

Fuji Time is Now! (Posted on Facebook on 12/16/2019)

Now that the full manuscript of my human-animal history book has been sent off to press and awaiting the verdicts of external readers and series editors, I want to use the occasion of the 9th anniversary of the passing of Sikiru Ayinde Barrister to formally start my next project on Fuji.

No book is easy to write, but this one is going to be far uneasy for a number of reasons. First, I will be leaving the colonial era (which has formed the basis of much of my publications) to the postcolonial period. Second, it's going to be a very expensive project, involving hardcore ethnography in Nigeria, North America, and Europe. It would test my frustration tolerance for being ignored by artists and their promoters. For instance, Mike Fash, a popular music promoter has not responded to my interview request since September 30. My wife and I drove 6 hours (to/fro) to see the Wasiu Ayinde show he promoted in Atlanta 4 years ago.

Third, by the time the project is done, I expect my sight and backbones to further deteriorate due to long hours of sitting and searching through newspaper microfilms. Fourth, no single field or sub-field can effectively unmask the Fuji phenomenon. From African literature, ethnomusicology, self-fashioning, and gender and sexuality, to diaspora, popular culture and performance art, and urbanity, I anticipate years of learning and unlearning new vocabularies, discursive tools, and theoretical expositions. One would need a solid grounding in Yoruba pragmatics to make sense of the genealogy of Fuji and its authorial politics. Getting all these paradigms to sync with the idea of "continuity and change"-- the cornerstone of historical research, would pose some problems. This project, like others, would take me to unexpected places and knowledge systems.

Regardless of all these predictable challenges, this project will give me a legitimate excuse to get responsibly drunk and party a lot, under the pretext of doing research through participant observation. I look forward to providing a sustainable intellectual visibility for Fuji, while paying a deserving homage to women and men whose creativity and tenacity gave millions of people a spectrum of nostalgia, livelihood, enjoyment, and an identity to live for.

Yours truly in Fuji,

Emperor Saedo Okola and His International Fuji Lions!



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