuma
Nigeria



Nwafor Grace Chidera
Nigeria



Nwagwughiagwu Kelechi G.
Nigeria



Nwakanma Godson U.
Nigeria



Nwaumere Clement O.
Nigeria



Nwakpa Gilbert Arinze
Nigeria



Nwefuru G. Chiadikobi
Nigeria



Obiadoh I. Livinus
Nigeria



Odifa Samuel
Nigeria



Odu Opuere Excel
Nigeria



Ogobuiro Mercy Chidinma
Nigeria



Olanrewaju Maryam Ayo
Nigeria



Oluwagbotemi Victor O.
Nigeria

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SENIOR



Omale Joshua Ojonugwa
Nigeria



Onyenike C. Onyeloni
Nigeria



Opara Chizaram
Nigeria



Opatola Nathaniel
Nigeria



Oyedibu Enoch
Nigeria



Pedro H. Goncalves Capita
Angola



Precious Emmanuel
Nigeria



Queen Elizabeth Oguwike
Nigeria



Saikou Camara
The Gambia



Samson Arewah
Nigeria



Sean Dranreb L. Mayani
Philippines



Serpine G. Amondi Okeyo
Kenya



Shufaah Salum
Tanzania



Simisola Shonibare
United Arab Emirates



SK. Maher Ansari Mahim
Bangladesh



Soyinka A. Oreoluwa
Nigeria



Timothy O. Ilegbusi
Nigeria



Tyrone N. Takawira
Zimbabwe



Victoria O. Aham-Ochi
Nigeria



Wosu Chisom Michael
Nigeria



Yakubu Hamzat Odoba
Nigeria



Yuying Zhu
China



Shaoyuan Li
China



THE WOLE SOYINKA ESSAY COMPETITION 2020 GLOBAL (SENIOR AND JUNIOR), CONSOLATION DIASPORA PRIZE CATEGORY WINNERS



GLOBAL WINNER SENIOR
TYRONE NKULULEKO TAKAWIRA
FROM ZIMBABWE
ASHESI UNIVERSITY



GLOBAL WINNER JUNIOR
THELMA IHEANACHO FROM
NIGERIA
MEADOW HALL SCHOOL



CONSOLATION DIASPORA PRIZE WINNER
LETA DANIEL FROM UGANDA
ST. GERALD HIGH SCHOOL



CONSOLATION DIASPORA PRIZE 2ND RUNNER-UP
ANUSHREE CHAUDHURI
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY



CONSOLATION DIASPORA PRIZE 1ST RUNNER-UP
MAJEEDAT ABDULMAJEED FROM
CUBA
VICTORIA DE GRÓN



CONSOLATION DIASPORA PRIZE RUNNER-UP
SAMPADA DAHAL FROM NEPAL
WHITE HEAVEN ACADEMY, NEPAL



CONSOLATION DIASPORA PRIZE WINNER
VERA HONAM ANTHONIO FROM GHANA
ABURI GIRLS' SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
PRESBYTERIAN, GHANA



THE WOLE SOYINKA ESSAY COMPETITION 2020 JUNIOR CATEGORY WINNERS



ANGLOPHONE (ENGLISH) WINNER
EMILY SUH FROM USA
TORREY PINES HIGH SCHOOL



ANGLOPHONE (ENGLISH) RUNNER-UP
JOSEPH DIVINE FROM NIGERIA
CALEB INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE, MAGODÓ



FRANCOPHONE (FRENCH) WINNER
THELMA IHEANACHO FROM NIGERIA
MEADOW HALL SCHOOL



FRANCOPHONE (FRENCH) RUNNER-UP
TOLUWANIMI SONUGA FROM NIGERIA
CORONA SECONDARY SCHOOL, AGBARA



SINOPHONE (CHINESE) MIDDLE WINNER
SHAORYUAN LI FROM CHINA
TILTON SCHOOL

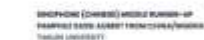
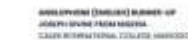
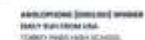
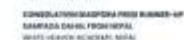
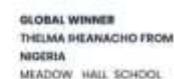
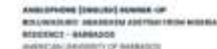
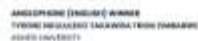
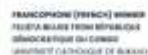
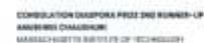
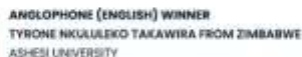
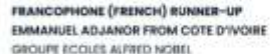
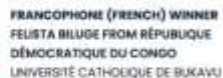
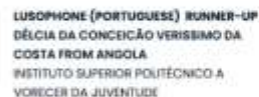
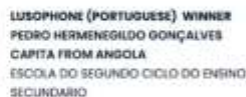


SINOPHONE (CHINESE) MIDDLE RUNNER-UP
PAMPHILE SASSI AUBERT FROM CHINA/NIGERIA
TIANJIN UNIVERSITY





**THE WOLE SOYINKA
ESSAY COMPETITION 2020
SENIOR CATEGORY WINNERS**





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WINNING NUMBERS

1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19 DURO ONI	101, 103, 105, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 118, 120 MABEL EVWERHOMA
22, 23, 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 36, 38, 40 OLU AJAYI	153, 160, 143, 146, 159, 147, 149, 152, 155, 156 SEGUN OJEWUYI
41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 52, 54, 56, 58, 60 LILLIAN AMAH	162, 163, 165, 167, 170, 171 DR RAZINAT
63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 78, 79, 80 SHABAKA THOMPSON	BONUS: 121, 127, 125, 123, 129 RMD
84, 92, 96, 85, 87, 98, 100, 93, 99, 81. ADUKE	



SPECIAL REPORT:

THE GLOBAL PRIZE TOP 5 WINNERS

It has been my great pleasure reading these essays; each is a delightful, uplifting read. They are incisive, thoughtful, and inspiring. What a promise of positive healing for our troubled world! Thank you for involving me in this noble project.

As requested, I have tried to rank the five essays in terms of how they articulate the theme, "I am, because you are." Each writer brings a unique, and informed understanding to the theme, and in my ranking, I provide what stands out, and qualifies each essay for its ascribed position. I must confess however, that the ranking has not been an easy task. Each essay is indeed a winner, and makes me appreciate the monumental work done by regional adjudicators before this last lap of the Final Five. Even more significantly, it underscores the fundamental significance of your Project.

The ranked essays follow immediately below. Again, thanks for introducing me to these bright young people.
Sincerely yours,



Omofolabo Ajayi-Soyinka, Professor Emerita,
University of Kansas, Lawrence.

WSICE Final Five Senior Essay Contest:

Ranked

1ST



TYRONE NKULULEKO TAKAWIRA
(ZIMBABWE)

A beautiful, analytical essay. It is clear, simple as well as encompassing. The essay breaks down the concept of Ubuntu into love, humanity and sacrifice, and broadens it through lens of "I am because you are." Taking off from Zululand, it expands globally into specific locations, time, movements, peoples and ethnicities/races. In its own unique style, it weaves together very eloquently, a story of different poignant happenings across time and space.
Special essay sentence: "Ubuntu is us – when we let go of our egos and recognize our interconnectedness."



2ND

**PEDRO HERMENEGILDO GONCALVES
CAPITA (ANGOLA)**

This is a story-teller. At the center of the essay is the *human heart* as a profound metaphor for “I am because you are,” the philosophy of Ubuntu. The story of a medical feat, a heart transplant that saves a life and opens the heart of a prejudicial old man into realising that human beings are of one single, interdependent race, smoothly morphs into a social event, a football game. During the game, two young men find it in their hearts to appreciate the defense side because without them, the offense cannot be achievers.

Special essay sentence: “....as a reminder that racism has no place within our hearts, and that regardless of social position I can only be a shining spearhead if my defense is too.”



3RD

**FELISTA BILUGE
(DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO)**

A profound essay with a significant nod to the philosophy of economics, a very broad discipline by itself. By focusing on solidarity as a central, classic concept of Ubuntu, the essay examines, and posits the current pandemic as cause for reflection and ability to transcend superficial differences to realise our human interdependence.

Special essay sentence: “...it made us understand that borders are imaginary and that they are the products of a mind that is scared to open itself to the world...”



4TH

**SAMSON AREWAH
(NIGERIA)**

A creative mixed style of poetry and prose. It takes a historical, sociological, and pragmatic route to land on Ubuntu. It explores how human co-dependency enables to us survive difficult times, and suggests how to rebuild afterwards.

Special essay sentence: “... today our world tells us that we are all siblings. We are all guardians; guardians of our planet, our neighbors and ourselves.”



5TH

**Ge4 - YUYING ZHU
(CHINA)**

This essay shows a lot of promise. It is a courageous attempt to fuse two similar ideas from different cultures into a single fluid theory. It is a developing idea that needs to be encouraged.

Special essay sentence: “As individual life on the earth, we are same and different. Only every individual can be treated equally...”

JUDGES' OBSERVATIONS

JUDGE, JUNIOR CATEGORY

Of the 30 submissions reviewed, I can, without hesitation, say a lot of thought, work and heart went into every single paper. All the submissions articulated clearly, their individual understanding of the subject matter. Considering the age range of the submitters, their essays on a philosophy that many people either are not aware of or understand speaks to the future of our world. A plethora of light is being kindled to usher us into a brighter future.

Some essays however stood out than others due to how they were structured, their overall global understanding of the subject with references made to SPECIFIC global occurrences such as the Black Lives Matter Movement, Cuban doctors helping other countries, Madagascar's proposed cure for Covid-19 etc. This showed their understanding of "UBUNTU"; though of African origin, as a philosophy that applies to EVERYTHING happening in our world especially with regards to underrepresented communities.

Many of the students put themselves and in their essays, which was impressive. Some writers had infusions of their native languages. However, I would like to caution against some overgeneralisations that were made in some papers which quote things like "when God created man, he made woman to complement" or "We all need our neighbours like they need us" Though the latter might sound quite

humorous and the former a little more complex, it is imperative we teach these (young) scholars to hold on to their beliefs while presenting ideals without biases based on those beliefs, opinions and societal generalisations as this could take away from the relevant points they might be attempting to make; should people disagree.

A couple papers referenced African countries as "third world" which I think is important because it shows perspective.

*This note is more so for educators and other "adults." The concept of "development" is based on who sets the standards for those comparisons and the scale with which the development of a society is measured also falls within the same scope, which in our case has been set by Western bodies. It is important we educate these future leaders on the relativity of "development" so that they are more solution tuned (to understand that development looks different for every society) and can think critically at how communities and countries can be "developed" based on the needs of the actual people more than the standards set by western bodies to measure development.

Overall, reading the essays reaffirmed the hope of unification, community and progress within our global community.

YAYRA TAMAKLOE

Storyteller, researcher in PanAfrican culture

JUDGE, SENIOR CATEGORY

All entries are up to standard. Each writer did a lot of research in relation to the topic. It was a bit difficult to judge because most of them are very close in points. Their essays are original and realistic. They went into details to justify the topic. Some of the writers supported their essay with quotations, examples and proofs.

Having read through the final Eighty-Six (86) essays, I am impressed. I will advise that this competition should be given more awareness in order to capture more participants. The more the participants, the better. I believe this topic is for the correction of 'RACISM' and 'XENOPHOBIA' which are causing damages globally.

AL-MAROOF OLUSEGUN

Arts & Design Teacher
JUDGE SENIOR CATEGORY

JUDGE, SENIOR CATEGORY

THE objective of the theme - I AM because YOU ARE required the writers to creatively express the interdependence of humanity during the Covid19 pandemic.

Misconstruing the context of the essay, most participants discussed other current affairs and societal wrongs in the light of the theme, a few others wrote short stories, while some understood the theme. However, they were unable to deliver articulately what was expected.

It was observed that there were cases of plagiarisms, mostly culled from online articles, and these same articles reoccurred in different works. However, contestants who plagiarised were scored according to their originality. However, there were relatively exceptional essays, the writers had good self-expression and there was clarity of purpose leading to a good flow of thoughts.

BANKOLE WRIGHT

Doctoral Candidate,
University of Lagos
JUDGE, SENIOR CATEGORY

JUDGES' OBSERVATIONS

JUDGE, JUNIOR/SENIOR CATEGORY

Quelques observations sur les textes soumis au concours (11 dans la catégorie JUNIOR, 9 dans la catégorie SENIOR)

Tout d'abord, il convient de féliciter chacun des participants. Le travail fourni est de qualité et, à une exception près, respecte totalement le format et le sujet proposé. Pour plusieurs participants, le français est une langue étrangère et c'était donc un vrai défi que d'utiliser la langue de Molière pour exprimer ses idées.

Dans la catégorie Junior, l'actualité tient une part importante. Le concept "Je suis parce que tu es" a bien été intégré et le besoin d'entraide, de solidarité et d'une meilleure compréhension entre les humains sont les notions qui reviennent le plus souvent.

Dans la catégorie Sénior, l'actualité comme l'interdépendance entre les hommes ont inspiré la plupart des textes et des réflexions profondes ont été engagées.

Pour conclure, de l'essai philosophique à la fiction, j'ai trouvé dans chacun des textes des formules très poétiques et des réflexions très pertinentes qui démontrent qu'un texte écrit reste un des moyens les plus forts pour faire passer le message de tolérance que prône la devise UBUNTU.

Olivier ALFONSI
Professeur au Lycée Français
JUGE dans les catégories Junior et Sénior

ADJUDICATORS

ANGLOPHONE



ROBERT FOX, PhD (USA)
He is a professor of Literature at the Southern Illinois University SIUC in Carbondale Illinois, USA. He earlier taught at the University of Ife in Nigeria and at Suffolk University in Boston. His current research primarily involves issues of post-coloniality, multiculturalism, black aesthetics, and "race." He is also an author of several books.



NADIA EMBLENTON (UK)
A London-based researcher of identity politics and representation in contemporary Nigerian novels, her previous research focused on the arts and socio-political development across Africa, but more specifically in Nigeria and Ghana. Whilst her research is now in Nigerian literature, she is still very much interested in political and policy analysis across Africa.



RAZINAT TALATU MOHAMMED (Nigeria)
She teaches African Literature with specialization in Women Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Maiduguri. She is also a creative writer who made her debut in 2005 when her first book, a collection of short stories; *A love Like a Woman's* and other Stories won the Maiden ANA/ Lantern Book prize. She has five novels to her credit.

LUSOPHONE



FÉLIX AYOH'OMIDIRE (Nigeria)
A professor of Brazilian and Afro-Latin-American Studies in the Department of Foreign Languages at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. His major research focus is on Yoruba Identity Studies in diverse societies including Brazil, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti, Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Colombia, Argentina, Venezuela and the USA.



PIA LINDQUIST WONG, Ph.D.
Trilingual in English, Brazilian Portuguese, and Spanish, she joined the College of Education at Sacramento State University in 1995. During her tenure as a faculty member, she taught courses in multicultural education, critical pedagogy and educational research. Her research focuses on urban professional development schools, teacher practices in the context of urban school reform and democratic education in the U.S., and democratic educational reforms in Brazil. She currently serves as the Associate Dean for Research and Engagement.



MARIA CAROLINA MARCHI SILVA
A Brazilian Cultural Producer and Educator, Ms. Marchi Silva is trilingual in Brazilian Portuguese, English, and Spanish. Currently, working as a Bilingual Coordinator at Castelo Bilingual School, through which she promotes English teacher development and student success. She is also the founder of Maria Sol Produções Culturais, a cultural organization aimed at promoting multidimensional artistic, educational and cultural projects.

HISPANOPHONE



CRISTIAN R. AQUINO-STERLING, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Diversity and International Affairs in the College of Education at San Diego State University, Dr. Aquino-Sterling is the recipient of the 2016 Early Career Reviewer Award of the Bilingual Research Journal (National Association of Bilingual Education) and currently serves as Assistant Editor of the Journal of Global Education and Research. Dr. Aquino Sterling is multilingual in Spanish and English and is currently learning Brazilian Portuguese. As an Afro-descendiente from the Dominican Republic (his great grandmother and grandfather were Haitians), he is in love with Afro-Caribbean ethnic, racial, cultural, linguistic, and spiritual heritages and traditions.



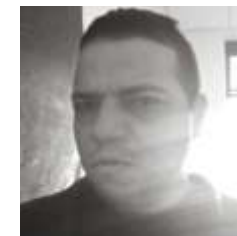
SHEILA M. FRAM
With a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Arizona State University, Sheila has taught Reading and English courses at various public schools (in Iowa



ARMANDO GUERRERO Jr., Ph.D.
Director of Language Programs and Lecturer in Spanish linguistics in the Department of Spanish & Portuguese at UCLA, where he currently supervises language instructors and teaches various topics in Spanish linguistics, Guerrero is a sociolinguist specializing in Mexican Spanish and Spanish as a heritage language. His research agenda explores Spanish language variation in the United States. He is a passionate scholar dedicated to uplifting and empowering heritage speakers of Spanish.

CECY BELTRÁN
Currently serving as Administrative Coordinator for the Dean's Office in College of Education at San Diego State University, Cecy Beltrán is bilingual in English and Spanish.

and Maryland) and Social Foundations courses at universities (Arizona State and Univ. of Wyoming). Her list of research publications highlights her interest in employing critical discourse analyses and visual discourse analyses with data from many different forms of communications and built environments.



RADOLFO MATA, Ph.D.
An Assistant Professor of Spanish Linguistics at Western Washington University, his trilingual in English, Spanish, and French. His current research focus is Spanish as a heritage language in the United States, particularly the U.S.-Mexico border area. His fieldwork analyzes some of the morphosyntactic properties of Spanish that are vulnerable to language contact, as well as language attitudes and discourse-pragmatics elements. At Western Washington University, he teaches general & Spanish linguistics, as well as a course in Spanish as a heritage language.



TANIA MÁRQUEZ, M.A.
A lecturer and program advisor in the College of Education at San Diego State University, she has a Master's in Spanish Literature and Linguistics, and loves reading and writing poetry. She is bilingual in English and Spanish.

ADJUDICATORS

SINOPHONE

DR. LI-RONG LILLY CHENG
(China/USA)

A professor in the School of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences and Executive Director of Chinese Studies Institute at San Diego State University, Dr. Cheng is the Managing Director of the Confucius Institute at SDSU. She is on the editorial board of several major professional journals. She has numerous professional publications and has lectured all over the world.



ROSA OVSHINSKY (Chinese)
With a PhD in Nuclear Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; she worked in Oak Ridge National Laboratory for 10 years before joining Energy Conversion Devices in Troy, Michigan. She has served as project leaders of various renewable energy projects; and was Vice President of Technology in Chevron-Ovonic Hydrogen Systems until her retirement in 2012.



LILY BIRMINGHAM (Taiwan)
After working for decades as a manager in Engineering, she has been a docent at the San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA) since 2013, giving tours regularly to adults and students on European, East Asian and South East Asian, American and Contemporary art. She has written, illustrated and published a children's book about her childhood stories in Taiwan.

FRANCOPHONE



VÉRONIQUE MAISIER, PhD (*France*)
She teaches French language, conversation and phonetics, as well as French and Francophone literatures and cultures at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Her teaching also includes courses on French literature in translation, such as Masterpieces of French Literature, and Women in French and Francophone Literatures.



OLIVIER ALFONSI (*France*)
Teacher and an art lover-patron, he taught Primary pupils at the French School of Lagos from 2004 to 2009, took a break; and resumed same job since 2016 when he returned to Nigeria. He worked at The French Cultural Center from 1997 to 1999, organising exhibitions & concerts. He has stayed in France, Nigeria & Gabon.

JUDGES

JUNIOR/SECONDARY CATEGORY: ENGLISH



BANKOLE WRIGHT
Judge

Researcher, Writer, Editor, and Humanitarian Activist, Bankole has written short stories, poems and essays; some of which won him participation in several writing workshops like the Ake Fiction Writing Workshop and Quramo Writing Workshop. As a writer he is concerned with capturing African sensibilities, especially the psychological impacts of events on characters. He is the Creative Director of Pensworth EdiVrit, a ghost-writing and editing outlet.

He obtained a BA in Literature-in-English from Lagos State University and MA in Literature from the University of Lagos respectively. He is currently running a PhD in African Diaspora Studies.



OLUKAYODE K. SAMUEL
Judge

Researcher and theatre director, Olukayode is currently running a doctoral programme at the University of Lagos. His research interests are Dramatic literature and criticism, cultural studies, Sociology of literature and Film studies. His thesis explores how human personality (characterization) as a social factor can be used in understanding Suicidal thought, behaviour, and attempts in the society. on aspect on his research interest. He has attended conferences both locally and internationally, where he presented papers and plays.



SEGUN AL-MAROOF
Judge

He started his teaching career as a part-time teacher in 1997 with Executive Care and Learning Centre, Lagos while almost at the end of his programme at Yabatech. He had taught Visual Arts on part-time basis in about 10 schools before he became a full-time tutor in schools like Mictech, Greensprings, Caleb, Supreme Edu-cation Foundation and presently at Oxbridge Tutorial College for 'A level' courses. Once a vice principal and a principal in one of his schools, he holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education from University of Nigeria, UNN and a Master's degree also in Education from UNILAG. He is proficient in children's show such as mascots, puppetry and compering.

He has won a few awards such as "The Most Dedicated Teaching Staff; the Most Punctual Staff; 'Art Teacher of the Year; the Neatest Male Staff; etc. He served as a contract examiner with Lagos State University, LASU and a book reviewer with Lagos State.

JUDGES

JUNIOR CATEGORY: ENGLISH



YAYRA TAMAKLOE
Judge,

Ghana-born America-inhabiting Yayra is founder of The P.A.L Project; a storyteller whose work advocates the importance of culture while bringing attention to social and gender issues both in artistic and academic environments. She holds BFA (*Cum Laude*) from the College of Arts, Kent State University with multiple directing, performance, leadership and scholarly experiences including being Student Government Senator for the College of the Arts, president of the African Students Association as well as a McNair Scholars Alum. More at

GLOBAL ADJUDICATOR



OMOFOLABO AJAYI-SOYINKA (Prof)

An interdisciplinary scholar, her teaching, research publications and creative works encompass performing arts, literary and gender studies, including the critical theories that inform them. For decades she taught in Gender Studies and Theatre Departments at the University of Kansas (KU); her courses included: "Race and the American Theatre," "African Theatre," "African Dance," "Myth and the Dramatist," and "Post-Modern Theory and Criticism." Her teaching encouraged independent thinking skills in students, and make them value the process of learning as well as its end result. Her research publications examine how disciplines theorize, analyze, challenge or breakdown discourses on power, gender, race, sexuality, cultures and nationality. At KU, she was honored with Women's Hall of Fame, and a Glidden Visiting Professorship at the University of Ohio, Athens (2011). She served as African Literature Association the President in 2008/09.

EVALUATORS

ENGLISH



JAMES JARAFU JAWUR
Script Evaluator

A graduate of English at the University of Maiduguri, currently pursuing his Master's degree, James is a Graduate Assistant with the Department of English and Literary Studies in the same University.



AHMADU MOHAMMED DAUDA
Script Evaluator

A doctoral candidate University of Maiduguri, Ahmadu is an Assistant Lecturer with the Department of English and Literary Studies in the same University, where he earlier graduated in English Language.



Winners

in the 10th edition
(**WS85**) of the essay
competition
2019



AJAYI KOLAJO

15 YEARS

MALE

NAME

AGE

GENDER

ABEOKUTA GRAMMAR SCHOOL

SS2

SCHOOL

CLASS

CHALLENGES TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DISCUSS)

**WINNER,
SPECIAL 10TH ANNIVERSARY
ESSAY COMPETITION 2019**

It is an ironical belief that the best countries of the world do not confront issues and matters that are related to problems of; security, environment, multi ethnic conflicts, corruption, violence, injustice, segregation, war, indiscipline, violation of rights, trafficking and so on. The truth remains that every nation has his or her own anomaly to deal with.

Every nation wants the best, but the best is only gotten when a nation proves that it deserved the best. Happenings and events that take place around us are pointers that every nation that wants to develop must be ready to face challenges.

A nation battling with health challenges like disease outbreak will find it very difficult to develop. An adage says "health is wealth", meaning that in ensuring that there is true development, improvement and betterment in the standard of living. The problems posed by lack of good health of the government and the citizens should be taken care of, because the resources that are to be spent on making a nation developed are being used to solve health problems.

Similarly, a nation that is stricken with poor citizens who do not have the ability of feeding themselves, not to talk of feeding others and contributing to growth will be found crawling on the path to making a headway. These poor citizens will not be able to pay their taxes, invest in themselves and depend on what the government bankrupt in the twinkle of an eye.

High poverty rate in different countries can be traced to diverse root causes ranging from wasteful spending and overpopulation.

A country that promotes overpopulation without making preparations to cater for the populace will suffer from poverty and underdevelopment.

Furthermore, a country with illiterate and ignorant citizens who do not have adequate knowledge on how to behave, respect other people's culture, interest with others, participate in governance and add value to their environment will find it difficult to progress because the development of a country lies mostly in the hands of its citizens. If the citizens are well groomed and enlightened on issues they will contribute their quota to national development.

In addition, social factors like injustice, inequality, racism, restricted freedom, trafficking and abuse of human rights and the rule of law. For example, in a unity school, you find more of southerners than northerners. The people from the southern part of Nigeria are given an edge over their counterparts in the north. Statistics have it that when admission is to be given into universities, the ratio of northerners and southerners is not in the right proportion; instead it should be equal to give leverage. Also, in the employment sector, we find out that the employment ratio is 65:35 in favor of the south. As a result, the south gets better at the expense of the north. This should not

occur in a country that needs to develop, we need to apply the principle of unity in diversity and accommodate others irrespective of their ethnic group.

Wars and violence that occur in different nations hinder development. In Nigeria, security issues like the Shiites protest, the BIAFRA groups protest, Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani herdsmen and farmers' clashes and offences such as theft, kidnap, rape, and assault among a host of others are also major factors that stop development. All of these will cause uproar and destabilize the peace of the nation. In a nation where there is no peace, violence and hatred will reign and such a nation will not develop. To the chief of all challenges, the king of all problems and the emperor of all difficulties faced by a nation; 'Corruption and indiscipline'. It is important, to note that, the major problem that affects a government is corruption. On the other hand, indiscipline is present in the government and the citizens.

A nation that is full of corruption among the leaders and the followers will not develop; instead it will have fake development. In a society where everyone is not truthful and honest, where lawmakers are accused of budget padding, where ministers are accused of embezzlement, where presidents and governors are charged to court for misappropriation of funds, where civil servants are guilty of vices, where security agents are alleged to receive bribe, where trust worthy people are insincere in keeping promises, where politicians are not capable of fulfilling their electoral promises and where the corruption fighting agencies are found wanting. Such society will never experience growth because everything is abnormal.

All of these problems have their causes and the effects they pose either directly or indirectly. They are the hurdles a nation needs to cross in achieving national development.

Henry Ford once said and I quote "Do not find faults, find a remedy" end of quote. In ensuring a developed nation, we need to borrow a leaf from the reaction of the United States to the attack on the twin towers in New York City on September 11, 2001. The government and the citizens weathered the storm of the incident by identifying the cause of the problem, recognizing the lapses that occurred, organizing a revival to renew, knowing the steps to reduce the loss, following the guidelines to make a change, acting on the instinct to prevent further occurrence and maintaining the secured progress.

In short, every nation has problems and the challenges can be minimized to a minute degree if not resolved by following the steps outlined in the paragraph above.

Conclusively, the resolution to build a developed nation should be supported by all.

Together, let us fight and overcome the challenges we are facing; it's just for the future generation.

