

## THE LEITMOTIF OF JOURNEY IN SELECT NOVELS OF AMOS TUTUOLA: A STUDY

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### ABSTRACT

In Amos Tutuola's novels, journey is found to be an important constituent element that binds the narrative together as well as a recurrent motif. A uniform structural pattern is found in the novels which involve leaving the homestead to fulfil a pursuit through the wilderness and a return to the hearth. This paper is a study of the element of journey as an organising structural motif in the otherwise digressive narratives of the novels of Tutuola. Four novels are chosen for this purpose, namely *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, *Feather Woman of the Jungle* and *The Brave African Huntress*. To analyse the importance of this leitmotif, the paper takes a cue from Margaret Thompson Drewal's study of the significance of journey vis-à-vis Yoruba life and rituals. It is found that Tutuola's novels are a written manifestation of the spiritual ontological journey that forms a part and parcel of Yoruba societies. The study of the select novels shows that the three-fold structure in initiation rites as propounded by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner operates in the journeys that the Tutuolan characters undergo. In analysing the leitmotif of journey, this paper also attempts a study of the constituent elements of this leitmotif—that is, time, space and character.

**Key Words:** journey, leitmotif, rites, Yoruba

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is a study of the element of journey as an organising structural motif in the otherwise digressive narratives found in the novels of Amos Tutuola. With this end in view, this paper draws upon Margaret Thompson Drewal's *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency* where she argues that the journey is an important organising metaphor in Yoruba thought<sup>1</sup> and rituals. While writers like Fielding and Defoe are found to employ journey-plots in narrating the tales of their piccario, it could be said that, the nature, essence and function of journey in Tutuola differ

fundamentally from that of his Western counterparts. *Robinson Crusoe* and *Tom Jones*<sup>2</sup> primarily depict triumph of the individual and the capacity to survive and sustain oneself in times of adversity. In the African context, the journey becomes a learning experience for the individual which serves the greater purpose of assimilation into the society or community. Performed by the individual, the outcome of journey is aimed to serve societal interests. In analysing the leitmotif of journey in the select novels of Amos Tutuola, namely, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, *Feather Woman of the Jungle* and *The Brave African Huntress*<sup>3</sup>, this paper also attempts a study of the constituent elements of this leitmotif—that is, time, space and character. The study also shows how the journey confers a liminal status upon the protagonist that subsequently leads to reintegration into the society.

It is found that in Tutuola, the journey imbibes a movement from home into the forest/wilderness and a return to the hearth. Drewal in the chapter titled “Ontological Journey” states that more than simply a movement forward, the act of travelling implies a transformation in the process, a progression. Drewal explicates the Yoruba notion of ritual (a part and parcel of life) as a journey with a synecdochic relationship to the ontology of the human spirit journeying through birth, death, and reincarnation. She establishes that many Yoruba rituals embody the characteristics of a journey: travel from one place to another and a return—sometimes actual, sometimes virtual; new experiences; joys and hardships along the route; material for further contemplation and reflection; presumed growth or progress as a result of the whole experience. Further, she argues that rites of passages are like journeys—they are “fundamentally transformations of experience, a deepening and broadening of each individual’s understanding in relation to his or her prior experience and knowledge....Both in rituals and in journeys, participants operate at different levels of understanding and also have different capacities for making meaning” (Drewal 37). Thus rites and rituals—an indispensable part of life is conceived as journeys—actual or virtual. This paper shows that written narratives like the novels of Tutuola externalise the spiritual journey and posit unaccountable life-situations—always in relation to an individual’s personal problem. **Cast in a myriad of ways, whether in ritual performances or narratives, the journey as a metaphor highlights the experiential, reflexive nature of day-to-day living.** It facilitates the relationship of man to his surroundings, his environment and the universe in which he lives<sup>4</sup>.

