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From Local to Global: Rethinking Yoruba Religious Traditions for the Next Millennium

Department of Religious Studies, Florida International University

African New World Studies, Florida International University

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
International Conference Co-Sponsored by the
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
and
AFRICAN-NEW WORLD STUDIES

**From Local To Global:
Rethinking
Yoruba Religious Traditions
for the
Next Millennium**



The
GLOBALIZATION
of
YORUBA
RELIGIOUS
CULTURE

December 9 -12th, 1999

A major international conference on Yoruba religious traditions organized by Professor Jacob K. Olupona and Professor Terry Rey, this event is co-sponsored by the Department of Religious Studies and African-New World Studies Program.



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**FROM LOCAL TO GLOBAL: RETHINKING YORUBA RELIGIOUS
TRADITIONS
FOR THE NEXT MILLENNIUM**

**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES
AFRICAN/NEW WORLD STUDIES PROGRAM**

MADE POSSIBLE BY A GRANT FROM THE FORD FOUNDATION

AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM:

***FIU AFRICAN STUDIES FORUM; FIU COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES;
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FIU DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY***

Thursday, December 9, 1999
Wolfe University Center

7:00-10:30 p.m. **Session I: The Opening**

7:00 **Welcome:**

Opening Remarks:

Jacob K. Olupona, Davidson Chair, Florida International University, and University of California, Davis

Arthur W. Herriott, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Florida International University

Nathan Katz, Chair, Department of Religious Studies, and Chair, Davidson Endowment Committee

Announcements/Orientation:

Terry Rey, Florida International University

8:00 **Keynote Address: "The Tolerant Gods"**

Wole Soyinka, Nobel Laureate, Emory University

Introduction by Carole Boyce Davies, Director, African/New World Studies Program, Florida International University

9:00-10:30

Reception

Friday, December 10, 1999
Kovens Conference Center

7:30-9:00 Presenters' Breakfast

9:00-10:45

Session IIA: Historicizing Yoruba Religion

Moderator: Christopher Gray, Florida International University

Sandra T. Barnes, University of Pennsylvania:

“Metacultural Processes and Metaphysical Realities in the Pre-Colonial History of Yoruba-Speaking Peoples”

Cornelius Adepegba, University of Ibadan:

“Associated Places and Objects of Certain Yoruba Deities: Historicity in Yoruba Religious Traditions”

John Mason, Yoruba Theological Archministry:

“Master Carvers Don't Carry Wood: Do Conferences Buy Off Entrepreneurial Scholars of Color?”

L. Djisovi Eason, Bowling Green State University:

“Historicizing Yoruba Culture in Ile-Ife, Nigeria and Oyotunji Village (Sheldon, SC)”

10:45-11:00

Break

11:00-12:45

Session IIB: Historicizing Yoruba Religion

Moderator: Codjo Achode, National University of Benin, Cotonou/Fulbright Scholar, Florida International University

J.D.Y. Peel, University of London:

“Looking Back: Christianity and the Trajectory of Yoruba History over the Last 150 Years”

J.D. Elder, Emeritus, University of the West Indies:

“Globalizing Orisha Tradition in New Millennium”

Kamari Clarke, Yale University:

“Normalizing Practices and Ritualizing Acts: The Mapping of Yoruba Transnational Identities”

Tracey Hucks, Haverford College:

“From Santeria to Yoruba: An Historical Assessment of the African American Orisha Tradition”

12:45-2:00

Break: Presenters' Lunch

2:00-3:45

Session III: Gender in Yoruba and Diasporic Yoruba Traditions

Moderator: Christine Gudorf, Florida International University

J. Lorand Matory, Harvard University:

“Man in ‘The City of Women’ (On Ruth Landes’ Brazil Study)”

Rachel Harding, Ilif School of Theology:

“What Part of the River are You in? African-American Devotion to Oshun”

Rita Segato, Universidade de Brasilia:
"The Contribution of Yoruba Religious Traditions in Brazil to Gender Theory"
Oyeronke Oyewumi, University of California, Santa Barbara:
"From Local Hierarchies to Global Genderings: Interpreting Yoruba Philosophical and Social Practices in the Era of Globality"

3:45-4:00

Break

4:00-5:45

Session IV: Performances and Representations of the Orishas
Moderator: **Jean Muteba Rahier, Florida International University**
Sandra Richards, Northwestern University:
"Yoruba Gods as Performers in African American Drama"
José Flavio Pessoa de Barros, Universidade Estadual de Rio de Janeiro:
"Myth, Memory and History: The Sacred Music of Shango in Brazil"
Diedre Badejo, Kent State University:
"The Pathways of Osun: The Synergy of a Cultural Ideology"
Elizabeth McAlister, Wesleyan University
"Celluloid Spirits: White Fear and Black Gods in Film"

5:45-7:30

Session V: Orisha Hermeneutics in the Americas
Moderator: **University Mei Mei Sanford, State University of New York, Purchase**
Joseph Murphy, Georgetown University:
"Oshun Traditions in the Americas"
Mercedes Sandoval, Miami-Dade Community College:
"Santeria in the 21st Century"
Reginaldo Prandi, Universidade de Sao Paulo:
"Funeral Rites in the Orisha Religion in Brazil: Constitution, Significance, and Recent Tendencies"
Eintou Pearl Springer, Trinidadian National Library
"Orisha Religion: Practice and Relevance for Diasporan Africans into the 21st Century"