OKONKWO OKECHUKWU

NAME

HERITAGE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

SCHOOL

15 YEARS

AGE

NASARAWA

STATE

MALE

GENDER

SS2

CLASS

**FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUITY;
THE CHILDREN INTERVENTION IN THE
RENEWAL OF THE NATION**

The young people are the backbone of a society and hence they determine the future of any society. One thing about being young. Is that, a lot of people don't expect them to care about their community? They definitely don't think they will take the time to make it better, figuring they are too busy with school, friends and whatever. In fact, only about one in five children feels valued by adult and only about one in four think that adult see young people as valuable resources. But according to the Albert However the 31st president of the United States, I quote: children are the most valuable resources.

Let us first of all, know the meaning of freedom, justice and equity. From my enormous research, according to oxford English Dictionary. Freedom is the power or right to act, speak, and have access. Think freely, or being free. Justice on the other hand, is the behavior or treatment that is right or fair, the administration of law in a fair and reasonable way. While Equity means the quality of being fair and impartial and it's concerned with justice. Freedom, justice and Equity are now here to be found in the nation, people violate this right of individual, there are no liberty, and people seek for justice and Equity.

Freedom, Justice and Equity can only be achieved in a well-educated society, because education is the mother of intelligence, and intelligence, therefore, is the capacity of a mind to understand principles, truths, fact or meaning. In other words, to acquire knowledge and apply it in to

practice, if we go ahead to defined knowledge, it is all about knowing and understanding awareness of a particular fact, which lead to total comprehension. Having said all this, this, if our children and the youth can be well and properly educated, they will grow to know and put into practice justice, which will then lead to Equity and freedom.

Another is that, the children are the driver of any development trend and activities in society and major determinants of the extent of growth and development in any given society. They are actually very idealistic as they are taught right from childhood to value unchanging ideas such as Justice Fairness and Equality.

Again, for any country, or society to succeed, it needs educated, well informed and responsible leaders, for your information the best leaders are the young children. They will correct the mistakes and short coming of the previous leader and completely change the outlook of that particular society or country. They will do away with vices like corruption, self-centeredness, in justice and greed in leadership, so as the citizen realize development, freedom, gender equity, Justice and equal allocation of resources.

In conclusion, from all the illustrations, I have drawn above, one is not left in doubt as to the intensive value, and one can derive from the intervention of children in the renewal of the nation. What will be of a nation or society without children?

MUJAHYD AMEEN LILO

16 YEARS

MALE

NAME

AGE

GENDER

SUNSHINE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE

KANO

SS2

SCHOOL

STATE

CLASS

FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUITY; THE CHILDREN INTERVENTION IN THE RENEWAL OF THE NATION

Everyone is tired. Everyone is angry. The atmosphere is permeated with the air of disappointment, frustration and despair. The country has been grinding to a halt, and the citizens are in disarray. With every step forward, we seem to incur several steps backward. Every expected solution turns out to be a monumental problem in itself. Even the optimists are becoming disenchanted.

This unfortunate state of affairs can be blamed on a number of factors. Yet, instead of addressing these factors, all that we devote our time and energy to is heaping blames on one another. The older generation blames the younger: the former accusing the latter of laziness and wanting to reap where they did not sow. And the latter, in their turn, blaming the former for overstaying their usefulness and sticking to the old way of doing things.

In every situation, however, there is a choice. Things cannot be allowed to go on like this. There is a dire need for this country to have a direction and focus. To do so we must honestly look at that which we have missed in our journey as a nation. These missing fundamentals should then be instilled into the younger generation; the millennials that have the singular privilege of being born and bred, living and growing under democratic dispensation. They should, in truth be our, golden generation. It is Aristotle who posited that 'the society is individual writs large'. This he said after discussing ethics and embarking upon his discourse on political philosophy. He meant by that, so I learnt, that just like the individuals have to imbibe some ideals and values as their ethics at personal level, so does the society, the political community, need to have similar ideals and values that will be backbone of running its affairs.

To be honest, Nigeria is becoming valueless ; with sentiments instead of common sense being our guiding principles. We can cite the quota system, the zoning or rotation of political offices, catchment area and, arguably, even the federal character principle, as examples.

The challenge before us now, is to steer our younger ones away from these antithetical considerations. Through these young ones, we can create the 'Nigerian Identity' that

has been eluding us from the colonial period up to the present. Creating this identity will, no doubt, go a long way in making the country transcend being a 'mere geographical expression' and becoming an existential reality.

The decision to do what is right should not be mere words; for children are more likely to emulate what they see done than what they heard said. In such children we have a duty to invest the value of freedom, justice and equity, not just on paper but in practical terms.

Speaking of freedom, for example, it is necessary for us to ensure an atmosphere under which our younger generation are free from any sort of maltreatment bordering on discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, place of origin etc. We cannot institutionalize the indigene/settler dichotomy and expect our innocent children not to turn into brooding fellows nursing ill-feeling and resentment towards the favored other.

Everything we do must be geared towards guaranteeing, and making possible, the pursuit of happiness. And the keyword here is happiness as it is not used here as the opposite of sadness but as the realization of aspirations and goals. We must provide a conducive atmosphere under which every citizen will have ample opportunity to pursue their dreams, make use of their talents and harness their capability and potentials. 'Peace does not mean the absence of war but the presence of justice', so wrote an unknown writer. A society in which might is right can never have a healthy, peaceful and patriotic citizenry. Justice in all its ramifications is necessary for every society that aims at becoming civilized, and having patriotic citizens. There must be equal opportunities, equal access to resources and equal protection under law. Anything less than this is a prelude and a direct invitation to anarchy and chaos.

A society's tomorrow is discernible from the way it grooms, moulds and trains its today's children.

IFEANYICHUKWU K. LYONNET

NAME

DORITY INT'L SECONDARY SCHOOL

SCHOOL

15 YEARS

AGE

ABIA

STATE

FEMALE

GENDER

Ss1

CLASS

**FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUITY;
THE CHILDREN INTERVENTION IN THE
RENEWAL OF THE NATION**

How would you feel if a loved one were killed for a crime not committed? The masses would have their best option as "Revenge". But the ultimate question on their minds is "Is this fair?" The Nigerian prison has recorded a lot of imprisonment of the poor and powerless. All Nigerians round the globe have noticed the constant wear off of the Nigerian pillars, our strongest hold. An adage says, "children are the leaders of tomorrow" and we, the children of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, have our say to this devastating unresolvable — like situation to renew Nigeria, clean its mess and patch its holes. Freedom, equity and justice are our cement, water and gravel in the reconstruction and patching of our crockrel pillars, our strongest hold.

The bedrock of the renewal of Nigeria is tribal tolerance. Marginalization of the southerners is a common stock upheld by the Northerners. Most significant posts are occupied by northerners. How is ethnic equity being prevailed? Let peace coexist among Nigerians; Let the 'Igbos' have a warmly handshake of brotherly love with the 'Hausas'; Let us live to tolerate one another. Let cyclic leadership prevail. Everyone has a say in the development of Nigeria. Tolerance of opposing views and tribes should be regarded and upheld strictly.

Furthermore, corruption in Nigeria should not be fought by the Federal government only but by all citizens of Nigeria. I made an adage that says "Not one tooth can crunch a biscuit but many." Power has corrupted the federal government to the extent of using corruption to fight corruption even when power are shared. Basically, fighting corruption was the duty of the government, but socially, it is the duty of all in Nigeria. We were insulted just last two years by the former prime minister of England, David Cameron, as a fantastically corrupt country.

Meanwhile, we can be brought out of shame and darkness by knowing what is wrong and doing what is right. The so-called leaders that usually advise us as children on the way forward for the nation are the core violators of the advice. I heard that Nigeria is a mistake of history, but the correction of a mistake is divine. The streets are weeping, the economy is dying while the pockets of our leaders are partying. The smile on the

faces of our leaders are partying. The smile on the faces of our leaders are growing bigger to create smacks of under development and death of infrastructures in our nation. What is the way forward?

The renewal of Nigeria can be solemnly upheld by the removal of immunity clause on a leader in seat. Impeachment of a leader through favorable can be easily resolved by the leaders by bribing of the senator, but clipping of the wings of the eagle can be a great justice for his blatant and unjust actions. Immunity clause are the powers and restriction given to a leader on a significant seat that prevents him from imprisonment. Using a knife to break a coconut is a tasking technique but breaking it on the ground is reliable. Functionally, the government is poor; socially, the government is blasé; fundamentally, the government is a debris; And generally, Nigeria is dying. The bedlam of injustice, the centripetal court of bondage and the courthouse of inequity. "these are the terms used in describing the Ntaional Assembly, Abuja. I can feel the tears of the blind folded mother of justice and equity. She weeps for our leaders' unjust jurisdiction. Ergo, I will not give an apologia to the governmental activities. I will shake my head and cross my arms if democracy dies in nation, my residence, my home. On behalf of the children of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I stand firmly to accent to my opinions saying, "Let freedom, equity and justice prevail; they are our last hope".

SAMUEL ONYINYECHI GOODNESS U

15 YEARS

MALE

NAME

AGE

GENDER

WEST END MIXED SCHOOL

DELTA

Ss3

SCHOOL

STATE

CLASS

FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUITY; THE CHILDREN INTERVENTION IN THE RENEWAL OF THE NATION

As a child, I remembered the first time my teacher asked me to stand erect and to place my hands in my chest to say the pledge with other students of different age-brackets. I was three or more. Being in school for the first time was not the issue, but what I was told to do. Throughout that day, I sensed that I had made a promise that is binding as long as I remain a Nigerian child. I did not understand it all, but I reasoned that the fact that I had been made to be silent showed that it is something to be respected and honored. Years came and gone and I kept reciting it ten times every school week the way a Muslim faithful recites a favorite passage in the Koran. Now as a teenager with full sense and limited responsibility, I have given thought to what the national pledge means to all of us.

The national pledge means to me a strong feeling of love, respect and duty towards Nigeria, my country. To me the national pledge was a gift of freedom, a blanket of safety, support and encouragement to continue despite all odds. It means a prayer for the success of Nigeria and her future generation; a good wish and will for Nigeria to learn and succeed as a nation. We stand in full silence at the time national pledge is said and that show how well we care for the labors of our past heroes. It is a tribute, a commitment, a vow, a memorial and a thank you to all that made this country great. When we as children sustain the legacy of the past, meditate and reflect on the effort that gave rise to what Nigeria is today, we will be very proud of what the future will bring. From that age, many young Nigerians starts taking responsibility for intervention in the renewal of our great nation. It is burning in us the heart of the young. We did not do anything to deserve injustice, inequality that exists presently. You did not wrong us for having us come to the earth. But of what use is it to us if you bring us to this earth and see us suffer. I see a country where everyone, even the minor accept responsibility for change, a country that accept certain obligations to one another and to future generations, so that the freedom which so many Nigerian's have fought for and died for come with responsibilities as well as rights, and among those are love and charity and duty and patriotism. I dream a Nigeria where we all said sorry for the past and pledge to be patriots for ourselves. That is intervention.

I find this also good about Nigeria. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, atheists and non-believers. We share common boundary despite that language and cultures differ. We are shaped by many languages and cultures, which is the fabrics of every society, drawn from every religion, tribes and tongues; and we have tasted many coups, failures of the pasts, hatred and injustices and the bitter swirl of civil war and segregation, and emerged from that dark chapter stronger and more united, we cannot help but believe that the old hatreds has passed; that the lines of tribe dissolved that now we can intermarry and associate freely and Nigeria is becoming one thing, something, one people and one mind.

There must be a step forward. A time for change will be here and is here. We have been able to endure for a hundred and five years after amalgamation, fifty-nine years after independence and forty-nine years after civil war, yet we remain indivisible. Many brave hearts authored these journey and destiny. Greater numbers of them are no more. Such heart they developed is the heart behind my knowing and believing that be it ever humble that I must honor their course and build on what they left undone. We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service; a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves — sacrifice.

I want to conclude in prostration, in appreciation for knowing that I have just one Nigeria to call my own and no other. We have new challenges to meet and that is a fact that must be understood. From here in the Southeast where I help my parents raise the family income to the Federal capital territory where our lawmakers and executive president lives, we must have to work and act on the values that binds us as a nation. Those values upon which our success depends are always there to speak for itself – honesty and hard work, courage and fair play, tolerance and curiosity, loyalty and patriotism. They have stood the taste of time. These things are true. They have been the quiet force of progress throughout every generation that lived. What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility – a recognition, on the part of every Nigerian, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task. This is the price and the promise of citizenship, of patriotism.

These common sense about patriotism defines our intervention using the tools of justice for the downtrodden. Freedom to all. Equity – the quality of being fair and impartial. We can't all be Muslims, we can't all be Christians, and we can't all be Igbo's, Hausa's or Yoruba's. We are in this diversity train because fate said so and on this we must build. We learn to be good to those around us because we trust they are good and this common destiny which held us together has remained the dream that time will unveil. We just need a change. That is a dream. We must not close our eyes to dream. We can still stand, think, meditate and visualize what we will be after now. I dream and see a Nigeria that learned respect for other people's view, a Nigeria that takes responsibility for her citizens, a Nigeria that the poor and educated cares, think and pitch tent with the poor and illiterates and help them. That is the intervention. We will have a free Nigeria. A just Nigeria and an equal Nigeria.

SOLADOYE TOLUWANIMI

14 YEARS

FEMALE

NAME

AGE

GENDER

THE VALE COLLEGE, IBADAN

OYO

Ss2

SCHOOL

STATE

CLASS

**FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUITY;
THE CHILDREN INTERVENTION IN THE
RENEWAL OF THE NATION**

Freedom, Justice and Equity. That seems to be the anthem nowadays. Everyone seems to want to promote the cause through campaigns, rallies, televised broadcast, speeches all preaching the same old story. The question is what action has the government taken to implement the cause?

Children have a role to play in renewal of the nation because they are the leaders of tomorrow. The nation is their legacy and if they don't work on making it better, who will? It is the duty of children to do everything in their power to save the nation from its current path of destruction. For if the nation is destroyed, it is the children who will govern the ashes of a nation destroyed by crimes that they had no part in. is it fair? No. Life rarely is. The time for action is now.

An intervention can be defined as intentionally preventing a situation from getting worse.

Throughout history, children have been known to stand up for what is right. Take Malala for example, she was almost killed for standing up for what she believed in. Yet she didn't stop fighting. She used her voice to bring education to children in her hometown. To most people Malala is an inspiration that anything is possible but first and foremost she was a child. Her story is an example of how far children are willing to go to fight for what they believe is right. Children always fight back.

One of a child's most enviable traits is the ability to trust so blindly and completely. A trait lacking in most adults. To move any nation forward, the people in charge must be able to trust each others and the populace. Children are usually regards as naïve because of their lack of experience and while that may be true in most cases like everything in life they are always exceptions. Children know that without trust nothing can be accomplished. That is why in their intervention they believe that everyone must learn to trust both in themselves and in the government.

Alost everyone is on social media nowadays especially children, but not all use it for fun and games. They also use it to fight against vices in the society such as gender discrimination, abuse against women and children, bullying and so much more. The internet is their territory and they are using it to their advantage. They can accomplish in one hour what it will take an adult months to complete. They don't do things halfway and their effort is showing. One important thing to note is that in this century, never underestimate a child.

Children bring in a different viewpoint on certain situations. They are able to see things adults cannot see and maybe all the nation needs is a different point of view. Their perspective is untainted and free from the influence of external factors. They are pure, unblemished in a sense. That kind of view on life will really change the way the nation works and yes, it might be naïve in a way but if the adults are willing to cooperate with the children that might just end up being the nation's saving grace.

Children can help, children have helped, and children are helping. Not just in this nation, all over the world. Children are getting involved in the revamping of their nations. Children need to be heard. It is vital that their input to the nation and he world is acknowledged. Otherwise, we should be asking ourselves do we want to live in the past or move into the future.

IBRAHIM MAINA SALEH

NAME

GOMBE HIGH SCHOOL

SCHOOL

15 YEARS

AGE

GOMBE

STATE

MALE

GENDER

Ss1

CLASS

FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND EQUITY; THE CHILDREN INTERVENTION IN THE RENEWAL OF THE NATION

Unlike popular definition, “freedom” does not only revolve around being free from slavery or imprisonment. The word has a wider context of meaning. Broadly speaking, “freedom” means being free from insecurities, injustices and inequities. As defined by Friedrich Nietzsche, “Freedom is the will to be responsible to ourselves”. On the other hand, while “justice” is fairness in protection of right and punishment of wrong, “equity” is the act of treating everyone equally without partiality.

Are people truly free in this society of ours? Does justice prevail equally among the Nigerian masses and her leaders? I would say, probably not. The prevalence of injustice and inequity in our society have brought backwardness to our nation, and have made us continue to walk in the dark, not knowing the paths that lead to the attainment of our desired levels of development.

The issues in our society, which range from political violence, religious crises, terrorism, tribal conflicts, and more, have brought about segregation, insecurities and fear of one another because of lack of trust amongst the people. There is nothing as equity in this country of ours where the gap between the poor and the rich is undeniably too wide. Take for example: the minimum wage of a Nigerian labourer who works off his vigor is N18, 000; while politicians — and indeed, many, who are in higher level of service — who sit in their offices and under the comfort of the air conditioner receive multiple amounts than those who suffer beneath the scorching sun. This is indeed what Plato, in his Republic, stresses when he wrote about the injustice between “the cake and the eaters”. The gap between the poor and the rich is wide enough and nothing can be done to collapse this gap unless there is, first, a great understanding of the ideal dynamics of a state.

Other issues that have stabbed true freedom, justice and equity in Nigeria are favouritism and God-fatherism. In many of our institutions today, be it academic, private

or public sector, one must have 'higher influences' before he/she gets admitted into a system or offered a job. On a second thought, would there be anything like justice when thousands of people who commit crimes go untouched; where the rapist walks freely and shamelessly while the victim is left to grieve over her fate?

For the future of our nation, children’s intervention becomes necessary to prepare the future. As Malcolm X says, “education is our passport to the future for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today”. Besides their hopes for the future, it is important to invest in their education, to set them ready for quality education that will make the future of our nation bright. Without investing in their education they will not have any hope and dream for the nation.

Investing in their talents also helps. Many children have talents in them and the government has to wake up invest in them. Children have an insight for innovation. Many children create new things from old, existing ones. Some other children are talented in writing. Government should invest in those children if truly there is a need for a new generation of honest writers who are ready to speak through their pens for a better state. Helping children develop skills they love at an early stage would help them understand what they represent. When their demands are identified, there should be opportunities or platforms for them to express themselves. This might be through the provision of important books and materials. This would, in turn, equip them with capacities that can make them do the necessary things that will help the nation develop; for the greater the realization of the dreams of children, the greater the hope for a new nation.

In conclusion, children must be taught the essentiality of being equality, the significance of being just, and the importance of respecting the freedom of others. When they are guided by these principles, then the hope of the renewal would burn brighter and brighter.



programmes **section**



Programme Outlines In Brief

CONCEPT

WSICE for 2020 will be VIRTUAL — staged for three days — July 12–14 on line. There are four main events:

- Essay Writing competition
- Advocacy conference
- Exhibition
- 'Meet and Greet' plus Prize Presentation session.

A. ESSAY COMPETITION:

Theme: I AM because YOU ARE — inspired by the UBUNTU.

i). Participations:

It was designed for two Age groups:

- 12–17 — children/students – 350 – 400 words
- 17–22 – Youths – 800–1000 words

Entries were called from 5 zones – with each zone represented by a language type

- Anglophone -- English
- Francophone -- French
- Sinophone -- Mandarin
- Hispanophone -- Spanish
- Portuguese -- Portuguese

The reasoning behind this, is to take

advantage of technology to make the Event global and inclusive with eyes on encouraging qualitative entries.

Entries opened June 5 and closed 26th.

ii). Prizes:

Junior Category

- Global Winner -- \$ 600
 - Zonal Winner -- \$500
 - Zonal Runner-up -- \$300
- Senior Category
- Global Winner -- \$1000
 - Zonal Winner -- \$300
 - Zonal Runner-up -- \$200

B. ADVOCACY:

This is curated in TWO sessions spanning TWO days: July 13 & 14

FIRST SESSION — JULY 12

Theme: I AM because YOU ARE

Lead paper will be delivered by Prof. Lilly Cheng: She is a professor in the School of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences and Executive Director of Chinese Cultural Centre

at San Diego State University, She is also the Managing Director of the Confucius Institute at SDSU.

A supporting paper will be delivered by Michael Li: He is the President of Beijing Shenmo Education Group, which he founded in 1998, with its headquarter in Beijing, China. Shenmo is guided by the principles of equity, respect, trust, gratitude, and care.

There will also be Speakers from various regions, mostly responding to Prof Lilly's paper.

We have lined up the following speakers:

i. VERNON SHABAKA THOMPSON

(Trinidad & Tobago)

Founder/Creative Producer with De CORE UK with extensive experience in carnival, event management and production, working over three decades in Canada, Trinidad, Britain and Africa.

ii. BUNMI OYINSAN (PhD) —

(Nigeria/Canada)

Writer, TV Producer, Women

Empowerment Advocate; Co-founder at Lekki Peninsula College (LPC)/Lekki Peninsula Affordable Schools (LPAS)

iii. LEOLYN JACKSON, PhD (South Africa)
Director, Centre for Global Engagement, Central University of technology, Free State; member National Directors Forum of the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA).

iv. CRISTIAN R. AQUINO-STERLING, PhD (Spain)
Researcher with Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies, University of Pennsylvania; Assistant Editor of the Journal of Global Education and Research.

SECOND SESSION — JULY 13
Theme: Reimagining our world post Covid-19

Lead paper is by Prof Segun Ojewuyi, head of directing at the

Southern Illinois University, SIU, Carbondale, Illinois, USA. He has also served as the President of the College of Liberal Arts Council, Chair of the University Fine Arts Activities Board and President of the University Faculty Senate at SIU. Prof Ojewuyi's paper will be followed by 5 respondents from diverse backgrounds each speaking for 10 minutes.

We have lined up the following speakers:

i. JOSEPH A. BROWN, SJ, PhD (USA) (Keynote)
Roma Catholic Priest and Professor in the Department of Africana Studies at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

ii. NATHAN KIWERE (Uganda)
Journalist, author and filmmaker; Chairman of the East African Documentary Network (EADN); Exco Member, Arterial Network; and Publisher of Sisi Magazine

iii. NIDIDI NWANERI, Ph.D (Nigeria)
Public policy, social and

international development consultant; Executive Board member, International Development Ethics Association (IDEA).

iv. DAVES GUZHA (Zimbabwe)
Actor, director, producer, administrator and social justice activist; founder Rooftop Promotions; Chairman, Pan-African Cultural Congress Bureau 5, a unit of the African Union.

v. LUCILE HUGUET
Journalist with the French public TV channel: Franceinfo.

vi. VÉRONIQUE MAISIER, PhD (France)
Teaches French language, conversation and phonetics, as well as French and Francophone literatures and cultures at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, USA.

C. EXHIBITION

As in previous editions, WE have an exhibition event on the theme **TIMELESS MEMORIES: The Humanity**

of WS'', curated by Mr. Oludamola Adebowale of ASIRI magazine. The virtual exhibition -- to be hosted on the project's website: www.wolesoyinkainternationalcultureexchange.com for two weeks -- will feature fresh illustrative works and an E-Art book that will be available for download.

D. PRIZE PRESENTATION AND MEET & GREET:

Day 3: July 14
As is customary, the participants Meet and Greet session with the Nobel laureate will take place on July 14. In keeping with the times, the prize presentation and mentoring session will be online and virtual. Prof Soyinka will present the prizes and give a word of encouragement to the youths on this year's theme 'I AM because YOU ARE.'

The date is 14th and the time of this session will be communicated in good time. Technical backup arrangements will be provided at Prof. Soyinka's location to ensure seamless hook up to the virtual platform.





advocacy



Advocacy Speakers

FIRST SESSION

JULY 12

PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS AND OUR COMMON HUMANITY



Dr. Li-Rong Lilly Cheng
China/USA

KEYNOTE

A professor in the School of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences and Executive Director of Chinese Cultural Centre at San Diego State University, Dr. Cheng is the Managing Director of the Confucius Institute at SDSU. She served as a member of the board of trustees of the Campanile Foundation of San Diego State University. She is the

past chair of the Multicultural Issues Board for the American Speech, Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) and served as chair of Education Committee for the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics (IALP). In the last two decades, she has given lectures in Thailand, Singapore, Myanmar, Laos, Kumpuchea, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Australia, Hong Kong and Macao, India, Japan, Vietnam and Sri Lanka, and is a frequent keynote speaker on the topic of speech, language pathology, culture, cross-cultural

understanding, ASD and bilingual language learning/teaching. She is the recipient of the 1997 ASHA Award for special contributions to Multicultural Affairs and the recipient of the 2002 Diversity Award from the California Speech & Hearing Association. She is on the editorial board of several major professional journals. She has numerous professional publications and has lectured all over the world. <https://www.kpbs.org/news/2016/may/16/asian-pacific-heritage-month-lilly-cheng/>



Michael Li
China

An educator specialising in the teaching of the Chinese national treasure, the Abacus, he is the President of Beijing Shenmo Education Group, which he founded in 1998, with headquarter in Beijing, China. Shenmo is guided by the following principles: equity, respect, trust, gratitude, care and encouragement. Shenmo's mission is to improve the quality of life of millions of young

people all over the world. Currently, Shenmo is one of the most influential education groups in China with schools in more than 110 countries and areas all over the world. Under the auspices of Shenmo, there are 70,000 teachers. Graduate of Peking University with a Master's degree in business management, Michael Li also serves as an adjunct lecturer for the MBA program of the Guang Hua school of Management of Beijing University. He is a member of a number of societies focusing on entrepreneurship and charity.

Advocacy Speakers



CRISTIAN R. AQUINO-STERLING, PhD
(Spain)

He holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum & Instruction (Arizona State University), he has taught at various public and private schools in New York City, at Fordham University (his *Alma Mater*), and at the Lauder Institute of Management and International Studies (University of Pennsylvania). He is currently pursuing two lines of research. The first examines 21st century innovations in (bilingual) teacher education theory, curriculum. The second employs social theory and discourse analytic methods to understand the logics of "ideology critique" in advocacy and critical discourses of education emerging as resistance to neoliberal, hyper-capitalist, and post-truth dynamics. He is recipient of the 2016 Early Career Reviewer Award of the *Bilingual Research Journal* (National Association of Bilingual Education) and currently serves as Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Global Education and Research*.



Shabaka Thompson
(Trinidad & Tobago)

A Cultural Leader with experience in carnival, event management and production, working over three decades in Canada, Trinidad, Britain and Africa. Shabaka is Executive Director with Zmirage UK; founder, creative producer with De CORE UK Ltd. As Director of London's leading African combine arts centre, the Yaa Asantewaa Arts and Community Centre, Shabaka initiated and realised a major capital building project call the Carnival Village that now contributes to the development and sustenance of African art, especially Carnival Arts and all its related industries of which he was the initial Chief Executive (2007 — 2012). For the past decade, Shabaka has worked extensively throughout Africa promoting Carnival Arts within the continent.



Bunmi Oyinsan (PhD)
Nigeria/Canada

Highly experienced in the non-profit sector where she worked with women and young people in Nigeria, she coordinated, designed and executed various projects. She also worked with women and youths who had suffered domestic violence by finding them safe havens, and providing support towards economic independence. She is a co-founder of Lekki Peninsula College and Lekki Peninsula Affordable Schools which provide quality affordable education at the secondary, elementary and nursery levels in Nigeria. She has published three novels — 'Silhouette' (1991), 'Halima' (2000) and 'Three Women' (2006), one book for young people — 'Fabulous Four' (2000), several short stories in anthologies and literary journals, edited a collection of short stories for the Association of Nigerian Authors — 'Trembling Leaves' (1998), written stage plays, radio plays, written and produced television

dramas and serials including, 'Owuro Lojo' (1995), 'Golden Cage' (1996), 'Aditulaye' (2003) and 'We the People' (2002). I am on the board of TelAfric Inc which hold 6 CRTC broadcast licenses and uses traditional and New Media platforms to advocate for representational equity.