Taking a cue from Drewal, it could be said that the works of Amos Tutuola, the physical journey undertaken by the characters is rooted in the metaphysics of Yoruba thought, customs and rituals. It broadens understanding of the surrounding world and brings about transformation in the characters accompanied by what Drewal calls—‘a progression’<sup>5</sup> (in terms of experience)—so that they are never the same as before. One could see the journey motif in allegorical terms as a reflection of a person’s progress in life. Harold Scheub in his study of South African narratives stresses that as a child prepares for circumcision and purification rites, the artists concentrate on the dramatisation of the odyssey that leads the youth from a state of impurity to its opposite, from youth to adulthood, from irresponsibility in the human community to the state of a mature adult. Narratives are brought together to externalise that spiritual journey and in many African societies that ‘journey’ seems to be a major preoccupation of tradition itself<sup>6</sup>. In the novels chosen for this study, the journey is narrated long after it is undertaken. It is narrated by someone who has matured since the time of the action and is therefore in a position to make ethical recommendations as s/he narrates.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The paper makes an analysis of the four select novels by Amos Tutuola vis-à-vis Margaret Thompson Drewal's theorising of 'journey' with respect to Yoruba culture in her book *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency*. The study also takes into account the concept of liminality as developed by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner with reference to cultural rituals. During liminal period, the participant of the ritual no longer carries his/her pre-ritual status but stand at the threshold between the previous status and the new status that the completion of the ritual eventually establishes. According to Gennep and Turner, such rituals (viz. rites of initiation) that allow passage from one to another phase of life, display a three-fold structure: pre-liminal (that involves the participant's parting with his previous status or practices and routine of earlier life); liminal (this involves the actual passing through the threshold between two phases); post-liminal (return to the society as a new being with new status). An analysis of the select novels using the concept of liminality is useful to understand the nuances of journey and life in Tutuola's writings. It shows journey as a metaphor for life wherein the characters undergo such liminal experiences to metamorphose into new beings.

## 3. ANALYSIS

In all the novels chosen for this study, a uniform structural pattern is found. It is seen that the journeys portrayed by Tutuola depict the tripartite movement that characterise liminality—separation or detachment (from family and community), marginalisation (solitary life in a terra incognita), reaggregation (return and reintegration into community)<sup>7</sup>. The characters hold liminal identity in that they pass from phase to another resulting in a transformation of personality and it is the journey that provides this passage. Separation from the family involves a state of leaving behind something or detachment of the protagonist from an earlier fixed point in the social structure. Their status thus becomes liminal. In such a liminal situation, the protagonists are brought to question the self, their attitudes and perspectives on life. The tests that the journey accrues lead to life-changing experiences that are associated with pains, dangers and spatio-temporal dislocation for the protagonists. These experiences prepare the protagonist to occupy a new role or status in the later stage of integration into the society.

Moreover, the study shows that the liminal experiences take place in liminal spaces. There are innumerable such spaces in all of Tutuola's novels; viz., the Deads' town (in *TPWD*) where the dead people live before going to heaven. Hence it is a threshold or an in-between space—neither belonging to heaven nor earth. Again, there is the junction of roads—another in-between space—leading to various places, worldly as well as otherworldly (like the Death's road). A major transformation occurs in the drinkard at this junction for it paves the way for access to esoteric knowledge or understanding of both worlds. The experience at a junction is a recurrently constituent factor of journeys in the select novels of Tutuola. All the texts feature a junction in one form or the other. The junction in *MLBG* could be identified as the fruit-tree (FUTURE SIGN-TREE) which leads the young boy to a ghastly non-human world. On the second day of her journey to the Jungle of Pigmies, Adebisi arrives at a point where "several roads crossed themselves. This was the junction of roads which used to confuse the stranger" (*TBAH* 22). The Ife town in *FWJ* which provides access to heaven as well as underground is another example of a junction. Apart from junctions, the bush of ghosts where the young protagonist gets trapped is also instance of a liminal space for it is "on the second side of the world between the heaven and earth" (*MLBG* 60). Liminal experiences, made possible through journey shapes personality and

self-understanding. The study shows that the liminal experiences in Tutuola's novels are the fountain head of formative experience.

### 3.1 Journey and Character

It is found that the journey in Tutuola's novels imbibe a uniform matrix from home to a terra incognita inhabited by ghosts, super human characters, evil spirits with bizarre forms and malignant intent. The characters are found to undergo an all-comprehensive experience within and beyond community life in villages (human world). In *TPWD*, apart from roads and bushes, the journey is also undertaken under the ground in search of the Skull and his family; by air, to avoid meeting gangs of highway-men on the road:

Then I told my wife to jump on my back with our loads, at the same time, I commanded my juju....**So I became a big bird like an aeroplane** and flew away with my wife, I flew for 5 hours before I came down, and after I had left the dangerous area...we began to trek the remaining journey by land or foot (*TPWD* 223) and, by water.