7:30-10:00

Edible, Audible, and Visual arts of the Yoruba-Inspired World
Lukumi Buffet
Drum and Dance Performance:
Ilé-Ifé Afro-Cuban Dance and Music Ensemble,
Directed by **Neri Torres**
Poetry Recital:
Miriam Alves
Adrian Castro
Eintou Pearl Springer
Orisha Inspired Visual Arts:
Charo Oquet

Saturday, December 11, 1999
Kovens Conference Center

- 7:30-9:00 Presenters' Breakfast
- 9:00-10:45 Session VI: The Practice of Orisha Tradition in the New World: Insiders' Perspectives
Moderator: **Jacob K. Olupona**, FIU/University of California, Davis
Chief Adenibi S. Ajamu
Oba Ernesto Pichardo
Chief Aluko
Iyalarisha Maria de Oxala
- 10:45-11:00 Break
- 11:00-12:45 Session VII: Yoruba Arts, Religion, and Rituals
Moderator: **Florence Bellande-Robertson**, La Sierra University
Rowland Abiodun, Amherst College:
"Who was First to Speak: Ifa Sculptural Repertoire and Orature"
Marta Vega, Baruch College:
"The Dynamic Influence of Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Afro-Americans in the Growth of the Path of Ocha in New York"
José Jorge Carvalho, Universidade de Brasilia:
"Yoruba Sacred Songs from Brazil: Ritual and Historical Restraints on Aesthetic Expression"
Mikelle Omari-Tunkara, University of Arizona:
"Queen, Mother, Witch: Change and Continuity of Yemoja Art and Ritual in the Yoruba Diaspora"
- 12:45-2:00 Break: Presenters' Lunch
- 2:00-3:45 Session VIII: The Globalization of Yoruba and Yoruba-Based Religious Traditions
Moderator: **Tejumole Olaniyan**, University of Virginia
Wande Abimbola, Colgate University:
"Global Yoruba Religion"
Laennec Hurbon, Université Quisqueya:
"Current Evolution of Haitian Vodou in the Context of Globalization"
Olabiya Yai, UNESCO:
"Yoruba Religions and Globalization: Some Reflections"
George Brandon, City University of New York:
"From Oral to Digital: Rethinking the Transmission of Tradition in Yoruba Religion"
- 3:45-4:00 Break

4:00-5:45

Session IX: Orishas, Hegemony, and Resistance

Moderator: Carole Boyce Davies, Florida International University

Henry John Drewal, University of Wisconsin:

"Arts, Agency and Resistance: Afro-Brazilian Religious Communities in Contemporary Brazil"

Flora Kaplan, New York University:

"Twice Told Tales: Yoruba Religious and Cultural Hegemony in Benin and Nigeria"

Karen McCarthy Brown, Drew University:

"Making and Unmaking *Wanga*: Power Configurations surrounding Diasporic Haitian Vodou"

Abiola Ogunsola, University of East London

"Rethinking Yoruba Culture for the New Millennium: From Resistance to Recovery from Colonialism and Racism"

5:45-7:30

Session X: Yoruba Religious Experience and Transcultural Encounter

Moderator: Terry Rey, Florida International University

Isabel Castellanos, Florida International University

"The Semantic Complexity of Afro-Cuban Orishas: Chango and Ochun"

H.O. Danmole, University of Ilorin:

"Religious Encounter in South Western Nigeria: The Domestication of Islam among the Yoruba"

Juan Sosa, Archdiocese of Miami:

"The Catholic Church and the Yoruba-Santeria Worldview"

Afe Adogame, Universitaet Bayreuth:

"Clearing New Paths into an Old Forest: Aladura Churches in Europe"

7:30-10:00

Buffet and John Pemberton III Tribute

Rowland Abiodun, Amherst College

John Pemberton III, Emeritus, Amherst College

Sunday, December 12, 1999
Kovens Conference Center

7:30-9:00 Presenters' Breakfast

9:00-11:15 Session XI: Yoruba Religion, Language, and Moral Knowing:
Philosophical and Sociological Interpretations
Moderator: Nkiru Nzegwu, SUNY, Binghamton
Akinsola Akiwowo, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife:
"Ipo rere na li Aye: Earth is the Space of the Good I Speak"
Olufemi Taiwo, Loyola University:
"A Prolegomenon to a Philosophy of African Religion"
Barry Hallen, Morehouse College:
"Moral Epistemology: Interrelations of the Epistemic, the Moral, and the
Aesthetic in an African Culture"
Niyi Akinnaso, Temple University:
"Knowledge, Power, and Authority in Yoruba Tradition"
Sope Oyelaran, Winston-Salem State University:
"In What Tongue?"

11:15-11:30 Break

11:30-12:45 Session XI: Reflections and Conclusions
Moderator: Jacob Olupona, Davidson Chair, Florida International
University, and University of California, Davis
Charles H. Long, Emeritus, University of California, Santa Barbara
Michele Foster, Claremont Graduate University

1:00 Departure