

*“Her Words Are Like Fire”:*  
*The Storytelling Magic of Dionne Brand*

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An oracle and a bringer of joy, the storyteller is the living memory of her time, her people. She composes on life but does not lie, for composing is not imagining, fancying, or inventing.

Her words are like fire. They burn and they destroy. It is, however, only by burning that they lighten. Destroying and saving, therefore, are here one single process. Not two processes posed in opposition or in conflict.

TRINH T. MINH-HA, *Woman, Native, Other*

ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN WOMEN'S writing crackles with images of flames and conflagration, of dreams of fire, of women whose names are “written in fire,” of torching of homes and great houses.<sup>1</sup> All express rage at the condition of the so-called post-colonial world and a burning desire to transform it.<sup>2</sup> All variously speak in fiery tongues about continued oppression, colourism, sexism, classism, economic servitude, squalor, and the realization of colonial desires through neocolonial enterprises. All burn with the knowledge that indigenous worlds and traditional ways of knowing, like storytelling and visionary experience, were and are eclipsed by dominant cultures.

The fiction of Trinidadian writer Dionne Brand underscores this rage and the desire to transfigure postcolonial worlds. Several of Brand's most powerful images focus on the the ability of the mind to delve into memory and invoke images that destroy and illumine. In “At the Lisbon Plate,” the narrator's dreams contain fires that unleash global political revolutions and in “St. Mary's Estate” the narrator, in visiting the estate where her family worked as labourers, conjures an image of the still extant Great

House and ignites it. These two brief examples highlight Brand's style that draws heavily on a woman's storytelling tradition to begin to refashion worlds disfigured by colonialism and neo-colonialism. Brand combines her rage with the lexicon of the storyteller, the words "like fire . . . that burn and destroy . . . that destroy and lighten" (Trinh 132).

Different from nationalist fiction modelled after realism, which merely protests and continues to "consolidate" characters and the neglected past (Sharrad 96), Brand's narratives are more like the work of Guyanese writer Wilson Harris, who, Paul Sharrad claims, acts as a "visionary witness" filling "the void [of the neglected past] with a fiction of the imagination that will repopulate history with invisible presences never completely destroyed" (97). According to Sharrad, Harris "[creates] a fictional memory of suppressed legend, silent folklore, forgotten images" (97). Brand, too, recreates the past by digging into a collective memory that Harris contends is available to the artist, a memory that sees ancestral presences never fully eclipsed by dominant cultures. While Brand is also a "visionary witness" like Harris, her work relies less on the "subjective" imagination and more on a woman's storytelling tradition, a communal, not individual approach to memory.<sup>3</sup> This approach informs her iconoclastic style and it underscores the ability of story/legend/vision to transform the listener. Brand's explosive fictional narratives, in particular "At the Lisbon Plate," "Blossom: Priestess of Oya, Goddess of Winds, Storms, and Waterfall," and "Photograph," offer healing and redemptive visions which supersede subaltern approaches that either oppose "colonialist-nationalist" history making or use a "strong counter-memory" to forget or override these histories (Radhakrishnan 759). This narrative approach relies on a storytelling practice that foregrounds a dissolution of boundaries between storyteller/listener and the past and present.<sup>4</sup>

Trinh Minh-ha suggests that women's storytelling revolves around women's work and the establishment and continuation of local history. Women's storytelling, the "oldest form of building historical consciousness" (148), is directly related to the work of women's hands. The story is told by women to other

women and girls as they work. Much like the weaving, baking, and farming that are the daily concerns of many women in postcolonial societies, the story comes out of the work of women's hands. The story is told and retold in conjunction with life experience and hence becomes a "living thing."

An entire body of knowledge of history, customs, and lineage, the story also becomes palpable, something "sucked at the mother's breast":

Patiently transmitted from mouth to ear, body to body, hand to hand. In the process of storytelling, speaking and listening refer to realities that do not just involve the imagination. The speech is seen, heard, smelled, tasted, and touched. It destroys, brings into life, nurtures.

(121)

The suckled story, which comes from the "belly of occult power" (136), is "magically revealed" rather than factually told (121), and it also often has a startling, unsettling impact. Similar to the yin-yang unity of the Tao and perhaps drawing on indigenous storytelling practices, like those of the Igbo that emphasize the juxtaposition of all things, the "words that burn" are also a "protection and a cure" (135).<sup>5</sup>

While the story is interwoven with the material and familial conditions of women's lives, Trinh also stresses, like Jamaican-born writer Michelle Cliff, that the story involves both the discovery of the hidden past and the repetition of what is uncovered. The story of the common people "needs our remembering and understanding for it to keep coming into being" (119). According to Cliff, this unearthing of the past involves an unlearning of dominant discourse, a forgetting of Lethean education, and a discovery of what was "lost from the darker side, and what may be hidden, to be dredged from memory and dream" ("A Journey Into Speech" 13).