Advocacy Speakers

SECOND SESSION

JULY 13

Reimagining our Humanity post- pandemic



Véronique Maisier, PhD
France

She teaches French language, conversation and phonetics, as well as French and Francophone literatures and cultures at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Her teaching also includes courses on French



Joseph A. Brown, SJ, PhD
USA

KEYNOTE

A native of East St. Louis, he is a Professor in the Department of Africana Studies at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, where he has taught since 1997. An ordained Roman Catholic priest, he has degrees from St. Louis University (BA); Johns Hopkins University (MA); and Yale University (MA, PhD). His research interests are in literature, religion,

aesthetics and cultural history. Some of his writings include, *A Retreat with Thea Bowman* and *Bede Abram: Leaning on the Lord*; *To Stand on the Rock: Meditations on Black Catholic Identity*; *Sweet, Sweet Spirit: Prayer Services in the Black Catholic Tradition* (with the assistance of Bishop Fernand J. Cheri, III, OFM/2006); and *The Sun Whispers, Wait: New and Collected Poems* (2009). Since 2014, he has served as the Chair of the East St. Louis 1917 Centennial Commission & Cultural Initiative. He also publishes the blog, "The Sankofa Muse." <http://sankofamuse.blogspot.com/>

literature in translation, such as *Masterpieces of French Literature*, and *Women in French and Francophone Literatures*. Earning her PhD in 20th century French Literature from the Sorbonne University in Paris, France; Dr. Maisier's research interests, of late, have focused on Francophone and Anglophone Caribbean literatures, and more specifically on the presence of violence in Caribbean narratives. She has published book chapters and articles on Caribbean literature, and on the French Caribbean authors Gisèle Pineau and Patrick Chamoiseau in *Nouvelles Études Francophones*, *Journal of West Indian Literature*, and *French Literature Studies*. Her monograph *Violence in Caribbean Literature: Stories of Stones and Blood* was published in 2015 in the Lexington Books' series *After the Empire: the Francophone World and Postcolonial France*. <https://cola.siu.edu/languages/faculty-staff/current-faculty/maisier.php>



Nathan Kiwere
Uganda

Graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Industrial and Fine Arts in 2002 from Makerere University, Kampala Uganda. His fascination with film came when he sought to blend the visual arts and audiovisual media with several

experiments over the years. However, his film endowment came to the fore when he joined film exhibition, working as program manager and later as director of Amakula Kampala International Film Festival, Uganda's oldest and premier social event until 2012. He wrote and directed his first short film titled *Missing in Berlin* (2013), which was shot mainly in the Berlin metro and the snow-laden boulevards. His interests range from documentary films to features and he has a series of international co-productions in development. He studied film festival and event management from the Deutsche Velle Akademie in Berlin and later enrolled for film production at the One Fine Day Film Workshop in Nairobi. Nathan is a founding director of Sword Entertainment Inc./Coronation Pictures, a content development and distribution company based in Kampala, Uganda. Nathan is also the Chairman of the East African Documentary Network (EADN). <http://uganda.spla.pro/en/file.pers.on.nathan-kiwere-nate.37169.html>

Advocacy Speakers



Daves Guzha

Actor, director, producer, administrator and social justice activist, Guzha has starred in more than 20 plays and 15 films in addition to directing and producing numerous plays, films and TV series, hence his iconic stature in the Zimbabwean cultural industries. Founding artistic Director of Rooftop Promotions based in Harare, Guzha, in a career spanning over 35 years, has managed to create a unique African-centered system of aesthetically varied acting styles that also incorporate elements of activism and civic education and civic dialogue. This style often culminates in a dialogue-based event, designed to address political and social justice issues through

typical traditional, satirical and often indirect name and shame strategies. He constantly endures censorship, arrest and intimidation from the nationalist regime due to his anti-establishment reputation as an actor, and social activist. He produced and played the lead role of President (a dictator in a fictitious African country) in "Super Patriot and Morons" (2007) which became the first play to get an official ban from the censorship Board in post-independence Zimbabwe. In March 2011, his production, "Rituals" made landmark historical victory when it had a full trial charged with Criminal nuisance. It won against the state. He was continental chairman of

Arterial Network, the pan-African network of cultural actors, entrepreneurs and artists organization on the continent. He served as the Regional Coordinating Director and board member of the Artists Trust of Southern Africa (ARTSA) from 2009 to 2011; and in 2018, he was appointed board member of the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe. In 2018 again, he was appointed the Chairman of the Pan-African Cultural Congress Bureau 5, a unit of the African Union. He also sits on the board of the African Culture Fund as a member. <http://www.powerofculture.nl/en/current/2009/may/daves-guzha.html>



Ndidi Nwaneri, Ph.D
Nigeria

Holder of a B.Sc. in Economics (Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, 1998), an M.A. in Public Policy (The George Washington University, Washington D.C.) and a Ph.D. in Social and Political Philosophy (Loyola university Chicago), Dr. Nwaneri is a public policy, social and international development consultant. She sits on the executive board of the International Development Ethics Association (IDEA). She has worked and studied in the Americas, Europe and Africa; and has conducted research and taught courses in public policy, ethics, philosophy and the person, international development, as well as business and military ethics at the university level. Her current research interest includes the

relationship between global existential threats (like pandemics) and global justice and equity. Her words, "Whether at the individual, social or global level, I consider all forms of injustice as crises that should be addressed urgently. I also believe that the greatest tool persons have to combat injustice is their ability to think. Thus, my strongest passions are intellectual pursuits and social justice." www.ndidinwaneri.com

Advocacy Speakers



Lucile Huguet

A journalist with the French public TV channel: Franceinfo, she did a Master's Degree at the University of Caen, in English Literature and, a Master of Journalism in the France's oldest school of Journalism ESJ Paris. She was part of the Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange in 2014.



Leolyn Jackson, PhD
South Africa

He has been in the higher education sector for more than 30 years as a Senior Lecturer, Head of Student Enrolment and Director of the Southern African-Nordic Centre (SANORD). He was also the Director of the International Relations Office (IRO) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Leolyn served as a member of the UWC Executive Management Committee, a Senator, and chaired the Senate International Relations Committee. During his tenure he also helped facilitated the successful run of the musical "Mama Africa: The Musical" as one of the Executive Producers. He is currently employed as the Director: Centre for Global Engagement at the Central University of technology, Free State and is a Senator, a Senate Executive member, and a member of Senate sub-committees (University Internationalisation Committee, University Teaching & Learning Committee). In addition, his office

also manages various EU and other Global Funding Agency projects. He serves on the national Directors Forum of the International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) and is the Immediate Past President of IEASA (2017–2018). Leolyn is also a member of various global networks and organisations such as the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), the African Network for Internationalisation of Education (ANIE), the Asia Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE), the European Association for International Education (EAIE), and NAFSA: Association of International Educators. His research interest focuses also on Comprehensive Internationalisation of Higher Education.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/leolyn-jackson-6395ab10/?originalSubdomain=za>



perform- ances & films



Films



THE WHITE HANDKERCHIEF

(short)
(17mins; 1998; dir. Tunde Kelani;
Mainframe Productions)
Language: English/Yoruba (with English
Subtitle)

Synopsis: Agbede village is expecting a new bride by nightfall and the people are in festive mood. Odejimi is the groom, AWERO, the bride. Odejimi's parents have made lavish preparations for the ceremony. Soon, the new bride is now in the bridal bedroom with her new husband while the whole village is waiting for the result of the virginity test. Odejimi holds a white handkerchief expected to be stained by Awero's virginity blood. There is expectant tension. But there is no blood. Odejimi feels betrayed and disgraced. The honour of his great

lineage has suffered an affront. The whole village is stunned by Awero's failure and the warriors of Agbede village start preparing for war with their neighbours for sending them a 'broken pot'.

Director: TUNDE KELANI

Having been introduced to Yoruba literature from an early stage in his life, Tunde was influenced by the travelling theatre tradition championed by the likes of Hubert Ogunde, Kola Ogunmola, Duro Ladipo and others. He got interested in photography from primary school. In the 1970s, he worked as a BBC TV and Reuters correspondent, and in Nigerian TV. After training at the London Film School, he returned to Nigeria and co-produced his first film with Adebayo Faleti — The Dilemma of Rev. Father Michael (Idaamu Paadi Minkailu). His other cinematic works include Ti Oluwa Ni ile, Ayo ni Mofe, Saworoide, Arugba, Thunderbolt, Maami, Campus Queen and lately Sidi Ilujinle. On the choices he has had to make as a trailblazer filmmaker, he said in a 2003 interview: "I'm just a filmmaker; a storyteller telling it the African way... all along, we had left other people to tell our stories; doing it ourselves may generate some kind of interest." He manages Mainframe Film & Television Productions aka Opomulero, renowned for its promotion and preservation of Yoruba culture and heritage.



A STORY YAA KNOWS

(35mins; Prod.by Yaa Carnival Group/ De
CORE; 2005
Screening: Tues. July 14; 1.25pm

Synopsis: A Story Yaa Knows is the first chapter of a trilogy commemorating the Centenary of the abolition of the slave trade. It addresses the presence of African people in Britain from the 15th—19th Century and was conceptualised through collective inspiration and discussions resulting in an authentic historical portrayal. The 2005 Notting Hill Carnival entry by the Yaa Asantewaa Carnival Group, the film documents the process in the mas camp culminating in the production at the Costume Splash and on the road. A Story Yaa Knows showcases Yaa's unique approach to the development, creativity and



diversity in Carnival Arts at the Centre. An approach that engendered knowledge, skills, cultural awareness empowerment and comradery, it captures the demographics and community spirit around the Carnival programme, characterised by communal endeavours and collective responsibility -- the essence of Yaa's ethos.

Producers: De CORE, a collective of creatives comprising of the 'core' artisans of the Yaa Carnival Group, who for over the years have provided consistent services to other entities in the areas of costume design and construction, event management, capacity building and training. As creative entrepreneurs. The group has championed Carnival Arts nationally and internationally and acknowledges the astute commitment of the range of artists, personnel and volunteers, including young people engaged in the film.



AB'OBAKU

(25mins; dir. Niji Akanni; Prod. DvWorx; 2010)

Screening: Tues. July 14, 2.25pm

Synopsis: In early twentieth century Yoruba kingdom, Aremu and Adenike are forbidden lovers with an imminently fatal future. Aremu is an Ab'obaku – a commitment of great honour and of an unusual demand: he is one of 5 courtiers in the palace who must be buried alive upon the King's death, to escort the King in his journey to the afterlife. Adenike is a Princess. Her father the King is gravely ill and looks ready for that journey to the afterlife. Adenike will by implication lose her father and her lover should the King die. Their uncertain future is further complicated when she discovers she is pregnant with Aremu's child. Adenike and Aremu must make the biggest decision of their lives: to save their future together by escaping or live up to Aremu's commitment as an Ab'obaku and watch Adenike kill herself, as she threatens, to join him and her father in the afterlife. For love or honour? The lovers confront a decision that would change not only their lives but their ancient traditions forever. Ab'obaku won the Most Outstanding Short Film at the

Zuma Film Festival held in 2010 and Best Costume at the 6th Africa Movie Academy Awards held on April 10, 2010 in Yenagosa, Bayelsa State.

Director: NIJI AKANNI: Dramatist, theatre and film director-producer, Akanni has written and directed numerous productions on stage and screen, including Soyinka's The Lion and the Jewel, one of Nigeria's official three theatrical presentations at the 2012 Cultural Olympiad in London. In 2008, he directed Ab'obaku, a short film in Super-16mm gauge, produced by Femi Odugbemi on the MNET's New Directions project. Ab'obaku won several awards, including the Most Outstanding Short Film award at the 2010 ZUMA Film Festival in Abuja, Nigeria; Best Costume at the 6th African Movie Academy Awards (AMAA) held April 2010 in Yenagosa, Bayelsa State. The film was also judged Best Short Film at the 2010 TERRACOTA Awards in Lagos, Nigeria. In 2010, he wrote and directed Aramotu, which won the Best Nigerian Film and Best Costume awards at the 2011 AMAA, as well as Best Feature Film plaque at the 2012 Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF) and was screened at various film festivals across the world. He wrote and directed Heroes and Zeros, released in 2012 and premiered in the UK on March 15, 2013 at Odeon Cinema. The film won the Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Editing awards at the 2013 AMAA and was screened at the 2013 FESPACO in Ouagadougou. Akanni received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Dramatic Arts from Obafemi Awolowo University and a Master's degree in Film Studies from the University of Ibadan as well as a professional master's degree (MFA) in Screenplay Writing and Film Directing from the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune.



ORIKI

(25mins; dir. Femi Odugbemi; Prod. DvWVOX)
Screening: Tues: July 14; 7.32pm

Synopsis: "Oriki" is the oral Yoruba poetry of chanted in salute of history and heritage often reaching back hundreds of years. Amongst Yoruba families, a name communicates the rich, colorful and vibrant heritage and history of families. It also informs their hopes and aspirations for the newborn. Globalization trends have led to the blurring of borderlines, both geographically and culturally. And as more people adopt western ways of thinking and understanding, the threat of extinction becomes more glaring, more imminent, more inevitable. Questions arise: are we losing our sense of self? Is there a chance for us to recover this heritage? Is progress in the age of globalization and the preservation of our cultures and historical heritage incompatible aspirations? Excerpted from <https://www.cultureunplugged.com/documentary/watch-online/filmmedia/play/4620/Oriki-Whats-in-a-Name-/VfhjOVBRT0rVg==>

Director: FEMI ODUGBEMI
Storyteller and content creator,

Odugbemi has scripted, directed and produced many documentaries, short films and drama. He was invited in 2018 to the Oscar jury as one of Nigeria's first Voting Members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. He was founding Producer of TINSEL, a soap opera that began airing in August 2008 is adjudged the longest running and most successful series on the Nigerian screen. He has also produced the famous TV series, BATTLEGROUNDS, which drew massive viewership across the continent with over 400 episodes. His current TV series is BRETHREN, also airing across the continent. Femi's other notable works include: 'Bar Beach Blues' (2004), 'Oui Voodoo' (2005), 'Mama Put' (2005), 'Metamorphosis' (2006), 'Maroko' (Feature Film) (2006), 'Oriki' (2008), 'Bariga Boy' (2009), 'And the Chain was Not' (2010), Abobaku — 2010; FAGUNWA: Literature, Language and Literalism' (2013), Gidi Blues (Feature Film), (2016), Makoko, Futures Afloat', (2016), The Eve (Feature Film), 2017; 4th Estate (Feature Film), 2018; Missing Pages (2018), Code Wilo (Feature Film) — 2019. He studied film and television production at the Montana State University, Bozeman Montana, USA (1979-1984). In March 2010, he co-founded the IREPRESENT International Documentary Film Festival Lagos which has pursued with vigour its theme of "Africa in self-conversation" by championing films and stories from Africa, about Africa and by Africans.

Drama



THE STRONG BREED

(Director's Note- Wole Soyinka's The Strong Breed)

It tells the story of a young man, Eman, who fled a family tradition of symbolic sacrifice to an unnamed village with a similar tradition of sacrificing a carrier annually as a way of purifying the land of previous year's evil, for reason of approaching the new year with a sense of purification and rejuvenation. Eventually recognising that it is better to choose his destiny rather than live it, Eman undertakes the task of substituting himself with the apparent carrier, Ifada. A prevailing theme in the play is choice, cynicism and hypocrisy. While Eman struggled between his individual will to live and his destiny as a

carrier we see the cynical and hypocritical nature of the community and how ideologies are readily manipulated at whim. These hypocrisies still prevail in the society today. Like Eman, many of us are victims to the twisted, self-obsessed ideologies we consume and adopt and we are manipulated by the people who run the society because they do so in a way that makes us believe we have a choice. Due to the pandemic, I am adopting the virtual space for this theatre production with the intention of preserving the live experience

- Kesiena C. Obue, director

Prod: KESSAVIER VANILLE PRODUCTIONS:

An arts, culture and entertainment company in Lagos, its traditional business model is to promote African arts, culture and entertainment through film, television and stage productions. "We seek to shape our own narrative and tell our own story, through our own eyes and in our own voice. We hope to foster and correct the hitherto poor reception and misinterpretation of Africa on the global stage and become a catalyst for global conversation, reception and appreciation of the diversity and richness of African arts and culture," stated founder/director of the outfit, Kesiena C. Obue.

10PP (TEN PAGE PRODUCTIONS)

Established by Aduke Gomez and Ladi Dawodu to provide a virtual theatre space where new and emerging writers can have the world listen to their voices, 10PP is determined to be at the forefront of the production of online

theatre and believes that in spite of the current constraints, theatre must continue to fulfill its role not only as a form of entertainment but also as a wider reflection of societal mores. Its initial ongoing project involves organising and presenting an online series of performances of 10 new plays by emerging writers from Nigeria, the Diaspora and beyond called the "Ten Minute Matinee" series. This series of plays provides an international virtual stage for contemporary storytellers to express, explore and experiment with diverse ideas which is just the beginning of a new way of working across time zones and borders.



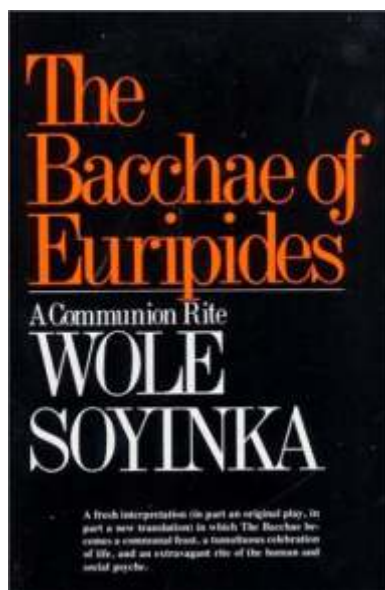
THE LION & THE JEWEL

The Lion and the Jewel, by Wole Soyinka, was first performed in 1959.

It chronicles how Baroka, the lion, fights with the modern Lakunle over the right to marry Sidi, the titular Jewel. Lakunle is portrayed as the civilized antithesis of Baroka and unilaterally attempts to modernise his community and change its social conventions for no reason other than the fact that he can. The transcript of the play was first published in 1962 by Oxford University Press. Soyinka emphasises the theme of the corrupted African culture through the play, as well as how the youth should embrace the original African culture

Producers: THE NATIONAL DRAMA COMPANY (NDC)

is a group of individuals that have graduated from the Guyana National School of Theatre Arts & Drama. They are actors, singers, dancers, stage managers, directors, producers and writers, with a diverse and eclectic mix of artistic backgrounds. They are also entrepreneurs, volunteers, corporate professionals, academics and business owners, all united by an undying passion for theatre and a desire to promote an art form that we believe makes life worthwhile, beautiful and fun. NDC aspires to present unique and inspired theatrical productions — some intimate, others larger than life, yet others fantastical. "We are not merely looking to promote theatre as a medium of art and culture, they hope to spark new thought, foster a better understanding of relationship with the world around us and light up our collective imaginations to boundless possibilities."



THE BACCHAE OF EURIPIDES

(Written by Wole Soyinka; Reading by Jefferey Page)

In Wole Soyinka's hands *The Bacchae* becomes a communal feast, a tumultuous celebration of life, and a robust ritual of the human and social psyche. "The Bacchae is the rites of an extravagant banquet, a monstrous feast," Soyinka writes. "Man reaffirms his indebtedness to earth, dedicates himself to the demands of continuity, and invokes the energies of productivity. Reabsorbed within the communal psyche, he provokes the resources of nature; in turn he is replenished for the cyclic rain in his fragile individual potency." The blending of two master playwrights Euripides and Soyinka makes for an unforgettable experience.

CAST LIST: Tiffany Bacon (Stage Directions); Ian Coulter-Buford

(Dionysos); Harrison White (Tiresias); Michael Shepperd (Kadmos); Joyce Guy (Agave); Michael Oloyede (Pentheus); C. Kelly Wright (Slave Leader/Chorus); Felicia Curry (Officer/Chorus); Katrinah Lewis (Old Slave/chorus); Angelique Gagnon (Vestal/Bacchante/Chorus); Chelsea Davis (Priest/Bridegroom/Flogger/Chorus); Oneika Phillips (Herdsman/Father-in-Law/Chorus). Dramaturgie: Aduke Gomez and Kola Tubosun.

MOVIN' LEGACY: A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, it aims to promote dance legacy through the preservation, cultivation and celebration of work from Africa and the African diaspora.

Director: JEFFREY L. PAGE: An opera and theatre director of both classical and contemporary works, Jefferey, as director and choreographer, spearheaded the 2015 and 2018 Tokyo productions of the musical Memphis, which received four Yomiuri Award nominations, including Best Musical. The first African American to be named the Marcus Institute Fellow for Opera Directing at The Juilliard School, he has also been nominated for an Emmy Award. Page has won an MTV Video Music Award for his work with Beyoncé, whose creative team has included him for more than 12 years. His work was featured on Beyoncé's "The Formation World Tour," in her historic Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival performance, and in two of her HBO specials. He was the associate creative director for Mariah Carey's "Sweet, Sweet Fantasy"

European Tour, and has been a featured choreographer on Fox Television's "So You Think You Can Dance." He was in the original, award-winning Broadway cast of *Fela!* (Eugene O'Neill Theatre). He worked alongside Tony Award-winning composer Jeanine Tesori to choreograph the hit Broadway musical *Violet* starring Sutton Foster (Roundabout Theatre Company).



KING BAABU

(Written by Wole Soyinka; directed by Toyin Osinaike; prod by Ezxygen Concepts)

A naked satire on the rule of General Abacha in Nigeria, the play chronicles the debauched rule of General Basha Bash who takes power in a coup and exchanges his general's uniform for a robe and crown re-christening himself King Baabu. In the manner of Alfred

Jarry's Ubu Roi, Soyinka develops a special childish language for his cast of characters who have names like Potipoo and General Uzi. Weaving together burlesque comedy, theatrical excess and storytelling, King Baabu was coined as a pet name for the despot par excellence. 'We turn Guatu into kingdom, ruled by kings. Nobody complains any more. General Basha Bash is dead. Long Live King Baabu.'

Director: TOYIN OSHINAIKE

Actor, theatre director who learnt on the job, Toyin has his training working with leading theatre directors -- Wole Soyinka, Chuck Mike, Jide Ogungbade, Tunde Awosanmi, Bayo Oduneye, Segun Ojewuyi, Niji Akanni, Felix Okolo and Matthias Ghert, among others. His acting credits include playing lead roles such as Elesin Oba in Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman* (Wole Soyinka Festival, 1994), Dozie in *A Horse on my Back* (Afrika Projekt, Germany Tour, 1998), Obierika in *Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart* (UK/US tour, 1999), Baroka in Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* (UK tour, 2005, and others).

He has also featured in several television/radio drama series and a few award-winning films; he received a National Association of Nigeria Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP) award for Outstanding Contribution to the Development of Theatre Arts in Nigeria. He is the founder/director of the One Six Productions; and a director of Ozxygen Concepts, producers of the Park Theatre located at the Freedom Park, Lagos.

Storytelling



YAYRA TAMAKLOE

(Ghana/USA)
Folktales

Ghana-born America-inhabiting Yayra is founder of The P.A.L. Project; a storyteller whose work advocates the importance of culture while bringing attention to social and gender issues both in artistic and academic environments. She holds BFA (Cum Laude) from the College of Arts, Kent State University with multiple directing, performance, leadership and scholarly experiences including being Student Government Senator for the College of the Arts, president of the African Students Association as well as a McNair Scholars Alum. A pace-setter who has implemented strategies and activities to facilitate inclusion that have earned her numerous awards & recognition, she believes Africans must tell their stories from their own perspectives. She is

currently Miss Africa USA's 3rd Princess, Miss Congeniality and Miss Visionary Leader, a Miss Ghana USA veteran, an honouree of the Kent State Women's Center SAGE project and the first ever recipient of the Rozell Duncan Student Diversity award. Through service, leadership, advocacy and artistry, Yayra strives to "contribute to a world where equity is the main course on the table for everyone."

Full profile: www.amitamakloe.com



SONIA AIMY

(Nigeria/Canada)
Musical Folkloric

Singer, songwriter, actress and social activist, Sonia Aimy, studied jazz music and interpretation, as well as theatre arts in Italy. With her inimitable, velvety voice, she has been described by a critic as "an embodiment of contemporary African world music." Fluent in English, Italian and several African tongues, she celebrates diverse African cultural

mores and folklores in her music and, now popular storytelling acts. She explores Yoruba, Hausa (Nigeria), Obamba (Gabon), Wolof (Senegal), Lingala (Congo), Kiswahili (East Africa) and Somali languages in her musical works. For her many endeavours, she was chosen Best Positive Figure for Youths in Turin and Caserta (2005/2006); named a Millennium Model (among 50 Nigerians in the

world) by Platinum Bank in 2003; and in 2005, was nominated by Italy's AfroLife magazine as one of the Top Ten leading Nigerians in that country. She has also been recognised in Italy and Nigeria not only for her obvious talent but also for her commitment to end human trafficking, and promoting her Nigerian heritage in her works. She currently operates from Canada.

<https://soniaaimy.com/about.php>

Music



ADUKE

Man is man (Afrosoul/beat)

In the wake of a new world, where technological advancements and even social reengineering are fast taking place, there is still a lot of clash with the old order. Human beings have begun to resist all forms of seclusion, inequality and suppression, the issues at hand have also become very magnified and visible owing to social media platforms. Man is man explores the similarities of humans. It

seeks to evoke conversations and prude sensibilities to find answers to controversial question on the prevalent global issue of racism, equality, and world peace. It highlights the unifying factors of humanity. Regardless of skin colour, tribe, nationality, race, ethnicity... MAN IS just MAN

Artist: ADUKE plays afro-soul, afrobeat and world music, uses her primary language, Yoruba, English and Pidgin to convey her message and also experiments with the other languages in the world. She is an advocate for the use of Art for social and political reforms. She is presently a part of the "how free are the arts" tandem art residency project between Brazil, Nigeria, Germany, and Pakistan with the Goethe Institut. She was a visiting professor at the Art school in Parque Lage, Rio; also, a presenting artiste at the Museu do Amanha, Rio De Janeiro. In 2019, she was named "Shining Star 2019" and, made an Honorary member and international consultant for Shenmo women league at the Shenmo Conference in Lang Fang, China.

Dance



MY CULTURE MY PRIDE

A total theatre piece with music, dance, drama, poetry expressed in lavish spectacle, My Culture My Pride celebrates the rich, vibrant and diverse cultures of Africans which holds aloft such values as humanity, humility, pride and respect for others. The piece spotlights the strength and beauty of African culture; taking the audience through emotional reflective journeys around the unique virtues of the black family. Even with the onslaught of modernisation and its many imported vices whose effects have been eroding aspects of the indigenous beliefs and virtues, African culture endures.

GIFTED STEPPERS ART ACADEMY

A group of talented, skillful and well-tested mostly "street children", discovered and being mentored by Oma Harrison, a multi-talented artiste — actress, dancer, drummer, singer and a member of National Troupe of Nigeria, who was herself once a "disadvantaged child." The story of the troupe, which has performed at many major cultural platforms including the Lagos Book & Art Festival, African Drum Festival in Abeokuta and the Lagos Fringe Festival — a gathering of the best theatrical groups in Nigeria — is tied to the personal story of the founder and chaperon of the group, Oma: "I was once like them, I was a disadvantaged child, when my father died, and left eight of us with my poor Mum, who could not cope..." "Life was difficult for my siblings and I, we slept outside without roof over our head, later my mum died..." "It was through dance that I rescued myself, sent myself to school, and now I am a graduate..." "I remember my experience then, so I decided to help rescue any other child in my kind of circumstances; that was why I set up the academy to cater for them." "Now, I have enrolled them all in school, and they are doing well in the school: New Star in Ikorodu, where the Proprietress takes special interest in them.



