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#### **Editorial Note**

We are pleased to present issues 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13 of the *Ibadan Journal of European Studies (JES)* to the public. There are thirty-one articles in this edition. The essays covering different areas like Language, Language Teaching, Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, Literary Criticism and Cultural Studies are well researched.

We must apologise for the delay in publication of these issues. It is mainly due to the long peer-review process occasioned by the tight schedule of our reviewers. While assuring you that the next issue will be promptly published, we sincerely believe that you will enjoy the articles which are carefully and meticulously selected for these issues.

**L.B. Ayeleru**

*Professor of French and Applied Linguistics*

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## Conceptualizing Continuity and Shifts in the African and the Black Diaspora Performance Traditions

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“I who am poisoned with the blood of both,  
Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?  
I who have cursed  
The drunken officer of British rule, how choose  
Between this Africa and the English tongue I love?  
Betray them both, or give back what they give?  
How can I face such slaughter and be cool?

....  
How can I turn from Africa and live?”

Excerpt from: “A Far Cry from Africa”  
—by Derek Walcott

### Background

In engaging the challenge of evolving a shared pedagogy of Black and African knowledge systems on the continent and the African Diaspora(s), I come into this conversation simultaneously as a learner, student, teacher and an advisor — of Black and African performance traditions. I have benefited from researching and observing the methodology of popularising Black and African studies in Nigeria, Central America and the Caribbean; and, more recently, in North America where I taught undergraduate and graduate courses on the broad theme of continuity and shifts in the Black and African performance traditions at Northwestern University, Evanston.

To a large extent, Derek Walcott's epigram at the beginning of this essay hints at the intricacies lurked in the concept of continuity from assumed cultural templates. For one, there are no easy solutions, and neither standard nor charted paths to monitor cultural manifestations once off their moorings. And this is particularly informing with diaspora discourses, especially over time and space. Hence, the potential self-rupturing of the theme is duly acknowledged with a qualifier — "Shifts." This qualifier demonstrates a strategy anchored on aspects of African ontology and metaphysics, and with reference to their emergent modernit(y)ies. This approach will, hopefully, serve the basis for an Africa-Diaspora pedagogical exchange by providing diverse possibilities of its own reading.

### **Introduction**

This article focuses on models of reading continuity and shifts in African drama and performance as well as the drama of the Black Diaspora. In broad terms, this includes texts (in script and performance) of Black African, Caribbean and African-American literature. We proceed with an understanding that there are foundational, epistemological thought-systems nested in African and Diaspora folklore(s), some of which are evinced in the relativist and deconstructionist *Esu*, *Ananse* and the mask paradigms already diffused in cultures across West Africa, the Caribbean and the United States of America.

It begins with an exploration of theoretical frames that can support the reading and staple oral rhetorical forms and the diverse masking traditions, with emphasis on their latent epistemic, literary and aesthetic qualities, before proceeding to examine selected

literary and performance texts. The three literary texts to be examined are: Wole Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests* and *Death and the King's Horseman*, Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, and Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman*. It will elicit the embedded pedagogical potential of the chosen texts in relation to the readings afforded us by earlier scholars, particularly those of Harry Garuba and Tejumola Olaniyan who identify these texts as embodiments of tropes of continuity and shifts, besides the detailed biographical reading of Bruce King on Derek Walcott.

Hopefully, the chapter will shed light on how we can begin to appreciate the relationship between aspects of the Black experience as presented in African, Caribbean and African- American 'literatures'; demonstrate the historical, social, cultural, aesthetic and intellectual underpinnings of that experience, and express the diversity in its expression. Attention will be paid to the forms and styles of the works under presentation, especially the ways they illustrate the complex relationship between the strategies of 'reading' orality and writing in the respective literature(s). We could then proceed to examine the interrelatedness of culture and ideology in the context of postcolonial discourse.

