



**WORDOC**  
WORDOCCENTRE FOR DOCUMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION  
INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

# WORDOC SEMINAR SERIES 2024

Readings from The Ibadan  
School of African Feminist Studies



MacArthur  
Foundation



CENTRE FOR APPLIED  
ETHICS & POLITICAL  
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IN AFRICA

WORDOC SEMINAR SERIES  
2024

Readings from The Ibadan School of  
African Feminist Studies Ibadan

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## Foreword

### *Of Resistance: Reorganising and Reaffirming the Power of Feminism*

The Ibadan School of African Feminist Studies at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, inspires us in many ways. Immersing us into a world of narrative possibilities and imaginings through the Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC) Seminar Series is just one of such many ways.

My experience at the WORDOC library recommissioning in December 2023 was another. The restored library was a powerful reminder of the transformative power of the written word. Its textbooks, manuscripts, dissertations, reports, and files, seemingly docile and ordered, hold the power to change the world. The crisp atmosphere and aura curated by the paint and brick-and-mortar renovation work gave one the hope that incremental change is as significant as it matters – much like the leadership of the University of Ibadan, who arrived right on time for the library commissioning. One, or a few, determined to show the power of possibility can indeed model new pathways, be it in fixing old things, examining old knowledge or working in new ways. Notably, the past has a lot to offer the present as a pathway to the future.

Like the Twi mythical bird, Sankofa, which symbolizes the need to learn from the past, Professor Bolanle Awe, the pioneer director of WORDOC, and other founders were present at that library rebirth event. Professor Awe, a trailblazer in her own right, has achieved many firsts: she was

the first female historian of Oral History and Women's Studies in Nigeria, the first Director of Nigeria's National Commission for Women, and the first female board chair of a Department for International Development (DFID) program – The Coalitions for Change programme (C4C). Professor Awe is also the pioneer Africa Director of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Her presence at the re-commissioning done in her honour was a testament to her pioneering spirit and commitment to the cause of feminism and course of knowledge. We are glad that the seed fund that the MacArthur Foundation offered to WORDOC through the Nigerian Women Trust Fund strengthened the current research initiative by the Ibadan School of African Feminism.

Origins, interconnections and a relook run through the research series volume. From 'Wombiture' to 'Exalgia' and to perceptions of 'feminised corruption', all rethink how we have diachronically ordered our existence and realities. It is in the character of feminism to always think of origins because, first, you need to remind yourself that you are strong enough and that you are enough, yet you are not alone, and you are sane. Second there is the need to make connections, having recognised the interconnected transcendence of life and the existence of bigger things, which makes nonsense of small things and minds oppressing minor things like them. Third, renouncing oppression of any form requires us to question perceptions and beliefs to create new awareness for the good of society. Therefore, the work we do is not about us, but from us, for us and everyone.

By virtue of this seminar series which re-examine assumptions that we have taken for granted, we see that constant checking-in, looking back and re-interrogating of what we know reinforce the fact that values are normatively good and are the forte of a particular social category, and that it is our environment that shapes us. What we feel, and experience, makes us who we are. A woman who must cope with patriarchy may invariably begin to imbibe the ways of the oppressed or seek to be assimilated to survive.

Women are not always good, nor are men always bad, because the categories 'woman' and 'man' are social constructs anyway. They are made by the 'wisdom' of society, in the image of patriarchy, and are responsive to its dynamics and malleable to its whims and caprices. In all of it, though, feminism remains wary of blaming the victim but instead understands the underlying elements responsible for a form of behaviour, intended and unintended. Only awareness and a safe space that gives some modicum of an alternative source of dignity, voice and an enduring livelihood can break patriarchy. It is, in the end, a political economy matter.

Thank you, WORDOC, for aggregating voice and elevating critical thought. I cannot wait to find this volume on the physical and digital shelves of the re-awakened WORDOC library.

Amina Salihu, PhD  
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MacArthur Foundation Africa Office  
Abuja  
Nov 2024

## Preface

The Ibadan School of African Feminist Studies is an initiative of the Women's Research and Documentation Center (WORDOC) and the Gender Studies Program, both at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. WORDOC recognises that centering African feminism not only requires analysis of data from fieldwork or lived experiences of women, but also the need to pay attention to naming concepts. This is a radical shift from African women as data mines to the concretisation of knowledges produced from Africa, by Africa(nists) and for Africa, spotlighting our theories, thoughts and ideas.

To this end, the Ibadan School of African Feminist Studies responds directly to feminists' dearth of adequate language to communicate women's encounters. It challenges the age-long namelessness of the problems associated with the emancipation of feminism from the status of a mere concept or movement to its full actualisation as a force. Such problems have been implicitly and explicitly noted by Betty Friedan (1963); Olutoyin Mejiuni (2013); Louise Morley (2006); and Abiola Odejide (2007), with the belief that issues must be named, and once there is a name, they must be studied. The school therefore commits to creating and promoting theories, ideas, and concepts emanating from different disciplines across Africa and the Diaspora, as they connect with the expansion of African Feminist Studies.

In the light of the foregoing, this three-chapter monograph contains the ideas, concepts and frameworks drawn from presentations made at WORDOC's 2024 edition of Seminar Series, under the leadership of Dr Seun Olutayo (Director IAS, 2022-2024) and Prof Sola Olorunyomi

(incumbent Director IAS). The seminar series held in February, August and November 2024 at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The events were attended by stakeholders, researchers and groups from diverse facets of society. For a balanced conversation, seasoned Africanist discussants were carefully selected from an array of fields – distributed across different geographical locations: Canada, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, and USA. The three main speakers were Professor Senayon Olaoluwa, Professor Sola Olorunyomi and Dr Sharon Omotoso. The insightful contributions of these scholars of renown, the conversations of the discussants and the engagement of the audience have been captured to form this monograph which is presented in an unconventional but unique format.

In the first chapter, we summarise the feminist aspects of Professor Olaoluwa's pathbreaking notion of extalgia which connotes the sufferings of the left-behinds in the wake of migration, and how these sufferings trigger creativity in them, strengthen their resilience and highlight their virtues and values. The second chapter is an exploration Professor Olorunyomi's innovative concept of wombiture which concerns the women-driven bio-environmental representations of humankind in their pre-birth abode within the context of evolutionary realities and imaginary possibilities laced with historic-philosophical thoughts. For its part, the third chapter teases out the dynamics of feminised corruption and its relationship with women's participation in politics and contribution to societal development within the Nigerian context – as intellectualised by Dr Omotoso. Following each chapter, we present the comments and interventions of the audience and document the reactions of the speakers and discussants.

What makes this monograph stand out is its ability to interlink the socio-cultural and political worthiness of the African woman with a multidisciplinary milieu of feminist reasoning, thereby demonstrating the indispensability of gender and women studies to the universality of discourses in the academia. Worth mentioning, however, is that the

ideas contained herein do not in any way intend to be conclusive but to serve as a take-off point for developing more extensive research towards unearthing deeper insights into the subject matters examined from a feminist perspective to enrich the ever-growing body of knowledge of feminist studies. Beyond public awareness of new concepts and issues of research, we invite a wide range of stakeholders to utilise these ideas and concepts as frameworks for teaching, research, and implementation across Africa/African Studies, Gender/Women and Sexualities studies, among others.

Adetoun Oyelude & Osagioduwa Eweka

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## Extalgia: Exploring the Suffering and Creativity of the Left Behind and the Impact of Migration on Women in the Homeland

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In this round of the WORDOC Seminar Series, Prof. Senayon Olaoluwa, through his published, pathbreaking research titled 'Extalgia: Transcending the Legible Frames of Diaspora' (2023), innovates with the concept of "extalgia," a term to describe the suffering and creativity experienced by those left behind when loved ones migrate. The presentation, delivered at Lady Bank Anthony Hall, University of Ibadan, challenges the existing literature on migration, which predominantly focuses on the experiences of migrants themselves. Olaoluwa argues for a more inclusive approach on sufferings, acknowledging the profound impact of emigration on those remaining in the homeland.

Olaoluwa's etymology of "extalgia" – combining the Greek "ex"; signifying exodus or departure and "algos"; meaning suffering or grief – aptly captures the essence of the concept. The lecture presented a

key criticism of existing migration literature and opens up a new vista for capturing the invisible and silenced. The key blind spots in existing migration scholarship is its affective deficit – the overwhelming focus on the suffering of the dispersed (known as nostalgia), neglecting the parallel suffering experienced by those left behind in the homeland. Olaoluwa argues that the dominant discourse of nostalgia, while valid in its own right, has created a “theoretical closure” that prevents a systematic understanding of extalgia—the new vista capturing the suffering and consequent coping-creativity of stay-at-homes. This neglect is not merely an oversight but a result of power dynamics that privilege the narratives of exiles, often celebrated as heroic figures, while rendering the experiences of those left behind invisible.

He illustrates his argument through personal anecdotes and literary examples, highlighting the emotional toll of migration on those left behind. One poignant example is George Lamming's (1953) *In the Castle of My Skin*, where a mother experiences profound sorrow after her successful son, Boy G, departs to take up a remarkable job opportunity abroad. The initial joy elicited by his success quickly transforms into overwhelming grief, demonstrating the complex emotional landscape of extalgia. Olaoluwa also draws on his own cultural background, detailing the tradition of creating effigies for deceased twin children, a practice initially dismissed as idolatry but later understood as a coping mechanism for migration-induced grief and a testament to creativity in the face of perceived or actual loss.

Extalgia, as expounded in this text, offers fertile grounds for exploration within gender studies. The text, *In the Castle of my Skin*, repeatedly highlights the experiences of mothers left behind by absent husbands or sons and the disproportionate burden of single motherhood in a (post)colonial context. This depiction illuminates how gender roles and expectations shape the experience of extalgia. Olaoluwa acknowledges that women, often bearing the primary responsibility for childcare and household maintenance, experience the absence of male partners or

children more acutely than men, contributing to their disproportionate suffering. The example of Boy G and his mother, the major characters in the aforementioned text, shows how the absence of a supporting partner amplifies emotional and economic burdens on women leading to different types of coping mechanisms than their male counterparts might deploy.

Furthermore, the analysis of creative responses to extalgia such as music, art, and storytelling could be enriched by examining how gendered forms of expression are employed to process grief and loss. Through this lens, researches in gender studies can examine how societal structures exacerbate or mitigate the experience of extalgia, revealing nuanced and often unequal distributions of both suffering and creative agencies. Using extalgia as a framework, researchers, health practitioners and indeed the general public can examine the ways that gender intersects with migration and displacement, uncovering unique experiences of trauma, coping, and creative resilience.

The panel discussion following the presentation underscores the significance of Prof. Olaoluwa's work. Dr. Naazia Ibrahim, a lecturer specialising in gender and women's empowerment from the University of Ghana, emphasises the significance of the concept within the context of the UN Decade for People of African Descent, extolling its relevance in revealing significant dimensions to onward study of gender and migration. Another panelist, Cynthia Olufade, a doctoral candidate in migration studies at the University of Alberta in Canada whose research is at the intersection of migration and gender studies, connects extalgia to the broader themes of coping mechanisms. She argued for the diversity of coping, and showed that not every woman succeeds at coping effectively. Several personal accounts shared by members of the audience reveal how grief can have devastating consequences on individuals, even culminating in death. This highlights the urgent need for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and the development of support systems to address the needs of those

who experience extalgia. The conversation further underscores the impact of migration on the cultural landscape and highlights the need for an inclusive global agenda that addresses the needs of both those who migrate and those left behind. This underscores the importance of acknowledging the impact of migration on all involved. The concluding discussion upheld the need for a holistic approach to approaching the studies and management of migration, suggesting unanimity among the attendees on the subject.

In summary, Olaoluwa's framework for understanding extalgia is multifaceted, encompassing four key aspects: suffering, creativity, transcendence, and limits. The suffering is divided into pre-departure and post-departure experiences, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the emotional process. Creativity manifests in various forms, often serving as a coping mechanism resulting from the pain of absence. Transcendence represents the process of overcoming this suffering and moving forward, although the existence of inherent limitations is acknowledged. This leads to calls for a more comprehensive approach which extends to medical practice, economics and psychology, advocating for support systems for those left behind, similar to that offered to migrants.

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## Comments and Interventions

Questions were raised on the perception the 'left behinds' on the social realities of life of migrants in diaspora as inherently superior in comparison to homeland; the impact of migration and exile particularly on women in diverse roles either as mothers, sisters, wives, grandmothers or children; and the absence of male family members (husbands) often

implied as added responsibilities for women (wives) and assumption of more masculine roles, and mental health dynamics. The interest here appeared to be on coping strategies linked with trauma, for instance, musings about a mother crying over the absence of her child being regarded as such, theorisation of extalgia as a mental health issue, queries as to how far into the past the phenomenon has existed and the impact of digital communication and social media in diminishing or otherwise feelings of extalgia.

Another interest was the view that parents and relatives are often not sad when family members migrate but rather consider it opportunity for success, status elevation or economic improvement led to question whether parents and families are more focused on the potential benefits of migration rather than the emotional cost of separation.

## Response from Olaoluwa

Professor Olaoluwa acknowledged 'an unequal power dynamic' between migrants in the diaspora and those left behind, stating that though both parties faced difficulties, the hardships due to the absence of loved ones may be more than the significant mental challenges associated with adjusting to life abroad.

He underscored the need for a stronger support system especially for the women and children left behind to address the challenges that they face.

