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Symbolism in Fágúnwà's Translated Novels

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ABSTRACT

Daniel Olórunfémi Fágúnwà was undoubtedly one of the greatest African novelists who wrote in Yorùbá language. He was one of the first to write a novel in an indigenous language, especially in Yorùbá language. This paper examines how symbolism conveys meaning in the four selected translated novels of D. O. Fagunwa. It also establishes the literary importance of symbolism as factor that sustains the timelessness and unique cross-cultural relevance of Fágúnwà's work as illustrated in the English translations of his selected novels. The paper describes intertextuality as a theory that enhances the readers' understanding of the selected texts. Finally, it analyses the symbolic references made to various characters, objects, actions and settings in the novels. The study concludes that symbolism is the major narrative element that revealed the subject, style and unique cross-cultural relevance of Fágúnwà's novels.

Keywords: Symbolism, Intertextuality, Culture, Forest, Characters.

This paper discusses the symbolic elements in English translations of Fágúnwà's novels. Symbolism runs through the novels of Fágúnwà. As a narrative tool, it enhances the understanding of the texts. The symbols are interconnected and through that the messages embedded in the novels are clearly passed across to the readers. Fágúnwà makes it clear from the onset of *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982) that the story he is about to narrate has double layers of meaning: that is, beyond the literal meaning, the narrative is symbolic with deeper meaning which is above the ordinary interpretation. Only the wise will be able to interpret the message. Hence, Fágúnwà calls it *'àgídìgbo*', a special drum:

> My friends all, like the sonorous proverbs do we drum the *àgídìgbo*; it is the wise who dance it and the learned who understand its language. The story which follows is a veritable *àgídìgbo*. (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.7)

In analyzing Fágúnwà's novels, Bámgbósécategorises symbolism into four aspects: "the symbolism of character, place and object, and of plot" (Bámgbósé, 2007, p.89). However, this paper discusses symbolism in Fágúnwà's novels under symbolic characters, symbolic settings, symbolic objects, and symbolic action in Fágúnwà's novels. This categorisation helps the novels to reveal their unique meanings. According to Bloomfield (1972):

> If a work of art is to have any meaning, it must, in some sense be symbolic… If a work of art says anything, it must have a general meaning in or above the meaning of its particulars. Particulars by themselves present only raw experience. To be understood, they must be conceived of as particulars of *something*… In this sense, experience-present and past and potential, in fact or in words-has in its ordinary way a meaning and a meaning of organisation above and beyond the meaning of its particulars. (p.309)

The novels of Fágúnwà present various symbolic characters that are employed to pass their messages across to the people. The character 'Fear' is symbolic, especially his four heads, facing different directions. The heads represent the four cardinal points of the earth, which make

the character ubiquitous. This description is intertextually traceable to the one found in *The Bible* (Ezek.1:4-20). The biblical character has the 'likeness of four living creatures.' The appearance has the 'likeness of man,' and he has 'four faces and four wings.' This biblical description vividly authenticates the description portrayed in *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* and equally ascertains *The Bible* as one of the sources of influence in Fágúnwà's novels. The description of Fear in the novel sends a hot flush of blood into the reader's system. Other dreadful characters, apart from Fear that feature in Fágúnwà's novels are Ghommid of Fear (Àǹjọ́nú-ìbẹ̀rù) who carries a huge tome in his hands in which all the sins of people are recorded in Fágúnwà's *In the Forest of Olódùmarè* (1949/2010), Disease, a most depressing personality, the wife of Death. Others are the Boa of Fury or Python-of-Rage (Ọ́jòlá-ìbínú), the king of the town of snakes who is the most vicious of all crawling creatures (*In the Forest of Olódùmarè*); Kùmọ̀dìran-The Inherited Clubs, who gets six strokes of clubs on the back of his neck every morning by any volunteer in *Expedition to the Mount of Thought* (1965/1999). Another symbolic character who induces fear in *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* is Tèmbèlẹkùn, a monster that dwells in a cave. Tèmbèlẹkùn takes delight in the blood of humans. He kills the rebellious Lámọrín in his cave. Lámọrín is anonymous and stands for Everyman. Bámgbósé (2007) posits that 'Fear' is a terror-inducing creature who is:

> a physical projection of the fear in man's mind. The fact that it is a condition of the mind is illustrated by the failure of the hunters' attempt to combat it in a physical way. Its cause is psychological and the way to get rid of it can only equally be psychological. (p.90)

Another symbolic character similar to Fear is Ẹlẹ́gbárá who is 'the twin brother of Satan and the sons of the earth gave sacrifices to both of them on the crossroads.'Ẹlẹ́gbárá stands for an enemy that human beings cannot conquer physically yet must be overcome in their journey in life. Ẹlẹ́gbárá is a challenge that must be overcome by human beings. It takes dexterity, agility, prompt action and above all, divine intervention to prevail over the challenges. 'Èsù' or 'Ẹlẹ́gbárá' features

in all the novels of Fágúnwà. There are other symbolic terrifying characters in Fágúnwà's novels that represent various challenges.

The key message from the author is that human beings are bound to encounter great challenges in life. Human beings cannot overcome most of these challenges by mere reliance on limited human skills, but total dependence on divine assistance. Ẹlẹ́gbárá is intertextually referred to in Fágúnwà's *The Mysteries of God* (1961/2012) when he takes Kòtẹ́milọ́rùn and drags him to Hell to be punished for his atrocity in reviling God. The biblical overseer of hell, Satan who punishes the occupants of hell, is replicated in the character of Ẹlẹ́gbárá in Fágúnwà's novels. He is different from Èsù, the Yorùbá deity of justice and retribution.