Trinh suggests that this remembering of what was lost occurs communally as women tell and retell the stories of the family and the group. Further, she indicates that the story is greater than the tellers, larger than their own memories:

My story, no doubt is me, but it is also, no doubt, older than me . . . Unmeasurable, uncontainable, so immense that it exceeds all attempts at humanizing. . . . [F]or the vision of a story . . . has no end—

no end, no middle, no beginning; no start, no stop, no progression; neither backward nor forward, only a stream that flows into another stream, an open sea. . . . (123)

Each storyteller, then, dips into the story that flows like a stream, with no beginning and no end. The storyteller makes the past and present contiguous. Likewise, Brand, a contemporary postcolonial storyteller, makes the past and present touch as she conjures up stories that destroy and illumine colonial discourses, while rebuilding a vision of the postcolonial world.

In "Make It Your Own," Michelle Cliff writes:

I wish sometimes we had it in our power to terrify you. And that your terror would come from a righteous place, and not the usual source of your fear—whatever image you have projected onto us. I wish you were sweating about our power. I wish your heart would burst from your chest and your aorta flood your extremities with blood. And that this blood seeped from your pores and blinded you. I wish we could destroy you without harming ourselves. (84)

While this narrator's fury is directed at tourists who seem to claim the islands as their own, the vengeful anger represented in this essay is much like the anger enunciated in Brand's "At the Lisbon Plate." This story explodes with postcolonial rage as Brand creates an iconoclastic revenge-seeking storyteller magician, a witch-figure who tells the collective story of the lost female and slave past while she comments upon contemporary social conditions that continue past oppression.

Similar to Jean Rhys's heroines, who often find solace in bars where they are anonymous and exiled, the narrator finds that the Lisbon Plate, a Portuguese bar located in the Kensington district of Toronto, is the perfect location for colonial exile. Here she can find "refuge." This is where she "can be invisible or, if not invisible, at least drunk" (96). In this setting, Brand brings the colonized, exiled woman in contact with the colonial forces that transfigured Trinidad and Tobago. In various ways, the setting is the meeting place for the Spaniards, French, and English, the forces that interchangeably conquered and ruled Trinidad and Tobago. It is also the nexus where the colonized woman discursively destroys and transforms the colonial past and acknowledges continuing oppression.

Even though the narrator feels "invisible," she cannot escape her colonial past and the past of her ancestors. The bar is owned by Rosa who had lived in "Angola and Mozambique." Rosa appears "accustomed to Black women" and she looks on the narrator "colonially" (95). Patrons of the bar are men who are emblematic remnants of the colonial past: "Whip-handlers, skin-dealers," and a professor whose ethno-gaze classifies and appropriates native art. He also thinks that Camus's *Outsider* "can be interpreted as the ultimate alienation" (111). The narrator is appalled to hear the men speak of "old times":

The old-timers boasted about how many peizas de indias they could pack into a ship. The young soldiers talked about the joys of filling a Black with bullets or stuffing a Black cunt with dynamite. Then they gathered around Columbus, the whoremaster, and sang a few old songs. (105)

In addition to hearing stories of past colonial atrocities, the narrator hears contemporary stories of oppression that she feels Maria de Consecacao, another bar patron, wanted to "get rid of." One story that Maria tells is the story of Rosa's brother, the priest who "gunned down" women and children in Angola (97). The narrator is also bitter when she sees in the newspaper that the press has "gone wild" about the murder of one Polish priest when, simultaneously, countless, but uncounted, "African laborers got killed and, besides that, fell to their deaths from third-floor police detention rooms in Johannesburg" (106).

As the narrator is bombarded with stories of oppression, she becomes introspective and sees herself from the "third-floor window of the furniture store across from the bar":

Rheumy-eyed, I have seen a woman sitting there, whom I recognize as myself. A Black woman, legs apart, chin resting in the palm of her hand, amusement and revulsion travelling across her face in uneasy companionship. The years have taken a bit of the tightness out of my skin but the expression has not changed, searching and uneasy, haunted like a plantation house. Surrounded by the likes of Rosa and her compadres. A woman in enemy territory. (97)

As the narrator sits in drunken introspection, looking at her face inscribed with the painful past, the fantastic further enters the story and the "ordinary" disappears. As she imagines looking

at herself from the third-floor window, she notes that she (the narrator) looks

like a woman I met many years ago. As old as the dirt, she sat at the roadside waiting her time, an ivory pipe stuck in her withered lips and naked as she was born. That woman had stories, more lucid than mine and more frightening for that. (98)

Indicating that this old woman unearths the buried past and “explodes” colonialism, the narrator describes her as the “old gravedigger”—whose “bones were black powder” (98). This gravedigger returns to the Sargasso Sea every winter to “mine bones and suicides” (102), seemingly to “resurrect” the lives of the “living dead” buried in the landscape and the sea, those who have died but who cannot be obliterated from the land. This storytelling obeah woman, who has a “burning hand” (108), promises the narrator her “memories and maps” and gives her a “juju belt full of perfidious mixtures, insolent smells and her secrets” (102), gifts that will provide the narrator with a way to subvert the Columbian era and to reach back to the Pre-Columbian past.