#### **Culture: Whose Culture and Ideology?**

For the purpose of pedagogical engagement on African history and culture, it would be required to tease out the nuances of the sometimes overlapping concepts of culture and ideology. To transcend this bug, a good starting point would involve clarifying the related concept of culture and examining its modality with another concept-ideology. Raymond Williams (1983) in *Keywords* suggests that culture is "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (87). This anxiety is hardly misplaced, for he then proceeds to articulate culture in terms of "a

general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development" (90); in other words, this can be related to the philosophical and aesthetic attitude of a people, including the works of its artists and writers.

The second suggestion indicates "a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group" (90), while the last is related to 'the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity' (90). John Storey (1993) notes that this third use of culture is "synonymous with what structuralists and poststructuralists call 'signifying practices' (2), and that the average sense of popular culture may be more related to the second and third concepts of the word culture-both as live cultures and cultural practices which would qualify as cultural texts.

As regards ideology, the primary problem arises because many scholars would even go as far as using it interchangeably with culture, and popular culture in particular. Stuart Hall (1978) cautions that there is a sense of emptiness in the term when used this way, a sense of emptiness which Storey suggests is "politics", once we randomly substitute ideology for culture.

In the light of this, Storey ventures into clarifying five possible meanings of the term 'ideology'. One, he says, is to see ideology as "a systematic body of ideas articulated by a particular group of people" (3); this could include a professional or a political group. The second relates to how a group could produce or foist false consciousness by masking, distorting, and concealing the social process of domestication by the privileged in society. The sub-text of this reading is best deduced from Karl Marx's popular formulation on base and superstructure, and how the material culture could significantly shape social consciousness.

Ideology, in this sense, points in the direction of power relations, and the third formulation by Storey actually derives from this. This is the sense of “society as conflictual rather than consensual,” with texts presumed to be taking sides, invariably, as in all the works of our case study. The fourth perspective is the Althuserian concept which tries, in the words of Storey, to “see ideology not simply as a body of ideas, but as a material practice” (5), while the fifth and last calls into play Roland Barthes’ preference of seeing ideology as operating at a connotative level, that is, “the secondary, often unconscious meanings, texts and practices carry or can be made to carry” (5).

In relation to our current study, a striking similarity noticeable in the treatment of the praxis of culture and ideology by the three authors under examination is the fact that they not only share a familiar platform in the medium of drama but also embed an insinuation and critique of dominant paradigms through their dramaturgy. What is central here is that it is an alternative perspective, and so alternative that you could spell the word by introducing a hyphen to stress two lexical items: alter and native - Alter-Native, yet without being nativist by the sheer breadth of the dramatists’ cross-cultural referencing.

#### **Against False Dilemma**

There is the need to come into awareness of another methodological constraint in relation to the question of African and Diaspora history and culture. It is actually what philosophers have sometimes described as “False Dilemma”. And in this case, it is tied to the tendency to canonise modes of strategic essentialisms in response to the Master-text. The Master-text, as approach, has been described as “arbitrary and idiosyncratic” in its penchant for blaming the victim, and making Africa and the Black world appear

responsible for its own violation. Not just this, it comes with a baggage of reading the African Other in broad and sweeping generalisations, besides freezing it in a moment of the human evolution. Quite often, in rebutting this, many Africanists had in the past responded in like manner.

While we may understand the challenge of such times in countering one essentialism with another, it must be remarked that this is insufficient in propagating, less evolving a pedagogy on African and its Diaspora cultural experiences. The impulse in reading continuity is itself prevalent upon the factor of denial and/or denigration of Black and African literature, and a few samples will serve. Melville Herskovits, who spent a considerable amount of his scholarly time rebutting pseudo-sciences of the academia, outlines five major constituents of the myth of the Negro past which is designed to validate the concept of Negro inferiority:

- 1) The negro is childlike in character;
- (2) Only the less intelligent members of the race were enslaved;
- (3) Since the slaves came from different parts of Africa and spoke different languages, they lost their identity and there was no common denomination of understanding among them;
- (4) Even if there had been one, the superiority of European culture must have, and did cause them to give up this; and
- (5) The Negro then is thus a man without a past.

