

Yoruba and Chinese Perspectives on Post-Anthropocentric Understanding of Human and Nonhuman Animal Relations

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Abstract

Human and nonhuman animal relations refer to human engagement of animals for several purposes that include food and companionship. Such engagement reflects the dominant worldview about animals as object of human utility. Post-anthropocentric understanding about animals contends the categorization of animals as object. Post-anthropocentrism remains a Western based ideology that projects extra-ordinary interpretations about the status of animals (as subject) beyond being tools (object) for human (anthropocentric) utility. It follows that post-anthropocentrism is often circulated as an ideology that has little or no connection with non-Western worldviews. This discourse inquires about the fundamental question: Are there other traditions of thought besides Western thought for understanding post-anthropocentric interpretations of the dynamics of human and nonhuman animal relations? This discourse attempts to comparatively interrogate indigenous Yoruba and Chinese traditions on the post-anthropocentric understanding of human and nonhuman animal relations. It adopts hermeneutical and critical approaches to analyze the Chinese Daoist, zodiac ontological cum cosmological beliefs, sayings/worldview about human and animal relations. These approaches are employed in similar manner to analyze Yoruba thought, in terms of ideas, beliefs and relational attitudes of humans to animals. The discourse submits that Yoruba and Chinese intellectual traditions reflect post-anthropocentric understanding about human and animal relations through eco-animist driven Zodiac cosmological beliefs and ontological roles of primordial agencies respectively, which shape perceptions about animals as interdependent agents and symbolic totems of ancestry to underwrite environmental order and harmony.

Keywords: Yoruba, Chinese, Post-anthropocentrism, Human and animal relations.

Introduction

Yoruba intellectual traditions that emphasize the primordial ontological place of animals through the cat, cock and snail shell for instance, suggest that there is a ‘beyond-human’ essence of animal existence within the Yoruba cosmological reality. Ideas or beliefs relating to the substantial and functional ecosystemic value of the presence or *being* of animals, such as vulture (*Igún*), yellow palm bird (*eye ògá*), and buffalo (*efón*), further corroborates the existential implication of considering the post-anthropocentric subjectivity of animals in certain circumstances, for deterring the extinction of rare species and allaying the disruption of interdependent environmentalism or environmental order. In similar terms, the Chinese ideas of the 12 zodiac animal signs (*Sheng Xiao*), to mark the lunar period within which the ontological materiality or essence of human personalities and destiny are categorized, suggests the post-anthropocentric conception of animals as subjects that presuppose the status, predicament of human *being* or existence. More so, the prominence of animal motifs, such as those associated with dog, tiger, pig, and rooster among others, established through the customary festivity/practice of the Year of Dog – *Fengshen*, Year of Golden Pig, Door or Gate of guidance Spirit, which informs the typical Chinese attitudes towards animals, supported by Daoist thought, in respect of sayings and beliefs, further suggest the viable ground for post-anthropocentric conception of human and animal relations in Chinese worldview.

Specifically, interrogating the context in which post-anthropocentrism, in lieu of human and animal relations, is manifested in indigenous Yoruba and Chinese intellectual traditions, rather than embracing the transposition of Derrida’s or other deconstructionist motifs, is the focus of this discourse. The discourse would adopt hermeneutics and critical approaches to analyze the Chinese Daoist, zodiac ontological cum cosmological beliefs, ideas about human and animal relations. In the same manner, these approaches would be employed to analyze Yoruba thought, in respect of ideas, beliefs and relational attitudes of human and animal relation, to inquire the plausible contribution of interdependent subjectivity of human and animals, for post-anthropocentrism. Basically, this discourse attempts to address the fundamental concern of; besides Western philosophical contention of post-anthropocentric undercurrent of human and animal relations, what contributions do indigenous Yoruba and Chinese intellectual traditions on human and animal relations make to this post-anthropocentric reflection?

Post-Anthropocentric Turn on the Question of “Animal” in Global North

Post-anthropocentrism remains a frame of reference to the postulation of a critical turn from the predominant (traditional) humanist or anthropocentric “gaze” that shapes the perceptual understanding of nonhuman entities/lifeforms as the *Other* category (Braidotti 2013; Salzani 2017 and Awan 2004). By anthropocentric gaze is meant a polarized conception of the human as *self* and nonhuman as *other*. Nonhuman animals remain trapped in this conceptual construct, derived from

such anthropocentric normativity. Post-anthropocentrism rejects the normative conception of animals as object of relations, as advanced by anthropocentric standpoint which elevates the *Anthropos* (man) as the major compass or determinant of relations. Through the metaphor of nudity, that is animals as the nude, shamed, and objectified *other*, Jacques Derrida attempts to situate animals as *subject* against the normative assumptions of anthropocentrism (Derrida & Wills 2002). Derrida's approach in this direction is essentially deconstructive.