Although after the narrator meets and joins with the old “harridan,” she warns the reader not to expect her storytelling to change, not to expect any old woman’s tale (101), any “lies or fiction” (101), the narrator’s story becomes more magically fantastic after her encounter with the old woman. The narrator reveals the buried past and the conflict-fraught present as she tells the stories of various women in different eras: the story from the immediate past of her aunt who went mad from trying to pass by whitening her skin and masquerading as a Spanish woman, and the current story of her friend Elaine who thinks the “motherland is Africa” and who wants to be a “queen in ancient Mali” (99). Each of these stories reveals a Caribbean search for identity, or what Kenneth Ramchand calls the story of “alienation within alienation” (de Abruna 85), a story of fragmented identity within a fragmented, colonial culture.

The old woman’s story that reveals the buried past and conflict-ridden present also transforms this fragmentation as it reveals it. The boundaries between the narrator and protagonist begin to dissolve as the narrator starts to resemble the old “bag of

dust." When a "big white boy" enters the Lisbon Plate, she sees his eyes through the eyes of a slave woman experiencing the middle passage:

I would know those eyes anywhere. The last time I saw them, I was lying in the hold of a great ship leaving Conakry for the new world. . . . That hell-hole stank of my own flesh before I left it. . . . For days I lived with my body rotting and the glare of those eyes keeping me alive, as I begged to die and follow my carcass. (107)

This transformation indicates that the narrator, the captive slave woman, and the old woman are connected by a matrilineal story and a collective memory. The story makes the past and present contiguous and allows women to participate in both the pain and strength of the past. The old woman, then, becomes an emblem for the unrecorded and painful past, and just as she is present in the narrator, she and her story are buried within the lives of each Caribbean woman past and present.

Acting like a revenge-seeking riverain goddess, an ancient goddess of Africa, the old woman plans a course of retribution for colonial sins that first involves storytelling. Before participating in the old hag's plan, the narrator retells the narrative of the *Outsider*, from the Arab's point of view, an action that, like the stories of the insignificant women, reveals the perspective of the conquered. Her retelling of the story of the nameless Arab, now called Ahmed, shot by the European, first shows that "killing an Arab, pumping successive bullets into an Arab, is not and never has been an alienating experience for a European" (111). It also demonstrates that the ultimate means of alienation is the murder of an individual of the "other" race and not the existential suffering of the white male.

After this retelling of the colonizer's discourse, the old hag gives the "go ahead" for her plan which represents a ritual retribution for colonial sins. The narrator and the old woman gather together all the oppressive colonial forces: the big white boy, the professor, the whiphandlers, the skindealers, and the moneychangers who frequent the Lisbon Plate. After defacing and "chewing" on the statue of Cristobal Colon that has been worshipped by the colonizers, the narrator/old woman chains her captives to the statue and sprays them with "oceans of blood"

(114), the blood of generations of tortured colonized. The narrator recognizes the sins of Columbus, which Eric Williams reports included the maiming and murder of Amerindians (34). After the colonizing forces “choke” on the blood, the old woman and her companion, the narrator, “marinate” them in hot peppers, ironically acting like the cannibals the Europeans claimed the Caribs to be, and the old woman “laughs until her belly burst” (114). This fantastical retribution, a story that comes from the “belly of occult power” (Trinh 136), represents both a violent overturning of the colonizer’s institutions and a visionary violence that unleashes the anger and pain that postcolonial societies still experience. Through drawing on a dissolution of boundaries inherent in the storytelling process, this narrative transforms the individual listener into a participant in the storytelling process.

In “Blossom: Priestess of Oya, Goddess of Winds, Storms, and Waterfall,” Brand continues to express the rage of a woman oppressed by sexism and colourism, but in this magical story, she begins the process of creating, out of the ashes of this raging fire, a new narrative for postcolonial peoples. While not specifically about the storytelling process, “Blossom” is concerned with the way rage leads to a union with a transformative deity that results in a revised vision of the world. Working like the storyteller, who Trinh claims “delights” in relating an “entire vision of the world” (121), Brand begins to refashion the way the postcolonial subject conceives the world.