HUNTERS' DANCE

Ogun: The Iron Wordsmith | Created by Seun Awobajo | Music by — FOD GANG
Costume by Seun Awobajo

Set in a typical ancient community, the songs and drumming pay tribute to the Yoruba god of iron, OGUN. Dedicated to Wole Soyinka, the wordsmith—word-warrior who weaves battle with letters and intellect; to whom Ogun is patron saint, and who is the patron saint of the Footprints of David. The plot of Ogun: The Iron Wordsmith is delicately translated to evince the indomitable feat of the playwright, poet, theatrist and social crusader upheld by the gods' anvil. The dance is preceded by a short poem, Lion of Arts, with each line riddled with works of the wordsmith; glorifying his enviable achievements. The introduction is a solemn spoken word rendition ignited by the rhythmic

throbbing of the ancient drums.

About FOOTPRINTS OF DAVID

A multiple-award winning children/student dance theatre group with vast experience in performances both at home and internationally, the FOD based in Bariga area of Lagos, enjoys patronage and support from numerous eminent Nigerians, and has received commendation in "performance excellence" from the former German president, Joachim Gauck, when he visited Nigeria few years ago. Led by the multi-skilled artiste — dancer, drummer, poet and actor, Seun Awobajo, the FoD has travelled extensively in Europe, especially in Germany.

Poetry



ORIADE (crown Troupe of Africa)

Open Letter to Korona Something

Dear coronavirus,
how you dey today?
I hope say you don dey pack your
bag go park
You don try you hear
Your harvest na helele
See as you turn tears to Akamu
And fear to Moinmoin
I beg people don belleful

Dear Coronavirus
Tell Mama Earth say we don hear
Make she no vex even though she
get reason to para
Tell am say we say
We know say we no get sense
We don F up and this kobokovirus
na ogbonge warning
Make she pity us

Dear Coronavirus
Though you dey do us wetin soap
dey do eyes

Me I know say na we use
Our small hand collect big one

Na jeje you dey go when you see
say we don kpai our maiguard
Na so you branch with pepper eye-
drop to treat our looking without
seeing eyes
I beg mercy tender with justice
Come dey go

Anyway sha
Ozone layer say make I thank you
Marine tenants say you get mouth
Bush squatters say your head dey there
Husband and wife don dey sabi
tanda together
Pikin don dey sabi dem papa for
daylight

Dear coronavirus,
Na you be the equalizer
Wey no dey fó for muscle
Big Boss and Big Brother don dey
shake for blokos
Before, before dem dey fight for
who be number one
Dem dey spit bomb like say na fashion
Dem dey grab, dem dey bark, dem
dey brag, dem dey gamble with
human life
But when you show face, dem sober
In fact, everybody lockdown
Come dey do panic buying
Dey shout social distance
Dey sing self-isolation
And mental quarantine
...
Thunder!

For our side,
Na mouth we open till fly fly enter
We open our gate when you dey raid
Now you don enter, we come dey shake
Our case be like mumu landlord

wey allow thief enter him house
Before he lock him gate
We come dey swallow headache melecine
for head wey dey roll for ground
Our leaders don dey sleep for bed
wey dem make
When we dey cry, dem say we too
dey shout
We dey chop hunger, dem dey chop biscuits
When dem get catarrh,
dem go go London
When dem get toothache, na
straight to America
Na Germany dem dey do check up
Their shopping na for Italy
Dem dey go Dubai
But common sense dem no buy
Dem import so tay, dem import you
come our land
Now person wey no get passport
don dey die international die

Chai! Coro, o korò gan o.
You try correct correct
You bitter no be small
Shebi when eye get palava, nose go
get wahala
And when nose jam trouble, eyes
water go double
Fowl don land on top clothesline
Fowl and rope no go rest
Now our leaders don enter soup
Na we be the pot
Na you be the fire

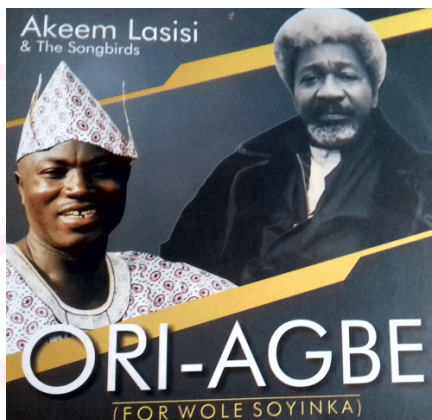
Coronavirus,
Na beg I dey beg, e don do
Come and be going.

ORIADE
(March 2020).

CROWN TROUPE OF AFRICA

Founded June 1, 1996 by a group of
young friends who shared a common

belief in the viability of the arts as
veritable social engineering
mechanism, the Crown Troupe
isknown for making different kinds of
multi-generic performances suitable
for diverse spaces. The content of
such works is mostly thematically
relevant to prevalent issues of
concern. The CTA also engages in
training, workshops, research and
documentation. Over the years, it has
carried out community intervention
projects by utilizing diverse art forms
to educate, conscientise towards
creating positive social change in the
society. It carries out its mission
through stage performances, acting,
theatre workshops and applied
theatre outreaches. Most of its works
are community-based theatre
projects; majorly as an antidote for
the current elitist status of the
theatre, while also aiming to bring
theatre closer to rural communities.
Its diverse artistic engagements have
gradually metamorphosed into the Eko
Theatre Carnival, which debuted in
2016 to commemorate the 20th
anniversary of the Crown Troupe.
Among its accomplishments are a
combination of its continuous
participation in a variety of local and
international art events, worth
mentioning are: Contacting the World,
Manchester (2002); Arts-in- Action
Trinidad and Tobago tour (A
Workshop/Performance with
University of The West Indies, St.
Augustine based company, 2003);
Contacting The World, Manchester
(Devised and directed Nigerian entry
LADUGBO with Ancient Theatre
Company, Lagos 2004), and others.



ORI AGBE

(For Wole Soyinka @ 80)

I
Because there may never be a second night
I shall plant my tongue in the soil of tonight
I shall construct a castle of words
As an eternal monument for a sage's birth.
Emo rat rises healthily in Opo Ile
Aferebojo rises healthily in its hole
Whether eku emo rises well or not
Once Soyinka rises well the deed is done.

II
Let me kiss the waves to gain the pulse
of the Nile
If I can touch the tail of your dansiki,
My craft will never remain the same again
If I can touch a strand of your silver hair
I shall win a multitude with a single poem.

III
You will lend me a sacred pun
To jerk up my Commonwealth poem
I want to borrow your dictionary of myth
Where a hen lays nothing other than
eggs of words
And the rain that comes from the bowel
of the August sky
An infinite scroll of Nobel rhymes.
Chief Kongi,
You hear my voice or not?
If I were a woman,
If I did not marry you because of your

cheek of a hunter's wife
I would marry you for your shiny beards
of a squirrel's tail.

IV
But in spite of the flowing wines of your
glorious birth
I shall open a can worm of subversive
truth.
The parrot privileged to come of age
Will tell different tales of our changing
times
Olugbon's prosperous reign,
The fields were draped in an egret's frock
Aresa's historic reign,
Draped were the deserts in an egret's frock
But these dragging eons of Jagunlabi's
dynasty
Thunder-retained vampires howl across
every nook and cranny of our shivering hills
Houses concede their heads to tenement
storms
The smith has lost the memory of the anvil
And I the chronicler of tides,
I sing about in kwashiokored feet.

V
I implore you the sage of the night
Savour my songs with Solomon's mind.
My teeth I know are rotten
If I break kola nut with them you can shun
But when I break with them a single poem,
Give my stinking mouth a second thought.
Democracy is a cake of prosperity
Universally eaten with the teeth of
give-and-take
But in the toothless mouth of my
country's heroes
Democracy is a chronic bone that never
cracks.

VI
For the sake of fish for their pot bellies
They have set ablaze the family grove
For the sake of fish for their pot bellies
They have killed the pond with chemical
greed.

VII
Now that you have climbed the mahogany
of age
Share a bit of our festival wine
And shed some light on the riddle of The
Road.
The world is building an amphitheatre
in the centre of the moon
But six decades after,
My country remains the protagonist in
the Dance of the Forest.
The rain is punctual,
The sun is prompt
But right before our teary eyes
Kongi's Harvest has blossomed into
national drought.

VIII
Only yesternight,
We accused Tandi of dacing awkwardly
But right before our teary eyes
Tandi Tandi has taken over the stage of
dance
Only yesternight,
We accused the departed of an untimely
death
But right before our teary eyes,
The pall bearers have missed their way
to the burial ground
Aaa, now that you have climbed the
mahogany of age, Soyinka
Share a bit of our festival wine
And shed some light on the riddle of The
Road.

Synopsis: Released on the label of Full Point Music, 'Ori Agbe' was first produced in 2004 to mark the 70th birthday of Soyinka by the resourceful performance poet, Akeem Lasisi. It was reissued as a video to mark the 80th birthday anniversary of the Nobel laureate. "It was inspired by an old album of Ifa priest and poet, Yemi Elebuibon, Akeem stated, "It is a poetic honour to whom is due; and it is a fine excuse to recreate the

panegyric/praise tradition of the Yoruba. But, when considered along similar efforts that we have made in the past — including the production of 'Eleleture' — 'Ori Agbe' has been produced to exhibit the entertainment qualities of poetry." The video was shot at Freedom Park, Lagos Island, where Soyinka has an office. Other artistes who featured in the video include the folklorist musician, Edaoto Agbeniyi, the flutist Awoko and singer Ayisat Kafidipe with former dance captain of the National Troupe of Nigeria, Emmanuel Adejumo, and his dance troupe."

Poet: AKEEM LASISI

A two-time winner of the ANA/Cadbury Poetry Prize, Akeem who says Soyinka deserves to be celebrated and honoured for his several achievements, is known for his experimentations with oral Yoruba and English poetry. A graduate of the Obafemi Awolowo University, he won the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) and Cadbury Poetry Prize for the year 2000 with Iremoje. A well-known performance poet and journalist who once worked with The Comet and until lately, was Arts editor of Punch newspaper, Lasisi is also the author of Wonderland and Post Mortem. He has five books and five musical poetry albums to his credit, including Right Option English, a grammar book, Ekun Iyawo (The Bride's Chant), Iremoje, ritual poetry for late activist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, and Eleleture. He has performed in several countries including Brazil, South Africa and Germany, and has featured at events for corporate organizations like the Ford Foundation, the British Council and the Goethe-Institut, among others.

SPOKEN WORD AND STORYTELLING FROM TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

FEATURING



Rachael Kennedy:

Rapso Poet, Brother Book is a cornerstone of the Rapso Foundation in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. Rapso is the "new progression of Poetry created to relate to the day to day experience of the people" Brother Book is considered the People's Poet. A well-known and loved national thespian, he was instrumental in the formation of the Laventille Education Workshop where he used Rapso in a community literacy programme. He has worked extensively with Culture House in their Arts Education and Environmental programmes. In 1998 Brother Book represented Trinidad and Tobago at the International Book Fair of "Black Radical and Third World Writers" in London and inaugural Dub Poetry Festival in Toronto. He continues to be an active member within his community holding executive positions in various community and arts based organisations



Abdul-Majeed Abdul-Karim:

Spoken word poet from the Two Cent Movement. His art is shrouded in the youthful wrestle of identity and spirituality. He represents the unrecognised youth with a final remark: We are present and we will inherit the world. Guide us accordingly



Cheryl Griffith:

Lover of Literature and Oral Tradition. Have been writing and reading poetry since Primary School. I am a performing poet, co-author of the book "Caribbean Spice" a collection of poems by myself and two others. Have work published in "Three Hundred and Sixty Degrees" and Circle of Thoughts" two anthologies by the Circle of Poets of Trinidad and Tobago. I am a Poetry Workshop Host, twice winner of National Poetry Competition of Trinidad and Tobago and holds a BA in Literatures and Communications.



Derron Sandy

His love for God pushes his constant desire to improve his communities and empower his peers using writing and performance, His art heroises characters that embrace oppressive systems and overcome them through introspection of the current historical moment. The art is tragic, passionate, comical and enlightening, He is devoted to his love as the core of his principles and as such his work pushes listeners toward positive solutions where righteousness is rewarded



Shabaka Kambon

The holder of a degree in history and a Masters in International Relations from the University of the West Indies Shabaka has a long track record of activism promoting human rights and social justice. Currently executing projects related to Climate Change and gender equality in the OECS region. In 2017, Shabaka launched his own civil society organization: The Cross Rhodes Freedom Project — confronting the past to free the future.



Theodora Ulerie (Auntie Thea)

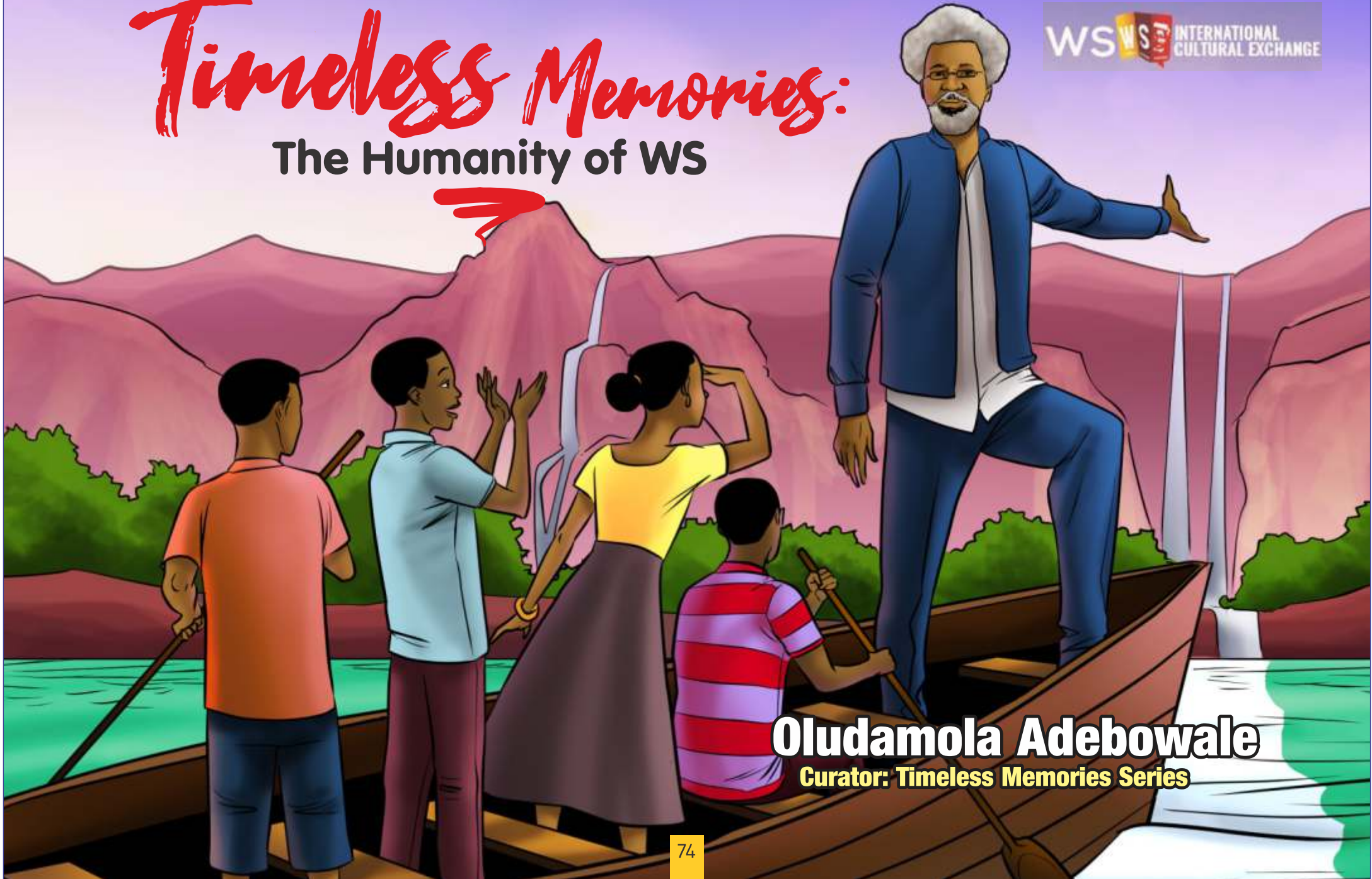
Theodora Ulerie has been championing the cause of children everywhere, from her childhood. Throughout her adult life, she has been an advocate, mentor, guardian, educator and entertainer to thousands of children and young adults. She is also a Facilitator of the Women's Movement in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean. Mrs. Ulerie was awarded the Commonwealth Women - Agents Award 2011. She was among three of the twenty-four Awardees selected to represent Trinidad and Tobago at the CHOGM 2011 in Australia, She was a guest storyteller at the WS80 in 2015 representing the Caribbean.



exhibition segment

Timeless Memories:

The Humanity of WS



Oludamola Adebawale
Curator: Timeless Memories Series



HISTORY

HERITAGE

CULTURE

Mr. Otonba Payne, who is just retiring from the post of Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court of Lagos, has seen thirty-six years of public service; and that is one of almost unique length in the case of a West African colony. He entered the public service two years after the cession of Lagos to Great Britain; and he leaves it with a handsome pension and all the compliments of Governor Macgregor. Mr. Payne will carry with him into his retirement the best wishes of all local Britons that his capacity to enjoy his well-earned leisure may not be in any way impaired by his long and arduous exertions on behalf of the British Crown.

From 1904-1940.
MR. OTONBA PAYNE.



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discover Nigerian History,
Culture, Heritage and Arts.*



EXECUTIVE PRODUCER'S NOTE

ODE TO THE ROLE MODEL



When the idea of the Timeless Memories Exhibition was mooted two years ago, I welcomed it as an addition to WSICE as a culturally unifying platform. The first edition in July 2019, 'Timeless Memories: A Decade of Iconic Celebration,' marked the great man's 85th birthday and a decade of the WSICE. This July 2020, 'Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS' again honours Prof Soyinka and the Humanity essence that drives his every action.

The Covid-19 Pandemic is the reason WSICE 2020 is a virtual event. The conference and all activities are taking place in the digital space. Consequently, this e-book joins the growing body of WSICE publications, which includes, 'That the Future may Live,' a compilation of writings by alumni of the annual 'The Wole Soyinka Essay' competition; 'Memo on our Future,' a compilation of all the winning essays from the Essay competitions from 2010 to 2018 and 'Igho goes to Farm,' a children's book authored by journalist and celebrated Art columnist, Anote Ajeluorou and

published in conjunction with WSICE for Ws2019.

As with everything we do in the WSICE, this e-book is designed for mentorship -- a major objective of the WSICE. The Nobel laureate has always been a reference point for humanity which is the main reason we selected him as the pillar of the cultural exchange project. We were thus elated and greatly honoured when he accepted.

WS has been a great role model in the fields of Literature, Arts and Humanity, so 'Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS' is very apt and relevant, especially at this present time.

In the words of WS himself, 'It is a touching tribute. It also fits snugly into your project, speaking quite objectively.'

There can be no higher praise and we are grateful, Sir.

Teju Kareem
Executive Producer, WSICE

SOYINKA AND HIS ART

What does it mean when artists collect other arts, especially those outside their own practices? Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka avidly collects sculptural and other visual art forms from Africa as references that are significant, not only for their spatial and temporal denotations but arguably to his dramaturgy and literature. Diverse in their media and textual tones – stone, clay, bronze, wood and shell, Soyinka's collection is deliberately eclectic and reflects a persistent practice of adding to his archives. His choices are not meant to be encyclopedic or historical digests on these art forms. Rather, they constitute referential visual texts, archives and methods of signifying cosmic and material times and place. Paying attention to their lines, motions and emotions enmeshed in spiritual (particularly Ifa) and cross-cultural references to the environments they come from, his collection also highlights these art forms as interdisciplinary fonts from which visual and performing arts are imagined and produced.

*Excerpted from the Catalogue of **WOLE SOYINKA: Antiquities Across Times and Place** by the Curator, **Awam Amkpa**, Global Network Professor, New York University, USA*





CURATOR'S STATEMENT:



Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



How does one celebrate a man who has given literally everything in service to Humanity; to his motherland, to Africa and to the advancement of the Arts globally? What magnitude of praise or what sort of gift could one accord a man who has risked his own very life in the life-drawn fight for the liberation of others? Perhaps a simple, 'Thank You' would be appropriate. Give him his roses while he can still smell it.

The idea of the “Timeless Memories” exhibition series was my own personal way of saying THANK YOU to “Kongi” for his service to humanity. The love for Humanity is the bedrock of societal development and

the advancement of mankind. Humanity is what Prof. Oluwole Soyinka is all about and that has been demonstrated in most of his writings spread across the various genres of literature. His works are widely read across the globe; thus, celebrating his values in concrete terms is a worthy step.

July 2019 marked the beginning of the series starting with the '*Timeless Memories: A Decade of Iconic Celebration*' exhibition, which celebrated the 10th anniversary of the annual Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange, WSICE project as well as Soyinka's 85th birthday. It featured an array of archival images spanning over 10 years of activities of the WSICE. The exhibition was well received; significantly recording attendance by about 1000 secondary school students in the course of its three-day run.



In November 2019, the *'Timeless Memories: Elastic Effects of Wole Soyinka'* was staged at Freedom Park, Lagos. This was during the *Lagos Book & Art Festival, LABAF*. It featured illustrative artworks around Soyinka, alongside a 23-minute documentary video and a 17ft mural display.

This year's virtual exhibition is titled *'Timeless Memories; The Humanity of WS'*. Drawing its title from the WSICE theme *"I AM because YOU ARE,"* the exhibition aims to reinforce the commitments of Soyinka to the cause of humanity; as well as the objective of the WSICE programme; aimed essentially at mentoring young minds for a better tomorrow. This special edition comes with this Art E-Book. The idea is to create worthy memorabilia as we all celebrate a man that is an embodiment of humanity and grace.

The Living Legends collection:

The E-book also contains a collection of drawings and paintings of Soyinka contributed by the Olu Ajayi Studios. The collection is an excerpt from the huge body of works that the painter Olu Ajayi has harvested via his unique project, *LIVING LEGENDS*, designed *to* identify, honour and induct prominent, iconic and high profile Nigerian professionals who have helped to promote the ideals of the society. Periodically, Ajayi convenes a group of his colleagues and students to do live drawings and paintings of cultural icons.

I sincerely hope you will enjoy this publication.

To Prof. Wole Soyinka.

Happy Birthday Sir!

Oludamola Adebowale

Curator: Timeless Memories Series





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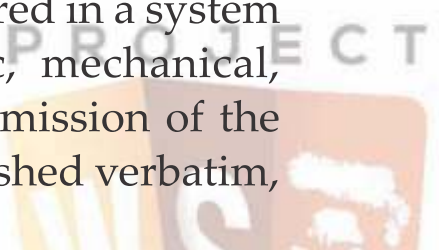
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-Olu Ajayi

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A large, faint, stylized logo in the background of the text area. It features the letters 'WSICE' in a large, bold font, with 'OPEN DOOR' and 'SERIES' written below it. The word 'PROJECT' is written in a smaller font above the 'WSICE' letters.

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



Heavy Duty: In the beginning, 'S.A' (Essay) and Eniola, also known as 'Wild Christian' (names Wole Soyinka gave his parents in his famed book *Ake: Years of my Childhood Memories*), could not have known that their young son (born July 13th 1934), would bring glory and honour to the family. The Yorùbá believe in the practice of seeking to know the destiny of a child after birth (Akosejaye); so maybe they did see the glory, fame and thorns in the future of the young Olúwoḷé. Maybe they never did. Whatever the case, Akínwándé Olúwoḷé Babátúndé Sọyínká was greater than his parents



Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



WSWS INTERNATIONAL
CULTURAL EXCHANGE

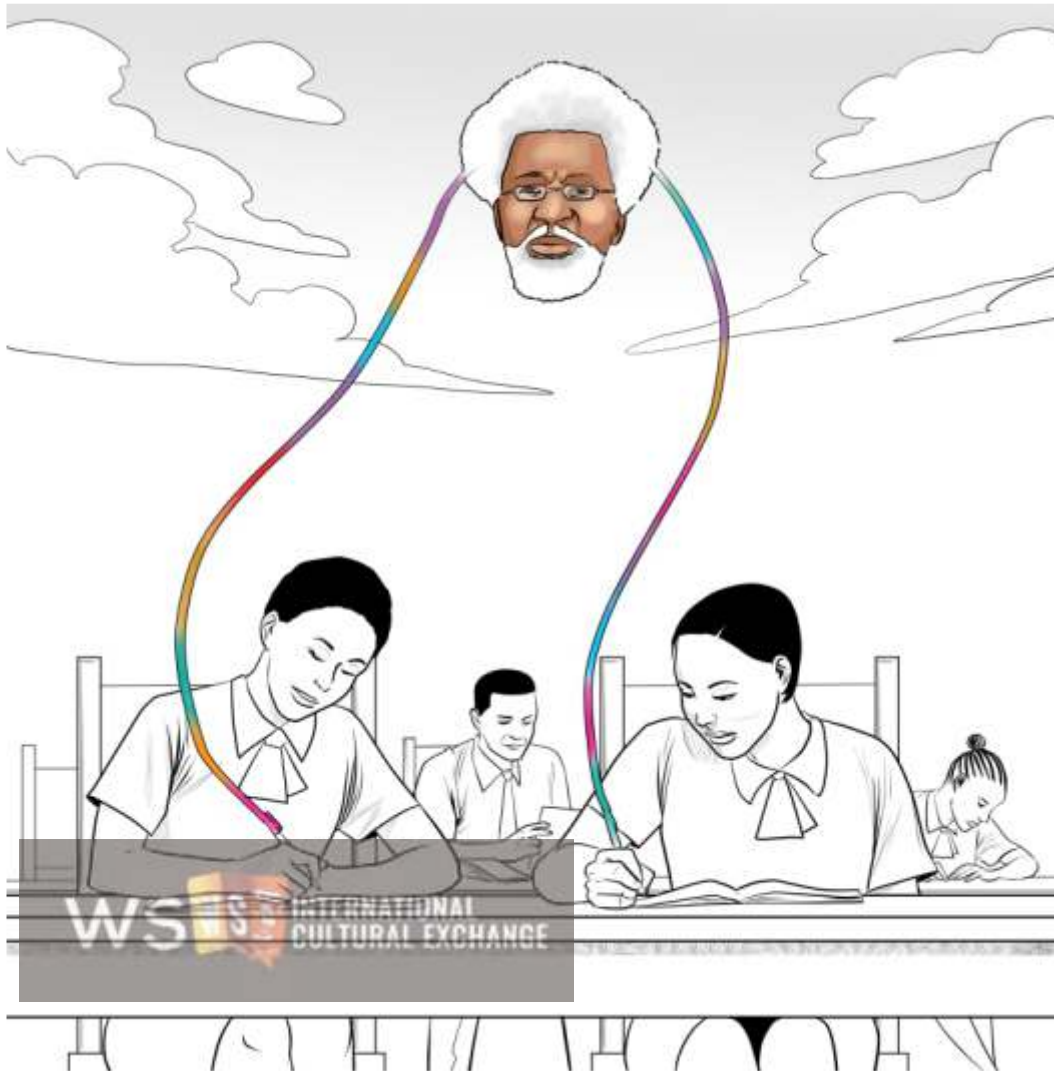
Page of Knowledge: Education and knowledge have always remained the bedrock of everything Wołé Sójínká stands for. Apart from being a global literature giant, he has also consistently fought for the recognition of education as means of empowerment at every stage in his life. This recognition is at the very core of the WSICE Project that aims to empower the young ones through education mental development.