By arguing that a deep feeling of longing or loss that arises from separation creating division between two people or places can be referred to as extalgia, Olaoluwa also clarified that extalgia is an extant issue. He drew attention to the existence of the phenomenon long before colonisation, and cited examples of migrations to the Middle East and far East that predate colonial history. Olaoluwa postulates that modern communication technologies do not fully address the emotional and mental struggles of those separated from loved ones; reconning that

people still crave intimacy, the absence of-which can lead to mental health challenges.

According to Olaoluwa, while viewpoints on migrations may reflect certain cultural attitudes, deep emotional struggles are associated with migration. Parents may hide the depth of sadness because they view their children's success as a source of pride, yet underlying feelings of despair and loneliness are ineluctable. This reinforces the conceptualizing of extalgia as a mental health issue. The comment that tension between migrants and those left behind is reflected in the resentment that the left behinds may harbor towards those who migrate was interpreted as a personal choice. The extalgia framework is not anti-migration but the impact of decisions on the wellbeing of those left behind is important, considering the significant emotional consequences for families and communities – and these should not be overlooked in discussions about migration as it connects in this discussion with women.

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## 2

# Wombiture: Digital Wombs and Foetal Subjectivities Or, Talking Futures with Culture as Wombiture

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### Background

The womb is a dense, complex and contradictory space, mankind's primal abode, an ante-natal workshop of cultural production of the fantasia, second only to the earth's primal fecundity in life's sustenance. Post-natal life comes in as a second phase of further mother culturing, nurturing and inducting the infant to the world of narrative possibilities.

To therefore locate culture and literature, indeed all cultural production, in the reflexive subjectivity of the womb is to gesture at three or more pertinent suggestions: the first is a confessional of sorts in acknowledging the reflexive womb at a materialist-philosophical level as the source and primary author of narrative as such, the second, to acknowledge the African womb as primal to the human cultural production as the

oldest inhabitant and creative agency of planet earth, and, the third is to highlight the potential of this as an epistemological foundation for future methodological approaches on the unborn. The unborn here commencing with the human, yet, transcending it in identifying other social unborn of silenced and underserved discourses and concepts in querying normative claims of primal roles and narrative in-media res. Silence, and the silenced are equally core to the methodology and theorising of cultural studies, hence the need to problematise them, locate spaces in the fast, unravelling processes of society, and now on the digital interphase and the current regime of Artificial intelligence, especially in the vortex of knowledge claims and contestations.

Plodding on with earlier reflections on nature and society, our earlier technologies and the nature of their orality and writing(s), coursing through the latter periods of our earlier external storage 'systems' from the cave to the cursor, the image to the digital emoji, etc., cultures have always embodied their myth, gnosis and broad imaginaries of 'life' before and after birth: conception, gestation and the mother's pang. The implications of this are vast and diverse as we can expect and should hardly be an enterprise to which an individual scholar dedicates the self. The current curiosity is of a much smaller area of this vast interpretational potential, and before stating them, here are a few anecdotal impulses that led to the research concern, two or three in the main. The pain arising from the difficulty of recalling vital data on account of the loss of our family 'archive' is topmost, the second being a general curiosity on the nature of narrative, across genres and the ages, and the third being the arrival of a daughter in the family and the keen observations on her all through the processes of conception, gestation and delivery.

meaning "care, cultivation, worship". The Latin root cult means "grow."

The term or concept Wombiture is a neologism derived from the fusion of two words: 'womb' and 'cult'. Here, 'womb' is a container of foetal

details, and of plausibility, and 'cult', a noun extension derived not from the French "culte" as first captured in English in 1617 and meaning "worship", but rather from its Latin etymology "cultus", meaning "care, cultivation, worship". The Latin root cult means "grow." This Latin root is the word origin of a good number of English vocabulary words, including culture, cultivate and horticulture. The root 'cult' is easily recalled via the word agriculture, for agriculture is the "growing" of plants via farming. Although the linguistic principle informing its structure requires a longer elaboration, the disciplinary sense of its usage here denotes the enculturing of the advancing foetus in diverse ways that mothers, parents and society employ wittingly or unwittingly, and to which they randomly coopt the technologies of their diverse eras to achieve. It is in this sense that this conceptual category is anchored on two potential theoretical models: one, cultural stem cells and, two, recall text.

In specific terms, Wombiture will explore the potential of digital wombs facilitating the possibilities of a reading of foetal subjectivities and the emerging implications. It weaves the biological into the social, hinting at the author's concept of 'Recall Text' and Mark Nwagwu's 'Cultural Stem Cells' as viable explainers of social tropes derived from nature but with compelling social resonances in the era of IoT Age. As recall-text, wombiture will serve as an empowering loop backwards as a strategy of developing human agency on the past (including the antenatal phase), and for the now (from the very moment of birth), and anticipated future (till that moment of exit from life, as commonly used). Bewildering as this may appear, that moment is not only here, and it just could be as empowering in its potential use(s) as it could be disempowering of the Other in its abuse(s). Helpful as this phase may be for several aspects of our life and the different disciplines, it more or less represents the more normative, technical-literal reading of Wombiture.

The first phase just articulated, remains of great value to the second phase of Wombiture; and that is Wombiture as Trope, charged with

the capacity for meaning-moulding and meaning-remoulding. Recall-text, as this trope is sometimes referred to, is evidential mythical Sankofa, but only fully philosophically appropriated if used as a trope in discursive engagements. As earlier noted, it is overtly implicated on issues of ideology, power and hegemony, among others. The mode and manner of manifestation of both are bound to overlap, especially as far as memory recall is involved, indicating my preference for “recall-text” in relation to the other descriptor. By imbuing the second phase with the lexical choice of “text”, thereby textualising the mode of this particular ‘recall’, a signal is being sent against a normative interpretation—an effort to reduce it from becoming a floating signifier tied to literalness— and develop an argument for charging the experience with the capacity to historicize, contextualize and pay very close attention to the dangers of mysticism, no matter how much it appeals to the authority of science. It is only in this manner that it can be of some minimal meaning to the humanities and even humanistic endeavours.

## Womb imagining across the ages

Here, attention is cast on texts that have focused on the different ways in which people have imagined the womb, unique child births and extraordinary lives in time-spatial categories. Some are captured in folk imaginings, authors’ reviews etc.

### Classical myths of in utero narratives.

Classical myths often feature in utero narratives that reflect ancient cultural beliefs and values surrounding pregnancy, childbirth, and fertility. Here are some examples:

Zeus and Athena (Greek): Zeus swallowed his pregnant wife Metis, fearing their child would overthrow him. However, the fetus (Athena) continued to grow inside Zeus’ head, eventually bursting forth fully grown and armored.

Dionysus (Greek): Zeus rescued his pregnant lover Semele’s fetus (Dionysus) from her womb after her death, stitching it into his thigh until the child was ready to be born.

Buddha (Buddhist): Queen Maya, the Buddha's mother, had a prophetic dream in which a white elephant entered her womb, signifying the conception of the future Buddha.

Horus(Egyptian): Isis, the goddess, protected her unborn son Horus from his father Osiris' murderer, Seth, by using magical spells and hiding in the marshes.

Mary and Jesus (Judeo-Christian): The Annunciation story features the angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she will bear Jesus, the Son of God, while remaining a virgin.

These ancient stories continue to influence art, literature, and cultural imagination, reflecting enduring human concerns and fascinations with in utero narratives. Moreover, the classical myths often symbolize divine intervention in human reproduction, the power of female fertility and maternal protection, the destiny and fate of the unborn child, and cultural beliefs about conception, pregnancy, and childbirth – all of which align with concepts and, myths and narratives in African religions and philosophies.

## Exploring Philosophical Dimensions of Wombiture Anamnesis

In the dialogue Meno, Plato opines that all human knowledge is nothing other than recollection of what is learnt in a pre-existing world (Cooper, 1997). This has been described as the major point of affirming the bifurcation of possible worlds: the world of forms and the world of appearance (Russell, 1945). The latter takes its semblance—and imperfection—from the former, which is an archetypal and unchanging world of perfection. The view that what we know in the world of appearance is a recollection of what had been imprinted on the soul in the world of forms is the theory of anamnesis.

In another dialogue, Phaedo, Plato reiterates the connection between the soul and knowledge (Plato, 1911), postulating the connection between the immortality of the soul, on the one hand, and knowledge, on the other. Recollection consequently reflects accumulated knowledge

embedded in the soul through its cycle of existence (Plato, 1911). Plato demonstrates the practical relevance and validity of the theory through Socrates' interrogation of a slave-boy. The slave-boy, ignorant of the knowledge of geometry, was guided by Socrates into revealing the truth of theorems in geometry. Although the slave-boy had never been taught geometry by anyone, this revelation buttresses Plato's theory. The collation of true beliefs bound into coherent knowledge is, consequently, made possible on account of anamnesis (Allen, 1959).

## Athena

Turning to the Greeks, we find an equally enchanting dimension. After swallowing Metis, Zeus took six more wives in succession, until he married his seventh and present wife, Hera. Then Zeus experienced an enormous headache. He was in such pain that he ordered someone (either Prometheus, Hephaestus, Hermes, Ares or Palaemon, depending on the sources examined) to cleave his head open with a labrys, the double-headed Minoan axe. Athena leaped from Zeus's head, fully grown and armed.

## Bataks of Sumatra

In his book, *The Golden Bough*, Sir James George Frazer (1951:16) gives us a good example using the Bataks of Sumatra as it concerns the pre-birth phenomenon:

Thus, among the Bataks of Sumatra a barren woman, who would become a mother, will make a wooden image of a child and hold it in her lap, believing that this will lead to the fulfilment of her wish.

In other words, the pre-birth is a spiritual thinking in the mind of the woman who earnestly wishes to become a mother and therefore dreams of having a baby by making an image from wood, apparently resembling a baby, in order for her dream to come to reality.

## Literary Perspectives on Wombiture Of Gargantua and Pantagruel

From the diverse character typology that literature has thrown up, it thus appears like the future portends the potential of infinite diversity. In Rabelais' Gargantua and Pantagruel, the narration reveals that Gargantua, father to the latter, having been born of a father who was "a jolly good fellow in his day, liking to drink hearty as well as any man in the world" (1946:56), came into the world craving a drink. However, his father's thirst was not the only precursor to his craving as the night of his birth was also a night of great drinking and feasting. The drunkards, having drunk their fill at the feast, made a great many remarks about drinks and drinking. They wondered which came first, thirst or drinking, and whether one wets the gullet in order to dry it or one dries it in order to wet it. As a newborn asking for a drink, Gargantua seemed to contribute to the discussion and also expand the riddles of thirst and drinking as well as the gullet. He did not cry "mie, mie like other children" (1946:69), but spoke coherent words right from the moment of his birth and so joined the conversation that had begun while he was still in the womb.

Another testament to his pre-birth consciousness is the alternate route via which he came to be born. His mother consumed a great abundance of tripe just before his birth and this led to complications during her labour with 'her bottom dropping out' (1946:68). A 'dirty old hag... who had a reputation for being a great doctor' (1946:68) prepared an astringent for her to contract the muscles in her bottom but this only led to more obstruction than was needed and so the foetus of Gargantua had to literally look for another way out of his mother's belly. He thus leapt up, went through the hollow vein and 'climbed over the diaphragm to her shoulders and there he took the left hand path and came out by the left ear'. ((1946:69). This long and winding journey through his mother's body frame no doubt contributed to his thirst at birth. Added to this was the fact that the astringent and subsequent tightening up of muscles made it inconvenient for him to come out the

normal way. Gargantua, with his knowledge of the precarious situation in his mother's physiology, opted to be separated from his mother in another manner rather than wait a moment longer in her body, after all he had spent 11 months in her belly and, by all accounts, would have been 'formed to perfection' (1946:56) for the great deeds he was to do in his time.

## Of *Macbeth* and Macbeth

Here is another instantiation of the broad archetype of the not-born of a woman trope in *Macbeth* the play, and Macbeth the character. On one hand, it launches a psychic debriefing of normativity in the use of language, just as it projects aspects of futures since there is ample textual evidence that a Caesarean section was not of common knowledge at this point to guarantee an intuitive deciphering of the witches' message.

### 1 Text – *Macbeth*

- (a) Act 4 Scene 1: From the Witches to Macbeth.  
"Be bloody, bold and resolute: laugh to scorn the power of man, for none of woman born shall harm Macbeth".
- (b) Act 5 Scene 8: Macbeth to Macduff.  
"I bear a charmed life, which must not yield, to one of woman born".
- (c) Act 5 Scene 8: Macduff to Macbeth.  
"Despair thy charm;  
And let the Angel, who thou still hast serv'd  
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother' womb  
Untimely ripened"

## Historico-Religious Aspects of Wombiture Of Jesus Christ of Faith and Jesus Christ of History

The Judeo-Christian tradition tells us through the Holy Bible of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. The Biblical account narrates that the virgin birth of Jesus is the doctrine that Jesus was conceived and born by his mother, Mary, through the power of the Holy Spirit. In the context of this study and the Africa-Yoruba mythopoesis, this sort of conception would necessarily sit well because many African cultures also equally have such versions from the regular female process of child delivery, but also to some other bizarre conceptions and deliveries.

The response of Jose Saramago in his work of fiction, *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ*, would seem to have drawn from both the intended fictional impulse of that genre as well as some class in "The Bible as Literature", as he portrays Jesus in a human-life worldly context, suggesting that, indeed, Jesus rebelled against God because he feared that his people would be put at risk by preaching a universal message rather a culturalnational one; and had gone ahead on the cross to utter the last message saying: 'Men, forgive Him for He knows not what he is doing.'

