



Strategies of Scholarly Depth and Range

Ogo Ofuani on Okot p'Bitek

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Comparative Cognitive Processes and Systems

"Exploring Every Corner of the Cosmos in Search of Knowledge"

A strategy by which scholars achieve depth and range in relation to a subject is that of exploring various aspects of the subject in a sequence of scholarly essays, often published in academic journals.

Two examples strike me in this regard with particular reference to their significance for the Nigerian and other African contexts in which article rather than book publication is the norm in academic culture.

One is that of [Alexis Sanderson](#), Spalding Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at the University of Oxford, whose [lengthy and detailed articles on the Saivite school of Hinduism](#) are a point of reference in scholarship in the field, in an academic culture where book publishing is a norm and in which he seems not to have published any book.

I am struck by the scope of Sanderson's achievement using the essay method alone.

The other is [Ogo Ofuani](#), Professor of Stylistics in the Department of English and Literature at the University of Benin, whose research has focused on the writer [Okot p'Bitek in articles spanning several years](#) [links to some of Ofuani's works] in which he examines various dimensions of the achievement of Okot p'Bitek, particularly in terms of the relationship between language and meaning, in an academic culture in which book publication is not a norm, but in which Ofuani has been able to provide an apprehension of a subject in multifaceted detail through essays alone.

I am struck by Ofuani's dogged focus on a particular writer, thereby providing depth that might not otherwise be possible except in a thorough, full length book.

What is the conceptual and analytical scope of Ofuani's exploration of Okot p'Bitek?

Can this scope be correlated with his other publications, on Nigerian Pidgin English, perhaps thereby distilling a perspective on linguistic creativity in various contexts, perhaps in relation to the tension between cultural authenticity and new means of social existence at times highlighted by Okot p'Bitek's work?

What is the significance of Ofuani's and Sanderson's strategy of focus on articles instead of books in relation to the Nigerian and other African contexts in which academic book publication is still at an embryonic stage?

What are the implications of Ofuani's focus on publication in some of the most prestigious Western journals in his field in relation to his location in Nigeria, and in Africa, in particular?

A foundation for exploring these questions, the significance of which resonates broadly across cultures of learning all over the world, is being laid at the [Ogo Ofuani, Uniben Eng/Lit Dept and the Vision of Inspiring Teaching](#) Facebook group through the building of a complete Ofuani publication bibliography.

Contributions on these questions, which may or may not relate to the particular scholars mentioned here, are invited and most welcome.

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