Emotional response to such a claim is not enough. Such a response had been partly informed by a certain degree of epistemological anxiety and the lure of resorting to normative African traditions in

thought and fiction, on the part of such Africanists. In theorising the sell they had found themselves limited within the same categories created by proponents of the Master-text, rather than creatively mine aspects of the metaphysics, ontology and creative practices in the African cultural and literary experience, no matter how yet unanonised such may be within the global matrix of knowledge production. Further constraints have been noticed in limiting oneself to race and the ideology of double-consciousness. It should be emphasised that race could be implicated in the debate, but there are legitimate forms of its use as well as modes of its abuse as an ideological tool of discourse. But in the cultural politics of identity, we are not unmindful that the subject may not just construct, but is herself constructed under circumstances external to her. True, race is a construct, but it is not a construction imposed by the subject. This is precisely the essence of Michael Echeruo's counter to the postmodernist tendency to consider identity as a state of constant becoming. He is wont to stressing that identity is constituted not just from one's choices, but also from choices imposed on the subject; and he says: "What the history of the black diaspora teaches us is that black identity must always be predicated on black experience."

Indeed, the Negro was also claimed to have arrived the new world with no more than his skin colour. The literary responses to this profiling meant resorting to the corpus of Africanist aesthetic canons, and thereby reinforcing the constitutive aspects of continuity, in theme and style. In reaction to the dominance of the Euro-American critical tradition, Louis Henry Gates had stated: I once thought it our most important gesture to master the canon of criticism, to imitate and apply it, but I now believe that we must turn to the black tradition itself to develop theories of criticism indigenous to our literatures. (Louis Henry Gates *Writing Race*)



20). In *The Signifying Monkey* (xxxx), Gates traces one of the figures of continuity in the playful, trickster divinity, Esu, who is variously realised in:

|                |   |              |
|----------------|---|--------------|
| Nigeria        | = | Esu-Elegbara |
| Benin Republic | = | Legba        |
| Brazil         | = | Exu          |
| Cuba           | = | Echu Elegua  |
| Haiti          | = | Papa Legba   |
| U.S.           | = | Papa La Dos  |

The import of this, Louis Henry Gates describes as speaking “eloquently of the unbroken arc of metaphysical presuppositions and patterns of figuration shared through space and time among black cultures in West Africa, South America, the Caribbean and the United States.”

Beyond continuity of tradition, the evidence of shifts in the tradition is also evident in Gates’ identification of transmutation and codification elaboration, variation, addition, transformation and/or displacement. Here is an attempt to go beyond the notion of continuity of the African and the Black literary experience as: survival and retention from Africa; similarity of motifs, archetypes, and folk figures, or even....intertextuality.

Another helpful response to dealing with the issue is to combine the most relevant universal experiences in the discourse with grounded epistemic foundations of Black and African Studies/Aesthetics. In this respect, two examples by Harry Garuba and Tejumola Olaniyan bear pertinence on the discourse of cultural

continuity and shifts between Africa and its Atlantic Diaspora. Both readings share a postcolonial strain. While Olaniyan stresses and Labels the cultural politics of hegemonic construction and its subversion, Garuba demonstrates the cultural manifestations of such identity shifts and their import on the creative experience. Both of them explore literary practices in Africa, the Caribbean and the United States. Harry Garuba derives his insight from the states and stages of the dramatic genre identifying moments of the primary, secondary and tertiary modes of textuality. Tejumola Olaniyan identifies moments of a colonial discourse embedded in the Master-text, its rebuttal in counter-hegemonic discourses and discursive practices, and a post-Afrocentric discourse.

Deriving from the conscious attempt to ignore the African literary heritage and create an amnesiac Middle Passage, the literature of, and on, Africa and its Diaspora since the late 19th Century has increasingly been allusive of the triad of race, colour and protest by many critics and scholars. Theme of continuity continues to feature in the following works attached as appendix.

