Egbe's Sworn Enemy: Soyinka's Popular Sport

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Abstract
Upon returning to the University of Ibadan in 1960 after more than five years of study and work in England, Wole Soyinka wrote a brief essay on 'The Future of West African Writing' for a young campus publication called The Horn. In it he praised Chinua Achebe for displaying an 'unquestioning acceptance' of West African subject matter in his novel Things Fall Apart. Soyinka believed that this 'seemingly indifferent acceptance' of one's own cultural milieu marked 'the turning point in our literary development', for it departed radically from the attitudes of earlier writers who had distorted African reality.
Egbe’s Sworn Enemy: Soyinka’s Popular Sport

Upon returning to the University of Ibadan in 1960 after more than five years of study and work in England, Wole Soyinka wrote a brief essay on ‘The Future of West African Writing’ for a young campus publication called *The Horn.* In it he praised Chinua Achebe for displaying an ‘unquestioning acceptance’ of West African subject matter in his novel *Things Fall Apart.* Soyinka believed that this ‘seemingly indifferent acceptance’ of one’s own cultural milieu marked ‘the turning point in our literary development’, for it departed radically from the attitudes of earlier writers who had distorted African reality. Prior to Achebe there had been two unhealthy tendencies in African writing which invariably led to
literary disaster.

First, it was the alien transposition. Writers - casual writers mostly, magazines, radio, etc. - took their heroes from 'True Romances' and thought it was sufficient to give them an African name, and they could claim to have written an African tale, about Africans.

This kind of imitation, bad enough in fiction but absolutely atrocious in poetry, may have been caused by the authors' miseducation or lack of experience in writing. The result was a deplorable tradition of 'literary dishonesty'.

The other tendency in African writing was regarded by Soyinka as equally fraudulent:

After the phase in which it appeared that nothing in West Africa was literary-worthy unless that which could be made as untruthful to the subject character as a negro in tails playing a banjo, the sudden European fashion change which sought a new artistic titillation in African art and sculpture also added a new respectability to West African folk tales. It was then that we swung over to the opposite extreme. A sort of 'Untrue Romances'. The moonlight over the bathing naked maiden became, as long as it lasted for ten pages, the criterion of validity for the creative effort. European critics helped of course.

Soyinka went on to offer an illustration of how this type of literature was encouraged and what he once did to satisfy a demand for it.

I have, by a lucky chance, a very recent example of this hankering after the non-creative literary transcriptions. A university publication in England asked me for translations of 'authentic' African tales and songs. I said I could give them short stories and poems written by me, but no, they were only interested in 'authentic' stuff. Yes, I replied, but I do have material on folk themes, only I regret to say, they are original. No, they insisted, we must have translations. So, being by now accustomed to this sort of thing, I sent them a 'translation'. I have just received a copy of their latest issue with a West African Folk Tale, translated by me. Only you won't find it in any anthology and you won't hear it from your great grandmother.
The story referred to is no doubt 'Egbe's Sworn Enemy', which appeared in the April 1960 issue of Geste, a mimeographed publication founded by the Union French Society at the University of Leeds, Soyinka's alma mater. It was a travesty of a traditional tale but Soyinka flavored it with so many folk motifs and pseudo-folk ingredients that it appeared genuine – at least to his ingenuous English editors who had adamantly insisted upon 'authenticity'. One could perhaps classify it as fakelore fabricated with malice aforethought or as a kind of covert popular literature produced as a private joke. To appreciate the mischief that went into its manufacture, it is necessary to reproduce the entire text before commenting on it.

EGBE'S SWORN ENEMY: An African Folk Tale

From the beginning, Egbe was unchallengeable. His whims were decidedly annoying, and no one who cried for his help could say where Egbe was likely to leave him after the rescue. But since he was the one Rarifier who served the earth and the vault of spirits, it was not only foolhardy, but rather ungrateful to quarrel with him. Egbe was the breath of wind that fused with light and darkness and remained Egbe. He was the Spirit who absorbed the man on the precipice even in the moment of his transition from the pulse of flesh to the darkness of the understreams, and materialised him the world's length away from the hand of Fate. Egbe was the one Spirit who could reverse the needle of Fate and make her unstitch the red gory patterns which she is always embroidering while she licks her lips. Not that this distressed Igbehinadun unduly. Since she could always think of a more spectacular pattern for the same insect, she viewed Egbe's antics with no more than a bored amusement.

