

# VIEWPOINT

A Critical Review of Culture and Society

Vol. 1, Nos. 1 & 2, 1999

TWO DECADES OF TEACHING CLASSICS IN IBADAN



## THE CULTURE of DEVELOPMENT and the DEVELOPMENT of CULTURE

**Development  
is About People**

*Intellectuals And  
Social Change in an African Context*

**The Public Sphere  
and Democracy**

TRIBUTES TO ESI-KINNI OLUSANYIN



# VIEWPOINT

## A Critical Review of Culture and Society

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## Identity Reflexes in Selected Post-Colonial Texts

If we agree, as Karl Hausser poses it, that the concept of identity can be defined by the three components of: self-concept, self esteem, and belief in control; that there are motivational consequences which are often mercurial and unpredictable; then the definition of identity is beyond the reach of psychological research that has hitherto dominated the field. In constructing identities from a multi-disciplinary approach, the perspective continues to recede as ideas and nationalities, with mutational strains, continue to dominate communities hitherto considered homogenous.

Though historical and geographical relativities continue to wield control over those things which bring us together but the institutions which run societies continue to challenge us as individuals. Our outlook is thereby limited by those things we think we know but hardly understand. We therefore move again from a centre towards a periphery, and unity and diffusion go hand in hand in continual flux.

If identity-specific indices are hardly determinable because our world is always changing, how then do we conceptualise works of literature which should reflect those realities? At what remove can we consider ourselves part of a particular ethnicity, tribe or nation? Are historical or geographical exigencies enough to (re)construct identities? Do such inchoate configurations as pan-Africanism or pan-Arabism

mean anything specific? If they do, are they political or biological? At the most liberal, the present tendency would suggest that the nation-state is an ongoing experimental set-up; at the most conservative, it would mean that beyond the individual self, no permanent identity formation is really possible. There must be a compromise, a mean between these extremities. Somehow the definition must begin with reflexes connected with identity, uniqueness, and forms of cultural and literary normatives.

I shall attempt to illustrate the foregoing methodological framework with an example each from the works of Aimé Césaire, Derek Walcott, Athol Fugard and Wole Soyinka.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to identify a discursive strain in twentieth century literature which can boast of a distinctive identity or a uniform cultural stratum. For we do have such bodies of literatures termed English, African, Canadian, Asian, Commonwealth or Post-Colonial but these writings, taken as a whole, can hardly sustain a view of the world which is homologous in style and outlook. As both Stephen Slemon (1988) and Femi Abodunrin (1996) have recently observed, even the contextual frameworks of the so-called post-colonial literatures have degenerated into a "reading" rather than a cultural practice. After all, the instinct of 'indigenous' literatures that have a flair for orature and performance are now being

gradually etched and adopted into the canons that were hitherto designed for scriptography and print. By the conscious or unconscious deputation of third world critics, their own writing style and attitudes pander to the tastes of (post) modernism and (post) structuralism. Thus, as Helen Tiffin [1998] has also rightly observed, a post-colonial canon which started off as the counter-discursive of European canons is unwittingly undermining itself by writing itself in text and word into European "post-structuralism".

The example of this is not far-fetched in the writing style of most recent literatures but its citing here is not meant as a form of criticism; rather, it is a pointer to the fact that the concept of identity is far more elusive in definition than we often suppose. Certainly, the tide which tears us apart within boundaries often brings us together again. This thus reinforces one fact: that identity encompasses a means of control either into, within, or over a medium. In conceptualising a distinctive feature, we end up identifying a means of control. For instance, in identifying a distinctive role for the theatre of the Caribbean, Derek Walcott sees colonials as mapping an existence within a unique context of deprivation and self-elected martyrdom: "Colonials... that being poor, we already had the theatre of our lives" (1970:4). It thus means that historical experience, being



indicative of a superstructure, could be a basis for identity:

If I see these as heroes it is because they have kept the sacred urge of actors everywhere: to record the anguish of the race .... It is the journey back from man to ape. Every actor should make this journey to articulate his origins, but for these who have been called not men but mimics, the darkness must be total ... its noises should be elemental, the roar of rain, ocean, wind, and fire. (1970:5).