Ẹ̀gbin, as the name implies in Yoruba language, means filth. Ẹ̀gbin is a symbolic character that stands for extreme corruption in the society. Ẹ̀gbin is a disgusting object, full of sores all over his body, oozing fluids and pus as he moves. He does not clean up whenever he excretes and 'crusts of excrement from some three years could be found at the entrance of his anus.' He is described thus:

> Every kind of boil and tumour lined the body of this man… they burst open on his body and he would gather the suppuration in his hand and lick it up. Ẹ̀gbin never bathed, it was a taboo… The mucus never dried in Ẹ̀gbin's nostrils, this he used as water for cooking his food and he drank it also as water. (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.94)

There is a verse in Ifá divination poetry that condemns dirty individuals. It says that whosoever claims to be neat but goes ahead to marry a dirty person, such a person is dirty as well. Yorùbá culture condemns dirt in the society. Under 'Òràngún Méjì' it reads:

A kì í f'ìtìjúkárùn,	We can't contact disease through shyness,
À sìmáa f' ìtìjúko o;	And we can contact it through shyness,
A díáfúnAfínjú,	Prescribes Ifá for a clean person,

Tí ń lọyanọ̀bùnlálè,	Who goes to marry a dirty person,
Èékánnáowopènte;,	The finger nails dirty;
Pèntèpenteìsàlè.	The under wears dirty,
Bíalọ́bùnlóbìnrin,	If your wife is dirty
A ò le jerúmọ́;	You can't eat locust-beans again;
A díáfúnÈsùàìwè,	Thus Ifá is prescribed for the god of dirtiness,
Tíyóòmúobìnrinsálọ.	Who will carry the woman away. (Wande, 2006, p.95)

Corruption is a disgusting element in the society. It is just like a communicable disease. It spreads easily. The fact that Ẹ̀gbin does not have a permanent abode shows that corruption is present everywhere. The hunters perceive the odour from Ẹ̀gbin before setting eyes on him, which means that the awful ordure of corruption is carried about to every nook and cranny of the society. The hunters could not conquer Ẹ̀gbin, they beg him to depart. The author believes that human beings cannot exterminate corruption completely from the world. They can only work on it to depart from the immediate environment for a while, if the right things are done. However, it is rather disheartening that Ẹ̀gbin does not depart alone; he must take 'Òtò', who can be deceived easily along with him.

There are some symbolic characters that Fágúnwà uses to portray various forms of human behaviour which are detrimental to the society. Ìbànújẹ́-ìsàlẹ̀, one of such symbolic characters, stands for people who are always sad, gloomy, conservative, melancholic and unpredictable. Ìbànújẹ́-ìsàlẹ̀ is one of the sojourners in the forest that other hunters are not willing to associate with. Olówó-aiyé says that "from the day I knew him, I never did find a wisp of laughter on his lips… no one can ever tell the difference between their seasons of happiness and unhappiness" (Fágúnwà, 1949/2010, p.183). The 'Ìbànújẹ́-ìsàlẹ̀'s' of this world are always unfriendly and too reserved or melancholic. They will never open up so that others can be of help to them. They are unpredictable and their demise is always mysterious and debatable. The actual death of Ìbànújẹ́-ìsàlẹ̀ is controversial as none of the hunters has a clear

account of how he died or disappeared. "Till today, no one has seen him… what we do know for certain is that we departed the palace of Boa-of-fury with Ìbànújẹ́-ìsàlẹ̀, and left the valley of the Accursed Women without him"(Fágúnwà,1949/2010, p.211).Fágúnwà concludes: "any man of good character who sees that this habit is becoming his own is well advised to part company with it, for it is a blemish in a person" (Fágúnwà, 1949/2010, p.184). When commenting on Goat-Baboon and Ìbànújẹ́-ìsàlẹ̀, Adékọyà (2014) attributes their destruction to lack of wisdom and foolishness.

> It is intelligence or wisdom that separates a human being from a beast. Characters like Goat-Baboon (Simpleton Personified) and Ìbànújẹ́-ìsàlẹ̀ either perish or get lost in the course of their return journey and never make it home because they lack wisdom. So there is no gainsaying the importance of wisdom in human life. (p.35)

The background message from the author to be noted is that life is not about isolation but by association, and such association should be with the right kind of people.

The behaviour of the man who rides the hero, Àkàrá-ògún in *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* like an antelope is symbolic. Though the name of this man is not given in the novel, his action depicts his description. The hero finds himself in the man's cave who is not much above short and his back had an enormous hunch; fins covered his body so that it had the appearance of a fish. He had two arms, two legs, and two eyes like a human being, but he had a small tail at his posterior and his eyes were enormous; each one was six times the normal size. The description shows that he is partly human and partly animal. He is full of wicked traits and the kind of punishment given to the hero is very severe. Despite the hero's plea for freedom, he refuses. He represents despotic and authoritarian leaders who rule their subjects with iron fist. There are examples of such dictators in literary texts like Jack in Golding's *The Lord of the Flies* (1954), President Sam in Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Gunema, Tuboum and Kamini in Soyinka's *A Play of Giants* (1984), and Koranche in Ayi Kwei Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973) among others.