What strikes us here is the fact that in spite of the author's recast of the Biblical narrative, he does not engage an equally central doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Wombiture Studies should find this quite significant to the extent that it demonstrates how sensitively some ordinary narratives are held, be it of cosmogony, autochthony, founder legends or, as in this case, the birthing of a new era of fresh beginnings. It highlights that narrative is not just powerful, but also of earliest beginnings of an equally antenatal conception of the nature of this particular birth; even when the process is not powered by the high-tech of a sensortransmitter scanning machine.

## Narrative in the Age of Digital In-Utero

This research takes off from the intersection of Biology (as an informing, originating principle), Technology (in relation to digital wombs), and Sociology (regarding the social sciences and the broad humanities of narrative recall). Specifically, I seek to further understand these broad areas that might be of interest to my students and the community of scholars in Nigeria, perhaps even the West Africa corridor where we share similar cultural traits in gnosis, myth, ontology, literature and the arts. In essence, this particular query on the future of narrative and the auto/biography will also interphase with biology, in particular, on aspects of digitised intra uterine developments.

I commenced my research seeking to combine textual inquiry with an ethnographic approach on the details of the process of a child's formation from conception through gestation to the stage of birth in terms of what our mothers say about, and 'to' these foetuses. I also seek knowledge on the cultural reaction to this process by both the child, and the mother, in the aftermath of birth, if the pregnancy were captured in an ultrasonographic digital environment. What are the potential implications of this for the future narrative, of, and by the child on her earliest beginnings? Based on these premises I sought to answer such questions as, 'What is the future of the auto/biography, even the African autobiographical novel?' Might this 'recall text' have initiated some kind of 'new humanity' with the capacity to revise, even reverse, but ultimately propel narrative sequence(s) with a qualitative shift of certitude of past(s) beyond our earlier experience?

This research takes off by drawing connections between our settled notions of narrative and the impulse of technologies to aid us in hinting at potential emergent discourse(s). It examines narrative through the oral, written and digital electronic responses to the dynamics of literary and cultural production in the context of probable, possible, and preferable Futures. At this stage, the research feels compelled to revisit

the characterisation of literary values; why, for instance, are we so mute on the literary value of intra uterine ‘conversations’ of the mother-child stimuli-response, for instance? Or, furthermore, why is the lullaby and other such early child feminine aesthetics not of great literary value? Why, other than the preferential gestures of an unquestioned nomenclatural elite and its stag power structure on valuation?

This research is particularly pertinent for the West Africa narrative space because the trend of ageism and engendering in African narratives and epistemic traditions has endured for so long and created a power base within a literary tradition in which griots and men often become the custodians of a communal knowledge system, albeit based on the old rhetorical tradition and the process of socialisation. The context of memory practices, therefore, was not fully dissimilar to memory practices within the field of rhetoric as captured in the myth of Simonides within the Western tradition.

As a work in Futures Studies, this research is designed to explore the intersections of culture, narrative and the auto/biographical within the field of digital humanities, and seeks to realign age and male gender-based theoretical narratives to the reality of the IoT Age and foetal subjectivitis.

## Familiar-Unfamiliar Concepts

Futures Studies, also known as futurology, is the study of probable, possible, and preferable futures including the worldview and myths that underlie each future. In the last fifty or so years, the study of the future has moved from predicting the future to mapping alternate futures to shopping for desired futures, both at external collective levels and inner individual levels (Masini, 1993; Bell 1996, Amara 1981; Sandar 1999; Inayathullah 2000; Saul 2001). In other words, Futures Studies, or Futures as I sometimes use it in context, and the other less known term, Wombiture, are both implicitly and explicitly implicated in other

discourses beyond their literal-technical provenance. Partly because they are also powered by narrative and representation, there is no avoiding the discourse of ideology, power, and hegemony, highlighting the most obvious. Beyond this, Futures have always been an enduring part of the human experience the diversity of its rendering in myth, gnosis, ontology, legend, and even magic.

Pysychodynamics, even though developed by the discipline of Psychology, has been appropriated by Cultural Studies, not so much as a negation of Jungian and Freudian excursions in the realm of the unconscious, but in its application to almost the least imaginable aspects of living and social processes, especially on cultural and aesthetic issues. We seek to use psychodynamics in this respect to examine Wombiture, in its evolving form as an aspect of Futures, the summary of which can be couched in the potential tensions that are bound to emerge from the interaction of this heightened mode of awareness of the self in relation to the role of the technologies that have supported increased access to evidence and familiarity with antenatal and postnatal existence. The thrust is also to locate this awareness within earlier forms of such ruptures by historicizing the stream of moments straddling the transition from orality to writing, and the different phases of writing that have led to the electronic age, and its subsequent multimedia phase now birthing wombiture in its 'full' hypertextual manifestation.

### What Future(s) Do We Study?

Futures Studies is undergirded by factors of time and change. Although there are multiple entry points to the study of the future, many scholars align on the idea that the study of the future has to do with understanding the temporal conditions that influence the shifts that happen in the world, and mapping the ways in which these can be steered in more positive directions (Inayatullah, 2008 Bussey 2014, Head 2012). These temporalities are often framed by social structures, power, human agency, etc. (Head 2012).

Wendell Bell's two volume *Foundations of Futures Studies*, read as one of the important introductory texts to the field, explores various thematic and methodological concerns of the field including questions of history, meaning and critical realism. Using critical realism, Bell's work explores the liminal space between the philosophy of positivism as regards 'truthful knowledge in an objective world' and the disillusioned postmodernist position, which glances cynically at the real possibility for 'truthful knowledge' (Actuarial Futures 1998). Thus, for Bell, studying the future would be an interface between the possibility of knowing the future and the fallibility of knowledge itself. This perspective allows a subjective model for approaching Future Studies. Gidley (2017) confirms this subjectivity in addressing five distinct yet overlappable entry points into the field, namely: "predictive/empirical, critical/ postmodern, cultural/interpretive, participatory/prospective, integral/ holistic" (Ollenburg 2018). While a lot of attention has been given to the technologies enabling the changes that shape the future, Gidley argues that insufficient attention is being given to developing human agency/intelligence, which also plays a tremendous role in understanding and shaping the future.

The preference of scholars like Gidley for the term 'futures' in its plural form is reflective of the necessary multiplicity of the future. Taking together the arguments of Bell and Gidley, Futures Studies may be said to be largely contingent upon and subjective to space and time, acquiring legibility within the different contexts in which it is being understood.

In a critical futures approach – the poststructural turn – the external world is informed by the reality of the external. While many embrace Futures Studies so as to reduce risk, to avoid negative futures, particularly the worst case, others actively move to creating desired futures (Masini 1983). This must have been the impulse that made premodern attempts to understand the future focus on astrology. By and large, the purpose

of astrology was to help individuals avoid dangerous circumstances by providing an early warning system. The future was not contested. In modern Future Studies, questioning and divergent views are not only incorporated, they are essential to robustness and resilience. Recent Future Studies includes contesting the views of the future as well as ways of knowing it. The unconscious assumption is that through better forecasting, the world, the future, can be more effectively controlled, thus increasing profits and hegemony.

## Futures Studies, Psychodynamics, and the Production of the Narrative Text

Texts have over time been unique tools to express and preserve language. Texts also continually evolve through time and space, and technology has played a critical role in the multiple configurations of texts that have emerged over centuries across various cultures. McLuhan (1964, 1967) describes technology, not as something other and an alternative to the human subject, but as an extension of human consciousness. As Harvey (2006) notes, McLuhan's famously cited 'the medium is the message' reflects the intricate link between the forms in which human beings do language and what they do with language per time. Thus the consciousness of an age informs its technology which in turn informs consciousness. The perpetually overlapping gestures between technology and consciousness ultimately produce narrative texts.

To attempt to project a future for the narrative text, specifically in relation to biographical and autobiographical texts, would thus be to ask: how do the changing factors of sociality and being (and their resulting technologies) frame narrative content and style? How do they interact with memory and how would new experiences of memory transform the ways in which stories are told?

## Psychodynamics and Individuation

The social pressure to be a unique individual is one of the key markers of modernity. In traditional societies, identity is determined by social position and family background. In the modern process of individuation, the autonomous actions of human beings are crucial to the maintenance of a coherent identity. These choices are rooted in the decisions of individuals who maintain their identities by appropriating their actions and carrying them into the future. Since past decisions determine individuality in the present, the concept of life history takes on a central role (Kergegard, 1987; 216). These histories are preserved in memories. As a result, remembrance becomes “an essential element of the final historical being of man” (Godamer 2004; 14). Memory is neither history nor is it defined by the chronology of linear time. Memory comes “from within”. It is an affective connection “a felt knowledge of recent events”.



### Ultrasound and Wombiture: Making the Most of Both

Ultrasounds have become highly anticipated rituals of pregnancy, opportunities to peek at your baby and even bring home a “photo”

of her tiny face, hands, and feet. Bobro advises women to make the experience personal by taking a moment to merge the images you saw on a screen with the intimate, personal picture you have of your baby. “Close your eyes and imagine who you think the baby is,” says Bobro. “Have an inner image as well” as the ultrasound photo.

Source: image: [https://d1lhri34tovdcj.cloudfront.net/prod/mom365/optimized-images/istock-843985644%20\(1\).jpg](https://d1lhri34tovdcj.cloudfront.net/prod/mom365/optimized-images/istock-843985644%20(1).jpg)

## Narrative forms: Fiction, Realism, the Imaginary, the Fictive Moment

The Future of narrative in utero promises to be quite engaging in almost all the ramifications of creative renderings, and particularly in relation to time-spatial representation, tense and aspect of representation, genre clarification, and intra and inter-modality, to mention a few. I have analysed a few works in this tone as samples of what we might be expecting soon at a much more complex level.

## Womb of the ‘cyclical’ Man

Perhaps more than any other writer of his age, Wole Soyinka has exceptionally demonstrated an early interest in, and an understanding of an intricate world, one of which the ‘cyclical’ archetype constitutes the nature of being. Soyinka captured this as a world— sometimes mutually inhabited, sometimes in sequence— of the dead, the living and the unborn. Besides being the structure upon which *Forest of a Thousand Daemons* is built, this motif is equally well captured in his essay: “The Fourth Stage” (1976:141-142), *besi*.

There, illusively, hovers the key to the human paradox, to man’s experience of being and non-being, his dubiousness as essence and matter; intimations of transience and eternity, and the harrowing drives between uniqueness and Oneness.

Our course to the heart of the Yoruba Mysteries leads by its own ironic truths through the light of Nietzsche and the Phrygian deity; but there are the inevitable, key departures. 'Blessed Greeks!' sings our mad votary in his recessional rapture, 'how great must be your Dionysos, if the Delic god thinks such enchantments necessary to cure you of your Dithyrambic madness.' Such is Apollo's resemblance to the serene art of Obatala the pure unsullied one, to the 'essence' idiom of his rituals, that it is tempting to place him at the end of a creative axis with Ogun, in a parallel evolutionary relationship to Nietzsche's Dionysos- Apollo brotherhood. But Obatala the sculptural god is not the artist of Apollonian illusion but of inner essence. The idealist bronze and terra-cotta of Ife which may tempt the comparison implicit in 'Apollonian' died at some now forgotten period, evidence only of the universal surface culture of courts and never again resurrected. It is alien to the Obatala spirit of Yoruba 'essential' art. Obatala finds expression, not in Nietzsche's Apollonian 'mirror' of enchantment' but as a statement of world resolution.

If The Fourth Stage is a critical text, below we can still find the dialogue between Mr. Pilkings, Iyaloja, and the bride instructive in *Death and the King's Horseman* in the same ritual of coming, staying and living, indeed a ritual of life's renewal.

Iyaloja: Why do you strain yourself? Why do you labour at tasks for which no one, not even the man lying there, would give you thanks? He is gone at last into the passage but oh, how late it all is. His son will feast on the meat and throw him bones. The passage is clogged with droppings from the King's stallion; he will arrive all stained in dung.

Pilkings: (in a tired voice) Was this what you wanted?

Iyaloja: No child, it is what you brought to be, you who play with strangers' lives, who even usurp the vestments of our dead, yet believe that the stain of death will not cling to you. The gods demanded only the old expired plantain but you cut down the sap-laden shoot to feed your pride. There is your board, filled to overflowing. Feast on it. (She screams at him suddenly, seeing that Pilkings is about to close Elesin's staring eyes.) Let him alone! However sunk he was in debt he is no pauper's carrion abandoned on the road. Since when have strangers donned clothes of indigo before the bereaved cries out his loss?

(She turns to the Bride who has remained motionless throughout.) Iyaloja: Child.

(The girl takes up a little earth, walks calmly into the cell and closes Elesin's eyes.

She then pours some earth over each eye-lid and comes out again.)

Iyaloja: Now forget the dead, forget even the living. Turn your mind only to the unborn.

(She goes off, accompanied by the Bride. The dirge rises in volume and the women continue their sway. Lights fade to a black-out.) (2003:62-63.)

## WHAT IS THE FUTURE SAYING?

### Literature and Narrative Language

There may be an emergence of a new genre or sub-genre of literature. A new genre of literature may take form and we may witness a new narrative language, a meta-narrative of sorts.

We may witness the invention of a new narrative form that dictates how

biography and autobiography are written, the point from which literary narrative begins and the language deployed in rendering these pre-birth narratives.