The above quotation from Walcott's "What the Twilight Says: An Overture" informs, fundamentally, the choice of the four West Indian and African works we have chosen for discussion in this paper. They are: Aimé Césaire's *Return to My Native Land* (1938, 1970); Derek Walcott's *Dream on Monkey Mountain* (1967, 1970); Athol Fugard's *The Island* (1974); and Wole Soyinka's *Ogun Abibiman* (1976). These four works are underscored by a dense, earthy allusion to a recognisable landmark; inflammatory fumaroles of sulphur, tellurium and anguish; and elemental volcano — dark, total and compelling. It would seem that there is an urgent, devastating, yet compassionate fusion between these writers and their immediate, recognisable milieu. What is felt and experienced becomes a means of locating an identity reflex, itself crucial to the process of creativity and cultural (re)production. This tallies with an aspect of self control, accountability, even self-justification.

Karl Hausser (1986:21) has rightly argued that identity has been difficult to define within the scope of scientific

conceptualisation but that he can only simplify the matter by summarising "three desired values of identity regulation":

I see myself correctly (self-concept);

I feel alright (self-esteem);

I get things done (belief in control).

The potential antagonist of these desired values is experienced reality (1986:21)

Hausser, and others, believe that identity formation is a life-long development. Largely, he describes rather than define this broad, sometimes contradictory concept. One, however, finds helpful as well as fascinating his assertion that the potential antagonist of desired values is reality as experienced by the individual through his/her society. If we chose to relativise experience within a given context, historical exigencies and cultural beliefs must become viable bases on which identity-specifics can be built. That is why it has often been convenient for recent theorisation to situate commonwealth experiences within such a valuable definition such as the post-colonial, post-apartheid or such metaphysical contiguities as magical realism, voodooism, mysticism, etc. (Davis & Morrison, 1988:143-144),

Identity paradigms are far more tangible within the context of such historical realities as colonialism, liberation, bondage, slavery, democracy, fascism etc. The texts chosen for discussion prefer this rather than be predicated on racial or religious contiguities alone, even if these were the only apparent reality. Obviously the

continent of Africa presents a racial homogeneity but is as linguistically disparate as, for instance, the old Soviet Union. We may then suppose that apart from raciality and skin pigmentation, we need to discover a second or third factor of homogeneity. A common historical experience will presuppose a programmed rather than a geneticist or instinctual response except where the fact of being co-existent in a particular location necessitates a communal historical experience. In like manner, in the modern world, professional codes and etiquette generate their own forms of identity reflexes.

Aimé Césaire, that Martiniquan man of letters, ascribes a polemical seesaw effect to the productivity of decline of civilisations, colonialism notwithstanding, so long as we insist on upholding human values as paramount. He writes:

That being settled, I admit that it is a good thing to place different civilisations in contact with each other, that it is an excellent thing to blend different worlds; that whatever its own particular genius may be, a civilisation that withdraws into itself atrophies; that for civilisations, exchange is oxygen ... But then I ask the following question; has colonisation really placed civilisation in contact? Or, if you prefer, of all the ways of establishing contact, was it the best? (1970:13).

He goes on to affirm that because of the destruction of human values engendered by colonialism, the mode of contact dehumanises its own undertaker even if he or she appears to be a civilised individual. This seesaw



or boomerang effect he describes thus:

Colonial activity, colonial enterprise, colonial conquest, which is based on contempt for the native and justified by that contempt, inevitably tends to change him who undertakes it: that the coloniser, who in order to ease his conscience gets into the habit of seeing the other man as *an animal*, accustoms himself to treating him like an animal. It is this boomerang effect of colonisation, that I wanted to point out. (1970:20)

If we, therefore, earmark such ideas of post-coloniality, proletarianisation, elitism and nationality as likely indices of identity formation, it is not because we espouse sloganeering but because these attitudes of mind and body are capable of simultaneously yielding their own counter opposition even as they are conceptualised. Their exceptions often prove their rules of identification. It will thereby be that our definition is that a concept of identity is that which is capable of generating its own counter opposition for the purpose of analysis and dialectical balance of the socio-political forces established in a select milieu. It is desirable to pitch this hypothesis against the analysis of *Return to My Native Land*.