### **Question of Textuality**

In addition to this outlined approach, it could be helpful to commence a reading of the overarching theme of continuity in African drama and performance, and the drama of the Black Diaspora by first exploring staple oral rhetorical forms and the diverse masking traditions, with emphasis on their literary and aesthetic qualities, before proceeding to the examination of the selected literary and performance texts? This is particularly relevant because diverse critical traditions have examined and re-examined the very core of the concept of the text. Reading "continuity," therefore, is integrally tied to the concept of the text and it is appropriate to commence by shedding some light on this.

Let us begin by asking the seemingly mundane question(s): what is a text? What constitutes a text? There is the need to identify layers of the text, and the concept of textuality. Is there such a thing as the oral text, the written text, the performance and performed text (and text(s) in situation?).

An important starting point is to understand the predominant literary tradition in which we ask these questions, and that tradition is a literate tradition, a tradition that is not only aware of the manuscript but also the print culture. Many cultures and languages with a high degree of post-oral inflection would largely derive their concept of the text and literature from assumptions of the scribal. The English word "literature," for instance, derives from the Latin, "Litera," by and large suggesting the act of writing. This etymological root of literature, therefore, prepares us to encounter the text/literature as a written sign. Not only this, we conflate the written and the literary, further compounding basic understanding. What then happens to the vast semiotic coding inhered in the non-verbal cues of our selected texts?

### **As Postcolonial Text**

Three critical voices in the debate help to illuminate these performance traditions as modes of textuality and potential postcolonial modes of reading: Houston A. Baker (1993), Karin Barber (2005) and Meki Nwezi et al. (2001). Houston Baker warns that in engaging the performance text, we need a theoretical approach that is capable of an "improvisational flexibility and a historicising of form..." (34). Although Baker's primary attention was devoted to "popular cultural forms," his emphasis was broadly on the oralist and non-verbal cues of those contexts. Karin Barber

helps to trace the anxiety of naming the performance event and the oral as text, noting the scriptocentric nature of our contemporary culture as its source, especially as pertains to using its yardsticks to measure the oral text. Barber suggests that the relationship between the text and so-called performance can be more engaging as, sometimes, “written texts can be cues, scripts, or stimulants to oral performance, and can also be records, outcomes, or by-products of it” (264). If the claim to textuality of the written tradition is rested on mediation and detachment, Barber equally identifies in oral performance the co-existence of text in conventions, which are abstractions of what gets to be performed as oral performance is not always mere instantaneity or pure evanescence of immediately disappearing acts.

Following up closely on this, Meki Nzewi et al. (2001) propose the concept “lingual text in music as song lyrics or recitative” (91) in describing the lingual fundamentals of African drum music. The authors persuasively demonstrate how the text in Black and African performance traditions can be encountered in the following ways:

- (i) as a vocal processing of language — song;
- (ii) as instrumental processing of language — metason;
- (iii) as choreographic processing of language the visual poetry of dance as metaphor;
- (iv) as symbolic documentation of cultural statements — the extramusical meaning of special music instruments and musical art costume. (91)

Furthermore, a scholar like Ademola Dasyuva has demonstrated the import of trans-generic mutation in orally based creations, showing

oral literature and its generic forms as essentially crosscutting and overlapping, even with their fresh contexts as written scripts. The illustration below by Dasylya stresses the point;

|                               |                         |           |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| Poetry                        | Prose                   |           |
| Drama                         |                         |           |
| • Court Poetry                | Folkiale & Types, e.g.: |           |
| Festival                      |                         |           |
| • Heroic Poetry               | Dilemma/Moral/Fairy     |           |
| Ritual Drama & its Forms:     |                         |           |
| • Lullaby/Proverb             | Fable                   | Sensuous. |
| Spirit Possession, Masquerade |                         |           |
| • Work Song                   | Proverb                 |           |
| Puppet Theatre, Revue         |                         |           |
| • Dirge/Rites of              | Riddle/Witticism        |           |
| Travelling Passage Theatre    |                         |           |
| • Religious Poetry            | Witticism               |           |
| Musical Drama                 |                         |           |

It should be noted that other cross-cutting modes include nonverbal forms like drum, costume and the general, extra-verbal cues. Add to this the fact that resources of all the genres are also drawn from the common pool of myth, legend and history. And in relation to dramatic action and drama proper, the four basic assumptions of speech — even acted speech; movement — which may include the acted event and general gestures of dance and enactment are present. This generic fluidity is evident in our chosen texts for this study.