### Realism, Supernaturalism and Naturalism

'Grotesque realism' also flows from this reality, such that the 'mental bodily' is presented not in private, egotistic form, but a second order semiotic reference injected with universal reference. This sometimes informs the high burlesque, and exaggerated form of representation, not of the individual but human corporate being in a flux. This invariably throws forth such images as fertility, growth etc. as preserved in many traditional and renaissance literature.

'Billingsgate abuses' — passion from excessive praise to excessive invective' as in pg. 49. This form handling has accommodation in official culture which is stereotypically oriented only to an immovable and unchanging hierarchy of a parallel structure. In the unofficial culture, the praise comingles with ironic advertisement. They are words excavated from the crowd.

### Alien Perspective

In the sense of Ajantala, a child with the knowledge of pre-birth existence, through civil disobedience, may create social tension, may shake 'social order'. An order of social deviants may be on the rise. How will the record of certain cultural and religious prenatal rites influence the personality and psyche of children?

### New Field of Study

We may witness the rise of a discipline or sub-discipline whose field of study is centred on personality formation of the foetus - "Foetus Behavioural Specialist."

## Sequential Gap

How maternal death at birth and the case of a damaged chip/belt affect the progression of prebirth activity record; how will this gap affect remembrance and memory?

## Theory of Evolution

The evolution of “hyper-intelligent” humans who have a record of activities of their foetal sensory perceptions, who can link their sentiments, understanding, character, vices and virtues and other temperaments to their pre-birth activities.

## Gender and Sexualities Studies

Settled issues are most likely going to be stirred awake, unsettled ones gaining and losing traction, depending on what side of the debate, school of thought, ideological and power equation of the literal discursive site.

## Theology Studies

It is almost obvious that this area of scholarship would harvest some good number of questions, not just from the community but also from their trainees and students.

## Clerics

Perhaps more than any group of people, Clerics have made more pronouncements on such sensitive issues as morality, sexual orientation, marriage, inheritance rights, and the like; this may just be the moment they need to step out and repeat what have sometimes been said age-old.

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## Comments and interventions

Professor Olorunyomi's presentation could best be described as ambitious as it foregrounds a dimension that had remained silenced and feminist interest in the subject. Essentialists would problematise attempts to hypothesize the womb, and regardless of Olorunyomi's theoretical view, considerations of the womb as location for human incubation, would raise concerns from some feminists due to the multi-dimensional nature of feminism. If the infamous phrase "female to male as nature is to culture" is put into consideration, it could be argued that nature becomes culture when worked on and men are culture and women remain as nature due to biological makeup. Wombiture is therefore perceived as an open-ended conversation that scholars would continue to examine as it evolves with time.

A perspective on the potential value of wombiture includes its description as a primordial phenomenon challenged by the Global South waiting for theorisations from the Global North. By this, Wombiture is perceived as an indigenous theory to the rest of the world awaiting instantiated responses when shared by the proponent at international meetings. A bigger picture includes wombiture as a theory that facilitates new forms of understandings of human personalities. The use of nanotechnology to facilitate the possibility of correcting genetic errors in fetus before birth pushed for re-imaginings beyond the instance of the fetus to considerations of the start of a human being as either from birth or from conception. Tracing an individual back to originating as the sperm that fertilised the egg is an opportunity to be advantaged. Olorunyomi's reference to John the Baptist and Jesus was considered to align with

some mothers' narratives of lack of surprise at how ambitious a child matures to be based on recollections of things the child was up to while in the womb. These narratives are ignored due to eurocentrism; with the question "can science be challenged?"

Connecting Wombiture with ecofeminism, an argument that Africa is the oldest inhabited and creative agency on the planet earth raised curiosity of intersections with existing theoretical frameworks and approaches to literary criticism from which Wombiture could be taken further into cultural, social and political approaches on digital humanities and development. The admiration from eco-feminist epistemic foundation emphasises the womb as a biological, cultural and environmental space which links femininity and fertility where nurturing by the mother exemplified the birth and introduction of the child to culture and environment. The argument here is that Wombiture could be a powerful literary approach towards the localisation a universal mode of reasoning within the feminist space.

Olorunyomi's identification of the womb as a contradiction, a mankind prima board, a natal or cultural production informed criticism of his description of the womb from masculinised point of view. The womb should be discussed as woman's humankind prima board, as language is important in perspectives. It is agreeable that life can only be considered after the womb had completed its duties. Olorunyomi's postulation of relation of culture and literature to the womb was suggestive of the womb as the primary author of narrative at a materialist philosophical level, suggesting relationship between culture and the woman's potential for creating new futures, methodological and epistemologies. There is also the curiosity about nature narratives, where the birth of the daughter erases the figure/status of the mother and emphasizes the daughter. The womb as a container of the future, thus present possibility(ies) as culture is traceable to an etiology of care, cultivation, and worship.

Could it then be that the womb is symbolic of nature as feminine and culture as masculine? Through recall text that looked backwards and

digital wombs, which facilitated the reading of fetus projects molding meanings and remodeling of meanings; in the consideration of the womb across eras and citations of several scholars by Olorunyomi, it is striking to read the Greek mythology of Zeus who swallowed his pregnant wife and proceeded to deliver a son through the head, an imagination which was informative of the idea of rebirth when masculinised. The idea of swallowing in feminist psychoanalysis was very much discussed by French feminist philosophers in the talk about swallowing as a process of occasional reclaiming but in the instantiated, swallowing was destructive of the feminine product and rebirth through the head was destructive of the process of birthing. The stories could not unfold without traveling through Olorunyomi's point of view and the journey reveals a rebirth, the outcome of the rebirth and subsequently the circular movement between conception and rebirth.

Olorunyomi's detailed future of writing with the example of, literature, a narrative language, realism, supernaturalism and naturalism, alien perspective, new field of study, sequential gap and the theory of evolution. Questions thus arise on the future of African literature and African stories; was an evolution reminiscent of the theory of evolution expected which would lead to the start of written fetal, sensory narratives of hyper intelligent humans? A perusal of current events was construal of wombs with modern bayonets, disemboweled pregnancies in Congo, Northern Uganda, Somalia and Eritrea. Equally important are narratives on broadcast and print media about wars and how conceptualisation of the future wombs that had been violated would play out in Olorunyomi's narratives. Describing them as products that remained volatile, producing fatherless and motherless narratives that were comparable to autobiographies of child soldiers, Olorunyomi's idea on truth of narratives in autobiographies offers a thin line between fiction and facts.

In admiration of imaginations which reflect dilemma presented in writing, typified in the autobiography Ake, the victim's mother in feminist history who remained the mother of feminist activism in Nigeria

was reduced to an (in)effective character by Soyinka and yet in feminist historical narratives Funmilayo Ransom-Kuti is a prominent fellow. The representation of truth in autobiography as seen in Soyinka's work gives credence to Olorunyomi's discussion of what could be found in and gained from the truth of autobiographies.

Focus on the digital - the 'digital wombs' as fetal subjectivities calls attention to recall text as approach to recover vital data lost in a family archive. The digital womb could be tapped into to recall experiences during prenatal phase and the theoretical womb as site for cultural, social influences and hub of potential knowledge. There were anxieties on the risk of wombiture becoming a tool for big tech encroachments, particularly the early stage of human existence in era where human's most intimate moments are easily identified, monetised and quantified. Conceptualisation of a sacred and very unknown complex space as place to tap into for vital, familiar, archival and prenatal archive with ubiquitous artificial intelligence, educes worry for wombiture becoming tool for normalization of encroachment into intimate end.

Discussants at the seminar revealed personal deduction that child technology appeared as strategy for understanding the Yoruba conception of life as the unborn, the present and the dead. Expressing understanding of the stages of the unborn in Yoruba metaphysical narratives, discussant pondered manner wombiture pointed to the curiosity and acknowledgement of a prenatal existence. Discussants worry that the woman and the womb are recurrent focal subject in attempts to legislate and determine what women do with their body while there were no prevailing conversations about the penis, scrotum sac or life cycle of sperm to human. The philosophical nature of the womb transcends the physical and the participant called for considerations of the womb as a baby irrespective of occupancy.

The current era of politically charged debates about reproductive rights raised questions on how to avoid the use of (wombiture) to legitimize, counter debates about maternal body autonomy, reproductive rights, particularly if the womb is positioned as a space of expectations

considering cultural narrative and social influences. How may subsumption into narratives about prenatal agency that are inherently against maternal agency managed?

Overall, there was the view that Wombiture is inherently metaphysical and narrative-based, and not necessarily making a claim about suppressing maternal autonomy. Also, Wombiture could easily be used for anti-choice rhetoric. In the presentation of Wombiture, due to advancement of science and technology, there were various forms of artificial means of reproduction which queries the place of exogenesis in Olorunyomi's discourse as the human womb cannot just be assumed to be human. Participants note that while the womb of a woman will always be a womb, the problem of identity - what identifies the person? consciousness? or the physical being of the person remains. At what point could memory, the ability to recall things which start at a particular age be personalised?

### Response from Olorunyomi

The most dangerous occurrence possible has been raised in respect of the danger of mobilizing the concerns of reproductive rights especially at human elements who might want to criminalize the womb, the woman and deny her agency to her body. Zones of potential misunderstandings abound, but the concept of the womb in "wombiture" is a metaphor. It is biological and requires establishment of origins and basis, with reference to explanation of cultural stem cells requiring definition of stem cells. The mention of evolutionism in oral literature studies and some of the social sciences is accompanied by tracing of its origins to Charles Darwin. Notably, theorization on the womb is in response to the several autonomous paradigm shifts that requested for better humanity, readied to tell the truth about size, knowledge and philosophy. Wombiture ought to be advanced for humanity sake and knowledge, with the awareness of navigations away from families conversation based on ever present limitations as a man. Women would forgive

genuine errors accompanied by honest confessions but the subject could not be left; it had to be learnt as it was not embodied within all.

Attention needs to be called to foundations as originated in Yoruba philosophical background that do not allow for divides of positive or negative in the sense that the concept of wombiture metaphorically provides that a glass of water is useful to drink without need for extra gulp in a drowning situation. The focus is not about water being good or bad, or the positive or negative in terms of location for positive and location for negative, rather in being situated in the same body. By implication, wombiture has the potential to be used for anything just as theory in itself could be manipulated to achieve a diversity of purposes.

Continuity and examination of future use of the concept of wombiture should be encouraged in terms of opportunistic sperms, as the extent and the knowledge to be yielded as far as the concept is concerned is not known and should not inspire fear for the future. Wombiture is not necessarily great because of self-constitution of oneself into one or into the complexity of some kind of microeconomics of research, for instance an economy. It is not the amount of mathematics done but the overall assumption of what society decides to use the resource for, as well as how it wants it distributed, how much it wants it to go for women, children, society, education and the rest of it or not. To this end, wombiture could mean different things to different people, depending on contexts. What is most important is to look into foundational explanations to unlock further research possibilities.

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## When 'She' is The Crook: Feminised Corruption and Women's Political Communication in Nigeria

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### Abstract

West Africa offers significant examples of struggles with dwindling women's political representation, of which several possible causes have been identified. In addition, this study unravels the concept of 'feminised corruption' as a subtle, yet major bane to an increased presence of women in political office. Using Nigeria as a case study, I draw evidence from five selected women to foreground how corruption charges laid against women in politics reveal a hidden, but deliberate attempt to truncate their political careers. I proceed to interrogate how the political communication actions and/or inactions of these women have reinforced stereotypes and distorted their responses to corruption charges and party misdemeanors. This qualitative study articulates how

corruption is gendered to regulate women's access to public offices and concludes that political parity would remain an illusion if feminised corruption is allowed to thrive.

## Introduction

Ongoing debates on gender and corruption have taken multiple views globally and locally. Some parity-based studies promote the 'fairer sex' hypothesis which connects femininity with probity and masculinity with corruption (World Bank 2001; Dollar, Fisman and Gatti 2001; Akunyili 2006; Arowolo and Aluko 2010; Bauhr, Charron and Wängnerud 2018), and on this basis, they advocate for increased women's participation in politics. Other studies argue that the gender binary as an anti-corruption device is mythical and problematic, therefore, more women in politics would not necessarily translate to less corruption. Rather, they suggest that institutional/legal reforms and dispassionate legal enforcement should be deployed to curb corruption (Okonkwo 2016; Mechkova, Dahlum and Petrarca 2022). There is also the moderate school that argues that the link between women's political representation and corruption is context-specific (Esarey and Schwindt- Bayer 2018; Bauhr and Charron 2021). These debates began to expand as more women entered the highly patriarchal political spaces in Africa. However, not many studies have sought to ask if corruption prevents women from seeking, gaining and retaining political office. To this end, keen attention to West Africa's political space (specifically, Nigeria) arises considering the hitherto backlash of dwindling women's political participation and representation in the region.

This article spotlights how political space in Africa marginalizes women, especially in the areas of having a fair representation in democratic processes, elections, and nomination into appointive offices. In addition to this, it calls attention to emerging bottlenecks that are beginning to reinforce malignant barriers to a more inclusive political environment, consequently deterring the prioritizing of space-making for women in

public office. Without discountenancing the importance of ongoing gender discussions on corruption, this paper introduces 'feminised corruption' as another important, yet unnoticed dimension to the debate. Feminised corruption engages a conceptual and theoretical interrogation of the scandalization of women in political offices and by extension, other leadership spaces using empirical evidence (Omotoso, 2023). This responds to the gap found due to "little theoretical evidence to suggest how gender may influence likability in the context of political scandal" (Stilwell and Utych 2022, 134). It also brings into focus how politicians' gender can determine the effect of a scandal (Bauer 2017; Pereira 2020; Cucchi and Cavazza 2020).