In considering the self-realisation of the hero, it is sure that there is need for human beings to acknowledge their limitations, realise where they have made mistake, be determined to make corrections and recognise God as the Supreme Being who can deliver. The hero realises that he has "indulged in magical arts but had failed to reckon with God… Before daylight broke on my third day I cried to God and prayed" (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.41). This shows that one's wisdom will fail at a stage and then one has to recognise the supremacy of God. The cooking of yam is used in a symbolic sense. This can be intertextually linked to how the hunters battle with that filthy character, Ègbin in *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons*, and their combat with Àrjònú-ibèrù (Ghommid of Fear) in *In the Forest of Olódùmarè*. Neither does Ghommid of Fear respect his neighbours nor the divinity of God. He is an "over-assiduous administrator who has lost all credibility among his own peers. Often he had subjected them to chastisement whenever a fight broke out between his wife and himself" (Fágúnwà1949/2010, p.50). God happens to be on the side of Olówó-aiyé as he shamefully defeats Ghommid of Fear on that day. Olówó-aiyé depends on divine assistance just as the hunters equally depend on the divine wisdom to defeat and excommunicate Ègbin from their midst. Leaders are to depend on God and realise that human beings are limited. Some leaders think they know everything more than their subjects and that is why most of them fail and die in their ignorance, pride and foolishness. The man does not know that cooked yam is better than raw yam until the hero gives him one. Good public opinions can help listening leaders greatly. Despite that, the man does not recognise the supremacy of God like his prisoner, and he dies foolishly.

Another area where symbolism manifests in Fágúnwà's novels is the setting. Fágúnwà uses mountains as symbols in his novels. Among such mountains is Mount Láńgbòdó, which stands for a challenge that must be overcome before success while the road to Mount Láńgbòdó represents the path that human beings must take in life in order to get to their destination. Mount Láńgbòdó is 'a town of wise men,' and before getting there, the road splits into two, "the right side to the dome of heaven and the left to hell" (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.95). The splitting of the road stands for moment of decision in life, as it is a universal phenomenon. Whether in political, religious, or social sphere, people

must choose which road to take in life: the road to good or evil. There is a moment of decision to everybody on earth, a moment to decide on how they will climb their own 'mount Láńgbòdó'. People who desire success in life will have to climb their own 'mount Láńgbòdó'. Fágúnwà refers to different mountains or hills in his novels and they have similar connotations, which are various shades of difficulties that human beings must pass through in order to achieve success in life. There are Mount of Thought (*ÒkèÌrònú*) and Hill of Triumph (*ÒkèÌgbéga*) (Fágúnwà, 1954/1994, p.174) in *Expedition to the Mount of Thought*; '*Òkè Hílàhílo'*–a mount with a glossy surface and '*ÒkèÌsòro*' in *Ìrèké Oníbùdó* (1949); Mount Láńgbòdó features in *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter's Saga* and *In the Forest of Olódùmarè*. Mountains or rocks must be climbed in order to see The Furry-Bearded-One (Baba-Onírungbọ̀n-Yẹ́úkẹ́) who resides at the promontory of the rocks, a symbolic representation of wisdom. The ability of anybody to climb to the top, and get to the position or location of the mountain is a symbol of success and achievement in life.

In addition, mountain plays a great role in controlling ecological and natural disasters. In ancient days, mountains served as protection and shield during battles and wars. Any town with so many mountains is always difficult to conquer. Likewise, mountains served as sources of food for the soldiers. When the soldiers hide for days by the mountains in order to ambush the enemies, naturally, water flows from the mountains and some animals like snails, snakes, monkeys and so on, naturally inhabit the mountains, the soldiers have their daily needs met, courtesy of the natural generosity of the mountains. History has it as part of the reasons why the enemies could not conquer Òkèigbó, the home town of Fágúnwà, in those days. In Òkèigbó town, there are numerous rivers or streams such as 'Omi-Ìyè' and 'Omi-Májerùkù', which naturally flow from different mountains and the water in those streams or rivers, cannot dry as long as the mountains are still there. Even the name 'Òkèigbó' is symbolic. '*Òkè*' in Yorùbá means 'mountain' and '*igbó*' means forest. These two components of nature are present in all the novels of Fágúnwà. In Òkèigbó town and its environs, there are various mountains that are specifically named such as 'Òkè-Láńgbòdó,' in Igbó Olódùmarè, a suburb town in Òkè Igbó. Others are 'Òkè Hílàhílo' which is also referred to as 'Òkè Ògèdèǹgbé,' 'Òkè Olóbò-

Méjì,' 'Òkè Olóróókè,' and 'Òkè-Ológúdú,' 'Òkè Jege,' 'Òkè Olórì,' and 'ÒkèSá,'. Definitely, Fágúnwà got the inspiration about various mountains and forests mentioned in his novels from his town.

According to the belief of people, 'Òkè' (Mountain) was the true son of Oníjan from heaven. Mountain was told in heaven, when he consulted Ifá, to come to the earth and stay by the pathway which he obeyed and that fetched him his long desired blessings. That is why mountains are visible to people and they are always at the entrance or behind towns that are notable for various mountains. According to Abímbọ́lá, Ifá refers to mountain as '*ẹniapá ò ká*,' (an unconquerable person), '*ọlọ́mọawáyéèkú*,' '*ọlọ́mọiyániyángidigbi* (Abimbola 2006, p.151).