### **Proto-Hypertext in Carnavalesque?**

The original concept of 'hypertext' was itself coined by Theodor Nelson to describe the non-linear, non-sequential space made possible by the computer, while the carnivalesque was introduced to literature by Mikhail Bakhtin in relation to his study of heightened performance of the Middle Ages with the potential of an incipient multimedia accent. Sven Birkets (1994) copiously cites a description of the term 'hypertext' in a New York Times Book Review entitled "The End of Books" (June 21, 1992) by Robert Coover thus:

Hypertext is not a system but a generic term, coined a quarter of a century ago by a computer populist named Ted Nelson to describe the writing done in the nonlinear or nonsequential space made possible by the computer. Moreover, unlike print text, hypertext provides multiple paths between text-segments, now often called 'lexias' in a borrowing from the pro-hypertextual but prescient Roland Barthes. With its web of linked lexias, its networks of alternate routes (as opposed to print's fixed unidirectional page-turning) hypertext presents a radically divergent technology, interactive and polyvocal, favoring a plurality of discourses over definitive utterance and freeing the reader from domination by the author. Hypertext readers and writers are said to become co-learners or co-writers, as it were, fellow travellers in the mapping and remapping of textual (and visual, kinetic, and aural components, not all of which are provided by what used to be called the author (153).

While the hypertext has more immediate bearing on the electronic condition, there are sufficient examples to indicate that aspects of the performance traditions being explored, especially Wole Soyinka and Derek Walcott's, bear close affinity to proto hypertext

features as regards modes of [mask] narration and reception of performance text. This becomes most evident in moments approximating to the carnivalesque, to appropriate Mikhail Bakhtin's term. Particularly with Soyinka and Walcott, we experience a heightened performance context which is highly ingested with a prescient tone of the carnivalesque played out in diverse forms, and one intermingled with song, music, and the extra-verbal features of gesture, costume, mask display, dance, mime, and excessive revelry; in short, a simultaneous staging of an apparently dissonant but deeply interactive segments. The moonlight fantasy-play template of Walcott's *Dream* alerts us on this aspect of revelry, just as much as the market scenes in Soyinka's *Death*. The constant shift from real to imaginary time in the prison scenes' experience of *Makak* in *Dream*, and the evolving plains of the world of the living and the dead in both of Soyinka's *Death* and the *King's Horseman* and *A Dance of the Forests* are quite telling on non-sequential, non-chronological narrative import of the proto-hypertext in cultural manifestation.

The concept of the carnivalesque was popularised by Mikhail Bakhtin who, in "*Rabelais and His World*," equated the form to a second-order semiotic system, and as he puts it, "Carnival is the people's second life, organised on the basis of laughter" (Rivkin and Ryan ed., 1998:45). Bakhtin came to this conclusion by studying the festivity of the Middle Ages that exhibited "peculiar qualities of all comic rituals and spectacles..." (45). He links the festival, at the external level, to the feast of the church, but avers that all carnivals of the Middle Ages (ecclesiastic, feudal or state-sponsored, led to any form beyond a replication of the existing world order. In other words, they merely endorsed "the norm, thereby betraying true human festivity" (45). For him, the official

feast, in celebrating normative truth, was invariably devoid of the tone of laughter, thereby betraying any true human festivity.