The concept of 'feminised corruption' exposes a depiction of "the bias of corruption against women... that is, making corruption into an act that is typical of women and making more women visible among the corrupt across political spaces. [This problem of feminised corruption]... infers that women carry more moral responsibility than men and should therefore receive greater punishment when caught in the web of corruption" (Omotoso 2023,10-13). By this, 'feminised corruption' is presented as an emerging disguised misogynist weapon used to hamper women's progress in politics. Within this situation, Nigeria's political sphere becomes a case in point to show how corruption is weaponised against women both through the spoken and unspoken among political actors, to reinforce political victimization performed through "a careful handpicking of political rivals or errant former allies" (Albert 2018, 4). I present this as a meeting point between women's political representation and women's political communication, aligning with Ossei-Apiah et al. (2023. 2510) that "issues of political communication represent a major edifice for the gendering of politics, both as a producer of enduring gender inequality and as an incentive for political change." Political communication (also known as Policom) "deals with how means of communication function within political processes. ... entailing the interaction of three main actors: political actors, the media and the public" (Orgeret and Rønning 2020). Specifically, women's political communication embodies their personality traits, fashion

sense, speeches, projects and methodical approaches (Omotoso 2020). Women's political communication spans verbal and non-verbal cues used to enter political arena, to attract media attention, to sustain public engagement and to defend themselves from political aggression. This is in response to the dearth of empirical studies in the "political context verifying the effectiveness of image reparation tactics in relation to a politician's gender" (Cucchi et al 2021, 2-3)

I argue here that, how women's political communication is structured and implemented determines how well or otherwise they will fare in their political careers. The objective of this study is to examine selected Nigerian female politicians' political communications as a link between manifestations of feminised corruption, and their many crashlandings that have resulted in women's dwindling political representation. In the remaining sections of this work I will interrogate 'political corruption' and 'feminised corruption' within Nigeria's political systems since the commencement of the fourth republic in 1999. The concept of 'feminised corruption' will be used to expand the debates by providing evidence from five selected Nigerian women who have held political office. I will then examine how women's responses to corruption charges and party misdemeanours have reinforced existing stereotypes and how their political communication actions and/or inactions downplay/distort women's agency, thereby allowing for gendered corruption to regulate women's access to public offices. Finally, I will propose how identified political challenges may be addressed by key players as Nigerian women's quest for gender egalitarianism continues and the study will close with reflections and conclusion.

## Women in Nigeria's Political Space: Rising Participation and Falling Representation.

Ravaged by rising participation yet falling representation, the Nigerian situation offers comprehensive contexts to the challenge of women's

political representation and participation. Okome and Zakiya (2013, 23) called attention to the lack of “consensus on how to conceptualize or understand women’s political participation and the consequent effects on politics and political systems.” One conception captures political participation as mainstreaming gender through equitable representation, while another conception points at descriptive representation (having to do with the election and appointment of women into office), and substantive representation (ensuring that women’s issues are incorporated into policymaking) (Lovenduski 2005). Therefore, ongoing debates on connections between political participation and political representation offer a description of political representation as that which transpires among candidates vying for office; and political participation as activities of voters, pressure groups, and civil society (Lindberg 2006). Differentiating between political participation and political representation reveals a tokenised structure sustained by “a drift from increased representation to increased participation, which keeps Nigeria stuck within retaining women as participants and restraining them from being elected or appointed en masse into political offices” (Omotoso and Akanni 2024, 128).

Accordingly, on one hand, political participation in Nigeria is feigned in women’s massive attendance of political rallies dressed in party attires; women being a larger population as the voting masses; women as recruits for political mobilizing, and as cheerleaders to male political gladiators. On the other hand, political representation remains in realms of the descriptive and the substantive where more women have not occupied. This places political participation in an all-comer realm of politics while representation is for a selected few who are qualified based on preset criteria often built on patriarchal party policies, socio-cultural regimen and country-specific media ecosystems (Zaller 1992; Ferraz & Finan 2011; Omotoso 2018). This argument somewhat aligns with the supply-side and demand-side explanation of women’s political representation.

As the supply side connects with increasing the pool of women with the will and experience to contest alongside men for political offices, the demand side spotlights countries' political climate and electoral systems' willingness to pull women working within the supply side into public offices (Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes 2007). With this categorization, this study would focus on political representation as conceived to imply women's willingness to contest for offices and the will of structures and systems to aid their presence and impact in the space. Such a categorization entails symbolic representation which should expectedly allow women to enter political spaces and gain influence to improve women's wellbeing. As a precursor to any substantive representation, when symbolic representation is weak, gender stereotype promoted by hegemonic masculinity renders women's agency in politics precarious (Fernandes 2012). Consequently, feminised corruption typifies the complication that accompanies weak symbolic representation and is thus presented here as a bane to political representation (specifically on the demand side), since it is usually weaponised against women in leadership.

Election Offices	2007		2011		2015		2019	
	Female Candidates	Women Elected	Female Candidates	Women Elected	Female Candidates	Women Elected	Female Candidates	Women Elected
President	1 of 25	0	1 of 20	0	1 of 14	0	6 of 73	0
Vice President	5 of 25	0	3 of 20	0	4 of 14	0	22 of 73	0
Governor	14 of 474	0	13 of 353	0	23 of 380	0	77 of 3269	0
Deputy Governor	21 of 474	6 of 36	58 of 347	1 of 36	64 of 380	4 of 29	265 of 3269	3 of 36
Senate	59 of 799	9 of 109	90 of 890	7 of 109	128 of 746	8 of 109	234 of 2824	8 of 109
House of Reps	150 of 2342	26 of 360	220 of 2408	26 of 360	270 of 172	17 of 360	543 of 4680	13 of 360

Source: IRJ 2015 Nigeria Election Observation Report  
 YIAGA Africa Observatory on Candidacy in the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria.

Table 1 Women's Political Representation in Nigeria's Politics 2007-2019

Table 1 establishes a similar trend of low representation of women in elective positions since 2007 despite a recurrent report of over 45 percent registered female voters. This confirms rising participation yet falling representation. In Nigeria, women's political representation remains a challenge, constituting 5.7 percent of parliamentary seats in 2021 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021). Nigeria's political landscape is complex, and shaped by cultural, religious, and economic factors. Successes and challenges emerge from grassroots movements and legislative reforms, highlighting the intricate dynamics of women's political participation (Duflo 2012). However, socio-cultural factors, discriminatory practices, and limited access to resources hinder women's political advancement when considered from a representation viewpoint. The next section examines feminised corruption as an identified bane contributing to the trend of falling women's political representation in Nigeria.

### Theoretical discussions on political corruption and feminised corruption.

Political corruption describes systematic ways in which "governing elites...seek to expand the flow of illicit benefits through official channels" (Balachandrudu 2006, 811). Albert (2018, 3) affirms an extension of the discourse of political corruption to cover incidences of unfair allocation of a country's wealth; ...intentional distortion in a country's social and political decision-making...cases of "stolen elections", lopsided political appointments, ethnic and religious influences in a political system, and other forms of nepotism.

It follows that political corruption is a combination of several constituents including electoral corruption, bureaucratic corruption (consisting of petty and grand corruption) among others, which undermines the foundations of political systems. Political corruption depends largely on political systems where political elites are at the apex within the circular bottom-top or top-bottom cycle. This may then be closely connected to bureaucratic corruption which include biased methods used by

government employees and the public to obtain illegitimate benefits. Beyond these, it is important to note strong links among the various forms of corruption. For instance, Malipula (2024) problematizes combating bureaucratic corruption considering the strong connection with political elites who massively influence bureaucratic decisions. This situation according to Osei-Afoakwa (2012) includes cases where public sector officials connive with private sector officials including political elites to implement bureaucratic corruption. Within this process, specifically in budget planning and public procurement, the masses become victims of lack of checks and balances between both parties.

Be that as it may, feminised corruption reverberates with political scandals considered as transgression, and defined as “illegal, or unauthorised, profiteering by officials who exploit their position for personal gain” (Blackburn et al., 2004, 5). It straddles multifarious manifestations, more so that corruption indictment against women politicians cut across embezzlement, misappropriation, money laundering, certificate forgery among others. These crosscut within bureaucracies, institutions, cultures and religions keeping in mind that the political space cannot operate independently from these spheres. Feminised corruption presents not just an addition in corruption discourses, but also a fresh contribution to the gender-corruption nexus. It is noteworthy, that studies have offered seven major areas of consideration in gender-corruption nexus:

1) socialization; 2) risk-appetite; 3) opportunities for corruption; 4) gender quotas; 5) the role of women; 6) institutions; and 7) context (UNODC Module on Anti-Corruption N.D, 12). While most of these areas have connected more with women’s probity in office, it is still unclear how institutions and contexts provide definitive understanding to the gender-corruption nexus. Consequently, there arises the need to dig deeper into the gender-corruption nexus through these two lenses. Noting that the concept of corruption is essentially a moral issue often emerging from an environment of moral diminution or depravity, “... corruption... typically involves the despoiling of the moral character of persons...” (Miller 2017, p. 55), “and/or the undermining of a morally legitimate institutional process, role, or condition” (Miller et.al 2005,

p.5). By implication, the condition of persons could be made worse or more complicated by their personal moral disposition and/or corrupt actions domiciled within institutions to which they belong. Thus, Feminised corruption may be described as an 'occupational hazard' (Stilwell & Utych 2022) which accompany women and distorts public perceptions about them as they gain prominence in leadership. It connects closely with the backlash effect theory which entrench social repercussion against women whose acts are incongrous with female stereotypes (Faludi 1991; Rudman 1998; Jordan 2016).

Backlash is imminent when a disadvantaged group threatens existing power structures by attempting to enact change in a social order. In this case, women's entrance into the political sphere may trigger storms and their quest to approach governance differently often predisposes them to attacks. As it attempts a closer look at contexts and institutions in explaining dwindling women's political representation, "feminised corruption is not about whether women are more corrupt than men or whether more women have been found guilty or not. Rather, it is about how more women are found or drawn into corruption discourses to the detriment of the sustainable development goals of 'gender equality', 'reduced inequalities', and 'partnership for the goals'" (Omotoso, 2023,11). Subsequently, feminised corruption may be explained as a byproduct of backlash. The discourse of feminised corruption may be anchored on suspected intentional strategy for fostering masculinised political spaces through exclusion mechanism. The exclusion mechanism recognizes women as equal and competent players but proceeds to deny them access into inner caucus. Inferentially, corruption connects with exclusion, as Warren (2004, 333) asserts that "corruption involves hypocrisy. For an elite (or group or individual) to be corrupt in the democratic sense, it must both profess and violate the democratic norm of inclusion. Thus, corrupt exclusion is distinguished by duplicity, a characteristic that implies not just the possibility of condemnation, but also the possibility of immanent critique". Since exclusion is a constituent of corruption, women's exclusion from inner circles of politics as Bauhr, Charron & Wangnerud (2018) suggest, may be a reason why women

repel corruption and seek public benefit while in office. Although the exclusion argument supports women's probity, Bjarnegård's work on corruption in Thailand (2013, 2018) unveils the possibility of political environments to emit toxic responses to women who mobilize against corruption and may raise influential foes to endanger their careers. Here lies the logic of feminised corruption which when deployed, can cut down the tree before maturity.

Two major issues feature in the discourse of feminised corruption:

(i) the politics of retention and, (ii) the politics of succession.

Retention in this context has to do with continued possession, use, and control of political space and power. The politics of retention is built around the intrigues and dynamics of women occupying public offices and sustaining relevance for a significant period in the space. A major harm that feminised corruption does to women's political representation is that it reinforces leaky pipelines; it allows women to shatter a glass ceiling but then proceeds to place them on a glass cliff. Feminised corruption is a mechanism that sets women up for failure. It ensures women do not enjoy a sustained tenure in office and thins them out of politics.

"Succession is broadly understood to mean the process of changing leadership. It basically involves three stages: the vacating of power by the older ruler; the selection of the new and the legitimisation of the new leader" (Banjo 2008, 33). When feminised corruption is deployed, the politics of succession ensures that women are not sufficiently mentored to take over from one another. Feminised corruption pits women against women since no one wants to identify with a woman who has been indicted for corruption; moreover, the public would not trust any woman mentored by such a woman. Both features of feminised corruption may be further explained with Esarey and Schwindt's (2018, 659) argument that "gender differences in corrupt behavior are proportional to the strength of electoral accountability." This is drawn from observations that women are more risk-averse than men, and consequently, often withdraw from public space when tainted by corruption charges. At this

point, it must be noted that the concept of feminised corruption differs completely from the concept of 'corruption victimisation', which has to do with "measuring corruption experience in order to be able to show who its victims are" (Seligson 2006, 402). Corruption victimisation could connect with feminised corruption if/and when a woman becomes an image of corruption as a form of political persecution. In this instance, feminised corruption operates as a double-edged sword that feigns women inclusion on one hand, and on the other hand uses corruption charges to disenfranchise women. It selectively captures female politicians as victims of the corrupt political structures, and by this means alienates them from public office. As promising women in politics gets thrown off balance with corruption charges around their necks, the result is a two-way cycle; first, being loss of credibility to contest for election or hold future public office; and second; loss of followship by younger women who could have been mentored into politics by them.