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



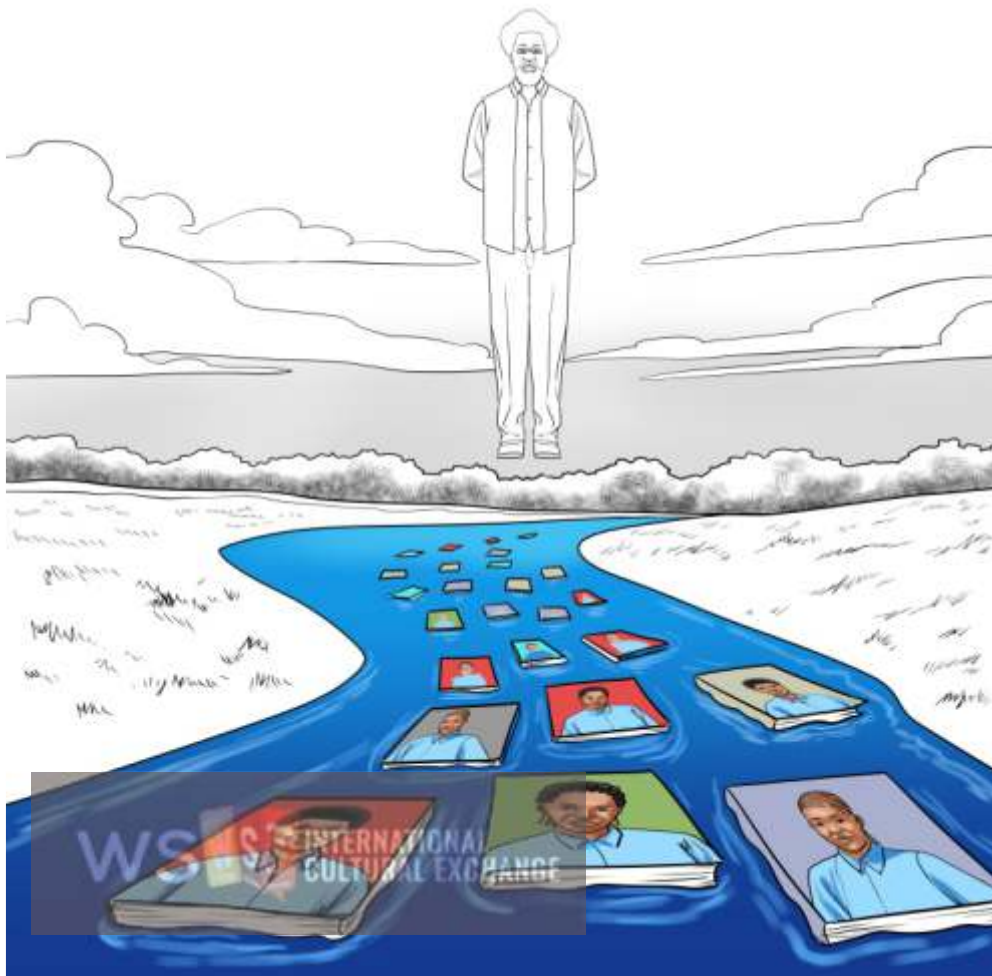
The WS in us all: Children are the leaders of tomorrow. If the present leaders have failed the children of today, the best way to secure the future is to properly arm the children of today and the ones coming with quantitative and qualitative education for a better tomorrow. The 'WS' brand presents itself as a catalyst for change for a better tomorrow for every child.

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



The Humanity of WS: The glory of the sun is reflected in the energy that feeds everything living. The humanity of WS is reflected in the enthronement of knowledge as the means of having children present themselves as forces to be reckoned with in any every level of the society.

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



Rivers of Life: One method of imparting civilization or locating any settlement during early migration in Yoruba land is the presence of waters, of flowing rivers. Where there is water, there is life. The importance of Education is like a flowing river. It shows the possibility of life and growth. For any society to live and flourish, there has to be a flow of education and knowledge in a proper direction.

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



Flying Books: One of the important jobs of a writer is constant penning down of thoughts in a book. These books, like angels, fly out of their comfort zone and give life and inspiration to other people. This creative cycle of life has to be fueled with constant work and a well robust imagination. Wole Soyinka as a writer has kept life in constant rotation with scores of literary works he has out there.

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



Concrete Foundation:

“Books and all forms of writing are terror to those who wish to suppress the truth” –Soyínká

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



Go forth and Shine Sọyínká! In 1986, the son of “Essay and Wild Christian” brought honour and placed Nigeria on world map when he won the Nobel Prize for Literature; becoming the 1st African to win the prestigious award. The name *Wolé Sọyinká* became a symbol of literacy. The award ceremony was held in Sweden. As a true Egba man, he was dressed in a *Aso-ofi (danshiki)* traditional outfit for the ceremony.

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



All for National Interest, but they won't understand: In 1967, at the age of 33 Sòyínká travelled to the creeks to meet General Ojukwu to talk about the planned secession of Biafra and how to stop a looming civil war. On his return back to Lagos, he was arrested by the Federal military government and detained for 33 Months in a Military confinement. His book *"The Man Died"* is a collection of his prison notes from the incident. Never stop writing!

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



Death and the King's Horseman: Premiered on March 1st 1975, the play, *'Death and the King's Horseman'* is one of Soyinka's important plays that questions the concept of the *'Aba Obaku'* in Yoruba culture. The *'Abobaku'* tradition in old Yoruba tradition allows the Oba to be buried with his closest counsel when he dies. Writing as a form of interrogation, Sọyínká questions the very core of Yoruba tradition with his writings

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



Mbari Club 'Original Dugbe Market': In 1961, a group of young writers and creative individuals came together to form a gathering that would help them in producing more creative works and a space where they can express themselves creatively. It was called the 'Mbari Club'

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



NADECO Route 1993–1998: Known for his unrestricted vocal opposition to any form of oppression and tyranny, Sóyínká and a few well-meaning but political and human rights Nigerians were hunted by General Sani Abacha during his reign of terror when he was Nigeria's Military head of state, between (1993-1998). Scores of people were maimed, murdered, and imprisoned unlawfully. At the peak of the struggle, Wole Soyinka fled Nigeria on a bike through what would later be known as the '**NADECO Route,**' an escape route mapped by the National Democratic Coalition.

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➔



The Hunter in his comfort Zone: A master of art and of his forest, Sòyinká's home A.R. I (Autonomous Residence of Ijegba) in the forested section of Kenta Housing Estate in Idi Aba area of Abeokuta, Ogun State, is a safe haven for literary and creative expression. As a hunter, Sòyinká also expresses his freedom and his hunting skills as he hunts, once a while, in the forest around his house.

Timeless Memories: The Humanity of WS ➡



Towards a Better Future: One of the important agenda of the WSICE Project and personal dream of Sáyínká is to have a better Nigeria for generations to come. A better future and safe environment where the citizens will be free to express their creative minds and mostly for children to be safe to dream big and wild without any form of inhibitions or intrusion in their natural growth.



The Man Lived!: *'The Man Died'* was written after spending 33 months in solitary confinement on alleged treason charges by the Federal Government for doing nothing. This art piece is a re-creation of the 1st interview Sọyínká granted after his release from prison in 1968. Here he is seen granting an interview at his residence at the University of Ibadan.

LIVING LEGENDS by OLU AJAYI



2008: Prof Wole Soyinka was the first recipient of the THE LIVING LEGEND award. The award was instituted by Living Icon Foundation, an initiative of Olu Ajayi, one of Nigeria's leading artists. The award is designed to induct into the body of Art these reputable individuals that have excelled in their chosen careers or vocations and used their fame or fortune to help society (humanistic ideals) with not less than 30-year record. A recipient is thus documented live by over a dozen frontline artists -- painters and sculptors -- to capture the essence of the legend. Others who have been so honoured are: Oba Erediauwa of Benin Kingdom; Professor J.P Clark; Chief Mrs. Solanke (SAN); Prof . Yusuff Grillo; Dr. Bruce Onobrakpeya; General Yakubu Gowon, Dr. David Dale (now late). The works are kept for a future publication (coffee table-book). The project is ongoing; over 80 artists have participated.





The spirit ...oil on canvas by Olu Ajayi 2008



Contemplation by Olu Ajayi



Ben Osaghae at work



Meditation by David Dale



Olu Ajayi painting Prof life



Untitled oil on canvas by Duke Asidere



Meditation by David Dale



Work by Osazuwa Osagie



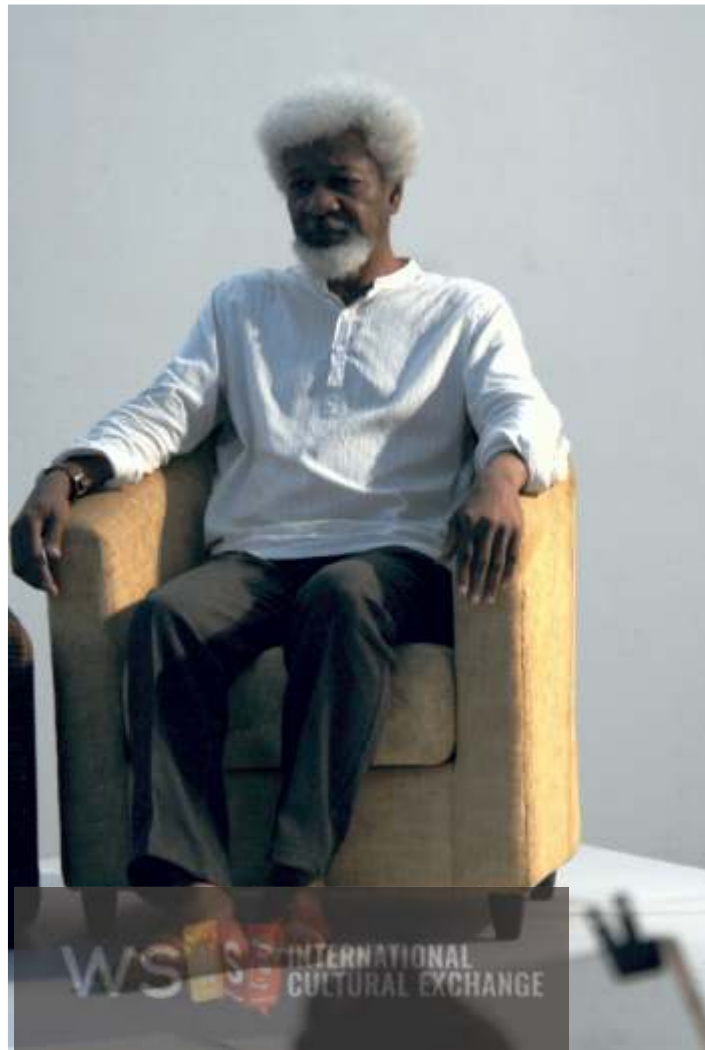
Ben Osaghae in action



Osazuwa Osagie at work



Charcoal on paper, by Dr David Dale



In the **Living Legends** session



Conversation with self



Untitled oil on canvas by Duke Asidiere



Acrylic on Canvas by Odun



Untitled scripture in Clay by Tom. Iduakhine



Charcoal on paper by Edosa Oguigo 2008



tributes

from associates, friends & well wishers



Essential WS Compassion. HUMANITY. Kindness

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by KUNLE AJIBADE)

Soyinka's compassion and kindness are extraordinary. The intensity of adulation which he attracts is well-earned partly because of his broad artistic imagination characterised by depth of vision and felicity of style for which he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986, and partly because he has consistently remained a champion of causes that are immensely humanising and far greater than himself.

ON Friday, 27 June 1980, at Oduduwa Hall, University of Ife, a memorial rally was held with speeches and poems for Walter Rodney, the Guyanese author of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* and other path-breaking, radical writings, who was assassinated in Georgetown, Guyana, on 13 June 1980. Organised by Positive Review and Socialist Forum, the hall was packed. The speakers included Biodun Jeyifo, Wole Olaoye, Kole Omotoso, Ike Okafor-Newsum, Femi Falana, the Marxist historian Segun Osoba, Femi Osofisan, John Ohiorhenuan, and Wole Soyinka.

Grief-stricken speaker after speaker mourned the loss of Rodney and expressed solidarity with all those who should carry on the struggle and who should keep the flame of hope kindled in their hearts. In a voice laden with pain, Wole Soyinka said that Walter Rodney, 38, who preferred actuality to cant, was not a phrase-monger and ideological mouther. Soyinka argued more fully and clearly: "No one remotely acquainted with his work, his thinking or his person would be surprised that he carried the same kind of approach into active politics. His activities in Guyana since his return were inspired by courageous assessment of the actualities of Guyana. Walter Rodney was no armchair-revolutionary, he was no captive intellectual playing to the gallery of local or international radicalism. He was clearly one of the most solidly ideologically situated intellectuals ever to look colonialism and its contemporary heir—black exploitation—in the eye, and where necessary, spit in it."

The principles and virtues of Walter Rodney, which Soyinka embraced and celebrated, he has also been displaying in the

course of his rich and full life. Since his late twenties, he has been calling every tyrant by his real name, and to proper accounting, in his wonderfully written plays, poetry and essays. Using his position as one of the world's brightest literary lights and masterful polemicists, he has been formidably engaging and profoundly insightful in his analyses of Africa and the world; in the ways he apprehends human experiences and extracts new and deeper meanings out of them. Although he rejects being likened to genuine ancient and contemporary prophets and visionaries, he shares a lot with them indeed: he is frequently prescient.

Soyinka's compassion and kindness are extraordinary. The intensity of adulation which he attracts is well-earned partly because of his broad artistic imagination characterised by depth of vision and felicity of style for which he won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1986, and partly because he has consistently remained a champion of causes that are immensely humanising and far greater than himself. He is ruthlessly frank, most often drawing blood with his witty, acerbic and vigorous prose. Perhaps more crucially, his example simply puts a lot of fuel in the tanks of others. We repeat: Soyinka, who likes his wine to be suitably chilled, is permanently hot as a wonder writer. John Ruskin it was who once said that "Books are divided into two classes — the books of the hour and the books of all time." Soyinka's books are not books of the hour. They are books of all time. Many of his deep ideas will echo through the ages.

Excerpted from a conversation with KUNLE AJIBADE, Executive Editor/Director of TheNEWS/ PM NEWS)

He has Given of Himself for the collective Good of fellow Humans

**(I AM, because YOU are! Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86,
by 'NIYI COKER, Jnr.)**

CONGRATULATIONS Prof! As we gather to celebrate your 86th birthday anniversary. Given all the occurrences around the world at the present time, there can be no appropriate theme or topic to reflect upon in commemoration of this event. The Ubuntu African spiritual and philosophical thought is quite appropriate. It is quite critical to comprehend this as we struggle to survive this pandemic. Now more than ever, we are compelled to awaken to the full realisation that we are all connected. The ailment and pandemic likely took seed in one person, and then spread through a household, then a community, a city, a country, and then it blazed through the globe. What others thought was only happening "over there", quickly swept the world and before they realised it, it was happening "right here!". Wherever right here is located from each person's global positioning.

This African philosophical thought is as fascinating as it is rife with contradictions. I will come to the contradictions shortly. The Ubuntu teaching grounded in the Ancient African traditional practice of community can best be explained as a traditional belief and practice in the interest of the collective versus that of individualism. I recall that several decades ago, another great named Muhammed Ali (the boxer) when requested to deliver a poem simply recited "Me, We", and that was the poem. Much like Ubuntu, you cannot take this on its face value. Ploughing deeper, you discover that he was referring to a deeper human connectivity. A responsibility that every person in the ME must embark on to create the wellbeing of the WE. Ultimately, and in return the WE must ensure the survival of every ME for the productive and harmonious existence of the WE. It is in the same vein that the Ubuntu spiritual teaching of

the I AM is construed to be responsible for the YOU to ensure adequate balance and harmony.

Professor Wole Soyinka continues to spend his life fighting for justice and the dignity of humanity. He has been an outspoken critic against oppression, dictatorship and mismanagement of resources. He is an avid practitioner of advocating for "YOU" and "WE". He has given of himself for the collective good of fellow humans. I wonder how many have stopped to check in, to see how that "I" is doing? That "I", for decades has been the sentinel for "YOU" and "WE". How is that "I" coping with the constant and consistent disappointments? The disappointments and contradictions of African governments who have failed in the practice of Ubuntu. A collective group of individuals elected to take care of their people, but end up lining their own pockets with the people's resources. Their first concern is never the people. Never the YOU or the WE, but the I. Sadly, always the I! This has to be deeply disappointing for persons who have continued to ululate in hopes of seeing a better world for everyone. But we put that disappointment aside today, to say Thank you for being an unwavering advocate for the people. It is fitting that we take this occasion to appreciate Professor Soyinka for his selflessness. Wish him a Happy Birthday, and thank him for his relentless struggle for the dignity of people around the world. Wishing him more strength, and express our profound appreciation on this occasion. Happy Birthday, Prof!

Professor Coker, Jr., theatre director, filmmaker and scholar, is Director of School of Television and Film at the San Diego, California, USA

Humble. Accommodating. Epicurean. Friendly

Snippets of my encounters with Wole Soyinka by DURO ONI, FNAL

Scene I: At St. Peter's College, Kaduna (SPCK), I had read and acted in some of the works of Wole Soyinka (VVS); falling in love with *The Trials of Brother Jero* and the poem *Telephone Conversation*. SPCK was a liberal mission school with lots of sporting activities. We engaged in dramatic presentations and sporting competitions with other schools and institutions which included the Police College; and as I was the school champion in Lawn Tennis, I participated in all the sporting competitions the school engaged in as long as the venue of the competition had tennis court to play on. Strangely, we were allowed to have sporting events with the inmates of Kakuri Prisons! Sometime in 1968, we had such a tournament at Kakuri prison. Although I had never met VVS in person, I could not stop fantasizing of the possibility, and of how I would feel if such were to become a reality. Emboldened by my wish-fulfilment, I, then, asked one of the officials if I could see VVS as he was then in Kakuri prison. He looked at me curiously and with amazement, and simply answered that he (VVS) was not allowed to receive visitors. He (VVS) was apparently in solitary confinement. I left downcast. While in one breath I had seen his being in Kakuri prison as a rare opportunity for me to meet with him, I could not stop muttering to myself "why would anyone put such a brilliant mind in prison?"

Scene II: Three years had passed since my first attempt to meet with VVS when in 1971, I was admitted to the School of Drama (later Department of Theatre Arts) at the University of Ibadan (UI). When VVS showed up in UI that year, I proceeded on my second missionary journey to try see him at his Ebrohime Road residence on campus. Although by this time, I had become friendly with Kayode Soyinka and Kunle Idowu (Soyinka's in-law), I was still not certain about the kind of reception I would get, and even whether he (VVS) was going to agree to see me. So, it was with trepidation and a feeling of foreboding that I approached his residence. Surprisingly, at a moment's notice (without keeping me waiting), not only did he agree to see me (a year one student), but he also let me into his residence. I was at once elated, and marveled at his humility and accommodation. He was apparently sorting out his books when I gained entrance into his habitation; they were far too many and he looked exasperated. Ironically, he muttered to me wondering why books were created. I was quick to point out that if books were not created, how was he to write all his wonderful plays, poems and novels? Believing that I had put him in a quandary, and that he was going to hesitate before answering, I was surprised that not only was his response quick and sharp, it was ready-made. According to him, his creativity could have found expression as a sculptor! For indeed, he had more than a hundred wooden sculptures in his residence.

Scene III: One year had passed since I had the rare privilege of meeting with VVS and interacting with him when Bernth Lindfors came to give a talk in UI in the 1972/73 session with a strange title of "Soyinka: When are you Coming Home?" As part of the lecture programme, Wale Ogunyemi and I were made to perform an excerpt of Soyinka's play, *The Road*. Mrs. Laide Soyinka was in the audience. Impressed by the performance, she walked up to me and said: "We know Wale Ogunyemi and therefore not surprised at his performance. But who are you? You performed so well." In appreciation, she then gave me a copy of *The Man Died* on the condition that I had to read it overnight and return it the following morning. When I returned the book in the morning, she wanted to know if I had actually read it and asked numerous questions on certain aspects of the book, which I confidently answered. As elated as I felt about the

commendation and invitation of Mrs. Soyinka, and my interaction with her; I could not help wishing that Soyinka himself had been in the audience, and that he was the one issuing the commendation. That was the extent to which I revered and venerated VVS.

Scene IV: Although I have met and interacted with VVS at different fora after 1971, I felt very proud and even walked with a chip on my shoulder when I was later instrumental to getting VVS to give the Rivers State Independence Lecture in September 2010. There were two reasons that accounted for this posture. The first was that I was the one approached by the Rivers State Government to get in touch with VVS, and the second was my success in persuading him (VVS) to deliver the lecture. However, that he accepted to come down to deliver the lecture from California after his initial reluctance, due to a crowded schedule, is a further testimony to his flexibility and accommodating posture. I would again be honoured and privileged in connection with VVS in 2013 when as the Chairman of the UI Theatre Arts Alumni Association @ 50, I gave, perhaps, the shortest citation of VVS for the UI Theatre Arts Geoffrey Axworthy Lecture at the Trenchard Hall: Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I have been given the task of reading the Citation of Professor Wole Soyinka, a Man who needs no introduction. I, therefore, present Professor Akinwande Oluwole Soyinka, Playwright, Poet, Novelist, Essayist, Foundation Fellow, Nigerian Academy of Letters, NNOM, CFR and 1986 Nobel Laureate for Literature. Although I gave the citation as Chairman of the Theatre Arts Alumni Association as already indicated, I could not still help it feeling proud and distinguished to be called upon to give the citation of VVS.

Scene V: The final scene of my encounters with VVS (this is because I do not want to exceed the traditional five scenes) was in organising the Soyinka International Symposium with Bisi Adigun in 2014 with participants that included Professors Biodun Jeyifo, James Gibbs, Niyi Osundare, Zedwa Motsa etc. The high point of the event was when VVS hosted us to a performance of *Forest of a Thousand Demons* directed by Tunde Awosanmi, at his magnificent Ijegba Theatre/Residence in Abeokuta. Not only did he individually welcome the more than 25 person's entourage, he also personally offered each of his guests fresh palmwine. Over the five following years, Bisi Adigun and I edited the 278 pages collection of essays titled: *The Soyinka Impulse: Essays on Wole Soyinka* published by Bookcraft in 2019.

Professor Wole Soyinka has been the most recognizable face in the Nigerian landscape for over six decades and has remained consistent in his advocacy and care for a just society. While his creative oeuvre has continued to grow year after year, and he has continued to grow in status to become a literary and socio-political colossus; it is ironic that he has remained humble, accommodating, epicurean, and very friendly. Here is wishing Professor Wole Soyinka, Kongi, VVS, Grandfather of Theatre Practice in Nigeria, Conscience of the Nation, African and World Literary Icon the very best as he turns 86. We look forward to his 87th, 88th, 89th, & 90th birthday and beyond. Best wishes and regards to Mrs. Folake Soyinka and the entire family.

*Prof. Duro Oni, FNAL,
University of Lagos*

Consistent. Principled. Patriotic. Morally Upright

(Why Heroes Matter: Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86,
by **TUNDE KELANI**)

WHO is your Hero? At Nigeria's independence in 1960, as young school pupils, our list of heroes included Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba, Jomo Kenyatta, Julius Nyerere, Haile Selassie, Obafemi Awolowo, Tafawa Balewa, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Tai Solarin, Wole Soyinka and Nelson Mandela. Since African history has been removed from the school syllabus, the present generation of young Nigerians is in the need of serious supply of heroes. Where are the role models needed to inspire and nurture new minds in the task of restoring Nigeria's pride and Africa's lost glory? Are politicians' heroes? It is a privilege and honour to be invited to write a tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86. I doubted my qualification as I could imagine the line-up of eminently qualified candidates but like many, I have enjoyed certain moments and travels with Prof Wole Soyinka, which gave me the rare opportunity to watch him at close quarters.

I recall the trip to Northern Ghana in 2011 on his visit to Pikworo Slave Camp located in Paga, Upper East Region of Ghana, a slave transit centre where slaves were stationed and later resold in the Salaga Slave Market. It is astonishing how Prof Soyinka, in his leadership role easily relates to world leaders, intellectuals, diplomats, activists, politicians, journalists, students, ordinary people, the man on the street, family, friends and

children. On this trip, we had a team of four including Ivor A. Duah, the Ghanaian scholar who worked with him on the project and my assistant, Jamiu Soyode, who was renamed Alhaji Essenco – by Prof because he was entrusted with the safety of our film equipment and essential commodities of three bottles of wine in a plastic bag for the smooth running of the project!

In 2007, Professor Wole Soyinka was celebrated by Ecriture Croisee at the Cite du livre, Aix en Province in France. As it turned out unofficially, I became Personal Assistant to the celebrant for three days and listened to his lectures as the programme unfolded. Sometimes, we got away to spend part of the time before lunch in the square, his pictures and banners decking the whole city while the celebrity appeared anonymous and so simple. He casually entered a cafe to borrow a plate and knife to cut the salami or different flavour of tender meat delicacies. Prof would turn to me and declare at 11 am in the morning, 'I think we should break our fast.' And that is when he opens the bottle of wine to complete the ritual!

In 2018, the Nobel laureate received the Official Key and became Honourary Citizen of Cap Haitien, he was also decorated with Order of Honour and Merit of the Commander's Rank by President Moise.

I will forever be grateful and appreciative to a true leader on this trip because it coincided with my 70th Birthday and he took the trouble to organise the most memorable Birthday ceremony for me attended by our hosts and four Ambassadors of some nations.

His image looms large in our memories every day, a consistent, principled patriot and morally upright. I recently watched all the three-part interview on Pulse TV, with Ekene Ezeji and could only marvel at Prof Soyinka's grasp of events, past, present, current, both local and global. A now late leading Nigerian neurologist friend of mine explained Nigeria's perpetual underdevelopment to lack of fully functioning brains. His solution is to launch a programme on 1000 days of guaranteed micro-nutrients for Africa's children from conception, which is optimum nutrition essential for brain development to ensure performance as an adult. Fortunately, geniuses like Prof Wole Soyinka and others like him arrived with fertile, functioning brains.

Happy Birthday wishes to Akinwande Oluwole Babatunde Soyinka, our Leader and Avatar at 86, as he continues his journey in good health to 96 and beyond.

Tani l'a'wa o` ni' Baba? Ka'i, a ni' Baba.

Humanely Ingenious. Humbly Sagacious. Profoundly Spiritual

(A tribute to Kongi at 86, by BISI ADIGUN)

WHAT an honour it is to be asked to write a tribute in honour of Professor Wole Soyinka on his 86th birthday, for, according to Biodun Jeyifo, Soyinka remains the most important living writer of the 20th and 21st centuries. It is soooo true.

In terms of writing, be it drama, poetry or essay, the ingenuity, sagacity and profundity of our WS is unparalleled. It is however Soyinka's humility, humanity and spirituality that I want to briefly touch upon here in this tribute, based on my interaction with him when I staged at the Terra Kulture Arena his masterpiece, *Death and the Kings Horseman*, during the Eid el Kabir celebrations in 2017.

I recall that having decided to produce the play, I contacted Prof to seek his consent and to ask what percentage he would be happy with as his royalty payment. In response, Prof said I should go ahead with my production and that I should not bother with any royalty payment, because he saw my effort as a labour of love. In his words, a bottle or two of a good wine would do.

