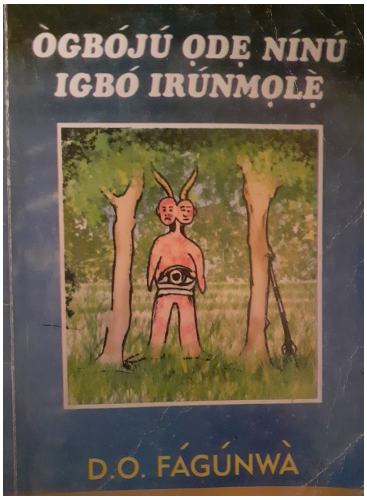
Divine Che Neba, Chester Mbangchia, "Entry on: Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter' Saga [Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ̀] by Daniel Orowole Olorunfemi Fagunwa", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Susan Deacy and Marta Pszczolińska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/777. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Daniel Orowole Olorunfemi Fagunwa

Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter' Saga [Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ̀]

Nigeria (1938)

TAGS: African Storytelling African Traditions Gods



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General information	
Title of the work	Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter' Saga [Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ̀]
Country of the First Edition	Nigeria
Country/countries of popularity	Nigeria, Senegal, French-speaking African countries, UK, USA
Original Language	Yorùbá
First Edition Date	1938
First Edition Details	D. O. Fagunwa, *Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú Igbó Irúnmalẹ̀*. Ill. by Ọnasanya, Lagos: Church Missionary Society Bookshop, 1938, 102 pp.
ISBN	not applicable for editio princeps
Genre	Novels
Target Audience	Young adults
Author of the Entry	Divine Che Neba, University of Yaoundé 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com Chester Mbangchia, University of Yaoundé 1, mbangchia25@gmail.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk Marta Pszczolińska, University of Warsaw, m.pszczolinska@al.uw.edu.pl

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Creators



Daniel Orowole Olorunfemi Fagunwa , 1903 - 1963 (Author)

Chief Daniel Orowole Olorunfemi Fagunwa Mbe was born in 1903 in Ile Oluji/Okeigbo (Yoruba land), Nigeria and died in 1963. He was also commonly called D.O Fagunwa. He was the father of Yejide Ogundipe and wrote mainly in the Yoruba language. *Forest of a Thousand Daemons* is his first publication on a list of five. It was first published in the Yoruba language and later translated into English by the Nobel Prize-winning author Wole Soyinka.

Source:

Bamgbọṣe, Ayọ, *The novels of DO Fagunwa*, Ethiope Publishing Corporation, 1974.

Bio prepared by Divine Che Neba, University of Yaoundé 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com and Chester Mbangchia, University of Yaoundé 1, mbangchia25@gmail.com

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Additional information

Adaptations

Reading OGBOJU ODE NINU IGBO IRUMOLE by D.O. FAGUNWA Part 1 on YouTube (accessed: October 25, 2021).

Translation

English: *Forest of a thousand daemons: a hunter's saga*, trans. Wole Soyinka, ill. Bruce Onobrakpeya, London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Limited, 1968.

French: *Le preux chasseur dans la forêt infestée de démons*, trans. Olaoye Abïoye, Ikeja, Lagos: Nelson Publishers, 1989.

French: *La forêt aux mille démons: roman épique Yoruba*, trans. Louis Camara, Dakar: ÉÉNAS, 2009.

Summary

The novel opens with the narrator's encounter with Akara-ogun, the great hunter of the village. Worried that he may die at any moment and that the world might forget him, the hunter asks the narrator to pick up his pen and write down his hunting story. He opens up by talking about his immediate family and his name, Akara-ogun (Compound-of-Spells). Because he has wronged God by getting married to a witch, a spirit is sent to kill him but it spares him and asks him to kill his witch wife. Not up to a month after he kills her, his parents also die. Akara-ogun becomes a hunter like his father and decides to go hunting in the Forest of a Thousand Daemons, home of every vicious beast on earth.

In the forest, he meets a set of *ghommids* that decide to use him for their meal, but thanks to "Egbe", a spirit that helps him, he disappears and finds himself home. His adventures are disrupted by several spirits and monsters: he combats Agbako, the sixteen eye monster; he is tempted by a beautiful Helpmeet, a beautiful woman who appears, presents herself and takes Akara-ogun with her, making him understand that he is special in the eyes of his Creator and he still has a lot to accomplish for his creator. He meets Iwapele who tells him that the name of the city where he is Filth, a place of suffering and contempt.