### Feminised Corruption in Nigeria

As Nigeria face challenges of violence, electoral fraud, unfulfilled promises, and negligence on the part of the ruling class, the growing scourge of corruption has fostered democratic instability, economic underdevelopment, and public distrust. Consequently, successive administrations across the civil-military political cycle have sought to address the menace of corruption by launching different anti-corruption measures and programs such as the 1983 War Against Indiscipline (WAI), and the establishment of anti-corruption agencies in 1999. Yet the menace seems not significantly controlled, as many of the anti-corruption measures have addressed the consequences of the problem but without sustainable control methods. Oftentimes, corruption indictment for politicians or public officials is accompanied by uproar across the government, political party spheres, family arena, and social and religious spaces to which the person charged with corruption belongs. These are usually amplified by media agencies both

locally and internationally (Omotoso 2023). Just as women and men react differently to corruption charges, public reactions to the charged person also often depend on whether they are male or female. This has been affirmed in the words of the former President of Malawi, Joyce Banda (2018), who asserted that women are treated differently when it comes to corruption. Likewise, Esarey and Schwindt's (2018, 659) study reveals that "voters hold women to a higher standard...." and that "women's representation–corruption link is strongest when the risk of corruption being detected and punished by voters is high.

The concept of 'feminised corruption' acknowledges Nigeria's thriving population of successful women who are qualified to take leadership in the political arena. Nevertheless, there is a growing structure within political systems, which do not disqualify women by physical, educational, or party criteria, but is often used to wittingly discredit the few women who venture into political spaces by election or appointment. Feminised corruption defies the essentialist parity lobby which presents women as the 'fairer sex' in politics. Rather it treats each corruption case in context-specific manners, Omotoso & Faniyi (2024) draw an instance from feminist activism in Nigeria's recent EndSARS protest to reveal how feminised corruption essentializes women by luring the masses to draw from one case to predict or define more women as unworthy occupiers of leadership roles and/or public offices.

### Feminised Corruption: Examples from Nigeria

Some women who have been caught in the web of corruption since 1999 in Nigeria include Patricia Etteh, the first female speaker of the National House of Representatives, who was accused of unauthorised spending of 628 million naira; Stella Oduah, former Minister of Aviation, indicted for alleged fraud of about five billion naira; Winifred Oyo- Ita, former Head of Service of the Federation who was accused of 570 million naira fraud charges; Diezani Alison-Madueke, former Minister of Petroleum Resources who was accused of money laundering; Kemi Adeosun, former Minister of Finance who was accused of certificate forgery; Iyabo Obasanjo-Bello (former Senator and daughter of former

President Obasanjo) accused of embezzling 1.5 million USD. Others are Adenike Grange, former Minister of Health indicted for allegedly stealing public funds; former First Lady, Patience Jonathan, for laundering 67.5 thousand USD and 13.5 million USD during her husband's tenure as governor of Bayelsa State. Former female chairperson of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Farida Waziri, who was accused of corruption, having close relationships with corrupt political figures, and of going slow on sensitive cases against powerful political figures. Since many of the cases are protracted and prolonged, the women are shamed publicly while awaiting the cases to be brought to a legal conclusion.

## Methodology

I identify as an academic activist, one who has chosen to remain within the academia while documenting women's political experiences and advocating for behavioral and institutional change. This qualitative study has purposively selected five women<sup>1</sup>; Patricia Etteh<sup>2</sup>, Adenike Grange<sup>3</sup>, Stella Oduah<sup>4</sup>, Kemi Adeosun<sup>5</sup>, and Winifred Oyo-Ita<sup>6</sup>. The criterion for their selection is based first on the fact that they served from 1999 when Nigeria returned to civil rule. Second, their corruption indictment attracted wider press coverage, provoked massive controversies and public outrage. Their personal data was collected as at the period when they served in office (i) to capture specific factors that subjected them to feminised corruption, (ii) to present the legal status of their cases and, (iii) to identify succession and retention factors following their indictment. Reckoning with the difficulties of researching real-life issues on corruption, approaching respondents for personal interview proved abortive as they were reluctant to grant interviews to discuss their experiences in office. Perhaps this also affirms women's culture of silence even as public figures. I subsequently could not have any personal contact or interaction with the selected women in this study, rather, I drew data from the archives including news reports, previous personality interviews, and opinion pieces. These were subjected to critical content analysis to identify trends of

feminised corruption and the political communication strategies of the women. The approach used for the study provided an avenue for close reading and analysis, more so that the women purposively selected are public figures and the materials used were drawn from public domains. Furthermore, while I acknowledge the possibility that some of these women being studied may be found guilty of corruption charges, I have not probed into their innocence or otherwise. Rather, what this study has captured is the trend of using corruption to deter parity in politics while also teasing policom approaches which might have contributed to the women's leadership experiences.

	Ethnic Group	Educational Background	Party	Status of Allegations
Patricia Etteh	Yoruba/ South west	Dip. in Law UniAbuja  B.Sc in view	People's Democratic Party (PDP), and later, All Progressive Congress (APC)	Became the first female speaker of the House of Representatives in June 2007. She succumbed to the pressure to resign after the corruption scandal on October 30, 2007 (VOA News October 30, 2007). By 2011 at the valedictory seating of the 6th House of Representatives, Patricia Olunmi Etteh was exonerated from the indictment (allafrica.com June 3, 2011). She was succeeded by Hon. Dimeji Bankole (Male).

Adenike Grange	Yoruba/ Southwest	B. Sc, PhD	Appointed under PDP	Appointed as the first female Minister of Health on July 25, 2007, she resigned following the corruption allegation (Reuters. March 25, 2008) but was later cleared of the criminal charges by the verdict of the court of appeal. She was succeeded by Babatunde Osotimehin (Male) and never returned to the political sphere.
Stella Oduah	Igbo/ Southeast	M.Sc, MBA	Appointed under PDP	Became Minister of Aviation in 2011. She was removed in 2014, following the corruption indictment. She was later elected senator for two terms during which she crossed from the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) to All Progressive Congress (APC), then back to PDP within an eight months interval. All the corruption cases against her have suffered protracted delays due to postponements and adjournments (Premium Times. October 17, 2023). She was succeeded by Osita Chidoka (Male).

Kemi Adeosun	Yoruba/ Southwest	M.Sc	Appointed under APC	Appointed on November 11, 2015, she resigned as Nigeria's Minister of Finance in 2018 following allegations of certificate forgery and exited the country only to return in 2021 (The Cable July 13, 2021). While the court exonerated her, the matter remains in the court of public opinion as she strives to restore her reputation. She was succeeded by Zainab Ahmed (Female).
Winifred Oyo Ita	E f i k / S o u t h - South	M.Sc	Appointed under APC	Appointed on October 21, 2015, she was sent on five months of compulsory leave, then pressured to submit a letter of retirement on August 20, 2019, which was approved, and had her removed on February 27, 2020 (Vanguard Newspaper February 29, 2020). Her trial has been severally postponed since then. She was succeeded by Folashade Yemi (Female).

Table 2 Short biodata, relevant details, and status of allegation of the purposively selected women. Source: Author's fieldwork. Note: All information sourced record their biodata as at the time of appointment/ election

## *Findings*

All the purposively selected women worked with the prominent political parties of their time. Regardless of the diverse personalities of these women in terms of age, class, ethnicity, religious leanings, educational background, and party ideologies, they have appeared within feminised corruption discourses, basically because they are women. This affirms sexism as an attribute of feminised corruption. Although this study also does not rule out colorations of ethnic bias, religious leaning, and party loyalty, it establishes that feminised corruption singles out how being a woman at the upper echelons of politics can be both problematic and victimizing. Allegations against the purposively selected women have been widely publicised, but most have not been drawn to a legal conclusion. The pressure to resign as found with Etteh, Grange, Adeosun and Oyo-Ita provides insights into how women are often abruptly removed from office without due process. It connects with the political undertone of women's persecution (Amede and Tooney 2010). Basic features that affirm the prevalence of feminised corruption include:

1. Sexualising politics for women by probing their marital status and often accusing them of infidelity.
2. Spotlighting women as lacking team spirit and the loyalty required for politics
3. Accusing women of fraud, illegalities and anti-party activities without full proof
4. Silencing women with bad press
5. Recruiting social media bullying through demeaning memes, disinformation, deep fakes among others.
6. Stalling legal processes that can prove women's innocence or otherwise
7. Destroying the pipeline that allows women to mentor one another for sustainable representation and substantive political participation.

Findings reveal that despite their varying periods of presence in office, each of the purposively selected women were subjected to the above-listed processes of feminised corruption. Table 2 captures how press reportage and social media comments maligned all the women even when their cases were yet to be concluded. It also records how family members were used to pressure women to resign from their positions. While some of the women were exonerated from the indictments (Etteh, Adeosun and Grange), not much was done to launder their battered images after they were cleared of the allegations. In the cases of Oduah and Oyo-Ita their trials have suffered protracted delays consequently inconclusive to judge them innocent or guilty. Aside the earlier noted, other characteristic features of feminised corruption found with the women in this study include:

*Absenteeism from public space:* Absenteeism/disappearance from the public is symptomatic of feminised corruption. This signals the termination of any political career since public appearances are an indispensable part of politics. When a prominently visible woman suddenly goes behind the scenes, it could be an indication that she has been silenced and forced to lay low. At their different tenures, the five purposively selected women in this study have had to retreat from public space. Particularly, Grange and Adeosun acknowledged this experience as the press report their sojourn into political oblivion and/ or reappearances after a period of disappearance from public space. For instance, fourteen year later, Idachaba, reports in Blueprint online newspaper (September 23 2022) about Grange:

“Shortly after she left the cabinet, Prof Grange was reported to have entered into private medical practice in Ibadan in conjunction with some non-governmental organisations; however, not much has been heard about her since then.”

Similarly, on Adeosun, This Day Live (June 20 2021) with the headline “The Return of Kemi Adeosun” reports:

“After her early retirement from public life in September of 2018, former finance minister Kemi Adeosun kept a low profile and reportedly

relocated overseas. However, the brilliant chartered accountant made a spectacular return to the limelight with the launching of her foundation.”

*Intra-Feminist Bickering:* Women within the systems will begin to avoid the one alleged for corruption. Likewise, there could be suspicions that a fellow woman has given them up in order to eliminate them and/ or monopolize the space (Huddy, Cassese and Lizotte 2008). Oduah’s case somewhat reflects this, as presented by Daily Times (November 20 2017) with the headline: “How Diezani forced Jonathan to Sack me” the article quotes Oduah as follows:

“I knew all along that Diezani could not deal with having another female around who had the kind of access I had to the president. But she went too far.... She thought I was the one who leaked the issue of private jet that put her into trouble with the House of Representatives (Diezani was accused of spending N10 billion on chartered jets). For her it was payback time.”

This informs Amede and Tooney’s (2010, 222) assertion that “where gender participation is not being consciously implemented as a collective agenda, individual women succeed alone and also risk losing as individuals.”

*Struggles for media defense:* Media play significant roles in the framing and conveyance of news surrounding corruption charges. Oftentimes, sensationalised headlines contribute to the damage done by the political class in feminizing corruption. Amidst these, the indicted woman is forced to seek media allies who can project her side of the story to save her from public shame. At different occasions, each of these women explored the media to save them from the public disgrace, unfortunately an uncultivated media relationship cannot yield desired change. To this end, this study proceeds to examine the policom tactics of the selected women.

## Of Feminised Corruption and Strategic Political Communication

Communication has remained the bedrock of politics. Many politicians in history have used oration, writing skills, language mastery and strong media influence to sway the masses and turn political wheels and wills in their favor. Strategic political communication therefore consists of “political agenda setting and agenda building, the uses and effects of political advertising, the relationship between journalists and politicians, the framing of political news by reporters, gatekeeping processes, and more recently, the uses and influence of the new social media in election coverage and public opinion management” (Okigbo & Onoja, 2020, 67). The advent of social media into political communication platforms and political analytics has broadened the already complex political terrain. Citizen journalism has made it possible for news to break from so-called ‘informal’ platforms as against earlier reliance on conventional media. The possibility for instant comments from the public and the option of sharing and forwarding of messages on the social media platforms have posed unprecedented threat to women in leadership. Consequently, studies have embarked on analysis, comparisons, and outcomes of political communication (policom) tactics used by men and women (Omotoso & Akanni 2024; Osei-Appiah et.al 2023; Funk 2015; Krook and Norris 2014; Bauer and Okpotor 2013). In the specific case of scandals, Cucchi et al (2021) affirm that when women adopt the stereotypical gender image of ‘submissiveness’ instead of the masculine ‘assertiveness’ in their policom, they increase their chances of being heavily penalised than men. Not many women politicians pay attention to post-election/post-appointment media management. As women become visible in political spaces, so also is made visible their lack of strategic political communication for stakeholder engagement, reputation management, and crisis control. On this note, I connect women’s political communication lacunae with the rising scourge of feminised corruption. This approach deploys policom as a tool that captures the (un)spoken; and silences that accompany the noises while

politicizing of the personal. The women studied in this article present pieces of evidence in this regard and as discussed below.

Patricia Etteh in an interview with Channels Television, July 30, 2018 (11 years later) was quoted with the headline “I joined politics to prove a point.” Not much was said on her corruption indictment of 2007, rather, she harped on her political resilience and the fact that she is still in politics. She has since been brought up in the news in connection with new corruption cases to which she has neither organised a public meeting to address nor set up a media team to launder her image.