Upon completing the production, which Prof and his wife, Auntie Folake, graciously attended, I returned to Ireland where I was based at the time. However, before I did, I asked my niece's driver, Wale, who took me to the airport to help me leave a bottle of red wine for Prof at Terra Kulture. When I came back to Nigeria in June 2018 or so, it was the same Wale who came to pick me up at the airport. As we were driving home, he said Prof Soyinka just called him about five minutes before he picked me up to thank him for the wine I had asked him to help me leave at Terra for Prof over six months ago. What are the odds of Prof calling Wale on the exact day and time I arrived back in the country? That is what I call the Soyinka spirituality.

Asking me to do his play without paying any royalty is what I call his humanity. And deeming it fit to call the driver who helped me drop the bottle of wine for him is humility.

May our humanely ingenious, humbly sagacious, profoundly spiritual WS continue to celebrate many more years in good health and happiness on the surface of the earth. Happy birthday, Kongi (a.k.a Captain Blood) and many happy returns of the day.

Àṣẹ̀yí ṣ'àm'dùn o.

Dr. Adigun, theatre maker and senior Lecturer of Theatre and Performing Arts at Bowen University, Iwo, Osun State)

He Breaks down the Walls of Tyranny

(Emeritus Professor Wole Soyinka: In celebration, by REMI RAJI)

We are because you are

IF there is a man worthy of brandishing the armor as a warrior of light for our humanity, if there is a man the African world must adorn with medals for his moral courage and emulate, and if there is a man deserving of being celebrated time and time over, from this July to June of the following year, and on again, that nominee who fits the bill squarely is none other than Emeritus Professor Oluwale Akinwande Soyinka.

Professor Soyinka continues to feed us with words of wisdom, beauty and fire; his light accompanies us, showing us the path to take in time of indecision or conflicts; his name opens the door to human liberties, and breaks down the walls of tyranny. He has used words to puncture holes in the muddy and stony conscience of many African leaders; his engagements are too numerous to recount, but in each one, Soyinka leaves no one in doubt about where he stands, what he desires and how he wants us to be.

At 86, he remains constant in his dialogue of love with his land. In 1984, in celebration of the 50th birthday of the Ijebu citizen, Prof Niyi Osundare led me to Wole Soyinka's house in Ife. Our Department of English in Ibadan took a holiday in his honour. On the beautiful campus of Ife at the time, we had a reading session at the Rotunda for WS. It was spartan but memorable; a night that marked the beginning of other physical journeys and meetings with the literary icon. Berlin. Illinois. Arkansas. Cape Town. Pretoria. Lagos. Abeokuta. the Forest. Ibadan. Abuja. Minna. Ibadan again. Geographical encounters filled with histories and snippets of wisdom garnered from the Nobel Laureate.

If there is a pantheon of authors who use metaphors as grenades against ignorance, who wield the word as slings against the outrageous cowardice of tyrants across the world, Soyinka is the patron saint of the engaging word.

And here, WS: here is a salute to the gut of your moral courage. Happy birthday, sir.

Prof. Raji, a poet, teaches English at the University of Ibadan, Oyo State)

An 'Òrìsà...

(A tribute for Wole Soyinka at 86, by AKIN ADEJUWON)

WRITING anything about, to, or for WS, if he is wont to read it, is in itself a fright. But because of the privilege and rare opportunity of direct eureka experiences with this global enigma, I dare write.

WS, is an 'Òrìsà' who through singleness of vision and a fierce defense of creative independence, earns his place atop the highest pedestal meant for master painters of our world. The appropriation of this profound revelation came through my encounter on WS' return 'home' to Ife by the invitation extended to him in 2007, which he honoured. The message -- come over to Ile- Ife and help us -- was borne of an initiative of Dr. Wale Adeniran (then Director of Institute of Cultural Studies) and his Vice Chancellor, Professor Roger Mekanjuola in their bid to resuscitate a 20-year abandoned OAU Ife International Festival of the Arts. WS being a veteran and Emeritus Professor of Dramatic Arts of the University and a moving force in the earlier festivals from 1968, responded with his unique and world-renowned capacity to convey dramatic messages, both visual and performative. He visualised pre-festival brand items, theme, exhibitions and performance flows with which we ran at the organising committee level. He painted unmatched spectacles 'seeable' by the discerning eyes particularly of our youthful audiences. The result -- a seamless animation of multiple venues for the festival within the ivory tower for one solid week.

I partook of this WS knack for cultural detailing. Be it the arrangement of one scene in a play or directing a whole Statewide festival like the 2010 LBHF (Lagos Black Heritage Festival) in which we were involved afterwards, WS exerted a deep artistic imprint. He chose the minute elements of the LBHF Festival logo form (the egúngún, the trumpeter and the ère Ibejì within three concentric rings). He then explained in lucid terms his preference for shades of brown (earthen colors), mixed with black and gold in putting the logo together. Inspiration for this perhaps emanated from a deeply entrenched Yoruba worldview. And when this was all done, WS had no hesitation in commending another, a design company headed by a young visual artist for the achievement. He sealed it approving full payment for the visual artist.

By this way, I pondered on what high encouragement this held for a young company. I marveled that this act of magnanimity would probably support the enlistment of another talented artist among the hordes or is it 'troupe' of young and bright artists and professionals worldwide, who are loyal and forever grateful to the WS brand and its impact on their lives. To this I lend my voice in confirming the true "Troop".

A prominent one among this is the overall producer and driver of the present project WSICE. An event that draws global attention to the big masquerade, the "ìgbàlè ìjègbá" and its adjoining market square once a year.

This nesting grove itself qualifies as another evidence of WS' visual strength in that it displays an uncanny artistic vision at integrating his life into nature. The Kongi abode with its surreality and quietude perhaps a charger of his creative batteries is now inculcated into the WSICE yearly celebration. The feedback is that of a resounding ovation to the worthy father of African arts.

WS, a teacher who spares no effort in his attention to feedback. He sought internet access by all means wherever he is, so he could attend to his emails. For example, in 2008, preparatory to the Ife Festival and in a provincial environment such as Ife of those days, he made sure daily to track his emails. This yielded great fruit as most of the international and national troupes that graced the festival grounds were rallied within the 10 days preceding the opening of the festival. Once the deployment pattern of performing troupes was decided, WS mailed requests for cultural troupes' attendance to key State Governors personally and we obtained favourable response which resulted in a successful outing. This crucial requirement also afforded my office (the unofficial Festival Designs office), the opportunity to host WS so we could use our wide and flat screen desktop computer sporting the WiFi modem. This he used in sending his emails once or twice daily. This habit was not affected as we later discovered, by the fact that WS was virtually more in the air than on the ground (going by his spate of air travels). Yet in the deployment of ICT he was way ahead in his generation. Much wondering was directed at whether there is a connection between the natural traits of Ogun -WS' Yoruba personality deity -- his affinity for the air, and his hunting of birds of the air. Whatever turns out, his is a visionary life to covet.

At more than four score eventful and action- filled years, one can only fathom that the spirit must progress consistently towards the spiritual and perhaps more towards the air, and the true state of an Òrìsà

Igba odún, odún kan baba.

Dr. Adejuwon is Curator of Wole Soyinka Museum, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife.; and immediate past Director General, National Troupe of Nigeria.

He makes us Think in more Complex Ways

(Tribute to Professor Wole Soyinka at 86, by DR. NDIDI NWANERI)

I AM sitting in the library of Loyola University, Chicago on a cold February night in 2012. I am due to present a 5-page philosophical reflection on a social justice issue at a social and political philosophy class by 9.45am. It is 1.20am – 7 hours before the class. I have no paper, no thesis – nothing. When you are dead anyway, you permit your mind wander ... human agency and autonomy as it relates to social justice... One of my favorite pieces of literature is Wole Soyinka's *Death and The King's Horseman*. In the story, the British colonial authorities did not think suicide should be part of anybody's job description. They therefore arrested Elesin Oba in order to prevent him from committing ritual suicide. And voila! WS — via DATKH — came to my rescue.

I used the story as an entry into the relationship between the rights of a citizen to his or her own life and the duties and obligations of the State to preserve the life of her citizens. Does the State's duty to protect her citizens justify the State interfering in a person's decision to take his or her own life?

Not many works of literature are able to provide material for philosophical analysis on state and personhood (as well as sociology, literature, history, politics, poetry and everything in between).

So, on your 86th birthday, I pay tribute to a master. Not to the person (I have not had the honour of meeting you in person), but to your work. Specifically, to the manner in which your body of work provides us with avenues to think in more complex ways. I finished the paper by 5am, and was able to present it by 10am. For the use of literature to demystify complex philosophical concepts, my paper was awarded an "A". And for that also, this student of yours pays tribute to you. Happy Birthday!

(Dr. Nwaneri is social philosopher and public speaker; www.ndidinwaneri.com)

An unshaken Araba...

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by DR. LEKAN BALOGUN)

AS Wole Soyinka turns 86, as the "Alaafin's stallion" gallops gracefully upon the waves and echoes of the sweet, enticing voice of the "Olohun-Iyo" and the soothing prodding of "Iyalaja" but with back turned to the trembling, unsteady hands of "Elesin Oba", as "Olunde" articulates the wisdom of his ancestry with the confidence of sages of old, genuine seekers of knowledge and willing neophytes must ponder the metaphor that Wole Soyinka represents for the Black world. In the country of his birth especially, Kongi remains an unshaken araba still, giving shelter to the disillusioned against storm and deceit, an ancient-modern araba which remains rooted to the soil of truth, the earth of conscience in the wilderness of "wolves and "jackals," those who have mortgaged on a plate of porridge the soul of their nation.

Inspired by both his worldview—his "compulsive mythopoesis"—and the teleological postulation of his ancestry and elsewhere for he is one who neither discountenances wisdom nor their sources, Soyinka's body of works remains a gushing fountain of knowledge from which this generation and the next will, and should, pause to drink; his ideology that he pursues without fear and philosophy that he articulates with near-prescient accuracy are a touchstone that is useful for this very generation to probe questions about their being.

For those who think, Kongi's has been nearly nine decades of adventure laced with commitment, creativity nurtured by vision, ingenuity supported by conviction; though native wisdom says one does not a crowd make, his life and works are a testimony to the fact that, indeed, a tree can sometimes make a forest.

(Dr. Balogun teaches Postcolonial Dramaturgies, Creative Writing and Performance Aesthetics in the Dept. of Creative Arts, at the University of Lagos, Akoka)

Father. Mentor. Teacher. Carer

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by MAKINDE ADENIRAN)

REMEMBER that day, so vivid, so real and still soothing when Wole Soyinka (WS) arrived at the rehearsal room of West Yorkshire Playhouse (WYP) in Leeds, Britain in 1995 during the event of Africa 95. We were preparing for the world premiere of one of his plays. Judy Kelly, the artistic director of Beatification of Area-boy (by WS) and Executive director of the WYP had announced "Mr. Soyinka is around to see us...", that was when the problem started...

In my growing up days, I had wished, as a small boy whose favorite subject was literature, to meet the Wole Soyinka of that "Abiku" poem and other confusing literature books we had read, yet so important to being academically brilliant in the midst of your school mates and teachers. That wish of my youthful foolishness was merely a dream. Such dream one never pursues because they mean nothing anyway. It was one of those wishes to merely soothe my youthful grandiose feeling of nothingness.

That day in Leeds, after Judy's announcement, WS sauntered in. In his usual simplistic appearance, with that very reassuring and warm smile (you really can't read WS's intention by merely looking at his face). Uncle Tunji Oyelana, (and the now late) Chief Wale Ogunyemi and Yomi Otileye), and the rest stood almost immediately in cult-like salutation, yet, that smile was disarming! He began to shake hands with each and everybody lined up in the cast, then he got to me. My mind ran wild! I was confused! Didn't know whether to go ahead and shake or prostrate to this overwhelming, suffocating and larger than life image that my youthful foolishness had conjured, standing right before me.

As if he knew I was being traumatised by his image, he waited briefly in front of me so to allow me settle and most important, to make up my mind on how to greet him. It was in winter but I was sweating. Suddenly the thought came back! The mere wishful thinking that I never pursued, that wish that was never meant to happen has rolled over itself to reality. Anyway, WS took my undecided hand on my way down to prostrate. He shook my hand reassuringly and beamed his smile at me as if the ghost of my youthful foolishness had come to haunt me...

Since then, WS has been a father, a mentor, a teacher, and most important of all, the man who cares for me more than I could myself.

Happy birthday Prof.

(Adeniran, FTA, actor, theatre director, is Chairman National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP Lagos Chapter)

A Humanist

(On the Occasion of our International Day of Honour: Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by ROPO EWENLA)

DARE I say no honour beats this one to pen a few lines of congratulations to a persona who has since defined our humanism not only in his literary and critical works but also in his interventionist introspection of the basis of our collective as a human race. This is nothing but a toast to a man who dares angels to fly where he has strolled by. Indeed, O gu n, with the mischievous cleverness of La a lu and ru nmi la with his inexhaustible bag of wit have been as faithful to you has you have been to your cause. May you forever be energized like fresh froth of the palm's milk.

A ku' ayy ori' ka'dun o'ni'.

Ire owo', m, ire a'iku' baa'l' r'.

A'bo'ta'n l'Edumare n' bo i'di' i'gbi'n

Gbogbo is' ti' a'gba'ra' ba' se

Odo' ni' i' fii' fu'n

I'fa' ile'

I'fa' oko

Ko' ma'a b' l'd' r

A ki'i' pa o'ke'te'

Ka' ma' fa' a' ni' i'ru'

L'j' ta'a ba' fa' irun ori'

O'mi'ra'n a hu' pa'a'r

Owo' ko' ni' w'n wa

Lo'ke'lo'ke' lmu n' ru si'

Lo'ke'lo'ke' la o' ma'a l.

Ire du'n yi'i' ko' ma' ni'i' di i'ba'nu'j' ""mi'n i'n, ire gbogbo ka' sa'i' wa'raa wn wa' o',

ire gbogbo. Agbo', at' l'la' a'la'wu'ra' ti'i' j'l'run ba.

Ropo Ewenla, poet, actor, activist

Freedom Fighter. Defender of Human Life

*(I Went to School because of Wole Soyinka: Tribute by
UZORAMACHUKWU MAXIM UZOATU)*

I DID not want anything to do with schooling anymore, being much of a tearaway in my youth -- then I saw the name of Professor Wole Soyinka as the Head of the Dramatic Arts Department at the then University of Ife. My plans had been to head into the bush to change the system as a guerrilla fighter but once I learnt of the Soyinka school at Great Ife I applied and was taken. Aside from his genius in literature, Soyinka ranks amongst the greatest freedom fighters ever, a foremost defender of the sanctity of human life. The first African to win the coveted Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986, he is an accomplished playwright, poet, novelist, memoirist, filmmaker, director, translator, actor, director, singer, activist, humanist, aesthete, connoisseur, and above all else, a human being, a remarkable one. Even the elements celebrate him. It's cool by me to bear witness to 86 thunders for my teacher and mentor, the immortal WS!

As ever your student

Uzoatu is a poet and journalist

A Mentor

(Tribute Wole Soyinka at 86th birthday, by FOLUKE MICHAEL)

I HAD his picture created on my mind's eyes; as a child, I always loved to read his short literature; participate in social studies discussion; with a wish to meet him some day...

My wish indeed came to pass in 2002 in faraway Italy. I was in the beautiful city of Firenze for an important assignment -- the 1st edition of Caterina de' medici International Painting competition with four (4) other Nigerian artists! A journey surrounded by unknown but ended up with divine recognition and a short note addressed to me -- to meet him on my return from Brussels. I met him in Nigeria a month later... And my life changed!

I have known Prof. Wole Soyinka for 18 years as my teacher, leader, boss, instructor and a great father who mentored me from a mere dreamer to an achiever.

Eighty- Six years ago, the almighty God sent a gift of inestimable value to the world as a blessing to mankind! How much of him do you know? Prof. WS is a giver, a truth speaker, dogged fighter, nation builder, lover of children and a very fearless personality, with over one hundred and twenty percent of Integrity in his gene. His love for Nigeria is matchless, he once painted his dream of a new Nigeria where hunger, suffering, corruption and bad leadership are gone into extinct.

I'm glad to be a brilliant student of 'Wole Soyinka School of Wisdom'!

Happy Birthday Father.

Foluke Michael, social worker, youth activist

Blessing to our Earth

(I Am A Devotee...: Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by SEGUN ADEFILA)

ENI mòó ò kòó, eni kòó ò mòó. Loosely meaning: those who know him have not met him, those who meet him, do not know him. There are a privileged few who know him and have met him. These are the ones I hope to be among.

I have found myself a couple of times in his presence, times I hope would linger longer but chose to fly fleetingly. Rare and cherished moments for me.

Like many people in my shoes, I had read and heard so much about WS before I met him that I could lay claim to being his childhood friend!

The myths, legends and stories! My mentors adore him; my teachers are in awe of him. Almost everyone I cherish knows or has heard of him. Even my maternal grandfather, who fought in the second European Civil War (aka World War 2) once described WS as a man of valour.

One of the kindest and firmest hearts I have ever met. You could see and feel it immediately if you are lucky enough to safely scale the fence and be among those who know him and have met him. In his presence, the elements assume a new poise. Nothing appears ordinary: the wind, water, fire, earth and all. The intangible becomes tangible and the tangible becomes intangible.

My whole being vibrate. I am at ease and taut at the same time.

If you have wondered what my greatest achievement might be, it is certainly not the plays and dances I have performed. It is the rare fact that WS knows me by name! Wo, 'Eni bà ló mò'. Dazall.

One-day friend, enemy, and finally friend, Wole Oguntokun was the one that called me to ask if it was okay to give my phone number to Prof! I asked him which Prof? And he said, Professor Wole Soyinka!

Haaa! I screamed, with my mouth rounded like when you scream Bariga. Which kain human being is this Wole sef? Asking me if it was okay to give my Muse my number! If that was not okay, then I am probably not okay myself. 'Give him oooo,' I shouted.

Then some days later, I got a call from the mystical one himself! My phone rang and it was

that rich, deep voice on the other end! I cannot explain how I did not faint at that very moment. He gave me an appointment to see him and that was how my one-on-one encounters with him began.

Now, let me share two out of my few remarkable encounters with him.

One is the trepidation with which I send him emails. When WS says 'Send me a mail...'. I wonder if he knows the kind of terror that runs through one's veins. This may not be a general statement o. This is my own case. How does one send a mail to WS in English language! So, I would type, cancel and retype again and also ensure the mail is as brief as possible to hide my linguistic infirmities.

One particular mail comes to mind: where I wrote: 'you can be rest assured sir that...' and was so proud of this singular feat. Well, until I got his reply where he corrected me like the seasoned teacher and kind father that he is:

He said something to the effect of, 'it's okay to simply say "be assured" in this context as "rest assured" means "your rest is assured".'

It was that kind of correction that makes you feel good.

That is the type I get from WS whenever I goof. If you however know what is good for you, you had better not get too careless because he suffers no fool gladly.

One other example. During one of the events lined up to celebrate his 80th birthday, and he directed his classic play, The Beatification of Area Boys, yours truly was graciously allowed to handle the choreography. I was to be guided by another father, the father, as a matter of fact, of us (dancers and choreographers): Peter Badejo OBE.

It was a dream come true for me. I was, at last, going to be working with (actually learning directly from) the Great One.

As we say in Nigeria, I had finally arrived, and I was not about to let anyone, or anything stand in my way.

As an aside, until then I had kept a secret close to my chest. Unlike some, I do not find most of Soyinka's plays too abstract or difficult to take on! This is quite a feat, but I dare not boast publicly about it, so I had kept it a secret, well till now. That you write or speak English perfectly does not guarantee your full apprehension of Kongi's rhetorical ecologies. I oftentimes imagine myself a child roaming in the garden of his mind, and he, hovering somewhere above me and whispering the meaning of his words to me. Perhaps I also owe

my immodest claim to my Yoruba origin, which I share with the sage. Yoruba elders speak in elevated languages and the ability to decode these languages sometimes helps one to crack those nuts buried in 'hot embers.'

I have myself directed a few of his plays from the 'simple' to the 'not-so-simple' ones. The Lion and the Jewel. The Trials of Brother Jero. Death and the King's Horseman. Kongi's Harvest. The Swamp Dwellers, and A Dance of the Forests.

In these works, whenever I come across a knot too tight to loosen, I resort to primordial gestures of dance. Simple. When it is too hard to explain, we dance it out!

Long digression.

Back to The Beatification of Area Boys.

It was at the famous culture hub, Freedom Park, Broad Street, Lagos. It may be a mixture of the two, that is 'over-sabi' but certainly, youthful exuberance that pushed me to jump on stage one day while WS was working with an actor.

I couldn't contain my frustration, so I just went on stage and told the actor who was supposed to lead the wedding scene. I couldn't contain myself when I went up to her to ask her if she knew who an 'Alága-ìjókòó' stands for in a traditional Yoruba wedding 'performance.' I told her that was the role she was playing. I urged her not to get too overwhelmed by the role. In my mind, I was 'decoding' o, until I heard Kongi's thunderous voice ordering me out of the set in anger.

It took me time to realise my foolishness, the aberration! Who barges in on a set while the director is busy working! Without the director's permission, it's a no, no. I could easily have made my observations known to the stage manager, who was also present.

Anyway, I was nonetheless hurt by the reprimand. I felt rejected by my Muse. I had taken a wrong step again! But could this demigod not see through me? Could he not see the innocence of my error? Did he not know how much I adored him? Okay, maybe, just maybe I can never fit into the 'privileged few' who know and have met him.

So, I withdrew into my shell and never ventured out of my space. I left everything and became a robot. I fought my emotional attachment to the man and the work and decided to 'dey my dey'. I would get to rehearsals, do my part and shut out every other thing. And you know what?

He NOTICED Me!

He saw through a mere midget like me! Surrounded by the giants of our crafts, the ones I adored from afar; the ones I had heard so much about and admired, watched and listened to from childhood. WS noticed my withdrawal tantrums, looking away from the cultural heavyweights around him! So, one day after one of the rehearsals, he called me, and our dialogue went something like this:

WS: Young man, next time, you don't go on stage while a director is working with an actor. If you have any notes, make them known to the stage manager, okay?

Me: Yes sir. I'm sorry sir.

WS: It's okay. I have observed that you've been a bit withdrawn for a couple of days now and I want you to go on with your work with the enthusiasm you started with. But don't you dare jump on my set without my permission. (He glared at me and when I looked into his eyes, I saw the characteristic fatherly warmth, patience and kindness lurking somewhere behind the mischievous glare).

Boy o'boy!

That encounter ehn! I felt like I owned more than a billion dollars in my bank account. I felt so good that his status as deity among us mere mortals solidified more in my heart.

I have over the years been supported, encouraged and even pampered by this great man. His birthday is a special day for me. It is a day to celebrate Mother Earth for her benevolence. There are historical factors and accidents of history. Wole Soyinka is one huge historical factor that is a blessing to our earth.

Eni Ògûn! Omo Essay! Omo Wild Christian!

Let me say it here again.

I AM A WOLE SOYINKA DEVOTEE.

Adefila, actor, dancer, he is founder/artistic director Crown Troupe of Africa)

Power. Fame. Brain. Spirit

(The Avatar...: Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by OLU AJAYI)

They never knew him, but through his books he told them who he is, they doubted him for it was too true to be true, for they live in the world of lies. Grapes! No! Yes! Have become mature wine, a drink for celebration. Bush fowl nko? The type brought home by hunters, Yes! I like that too. I can hear some rumbling in the jungle, someone has woken trouble up; how? By lying... that three letter word that inspired a book as a response. O yes! Who are those men gathered in red colour waist coat over white shirts? Oh! Pyrates. An inspiration that originated in Ibadan sixty-eight years ago. Seven has become Seven thousand active officers, sworn enemies of moribund convention and the best in all discipline, all graduate quality foot soldiers. Wow!

I remember before our road, I mean when motorists considered best behavior on our roads. Road Safety Corps. Another inspiration now an institution, employing and given families hope.

Most painted portrait by Artist (trained and untrained) of an individual. Most photographed by photo journalist, hobbyist. And by-standers. A casual reader's headache... I can't understand THE MAN DIED. A face better than currency.

Easily recognised by name and image, even by an eight-year-old in the mosaic of faces. How great!

Aging gracefully personified. But with firm steps and poise
Changed the way others and I are described... see your hair like Wole Soyinka own.
Power, Fame, Brain wrapped in beautiful skin, the envy of women.
The monk that made Dressing casual. A symbol of strength

The spirit, yes if you doubt it ask the messenger in your office if Wole Soyinka is a spirit. Nobody knows where the sun sleeps
Father with a kind heart to me,
Humanity at the centre of it all. I thank God the creator of the Avatar for his blessings.

May more years of good health be yours.
"Ogun Kanako of NASA"
Amen!

Ajayi, painter, is director *Olu Ajayi Studios*; initiator of *Living Legends* project

He Shaped my Life

(Dear KONGI: Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, YINKA DAVIES)

Dearest Oga KONGI

You do not know me but, two, of your sons in the arts, took me through some sweet grueling journey into stage acting, just for some few years that left an indelible mark on me as an actor.

Mr. Chuck Mike employed this small me in 1989, to play a serious role for the final year students of some of the universities in Nigeria.

As a matter of fact, the late Bassey Effiong, directed The Road in 1988 and taught all the ladies to handle stage lightings of the play; oh boy, were we excited! It was performed in the main hall of the National Theatre. I had to handle the spotlight! Me thinks, that was what your other son, Mr. Felix Okolo, saw and endowed me with improvisational skills that I still incorporate into my music, stylishly.

I remember when Uncle Bayo Oduneye directed Death & The King's Horseman in 1990 and the late Funso Alabi playing Brother Jero in Trials of Brother Jero...

How i struggled to be done with my secondary school examination was a surprise to all as i was always at the National Theatre, helping out backstage or, taking up minor roles.

I read about you, taking over a radio station one time and i thought to myself, if all these incredible people like yourself, did such mind-blowing work when Nigeria was great, what can we do now that, all the industries that can show children great experiences and aspirations are run aground

My heart desire, is to actually sit and learn more from you soon and i hope you will oblige me sir.

Happy birthday, oh great the Baroka of my life!

Thank you so much for who you are sir

Yours sincerely,
Layinka

Ms. Davies is an actor and singer

Born to Change the World...

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka, by LUCILE HUGUET)

SIX years ago... Six years ago, I arrived in Nigeria on the 10th of July 2014 at 5am, stressed out, but eager. It was my first visit ever and I came to humbly give a presentation at a conference on Wole Soyinka, hosted at the University of Lagos. He wasn't there but all the wonderful scholars and specialists who had spent their lives studying him were here.

I had discovered Wole Soyinka in France when I was studying for my Master's degree in English literature. We studied his play, *Death and the King's Horseman*. What great fortune. He was the first African writer I encountered, when focusing on post-colonialism. I remember my teacher being really enthusiastic about Wole Soyinka and now I can affirm, I understand why.

I have always thought that this play is an easy work/step to dive in Wole Soyinka's world, being a young, white, French woman. Later on, studying and researching in the USA for a year, I met prof. Olusegun Ojewuyi, who helped me grasp the depths of the play and Wole Soyinka's intersectional body of works as a writer of global import, steeped in his Yoruba culture. Professor Ojewuyi gave me so much more direction, meaning, and, research; introducing me to Nigerian history, Yoruba culture and dramatic literature. I now know that though I will never totally get or understand Wole Soyinka's work, I will always be drawn to the depths of his culture, intellect and his consciousness as a literary artist.