Derrida rehashes the French claim of *animalséance*, to conceptualize animals as subject of relations (*animot*), just like humans. For Derrida, enjoining such conceptualization of animals provides the deconstructive ideological base of thinking about the freedom of animals from the confinement of cages, vivisection, sport, industrial farming, domestication and other violent gestures.¹ Similarly, Donna Haraway (1991) drifts intellectually through the notion of companion species, on the basis of nonhumanism to make the point that animals, cyborgs or machines are engulfed with humans in a continuum of species evolution. Thus, Haraway notes that "I am who I become with companion species, who and which make a mess out of the categories in the making of kin and kind..." (Haraway 2008, 19). In other words, in Haraway's worldview, the polarized conceptual categories such as human vs. animals, self vs. *other*, subject vs. object, etc., are mainly underscored by the messiness of understanding that subjects of relations (that is human and nonhuman) are "made up in flesh" (Haraway 2008, 16). Being 'made up in flesh' implies that humans and nonhumans are entangled by matter of companionship, as humans 'with' pets, domestic animals, cyborgs, etc. For Cary Wolfe, the question of "animal" as the *Other* have reached its peak in the articulation of post-modern theories (characterized by a linguistic turn). Wolfe embraces post-humanism to question the continuity of subject – object dichotomy, drawn from anthropocentric impression of the primacy of humans (humanity) over the *Other/animals* (Wolfe 2003; Aigner et al 2016).

In lieu of these scholarly contentions hinted above within the Global North, it could be stated that the aim of charting a course of deconstructing the anthropocentric gaze² is to respond to the perception of nonhuman animals as mere *Object* (the *Other*), due to manifest relations with animals as food, pets, test tools, farm implements, and source of entertainment, among others. The logic of post-anthropocentrism seems to be established on this course of deconstruction. However, further interest is triggered by such deconstruction, to inquire whether in the absence of the undeniable case of manifest relations with animals, post-anthropocentrism could yet be signified. In other words, beyond the Global North deconstructive impulse, can a post-anthropocentric outlook of human and animal relations be sustained? An attempt to address such inquiry involves engaging the plausibility of worldviews besides that of Global North. Specifically, focusing on two Global South indigenous worldviews, mainly the Chinese and Yoruba (Southwest Nigeria) thought on human and nonhuman animal relations, to discern the plausibility of a post-anthropocentric outlook (with less emphasis on manifest relations with animals), would not be out of order.

Post-Anthropocentric Nexus in Chinese and Yoruba Worldviews on Human and Nonhuman Animal Relations

There is no doubt that efforts to understand the nature of Chinese cosmology is ongoing. Scholarly reflections or accounts regarding the unique sense of understanding Chinese cosmology as against the tradition of Western metaphysics generate concerns about qualifying Chinese cosmology as metaphysics. Importantly, this does not constitute the focus in this discourse. Allusion to this ongoing debate is necessary to hint that on the contrary that Chinese cosmological worldview such as “the unity of *tian* and man” expressed in classical texts like Mencius, Xunzi, Laozi, Zhangzi and so on, from which the teachings or theories of Confucianism, Ying-Yang, five phases among others are derived, have also been classified as immanent or non-substantial metaphysics (Puett 2015).³ Laying aside the continuous debate of whether or not Chinese cosmology is metaphysics, this discourse would make specific reference to Chinese cosmological account.

It is imperative to note that it is difficult to maintain that there is a univocal Chinese cosmology of reality, as there are perspectives held by the various Chinese dynasties (Xia, Han, Qing, Shang, Song, Zhou etc.). Despite this, certain mythological understanding seems prominent in Chinese worldview. One of such is the impressive belief that Chinese cosmology can hardly be fathomed on a notion of being or, as Weimun Sun notes, that the role or thought of creation is more diminished in Chinese thought.⁴ This reiterates the non-dualistic nature of Chinese cosmology, as portrayed in the perceptual view about things (living or nonliving) or events as continuum in existence, that hardly suggests the idea of subject and object dichotomy. In other words, Chinese cosmology is correlative (rather than transcendent), by virtue of interconnection among realities such as heaven and man, man and nature, human and nonhuman.⁵ Chinese belief about human and animals would exemplify this typical cosmological worldview.