At a public event in 2013 (6 years later) PMNEWS (January 23, 2013) captured Adenike Grange, with the headline “Politics swept me off as Minister.” Such communications signify a sense of unpreparedness for the political space, despite her unmatched feats in academia and other public spheres<sup>7</sup>. She provided further explanations at another interview:

*They saw me as an alien. Ideally, in developed world, I would have fitted in very well because I had the skills, knowledge, and willpower. But coming here, it looked as though their expectation was more of playing the politics than actually doing the work. Now I see that it is going to be very difficult for people with pure motives to survive.... What they said happened was not what happened but people took advantage of the fact that some people have access to getting lies out and making them look real. Well, I have learnt my lesson (Vanguard, March 10 2012).*

These assertions defended her but are rather reactive and damage control-focused. Such a situation should have been envisaged, and measures taken before accepting the appointment.

After her removal from the office as Minister for Aviation, Stella Oduah’s victory in the polls for a Senatorial seat makes her one of the women not thinned out of politics through feminised corruption. Although she has not displayed a significant strategic media presence, her current

standing is one to be examined. Two major news reports center her for this scrutiny. First, the (Daily Times November 20, 2017) reports on her with the headline: “How Diezani Forced Jonathan to Sack Me – Stella Oduah.” This report resonates with the challenge of space-making in politics which may permits some intra-feminist bickering as the structure pitches women against women. Perhaps she should be considered as the surviving fittest. Second, (Punch Newspaper August 26, 2021) reports on her with the headline “Stella Oduah dumps PDP, joins APC.” There she expressed that her crossing to the the APC family is “part of the process of the changing political narrative in the South-East”. As the quest for inclusion is charting a path for increased women’s political representation, one may suspect the manifestation of what Okonkwo (2016, 117) describes as the emergence of a tyrannical political space fraught with “patriarchal decision-making and control, masculine interest-begotten group dynamics and, patriarchal manipulative usurpation of participatory methods.” He argues that these “processes of political subject formation and political participation explain why corruption thrives in Nigeria.” Moreover, studies had called attention to instances of protectionism, where partisan identity with the national incumbent may shield persons indicted for corruption (Enweremadu 2006; Chang and Kerr 2017; Solaz 2019). Could it be that Oduah is conformist in this regard and therefore enjoying the protection of political godfathers? Why is this not the case for the other women? Is silence a viable political communication tactic (Omotoso 2015)8? And for how long can silence as a political communication tactic sustain a woman’s political career?

Like many of her female counterparts, Kemi Adeosun came to the limelight through media profiling after she was appointed Minister for Finance. Aside from this, there was no known strategic communication structure to support her political office. A paragraph in her resignation letter reads thus:

*I have, today, become privy to the findings of the investigation into the allegation made in an online*

*medium that the Certificate of Exemption from National Youth Service Corp (NYSC) that I had presented was not genuine...this has come as a shock to me and I believe that in line with this administration's focus on integrity, I must do the honourable thing and resign (Reuters September 17, 2018).*

It was 7 years after this incidence that the Punch Newspaper (March 27, 2022) quoted her in the headline: "I cried every day for three months, had therapy to survive NYSC Certificate Saga." On one hand, such post-scandal policom reconnects with the argument of Cucchi et al (2021) about the dangers of women adopting the stereotypical gender image of 'submissiveness' as it could predispose them to more victimization. On the other hand, such post-scandal policom could also connect with the argument of Stilwell and Utych (2022) that when women provide justifications for their scandal, they stand a higher chance than men to be favorably evaluated. Either way, the onus is on women in leadership to decide how they want to be viewed and described in public space.

Again, like most female political appointees, Winifred Oyo-Ita did not venture into any form of damage control after her indictment. There were insinuations that her feud with a top government official caused the crises, and some of her fans have dismissed her travails as a setup, describing it as a way of fishing for dirt forcing her to succumb to pressure from family members to resign (Sun Online August 25, 2019).

In the words of Okigbo & Onoja (2020, 65) "the African political scene is not the only arena where the true meaning of strategic communication is opaque and arguable."

It is worrisome that none of these women had recognizable and formidable political communication strategies before, during, and after their indictments. The trend of roping women into corrupt cases when they transgress official party policy or rebel against the 'powers that be' has become a regulatory device to keep women at bay or throw them out

with no hope of returning. This is in line with Mechkova et.al’s (2022,16) assertion that “women can be used to legitimize the rule of corrupt elites”. In support of this, pieces of evidence exist of pre-electoral/pre-appointment covenants including oath-taking (Ribadu 2009) which augments the culture of silence that trails women when indicted for corruption. Perhaps an earlier instituted policom strategy would have allowed citizens to trace back a woman’s political trajectories-as this might help in (dis)connecting the act from the person. This is more productive than some haphazard reactive political communication that often accompanies women politicians in crisis. Table 3 below presents a quick guide for women’s strategic political communication.

What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Blueprint</li> <li>- Leadership ideologies</li> <li>- Unique Selling point</li> <li>- Weaknesses that opposition can throw up</li> <li>- Verbal and non-verbal cues to maintain.</li> <li>- Working documents, terms and conditions.</li> </ul>
When?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As soon as the yearning for change begins.</li> <li>- As soon as party activities commence.</li> <li>- In periods of success and failure.</li> </ul>
How?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruit team members</li> <li>- Identify allies (both men and women)</li> <li>- Have financial plans.</li> <li>- Decide how often to engage with stakeholders.</li> <li>- Evaluate critiques for improvement</li> </ul>

Who?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experienced and goal-oriented persons</li> <li>- Local and global stakeholders</li> </ul>
Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep this space open for regular self-assessment and how well the pursuit of predefined objectives is going.</li> </ul>

Table 3. Quick guide for women’s strategic political communication.

Source: Author’s compilation

## Reflections and Conclusion

Several political processes reinforce corruption. The federal character system equally encourages communities to defend their representatives who are charged with corruption, insisting on a replacement from the same community without regard for competence and integrity (Enweremadu 2013). Still, the agitation for political parity remains valid for any meaningful political engagement. As this article condemns corruption in all its shades, it also explores how corruption has been weaponised against the few women who venture into politics in Nigeria. The article notes that endemic patriarchy in politics allows men to remain political gatekeepers, determining who is in or out. Even in a state of poor or non-preparedness, the system encourages women to venture into politics but has retained a subtle way of easing them out when they fail to ‘play by the rules’. By purposively selecting five female political office holders in Nigeria, the article has affirmed the manifestation of feminised corruption and the attendant challenges. I have argued here that feminised corruption is characterised by disinformation, media trial, politicising the personal, sexism, absenteeism from public space and shaming women to silence. Feminised corruption affords men a soft landing and women a crash landing in political office. It reiterates an urgent redoubling of “efforts not just to target gender openings and inclusions, but also to provide meaningful support to the women weathering the turbulent storms of gynophobia” (Amede & Tooney 2020, 222).

Revealing how four of the five women were thinned out of political space while one has remained raises questions for future studies on feminised corruption. Are there hidden hands and faces behind feminised corruption? Does feminised corruption trail women in other workspaces? What happens when women stand against feminised corruption and what is the future of the essentialist parity lobby if/ when corrupt women continue to occupy political offices? As much as these reflections are valid, political participation (casual visibility) will keep trumping substantive representation, which is why women must not handle politics with kid gloves. There must be a blueprint for any woman venturing into politics. She must develop her ideology even if her political party maintains no commitment to party ideologies. She must fully understand the terrain within which she intends to operate, and when 'she' is taken as the 'crook', by her political communication, we shall know her. Reckless, negligent, and haphazard political communication strategies and structure contribute to feminised corruption and must be duly addressed in Nigeria and wherever it manifests. More strategic political communication tactics, structures, and processes are needed for women and by women. The quest for gender egalitarianism in politics in Nigeria, and by extension, across West Africa must be one where women do not just count the glamor, but also the cost.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> For want of space, I have provided links to basic historical information and the issues that led to their corruption charges.
- <sup>2</sup> Nigeria speaker goes in graft row  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7069654.stm>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://articles.nigeriahealthwatch.com/prof-grange-villain-or-victim>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/443108-revealed-how-nigerian-senator-stella-oduah-chinese-firm-ccecc-others-laundered-n5billion-in-five-months-efcc.html?tztc=1>
- <sup>5</sup> Reuters. September 17, 2018. Nigerian Finance Minister Adeosun resigns over forgery claims. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-politics/nigerian-finance-minister-adeosun-resigns-over-forgery-claims-idUSKCN1LU2Q8/?edition-redirect=ca>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://www.tvcnews.tv/2019/08/efcc-quizzes-head-of-service-winfred-oyo-ita-over-alleged-n3bn-fraud/>

- <sup>7</sup> See <https://articles.nigeriahealthwatch.com/professor-grange-history-and-the-federal-ministry-of-health/> where what could be called a 'rescue piece' attests to Adenike Grange's work ethic and integrity.
- <sup>8</sup> Silence exemplified by avoidance (no communication or information), in which case, no information is made available has also been described as a political communication tactic. See Omotoso, 2015

## Discussions and Interventions

Due acknowledgement was given to Omotoso's conceptualization of 'Feminised Corruption' as an important phenomenon that many within Nigeria would have noticed but could not substantiate. While discussing the selective visibility and attention to women alleged to have carried out or been involved in corrupt practices in leadership and politics, three areas were identified in Omotoso's feminised corruption: the manner of conceptualisation, the question of causality and the mode of use of particular words. The manner of use of terms and language highlights problematic conceptualisation.

It details the relationship between the terms 'feminised' and 'corruption' as had been acknowledged in the presentation and critiqued in other spaces. The use of the term 'feminised' before 'corruption' seems to reflect it in contrast with the term 'masculinised space'. This referenced a space that had become either overrepresented by men, or descriptive of the practice of politics associated with strength, power, stereotypical, and masculine. Corruption here seems implicative of a specificity about the kind of corruption, the substance, style, or of the fact that it was carried out by women making it feminised. In the sense presented, some discussants considered this as problematic because it was suggestive of either women being more corrupt or women were involved in corruption activities in manner that made them the subject of the scandals. However, other discussants observe that this was not Omotoso's argument, as the paper presented was indicative of a different idea.

Presenting feminised corruption as acts carried out by different actors and institutions need further clarifications as much as presenting the various responses by the women purposively selected for the study. Examining the language in the conceptualisation, discussants argued that the narrative of intra-feminist bickering - descriptive of attempts by women to undermine one another in politics was not feminist and questioned the use of the word bickering stating that when men were involved in similar or worse situations it was not referred to as such.

There were doubts about the deliberate or master minded approach to the effect of attempts to hound women out of politics; as a generalised sense that provided support of different attempts by political institutions, the media sufficed. Similarly, the pipeline for women involvement in politics was not faced by intents to destroy but was already destroyed by mindsets that women should not be involved in politics. Societal belief that women should be less corrupt is contributory to the manner corruption disproportionately impacted on women, this exemplified Omotoso's conceptualisation of feminised corruption as the framework was cognizant of gender bias. Consequently, they argued that the destruction of the pipeline of women in politics is not necessarily intentional but could be inadvertent.

Against the backdrop of recent events in Nigeria, discussants agreed with Omotoso's postulation that corruption allegations against women were overblown in comparison to those of men. The context of deliberate attempts to truncate political career of women was explored by discussants who indicated that Nigerian women had occupied national and global positions of authority with acclamation and a woman in position of authority could foster a hundred more. Irrespective of feminised corruption, a corrupt individual could be female or male. Education, integrity, transparency and accountability are vital for occupants of offices as it paves the way for others.

While details of outcome of some of the corruption allegations were yet to be known, and the accused women had not been interviewed directly, panelist believed some of the allegations were unfounded, and

others would be confirmed. Inquiring what could be done to provide support, discussants commented that it was important to explore means to assist women vying and occupying positions of authority from falling into laid traps and a network of people to defend them from allegations was needed. Also highlighted was the importance of effective political communications as crucial strategy for the success of female politicians and the need to craft compelling and concise messages that address the needs and moral value of their constituency.

Key issues and formulation of articulate vision of change identified by discussants as needed for the woman engaged in politics include: impeccable lifestyle, leverage on social media platforms for strong online presence, understanding of politics as a game and acquisition of the skills needed to change the trend of defeat by men, accountability, transparency, integrity and development of a distinct voice.

Discussants also commented on the need to address gender disinformation and online abuse faced by women politicians seeing that allegations levelled against men did not hinder their recommendations to future positions. Equally important is the need for civil society organizations to train women who aspire for political office to engage and prioritize active listening to understand the concerns of their constituents and earn their trust as this would mitigate allegations. Other suggestions to include in combating the scourge of feminised corruption are storytelling so that their experiences in office can be shared, a supportive network of mentors, advisers and peers' support.

Globally, corruption cases involving prominent personalities generate speculations of judicial officers being manipulated and the outcome of corruption trials might not be reflective of the real events. Consequently, accusation of corruption against women political office holders may not imply that corruption is feminised. Likewise, it is not about the manner women got embroiled in corruption cases, but the increase in the number of women embroiled in corruption cases justified concern for the detriment to achieving sustainable development goals of gender equality.

It was observed that sexual corruption which entailed using sex and the human body as currency of corruption as this aspect was not captured in the presentation and would add savor and nuance to the feminised corruption framework. The inclusion of a collection of gender disaggregated data would likewise provide a better understanding of the experiences of men and women in relation to political corruption.