With the earth people, however, is it to be wondered at that a man who had just been whisked from the coils of a boa-constrictor
would not complain if he found himself in the very centre of a thorn-bush and arrived home bleeding from the nose to his ankles and back. The man would be too grateful for the yam pottage to think of the chips that had come off his favourite clay bowl. He would return and sacrifice a goat or two and show the thorn scratches to his neighbours as if this were a newly acquired talisman.

Is it, I ask you, the business of the passenger to deny the boatman his private jokes? And indeed, if a man merely summons Egbe and cries for help, is this not the same as if he said to the spirit, Take me where you will as long as I leave this spot. This leaves Egbe a free choice. And it is not many men who would remember to request that Egbe leave them in a shallow pool of rose-scented water where a circle of virgins await them with sponge and with freshly tapped wine.

But this is talking of ordinary men alone. There are those to whom one cannot apply these common rules, and one person, yes, a very mutual friend, has claimed that he chooses his destination very carefully and that, as far as he is concerned, Egbe is merely the driver of the cart and not the owner. One day, this person claims, he was swimming in the sea, and while he floated unsuspecting on his back and made small talk with the sun, this person claims that he was sucked under suddenly by a whirlpool which embraced him totally with the strength of twenty octopuses. But even as the eddy poured its black poisoned water into his mouth so that he could call no one for help, he not only succeeded in summoning Egbe to his side, but he told Old Rarifier just where he expected to be conveyed. And this was – to the moon – no less. Egbe was to whip him out of the sea, dry him with a cloth woven from the fleece of clouds, place him on the back of a hawk who would fly him directly to Apatumo, the god, who, with the moon-ring on his finger, controls the ebb and tide of the oceans, and from whom he would demand immediate punishment for the current which had so brutally assaulted his person.

And if you haven’t guessed already, the hero of that story is
Awun, and in case there are people so ignorant that they do not know who Awun is, his other name is Ajapa, the tortoise. Egbe himself, however, tells another story. He says that it was entirely his idea to take Ajapa and leave him at the bedside of Atunomole’s wife light-keeper of the moon. And Awun was never a man to be unduly troubled by such an unexpected situation, which, as everyone knows, is a recurring episode in the life-history of the cunning one. He had just begun to explore the hidden valleys of that delightful land when the husband arrived. Atunomole used no ceremony at all; he merely picked up the tortoise and flung him over the cliff. Awun fell for twenty-one days and twenty-one nights, finally hitting the roof of the Odoritan caves. And as proof of his story, Egbe points to Awun’s shell, which since that day, has borne the scars of its tremendous crash from the height of the moon.

This was only the first of the many misadventures which Ajapa denies that he ever suffered from Egbe’s hands. The one which took place after this, and which, from the news which seeps to us through earth runnels, set the Heavy People laughing in Orogbo grove for twenty days or more, made Ajapa even more resolved to be avenged on Egbe.

To begin with, when Ajapa told the story of his trip to the moon, he was not aware that Egbe was listening, but Egbe had heard every word, and he is said to have told Kori, his half-brother that he would serve Awun in a very similar manner, only worse, if that unfortunate creature were ever to summon him again. This of course, Awun did not know.

It happened one day that Awun’s wife, Yarinbo, ran out of firewood while she was preparing supper for her husband.

‘Awun’, she said, ‘do go into the bush and get me some firewood’.

‘What! At this time of the night?’

‘But the food will be spoilt’, Yarinbo pleaded.

‘Then I will beat you for it’, Ajapa replied.
Yarinbo thought for a few minutes. Then she said, ‘Of course, if you are afraid to walk in the woods at night that is another matter’.

Everybody knows that Ajapa is a vain creature, and if you didn’t I hope you will now understand how it came about that Ajapa, who, if not entirely a coward is not really the stout-hearted among men, came to be blundering into saplings at the darkest hour of the night. And need I add that it was not very long before Ajapa the Wealthy, Ajapa the Cunning, the Unequalled Liar and Unparalleled Boaster got totally lost in a small bush which was almost in his own backyard and found himself not far from the haunt of ghommids.

Firewood on his head, he began to shout for help, and very soon he heard the sound of approaching footsteps, but whether they belonged to a mortal or whether it was an earthquake which set the trees and the whole forest in motion was a lot more than he could tell.

Indeed this was a night of the monkey reaching for a coconut and finding that the whole palm tree has come tumbling down on his head. The neighbour who answered his cry was none other than Agbenigbere, the dewild whose twenty horns make him appear like a prickly pear, Agbenigbere whose garment is made of beaten human skull – this was the creature who approached the lost husband.