What is most astonishing with Wole Soyinka, is the will of this man. He was born to change the world, across racial, cultural divides, to make people live in a better and more humane world (*The Road*); and be more aware of the conflicted relationship between pastoral 'prophecies' and lustful desires, the exploitative and abusive patriarchy of church and state over the congregation and the people (*The Trials of Brother Jero*). He never failed his destiny in serving his fellow Nigerians, Africans and the world. And recently, in his advanced years, his activism has not ebbed, taking a clear position on the death of George Floyd, denouncing the systemic oppression of Black people in the US. By his work, his determination and his engagement, Wole Soyinka is a model, more than a Nobel prize, with a mission to change the world. It is a great honor to live in his time and be able to say these words.

Huguet is a journalist with the French public TV channel, *Franceinfo*

Fighter for Freedom, Justice...

(A luminary of creative writing breathes on: Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by NATHAN KIWERE)

IT is a great honour to be treading on the same soil with one of Africa's foremost literary icons of all time that is still breathing. As I write this tribute, I am well aware that those that have done this before me have probably used, reused and run out of superlatives to describe your great achievements. I am therefore under no illusion that I can appropriately marshal the right combination of words to give you the kind of befitting tribute that you deserve. That being said, I believe that among the many things that you have bequeathed to humanity are your impassioned pieces of literature that have set a high threshold for us your fellows in the trade to reach. You have created a larger-than-life reputation that current and succeeding generations will have to work so hard to reach or even surpass. These treasures remain a permanent memorial upon which posterity will benchmark in the quest for the highest. To borrow from your own words, "...And I believe that the best learning process of any kind of craft is just to look at the work of others."

You have fought a good fight and paid the price for freedom and justice in your native country and around the continent, a fight that will be pondered for generations. You have voiced in much of your writings about the "oppressive boot and the irrelevance of the colour of the foot that wears it." Your voice has been heard loud and clear. We have heard it in Uganda where I hail from and we applaud it. We seek to build on the steps that you have created with your works in the furtherance of the dream of the Africa you envisioned. Your legacy echoes the wise words of J D Bernal, who wrote in *Science in History* that, "Knowledge that is not being used for winning of further knowledge does not even remain- it decays and disappears." We pledge to keep the knowledge you have bestowed upon us alive and to assure you that your countless years of literary productivity will never be in vain!

I wish you a very happy 86th birthday and look forward to more.

Kiwere, writer/publisher is CEO Sisi Africa www.sisiafrica.net



Letter from **Michael Li**, founder Shenmo Education Institute

贺 信

尊敬的沃莱·索因卡阁下并“WSICE”：

值此沃莱·索因卡国际文化交流中心 2020 年年度文化活动举办之际，我在中国北京向沃莱·索因卡先生致以诚挚问候和崇高敬意，向本次文化活动的顺利举行表达衷心的祝贺！

作为非洲首位诺贝尔文学奖获得者，沃莱·索因卡先生的文学作品从上世纪 80 年代就开始在中国出版，透过索因卡先生的文学创作和人生历程，不仅让我和中国人民对非洲文化有了更多理解，也让我们强烈感受到了人性的光辉和精神的力量。

本次年度文化活动的主题为“I AM because YOU ARE”。在中国的文化观念当中，人与人之间，人与自然万物之间都存在着紧密的关联，和谐相处，美美与共，是我们共同的期许。很荣幸也很开心能够有机会通过远程视频的方式在论坛中和大家分享我的经历和思考。

希望新冠肺炎疫情早日过去！

祝沃莱·索因卡先生健康长寿！

祝本次文化活动圆满成功！

李锦军 Michael John Li
2020 年 7 月 1 日于北京

—— 贺 / 索 / 因 / 卡 / 阁 / 下 ——



Man of Courage and Vision

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by LI-RONG LILLY CHENG)

Dear Professor Wole Soyinka,

Greetings from San Diego, California. I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of your 86th birthday. It gives me great joy to participate in the 11th annual Wole Soyinka International Cultural Exchange program.

Given the current global pandemic, it is so important that we increase our connectivity through multiple means. The central theme of this celebration of humanity is: I AM because YOU ARE, which makes great sense in these challenging times. We must improve and increase our understanding of humanity and human connectivity. It is even more imperative to understand the importance of our mutual existence.

We are grateful for your leadership, courage and vision. This program provides an excellent platform for youths around the globe to connect. I am thankful that we can enjoy the happiness and synergy that we create together.

Indeed, it is through our human resilience that we will not only survive but also thrive. Each human being is precious and each life is valuable. We must work together upholding the principle of humility in this very unusual era of human history. As we make history together we must continue to pursue happiness and to respect human humility and dignity in order to create a better world for tomorrow.

Again, I offer my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the 86th birthday of our dearest Nobel laureate Professor Wole Soyinka. I wish you the best of health and happiness.

(Professor Cheng, Director, Chinese Cultural Center at San Diego State University, California, USA)

He Uplifts the World

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by CRISTIAN AQUINO-STERLING)

July 13, 2020

Dear Sir Wole Soyinka:

It is a profound pleasure to be given the opportunity to celebrate you, your life, your humanity, your accomplishments and, most importantly, the audacity and commitment that has led you to answering the call to uplift the world!

On this your 86th birthday —celebrated in awe, wonder, community and joy across towns, cities, countries, continents, languages, cultures, social classes, races, and ethnicities— I ask the Universal Energy of Love and Common Humanity to continue to guide you, bless you, and make you ever strong in spirit, soul, and body! May you continue to be guided by the wisdom of your inner Self; and may you and your loved ones share in the joy and beauty you bring to the world through your writings, advocacy, and commitment to make this world a much, much better place for all.

Happy Birthday!

With great respect and admiration,

Dr. Aquino-Sterling, Associate Professor and Associate Dean for Diversity and International Affairs College of Education, San Diego State University, California, USA

Very Special Human Being

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by KENNETH OLUMUYIWA THARP)

As the first African to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, Wole Soyinka is, without doubt, one of the literary giants of our time. The Africa Centre is thrilled to see his great work and legacy celebrated with the continuation of the WS International Cultural Exchange Programme and Essay Competition.

On a more personal level, my introduction to African literature was through the works of Chinua Achebe. I remember first reading Soyinka's *The Man Died: Prison Notes* of Wole Soyinka as a young man. His life and works had added resonance for me, knowing that he was born near Abeokuta, the spiritual home of the Egba people of Nigeria; and knowing that he attended the renowned Abeokuta Boy's Grammar School at the same time as my late father, Professor Gabriel Oluwole Esuruoso.

But the thing about such a great writer as Soyinka, is that they transcend all sorts of boundaries. You do not have to be from Abeokuta, or Nigeria, or even from the African continent to appreciate and treasure their work. As a playwright, as well as author, essayist and political activist, Soyinka is one of those rare human beings who defy easy categorisation. He is, put most simply, and above all, a very special human being.

As such I'm really delighted that The Africa Centre is able to lend its support to this forthcoming Wole Soyinka Symposium and Essay Competition and add our voice in tribute to this great African on his 86th Birthday.

Kenneth Olumuyiwa Tharp CBE, is Director, The Africa Centre

Leader. Motivator. Inspiration

One who conjures up words, seemingly out of thin air

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka @86, by TAIWO OBILEYE)

CONSIDER it an honour to be asked to write a tribute to Professor Wole Soyinka on his 86th Birthday.

But then, there lies the problem, because, as they say, what do you give a man who has everything? What words would one use to describe him, which have not been used before?

So, one would have to think up new words. But, here, again, I am stymied. Because, not everyone is a Kongi, not everyone is a Wole Soyinka who conjures up words, seemingly out of thin air, with such facility -- not for nothing is he the only Nigerian Nobel Laureate in Literature.

Anyway, I'll just bite the bullet and get stuck in.

I have known, read of, and had personal contact with Uncle Wole, Prof, Kongi -- a few of the names he is known by -- for over 50 years now, dating back to my student days at the University of Ibadan, and my relationship with the Arts Theatre, far though it was from my Faculty of Agriculture. Plus, the odd productions at M'bari, and my first appearance in a big-screen movie, *Kongi's Harvest*, a movie adapted from Prof's widely acclaimed publication, and from which his younger associates and protégés derived the nickname by which he is fondly known -- Kongi.

Professor Soyinka is a highly cerebral individual. His epithets -- Professor, Nobel Laureate, as well as his many writings, are proof of that.

Uncle Wole is a good Leader, Motivator, and Inspiration to people of different ages, young and elderly. This is highlighted by the loyalty almost all of his students and younger friends and associates still show towards him.

Prof is a very disciplined person, one proof of which is the trim figure which he still maintains at his age -- not for him the pot belly of some who are even younger than he. He disciplines himself to work at it. When Uncle Wole holds a conviction, he holds strongly to it and exerts himself no end to see that his project comes to fruition.

As you celebrate your 86th Birthday, Prof, I pray God to grant you many more years of Health, Happiness, Fulfillment, and Service to the Nation and the large number of people, young and not-so-young, that you still inspire and nurture.

Happy Birthday, Kongi!

My elder brother, Yomi, who was much closer to you, would have loved to be a part of this celebration.

But, he passed on.

(Obileye is a veteran Broadcaster, Actor and TV personality)

Pride of People of African descent

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by Bob-Manuel Udokwu)

Is there something about 86? I'm beginning to wonder. Perhaps there is something significant about it.

I have never been asked to write a tribute to the great one and only Nobel laureate in literature from Nigeria. However, each year I come across activities marking the celebration of his birthday in the mass media.

When the organisers of his birthday celebration this year asked me to do a tribute to him at 86, something clicked in my mind about the number 86!

I recall that it was as a student of Theatre Arts in 1986 in the Department of Creative Arts, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, I encountered Wole Soyinka very closely through some of his great dramatic works.

During the departmental stage production of *"The Lion and The Jewel,"* I played the role of the controversial male leading character 'Teacher Lakunle.' It was an enriching theatrical experience and so were other dramatic works of Wole Soyinka which I was part of in those days.

However, the most challenging experience I had playing a major character in any of his plays was the enigmatic 'Professor' in *"The Road."* It was a daunting task and a deep learning experience which sharpened my skills in acting, character analysis and development, script interpretation, delivering of very long monologues and unusual theatre experience. It brought home to me the genius and depth of Wole Soyinka's creativity.

Our stage production of *"The Road"* in 1986 was a run-away success. It was such a huge success that *The Guardian* newspaper captured it in a wonderful article titled *"Uniport Theatre and the challenge of The Road,"* accompanied with a photograph of my humble self, playing the role of the "Professor" on stage. The article was written by the well-respected writer and critic, Jahman Anikulapo.

When Wole Soyinka was announced as winner of the 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature, it was a personal pleasure for me. I saw and still see him not just as a pride for Nigeria or Africa but a pride for people of African descent across the globe.

My only regret (if I may call it that) is I haven't been lucky enough to be in a play directed by the Kongi himself! Perhaps providence will avail me the opportunity someday.

There is no doubt that many across the world have drank from the fountain of Professor Wole Soyinka's creative stream. A man who stands for what is right at all times no matter what personal discomforts such actions might bring. A man who like a prism, shines different dazzling lights and therefore represent different things to different people. An enigma! He is simply a great gift to humanity.

Prof, as we in Nigeria, Africa and the world celebrate you at 86, I thank you most profoundly for the priceless legacies which you have bequeathed mankind through your very large volumes of work. May you remain in good health, sound mind and continued longevity for the continued benefit of mankind and to the glory of God.

Happy birthday, Sir!

Udokwu, VAN. FCAI., is an actor, director and producer

Humorous. Stern. Disciplined. Humane

(Soyinka: *Man or Spirit: Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86*, by CHARLES UKPONG, fta)

ENCOUNTERING Soyinka, the Author in *Kongi's Harvest*, I thought he was a spirit not man. After winning the Nobel prize for Literature in 1986; a very rare feat no Nigerian has been able to attain yet, the duo of Kunle Adeyemo and Akpor Otebele (late) of KAPO Productions announced the production of the much-dreaded literary masterpiece *Kongi's Harvest* to celebrate Soyinka's Nobel prize. As I read through the play preparing for the audition to feature in the epoch performance, I must confess my young mind could not grasp the meaning nor the thrust of the play at the time. I then concluded Soyinka is a spirit. Though I missed featuring in the production due to family commitment, I was duly present at the feast held at the Mainbowl of the National Theatre with the late *Ikemba* of Nnewi, Dim Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu as Chairman. It was a sheer delight of a performance to watch but unfortunately Soyinka was absent; further lending credence to my belief that he is a spirit that must not be seen in daylight. (lol)

Featuring as lead in *The Lion and the Jewel*, *Trials of Brother Jero* and *The Road* where the garage boys idolise him in the song "*Professor anjonu tawa, Professor anjonu tawa ni...*" I concluded further, unequivocally, that Soyinka is a spirit. *Finito!* I would later, in 2001, encounter Soyinka, the Man. Makinde Adeniran, a staunch Soyinka acolyte had made it possible for me to attend a closed audition of select actors for Soyinka's latest play — *King Baabu*. A collaboration of Nigerian-British-Swiss Creatives, *King Baabu*, produced by Niggi Popp featured late Wale Ogunyemi, Tunji Oyelana, Tosan Ugbeye, Ayo Lijadu, Makinde Adeniran, Tunji Sotimirin, late Victor Eze, Bassey Okon-Esanetok, Kehinde Adeyemo, late Ombo Gogo Ombo, Anthony Ofoegbu, late Yomi Michael, Susan Aderin, Mercia Hewitt and Yours truly. In the 30 days of rehearsal tucked away in ASCON Badagry as well as the one month of performances in Lagos, Ibadan, Benin, Zurich and Dusseldorf, I shared the same space — dine, wine, work — with Prof. I met for the first time in my career the very humorous WS, the stern but disciplined WS and ultimately, the humane WS. It was a fulfilling moment for me as an actor. But what I couldn't subject my small brain to fathom at the time is Prof's ease outside the country. He is more relaxed anywhere else but Nigeria. In all the performances in Nigeria, just before curtain call, Prof disappears while outside the country, he would gleefully mingle with the audience after the performance. I would later understand that the Abacha "hunting" days played a part in that demeanour.

Two things, however, remain indelible in my encounter of Soyinka, the Man. We had arrived Zurich early morning, after a long 8 hours flight, tired with jetlag. Soon after settling into our hotel rooms, we had to find our way to the rehearsal space some kilometres away from our hotel where Prof was waiting for us. We had a grueling rehearsal session which took the excitement off our faces. Next day came the world premiere. We again had to have a run-through at the facility in a boatyard which was converted to performance hall in order to have a feel of the stage. Even as the audience kept the standing ovation on for upward of 10 minutes, the performance to Prof was a lack-lustre.

Chikena!

Surprisingly, Prof neither screamed nor howled at us. He simply said, "Please forgive me for subjecting you to a full run in the morning of the world premiere. I was wrong to have thought that you were super- humans who could pull off a fantastic showing. Unfortunately, you are not."

Second is when Kehinde Adeyemo could not be located moments before a scheduled performance. Unperturbed, Prof simply asked Niji Akanni, the Assistant Director to grab the script; prepare to mount the stage and just read the lines from the script. Unheard of.

Few minutes to opening, Kehinde arrives. Prof neither scowled at her nor asked what happened. He simply relieved Niji of the burden and asked her to get into costumes.

To the outside world; those yet to encounter him, Soyinka is a literary giant, a complex being, a spirit that cannot be ordinarily deciphered -- a characteristic they believed won him the Nobel prize. But to us, Prof Wole Soyinka is an embodiment of humanity, compassionate to a fault.

As he ages gracefully with every inch towards 90, he is like a fine wine; but more interestingly, like onions, as you peel each layer, the more you encounter the humanity that encapsulates the spirit-man, Soyinka.

At 86 and beyond it, may the Spirit that propels Soyinka the Man to transcend immortality.

Best wishes on your birthday *Eni-Ogun*.

Ukpong, fta, is an actor, director and photographer

Speech Teacher. Director. Mentor He gave me the Hallmark of my Skill as an Actor

(*Colours of His Mane I Saw...: Tribute The Lion at 86,*
by CLARION CHUKWURAH)

Most People call him Kongi from his African classic play, *Kongi's Harvest*, but I call him, The Lion, initially inspired by his first play that I read at age 14, *Lion and the Jewel*; and cemented by my first sight of him. Before meeting, being taught and working with The Lion, and after, I had and have worked with notable Directors, listening to those who revered him and those who hated him, but the one thing all agreed on is that he is the King who bestrides our world as a Colossus so much so that every Playwright, Director, Poet, or Teacher of Theatre and/or Literature want to be a Wole Soyinka.

My unforgettable first sight of The Lion was on an early November evening in 1981, about 5pm, as he walked down the hallway from his office at the Department of Dramatic Arts at the then University of Ile Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), where I had just been admitted to study Acting and Speech. I watched in awe from a corner as he walked towards me in short sleeves shirt and slacks but it was the head with the full hair of white on black and the slightly frowning face bearing sharp penetrating eyes behind glasses, that cemented my preference for "The Lion", in place of Kongi, the INSTITUTIONAL name.

I met The Lion as a 17-year old student of Dramatic Arts, however, my Wole Soyinka Experience as a student which lasted only seven months but impacted my lifetime began with the rehearsals for the Wole Soyinka premiere production of the play that was actually the first play he wrote, *Camwood on the Leaves*, which gave an insight into his teenage struggle for individualism, self-expression and self-determination. He was my Head of Department, my Speech Teacher, my Director, and my Mentor for that space of time. He gave me the hallmark of my skill as an actor, The Psychology of Interpretation. He gave me the understanding that whatever direction my future will go will be my decision and I must make the choice not anybody else. He gave me the Acting Character opportunity in his play *Camwood on the Leaves* that ultimately

positioned me for who I am today by being the singular production that determined the course of my career and my life.

He introduced me to American legendary actress, Cicely Tyson who gave me permission to use her name as a reference and; the first woman to teach me Etiquette — Nigeria's first female Permanent Secretary in Public Service, Artist and Patron of the Arts, Mrs. Francesca Emmanuel C.O.N, (late); and I was privileged to also work with The Lion in his experimental short film in the same 1982.

At 86, Professor Wole Soyinka has lived a full life. I remember the most amazing words I ever heard when he spoke these opening words from one of his poems in defense of who we are as Black People, which today 38 years later, informs my title for this tribute...

"White is a Colour for Occasions, Black is a Colour for Everyday..."

I saw the Colours of His Mane... his cooking his own special mix of Okro and Greens, his love for rare wine: Chablis 1929, his wise views of an Egba Traditionalist who continues to argue for a return to traditional ideas, still believes in his ancestral Egba ideals and lifestyle, despite having added a word or two to the English language.

OLUVOLE I' Egba Alake,

Ake nki o, o!

Brother Jero transplanted to Jero's Metamorphosis,

Mo ki o lati Ebuikoko li Ibara,

L' Abeokuta, li ibi ti Eru ti nsin ni.

Kiniun ti ki' n беру eniken,

Happy 86th Birthday to You!!!

Live longer in Excellent Health.

Amb. Clarion Chukwurah Abiola,

(U.N. Peace Ambassador/Nigeria Peace Corps Lagos, Nigeria)

Courageous Fighter, Consistent in Struggles to Liberate us

(A tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by RICHARD MOFE-DAMIJO)

“The hand that dips into the bottom of the pot will eat the biggest snail.” This has to be one of my favourite quotes from the Prof. A life worth greatly celebrating but one which has not been without its challenges and obstacles. The bones he has had to wade through in this pot of life that has been unevenly and most times harshly brewed, many of which have left him with cuts, bruises and scars, yet here we are, 86 years down the road, from the domains of Ake, life’s journey began for this giant as he set forth at dawn dancing into dry forests filled with Lions and their jewels, falling and rising but not without bleeding. Open sores for a continent he calls home. Most times taking up the role as an interpreter of the African’s struggle leading to consequences were the ordinary Man would have died but alas this is no ordinary man and even when surrounded in a Climate of Fear he remains the Master not just of Playwrights but of all advocates, fighting for the betterment of Brother Jero, Sister Comfort and all who wear this skin called African. He has struggled to liberate us from a system filled with many Madmen and their specialists engaging in a play of giants where many have fallen but he remains, standing tall. Indeed, the Road has not been easy and 86 down the path we throw a huge Salutation to your guts, courage and achievements. Happy birthday Prof.

Mofe-Damijo, actor, journalist, TV personality

Blessed with his Writing, his Presence, his Spirit

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by NSE IKPE ETIM)

WHEN I was asked to write a tribute about poet laureate Wole Soyinka I felt immediately intimidated as so many questions rampaged through my mind. How does one write about such a huge personality? And how did they know to ask me? How did they know that this was a man whose writing had touched my life on so many personal levels? Giving me clearance and understanding when I felt doubtful and lost.

I remember once when I was contemplating the idea of oneness and evolution, when I was asking questions about life, who I am, where I’m from and where I was going.

Lots of people would think that I am talking about myself in the physical, my career or my love life perhaps. But rather, I was questioning something much bigger, the fact that we are all part of something greater and that who we are in the physical can sometimes hinder us from who we can become. As Wole Soyinka’s voice once again gave me clearance on the topic, the same way his wise words have accompanied me all through my life time.

“There is only one home to the life of a river-mussel; there is only one home to the life of a tortoise; there is only one shell to the soul of a man; there is only one world to the spirit of our race. If that world leaves its course and smashes on boulders of the great void, whose world will give us shelter?” I am indeed as so we all are, blessed to have a great man amongst us. Blessed with his writing, blessed with his presence, blessed with his spirit. The same spirit and the same heart beat that we all share.

A privilege indeed to be able to say;

“I lived in the time when man began to evolve from homo sapiens to homo luminous; I lived in a time when man could reach out from a singular Universe to the possibility of an amazing Multi-verse. I lived in a time when Oneness and energy was all that made sense.

I lived in the time of Wole Soyinka.”

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

He speaks in the Tongues of Spirits

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by IBINABO FIBERESIMA)

WORDS finally fall to the sword in the bid to epitomize the archetype of the very word itself, the quintessence of our literary cache, the ethereal mystery.

Men of letters speak with words, but he speaks in the tongues of spirits in parlance far above the comprehension of mortal men and that is why with him you will absolutely need... *The Interpreters*. His language is not one you understand by a mere *Telephone Conversation*, or even through the accumulation of experiences garnered by your life's sojourn on *The Road*, but if you are diligent enough and put yourself through the crucibles of subconscious meditation propelled by the train of thought past certain *Swamp Dwellers* then you might decipher the obscurity of the man.

My eyes transfixed on his righteous mane of grey I sat still by the cradle of wisdom and learned to understand through his musings *The Father's Burden* when our country groaned under the reign of a certain *King Baabu*. He wept when *The Man Died* and strenuously sought for *The Strong Breed* to rise up to the challenge of saving his blessed nation just *Before the Blackout*!

And when the dark shroud did fall in a sinister *Season of Anomy*, orchestrated by two million-man marches of stupidity rapaciously led by *Madmen and Specialists* in sycophancy, his words pierced the *Blackman and The Veil* of savagery he wore, till Kongi was hounded into exile, the lot of courageous sailors confronting the tempest of tyranny. AHoy!

To fully grasp the man, *You Must Set Forth at Dawn* but for the rest of us initiates who daily engage in *A Dance of the Forest* under the watch of his words, we rest assured in the knowledge that he is a melange... *A Lion and A Jewel* who has thrilled our psyche in 86 awesome years of existence.

His name is Wole!

Happy Birthday to you Prof... and amidst the fetes and adulations, please don't forget Keffi's Birthday Treat!

All my love.

Ibinabo Fiberesima, actress

Impressive, his Ability to Engage and Share with any Generation

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by EMEM EMA)

AN encounter with Prof is what it is, an encounter of the good kind; delectable slices of unforgettable conversations, drawing from his wealth of knowledge and wisdom. A well that he generously allows you draw from without any form of prejudice irrespective of who he is conversing with.

What strikes me about Prof the most, is his ability to engage and share with any generation.

I'm humbled to experience such a genius. Thank you for all that you do and here's wishing you a very happy birthday Sir!

Emem Ema, singer, art manager

Oppressor of the Oppressors

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by HELEN PAUL)

PROF. Wole Soyinka is a true example of the saying "a pen is a tool and weapon when it is in the right hands". His eloquent manner of writing is one that can never go unnoticed, as his works are indeed a reflection of his concern for humanity.

Some say he is the African Shakespeare but I say he is in a class of his own. Despite having studied in foreign lands, he still firmly holds on to his roots and the happenings of his motherland, making it possible for him to communicate, enlighten, and sensitize the people at the grassroots and the world at large. Such people are not only unique but rare gems to the world of literature and art as a whole.

He is known to be living a life worthy of commendation, having written numerous works of art that have brought him global recognition and awards. Popularly known as Aké, he exhibits a dogged spirit in the area of politics both in his homeland and in the diaspora. He is a fighter and an oppressor of the oppressors. His words have not only struck at first perception but they ring in the minds of people due to their insightful composition.

Prof. is a man of substance and relentless desire for development and self-discovery. He is a role model to youths in the present generation and those to come and will forever be eulogized.

Dr. Helen Paul, actress, comic artist

Gem. Enigmatic. Hero

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka@86, by MAZI SAM UCHE ANYAMELE)

TO a Rare Gem, an Enigmatic Orator, A social-human equity activist cum hero. I congratulate the team behind the initiative of celebrating and eulogizing the living, as this serves as an inspiration to our generation.

The theme of this year's series – I AM because YOU ARE -- is a philosophical clause that bothers on the societal strata which you continue to defend.

Our Nobel Laureate Prof Sir, amidst countless honours both here and in the diaspora, I trust as the Holy Scriptures -- The Bible -- says, as your days, so shall your strength be...Amen!

86 Hearty Cheers and Cup Clangs to our Cultural Icon of International Repute!!!

Mazi Sam Uche Anyamele, actor, Secretary General, National Association of Nigerian Theatre Practitioners, NANTAP.

He Loves Nigeria enough to Fight for it Soyinka! Kongi! The Bard!

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka at 86, by LEO 'SPARTANI' OMOSEEBI)

The first time I saw any of Soyinka's books was *"The Interpreters"* which I tried to read... in primary school. Please don't laugh. Then in JS1 we had to read the *"Trials of Brother Jero"* as part of the literature in English syllabus.

I erroneously thought he won the Nobel prize for that play, as it was the one book I saw *"Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature"* splattered all over. Until my elder brother shut me up and counted off the other great works (as a kid back then I did not know he had a canon of works.)

By the way, any young man who wants to understand the Nigerian experience would have encountered Baba through his activism, politics and writing. You get the sense that he is someone who believes in Nigeria enough to fight the establishment for it, and still, keep speaking truth to all the manifestations of power.

"You must set forth at Dawn" serialised in one of the dailies brought the Urbane Soyinka to me. He was there when they were, conceiving 007!! among many other adventures. So once a while we hold him up as a man of the world when some of my friends with geek cred speak about our own heroes. And of course, anyone who snaps with him automatically has his/her value enriched... even if they are not exactly jewels in a lion's den.

As we say in my small community we will read anything Soyinka writes. The man knows things and his "greencard" pronouncement now seems prescient.

Why we don't have a biopic on him is what I don't know.

The first book of his I bought with my money was *"Ake"*. The excerpt we read from *"Ake"* back then in school in one of the English language textbooks stirred the imagination. It was about how a chap was flogged and did not flinch, and still respectfully said thank you to the teacher who flogged him -- the sort of thing that made secondary school students feel you had swag!

Soyinka ... The mononym. We will say of you sir, you walked the earth and Nigeria glows on your account. Happy birthday sir. Your words still feed us.

Leo *"SpartANI"* Omooseebi Leo Omooseebi, filmmaker

His Words are Golden...

(Tribute to Wole Soyinka @86!!! by DAN CHRIS EBIE)

For weeks I have grappled with a trembling hand and distorted thoughts trying to write this tribute. Writing a piece of literature about an acclaimed, accomplished personality in the literary space is no mere feat for a neophyte like me.