The study shows that all the Tutuolan protagonists are given a special privilege of understanding, interacting and conquering (in most cases) this terra incognita for which they are celebrated in their respective villages after the completion of the journey. This achievement confers a greater degree of maturity and mellowness upon the characters. The motive for the journey or the quest is very explicitly stated in *TPWD* as, "I would find out where my palm-wine tapster who had died was" (*TPWD* 193). It is interesting to observe how Tutuola interweaves folk belief with the Drinkard's journey motive/quest. While the Drinkard wanted to find out his tapster and did not know where to find him out, he resorts to the traditional belief that "the old people were saying that the whole people who had died in this world, did not go to heaven directly. But they were living in one place somewhere in this world" (*TPWD* 193). This place is later found out to be the Deads' Town and the story recounts the journey undertaken.

Another feature that is uniformly found to feature in his novels is the fluidity of corporal forms during the journeys. The changeability of corporal matter is very fast and suited to the drinkard's convenience. This recurring aspect, in many instances, helps to propel the journey forward. For instance, the drinkard's use of juju to change himself into different forms viz., a bird, helps him to extract a valuable piece of information from the old man (god) that he wanted to get a bell from the blacksmith. Again, in the complete gentleman episode, when the drinkard is on his mission to save the lady, he changes into as many forms as a lizard, air, sparrow and changes the lady too into a kitten. Later, in the encounter with the mountain-creatures, when he could not run away from them, the drinkard changes to a pebble and flings himself to long distances as an alternative to running. That corporal form is protean and slippery; that a very thin line of demarcation exists between bodily entities leads to an element of ambiguity in identity. This is more markedly made manifest when the drinkard says, "I myself was a god (*TPWD* 194)" thereby enhancing the ambiguity.

The first ordeal of the drinkard marks the beginning of a change in him. If 'Death' is a formidable character, the drinkard outsmarts death with his tricks. he meets an equally formidable character in the drinkard who ties him with the ropes of yam in his own garden. He outsmarts death with his clever tricks. Death whose "work was only to kill the people of the world" is tied by the drinkard with the ropes of yam in his own garden and is later trapped in a net. His laziness is replaced by quick and sharp wit through contact with the superhuman world.

In every episode, the drinkard has to pass through a number of ordeals. For instance, he is entrusted with the task of killing the ‘Red bird’ and the ‘Red fish’ to help the people of the Red town. One could hardly believe that this is the same drinkard who had no work to do. The drinkard also tells about his capitalist enterprises and entrepreneurial skills in the new town of the Red people:

After I had spent a year with my wife in this new town, I became a rich man. Then I hired many labourers to clear bush for me and it was cleared upto three miles square by these farm-labourers, then I planted the seeds and grains which were given me in the “Wraith Island” by a certain animal....As the seeds and grains grew up and yielded fruits the same day, so it made me richer than the rest of the people in that town (*TPWD* 264).

The study shows that in the course of the journeys, the hardwork that the Drinkard performs changes him to a man who is now respected and revered. But a similar kind of hardwork only lowers the esteem of the young boy (the protagonist of *MLBG*) in the minds of the readers. It is not only hard work but what is important is that why, where and for whom one works. The drinkard works for his own interest; while, the young boy works for his masters. Through the medium of journey, they are made to learn different things—the drinkard learns the value of labour and the young boy learns what hatred breeds. This could be one of the reasons why the most of the experiences of the young boy are torturous (as he has to learn what hatred could do). Moreover, because he does not know the meaning of ‘bad’ and ‘good’, he has to learn it by experience; herein comes the importance of journey. As found in the drinkard’s case, there is danger both on the road and in the bush in *MLBG*. The slave traders are terrors on the roads while the evil spirits haunt the bush. But, instead of boldly overcoming them, the boy protagonist falls easy victim to both hands displaying a lack of heroic potential. Here, the journey is not propelled by any quest or motive as in *TPWD*. In the Foreword to *MLBG*, Geoffrey Parrinder opines that the theme concerns what happens to a mortal who strays into the world of ghosts:

The journey involves discernable stages in the process of initiation into the mysteries of the ghost-world, which link up with the rites of secret societies and religious cults (Foreword to *MLBG* 13).

Unlike the drinkard, change of bodily forms takes place against the wish of the protagonist. The smelling ghost changes him to a series of animals beginning from a monkey (he is made to climb trees and pluck down fruits for the smelling ghosts), to a lion, horse, camel, cow and finally to a bull. In the 9<sup>th</sup> town of ghosts, he is changed to a blind man and his body straitjacketed in a pitcher:

...this doorless room changed to a pitcher and unexpectedly I found myself inside this pitcher and at the same moment my neck was about three feet long and very thick, and again my head was so big so that my long neck was unable to carry it upright as it was very stiff as a dried stick. Another two eyes which were as big and round as a football formed and appeared on this head...and I did not know where my normal eyes which were on my head before went (*MLBG* 68).