In Sun’s opinion, the need to understand the nature of the relationship between natural and spiritual entities as well as the order of change that occurs in the world is the central concern of the Chinese cosmology. And for this purpose, the investment of myths about the role of the High Lord (god of the land/heaven/the way in Daoist thought) with the accompaniment of the fortifying potency of a bird’s egg (and in other myth, stepping on the big foot print which caused pregnancy) is differently expressed or presented among the various Chinese dynasties. Such narrative basically corroborates the claim of the unity of reality, which is bereft of a polarized conception of existence/*being* as *subject* and *object*. However, given the influence of Neo-Confucianism (which supposedly modified the Daoist notion of the Way, which humans need to follow, by impressing that the human is the Way), the harmony of man and heaven/high Lord becomes granted as a synonym for the unity of reality (Puett 2015; Ahad 1992; Kemmerer 2009; Victor 1994).⁶ Hence, man earned being the best among all realities, with the highest/best endowment (from which Chinese morality, social and political understanding is derived).

A recourse to the Chinese Zodiac calendric belief of nature and human personality, derived from animal symbolism could perhaps render clear the view that Chinese cosmology operates on a

decentered 'subject-hood', enacted through animal motifs that predetermine the predicament of human destiny and natural conditions. Basically, the Chinese saying that "this animal hides in your heart" reiterate the significance of the calendric (lunar) marking of personhood (by the respective year of birth) on the basis of a twelve-year circle named after particular animals. The Chinese calendar repeats every sixty years and have two cycles (which interact with each other), represented by the Zodiac (animal) symbols; the rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog and pig; as well as the five elements (*Wu Xing*)⁷ of metal, water, wood, fire and earth.⁸ These elements, in Chinese worldview, are believed to be dialectically interactive and to be the cause of alterity of human personality or character and weather conditions of hot and cold temperature, night and day, autumn, spring, raining and dry seasons. In other words, these five elements are assigned to each of the twelve zodiac signs, which suggests different characteristics that create 60 different combinations, resulting in a 60-year cycle.⁹

This is believed to be the cause of the periodic alternation of the Chinese years of the golden pig, year of rat, year of dog, year of ox, and so on. People born in these diverse years are believed to take on the characterization indicated by each animal motifs designated in the Chinese zodiac calendar and are also accorded as descendants accordingly. For instance;

Descendants of Dragon – Bearers of blessings, festivity, happiness, strength (Earth)

Descendants of Pig – Intelligence, bravery, courage, wealth, abundance (rain, water), wealth, good luck/fortune.

Descendants of Rat – Charming, creative, sociable, adaptable, altruistic (Water)

Descendants of Ox – Dependable, methodical, hardworking, ambitious etc. (Earth)¹⁰

It is generally believed also in Chinese worldview that persons bearing the name *Long* are descendants of the Dragon. These Chinese zodiac signification of animal motifs remain at most psycho-social rationale for categorizing personality/human destiny. This categorization of personality demands tenable justification, subject to verifiable understanding. However, the point emphasized here is the "beyond human" motivation of the Chinese cosmological account, drawn from animal motifs, that is expounded on the basis of inclusive ("elastic") subject-hood (of humans, natural entities or compounds). The implication that this has for what is conceived as eco-animist subject-hood would soon be explicated shortly, meanwhile it is important to turn to what is similarly obtained in Yoruba worldview on human and nonhuman animal relations.

The contentious issue of asserting Chinese cosmology as metaphysics similarly suffice in the case of Yoruba worldviews about reality. In the case of Yoruba worldview, this is captured in the debates that rock the edifice of the earlier claim and doubt about the plausibility of a philosophical foundation of African outlooks or modes of knowing (Bodunrin 1981; Gutema 2002; Oyeshile 2008). Again, this is mainly contested by the Western tradition of doing philosophy that expects that the nature of epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and so on should be basically universal in content and method, not edged by any people's cultural way of life. Importantly, the point that Yoruba and

Chinese worldviews could be classified within the Global South divide that holds a contrary position to the Western expectation is the emphasis here. It follows that Yoruba cosmological account of reality or phenomenon would also attract skeptical glances about its viability as a metaphysics. Leading responses to this skeptical glance does not constitute the subject matter here.