Another symbolic setting employed in Fágúnwà's novels is the forest. The forest stands for the world while the various characters in the novels demonstrate the experiences of people in the world. For instance, Àkàrà-ogùn demonstrates his hunting dexterity in the 'Forest of Irúnmọlẹ̀' (*Igbó Irúnmọlẹ̀* & *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons: A Hunter's Saga*). Olówó-aiyé, the father of Àkàrà-ogùn also goes to the 'Forest of 'Olódùmarè' (*Igbó Olódùmarè*) to hunt and he comes across several hunters in the forest. Other forests mentioned are the 'Forest of Impenetrable Silence' (*Igbó Ìdákẹ́rọ́rọ́*), the 'Forest of a Thousand and Four Hundred Deities' (*Igbó Elégbèje*), and unnamed forest where Àdìítú goes to sojourn.

Remarkably, *Igbó Ìdákẹ́rọ́rọ́* is qualified as "the most soundless place you could find anywhere under the sun. Only one ghommid lived in this forest, and he was morefiery than the very lightning of the sky. The ghommid did not permit anyone to enter…. The name of this creature was Èsù-kékeré-òde, Tiny Fiend of the Border" (Fágúnwà, 1949/2010, p.20). Ìrìnkèrindò and his fellow hunters go on an expedition to *Igbó Elégbèje* for several years to seek out the Fruit of Thought (*ÈsoÌrònú*) and that of Reliance-on-God in *Expedition to the Mount of Thought*, while Àdìítú spends seven years in the forest living like a beast and with animals. It is of significance that just as the forest finally becomes the source and origin of Àdìítú's wealth (*The Mysteries of God*) the forest also becomes the place of death for many people, hunters in particular (*Expedition to the Mount of Thought*). Many hunters lose their lives in

the forests due to one reason or the other. Some die because of their negligence like ÌgbínÈnìyàn, Lámọ́rín, kàkó, Ìbànújẹ́ Ìsàlẹ̀, while some die because of their wickedness like Ayédèrú-ẹ̀dá and Ojúayédùn in *Expedition to the Mount of Thought.* Forest also represents a place of conflict, a battle ground between forces in fighting for supremacy as we see in the contest between Olówó-aiyé and Èsù-kékeré-òde; Àkàrá-ògún and Àgbákò; the hunters and the birds; the pilgrims and the snakes; between the natural and the supernatural. Délé Láyíwọ́lá (2003) calls forest 'wilderness', and refers to it 'as a no man's land' and it 'is a space of potential conflict perpetually generating its own dramas" (p.111). Similarly, Adéòtí (2015) submits that:

> Interestingly, the forest environment is also the link to the celestial realm… It is remarkable that the Forest (Igbo) is a recurring setting in Fágúnwà's novels… (*they)* are inter-textual echoes of the space between the mysterious and the graspable. The forest connects human beings with non-human creatures. (pp. 3–4)

Ìlákọ̀ṣẹ refers to something very small. Whosoever decides to pitch his tent in such a town cannot succeed in life because the condition of that environment is naturally of inadequacy and limitation. The name "reminds one of a small animal that resembles snail… There is no single animal in Ìlákọ̀ṣẹ town that is bigger than Ìlákọ̀ṣẹ … Goats had abandoned Ìlákọ̀ṣẹ … it was as if God himself had decreed that the people of Ìlákọ̀ṣẹ must live in total suffering" (Obafemi, 2012, p.8). The environmental, natural and historic condition of where one stays could have a great impact on one, hence, the need for proper investigation before settling down. Hence, Àdìítú has to move to Ajẹ́dùbúlẹ̀ so as to succeed in life. His parents who stay behind remain poor and die in poverty while their son becomes rich.Ajẹ́dùbúlẹ̀ symbolises a prosperous, industrious and modernised town. The town represents a place of breakthrough and prosperity after a long time of hardship and hard work. It is a direct opposite of 'Ìlákọ̀ṣẹ'.

The unnamed island is symbolic, especially in the coming together of Àdìítú and Iyùn-adé. It represents the place of resolution of long-standing differences, a place where love is solidified and concretised

and a place where impossible things become possible. Iyùn-adé vows that she will rather remain single than marry Àdiìtú, but the experiences on the Island make her change her mind. Both of them, by divine arrangement, find themselves travelling in the same ferry which later capsizes, leaving Àdiìtú and Iyùn-adé as the only survivors. Alone on the Island, the middle wall of disagreement between them is broken and they have to face the challenges on the Island together, especially the colony of cannibals. The idea of 'Unnamed Island' (Igbó-àìmò) is derived from both literary and oral texts that Fagunwa has come across before the writing of his novels. Julia Kristeva, while explaining intertextuality, says that because of the influence of other texts on readers' consciousness, texts are usually filtered through 'codes' which bring the weight of other, previous meanings with them. Intertextuality, according to her, creates a situation whereby "we are then, already entangled in a web of meaning created by other texts and the connotations surrounding them" (Kristeva 1980). The incidence at the Unnamed Island mentioned by Fagunwa is similar to what happens in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) where Crusoe and Friday find themselves alone on the island with its attendant challenges especially the episode of the cannibals they encounter. Also relevant are the experiences of the young boys who find themselves on an isolated island because of air crash in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. It is interesting that the love between Àdiìtú and Iyùn-adé grows, with a plan to get married when they get back home safely, though that does not happen until after four months on the Island.