However, unlike the official feast, the carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the stricture of prevailing truth. The true carnival strove beyond inhibitions to embrace open spaces rather than enclosures, the borderless zone rather than boundaries, and a penchant to dehierarchize and query prevailing order in the course of the carnival. This mode sharply contrasted to the official feast that, more or less, was a "consecration of inequality" (45). At a deeper level, the carnival enthroned an intersubjective space to which all participants could claim ownership, not just at an ideational level but evinced in real-life experience. It is this form of abundant spiritual excess, similar to the mode of representation found in Rabelais' novel — *Penragruel* — that Bakhtin describes as carnivalesque. This form of 'speak back' to power, authority, and hierarchy is common in traditional festivals of poetic licence from which the dramatists presumably drew. This is besides the potentially ribald atmosphere replete with high burlesque, and an exaggerated form of representation, not necessarily of the individual but human corporate being in a flux. The ultimate intentions of the Bakhtinian 'true' carnival might not have been fully played out in our chosen texts, but the three authors metaphorically appropriate it by their conscious relativisation of cultural experience and insidious challenge of all orthodoxies strewn in their path.

We must bear in mind that the nature of transposition of the mask code need not be direct because the mask — even as an ideational category — does not offer itself to a simple, literal interpretation. The process of deriving meaning from the mask in a dramaturgic sense is such that once the mask has been foregrounded as the



primary genre, as Harry Garuba (1988) notes, “a dramatic genre can then be constructed from its code” (45). Indeed, Garuba suggests that the mask in this sense serves as a crucial enabling conceptual metaphor of African and Black drama. The dramatists’ re-enactment of ritual through song and drama in their plays does not necessarily attempt to faithfully recapture those idioms in their pristine states. In his treatment, such performances have been revised and transformed into modes of cross-cultural expression of contemporary global experience.

### **Transforming the Mask**

Using the mask idiom of the Oyo-Yoruba, Nigeria, as an example, Harry Garuba demonstrates how the mask can be reconstituted in dramaturgic terms. He suggests three conceptual layers of the mask idiom, moving from direct, denotative relationships of the primary to the more abstracted uses of the same idiom at the secondary and tertiary levels by contemporary playwrights.

**Primary:** The representation of mask idiom in the Yoruba Apidan Phase (travelling theatre) was traced back to its cultural subsoil of the 17th Century in the old Oyo Empire. This phase embodied a large dose of spectacle (idan), mime, song, dance, and acting at a primordial level. He also emphasised the different phases of the development, leading up to the emergence of professional guilds, and one that eventually included the four-act performance structure.

**Secondary:** Other masks in literary drama (Death and the King’s Horseman). This is preceded by the playwright’s research on traditional dramatic forms. The emergence of the 1960 Ibadan masks as a new cognitive idiom for theatrical expression. In his essay, “From a Common Back Cloth...” Soyinka had said: “A very

long time ago, the discerning African rejected the anthropological novel. Perhaps during the next twenty years his foreign counterpart will do the same. Since even now African writers work against a similar back cloth, it is on the level of interpretation that the individual artist, as in any other culture, must be judged (389-390).”

Garuba shows how the mask in this phase reinvokes the logic that the body is a temporal mask of the soul, noting that bringing the spirit back after the departure of the soul requires another masking device. In this effort, cross-cultural influence was evident in the fusion of the mimetic and the mask code. At this point, the mask had been discarded as a direct cognitive aid, but conceptually incorporated in the play. And this fusion is most evident in experimental *A Dance* and its triple trajectory, which relived: one, The dead as characters, two, The dramatic structure of *Ijuba*, and three subversion of the principle of suspension of disbelief.

**Tertiary:** Extension of the idiom — *Dream on Monkey Mountain* and *Dutchman* by Derek Walcott and LeRoy Jones (Amiria Baraka). Here, Walcott affirms the theme of continuity in cross-cultural terms by noting that “Maturity is the assimilation of the features of every ancestor, “while Jones structures *Dutchman* in journey motif. Earlier experimentation by Caribbean writers had been decidedly weighed towards the European influence. *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, it was, that came to reconfigure this strategy of telling, showing and experiencing. In what Garuba describes as a transformation into a modal (tertiary) form, we find a sharp distinction from the earlier modes. While the primary genre may require the possibility of visual metamorphoses deriving from the use of the mask, the secondary phase merely depicted the element of metamorphoses through the figurative and impersonation —

with the primary genre becoming “an object of imitation.” At the tertiary level and movement from the second to this third phase (as with Dream), the artist no longer needs to adhere strictly to the technical criteria (or prescription) of the genre, but rather incorporates within the work the informing essence of the discourse.