Thus, the transition here is forced and does not indicate the character as a possessor of powers. Unaided by any juju, he is at the mercy of others’ whims. His condition arouses pity and sympathy in the reader. However, it is found that the fluidity or transition from one bodily form to another is never complete and in all cases there is a retaining of traits of the actual form. When the drinkard and his wife turn into fire, they experience hunger as they are human beings. Similarly, the young boy when changed into a horse, is unable to eat the leaves, though hungry,



as he is not really a horse. In a striking and interesting contrast with the condition of the protagonist, his second wife—the Super Lady— is a possessor of unparalleled miraculous powers. First, she appears to him in the form of an antelope; later in an episode where she displays her form-changing powers, she changes to a lioness, a big boa constrictor, a tigress, a goat, and finally proclaims, “the power of lights is among my supernatural powers” (*MLBG* 120).

The twenty-four year long odyssey in the bush of ghosts is packed with dangers, hazards and risks before the protagonist could return home. In the first twenty-four years of his life, he lives more as a ghost than a human being. It is found that in many ghost-towns, the inhabitants could not make out if the protagonist is a ghost or a human being. The king of the 4<sup>th</sup> town of ghosts is in a dilemma and keeps looking at the protagonist for half an hour as, “he could not identify me that I am not a ghost and he did not understand my trick that I am only to find out the right way [to an earthly place] from him” (*MLBG* 140).

The protagonist on account of his stay for about two and a half decades in the bush of ghosts gets so adapted to their ways that towards the later part of his journey he is able to display magical powers at par with ghosts, “but as I had already become a real ghost before I left the 10<sup>th</sup> town, so by that a ghost friend of mine taught me the art of magic, because he did not know that I am an earthly person at that time otherwise he would not teach me to become a magician” (*MLBG* 157). It enables him manufacture a left arm for the amputated ghost-queen of the 4<sup>th</sup> town; heal the television handed ghostess of the sores that covered her body and win a contest with a powerful magician. In the last instance the boy comes very close to the drinkard in display of tricks and cunning. It bears close resemblance to the drinkard’s encounter with the Skull and the ensuing torrent of change of forms. When the magician changes to a snake, the protagonist becomes a stick and starts beating up the former. Then the magician changes to fire in a bid to burn up the stick, but the protagonist changes to rain and quenches the fire. This encounter shows that gradually in the course of his journey, the protagonist learns what is ‘good’ and ‘bad’ and how to successfully tackle the latter. Moreover, in the same episode, the protagonist is able to change the day to night—a feat that is performed earlier by the guard ghost in the 20<sup>th</sup> town. He also changes the magician-ghost to a dog for the entertainment of the onlookers.

In *FWJ*, the old chief takes the villagers on a journey through his narrative. When the old chief as a young man sets out for adventures, he already knows what is good and what is bad; what is to be done and not to be done. His adventures are propelled by the desire to know and experience “the difficulties, hardships, punishments, risks, dangers, etc., of the adventures” (*FWJ* 2). There is also another immediate motive running parallelly with the first, that is, the need to fend for one, the need to earn money to support the family, to find riches and wealth of the world and to know the unknown. He adventures from the vantage point of some degree of maturity found missing in the young protagonist in *MLBG*. The chief also has striking resemblances to the drinkard in his attitude towards work, “Of course, I was not interested in farming as from beginning” (*FWJ* 13).

Among the protagonists of Tutuola, it is undoubtedly the drinkard who very tactfully outwits his opponents. He exhibits more presence of mind and tact in handling adverse situations in the course of his journeys. The chief as a young man is very easily victimised by the Jungle Witch who turns him into an image. He falls an easy prey to the Witch’s trap. Later, he undergoes a punishment similar to that of the young boy in *MLBG* when the senior chief of the

town of the savage people rides him like a horse in the hole (where he is imprisoned) for six hours<sup>8</sup>. Like the young boy in *MLBG*, the protagonist is also under the whims of the Jungle Witch and change of corporal form is not wilful.

It is found that in the second journey, the chief is smarter than the first as he rescues the king of the quiet bush from his wicked wife—a juju woman who had transformed him into a half-snake. The third journey is well planned. Apart from weapons like cutlass, axe, cudgel etc, he raises three dogs. This need arises out of the hardships and experiences gathered from the earlier journeys. Success and wealth of the first journey, propels the subsequent journeys. It is seen that the later journeys are not driven by need but by ambition—the longing for wealth and riches, “I made up my mind that night to go there, not for animals but for the treasures” (*FWJ* 54), the chief says recalling his third journey. In the fifth and last journey, he goes to the ‘town of wealth’ situated underground, overcoming umpteen difficulties and tortures as agonising as the death of some of his companions. It is thus, every journey teaches him a lesson and in course of time he matures as an adventurer.