C.L.R. James (1964, 1984) upholds that the genius of Césaire had been foreshadowed by two French poets: Baudelaire and Rimbaud. The former averred that the bourgeois nation state is rotten and that the poet (and modern man) must search for a genuine identity in an unknown place out of this world. The corpus of Baudelaire's poetry is thus classed by James as a form of

escape from a less than ideal world. James went as far as to say that Rimbaud's (and this is true) escapism led him to live in Ethiopia and to affirm this in his most famous collection, *Une Saison en Enfer* (A Season in Hell). He establishes the link with Césaire thus:

Rimbaud was anxious to get away from the world around him. He wrote about democracy and socialism and he fought in the Paris Commune as Baudelaire had fought in 1848. They were both very sensitive men who had an exalted conception of what society should be, and Rimbaud, in *Une Saison en Enfer* .... Now if you have read *Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal* by Aimé Césaire of Martinique you will realise that it is merely an extension in the twentieth century of Rimbaud's famous *Une Saison en Enfer*. (1984:145).

The translation of Césaire's poetry as *Return to my Native Land* is both a search as well as a return to source, a profound inner identity untainted and uncomplicated by the purely hypocritical bourgeois society emerging from the era of colonialism and subjugation. Colonial imposition had created a split personality for the writer where he must speak or write in a foreign language to be heard at all. In that context, he/she is regarded in the larger French society as a 'type' rather than as a human being (Kunene, 1970). This derives, undoubtedly, from the assimilationist policy of the French which calls on colonised peoples to 'discard any other identity in deference to a superior French identity' (Kunene: 17). It was the same search for identity which first led Césaire, like George Padmore before him, (James, 1984:227-8) to join the

Communist party as a way of dealing in a form of politics unpredicated on race or colour. He later (like Padmore too) resigned from the Communist party in frustration:

The peculiarity of 'our place in the world' which isn't to be confused with anybody else's. The peculiarity of our problems which aren't to be reduced to subordinate forms of any other problem. The peculiarity of our history, laced with terrible misfortunes which belong to no other history. The peculiarity of our culture, which we intend to live and to make live in an ever more real manner. (cited in Kunene:17).

Césaire discussed these peculiarities which make up a culture and an identity in the harsh, pauperised existence of the Caribbean as well as the visceral, grueling dynamics of its direct experiences. The question of identity has always been a trying but interesting case study for nationalities in the African diaspora. If we further subject those nationalities to the policy of assimilation, theirs is complicated two steps further than the situation of their African or Asian counterparts; and it represents an extreme condition. The West Indian grew up in an alien environment with residual cultural expressions of Africa without an African language. French assimilation forces them to shed a second degree of indigenisation for a third one that is held as supreme. Any lapse into either of the two earlier 'identities' (African or West Indian) amounts to a kind of betrayal which is capable of rendering the personality schizoid.



A direct cultural reaction to this phenomenon was the philosophy of Negritude which upholds that the black person has his/her own culture and civilisation in opposition to a system that denies him/her any contribution. This is why he affirms, tongue in cheek:

Heia for those who have  
never intend anything

those who never explored  
anything

those who never tamed  
anything

those who give themselves up  
to the essence of all things

ignorant of surfaces but struck  
by the movement of all things

free of the desire to tame but  
familiar with the play of the  
world (1970:75).

Or that rather prosaic  
interdiction:

For centuries this country  
repeated that we are brute  
beasts; that the human heart-  
beat stops at the gates of the  
black world; that we are  
walking manure hideously  
proffering the promise of  
tender cane and silky cotton,  
and they branded us with red-  
hot irons and we slept in our  
shit and we were sold in  
public squares and a yard of  
English cloth and salted Irish  
meat were cheaper than us  
and this country was quiet,  
calm, saying that the spirit of  
God was in His acts.  
(1970:67).

The strength of Césaire's  
assertions and others with him  
— like Sedar Senghor and  
Frantz Fanon — crystallised  
into what is generally known as  
the Negritude movement. The  
failure of bourgeois society  
gave rise to such other  
complementary, though  
preceding movements in art  
such as Romanticism, the  
Parnassian movement,

Surrealism, Symbolism and  
Dada. The cluster of all these  
movements at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>  
century and the beginning of the  
20th century, in my opinion,  
represents a general distrust and  
aversion towards a certain state  
of society or the rigid hierarchy  
of bourgeois society. Negritude  
was no exception in that the  
decadence and temper in society  
is almost always reflected in its  
art and literature. The only  
difference is that Negritude is  
more concerned with the state of  
colonised and oppressed peoples  
as universalised in his lines:

To leave

As there are hyena-men and  
panther men.