The evolving form of the mask genre in phases (Primary-Secondary-Tertiary) was broadly represented below) by Harry Garuba (1988) along the structures of Presentational Style, Action, Time Structure, Characterisation and Audience Response:

**Reading Conceptual Codes and Conventions of Continuity:  
Two Traditions and conventions in the aesthetic continuum**

**• The Mask code vs. The Mimetic code**

| <b>A. The Mimetic code:</b>  | <b>B. The Mask code:</b>   |
|--|--|
| 1. Presentational Style  |  |
| Mimesis/Illusionism/Immitation   | Representation Incarnation/<br>Metamorphosis / Event<br>Presentation   |
| 2. Action  |  |
| Realistic/Plausible story, plot/<br>Causality/Unity of plot/<br>Sequentiality/Conflict/Resolution!/<br>Closure/Unity of action | Realistic and unrealistic<br>stories!// Episodes/<br>Juxtaposition/Conceptual<br>Unity/ Multidimensionality/<br>Situation/<br>Exposition/Situation/<br>Openended!/ Encyclopedic<br>scope of action |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 3. Time Structure  |   |
| Linearity set in historical time/<br>Time span of events in the<br>play=time-span indicated by the<br>Action   | Simultaneity/Set in historical<br>and non-historical time/ Time<br>span of events in the play<br>often= time span of<br>performance |
| 4. Characterization  |   |
| Individuals/Psychological<br>exploration in character<br>development/ Actor and<br>character are one Personae/ | Types/ Character in relation to<br>event or situation/ Actor may<br>assume other masks/ Play-<br>other-roles                        |
| 5. Audience Reaction   |   |
| Suspension of disbelief/ Non-<br>participatory   | Participatory/Chorus  |

### Hegemony and Counter-Hegemony

Tejumola Olaniyan (1995) in *Scars of Conquest/Masks of Resistance...*, engages the continuity and shift debate by examining the critical foundations of the informing creative process of each of the playwrights. Besides other references, he engages Soyinka's - "African Worldview" in "The Fourth Stage," Derek Walcott, in "What the Twilight Says," and LeRoi Jones (Amiria Baraka) in "The Motion of History."

Olaniyan locates the value of the concept "Discourse" in explaining this sense of difference amongst the different authors. He resorts to Foucault in identifying "Discourse", as not merely "a violence that we do to things... [but] a practice that we impose upon them," noting further... the domain of violence at the human-

interactive level, imposed through “the complexes of signs and practices which organise social existence and social reproduction.”

In appraising Baraka’s “The Motion of History”, he weaves it around the author’s activism, aptly comparing him to a “Che Without a Jungle.” He notes, furthermore, that what we are faced with in Baraka, therefore, (69) is “not his dogmatism, literalism, penchant for politics and propaganda...but...is Fanon’s irreverent, unassimilable Negro who is needed, demanded, and requested for if only ‘he’ would allow himself to be made palatable...” For one, Baraka refused to accept the Manichean divide “between literature and non-literature, art and politics, (69) “literary writer and “political pamphleteer,” genre and history, value and its material and historical determinants, and the scholar and the activist or the intellectual and politician.” (Baraka, 17) It seems like the (70): “...vision governing Baraka’s work is that of art as practice.” And there is a sense in which Baraka’s transformation(s) conforms, very closely to the journey motif of his play, *Duthman*: himself journeying through name and ideological transit camps - Bohemian-Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tse Tung-Feminist. This paradox of consistence in change, Baraka had once described as “The Changing Same.” This merely affirms his view that discourse goes beyond the monologic as it can at once be multiple and contradictory.

Olaniyan’s interpretation of the oeuvre of the manufacture of post-imperial dramaturgic subjectivity comes quite strongly. And to illustrate this, he somewhat assembles three distinct discursive formations: a hegemonic-Colonialist-Eurocentric discourse versus an anticolonialist, Afrocentric counter-discourse, and a once anti-colonialist and post-Afrocentric discursive formation.