Unlike the case in Chinese worldview, there are diverse cosmological expressions about the notion of being (*Olodumare* as architect of existence) and the lack of it in Yoruba worldview (Alade 2015; Harvey 2015; Abimbola 2005).¹¹ Prominent Yoruba myths account that *Olodumare* (the Supreme Being) commissioned the cosmic and ontological existence through primordial deities and agencies that assumed the proto-forms of undifferentiated subjects (i. e. *Obatala*, *Orunmila*, snail shell, cock, cats, water, sand and so on). It appears, for instance, that the 'agential' roles of sand and water in Yoruba intellectual traditions coincides with the fundamental cosmological elements hinted previously in Chinese myth, since these agents are held in Yoruba belief to be essential contributory factors for the concretization of liveliness; that is, human and natural activity, in terms of human occupation on plains, dry land, mountains, hills, cultivation of animals, food and so on. Given the Yoruba belief expressed here, it is yet to be conceptually clear how the divine design of existence leads to the realization of liveliness. The impression here is basically to state that liveliness, by virtue of equaled participation of primordial entities in proto-forms (human and nonhuman) does not suggest hierarchy or categories. In this sense, one can speak of the plausibility of a post-anthropocentric undertone in Yoruba mythological worldview that implies a deconstruction of the subject-object dichotomy of (*being*) human, nature, or animal.

This is further substantiated in the Yoruba use of animal motifs, underscored by the motivation of an ecocentric order. One can allude to the popular belief expressed about the status of animals, such as vulture, yellow palm bird and buffalo that are often considered as essential embodiment of certain divinities, believed to deserve cautious relations, periodic rites or festivals. This is enhanced by the invested belief that the vulture is riddled with the *force* of being or existence that span across celestial and terrestrial realms. According to the belief, when these realms are inhibited incautiously by human intention and action, in terms of breaching the expectation toward animals as essential embodiment, doom or damnation of the human community and ecosystem degeneration in unpredictable forms (like flood, epidemic outbreak, famine, still birth, death etc.) may ensue. The same belief is applicable to the status of certain species like giant rat (*Okete*), snake (*ejò*), yellow palm bird, and so on, in Yoruba worldview, who are acknowledged as subject. Such subject-hood is conferred through the belief that humans should not interfere unduly and disrespectfully with these animals. Undue and disrespectful interactions with these animals include deterring the human community from hunting, eating or taunting these animals in their places of abode.

The subject-hood of these animal species vary from one kin or clan to another in Yoruba cosmos (just as is applicable in the diverse Chinese dynasties) depending on the belief attached also to divinatory or ancestral source. For instance, the belief held by the *Onikoyi* and *Alapa* families in Southwest Nigeria (where the Yoruba are prominent) as regards the prohibition of hunting and

consuming animals such as yellow palm bird, snake and giant rat suffice here (Adewoye 2007; Ajibade 2006). Among the Yoruba people, it is also not uncommon to encounter panegyrics or adulation in respect of persons from particular kin group being associated with certain characters prominent in animals, to the extent of according such persons as predecessors and accomplice of this animal.¹² This seems to be at par with the Chinese myth about persons as descendants of some of the symbolic animals in the Zodiac calendar, as expressed previously. While the nature of human personality and natural condition is symbolized through the Zodiac calendar in Chinese myth, physical attributes of specific animals in Yoruba belief are perceived as metaphors for human character, though not on the basis of calendric grouping of such character/personality. Adesola Olateju (2005, 373) adds a voice regarding such Yoruba metaphorical belief that alludes to the following animals, as presented below:

The lion, *Kinniun* – royalty and beauty
Big ‘rat’, *Okete* – treachery
Civet cat, *Eta* – sleepiness/laziness
Dog, *Aja* – sexual incontinence/promiscuity.

It could be discerned from the foregoing that the Chinese and Yoruba worldviews on human and nonhuman animal relations share some similarity (with disparate specificities though) in terms of animal motifs, founded on cosmological and mythological perceptions, by the sheer flux of dialectical continuity for human, animal and ecological survival. This dialectical continuity is essentially one of inclusive subject-hood that is a situation of human and nonhuman subject-hood. Within this context, such subject-hood is reinforced by an animist rationale that is eco-centered. For the sake of precision, this could be called “eco-animist subject-hood.”