Describing how the Nigerian environment, structure and individuals provided assistance for corrupt practices, discussants argued that corruption was more than a financial issue. They suggested a rescue center for women in leadership at WORDOC, that could be approached for advice. Concluding, panelists recalled the attention, support in terms of rules of procedures, legal luminaries and volunteers named prominent male political officers received when investigated and prosecuted on corruption charges stating that the denial of involvement in corruption activities did not imply innocence.

Above all, Omotoso's feminised corruption was applauded as one, amongst several scholarly works by feminist in defense of feminism and attempts to help women stay afloat in politics which could rescue the dwindling political representation of women in Nigeria.

#### Response by Omotoso

The aim of the WORDOC series was to make room for discussing emerging issues and developing theories for prospective scholars to think and work with. There was need for the populace and not just the academic to see some of the things being done within the system and how it enhanced the system. The several questions from participants at the presentation answered to the aims and objectives of the seminar.

The concept of feminisation or feminised could be considered in a negative or positive sense as has been captured in the literature; it has shown up in multiple senses and has been regarded as such in the framework. The concept is a discourse, a structure and an act. It is an emerging theory with different angles for discourse and research.

The diversity of sectors for its application include education, security, health, criminology and implied the disposition for several meanings and interests from individuals.

Similarly, the concept of intra-feminist bickering as an issue of reality which requires reexamination.

Feminised corruption is a question, a theorisation querying the possibilities that women are being deliberately positioned within a system about to collapse to take the blame for the collapse. This is why feminist solidarity ought to come in response to questions and requests on ways women could be assisted to scale traps of corruption scandals. Several works have been done on gender and gendering, corruption and gender which have helped to maintain the concept 'feminised corruption' and these should be considered from different angles as is expected of scholarship.

Request for women rescue center /mission has not been considered by WORDOC and the process for attainment could not be ascertained as WORDOC was established for research and documentation. Considerations for such a center would require the input of female politicians in addition to mass mobilisation. Women indeed require such a platform to tell their stories.

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## Short Bio of Discussants

### Charmaine Pereira

Charmaine Pereira is an independent feminist scholar living and working in Abuja, Nigeria. Her research and writing address the gender and sexual politics of violence, feminist thought and practice, and the politics of natural resource extraction in Africa. She has organised and coordinated action research on the theme of sexual harassment and sexual violence in Nigerian universities, with the goal of developing strategies for change.

Pereira is the author of “Gender in the Making of the Nigerian University System” (James Currey/Partnership for Higher Education in Africa, 2007); editor of “Changing Narratives of Sexuality: Contestations, Compliance and Women’s Empowerment” (Zed, 2014); and co-editor of “Jacketed Women: Qualitative Research Methodologies on Sexualities and Gender in Africa” (UCT Press and United Nations University Press, 2013).

She has been an active force in the coalition pushing for the passage of the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2015, in Nigeria, and has coordinated research on the implementation of the law. She is one of the seven editors of *Feminist Africa*.

### Chinasa Abonyi

Chinasa Abonyi is a lecturer in English and Literary Studies at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. She is also a scholar-poet, and her research focuses on gender and the environment, conflict, and sustainability studies in African literature and poetics.

Dr. Abonyi is a fellow of the University of Michigan African Presidential Scholars Program (UMAPS), a fellow of the Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA) at the University of Ghana, and a fellow of the Ife Institute of Advanced Studies (IIAS). She is a member

of the African Literature Association and the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE).

Her passion for gender and environmental sustainability, decoloniality of knowledge, and indigenous consciousness is reflected in her poems and critical writings.

### Cynthia Olufade

Cynthia Olufade completed an MA in African Studies (Diaspora and Transnational Studies) at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan (Nigeria) in March 2018. She is currently a Doctoral Student at the University of Alberta.

### Damilola Agbalajobi

Damilola Taiye Agbalajobi is an Associate Professor at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ife-Ife, Nigeria. As a political scientist and gender specialist, she has research experience dating back to 2006 at Redeemer's University, Nigeria. Her scholarly contributions span a wide range of topics, including women in politics, women and peacebuilding, gender and power, gender and corruption, gender and governance in Africa, gender and climate change, gender-based violence, and sustainable development, as well as violence and women in elections.

With numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes, Dr. Agbalajobi has established herself as a leading expert in her field. Since 2008, she has won multiple travel grants to present at international conferences on various aspects of politics and developmental studies, including the NRF TETFUND grant. As Principal Investigator, she leads a project titled "The Political Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria." Dr. Agbalajobi holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Lagos.

## David Olom Nkpe

Dr. David Olom Nkpe is an award-winning, prolific frontline financial crime investigator with over 17 years of hands-on experience at the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Nigeria, where he serves as an Assistant Commander. As a patriotic officer with unwavering determination to take profit out of crime, he has participated in most high-profile investigations, including the 2008-2009 rescued banks, where his team secured the only convictions after rigorous prosecution. Dr. Nkpe holds a First-Class (Honours) Bachelor's Degree, a Master of Arts, and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Sociology from the University of Jos, City University of London, and the University of Ibadan, respectively. His pioneering PhD thesis, "Social Construction of Corruption in Nigeria," offers far-reaching recommendations on how to effectively deconstruct Nigeria's "cake-sharing mentality," refocus on wealth creation, and resolve corruption driven by need and greed.

Dr. Nkpe has an action-oriented approach to work, along with a track record of outstanding extracurricular and leadership achievements. He is open-minded, resilient, visionary, innovative, resourceful, self-motivated, and emotionally stable. In December 2021, Nkpe co-authored the widely sought-after book "Corruption and Development in Nigeria," published by the reputable multinational publisher Routledge, among other publications.

His research interests span interdisciplinary issues, including sustainable development, migration, crime news, moral panic, corruption, and other wicked problems, urban renewal, race and ethnic relations, urban poverty, social inclusion, and deprivation. Notably, Dr. Nkpe founded the SUG Oxfam Students Society as part of his Development Programme while studying for a Master's degree in London, where he campaigned for and rallied support to end the war in Syria and other conflicts worldwide. A habitual award winner, Dr. Nkpe has received several awards.

Dr. Nkpe is happily married to Nia Udego David-Nkpe and blessed with three excellent boys. He attributes his success to the staying grace of the Almighty God.

## Florence Ebila

Florence Ebila is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Women and Gender Studies at Makerere University, Kampala. She is a scholar of gender and cultural studies. Her specific interest in African women's autobiographies has spanned over a decade, during which she has researched the representation of identity, trauma, nostalgia, selfhood, and nationalism by women in autobiographies and other forms of self-narratives.

Her doctoral studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison focused on African women's political autobiographies, and she continues to publish research in this area.

Some of her recent publications include:

Devon E. A. Curtis, Florence Ebila, and Maria Martin de Almagro. (2022). *Memoirs of Women in Conflict: Ugandan Ex-Combatants and the Production of Knowledge on Security and Peacebuilding*. *Security Dialogue*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09670106211064040>

Florence Ebila. "Loss and Trauma in Ugandan Girls' Ex-Child-Soldier Autobiographical Narratives: The Case of Grace Akallo and China Keitetsi." *Journal of a/b: Auto/Biography Studies*, Vol. 35, Issue 3, 2020: *The Textualities of the Autobiographical*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08989575.2020.1759871>. pp 533-555

Florence Ebila. 'A Proper Woman, in the African Tradition': The Construction of Gender and Nationalism in Wangari Maathai's *Autobiography Unbowed*." *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde* 52, no. 1 (2015). Available at [www.Letterkunde.up.ac.za/argief/52\\_1/10EbilaWEB](http://www.Letterkunde.up.ac.za/argief/52_1/10EbilaWEB)

She has been a Fulbright Scholar, a Cambridge Africa Research for Excellence (CAPREX/ALBARODA) Postdoctoral Fellow, an African Humanities Program (AHP) Postdoctoral Fellow, and a Mellon Foundation Early Career Scholar.

She is a Research Associate at the Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR), where she also teaches in the PhD program. Additionally, she is a member of the Centre of Excellence in Notions of Identities at Makerere University and the Centre of Excellence for Urbanisation and Habitable Cities at the University of Lagos, Nigeria, both under the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA).

Beyond academia, she collaborates with NGOs and CBOs that work to advance women's empowerment and promote gender equity and equality. She is also a member of the Senate and Council of Lira University.

### Naazia Ibrahim

Naazia Ibrahim is a Lecturer in the Faculty Social Sciences under the Department of Politics and Governance at the University for Development Studies. She is currently works with Africa Group Consult, a United Nations affiliate on Gender and women's empowerment. This has enabled her to participate in United Nations conferences by UN Women in New York City. She is the Gender Specialist for CARO-Ghana, a local NGO. She has consulted for Star Ghana Foundation on formulating sustainable markets for rural women. She has a Strong research Interest in Foreign Policy, South-South Relations, and studying the dynamics of international Organisations, Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise Policy in Ghana and beyond.

She helped in the coordination and facilitation of the Women's Entrepreneurship and Livelihoods Initiative (WELI) sought to address some of the post-covid related challenges through a youth-centred and gender-responsive economic empowerment project. The project's outcome was to increase economic empowerment to strengthen the resilience of Adolescent Girls and Young Women most affected by COVID-19 in targeted areas in Ghana and Senegal.

She is a member of the Social Entrepreneurship Network for people of African Descent under the United States State Department.

## Ololade Faniyi

Ololade Faniyi is an African feminist activist-scholar and Ph.D. student in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Emory University. Her research focuses on African feminist digital cultures, political communication, and digital humanities.

Ololade's graduate work examines Nigerian feminist and queer digital activism amid the challenges of state surveillance, reactionary politics, platform governance, and AI-driven superappification.

She serves as an African advisor for FRIDA, the Young Feminist Fund, and works as a staff researcher for the Atlanta Interdisciplinary Artificial Intelligence Network.

## Short Bio of Presenters

### Senayon Olaoluwa

Professor Senayon Olaoluwa is a researcher and lecturer at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria who specializes in Diaspora and Transnational Studies

His research focuses on the intersection of culture, migration, and environmentalism. He is known for his theory of "extalgia", which is a multidisciplinary examination of the opposite of nostalgia. His research explores the experiences of those left behind in their homeland, and he uses literary and cultural texts to do so. His work has been published in many journals, including African Affairs, African Studies Review, Journal of African Cultural Studies, Research in African Literatures, and ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment.

He is the founder of the Ibadan School of Diaspora Studies and the Inaugural Director of the TETFund Centre of Excellence for Diaspora Studies at the University of Ibadan.

He received his PhD in Humanities from the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa.

## Sola Olorunyomi

Sola Olorunyomi, a writer and fine artist, teaches Folklore studies and African literature in the English Department of University of Ibadan, Nigeria. He has published extensively on his research in West Africa, the Caribbean, and Nicaragua where he worked in the literacy and harvest volunteer project while also doubling as a freelance reporter behind Sandinista lines during the Contra offensive of the mid-1980s.

Professor Sola Olorunyomi is a recipient of several awards, scholarships, Fellowships and prizes in respect of undergraduate and postgraduate work. Among them include Honor's, Distinctions and Membership of Learned Societies:

- Fellow, Salzburg Seminar, Austria
- Grant of the Prince Claus Fund, the Netherlands
- Association of Nigerian Authors, Nigeria
- African Literature Association (ALA), Africa/Diaspora
- Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Nigeria

## Sharon Omotoso

Sharon Adetutu Omotoso is a feminist philosopher. Currently, she is a researcher at the Institute for Media Studies, Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany, as an experienced researcher on the Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship. Sharon is an Associate Professor of Gender/Media Studies at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, where she heads the Institute's Women's Research and Documentation Centre (WORDOC).

Her work integrates the transdisciplinary field of Gender Studies into African politics, philosophy, and media. In these areas, she serves on the editorial boards of scholarly journals and consults for international agencies. Her strength lies in developing innovative concepts that contribute to debates in scholarship, activism, and policy engagement. Sharon is also a Research Associate with the Institute for the Future of Knowledge, University of Johannesburg, South Africa.



**Prof. Olaoluwa Senayon**

Diaspora and  
Transnational Studies,  
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**Dr. Naazia Ibrahim**

International and community development expert, Lecturer  
University of Development Studies, We  
Stano

**Cynthia Olufade**

Doctoral Candidate, University of Alberta  
Canada

## WORDOC SEMINAR SERIES

The Ibadan School of African Feminist Studies at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan is committed to creating, and promoting theories, ideas, and concepts emanating from different disciplines across Africa and the Diaspora, as they connect with the expansion of African Feminist Studies.

### **Title: "Extalgia: Unveiling women's strength and capacity in societal development"**

This edition will be featuring Prof. Olaoluwa Senayon, Professor of Diaspora and Transnational Studies at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, as he would be discussing the emerging concept 'Extalgia'.

Olaoluwa explains how creativity can sprout and bring determination in this process stating that Extalgia 'facilitates new ways of knowing by which the experiences of the left behind can assume a cognate center stage in the discourse of diaspora and exile'.

This seminar seeks to tease feminist imports of the nuanced intersection of suffering and creativity and the multifaceted dimensions of homeland versus Diaspora experiences including resilience, agency, and untapped potential often overlooked within the confines of domesticity.

#### **WHO SHOULD ATTEND?**

We invite a wide range of stakeholders and researchers to utilize the concepts and ideas for teaching, research, and implementation frameworks across Africa/Africana Studies, Gender/Women and Sexualities studies, Migration studies, History, Literature, and Literary studies

- Date: February 27, 2024.
- Time: 2:00-3:30 pm
- Venue: The Lady Bank Anthony Hall, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan Nigeria.
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