In relation to the authors, Olaniyan suggests two modes of articulating difference: the expressive and performative. While the expressive, harbouring ethnocentric bias, does little in engaging difference, the performative acknowledges identity as multiple and negotiates the intercultural experience. He goes further to suggest Barbara Ann Teer's word-concept "decrudian", to characterise Baraka's construction of an African-American cultural identity. A process (71), according to Olaniyan, of refusing subjection and reforming subjectivity..." He cites W.J. Harris's suggestion that Baraka's method is similar to the process of jazz composition, which includes (p31) inversion, mutilation, repetition, parody, rejection, extremism, signifying, and complex fusion, and all utilised in relation to the dominant.

The biography is a crucial way of evolving a pedagogy, and Olaniyan maximises this in exploring the literary biography of the trio in relation to aesthetic response. He details Baraka's struggle with the complex of colour and the hierarchy of shades along the rungs of whiteness-yellowness-brownness-blackness. In relation to Soyinka and Walcott, he notes that both have suffered the charge of Eurocentricism, but suggests that a productive way to identify their ambiguity lies in the apprehension of utilisation of difference by a figure like Soyinka. He however notes the ambiguity between the portraiture of class and gender in his plays as against the denial of appropriateness of same in his essays. And for Derek Walcott, he suggests a distinction between the former's treatment of history as distinct from his engagement with culture not as politics. For the three authors, he notes a similar passion, but different articulation under different but related cultures. His preference is on how to draw attention NOT to sameness but diverse modes by which the playwrights respond to the, often, similar socio-historical contexts of their works and existence.. as all share historical

subjection...with originally violent, and yet assertion of subjectivity...

In *Dutchman*, he notes the bipolarity articulation of Clay by Lula, who divides him into two frames: Clay the 'individual' and Clay, the 'genius', black middle class. She, Lula, knows everything about the latter but very little about the former — since (78) “the genius is the realm of seeping frameworks and frozen identities, while the individual is the field in/of motion.” Frozen identities: slave/ descendant of a slave/black (genus) middle class/white prebendal (A black Baudelaire)/ Minstrelsia.

#### **A Sample Recommendation of Course Description**

Deriving from the above, a course could be derived on models of reading continuity in African drama and performance, and the drama of the Black Diaspora. In broad terms, this could include texts (in script or performance) of Black Africa, the Caribbean and African-American literature.

It could begin with an exploration of staple oral rhetorical forms and the diverse masking traditions, with emphasis on their literary and aesthetic qualities, before proceeding to the examination of the selected literary and performance texts. The course instructor and students would find it most rewarding with such texts as Wole Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forests*, *Death and the King's Horseman*, Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, and LeRoi Jones' (Amiri Baraka's) *Dutchman*. The course could also conclude with the song-text performance of African music, reggae and/or calypso tradition, as embodiments of the tropes of this continuity.

In one such tested case study (2007), at the Northwestern University, Evanston-Illinois, students were able to appreciate the relationship between aspects of the Black experience as presented in African, Caribbean and African-American 'literatures'; the historical, social, cultural, aesthetic and intellectual underpinnings of that experience, and the diversity in its expression. They equally came to appreciate the forms and styles of the works under study, especially the ways they illustrate the complex relationship between orality, cultural studies/popular culture, and literature.

### **Conclusion**

There is no set method for evolving the pedagogy of African and Diaspora history and culture; so, an insightful starting point would suggest a review of past curriculum theories and practices.

It is important to note that the creative process, in spite of its communal sensibilities and environmental influence, remains an intensely private domain of experience. It is in this context that this presentation has stressed the diverse theoretical possibilities that can attend to the subject matter as well as tease out evidence of the theme and style of continuity in dramaturgic terms. Beyond the continuum, however, it is apt to identify the constant shifts across time and space within the individual and collective oeuvre of the playwrights under examination.

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