Ajapa did not think twice about the matter. He merely dropped on his belly and all you could see was the firewood. Agbenigbere came to the spot and sniffed. He was sure the noise had come from there. He looked up the trees to see if the intruder was hiding there and he pulled aside the bushes but there was no one to be seen. He was about to leave when he saw the bundle of firewood on the ground. Well, well, he said, someone has brought me a gift, and he picked it up.

All would have been well at that moment if Awun, incensed by this piece of impertinence had still succeeded in holding his peace. Clinging to the underside of the firewood where he could not be
seen, he shouted:

‘That’s right, you pawpaw-nosed, dung-covered pit of crawling maggots, go on, just pick up anything you find in the road and say it is yours’.

Agbenigbere spun on his hooves and looked everywhere. Nobody.

And again Tortoise abused him. ‘One of these days you’ll pick up another gift and find it is a nest of scorpions. And then you’ll stink up the whole forest and you’ll be so bloated and rotting that even your mother will refuse to own you’.

Agbenigbere gave a bellow of rage and began to tear up and down looking for his tormentor.

‘Of course’ sneered the tortoise, who as always, had now begun to enjoy himself so well that he had quite forgotten his danger. ‘Of course’ he sneered, ‘that is assuming that you have a mother at all, because everybody knows that you were picked up inside elephant’s vomit, on which you also happened to be dining at the time. Others say that you were simply blown into the world one day through the fart of hippopotamus, a more disgusting way to be born I cannot imagine. If you had any shame Agbenigbere, you would tie a stone around your ........ Ya oww’!

What caused the tortoise to cry out suddenly in pain was that Agbenigbere, goaded into frothing insanity by his unseen enemy, had seized the bundle of firewood in both hands and was using it to beat the surrounding bush, so that Ajapa’s head came suddenly in hard contact with a tree-trunk. Too late for regrets now, he saw that Agbenigbere had heard the cry, realised at last that the voice came from the firewood, and before Ajapa could cry Yarinbo, he was in the steaming paws of Agbenigbere.

Agbenigbere seized the lizard neck of the tortoise and proceeded to pull him out of the shell. Ajapa thought of the supper awaiting him at home and summoned Egbe with the last puff of his breath. In an instant the Rarifier had snatched him and laid him, half-dead by the fireside in a little dark cottage not far from the spot, where a beautiful woman was preparing a meal with her
back to him.

Dazed and shaken though he was, the randiness never quite
deserts Ajapa, who, even in his childhood days . . . and since there
is no childhood companion of his alive today, we must accept his
word . . . and his story is that before he was a week old he was
banished by the king of his village for seducing his youngest wife.
So, in his half stupor, he looked at this beautiful woman who had
now half-turned her face towards him, and said, It seems to me
that Yarinbo is more beautiful now than when I left home earlier
this evening. And pulling himself up, a very painful process it was
I must say, he grabbed the woman by the waist and said,
‘Come on woman, I brought no firewood, so you can leave off
the cooking. Come on Yarinbo, we’ll find something better to do’.

The woman did not answer or take any notice of him.

Ajapa tried tickling her under the armpits, which succeeded
because the woman leapt up immediately and then Tortoise re-
coiled, because he saw now that although one side of the woman’s
face was human, the other was a cesspit of swarming snakes.

‘Ah! What is this’? Ajapa cried. ‘What horrible joke is someone
playing on me’?

The woman heard nothing; although Ajapa did not know this,
she was quite deaf, having been battered on the ears too often by
the brute she had for a husband. Her waist was scaly and hard
like a crocodile and Ajapa could see now why she had felt nothing
when he laid hands on her waist.

But the worst was now to come. Although he was truly sorry
that he made advances to this creature, it became clear that the
woman had formed an immediate attachment to him. When all is
said and done, it must be remembered that Ajapa was not entirely
a repulsive creature. He had short legs it is true, but his long and
slim neck was the envy of many women. And this one whom he
had disturbed now advanced on him, lifted him in one swoop and
carried him struggling to bed. Ajapa let off a scream loud enough
to wake the skulls in Agbenigbere’s home, and who should walk
into the house but that very man himself, yes, Agbenigbere was
the husband of the strange woman from whose clutches Ajapa was now trying to escape. He seized the woman and flung her with such force that she landed on the pot on the fire. Agbenigbere took the tortoise, whom his wife had now dropped on the bed, and lifted him in order to break him against the wall, when his wife leapt back into the fray and upset the entire mess of the boiling stewpot on Agbenigbere's head. In turn he dropped Ajapa and howled. His attention being now completely taken with his wife, whom desire had turned into a fury every bit as powerful as her husband, Ajapa was able to make good his escape and hide in the forest until dawn when he rejoined his despairing wife.