Another aspect found in the study of all the protagonists is that, they amply reflect upon their encounters; as the young protagonist says, “Ah! Nobody would enter into the Bush of Ghosts without much trouble and severe punishment...” (*MLBG* 70). The torture that the old chief has to undergo as a young man in his first journey makes him learn that “amusement is the father of sorrow” (*FWJ* 28) and this is what he tells his listeners when giving an account of his journeys much later. For the chief, every journey confers a formative knowledge. In the second journey, he learns that “beauty of the beautiful woman is a danger” (*FWJ* 46). From the fourth journey in the town of famine, the chief has a hard-earned experience that, “one journey might prove to be a better one from the beginning but might be worst towards the end” (*FWJ* 83). At the end of the series of story-telling session, the old chief reflects upon his experiences, “so it is very scarcely to go on a journey and return without punishments, hardships, etc. etc!” (*FWJ* 132). The encounter with the semi-bird where Adebisi, the huntress runs out of gun powder bestows upon her the practical knowledge that “when there were no gun-powder and gun-shots, the gun became a mere stick” (*TBAH* 39). When she is miraculously brought into the jungle of pigmies after she enters the forbidden room in the Bachelors’ Town, she learns that, “there is no one who is rich beyond temptation” (*TBAH* 119).

The study shows that, all sorts of tests appear in the journeys; test of patience, courage, strength, wit, skill and intelligence, ability to resist curiosity. At times, the protagonists’ fate could rest on an apparently trivial and seemingly harmless task. In *TBAH*, while Adebisi is installed as a queen of the Bachelor’s Town, no more is demanded of her than refraining from opening a locked room. As she fails to resist the temptation of knowing what lies beyond the locked door, she opens it and is instantly reduced to her former state of poverty. To add to her woes she finds herself in the Jungle of Pigmies. Again, Adebisi fails to hide the secret of the king of Ibembe town. As a private barber to the king, she sees two horns sprouting from his head. This secret is accidentally let out, whereupon she has to save her skin by running away from the town. It is found that the prohibition of curiosity is almost always broken. Ashabi, the younger sister of the chief in *FWJ* is cautioned not to open the lid covering a pit. However, out of curiosity, she opens it and finds her brothers transformed into immobile images. In the test of patience following the first failed test to resist temptation, Ashabi is found to emerge successful. To get back her brothers in their human form, she is required to dumb-act for two years within which she is married to a prince and sees the guillotining of her two new born babies. It is seen

that one of the most important qualities that the journey puts to test is bravery. This does not necessarily denote bodily strength but courage and mental preparedness to face and overcome a trial. Human refinement and maturation comes about from the journey and it is achieved through sorrow and pain.

### 3.2 Journey and Time

A reading of *TPWD* gives the idea of time operating in a cyclical and elliptical manner. Since the first journey proves futile (as Death makes good his escape), the drinkard starts another new journey. Again and again the drinkard and his wife come to the starting point wherefrom they need to perform the journey anew. It could be said that they do not continue the journey but ‘start’ it again. At a rough count in the drinkard’s narration, the act of ‘starting the journey’ occurs no less than twelve (12) times throughout the text. This could be substantiated with the following instances excerpted from the text itself:

Then I left the town without knowing where my tapster was, and I **started** another fresh journey (*TPWD* 200; emphasis mine).

Then after we had left these creatures and our half-bodied baby, we **started** another fresh journey...(*TPWD* 221; emphasis mine).

Then we left that town with gladness, we **started** our journey again... (*TPWD* 222; emphasis mine).

Then we **started** our journey again in another bush, of course it was full of Islands and swamps... (*TPWD* 228; emphasis mine).

While we had enjoyed everything in that “Wraith Island”, to our satisfaction, there were still many great tasks ahead. Then we **started** our journey in another bush, but remember that there was no road on which to travel in those bushes at all (*TPWD* 232; emphasis mine).

We **started** our journey in another bush with new creatures, this bush was smaller than the one which we had left behind... (*TPWD* 237; emphasis mine).

After that we **started** our journey, but although we had travelled from that morning till 4 o’ clock in the evening, yet we did not see or meet anybody on this road... (*TPWD* 238; emphasis mine).