In addition, the love between Ìrìnkèrindò and Affection of Significance (Ìfẹ́pàtàkì) is initiated and cemented besides an unnamed river. This shows the significance of unknown water or island in matters of love in Fágúnwà's novels. The rivers are not named because the concept of love is universal. It is not supposed to be confined to a particular environment. Not only that, none can actually comprehend the nature of true love. No one actually knows the end of rivers, for they flow into one another and they become endless. Just as rivers flow naturally into one another, so also true love should flow among human beings and it continues endlessly, eternally.

The River of Blood in *Expedition to the Mount of Thought* equally symbolises a place of unrestrained confession and retribution for the wicked people. The hunters have to cross this river in the course of their expedition before getting to their destination. Whosoever crosses it successfully will be saved. Human beings are also on a journey to a destination and before they get to that heavenly abode to receive rewards, they must cross over their own 'river of blood' where confession of all their past crimes must be made. The confession in this sacred place is unrestrained and cannot be curtailed or controlled by the individual. The person will declare all the sins he has committed since birth. This is like what happens during the meeting between Olówóayé and the Ghommid of Fear (Àǹjọ̀nú-ìbẹ̀rù), the gatekeeper of the forest of Olódùmarè, who has a register where the sins of people are recorded. Based on the register, "there is not one who can be accounted perfect" (Fágúnwà, 1949/2010, p.49).

The city of Filth is another symbolic setting in Fágúnwà's novels. The city stands for the world where a lot takes place, mostly evil things. The situation of this city originally is different from the present condition where 'the affairs of these people run higgledy-piggledy, topsy-turvy'. In fact, the author describes the city as a "place of suffering and contempt, a city of greed and contumely, a city of envy and of thievery, a city of fights and wrangles, a city of death and diseases- a veritable city of sinners" (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.31)

The people of the City of Filth commit a 'most atrocious crime,' which makes the sun not to shine on them for six months. There is no rain, no moon for three years and it results in famine and epidemics. After some time, God has mercy on them; things become normal but with a warning not to do evil again. Later, when they have eaten well and drank to satisfaction, they forget God who created them, and they begin to do more terrible things than before. God becomes angry and sends His 'emissaries' to the city and the 'emissaries' stay in Ìwàpẹ̀lẹ́'s house before unleashing God's judgment on the inhabitants of that city. "They turned the dwellers of this town into a race of the dumb and punished them all with blindness; the city became a city of curses for ever… only Ìwàpẹ̀lẹ́ is spared" (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.31) This recalls the story of Sodom and Gomorrah that are destroyed by God in the

Bible and only Lot's family is spared (Gen.19). Ìwàpẹ̀lẹ́ can be likened to biblical Lot as a sole survivor of great calamity.

Filth (Ẹ̀gbin) can be linked to the city of Filth as both of them share the same characteristics and attributes- filthiness. The hunters encounter the city first before meeting Filth (Ẹ̀gbin) on the way. Surely, Filth is supposed to live in the city of Filth. When the hunters get there, he is not found there probably he has wandered away. The citizens of the city that Àkàrá-ògún meets actually behave in a filthy manner. No sane person ought to stay in that city. That is why Ìwàpẹ̀lẹ́ departs from the city through death shortly after Àkàrá-ògún gets there.

Just as Àkàrá-ògun enters the city alone, everybody comes into this world individually. Someone's companion like Helpmeet will surely depart as such a person steps into the world. While in the world, we come across many people and different situations, both good and bad. Definitely the loved ones in the world will certainly depart suddenly when the people feel they need them most, like Ìwàpẹ̀lẹ́ dying suddenly when Àkàrá-ògún needs her most. Just as Àkàrá-ògún departs from the city alone without his anticipated cherished wife, so will every person on earth depart from this world.

The city of Filth as a representation of the world is full of symbolic places and characters like the market, Ìwàpẹ̀lẹ́, the forbidden room and so on. The market symbolises the microcosm of this world where many atrocities are committed. The market women and men are engaged in all kinds of fights, killing themselves and trampling on their innocent children. In fact, the innocent children are the unlucky victims. The forbidden room represents what must not be toiled with, once taken, it takes one to another unexpected level, whether pleasant or not. Ìwàpẹ̀lẹ́ categorically tells Àkàrá-ògún not to enter the room without telling Àkàrá-ògún what is in the room or the consequences of entering the room. Àkàrá-ògún decides to enter the room after the death of Ìwàpẹ̀lẹ́. Immediately he steps inside, he finds himself in his room with a bag of money, thus he becomes a wealthy man. The message from Fágúnwà is that as human beings traverse this 'city of filth' (the world), great caution must be exercised not to be contaminated, and never hold something or somebody too dearly because someday there is going to be

sudden separation. In addition, Fágúnwà believes that there are consequences for all actions in this world, whether negative or positive, good or bad.

Fágúnwà believes that there is no person without sin. However, sins are of different categories. The narrator says that, "there was scarcely a single vile left upon the earth which those men's mouths did not speak out" (Fágúnwà, 1954/1994, p.158). Those who commit simple sins like "little little lies," (Fágúnwà, 1954/1994, p.156) abusing others, berating others, infant stealing and other petty sins are overlooked. But those with grievous sins like "killing of any man … bringing harm on anybody," (Fágúnwà, 1954/1994, p.159) will perish in the River of Blood.

