

Narratives of Struggle

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Narratives of Struggle

The Philosophy and Politics of Development

John Ayotunde Isola Bewaji

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Series Editor's Preface

The *Carolina Academic Press African World Series*, inaugurated in 2010, offers significant new works in the field of African and Black World studies. The series provides scholarly and educational texts that can serve both as reference works and as readers in college classes.

Studies in the series are anchored in the existing humanistic and the social scientific traditions. Their goal, however, is the identification and elaboration of the strategic place of Africa and its Diaspora in a shifting global world. More specifically, the studies will address gaps and larger needs in the developing scholarship on Africa and the Black World.

The series intends to fill gaps in areas such as African politics, history, law, religion, culture, sociology, literature, philosophy, visual arts, art history, geography, language, health, and social welfare. Given the complex nature of Africa and its Diaspora, and the constantly shifting perspectives prompted by globalization, the series also meets a vital need for scholarship connecting knowledge with events and practices. Reflecting the fact that life in Africa continues to change, especially in the political arena, the series explores issues emanating from racial and ethnic identities, particularly those connected with the ongoing mobilization of ethnic minorities for inclusion and representation.

Toyin Falola
University of Texas at Austin

Acknowledgments

The motivation to present, in a synthesized and unified book format, related issues, ideas, and reflections with which I have been grappling for over a decade and a half, especially on the causative, sustaining, and perpetuating factors concerning the challenges faced by Africa and its diaspora, where the provision of basic necessities for decent human existence was concerned, derives from an invitation from one of the most respected African historians, an unalloyed African cultural icon, the indefatigable scholar, Professor Toyin Falola, the Series Editor for the Carolina Academic Press’ “Africa World Series.” Even while I was reluctant to take up the challenge, because of a feeling that such a venture could be misread to mean that one single individual has *the* solution to African and Diaspora problems, he persisted, because he felt that the issues I treat with in my philosophical reflections are important enough to merit bringing to a wider audience the kind of discourse which my thoughts have generated, and more importantly that this kind of contribution from me on this type of scale, even if it does not provide the proverbial final solution to the problems discussed, could succeed in stimulating more imaginative readers and thinkers to arrive at such useful solutions. For this confidence and encouragement, I am eternally grateful to him; *a o ma a ri yin ba*.

Having said that, there is always some danger in acknowledging and presenting debts of gratitude: in the first instance, it may be impossible to order such acknowledgments and gratitude in their proper chronology and order of importance, thereby giving the impression that some contributions are not as valued as others and debts of gratitude are not properly paid; and in the second instance, there is the factor of the human memory being given to forgetfulness, thereby allowing for certain important debts of gratitude to be forgotten — as we know in Yoruba culture, to paraphrase, “it is easy to forget good and positive events, while bad and negative ones tend to stick in the mind longer,” because, *eni to ya’gbe le gbagbe, eni to’ko ko le gbagbe*. For this reason, I request forgiveness for any errors of omission or commission in the acknowledgement presented here.

Over the last two years or so, I have been a beneficiary of the University of the West Indies’s generosity by way of the Campus Principal’s New Initiative Fund. With the University’s deliberate refocusing of efforts on research, emanating from the belief that research is necessary in all disciplines for the development of the solution-oriented approach to the diverse challenges of Jamaica, the region, and the world, deliberate effort has been made to support the deserving projects of faculty. This book is partly a product of this support.

In 2010 I had the honor of being awarded the prestigious Simon Guggenheim Research Fellowship to support my ongoing researches in philosophy, especially those directly concerned with themes in Africana philosophy, and particularly dealing with issues of leadership and development in Africana societies, with a view to providing some illumination in a critical way for resolving or better handling the diverse challenges facing African and Diaspora societies. In awarding the Fellowship, the Foundation Trustees were generous enough to grant the recipient latitude on how to utilize the resources provided.

This has been most useful, because it has made it possible for me to make trips to Kenya, Nigeria, and Barbados for research and dissemination of the outcome of the efforts, some of which are here presented. I thank the Foundation for the honor bestowed on me to conduct the research and I dedicate this book, in honor of Simon Guggenheim, to all who believe in the universal human ability to contribute to knowledge and human development, regardless of climate or geographic origin.

I want to thank the librarians at the Africa International University, the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGEST), Karen, Kenya and the librarians at the University of Ibadan in Ibadan, Nigeria, for the assistance provided during my research trips. They made me feel at home, sourcing rare materials for me and facilitating my Internet searches for verification of information, even at very short notice. For useful and stimulating comments on occasions when some of the ideas tabled here were presented at seminars and conferences, I want to thank the numerous members of the audience. They will recognize the evolution of the ideas, see their imprint on them, and notice the changes that have taken place for improvement.

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I thank my expanding family for bearing with my many disappearances from home and nocturnal activities even while at home — Professor Tolulope Bewaji, Dr. Temitayo Bewaji, Temitope Bewaji, Oluwatomilayo Bewaji, Lana Bewaji; but especially my wife, Mary Bolajoko Bewaji, the beautiful one, for her forbearance. It has been a bumpy ride, but I wouldn't have chosen any other.

I also want to acknowledge, with special gratitude, permission for use of the following published materials which, in some instances, have been revised and updated for this book edition. Given the benefit of the generous comments from colleagues and other interlocutors over the years, some of the essays have evolved through reflective revision or reworking, and are here synthesized into what is supposed to be a coherent perspective aimed at illuminating the philosophy and politics of development in Africana societies:

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