As you may imagine, Ajapa, even as he nursed his wounds had begun to nurse schemes for his revenge on Egbe, but the night is too far gone for that story and I do not wish to stumble into Agbenigbere's hut. If you soak the beans at night it needs less firewood in the morning.

Translated by WOLE SOYINKA

Soyinka has taken three of his major characters directly from Yoruba tradition. Awun, or Ajapa the tortoise, is the trickster figure in Yoruba folktales, and Yarinbo is well-known as his loyal but sometimes argumentative wife. Egbe, the Old Rarifier, is a personification of the metaphysical force or spirit believed to be endowed with magical power to transport living creatures from one place to another instantly. Egbe can — indeed, must, — intervene in human affairs by coming to the rescue whenever anyone in distress calls his name. He is normally considered a dependable lifeguard, but Soyinka invests him with a mischievous sense of humour which is exercised to its fullest when he is called upon to rescue his enemies or detractors. He lifts ungrateful adversaries such as Ajapa out of hot water only to immerse them in a far larger sea of troubles.

The other characters in the story — Igbehinadun (literally 'The-end-will-be-sweet') or Fate; Apatumo, the god with the moon-
ring who is said to control the ebb and tide of the oceans; Atunomole’s wife, the light-keeper of the moon; Kori, the half-brother of Egbe; and the marvellous dewild called Agbenigbere (literally either ‘He-who-carries-one-briskly’ or ‘He-who-carries-a-human-and-non-humans (statues)’ or, more figuratively, ‘The-fierce-strong-limbed-one’) as well as his splendidly grotesque wife – appear to be Soyinka’s creations. The few places named – Odoritan (a delightfully ambiguous term meaning either ‘It-lies-in-the-realm-of-stories [myths]’ or ‘It-falls-on-the-thighs’) caves and Orogbo (a-bitter-tasting-nut) grove – also bear no clear resemblance to known locales, real or mythical. Soyinka seems to have forged his setting and his supporting cast from the smithy of his own folk imagination.

The story is a reversal of the usual trickster tale, with the trickster himself being duped not once but twice by his ‘sworn enemy’, Egbe. To effect this turn-about convincingly, Soyinka equips Ajapa with a near-fatal flaw – a weakness for women – which is not usually one of the tortoise’s idiosyncrasies in traditional Yoruba narratives. Nevertheless, Soyinka’s randy protagonist stands ever ready and eager to perform his tricks in whatever bedroom he suddenly finds himself. When Egbe transports him from a treacherous whirlpool to the moon and leaves him at the bedside of Atunomole’s wife, Soyinka assures us that ‘Awun was never a man to be unduly troubled by such an unexpected situation, which, as everyone knows is a recurring episode in the history of the cunning one’. This statement, in addition to teaching us something new about the tortoise’s behavior in the guise of a well-established fact, prepares us for the climactic episode in the story where another attempt at seduction of someone else’s wife backfires hilariously.

Not everything is completely topsy-turvy in these farcical episodes, however. Ajapa’s ‘escapes’ from his escapades are engineered by Soyinka with such an adroit blending of traditional and non-traditional motifs that this very tall tale takes on a speciously ‘authentic’ flavor. In the first misadventure Ajapa, flung
unceremoniously over a cliff by Atunomole, falls for twenty-one days and nights until he hits the roof of the Odoritan caves; ‘since that day, (his shell) has borne the scars of its tremendous crash from the height of the moon’. This familiar-sounding etiological ending tends to validate the tale as traditional, even though in true Yoruba oral narratives Ajapa normally acquires his fractured shell by falling as he is climbing a rope to heaven\(^6\) or by being chopped up and reassembled sloppily.\(^7\) Tales explaining ‘why the tortoise has a cracked shell’ are of course legion not only in Africa but throughout many other parts of the world as well.\(^8\) Soyinka’s amusing bedroom-on-the-moon variant may have struck some of his English readers as genuinely African simply because it departed so widely from versions they knew. Soyinka’s pastiche relies as much on his audience’s vague familiarity with certain common folk motifs as it does on their unfamiliarity with the shape such motifs take in West African oral narratives.