Those that Ìrìnkèrindò thinks will perish because he sees them as terrible sinners, survive the ordeal by the River of Blood. Whereas the cunning and hypocritical ones, like Ayédèrú-ẹ̀dá, do not make it to the other side. River of Blood is intertextually referred to in *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (p.93).

Some objects are symbolic in the novels. For example, Kola nut as a symbolic object traditionally represents longevity. It is an emblem, a means of rendering sacrifice to the gods in Africa in order to know their mind and to seek for divine assistance. Kola nut is a symbol representing how to perceive and understand God's mind on the success of any adventure embarked upon. It is used in prayer. The hero, Àkàrá-òógún, at the onset of his journey to the forest, while waiting at the outskirt of the forest, decides to make sacrifice to God. He expects good result from the kola nuts he throws on the ground, but most of the time, the kola nuts face down. This implies doom and failure. As long as his mind is set on the journey and the kola nut divination seems not to be working in his favour, he turns two of the four kola-nuts to face up. He says that "with his own two hands does a man mend his fortune: if you kola pieces will not predict good, I will predict that good for you" (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.37). This action of Àkàrá-òógún is a great pointer to the belief in personal freewill and in the spirit of determinism. For success to be achieved in life, one must be determined and decide to forge ahead despite all odds and obstacles on the ways. As he stands up

to go, he hits his left foot against a stump. The left foot is the 'unlucky foot.' In addition, a flying owl hits Àkàrá-ògún's face with its wings. The kola pieces facing down, the stubbing with the left foot and that of owl symbolise bad omen, a danger that lies ahead. This re-affirms the influence of Yoruba cosmology on Fágúnwà's novels.

The hero is not moved by all these ominous signs, he 'simply bartered death away' and prepares for any eventualities. Immediately after this incidence, a monster captures and tortures him severely and it could have been worse if not for divine intervention.

Kola nuts are used by 'Babaláwo' or diviners to worship Ọ̀rúnmìlà through Ifá either in the morning, in the evening or during Ifá festival. To worship Ọ̀rúnmìlà in the morning, a Babaláwo will put kola nuts inside cold water in a calabash; then he will be hitting ỌpọńIfá with Ìrọ̀kẹ́ Ifá for some time, chanting the right or the appropriate Ifá verse (ẸsẹIfá) on the kola-nuts in the water like this:

Tí á bájí, à wẹ'wótóní, a wẹ'sẹ̀ kàsinòwúrọ̀
Ti á bájí, a tùnwá fi asọtókibo'ra
Mo níỌ̀rúnmìlà, o ò jíirelónìí
Èlà, o ò jíirelónìí
Moróhuntólú, Mòsìakarabá, ọmọerin ń fọn gun l'álò:
Ọmọèékánnáowokòj'ekunaraabe,
Ọmọabètòwìnnìwìnnìb'ejìrop'ímoákúnnú
Ọmọolóbètò fi oríjọadétómọòdiùmọ̀ jimọ̀,
O màjíirelónìí o
O jíirelónìítokun-tokun,
O jíirelónìítidẹ-tidẹ…
O màjẹ́ kíòní san mí o.

When we wake up in the morning, we wash hands clean, and wash the stale legs
When we wake up, we cover ourselves with thick cloth
Ọ̀rúnmìlà, you woke up fine today
Certainly, you woke up fine
Moróhuntólú, Mosíakaraba, children of Erin- ń-fọn:
Finger nails cannot reject the razor blade,

The morning dew brings blessings
The royal prince who resembles the crown and builds a fence,
You woke up fine
You woke up with strength
You woke up with vitality…
Let today bring blessings to me ho.
(Daramola & Jéjé, 1970, p.235)

After the chanting, the kola-nuts will be broken into pieces and the water poured for Èsù. If the worshipper wants to know whether his worship or sacrifice is accepted, the kola pieces will be thrown on the plate. If two kola pieces face up and two pieces face down, that is male and female (*takọtabo*). It means the worship is accepted. This is illustrated by the figure below.

Figure 1

If the kola-nuts show '*Ọ̀yẹ̀kú*' that is, all the pieces face down, the sacrifice is accepted. '*Ọ̀yẹ̀kú*' is illustrated pictorially below.

Figure 2

If the kola-nuts bring out 'Èjìogbè', that is, all the pieces face up, it means Ifá has accepted the sacrifice or worship. "The babaláwo will then distribute the kola-nuts to the people around there, after that, the day's activities can begin" (Daramola & Jéjé, 1970, p.236). The picture below portrays 'Èjìogbè' through kola-nut divination.

Figure 3

Àkàrá-ògún does not have full knowledge of how to use kola-nuts for divination. In fact, he confesses that "the matter of this kolanut was simply beyond my comprehension" (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.37). There is a time the divination by Àkàrá-ògún is accepted for it shows '*Ọ̀yẹ̀kú*', which means all the kola-nuts face down, but he does not know, he simply goes ahead to change the pieces to favour him. "With his own two hands," (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.37) it can be established, that he brings trouble upon himself.