According to Carla Corradi Musi, who analyses the Shamanic beliefs of the Siberian people, eco-animism emphasizes the need to consider the perception of reality within the context of myths, ideas, and practices, which most societies construct to face the problems of existence, rather than relying upon an isolated expression of other cultures (Musi 2004). In Musi’s view, eco-animism in such societies fosters natural equilibrium, in which man “imagined himself supported by animal and vegetal totem spirits in his search for syntony with the environment” (2004, 292). Eco-animist undertone seems obtainable in Yoruba worldview as presented above, especially with the examples of vulture and yellow palm bird, in the light of the consequences of anthropocentric utilization involving the breach of animal as essential embodiments. The Chinese zodiac mythologies expounded to relay the deterministic state of nature and human destiny/personality signifies similarly the rationale of dialectic continuity, which negates the logic of subject-object dichotomy.

Basically, this presupposes the post-anthropocentric twist anchored in indigenous Chinese and Yoruba worldviews on human and nonhuman animal relations. It further suggests that the flux of subject-hood (due to dialectical continuity) implies the nature of the transient presence of animals, morphed into characters/virtues essential for human and ecosystem wellbeing as a whole.

To speak in this direction is to make allusion to the animal motifs represented in the personality formation of the Chinese people, who fall within the zodiac calendar. Hatalova (2007) and Shan Ni expatiate this further in their seminal contribution.¹³ In similar terms, animal beliefs or motifs regarding certain species (buffalo, vulture) associated with other essential life forms like humans, trees, river, or water in Yoruba worldview exemplify at large the value of human and nonhuman intersubjective relations (in terms of co-species survival, ecological preservation, and cautious relations as subject).

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it could be inferred that the motivations of the post-anthropocentric turn in the Global North that is spurred by response to the predominant schools of animal liberation (rights and welfare) and human exceptionalism is not the same within the Global South examples. The impression that indigenous myths, beliefs and practice within the Global South remain the precursor of post-anthropocentric understanding that shape the perception about certain animals as subject of relations (essential embodiment of ‘beyond human’ existence or being) is reached. However, some contentions could be derived from the comparative worldviews presented above. Firstly, there is the problem of proximate, yet unparalleled, worldviews inherent in Yoruba and Chinese cosmological and ontological accounts. This has been hinted subtly (not detailed though) in the presentation above, with emphasis on the controversies about the notion of being and lack of it in the case of Yoruba worldview, and the varying interpretations of similar myths among Chinese dynasties.

Secondly, the problem of conflation of understanding the prefix “post” (in post-anthropocentrism) within the Global South examples arises. This is to imply that within Global South examples, the prefix is taken to mean ‘beyond or more than human’, against the presupposed understanding of the prefix as ‘after or besides human’ in the Global North. It is indubitable that the understanding of this prefix demands further conceptual clarification and critical engagement.

Thirdly, the problem of proffering viable epistemological framework of justification for these disparate Global South examples, in the course of discerning the plausibility of post-anthropocentric turn of understanding about human and nonhuman animal relations, is yet to be addressed. For instance, one may be interested in inquiring whether the idea of transient presence of animals as *subject* is not merely a projection of the metaphysics of *Yin* and *Yang*, which could serve as a justifiable ground for the opposing dynamics of revering or killing certain animals. Concerning Yoruba worldview in this regard, one may also be interested in inquiring about the veracity of the belief about the essential *presence* of the vulture or yellow palm bird within the epistemological frame of distinction between *Igbagbo* (putatively belief – by virtue of second-hand information passed down from generation to generation) and *Imo* (putatively knowledge – by virtue of first-hand experience or verification).¹⁴

Be that as it may, this discourse so far has made effort to contribute to the ongoing dialogue or conversation on the plausibility of Global South indigenous myths, belief and practice as an anchor of post-anthropocentric understanding of human and nonhuman animal relations. Specifically, it suggests that post-anthropocentric turn in Global South can hardly be explicated as an exclusive agenda of the subject-hood of only animals without reference to indigenous and communal thought about animals. It submits that post-anthropocentric consideration of animals as subject in the particular contexts of indigenous Yoruba and Chinese is inextricably linked with environmental consideration of entities besides animals like plants/trees, natural order and weather condition as well human values, personality traits and so on.

End Notes

¹ For more details, visit the Youtube video chat of “Jacques Derrida and the Question of the Animal”, retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry49Jr0TFjk>. Accessed on May 26, 2018.