A well celebrated Nobel Laureate of our time, cerebral in Cosmic mythology, a custodian of our culture, revered and respected worldwide. I salute you Sir as you turn 86. My only pain and regret as I pen this, is the absence of "an army" of "Wole Soyinka disciples" taking up our societal challenges and scholarly engagements in furtherance of that which you stand for as a force in Nigeria especially with our teaming young generation of writers.

As a young lad growing up back in the 1980s, my ambition was to become an economist or an accountant. Then one day as I was cleaning up my dad's study, I stumbled on your play, *"The Road"* and my orientation had a shift. Few years down the line I was cast to play Brother Jero in *Jero Plays*, the rest today is history. I didn't become just a professional actor but added being a Tv/Film Producer in an industry that is rapidly growing in leaps and bounds showcasing Nigeria's culture and pride to the world to the hilt.

It's indeed a rare privilege being granted an opportunity of contributing a tribute to celebrate a great icon who made Abacha look "good" in "Macbutu" and who opened our eyes to the Yoruba cosmic imbalances through the eyes of the Eleshin Oba in your play *"Death and the King's Horseman."* I celebrate you Akinwande Oluwole Babatunde Soyinka, a man whose words are more golden than the gold pen he writes his thoughts on.

Let me conclude with one of your stunning quotes I admire so much which says *"the hand that dips deeper into the bottom of the pot will eat the biggest snail"* you have inspired my love for "Arts" and what I do today. I will indeed continue to dig the pot of "Arts" till I find that "big snail." Happy Birthday Kongi!

Chris Ebie, actor, filmmaker

He has an unrepentant Concern for Equity, Justice and Fairness

(Tribute to the Living Legend Wole Soyinka at 86, by FIDELIS DUKER)

PROFESSOR Wole Soyinka needs no introduction as a global creative icon; some of us who grew up reading his literary works as secondary school students. As a rare literary giant and a committed social critic, he is one of the distinguished global scholars who have made Nigeria proud. His brilliance, crystal image and sterling contributions to the academia stands taller than him.

My first encounter with him was shortly after the annulled 1993 elections when he alongside other Pro-democracy activists led civil protest to Yaba area of Lagos where I was living then. As young men in our early 20s we were enthralled by his eloquence, confidence and oratory when he gave speeches that instilled confidence in us.

However, we stopped seeing him at those rallies because he had to leave the country and coordinate the NADECO group from exile.

To many us Prof means different things, but I have personally come to respect his energy and contribution to national discourse even at the advance age of 86.

As I mentioned, it is not only in the field of activism that Professor Wole Soyinka has made his marks. He is also one of the most cerebral and creative minds. His writings are very academic and complex.

It takes only an intelligent mind to decipher his writings: *The Jero Plays*, *The Trials of Brother Jero*, *Ake*, *The Interpreters*, *The Man Died*, *King Baabu* amongst his several titles.

The Nigerian Movie Industry popular called Nollywood will always reference his 1965 play *Kongi's Harvest* which was later adapted as a film of the same name, directed by the American Ossie Davis as one of the pioneers of indigenous filmmaking.

Kongi is in fact, one Nigerian who has an unrepentant concern for equity, justice and fairness and this he has shown in vocal nature on issues. All he needs is a self-conviction and he goes out of his way to fight for the commoner or oppressed.

Over the years, I am always excited listening to Professor Wole Soyinka speak, he talks with conviction and human redemption. His presence is a tremor to the guilty and a healing to the voiceless.

Only three years ago, I was to feature him in the award-winning documentary *Fela My Friend* from the book with same title by Carlos Moore which I co-produced with my Brazilian producer. Regrettably Prof was unavailable due to his tight travel schedule during the filming period.

As you celebrate your 86th birthday, we can only but wish you the best of your day. Nigeria, Africa and the World will never forget your contributions in all spheres of human existence.

Happy Birthday Sir, Age with Grace.

Duker, filmmaker, CEO of FAD radio station

Timeless Memories:

The Humanity of WS

WS  INTERNATIONAL
CULTURAL EXCHANGE





secretariat



Project/Programme Directorate



Teju Kareem, FTA
(Executive Producer)

Technical theatre expert, businessman, philanthropist, founder and CEO of Zmirage Multimedia Limited, Teju trained at the department of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan where he emerged as one of the best in technical theatre. Thereafter he obtained a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration from the Hastings School of Business and Management Studies, United Kingdom. Having practiced theatre extensively in Nigeria and the United Kingdom, he revolutionized technical theatre practice in Nigeria by setting up Zmirage Multimedia Limited in 1996 to fill the yawning gap created by the absence of world class infrastructure to aid practitioners in that field. Now in its 23rd year as the pioneer and leading suppliers of technical equipment to the entertainment and corporate event industries, Zmirage has grown and diversified its services far beyond the boundaries of a mere theatrical technical hire company, reaching into every area where technical

equipment is used as part of entertainment, with the rare capacity to handle several events simultaneously no matter the time or location. Zmirage and Teju Kareem who also hold the franchise for the popular Miss Malaika Beauty Pageant, has handled countless high-profile events within and outside Nigeria. Projects undertaken include KORA Music Awards in South Africa, Mariam Makeba the musical both in America and South Africa, WSICE at the African Centre and CANIRIV at Notting Hill Carnival, both in London. With many awards and honors to his credit, Teju Kareem is the chairman of Abuja Rocks. He is the Consultant Technical Producer of Nigeria Election Debate Group (NEDG) and was Consultant for the Sierra Leone Election Debate Group (SEDC). He was also Consultant Technical Producer for the Nigerian Olympic stage plays held at Stratford Theatre London in July 2012. Among his numerous credits are: Technical Director, CORA Awards Abuja and SARO the Musical, President Miss Malaika Nigeria and President CIOF Nigeria a cultural body devoted to the development of folklore festivals from 2007 — 2009; artistic producer/Director African Drums Festival 2017–2019; and Consultant/Producer for all 18 editions of the ongoing Federal Government of Nigeria Town Hall meetings. Fellow of The National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP), he is a member of the Institute of Directors (IOD), and director of Communication at African Renaissance.



Segun Ojewuyi
(Co-Executive Producer)
Nigeria/USA

Winner of Pittsburgh's Onyx Best Director award by the African American Academy for the Arts, Ojewuyi is professor and head of directing at the Southern Illinois University, SIU, Carbondale, Illinois, USA, where he has also served as the President of the College of Liberal Arts Council, Chair of the University Fine Arts Activities Board and President of the University Faculty Senate. He is also the Managing Artistic Director of the McLeod Summer Playhouse (MSP). A graduate of Theater from the University of Ibadan Nigeria and the Yale University School of Drama (Directing), he is an Alumnus Fellow of the Salzburg Seminar, Salzburg

Austria, a Carnegie African Diaspora fellow, and Grantee of the United States International Visitor Program, awarded by the United States Information Service. As a director, he has staged his productions in professional theaters in Europe, the Mediterranean, Africa and the United States.

He is the recipient of several awards and fellowships like the British Council Commonwealth Fellowship; Ford Foundation/Arts International Professional Development grant, the Horowitz Foundation Fellowship award, the Rowan University Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Recognition Award – 2000 and 2001. Ojewuyi is the founding Co-Executive Producer of WSICE.



Jahman O. Anikulapo
(Project Consultant/Head,
Communications)

He studied Theatre Arts at the University of Ibadan, specialising in Directing, Dramatic Theories and Criticisms. Aside practising as a performing artiste since June 1980, he has been an Arts and Culture Journalist since 1984, writing mostly on the Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Literature, Film and Cultural Affairs. He joined The Guardian in 1987 as an Arts Reporter and rose to be Arts & Media Editor (Daily) 1992–2003; and Editor, The Guardian on Sunday (2003–2013). He also operates as Culture Curator, Producer, Programmist and

Consultant to major local and continental cultural projects e.g National Festival of Arts, NAFEST; Lagos Black Heritage Festival (LBHF); African Drums Festival (ADF); Market for African Performing Arts, MASA, Abidjan, Cote D'Ivoire; Pan-African Film Festival, FESPACO, Ougadougou, Burkina Faso; Pan-African Theatre Festival PANAFEST, Ghana; Festival sur Niger, FSN, Segou-Mali etc. He was Country Chairman & West Africa Representative Arterial Network (AN), the pan-African network of artists, arts organisations and culture creators, 2015–2017. He is Prog. Chairman Committee for Relevant Art, CORA, as well as Executive Director, Culture Advocates Caucus, CAC, through which he has created, produced and co-ordinated or directed programming contents for major cultural projects around the continent as well as in Europe, North America, South America and Asia. Presently, he has led the CAC to partner on most major culture projects such as the Lagos Book & Art Festival; IREP International Documentary Film Festival; Lagos International Jazz Festival; Lagos International Poetry Festival, while also handling core programming assignments for the Lagos Black Heritage Festival; Lagos@50 Festival and lately African Drum Festival. Continentally, the CAC functions in the advisory committees of major projects such as Market for Africa Performing Arts, MASA, Great Trading Empires of Africa, among others.



Lillian Amah-Aluko
(Consulting Producer)

Holder of a Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees in English from the University of Lagos and a certificate in Film Production from the University of California School of Theatre, Film and Television, she is an actor, producer and writer. She was a lecturer in the English department of Nnamdi Azikiwe University Satellite Campus in Lagos. She has retained her interest in the education sector over the years acting as a judge, mentor and speaker at several youth-focused events such as University of Ibadan Havana Festival Students union lecture in 2010, Nigerian Economics Students Association (NECA) of

Obafemi Awolowo University Leadership Qualities in Entrepreneurship Development (LQED) program in August 2018, Actors Guild of Nigeria Lagos State Chapter members training in 2018 and Girls Day Out with Oyinkan (GDOW) in February 2017 to mention a few. Lillian has published two books: "Echoes of a Heartbeat" and "Dreams of Yesterday," and is working on her third book. She has several nominations and awards to her credit including: 2019- JTAH 10 most inspiring women in Nigeria; 2018- MSAA Best Legend Icon award; 2016 - City People Special Recognition Award; 2015 -Hollywood Weekly Film Festival Special Recognition Award; 2014 - Distinguished Personality in the Arts Award by FEGOCOWOSA old students Association Lagos Branch; 2011 -- Afro Hollywood's best Crossover Actress; 1998 -- The Reel awards -- Best New actress; and 1998 -- Thema Awards -- Best Upcoming Actress. She is a member of The Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM), a Director of AudioVisual Rights Society of Nigeria (AVRS), a past (2 term) Vice President of the Association of Movie Producers of Nigeria (AMP), current chairperson of Federal Government College Warri Old Students Association (FEGOCOWOSA) Lagos Branch and Executive Director/Co-Founder of Women in Entertainment Advancement Network (WEAN). She is an Ambassador for KUTH; and Ambassador for Niola Cancer Care Foundation. She was producer of the VVSICE 2010–2015.



HANEEFAT EFUE IKHARO
(Producer)

A graduate of Theatre Arts from the University of Benin, Edo State. She is a trained actor, scriptwriter, presenter and production manager. She has worked as reporter, voiceover artiste and script writer for ATS Multimedia Ltd, as co-presenter of the "ATS show on Radio" and the voice of the entertainment news on "ATS Show"

on Galaxy Television. She presently works as Presenter, Researcher and Administrative Manager/Production Coordinator for Zmirage / New Dawn Productions. She was one of two Vox Pop interviewers and reporters for 'The Health Zone' a TV talk show on Channels Television. She has written numerous feature length scripts, some of which have been produced for TV. She was also part of the technical crew for Saro The Musical,

Town Hall Meeting for Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, AFRIMA Awards and Miriam Makeba Mama Africa The Musical. She has been Producer of the Wole Soyinka International Cultural exchange Project (WSICE) since 2015; before then, she was responsible for Admin and protocol for the project.



LYNDA AMADI
(Associate producer (Children's Programme))

With a degree in Accountancy from The Polytechnic Ibadan, she is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ATS I.C.A.N). A management consultant, she has worked with Prof Wole Soyinka on the Obafemi Awolowo University (O.A.U)

Masquerades Festival of Arts and Culture, and the O.A.U Ile-Ife Food Festival. She also worked on World Yoruba Festival of Arts and Culture. She worked with Prof. Pat Utomi in the Restoration Group (R.G) and was with the Utomi Presidential campaign organization. She is the coordinator of the Committee for Relevant Art's CORA Creative Youth Club (CCYC) of the Lagos Book & Art Festival, LABAF. She is also the

director of programme of Ifakala Youth Empowerment Forum initiative, a non-governmental community development project. She is the Chief Executive Officer of Events by Nature Consult Limited; marketing director of Women in Entertainment Advancement Network (W.E.A.N); and has managed numerous local and international events and projects.



RAZINAT TALATU MOHAMMED, PhD
(Head, Adjudication)

Born in Maiduguri, Northern Nigeria teaches African Literature with specialization in Women Studies and Comparative Literature at the University of Maiduguri. She is a creative writer who made her debut in 2005 when her first book, a collection of short stories; A love Like a Woman's and other Stories won the Maiden ANA/

Lantern Book prize. Her first novel, Habiba, was short listed for the ANA prize for prose 2014 while her other works have appeared in some national and international anthologies like Camouflage: The Best of Contemporary Writings from Nigeria, The Gong Books, Fireflies: An Anthology of New Nigerian Poetry, Pyramids: An Anthology of Poems from Northern Nigeria, For Women Collective: A Tribute to Nina Simone (USA). She

has to her credit, a reference text titled: Feminism and the Works of Nawal El-Saadawi and Buchi Emecheta, published by Lambert Academic Publication, Germany. She is the author of Female Representation in Nigerian Literature www.africanwriter.com among others. She was a Resident Writer in El-Gouna, Egypt June /July, 2011. Currently, she is a senior Lecturer at the University of Maiduguri where she lives.

Administration



TAIWO KAREEM
(Financial Director)

Mrs. Taiwo Kareem taught Physical and Health Education in Primary and Secondary School before acquiring a postgraduate Diploma/Certificate from Hendon College/ Middlesex University, London. She is also a member of LCCI Business Administration.



FOLASHADE KAREEM
(Legal)

Specialist in intellectual property law, with passion in media and technology, she studied Law LLB at the University of Reading with an MSc in Management. She was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2014.



OLUWATIMILEHIN SHOTOLA
(Accounts)

Graduate of Lagos State University, where she studied Accountancy, she has been the accountant for Zmirage Multimedia Ltd for 8 years, till date.



KUNLE JIMOH
(Logistics)

A Senior Manager in live event production at Zmirage Multimedia Ltd, he works closely with the Chief Operating Officer at Zmirage to facilitate the development of strategy and plans for the business while coordinating implementation process. He also coordinates crew on the field of operation to actualise client/project objectives.

Programme Consultancy



BONNY A. BOTOKU

President and executive producer African Integration Festival, he is a multimedia expert, film writer, producer & director. He is the CEO Multiple Vision Multimedia, a technical service provider company with offices in Nigeria & Benin Republic. Founder, African Initiative for Cultural Integration and Village

Support, he studied Foreign European languages and thereafter moved into cinematography with professional training as photo-cinematographer at the New York Institute of Photography. He thereafter acquired a postgraduate degree at Southgate College UK. He was conferred a doctorate degree (honoris causa) in International Relation and Diplomacy by Edexcel University Benin Republic. Member board of the advisory council Edexcel University, Dr. Botoku is the Secretary General Inter-border Peace & Security Forum through which he has contributed to various initiatives in conflicts resolution within the borderline communities. He is the translator and interpreter for the international roundtable on rhythm and productivity and coordinator of the International contingents to the African Drum Festival, organised annually by the Ogun State Government of Nigeria.



NIYI COKER JR

Niyi Coker, Jr. has served as Visiting Artistic Director to several theatre companies including: K3 at Malmo Hogskola in Sweden, the National Theatre of Nigeria and Black Box Theatre in Bermuda. He is the founding Artistic Director of the African Arts Ensemble in New York City. A recipient of the Washington D.C. Kennedy Center Merit Award for Directing, some of his plays include: Ouray, based on the 19th century struggles of the Utes in Colorado, against European encroachment; Endangered Species, which explores how racism can complicate family dynamics; and was commissioned and sponsored by the British Council, with a tour of England; Preemptive, a drama on Islamophobia, initially developed at

the Indiana University Playwrights lab and staged at London's West End Shaw Theatre, produced by the British Production company, Z-Mirage. Some of his Off-Broadway writing and directing credits, include, Booth! a musical on Edwin Booths reflections after the assassination of Lincoln (with Barbara Harbach & Jonathan Yordy); Miriam Makeba - Mama Africa — the musical, (with Angela Coker) on the struggles and challenges of anti-apartheid singer and civil rights advocate, which first opened in Cape Town, South Africa, before touring the USA with an original cast of 40 performers. Founding Director of the Africa World Documentary Film Festival, (AWDFFF) which is presently in its 12th season, and staged in USA, Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon and most recently in Thailand, his documentary film writing and directing credits include, Black Studies USA, which won best short documentary at the Berlin Black Film Festival in Germany in 2005, and was finalist at the Hollywood Black Film Festival in 2007 and Silver Remi Award Winner at the Houston International Film Festival in 2007. His feature, Pennies for the Boatman based on Mario Farwell's "The Seamstress of Saint Francis" was nominated in 4 categories, and won Best Screenplay at the 2012 Madrid International Film Festival. His most recent documentary film

Ota Benga — Human at the Zoo, (with Jean Bodon), is the true story of an African kidnapped from the continent and destined for the Bronx Zoo, premiered at the Smithsonian Museum of African Art in November 2015. It won best Director for a Documentary Film at the 2015 London International Film Festival. It also won best Director of a Foreign Documentary Film at the 2015 Nice International Film Festival. Author of 2 books The Music and Social Criticism of African Musician Fela Kuti and Ola Rotimi's African Theatre: The Development of an Indigenous Aesthetic, he has written numerous book chapters and contributed several articles to Journals and Magazines. He is an Associate Member of the Directors Guild of America and a full member of the Society for Stage Directors and Choreographers SDC. He holds a B.A in Dramatic Arts from the University of Ife, Nigeria, the MFA in Directing from Brooklyn College CUNY, and a Ph.D in African American Studies (Cultural Aesthetics) from Temple University in Philadelphia. He is currently a Professor and Director of The School of Theatre, Television and Film at San Diego State University, San Diego, California.



TUNDE AWOSANMI

A former Head of Theatre Arts Department, University of Ibadan, where he teaches theatre theory and criticism, theatre directing and performance aesthetics, he has been a Personal Assistant to Professor Wole Soyinka and has remained the Nobel Laureate's private student and research collaborator till date. In the 1990s, 'Tunde was covertly involved in pro-democracy activism and guerrilla combat performances, against military despotism in Nigerian cities and public places.



STEPH OGUNDELE

A theater graduate, critic and culture advocate, he has been deeply involved in the activities of his professional association, the National Association of Nigerian Theater Arts Practitioners, NANTAP; he was once the General Secretary of its Lagos Chapter; a two term Secretary General of its National Body and later its Deputy President. An alumnus of the University of Ilorin and Jos, where he took a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees respectively, he has taken part in series of local and international workshops and seminars on theater, film and allied matters. He has served in different categories from the maiden edition of WSICE till date. He was juror for the first two editions of the African Magic Viewers' Choice Awards AMVCA. He currently works in the Business Developments and Events Management department of the National Theater, doubling also as the Public Relations Officer.



EDMUND ENAIBE

A veteran actor, theatre and media practitioner, popularly known as 'Teacher Chike' in the long- rested Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) soap, *After the Storm*, Enaibe was an Arts Editor at the now defunct *Republic Newspaper* and also the former Organising Secretary of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Lagos chapter. A Fellow of Theatre Arts, Enaibe served in various official capacities during the formation stage and after, including as Secretary General of the National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP). As an actor he has featured in films and TV series such as *Newman Street*, *The Governor*, *Shadows*, *Shuga*, *Face to Face*, etc. Apart from screen credits, his acting talents also found expressions on stage. He toured with the National Troupe of Nigeria productions of *The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen* and *Attahiru*. As an Ambassador of Nigeria Arts and Culture, Enaibe was in the contingent of actors to Italy in 1992 with the production of Ben Tomoloju's *Mujemuje* by Kakaaki Arts Komany and to London in 2012 with *The King Must Dance Naked* and *Lion and the Jewel*.



MAKIN SOYINKA

Working extensively in the arts and media industry, focusing primarily on television, film and radio productions; he has been a columnist for several magazines, and consultant to various media organizations in the realm of programming and infrastructure. He has worked on various independent programming documentaries, including several for the BBC, Channel 4 UK, CBC Canada, and The Oprah Winfrey Show (among others). He is a co-founder of the Lagos Film Office (LFO), the pioneer Film Office in Nigeria, and the Lagos Film City Project (LFC). He's been a Consultant to the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), helping to bring attention to the Nigerian Content in the media and, promoting such at major international gathering such as MIPCOM, MIPTV, Cannes to name a few. He is a founding member of Kudirat Initiative for Democracy (KIND), and a member of the Advisory Board of The Nollywood Foundation (USA); he serves on the boards of other NGOs as a director and trustee, including the IREP Documentary film Forum/Festival.



KESIENA C. OBUE

Writer, director and producer for theatre and film, Kesiena is a synergy of talent, good training with a resonant, inclusive worldview. In 2009, she founded "Kesservier Vanille Productions, which quickly became the platform for her early artistic expressions and success. Aside the critically acclaimed play *Hertitude*, which she wrote, direct and produced, her other works for theatre includes *Ivie*, *Hey Brother*, *Maama Dearest* and *Call Back*. With a growing reputation as a prolific writer, auteur and critic, she has also written successful musicals like *Wakaa the Musical*, *Fela* and the *Kalakuta Queens* and *Queen Moremi the Musical*. She has written and directed commissioned works for Cable Television, independent feature and documentary film projects.

Media/ Communications



AYOBAMIDELE ALADEKOMO
Media/Communication Officer

Popularly known as ADUKE, she is a multi-disciplinary performing artiste, creative consultant, and entrepreneur. With a degree in communication from the University of Lagos, she is also a communication practitioner and professional with background in theatre and creative production. She has 12 years of career experience in administration,

theatre, creative and technical productions. Aduke plays afro-soul, afrobeat and world music, uses her primary language, Yoruba, English and Pidgin to convey her message and also experiments with the other languages in the world. She is an advocate for the use of Art for social and political reforms. Aduke is presently a part of the "how free are the arts" tandem art residency project between Brazil, Nigeria, Germany, and Pakistan with the Goethe institute. She was a visiting professor at the Art school in Parque Lage, Rio, she was also a presenting artiste at the Museu do Amanha, Rio De Janeiro. In 2019, Aduke was named "shining star 2019" and made an Honorary member and international consultant for Shenmo women league at the Shenmo Conference in Lang Fang, China.

TEAM MEMBERS

PROJECT DIRECTORATE

Dr. Teju Kareem – Executive Producer

Prof. Segun Ojewuyi – Co-Executive Producer

Mrs. Taiwo Kareem – Financial Director

Jahman Anikulapo – Project Const/Head, Comms.

Lillian Amah-Aluko – Consulting Producer

Haneefat Ikharo – Producer

Lynda Amadi – Assoc. Producer (Children's Program)

ADMINISTRATION

Folashade Kareem – Legal

Timilehin Shotola – Account /Financial Officer

Kunle Jimoh – Logistics

OUTSOURCED RESOURCES

Aduke Aladekomo – Media/Communication

Kesiana Obue – Prog. Asst.

Niyi Areola – Graphic

Seun Olakotan – Digital & Tech Admin.

Gabriel Ogungbade – Research

Kehinde Ayenugba – Research

Thomas Babalola – Design & Publications

Dave Olugbenga Adebisi – Web Design/Master

PRODUCTION SUPPORT

Dr. Akin Adejuwon

Dr. Felix Omidire

Sherif Yekini

Mopelola Saidat Kareem-Shittu

Esther Adeniran

Funbi Kareem

Oreoluwa Ojewuyi

Omolade Oyewo

PROGRAMME CONSULTANTS

Dr. Tunde Awosanmi

Shabaka Thompson

Vernon Henry Foluso

Peter Badejo OBE

Olu Ajayi – Curator

Oludamola Adebawale — Curator

PROJECT ASSOCIATES

Prof. Niyi Coker Jr

Dr. Razinat T. Muhammed

Dr. Bonny Botoku

Steve Ogundele

Edmond Enaibe

James Hughes

Ilemakin Soyinka

Media/ Communications



AYOOLA OLANIYI
(Graphics/Media)

A technology expert and new media strategist, Ayoola is the founder and CEO of VerveTree Hub, a technological business incubation hub; and the brain behind TechSummitOgun, TechChallengeOgun, and several other projects. Also, a professional project manager, product manager and business developer with over 17 years of cognate experience, he has managed and coordinated several top-notch projects and products including Project World View and Global Peace Project in Chandigarh, Punjab District, India, among others. He has carved a niche in the technological ecosystem of Nigeria with special interest in innovators, disruptors, creatives, and undergraduates of tertiary institutions, which gave birth to VerveTree Hub.



SEUN OLAKOTAN
Digital & Technology Administrator

With a B.Sc. in Computer Science and Business Management from Anglia Ruskin University Cambridge, UK, Seun's wealth of experience over the years covers from Information Technology, Media (print), Community Relations and Contract negotiation. He is a seasoned regulatory and project manager with over 20 years' experience in the extractive industry, covering (Oil, Gas and Mining), field operations around West African countries. Currently focused on local production of natural stones (granite and marble tiles) for construction and gas-to-power upstream and midstream projects, he also consulted over the years for African Leaders Forum — (ALF) from remote location network solution across West Africa office to security technology. He sits as a member with the upstream OPTS review committee on the current Nigeria Petroleum Bill. He is also a member of Nigerian Gas Association; Petroleum Club Lagos; The Lagos Oil Club and member of Committee for Relevant Art (CORA).



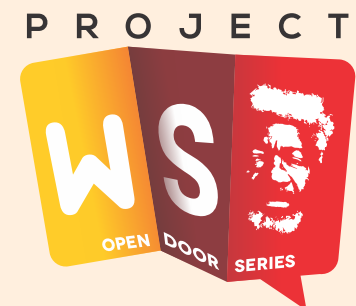
DAVE OLUGBENGA ADEBISI
Project Web Design/Master

Doubling as Director and Principal Partner at Multicast Platform, a company he founded in 2009, which specializes in Content -- Motion and Stills, Website Development; and catering for the branding and marketing needs of clients. In his practice, he leads creative outputs from concepts to execution, ensuring desired creative standard is adhered to. Versed in copywriting and concept development, he once worked with Red Uhuru, an advertising agency in Lagos; and has also worked on many top Nigerian and multinational brands, including being responsible for Reputation Management for Timekeepers, a wristwatch outlet with 10 locations nationwide. He is currently a Contractual Staff with Soulcomms, a sister company to leading agency, SO&U, where his role includes creating Art Direction for, and on projects. An alumnus of O2 Academy Lagos, he is Head, Art Direction at The Fountain of Life Church.



GBADE GABRIEL
Research Asst.

Writer and Poet, Gabriel graduated from PEFTI Film Institute in 2017, with the award: Best Student in Scriptwriting. He won the Ken Saro-Wiwa Prize for Book Review in 2018 at the Lagos Book & Art Festival, LABAF. His poems have appeared in *Our Verse* Magazine. He is an Editorial Writer at [www. culturedispatch.org](http://www.culturedispatch.org), and is currently completing his second full-length screenplay while also working on his first short film.



**WOLE SOYINKA
INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL
EXCHANGE**

Dr. Li-Rong Lilly Cheng

From all of us at **WSICE**, we say **thank you!**



...unlock your **imagination.**




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