The same point can be illustrated by examining the conclusion to the second erotic episode in Soyinka’s story. Ajapa, once more caught in a compromising posture by an irate husband, manages to make a getaway when the husband and wife start battling over him. The story is reminiscent of traditional tales in which a trickster succeeds in setting two of his adversaries against one another,\(^9\) but Soyinka gives the orthodox narrative line a few new twists. Ajapa, ‘half-dead’ from his terrifying encounter with Agbenigbere in the forest, revives quickly when he has the opportunity to make advances toward a woman he mistakes as his wife. The woman turns out to be a hideous monster who immediately falls in love with him and carries him off to bed. Worse yet, she turns out to be Agbenigbere’s wife, and Agbenigbere finds them in *flagrante delicto* of sorts when he returns home. Ajapa does not trick them into fighting but makes an ignominious departure as soon as they are engrossed in their own domestic brawl. The so-called ‘trickster’ is thus depicted again as a blundering coward who can be easily victimized by his arch-enemy Egbe. By transforming ‘Ajapa the Cunning’ into a fool, Soyinka unites a convention of the numskull
tradition with a perversion of the trickster tradition. Burlesque permits such large-scale literary license.

Soyinka’s Ajapa is himself an interesting study in contrasts. On the one hand, he remains — as in tradition — a creature of grand appetites who tries to take advantage of unstable situations by turning events in his own favor. He acts very much in character when he tries to exploit, insult or discomfit others, as he does, for instance, when being transported from the whirlpool or when taunting Agbenigbere in the forest. It is also not unusual for him to be outwitted occasionally by other tricksters, particularly his wife, who uses a very clever strategem in this story to persuade him to gather firewood for her. But on the other hand, we hardly ever see him behaving as a lusty paramour in African oral literature; the notion that he was so precociously libidinous that ‘before he was a week old he was banished by the king of his village for seducing his youngest wife’ appears to have no foundation in tradition, Yoruba or otherwise. And it is exceedingly odd to find him so outsmarted, so outmaneuvered and so out-and-out humiliated as he is in this story. Soyinka has turned him into a dull-witted, disaster-prone Don Juan.

The story is structured as a reduplicated sequence of comic reversals — that is, a string of events which is repeated twice, as if to emphasize that Ajapa is incapable of learning anything from past catastrophes. The sequence can be summarized as follows: (1) Ajapa in danger, (2) Egbe to the rescue, (3) Ajapa in greater danger, (4) ignominious escape. In the first episode, the danger of the whirlpool is canceled out by transportation to the moon, but there Ajapa’s lust gets him into trouble with Atunomole and the consequence is a shattered shell. In the second episode, Ajapa is captured by Agbenigbere only to be transported to Agbenigbere’s hut, where his lust puts him at the mercy first of Agbenigbere’s even lustier wife and then of Agbenigbere himself; from this double jeopardy Ajapa is lucky to escape with his life. Reduplication of a particular motifemic sequence may not be a very typical narrative pattern for African trickster tales, but at least it offers
the kind of repetition and cyclical movement one tends to associate with oral narrative art. Soyinka succeeds in making the story look like a folktale, even while departing from established norms of folktale construction.

Much of the humour in the story derives from the sudden reversals of fortune Ajapa experiences. Soyinka is continually surprising the reader with new information and unexpected events. We no sooner hear the tortoise shamelessly threatening to beat his wife if she fails to cook his dinner properly than we see him shamed into collecting the wood she needs for the fire. When Agbenigbere first appears, Ajapa hides in fear, but a few moments later he is boldly tormenting the monster with a stream of personal abuse, a stream that proves so effective in riling him that Ajapa begins to warm to the task, forgetting the danger he is in. He suddenly finds himself captured, escapes just as suddenly by appealing to Egbe, but then is thrust abruptly into another situation which soon turns out to be quite the opposite of what he had anticipated. Throughout the story we are forced to make rapid mental adjustments to keep up with the zany twists and turns of the plot. Unlike folktales, where the audience often is familiar with the direction and denouement of the action, Soyinka’s tale is a wild excursion through the seemingly conventional into the unpredictable unknown. The strategy of the story is to keep the reader permanently off balance.