² Deconstruction of the anthropocentric gaze implies the critical interrogation of the basis of moral anthropocentrism (by matter of allusion to the reality of pains in animals, suffering, lack of competence or obligatory capacity of animals) expressed in the philosophical thoughts of animal rights, animal welfare and human exceptionalism, which are emphasized diversely by Peter Singer, Tom Regan, Rollin Bernard, Wesley Smith, and others. See Singer, P. 1975. *Animal liberation. A new ethics for our treatment of animal*. New York: Avon Books; Regan, T. & Singer, P. 1989. *Animal Rights and Human Obligations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall; Rollin, B.E. 2003. Animal pain. In S.J., Armstrong & R.G., Botzler (eds.) *The Animal ethics reader*. London & New York: Routledge; Smith, W. 2007. Four Legs Good, Two Legs Bad: The Anti – Human Values of Animal Rights. *HUM. LIF. REV.*

³ See also Yu, J. 2011. “Is Chinese Cosmology Metaphysics? Retrieved from <https://broncoscholar.library.cpp.edu>h...> Accessed on June 15, 2018; Sun, W. “Features of Chinese Cosmology”. *Journal of East-West Thought*, pp. 133 – 144. Retrieved from www.Cpp.edu>JET>Jet2>Sun133-44. Accessed on June 15, 2018.

⁴ Sun, W. “Features of Chinese Cosmology”. *Journal of East-West Thought*, p. 134. Retrieved from www.Cpp.edu>JET>Jet2>Sun133-44. Accessed on June 15, 2018.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 136 – 139.

⁶ See also Sun, W. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 139 – 140

⁷ According to Shan Ni, *Wu Xing* is a mutual generating cycle and overcoming/recycling cycle, which is also responsible for the alterity of natural states or being in Chinese cosmology. In other words, wood feeds fire, fire creates earth, earth bears metal, metal carries water and water nourishes wood. The mutual restraint of these elements is that wood parts earth, metal chops wood, fire melts wood,

water quenches fire and earth absorbs water. See Shan Ni, “Chinese Views on Nature: Ethical Worldviews of Nature in China”, UNESCO ECCAP WG2. Retrieved from www.unescobkk.org>ECCAPWG2China. Accessed June 17, 2018.

⁸ See Merritt, C. “Animal World in China: A Cross-Cultural Perspective”. Retrieved from <https://www.g-casa.com>papers>Merritt>. Accessed June 17, 2018; The National Gallery Chinese Zodiac Trail: A Trail Exploring the Symbolism of Animals in Eastern and Western Traditions. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk>media>. Accessed on June 14, 2018; Gunawan, H. J. *et al.* “The Chinese Calendar”. Retrieved from www.math.nus.edu.sg>gem-projects>C... Accessed on June 15, 2018.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Merritt, C. *Op. Cit.*

¹¹ See also “Yoruba Myth of Creation”, retrieved from www.gccompletion.com/.../LESSONS%203-4%20UNDERSTANDING%20&%20RE...

¹² In the praise (*oriki*) of *Aresa* lineage in Yoruba community and those who hail from royal or prestigious lineage in Yoruba land for example, the poetic chant below is obtainable respectively; (Praise of *Aresa* lineage)

Okere ni mi

Mo le fopo, ladagun mode

Ofofo,

Mo le foyin l’Ade.

Translated as:

I am squirrel

I can prepare palm oil from palm-nuts on the forest of the *Mode* lineage

I am skilled at washing

I can produce palm oil by washing palm-nuts in *Ade* palm forests.

(Praise of the Royal/prestigious lineage)

Omo Adegoriite, omo Ejigbara Ileke,

Omo Ogan-an, omo ehin erin

Translated as:

Offspring of *Adegoriite*, offspring of those who used to wear double springs of beads

Offspring of *Ogan-an*, offspring of Elephants’ Tusks.

In the case of the first panegyric or chant, the zoomorphic (as against Olateju’s observation of this as anthropomorphic) personification of the lineage with/as the squirrel, is by virtue of their

profession in making palm oil. See Babalola cited in Olateju, A. 2005. “The Yoruba Animal Metaphors: Analysis and Interpretation”. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 14(3), p. 374.

¹³ See also Shan Ni, *Op. Cit.*

¹⁴ For detailed insight into the conceptual distinction between *Imo* and *Igbagbo* as epistemological framework in Yoruba worldview, see Hallen, B. 1998. “Moral Epistemology – When Propositions Come out of the Mouth.” *International Philosophical Quarterly*, XXXVIII/2 (Issue No. 159); Hallen, B. 2004. “Yoruba Moral Epistemology”. In K. Wiredu (ed.) *A Companion to African Philosophy*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

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