That time does not flow in a linear fashion, is very explicitly stated in *FWJ*. When depressed by his failures in the fourth journey, the chief’s friends advise him: “time is not always as straight as a straight line” (*FWJ* 82). This vociferously debunks the Western notion of linearity of time. It is found that a time span of many decades is compressed within a second when the drinkard attempts to flee from the magician, “then I changed again to air and blew within a second to a distance which a person could not travel on foot for thirty years” (*TPWD* 159).

In *MLBG*, the young protagonist lives in the bush of ghosts for twenty four years but is found to declare that he has actually covered a distance which could not be traversed in thirty years. This shows again that time operates in a whimsical or arbitrary manner in the terra incognita. In an earlier case, the Super Lady informs the protagonist that witches could travel round the world in a minute. In *TPWD*, to bring an end to the famine, the people of the town send a sacrifice to Heaven through a messenger. This messenger is supposed to take the sacrifice to Heaven so that the latter pacifies its wrath upon earth. However, the return journey from heaven takes a very short period of time (not specifically mentioned in the text); it is completed within a few lines. When the messenger returns to the town, the people experiencing the famine are still alive. This illustrates that messenger has covered the distance to heaven very fast and faced no obstacle on the path towards accomplishment of the task. Here ‘time’ is compressed to



suit the purpose of the plot. The journey to the town situated underground, in *FWJ* namely the town of wealths takes a long time whereas the return journey takes relatively shorter duration. This could be due to lesser numbers of hurdles encountered.

The study shows that in certain cases, Tutuola presents very accurate details of time. The protagonist leaves the Super Lady's town at "two o'clock in the midnight" (*MLBG* 135); the step-mothers of the protagonist leaves the town with their children at "twelve o'clock p.m. (*MLBG* 18)"; the meeting of the Smelling-Ghost with his partners end at two o'clock in the midnight" (*MLBG* 33); the protagonist is dug out from the coffin by the resurrectionist ghost at one o'clock in the mid-night" (*MLBG* 92). This kind of random specificity of time occurs in *TPWD* as well. It is at "6:30 A.M. of the following morning" (*TPWD* 195) that the old man alias god, gives him a net to trap Death in it; it is exactly at 6:30 pm one evening that the drinkard and his wife enter the bush of the long white creatures, and so on. The chief in *FWJ* enters the spot of the disappeared town which got changed into a silent fearful bush exactly at "one o'clock p.m." (*FWJ* 38); at 12 o'clock in the midnight Sela and the chief leave the palace of the Goddess of Diamonds (*FWJ* 93). In the fifth journey, the chief and his companions reach the town of wealth at about "5 o'clock in the evening" (*FWJ* 127). The chief and his companions pull the hands of the hairy giant from night till 7 o'clock in the morning (*FWJ* 121). Adebisi leaves her village to hunt in the jungle of pigmies at "1 o'clock p.m. prompt" (*TBAH* 18), and others.

Charles Larson in *The Emergence of African Fiction* classifies time in Tutuola's *TPWD* as "good time" and "evil time"<sup>9</sup>. What Larson intends to state by means of this classification is that on certain occasions time functions favourably for the drinkard and his wife, while on other occasions, it operates unfavourably. It is found from this study that Larson's notion of favourable and unfavourable time applies to all of Tutuola's novels but more fittingly to *TBAH*. Here, one could find the culturally sanctioned belief of time being either favourable or unfavourable to the characters. Conversely, the characters are endowed with the foreknowledge of what time might have in store for them. For instance, after the frightful encounter with Ajantala the forest burglar, Adebisi accidentally enters the jungle of pigmies. This time, she is without her gun, cutlass, cudgel and other hunting equipments and knows that a few pigmies are still alive in the jungle who might as well kill her as an act of revenge for destroying their town. But, as it is a Sunday—the Day of Immortality—she sheds aside her fears; time is on her side: Although when I remembered that this was "The Day of Immortality" I did not fear so much again. Of course there might be some troubles for me later on but there was no fear of death at all. (*TBAH* 133).

The final return to the town after vanquishing all the pigmies and other evil creatures occurs on a Tuesday which is designated as the Day of Victory. Therefore, the victory could not take place on any other day except the day for which it is meant. It is the only day when the time is favourable for one to attain victory over antagonists. Moreover, it is found that, no less than three times Adebisi enter the jungle of pigmies and come out of it—twice wilfully and once accidentally. This cycle of entry and exit again depicts time moving in a cyclical manner.