So I shall be a Jew man

a kaffir man

a Hindu-from-calcutta man

a man-from-Harlem-who-  
hasn't-got-the-vote.

(1970:48)

Consequently, the structure and  
images of Césaire's poetry tend  
to break down a familiar order,  
as surrealism and symbolism do,  
in a bid to re-structure the  
*status-quo* and re-order our  
perception of the world. I  
subscribe to the analysis of  
Kunene as reflected thus:

Surrealism was for him a  
logical instrument with which  
to smash the restrictive forms  
of a language which sanctified  
rationalised bourgeois values  
.... Césaire wrote poetry  
whose words had no normal  
logical order, which had no  
punctuation, and had a string  
of images not related to each  
other, throwing many  
reflected meanings on the  
subject. He felt that by  
breaking up the patterns  
whose logical order had  
affirmed racialism he had  
given surrealism a purpose.  
(1970:23,24).

My preoccupation with the form  
of Césaire's art, as I shall

presently do for Walcott, would  
seem to be part of a groping for  
identity. Both the content and  
form of the poetry represents a  
*running away from* a  
stereotypical image, and a  
conscious creation of *another*  
*image* of one's self and others  
like one's self. This would seem  
to buttress my earlier  
supposition that a definition of  
identity within a given context  
in a given situation, would  
almost certainly imply an other,  
an opposition. Negritude,  
therefore in all its positive  
affirmation represents a form of  
identity, a form of disalienation.  
This identity reflex was probed  
further in an interview which  
René Depestre held with  
Césaire in 1967 (Césaire, 1972)  
where Césaire stated that  
surrealism created a way of  
summoning the unconscious;  
calling back to Africa and  
emancipating his consciousness:

Yes, I felt that beneath the  
social being would be found a  
profound being, over whom  
all sorts of ancestral layers  
and alluvium had been  
deposited .... And I tried to  
develop a theory to  
encompass all of my reality.  
(1972:68, 69, 70).

In converging all the layers of  
alluviums, that archaeological  
image gave rise to what Abiola  
Irele calls the "telluric strain" in  
Césaire's poetry. Apart from the  
down-to-earth description of his  
material environment up to the  
abject state of his infant home  
and details of his grandmother's  
bed, he uncovers both individual  
and communal situation and  
unfurls the seismic disturbances  
of Martinique in his poetry such  
that the natural and political  
deprivations seem to be part of  
the same scheme. This is Irele's  
perception of it:

Colonial domination appears  
as a continuation of slavery,



so that his protest is often framed in terms of a slave revolt .... This aggressiveness is also projected in images and symbols drawn from the fauna and flora of the islands. A particularly significant example is his frequent use of 'volcanoes' and 'eruptive forces', a direct reference to the volcano which is a striking feature of the landscape of Martinique, his native Island. So closely tied up with his different words and attitudes are these local images that his poetry results in a deepening of local colour and becomes the expression of an organic union of the poet with his natural habitat. (Irele, 1967:65).

In my belief, the task of identity formation is achieved in Césaire's ability to conflate social and historical experience with the matching flavour of an expressive, evocative, linguistic form. I shall therefore attempt to push this frontier in the two other works to be discussed.

Derek Walcott, in *Dream on Monkey Mountain*, (1970) explores the two sides of the divided self of all displaced peoples: in this case the Afro-Caribbean. The spirit of these persons have been transplanted on to "strange soil in very unhealthy conditions", and their hearts and bodies broken and their souls left forlorn. The feeling is described by Irele thus:

For apart from the sentiment of rootlessness which requires a palliation, there is also present in his Caribbean mind a conflict arising out of his suppression of his African origins in the face of a diminishing Western culture. Africa, though present in the popular culture of the Caribbean, is the 'unavowed continent'; a situation which has created an unfortunate

complex in the West Indian and given rise to a difficult social problem. (1967:66).