In another aspect, the two fresh trees in *In the Forest of Olódùmarè*,' whose leaves are ever fresh with stunning flowers symbolise love that never dies. The trees are human beings originally. They are lovers. There is true love between them as they plan to get married in the future, but their parents are sworn enemies. The lovers decide to elope. While the girl waits for her lover at the bank of a river as agreed, she sees a lion approaching and seeks a refuge in a hole. The lion sees the girl's shawl on the ground, smears it haphazardly from its bloodstained mouth, and finally departs. Shortly after that, the boy arrives and sees his lover's shawl stained with blood. He concludes immediately that a

lion has killed his lover and all his hope is gone. Instantly, he kills himself with his own sword. By the time the girl emerges from her hide-out, sees her lover's corpse, she loses her emotional balance and instantly sinks into a deep depression and dies. The tragic death of the lovers makes God to turn the lovers into two trees whose leaves remain cool and fresh. God assigns two angels who will perpetually guard the trees, in order to ensure that they are not cut down for destruction. True love is not to be destroyed but to be kept alive at all times. The trees symbolise ideal love. The story is an intertextual reference to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

After the death of his parents, Àdìítú returns to Ìlákọ̀sẹ to give them a befitting burial. Apart from the company that Àdìítú establishes and the road he tars in memory of his parents, 'Àdìítú then erected a big statue in the name of his parents.' The statue represents the indelible memory of loved ones. A big clock is also put on top of the statue to give the time of the day and an epitaph is written at the base of that statue. The epitaph reads: "This statue is named after ÒBÌRÍ-AIYÉ AND ÌPỌ́NJÚDÌRAN, MADE BY THEIR SON, ÀDÌÌTÚ-OLÓDÙMARÈ" (Fágúnwà, 1961/2012, p.65).

This statue is futuristic and it foreshadows what will happen to Fágúnwà himself later. After the sudden death of Fágúnwà in 1963 and his burial, a big statue was put at the centre of his hometown, Òkèigbó, with inscription under it. The inscription is "D, O, Fágúnwà (Author of the Famous Yorùbá Novel) *Ògbójú Ọdẹ Nínú Igbó Irúnmọlẹ̀*. By Ìfẹ́sowápọ̀ Local Government." The statue is conspicuous to everybody coming into the town and it is known as 'ÈreFágúnwà' (Fágúnwà's Statue) just like the one made by Àdìítú known as "The clock of Òbìrí-ayé and Ìpọ́njúdìran" (Fágúnwà, 1961/2012, p.65).

Symbolic objects also include the register in the hand of Ìtọ́jú Ẹ̀mí, which contains all the things human beings do while on earth, in *The Mysteries of God*. Others are the three fishes, which cannot be cooked. According to the author, "Only three types of fish will be found in that pool, they represent three groups of people in the town: one represents Christians, the second Moslems, and the third are the unbelievers" (Fágúnwà, 1949/2010, p.174). The three fishes can be symbolically

referred to as the three major religious groups of people in the society, especially in the African society, which are the Christians, the Muslims and what Fágúnwà refers to as 'unbelievers' who should be called the Traditional Worshippers. This is because, the fact that someone is neither a Christian nor a Muslim does not make him an 'unbeliever.' Everybody believes in something or someone superior, visible or not. The religions mentioned by Fágúnwà are not the only religions in the world, the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Jews, and so on are present in the universe.

Another aspect of symbolism in Fágúnwà's novels lies in action. There are several characters in the novels whose actions actually justify their behaviours and invariably determine their final destination. Some actions are positive, virtuous and commendable while some actions are negative, bad and unworthy. Fágúnwà uses symbolic actions to pass the message that an individual reaps what he or she has sown. For instance, the action of Kàkó who kills his wife on their wedding day just because she does not want him to embark on an expedition is condemned. Kàkó represents the hot-tempered individual with erratic action while the wife's action marks her out as an obdurate personality, a stumbling block on the line of meritorious duty who dies needlessly.

Ìbẹ̀mbẹ́ Olókùnrùn's (Barn of Worms) action is detestable and must be jettisoned by the people. This creature, before his departure from the dome of heaven robs the Heavenly Vestry of the garment of immortality, without the approval of God. The original owner of the cloak is Ògodógo, or Glory-to-Glory, a man who is famous through that name. As soon as he commits this offence, he runs to the world to seek refuge and to continue his callous acts. Not only that, "he slaughtered his oldest son" as meat and "slew his oldest daughter and poured her blood into a bottle" as wine to entertain his guests. As a result of that action, "the guests from heaven" decide to make him a present of curses that he will not be satisfied no matter the quantity of food and drinks he consumes. That is why he is referred to as the man who eats "the most of every living being on earth" (Fágúnwà, 1954/1994, p.21-22). Any person who eats uncontrollably is referred to as Ìbẹ̀mbẹ́ Olókùnrùn, a person who is never satisfied with moderate things.

However, at last, due to his interactions with 'civilised' people, his unwholesome attitude is changed for the better. He is healed from his infirmities. He repents from his old ways and turns a new leaf, mainly because he is now keeping the company of well-meaning people. He now eats "the same measure as appropriate to normal human beings" (Fágúnwà,1954/1994, p.172) What Fágúnwà intends to teach the people is to be contented and never to imbibe such negative acts like stealing, covetousness, greed and insatiable appetite for food and bad eating habit as they symbolise unwholesome behaviours among human beings.