### 3.3 Journey and Space

In Tutuola's universe, the protagonists interact with beings of the human as well as the spirit world. It is a world in which animals, vegetation and spirits are frequently given human attributes and human paraphernalia whereas the protagonists (in most cases) are endowed with miraculous powers. A strict line of demarcation or boundary is found to exist between the human

and the non human world. Moreover, within the non human world, the spatial terrain for operation of the evil creatures, malignant spirits as well as the benevolent spirits is fixed and strictly demarcated. The long white creatures who follow the drinkard and his wife as they change into a ‘big fire’, chase them all along the thick bush till they reach a big field: But although we did not know it these long white creatures were bound not to trespass on another’s bush, and they did not enter into that field at all...and the creatures of that field must not enter into their bush either. That was how we got away from the long white creatures (*TPWD* 225).

The perils are present both in the roads as well as in the bushes. For instance, there are roads (viz., the road leading to the Unreturnable Heaven’s Town) on which one could find no foot marks, which shows that such a journey has not yet been undertaken by anyone. Parallely, there are bushes, so thick that even a “snake could not pass through without getting hurt” (*TPWD* 224). The drinkard’s entry and journey through these untravelled terrain enhances the heroic vigour, boldness and vitality of his character. These traits of his personality would probably never have flowered had he not set out on the journey to find his dead tapster. Moreover, digressions like the man with a heavy load who deceitfully convinces the drinkard to carry it for him, do not add anything to the quest. Rather, they build on the strength and integrity of the drinkard’s character enabling his heroic potential to reach a full circle. These changes in the drinkard could be seen in terms of Margaret Thompson Drewal’s ‘progression’ (already referred in an earlier section of the paper). The White Tree where the drinkard and his wife live in peaceful sojourn for one year and two weeks depicts an important lesson that the quest must be achieved by individual effort alone. This is the reason why the Faithful Mother who could otherwise work wonders, could not help the drinkard to find out his tapster. She is shown to operate within a fixed terrain.

The Wraith Island creatures, though helpful and kind, could not help them reach the Deads’ Town because like the Faithful mother, their arena of operation is fixed. The ugly man in the small bush with eyes on his knees who chases them with a whip could not pursue them far for they entered a wide road where he could not enter. Again, in the final ordeal in the terra incognita with the mountain creatures, the drinkard emerges successful largely because, these creatures are not allowed to leave their own terrain:

...we bade the mountain creatures good-bye and they were looking at us as we were going, because they must not cross the river at all (*TPWD* 295).

The line of demarcation is also found to be strictly maintained in *MLBG* for the bush “was banned to be entered by any earthly persons” (*MLBG* 22). Moreover, the ghosts of one bush are not allowed to trespass into the territory of other ghosts. When chased by the ghosts of the alarm-bush, the young boy accidentally enters into the spider-web bush and saves himself as the alarm-bush creatures were banned from entering it.

An interesting feature that is strikingly presented in *FWJ* is the merging of a fantasy oriented spatial and temporal system within the paradigm of a realistic time and space. The chief and his companions travel from Abeokuta to Ile-Ife town (situated in the West of Nigeria; hence, reality plane) where they see two wells wherefrom the sun and the moon rise (fantasy plane): First, he [the porter of Ife town] took us to the well from which the moon was rising into the sky. When we peeped into this well, the water reached a half of it and it was very clear....And we saw the moon in it as it was moving round like a wheel. It shone to every part of the well as if it was as big as the sky. But of course we were unable to look at it so long for its ray was too

powerful for the eyes....I asked him to show the well from which the sun was rising into the sky. He replied without delay that as time was the day-time and that the sun was on, we could not go near it or if we did so, we would burn into the ashes at the same moment. Of course he pointed finger to the well and in fact nobody could go near it in the day-time because we saw plainly the heat which was rushing out of the well (*FWJ* 108).

Located within Ile-Ife town (reality plane), is the secret passage to an underground town of wealth dwelt by evil and malignant creatures (fantasy plane).

It emerges from the study that the point of entry into the esoteric could be easily identified. For instance, the young boy uses the fruit tree as a sign to identify the boundary between the 'human' and the 'ghost' world, "The fruit tree was a SIGN for me and it was on that day I called it—THE FUTURE SIGN" (*MLBG* 21). Similarly, the drinkard's finding out the right path to Death's road from a junction of roads, "then I began to travel on Death's road, and I spent about eight hours to reach there" (*TPWD* 195) depicts the existence of a boundary between different worlds. This also shows that the two worlds are separated by a distance that requires the drinkard eight hours to cover. In a similar case, the lady and the complete gentleman had to travel for twelve miles from the market before entering into an endless forest inhabited only by terrible creatures. The accuracy of this distance between the two worlds is maintained later as well when the Drinkard sets out on his mission to save the lady trapped by the Skull:

When I travelled with him a distance of about twelve miles away to that market, the gentleman left the really road on which we were travelling and branched into an endless forest (*TPWD* 209).