In being thus marooned, ecologically and socially, two tendencies were bound to develop. The first is what Michael Dash and Helen Tiffin have called "the counter culture of the imagination" (1988:173); the other is an unprecedented holding on to permanent features and images of the land and the terrain. The first is unabashedly Jungian, manifesting in the unconscious as dreams, visions, rebellion, eroticism, orgy and sometimes, violence. The second emerges in an evocative internalisation of environment in art, creativity and control of the fauna as cultivators of the land. Both attitudes are inevitably linked and have manifested vividly in the two West Indian works discussed here. In the poetry of Césaire there is the invocation of elemental forces: rain, wind, fire, fumaroles and lava. In the play of Walcott, there is a prevalence of that Jungian unconscious. The bid to go back to the very beginning of things for a people who were transplanted "unto a stranger soil, in the worst possible biological conditions" (Price Mars in Sylvia Wynter (1970:1)).

Walcott's play is intriguing for recreating a history and a source for a people with rootlessness. He elects a pseudo-god as a militaristic judge, Corporal Lestrade who proclaims, *ilto tempore*.

In the beginning was the ape, and the ape had no name, so God call him man. Now there were various tribes of the ape, it had gorilla, baboon, orang-outan, chimpanzee, the blue-arsed monkey and 'the marmoset, and God looked at

his handiwork, and saw that it was good: (1970:216-7).

But even before this Adamic acknowledgement, the garden of Eden is converted into a jail because man has fallen from grace:

Mooma, mooma,  
Your son in de jail a'ready,  
Your son in de jail a'ready,  
Take a towel and band your belly. (p. 212).

Though Walcott presents the 'original sin' as that of a mental rage and violence deriving from alcohol, he pitches it firmly on the mental instability often recurrent from the changing phases of the moon. It is the same moon that drives the adamic man, Makak, into sleep, hallucination and dreams. Makak calls this moon, a heavenly woman "walking along her own road" (p. 227). He supplicates his temper and tormentor thus:

(on his knees)  
Lady in heaven, is your old black warrior,  
The King of Ashanti,  
Dahomey, Guinea,  
Is this old cracked face you kiss in his sleep...  
Put on my rage, the rage of the lion! (p. 228).

If the rage for an identity, a knowing unknowable, creates an illusion in an unsubstantiated entity known as the whiteness of the moon, then Corporal is right to assert that "is this rage for whiteness that does drive niggers mad" (p. 228). Whilst Makak, and his alter-ego Moustique quests after a livelihood, Makak seeks an identity, and through his own imagination discovers his innocence. Not only does a memory of the past become re-established by his interaction with his pet phantom, there is a reassurance that there is nothing



shameful in his history and his past. It is thus in dialoguing with that imagination that he discovers his identity in the alluvial deposits of that recoverable past. Though he must kill that dream, he must first of all confront it to discover the race of lions in himself. This complements the symbolism of the drum and the sun. Apart from being a medium of communication, song, dance and religion, the drum becomes a dread symbol for cultural resistance and revolt on the slave plantations for which reason it is banned;

The alphabet preserves information longer, the drum spreads it more quickly and across physical space. The prescription of the drum came about when it was realised that the drum rhythms were part of the unifying force of revolts (Wynter 1970:36).

The reality of the dream emerges as Makak 'heals' the peasant, Josephus. The reality of a dream to inaugurate an identity suffers a temporary setback when felons like Moustique, a mosquito and parasite, take advantage to monetise 'a faith' which is truly and freely given. This is the subversive element of the bourgeois state. It is this exploitative tendency in colonialism and the bourgeois state which swaps or subverts identities and makes business out of the resources of others that eventually destroys Moustique. Though Makak's search is itself fraught with setbacks and is rendered inconclusive, he re-discovers his own bearing as indicated by the nature of the elements around him. His own dream is encapsulated in his discovery of that knowledge.

I know the nature of fire and wind. I will make a small fire. Here, look, you see this plant? Dry it, fire it, and your mind will cloud with a sweet, smelling smoke. Then the smoke will clear. You will not need to eat. (p. 288).

This becomes an indication that he has conquered what Césaire describes as "every rigid prohibition at the four corners of his fervour" (1970:85). Makak's response to his more passionate followers, Tigre and Souris, is almost incantatory and it logically follows that the chorus in Scene III should sing his praise names almost like an African Oriki\*

Who drew the thief to his bosom,

The murderer to his heart,

Whose blackness is a coal,

Whose soul is a fire

Whose mind is a diamond

Dispenser of justice,

Genderer and nourisher to a thousand wives,

Praise him! (p. 30).