Another symbolic action is that of the king in *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons*, who is callous, but is turned to a beggar suddenly by God and he is replaced on the throne by another person. The king is described as being "more wicked than the devil and more cruel than a monkey, more ill-natured than the thorns on a thorn-bush, and he spent his days with a perpetual scowl on his face" (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.131)

He is highly religious. During a sermon in the church, members of the choir sing about how God "removes the mighty from his throne and exalts the humble above them" (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.131). He becomes annoyed, threatens to deal with the choir and then speaks against God. God sends an angel to turn him to a beggar. He falls asleep; before he wakes up, the transformation, the reversal of personality has taken place. That is how he becomes a slave, a beggar in his own palace. He remains in this state for over a year, but he repents of his pride later and he is restored into his position as the king.

The action of the king stems out of pride. The story of this king is intertextually linked to the story of King Nebuchadnezzar in the Bible (Dan. 4), who becomes proud, speaks arrogantly against God and he is turned to an animal for seven years by God before he is restored to his throne as king in Babylon.

In the same vein, the action of the leopard in an iron cage and a man on a journey is to teach human race lesson to imbibe. Just as Fágúnwà stresses that act of kindness is good to be shown to others and even strangers, as he portrays that in the story of the young prince and the healing of smallpox, caution must be taken. According to him:

> About acts of kindness, it is true that men ought to perform these but a man ought to know what sort of kindness he ought to perform and what kind of person deserves his kindnesses. Some people perform their kind deeds thoughtlessly, simply because they believe that such conduct is good, they do not think whether such acts are advisable or not. Anyone who performs acts of charity without thought does ill. (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.123)

He uses the story of a Leopard that has been locked in a cage to illustrate this. As a man happens to pass by, not knowing that a Leopard has been caged, the Leopard pleads with the man to release him with a promise that he will not kill the man. The man ignorantly agrees. He releases the Leopard and immediately, the hungry leopard descends on him wanting to devour him. The man quickly tells him to wait and narrate his ordeal to at least five personalities and then he will surrender himself to be killed and the Leopard agrees. The first four creatures they meet blame and condemn the man to death, but it takes the wisdom employed by the Fox to set the man free. The Fox pleads that the story should be physically demonstrated right from the beginning when the Leopard was still in the cage. The Leopard agrees, goes back to the cage, and the cage is locked. That marks the end of the ingrate Leopard.

The action here implies that kindness should be shown with great care and thoughtfulness. The action of the Leopard shows ingratitude because in *The Mysteries of God*,the author says:

> Anyone who was shown kindness and did not appreciate it had blocked the way for others; that person is a deadly poison among people and nobody would want to show kindness to such a person…. An ingrate brings unhappiness for people; an evil person who wears human flesh but has the head of an animal. (Fágúnwà, 1961/2012, p.188)

Ifá divination supports appreciation and condemns ingratitude and wickedness. In 'ÈjìOgbè,' verse eight, one of the sixteen OdùIfá says:

Igbóbiribiri;	Thick forest;
Òkùnkùnbirimùbirimù;	Thick darkness;
Ẹni ò bámọ̀seòkùnkùn,	Whosoever delights in darkness,

K'omọ́ mọ̀ d'ósùpálóró	Should not blame the moon if he withdraws his light,
... òkùnkùn, kòyẹọmọèèyàn;	…Darkness does not befit human beings;
A díáfún Ogbè-soore-gbìkà	It prescribes Ifá for the ingrates
Tíwọn ó máa san ibifúndípòoore,...	Those who receive good and pay back evil…
Orin awoní ń kọ,	He sings the song of 'awo',
Ó ní, 'Ro rere o,	Says, think of good always,
ìkà, rorere,	The wicked, please think good,
Ohuntíògèdè se f'ágbèl'ópọ̀,	What plantain does for the farmer is more than what he gets from him,
Ro rere,	Think good,
Ìkà, rorere.'	The wicked, please think good.

(Abimbola, 2006, pp.8-9)

Ènìà-se-pẹ̀lẹ́'s life portrays contentment in marriage. Though he "is a man of great repute… also abundantly blessed with good looks…. extremely handsome," he does not ride on that natural endowed beauty and wisdom to acquire wives like biblical king Solomon who had numerous wives. In fact, twelve women are offered to Ènìà-se-pẹ̀lẹ́ in marriage "at the same time, but he did not marry any of them. He was very prudent indeed, and even though young women drifted in and out of his house day and night, he married none" (Fágúnwà, 1949/2010, p.181). This action is contrary to the character of Àkàrá-ògún. Àkàrá-ògún marries many women who come across his way since the women only delight in his money and they do not mind his crude behaviour. He declares:

> I had lately returned from my second hunting adventure and when the women of the town saw in me a new man of wealth, they began to beset my house in thousands, and I took them to wife with equal zeal, many of them did I marry because they were not really interested in my character. (Fágúnwà, 1938/1982, p.70)

Ènìà-se-pẹ̀lẹ́ believes that happiness in a home does not depend on the number of wives one possesses. His slogan is "one woman, lots of enjoyment; two women, two problems… Seven women, seven problems" (Fágúnwà, 1949/2010, p.181). He marries just one wife and

he is contented with that; no wonder his father's name is 'Ìwàtútù'–a man with extreme meekness.

This paper has been able to establish the importance of symbolism in literature, as literary element used by Fágúnwà to convey messages to the readers which proves the uniqueness, timelessness and cross-cultural relevance of Fágúnwà'swork through the analysis of his translated novels.

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