As in the other texts, the terra incognita in *FWJ* is again an 'endless jungle' and it takes the chief and his brother nine days to reach the middle of it. Like the drinkard and the boy, they do not know what lies in it; after meeting the Jungle Witch realise that their entry in this terrain is restricted:

As we were still wondering and trembling with fear from feet to head, she started to ask, "What do both of you come to do in my land or do you not know that this is my jungle?" I answered at the same time with a trembling voice, "We are sorry to come to your jungle..." (*FWJ* 15)

A more strict kind of demarcation of territory could be seen in this novel in the form of the old tax collector who collects the boundary fee (that is, an entry pass) from any traveller who wants to travel in the underground 'town of wealth'. Similarly there is a gate keeper in the Jungle of Pigmies in *TBAH* who does not demand tax but the lives of anyone attempting to enter the jungle. Again, it is stated at the very beginning that the "Jungle of Pigmies is at a distance of about 100 miles from the town" (*TBAH* 11), depicting the end of one territory and the beginning of another.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It is found from the study that in the novels of Amos Tutuola, journeys are like rites of passages where the protagonist has to undergo a number of hitherto unexperienced experiences. The body has to endure these encounters on account of which, one could say that the body becomes a register for these experiences. Moreover, the spatio-temporal nuances pose further challenges for the individual. Only if the body can successfully perform/accomplish the ordeal, the passage could take place. If the drinkard is transformed into a new man, it is because he has successfully passed the ordeals in the course of the journey. This is somewhat similar to the rites of passages in Yoruba culture as pointed out by Drewal. However, a marked difference observed is that unlike rites of passages there is no one to guide the protagonists as to what course of

action one should take. There is no one who has gone through the process before and can lead the protagonist out of it. In such a situation, the experiences are hard earned, valuable, vital and crucial resulting in self-realisation. Tutuola's works have been related to various medieval quest or voyage narratives like Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, or, to more recent works like Celine's *Journey to the End of the Night*, Kafka's *The Castle*. However, this paper shows that journey is embedded in the very fabric of Yoruba life—as an indispensable part of community values/ethos. It is essential to comprehend man's environment leading to maturity and self-understanding. Pursuant to the journey, the Tutuolan hero undergoes a metamorphosis and emerges more confident and responsible. The protagonist changes as an individual as s/he returns to the society as a new person and has something new to reflect upon.

### NOTES

1. Margaret Thompson Drewal in *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency*, p. 33.
2. *Robinson Crusoe* and *Tom Jones*, considered to be among the first English novels, are found to employ journey plots. *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* which marks the beginnings of the African novel in English also uses journey as a motif that serves to portray the development and maturity of the protagonists. However, the transformations in the characters are aimed at bringing them under the fold of the community. But, in novels like *Robinson Crusoe*, the journey is used as a device to celebrate individual achievement. This difference is markedly palpable in the first novels of the two cultures.
3. In the manuscript henceforth, to refer to the chosen novels, only abbreviations will be used viz. *TPWD*, *MLBG*, *FWJ*, *TBAH* to denote *The Palm-Wine Drinkard*, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*, *Feather Woman of the Jungle* and *The Brave African Huntress* respectively.
4. Charles Larson in *The Emergence of African Fiction* says that Tutuola's works are a personal groping towards an understanding of the ontological gap, that is, man's relationship to the external and the spirit world; p. 94.
5. Margaret Thompson Drewal in *Yoruba Ritual: Performers, Play, Agency*, p. 33.
6. Harold Scheub, "Fixed and Non-fixed Symbols in Xhosa and Zulu Oral Narrative Tradition", *Journal of American Folklore*, 85 (1972), p. 273.
7. The tripartite movement of rites of passages is elaborated in Victor Turner's *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca: Cornell Paperbacks Edition, 1977.
8. When captured by the Smelling-Ghost, the young protagonist has to carry his master from town to town as a horse. He is barely able to eat or drink anything; being a human being fodder meant for horses is unpalatable for him.
9. Charles Larson in *The Emergence of African Fiction*, p. 103.

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