This would seem to be the long-sought identity or idea and dream of his people that Makak has always sought. He can thus destroy his illusions without destabilising himself. Earlier on, he did not know his name, his true identity, but now "the branches of his fingers and the root of his feet have found ground" (p. 326). One is tempted to name, among the influences of Walcott, Isidore Ducasse (1846-1870), a forerunner of surrealism who is thought to have influenced poets of the later generation. In his *Chants de Maldoror*, the hero

therein fits Makak as Césaire describes it; and the episodic nature of *Dream on Monkey Mountain*:

a kind of epic poem in prose whose satanic hero is in violent rebellion against God and society. The disconnected episodes through which Maldoror passes are a series of fantastic vision, occasionally mystic and lyrical, more often grotesque, macabre and erotic, filled with sadism and vampirism. The work as a whole has the intensity of a nightmare and seems almost to spring directly from the author's subconscious. (1972:47)

But beyond that subconscious is Walcott himself teasing out an identity from juxtaposing epistemic traditions from the 'imperial' and the 'native', the colonising mind and its opposing spirit whilst gently parodying a super-imposed reality.

My two other examples will come nearer home to the continent of Africa. Though the experiment of Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona in *The Island* (1974) is a rather extreme one, it cannot be faulted that a sense of identity in a colony is best analysed at second remove. First, the Island takes the two protagonists, John and Winston away from the mainstream of Apartheid South Africa by putting them on an imagined (supposedly the notorious Robben) island. The two characters (a little more interesting if we assume them to be a white and a black) are supposed to interact in a solitary cell, further away from the prejudices of their respective tribes. The aim is to distill a unifying identity for a people who find themselves accidentally contiguous; and to

\* A praise poem



fault the imposed supposition that one is inferior to the other, as apartheid and racism uphold it.

John and Winston impose a third level identity index on themselves because they devise a play (itself a code-switching phenomenon) in which they were to act gender-reversing roles. Winston, the more sensitive of the two because he is to switch his sex and transform into a Greek Princess, Antigone. The process of transvestitism, for the actor Winston, is wrought in pain: the fear of a phoney appearance; of being laughed at; of not keeping his 'balls', etc. The point here, when taken, provokes the question earlier interposed whether identity formation is ever a 'once and for all' matter or whether it is motile. The experiment in the play further consubstantiates the two emotional personages for the purpose of tearing them apart: violently, so that the reflexes of identity can be annealed by the vicissitudes of nationhood.

In the fourth scene, the brink of emotional break-down beguiles the spirit of solidarity as it appears that one of the prisoners is to be set free and the other doomed to loneliness. The point is then broached whether identity is the choice of the individual tied to his/her own fate or if it is inherent in the choice of a group or a nation over the individual. Even here, the benefit of a common language does not forestall the collapse:

No John! Forget me ...  
because I am going to forget  
you. Yes. I will forget you.  
Others will come in here,  
John, count, go, and I'll forget  
them. Still more will come,  
count like you, go like you,

and I will forget them. And  
then one day, it will all be  
over (p. 72).

Winston's point here would seem to affirm that contiguity is a sound prerogative of identity nucleus. "So far as something brings us together...", then we are identical. This may be values of culture, history or geography. It also reveals that the point of contact is a capable point of departure. If it is only a point of contact, then it cannot be an identity nucleus; the crucial point is that it must be capable of generating disunity as well.

It is in Soyinka's piece of poetry, *Ogun Abibiman* (1976) that a historical experience is forged on mythology as lived by a racial stock. The basis of identity here hinges on experience as lived through parallels of imaginative connectedness. Historical personages, Ogun and Chaka, both war leaders, were relived as steaks of the same event in the experience of a race as it moves through history. He tries to link the spirit of Ogun, a 14th century icon with Chaka's, an 18th century Zulu warrior and nation builder. He poetically traces the use of metal and the instruments of warfare to these African icons as he laments the vacuum left behind:

Labour is holy — behold our  
midwives with  
The dark wine and black  
wafers of communion,  
Ministering to history,  
delivering the missing  
Chapter of the text. Let the  
living mourn  
Hereafter. But in this hour,  
Since a song is arduous task  
to grieving tongues  
And drums must pause while  
hands are raised  
To heal, and to rebuild

The tradition of poetry and literature which, coincidentally, is inspired by these two great figures are still aspects of praise poetry in the structure of oral performances among African peoples. If cultural contiguity is invoked as an identity-prone phenomenon, then it is legitimate to contextualise those two historical periods as high point of history on the African continent. The connection readily forged between these two like-minded heroes does reinforce the spectrum of cultural identity discernible in the prolificity of song and theatre among Western and Southern Africans.

