The Poetry and Drama of Nigeria’s Femi Osofisan

TEACHERS’ WORKSHOP ON TEACHING AFRICAN LITERATURE IN MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOLS
Map of Africa

*Africa for Kids (2006)*
The African continent is so big that three continental United States could fit into it.
THE YORUBA
Olusegun Obasanjo

Former President of Nigeria

Catholic Cathedral (Owerri)
St Paul’s Church, Owerri
Although many Yoruba are Christians or Muslims, their traditional pantheon of deities known as *orisha* number over 400. Their high god is *Olorun* but he has no organized priesthoods or shrines. Other important *orisha* include *Eshu*, the trickster; *Shango*, the god of thunder; and *Ogun*, the god of iron and of war.
The Yoruba believe in reincarnation. They sometimes name their children Babatunde (Father returns) or Yetunde (Mother returns)
Historically the Yoruba were farmers. Their cash crops were cocoa and yams. Other crops included maize (corn), groundnuts (peanuts), cotton, cassava, and beans.
Palm nuts

The kernels are processed - the oil is extracted and retains its red color. You can buy it in Flint at African shops.
If you can’t get to the market, the market gets to you.

This girl is selling plantain chips – you will be able to try these here.
An urban area - Owerri
Transportation to markets was often done by women carrying enormous loads of goods to sell on their heads.
Tired of Walking?
Or Open-air taxis
The Arts

Kente (Ghana)

Asoke (Nigeria)
Asoke cloth – reserved traditionally for funerals, religious rituals and other formal occasions. Each strip is 4 inches wide.
Two additional examples
Distinctive Yoruba style wears well anywhere. Who looks Cooler in this shot?
George cloth (Igbo)
Music
Wooden Sculpture      Yoruba Ere Ibeji figure (male)
Ibeji figure (female)  Igbeuke, Oyo region, Nigeria
The first born twin, whether a boy or a girl, is always called *Taiwo*,

the second is named *Kehinde*

From the book: 
*Ibeji - The Cult of Yoruba Twins* 
1980

http://www.randafricanart.com/Yoruba_Ibeji_2.html
Yoruba bronze head sculpture from the city of Ife, Nigeria c. 12th century A.D.
Afri-facts

• In 2000, there were 794 million Africans (compared to 240 million Americans)
• Thirteen out of every 100 people in the world are African
• The African population is growing almost twice as fast as the rest of the world
• One out of every seven Africans is Nigerian
• Sixty percent of African adults can read and write (the world average is 75%)
• Twenty-five African countries will not have enough water by 2025
• Every African country has mobile phones, Internet access, and satellite TV
Websites

3. Interview with Osofisan  www.africantheatre.org/interviewofof.html
5. Sentinel Poetry  www.sentinelpoetry.org.uk/0906/page0004.htm
6. JSTOR: Theatre J.  www.jstor.rog/view/01922882/sp050158/05x210z/0
7. Nigerian recipes  www.folklife.si.edu/africa/recipes.htm
8. Yoruba Names  www.folklife.si.edu/africa/names.htm
Websites continued:

1. Yoruba Art  [www.zyama.com/yoruba/pics..htm](www.zyama.com/yoruba/pics..htm)

2. The Place of Susan Wenger’s Art in Yoruba Religion:

3. Lesson Plan: Folktale Through African Art
   [www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1993/2/93.02.04x.html](www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1993/2/93.02.04x.html)