

SOCIETY OF YOUNG NIGERIAN WRITERS

**ARTICLES, ESSAYS AND E-BOOKS ON DANIEL
OLORUNFEMI FAGUNWA**



Honour for Fagunwa, as ANA remembers Aluko, Irobi, others

The late D.O. Fagunwa is definitely the winner of the just-concluded 2010 Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) annual convention held in Akure, Ondo State, with the theme of the convention being a study of Fagunwa's style of writing.

The Ondo State governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko (middle); Dr Jerry Agada, president, Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA) left, and Dr Wale Okediran, immediate past president of the association, during the 2010 convention of ANA in Akure, on Friday.

The association also reflected on the outgoing year that has seen it lose great writers like T.M. Aluko, Esiaba Irobi, among others. **Adewale Oshodi** reports.

Despite having left this world 47 years ago, precisely on December 9, 1963, late Yoruba writer, D.O Fagunwa was the hero of this year's annual conference of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA), which was held in Akure, the Ondo State capital between Thursday, October 28 and Saturday, October 30, 2010.

Fagunwa's style of writing was what prompted the theme of the conference, **Myth, Fantasy and Indigenous Theatre**, although the guest lecturer, Professor Kalu Uka of the Department of Theatre Studies, University of Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State, changed the title of his lecture to **21st Century Environments and the Relevance of the writer in Nigeria**.

Despite this change, Professor Uka still spoke about the relevance of the environment in one's writings.

Late Fagunwa's flowery style of writing dealt mostly in myths and fantasies, especially about issues which are difficult to believe — about gnomes, masquerades and fairy tales.

It is what brought about the theme, which ANA believes could help members write more about their environment, especially on issues that will be of interest to the outside world.

In his opening address on the opening day of the convention, which was held at the Babafunke Ajasin Auditorium, Akure, ANA president, Dr. Jerry Agada, extolled the contributions of late D.O Fagunwa to the development of literature in the country.

Dr. Agada said choosing **Myth, Fantasy and Indigenous Theatre** as the theme of this year's convention was to re-focus members' attention to the primal role which myth-making and dream-like projection play in Nigerian literature, and the thrust they can play in our quest for wholesome national rebirth.

“Also, we chose this theme in commemoration of the prodigious contribution of an illustrious son of this state, the late D.O Fagunwa, to our literature, through writing in the indigenous languages.

“D.O Fagunwa's masterpieces in the Yoruba language have continued to be relevant to this day, enriching socio-political discourse and being resource materials for brilliant adaptations in contemporary theatre practice,” the ANA president said.

Also, the former Minister of Education described the outgoing year as one that has been sobering because of the passage of some leading lights of Nigerian literature, such as Dr. T.M Aluko, Professor Ossie Enekwe, Dr. Esiaba Irobi, Chukwu Eke, among others.

Dr. Agada also used the opportunity to commend the Federal Government for including Professor Chinua Achebe, Professor Wole Soyinka and Abubakar Imam among the list of 50 distinguished Nigerians, in celebrating the country's 50th anniversary.

In his address, the guest lecturer, Professor Kalu Uka, said environment, for the writer, should not only be local, but also international.

He said Nigerian writers, for too long, seemed to be merely creating a divide, an artificial divide between writers who essentially are still living or transiting in the same current time continuum.

Professor Uka, therefore, advised that those in the movie industry can learn to re-use myths and fantasies, not as visceral, temporary titillations, but as creators of permanent ambience of the classically durable.

Earlier, the Ondo State governor, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko, thanked ANA for the honour done the late D.O. Fagunwa, by choosing the theme of this year's convention in his honour.

The governor promised that he would continue to support the association in whatever capacity he found himself.

Among the winners of the 2010 ANA literary prizes are **The Knots of Karma** by Ngozi Onyioha-Orji; **The Bear Hug** by Godwin Noah; **Against The Odds** by Ben Igwe; **Songs From My Mother's Heart** by Seyi Hodonu; **Long Walk to a Dream** by Arnold Udoka; **That Other Country** by Hyginus Ekwuazi, among others.

ANA later honoured the late Fagunwa with a post-humous award, while King Sunny Ade was given a special award for his contribution to the Nigerian music industry.