In conclusion, it is safe to affirm that (i) Identity-related phenomenon such as race, language, historical relativity and geographical contiguities are indicative of identity, (ii) theoretical conclusions can only be reached when identity markers can generate their own counter opposition as earlier discussed where an exception proves the rule.

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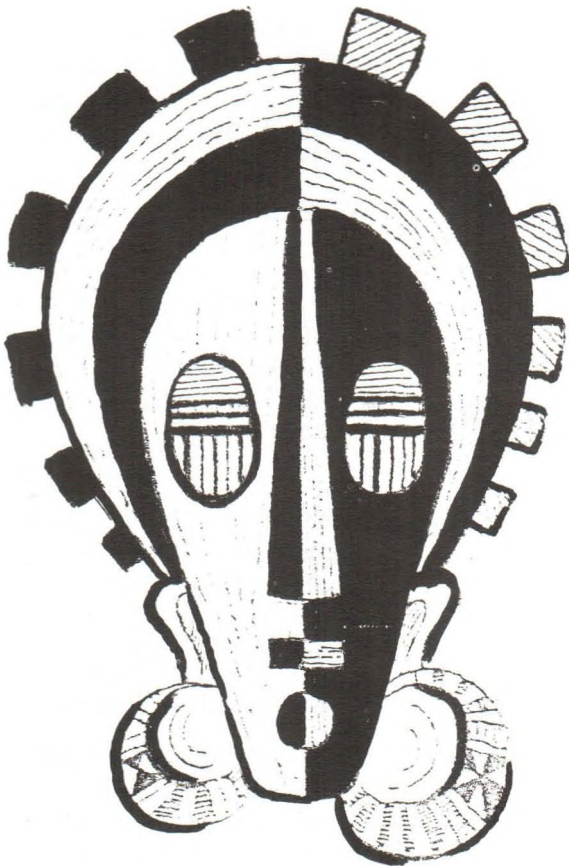
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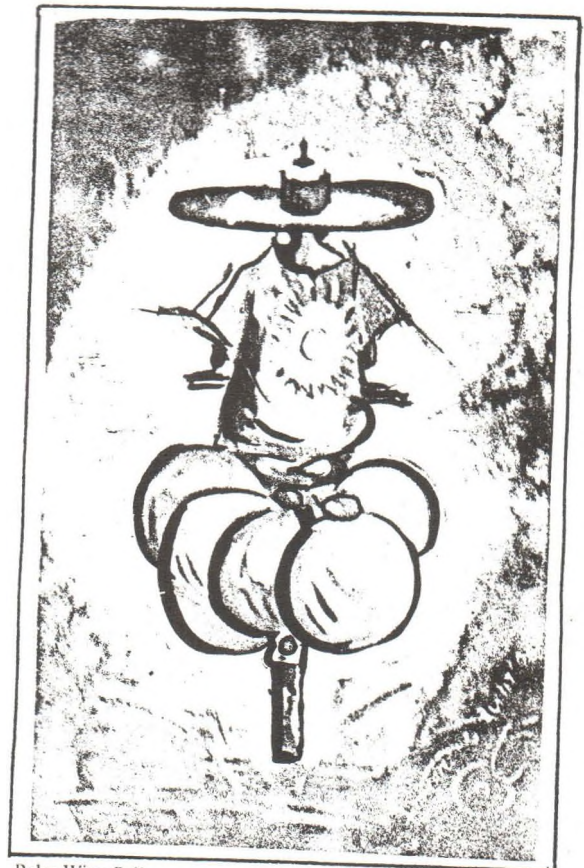
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Mask

Moses Ogunleye



Palm Wine Seller

Lawrence Iyoha