Of course, some of Soyinka’s humor is not intended for public consumption. He appears to be enjoying a huge private joke when he inserts into the narrative such statements as: ‘if you haven’t guessed already. . .’; ‘it must be remembered that. . .’; ‘everybody knows that. . .’; ‘in case there are people so ignorant that they do not know. . .’ – statements which encourage the reader to accept in good faith whatever nonsense Soyinka then puts forth as transparently traditional. Ajapa’s libertinism is thus authenticated. So is his supposed attractiveness to women, despite the fact that he is ordinarily depicted in folk tradition as among the homeliest of creatures. Soyinka uses the authority of his narrative voice to
establish the patently false as unquestionably true. This is surreptitious comedy visible only to the perpetrator and to those few conoscenti who might happen to come across the tale. The joke would not be caught by most readers of the ephemeral university literary magazine in which this story made its only appearance. Soyinka appears to have been writing as much for his own private amusement as for the entertainment of his British academic audience. He was evidently relishing his role as a literary trickster.

Since ‘Egbe’s Sworn Enemy’ cannot be classified as a folktale proper, since its tendency to mock the conventions of an entire narrative genre rather than those of a specific text lifts it beyond mere parody, since it was composed as an aberrant form of ‘art for art’s sake’ (i.e., comic art intended partially for the private gratification of the artist alone) as well as a form of popular literature (i.e., narrative art intended for mass consumption), it is difficult to decide what to call this bizarre story. None of the old taxonomic labels seems to fit. Perhaps it would be best to call it a ‘sport’, using the term in the biological sense to designate a mutation displaying ‘an unusual or singular deviation from the normal or parent type’.12 ‘Egbe’s Sworn Enemy’, in other words, is neither fish nor fowl, neither folk nor pop nor pure parody; rather, it is a rare and original specimen of comically elevated narrative art which exists in its own unique, submerged literary environment. By rescuing it from obscurity and placing it before a wider mass audience which can fully appreciate its entertaining peculiarities, we have added yet another dimension to its existence. It is still a sport, but now that it has been returned to a more public domain, it must be treated as a popular sport. True, you may not find it in any anthology and you may not hear it from your great-grandmother, but this does not diminish its authenticity and appeal as a work of native creative imagination. ‘Egbe’s Sworn Enemy’ is a genuine West African fake tale concocted by a trickster-author who deserves commendation for good sportsmanship.
NOTES


3. Egbe also appears in Daniel O. Fagunwa's Yoruba novel, *Ôgbójú Ode nínú Ìgbí Ìrùnlẹ* (Lagos, 1938), which was translated by Soyinka under the title: *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (London, 1968); see pp. 16-17 of this translation.

4. Though this is not a traditional Yoruba name for the concept of Fate, it appears to have a special meaning for Soyinka, who uses it again in *A Dance of the Forests* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 50:

   
   ... When spells are cast
   
   And the dead invoked by the living, only such
   
   May resume their body corporeal as are summoned
   
   When the understreams that whirl them endlessly
   
   Complete a circle. Only such may regain
   
   Voice auditorial as are summoned when their link
   
   With the living has fully repeated its nature, has
   
   Re-impressed fully on the tapestry of Igbehinadun
   
   In approximate duplicate of actions, be they
   
   Of good, or of evil, of violence or carelessness;
   
   In approximate duplicate of motives, be they
   
   Illusory, tangible, commendable or damnable.

   I am grateful to Dapo Adelugba of the Department of Theatre Arts at the University of Ibadan for this reference and for considerable help with Yoruba names and nuances in this story.

5. However, one can find a few examples of this trait in a collection of Yoruba tales published in German by Leo Frobenius, *Atlantis X: Die Atlantische Götterlehre* (Jena, 1926), No. 38, pp. 277-78; No. 39, pp. 278-79; No. 54, pp. 315-16.


7. See Frobenius, No. 26, pp. 254-56; No. 54, pp. 315-16.

9. The most common example is perhaps the ‘Deceptive Tug-of-War’ found in Walker and Walker, pp. 59-60; M. I. Ogumefu, *Yoruba Legends* (London, 1929), pp. 71-72; Margaret I. Baumann, *Ajapa the Tortoise* (London, 1929), pp. 117-20; Kunle Akinsemoyin, *Twilight and the Tortoise* (Lagos, 1963), pp. 57-63, and other collections. I am grateful to Prof. William Bascom of the University of California at Berkeley for these references. The same tale, numbered 291 in Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson’s *The Types of the Folk-tale* (2nd ed., Helsinki, 1964), has been found in North and South America, Latin America and the West Indies.