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After saying this, Akara-ogun gets up and bids goodnight to the narrator, promising to come the following day to continue the story. After his departure, the narrator gathers a cross section of his neighbors and narrates the old man's tale to them. The following morning the narrator's home is full of patient listeners. He continues the story with his visit to Irunmale, Forest of A Thousand Daemons, where he sees an antelope, shoots it and the animal goes into a cave. He follows to get it only to discover that he has been trapped by a large posterior with eyes six times the normal size. The creature uses him like a horse; mounting him and making him carry it about. However, the hunter with his cunning style, tricks the monster, and kills it. Lost in the forest, he meets *ghommids* that are different from the ones he had seen all through his wandering in the forest. They look much like humans and their settlement is well organized with a king, whom the hunter saves from plots against him. His saving of the king makes the people detest him, bury him up to his neck, shave him, and apply honey to his head, inviting all sorts of insects. However, he struggles and liberates himself when it rains and the earth is soft.

Thinking about his miserable state on earth, he starts lamenting but his Creator sends an exquisitely beautiful lady who takes him to her home and asks her maids to "bathe him with warm water and rub him with sweet-smelling unguents". The beautiful lady dies immediately alongside her servants after helping the hunter. Feeling frustrated, he cries and calls for his mother who had gone forth to the land of the dead. She appears from beneath the earth, takes him along through a path to a tunnel where she gives him a white stone. She asks him to cast it into the tunnel, then follow it. This he does and it takes him through the tunnel where he meets Lamorin, a long-time missing hunter. They recognize each other from way back and soon became fond of each other and are inseparable. The hunter helps a *ghommid* to transform into a woman, decides to marry her and Lamorin officiates their marriage. Unfortunately for them, Lamorin dies in the hands of Tembelekun, a monster. Later, his wife leaves him for she cannot live in the presence of other humans. This breaks his heart and he parks to his uncle's village where he settles and gets married to many wives. At this point, the sun goes down and the old hunter leaves for his home, promising to come back to complete whatever is left of the tale. The following day, upon arrival, Akara-ogun exchanges some words of wisdom with the assistants, making them understand the Greatness of God, man's inability to see the future, and God's supremacy over man and other creatures. On this note, he goes to

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finish his story.

In his new habitat, he is summoned by the king, who puts him at the head of a team. He will be sent on a mission in quest of a precious thing he knows nothing about, which is found in Mount Langbodo, a kingdom found deep at the end of a forest thicker and denser than The Forest of a Thousand Daemons. In fact, this forest begins at the very end of the Forest of a Thousand Daemons. It is filled with more deadly creatures, superior in number and in ferocity to the Forest of a Thousand Daemons. After a careful selection and scrutiny, a team of seasoned hunters is put in place. This team consists of Kako, Imodoye, Elegbede-Ode, Efoiye, Aramada-Okunrin and great Akara-ogun himself. Their object of quest is something that will flourish in the land. After so much toiling in pain and battles, they registered successes, thanks to the timely intervention of a number of people and creatures Akara-ogun met during his earlier trips in the Forest of a Thousand Daemons. They finally get to Mount Langbodo, the kingdom of God. Here, they are received, fed, and draped, then brought in the presence of God, in front of whom they prostrate as a show of respect and recognition for his greatness. He, in return, welcomes and tells them to go to Iragbeje where, for over seven days in the house of seven wings, he edifies them on some virtues that every human should adopt: child upbringing and education, and worship and Glorification of God. When they return, they discover that a day spent in heaven was more than a year on earth. The narrator ends his story by reminding each reader to always remember that life is full of ups and downs, but it is not because things get rough that we should forget God and his immense love for us. We should give thanks in all situations. We should behave like men, and remember that "God in His Highness helps those who help themselves".

Analysis

The book is the first novel published in the Yoruba language. Fagunwa uses motifs from his traditional Yoruba folktales but textures them together into a lengthier narrative structure that parallel epic proportions. Fagunwa's narration is about a hero who sets out on a mission that is ultimately accomplished with great audacity, cunning, fluke, and help from God. More so, Fagunwa sets his story in strange settings like in the middle of the forest, bush that has spirits and remarkable creatures who hover around any traveller, brave enough to trespass on their terrain. The narration is mainly from the third-

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	person narrative, interspersed with dialogue and the first person point of view. *Forest of a Thousand Daemons* presents tones that are nostalgic and celebratory, from a sombre tone to a joyous and exciting one at the end of the heroes' quests. Notably, Fagunwa uses flashbacks as the main narrative device to reminisce about the hero's past quests. The author presents the strength of heroes' cunning natures, temptation; goals and obstacles, separation of friends and family and maturation in journeys.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Storytelling African Traditions Gods
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Supernatural creatures (non-classical) Survival Witch
Further Reading	Lindfors, Bernth, "Form, Theme, and Style in the Narratives of DO Fagunwa", *International Fiction Review* 6.1 (1979).
Addenda	On September 24th 1968, the Nigerian writer, Wole Soyinka, translated it from Yoruba to English and it was published, by City Lights Publishers (Columbus Avenue, San Francisco).

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