Blossom, a native of Trinidad and emigrant to Toronto, is sexually exploited by both white and black males. Her unfaithful husband Victor expects her to be dutiful whenever he decides to return to her. When the white doctor for whom she is a housekeeper grabs her, she explodes with rage:

Blossom sheself start to scream like all hell. . . . A craziness fly up in Blossom head and she start to go mad on them in the house. She flinging things left right and centre, and cussing big word. . . . The doctor keep saying to the police, “Oh, this is so embarrassing. She’s crazy, she’s crazy.” And Blossom tell him, “You ain’t see crazy yet.” (33)

Blossom starts to throw all the clothes in the swimming pool as



she shouts, "Make me a weapon in thine hand, Oh Lord!" But the prayer reaches beyond the Christian god into the distant past, to the goddess of storms, wind, and waterfalls, the "goddess of edges, of the dynamic interplay between surfaces, of transformation from one state to another" (Gleason 1).<sup>6</sup>

Blossom also loses control when Victor returns after a long absence. Until this point she has suffered silently, willing to accept, as a good Christian lady, Victor's neglect and infidelity. This unfaithfulness, combined with Blossom's realization that she is becoming an old woman working for white people as she "watches white people live," instigates the moment of rage: "[s]omething just fly up in Blossom head and she reach for the bread knife . . . 'Victor, just go and don't come back, you hear me?'" (37). Blossom chases Victor down the street brandishing the knife and it is at this point that she loses her boundaries. She hears someone scream and at first she does not know who it is. Then she "realize that the scream was coming from she and she couldn't stop it" (38).

Blossom enters a Pentecostal church, "feeling that she was holding she body around she heart, holding sheself together, tight, tight" (38). In this church she feels as if she is drowning and "gasping for air," she begins "speaking in tongues" and she understands the messages. In a sense, she experiences the "descent of the Holy Spirit," yet the Holy Spirit is not the Christian spirit, but rather the Spirit of Oya. The boundary between Oya and Blossom dissolves, and Blossom attains a visionary state where the imposed boundaries between species, time, and dualities dissolve. She begins to see juxtapositions and attains the vision of the storyteller who sees no beginning, no middle, no end, only an endless stream of story. Oya enters her and leads her into a state where she attains a broad, enlightened vision of the world.

In an experience similar to Eve's dream in *Paradise Lost*, Blossom flies around the world. But she surpasses Eve's experience in that she enters the "deep blackness beyond the sky." In this waking dream, Blossom sees a "volcano erupt and a mountain fall down" and she comes

to the place where legahoo and lajabless is not even dog and where soucouyant the fireball burn up in the bigger fire of an infinite sun. . . . The place bright one minute and dark the next. . . . The place big one minute, so big Blossom standing in a hole and the blackness rising up like long shafts above she and widening out into a yellow and red desert . . . the place small, next minute, as a pin head. (39)

In this place big and small, dark and light meld and transform into one another. Here, as in Taoist and Igbo worldviews, dualisms are complements, not opposites, and are part of a larger whole.

Blossom also experiences a moment when her body is transformed into other forms of being:

Then she feel as if she don't have no hand, no foot, and she don't need them. Sometimes she crawling like a mapeeppe snake; sometimes she walking tall, tall, like a moco jumbie through desert . . . upside down and sideways. (39)

After this experience, Blossom feels as if "somebody is borning," and she begins speaking in tongues the name Oya.

A significant aspect of Blossom's transformation and union with the goddess Oya is its material dimension. Blossom is forced to confront the suffering of Black humanity; she cannot look away. This leads to Blossom's understanding of a new narrative for postcolonial peoples.

In "If I Could Write This In Fire, I Would Write This In Fire," Cliff states that one of the tests of the colonized person is the ability to walk through the Dungle of Kingston without batting an eye, the ability to accept the suffering and material conditions of the oppressed masses (71). In facing off with Suffering, Blossom sees the "old, hoary face" of Black people suffering and the sight sickens her (39). In battling with Suffering, Blossom takes on the attributes of Oya with the "warrior knife," and vanquishes Suffering, who retreats. Suffering has not been annihilated, but Blossom realizes that suffering should not be a natural assumption of life. From this point on, Blossom writes her own narrative, one that refuses to accept racism, colourism, sexism, or axiomatic suffering. She transforms and protects herself by wearing the colors of Oya: yellow the color of joy, and red, the color of war with suffering (41).

While "Blossom" and "At the Lisbon Plate" draw heavily on the destructive/enlightening aspects of the storytelling tradition, "Photograph" emphasizes the nurturing/protective aspects—the "protection and the cure" that forges a women's storytelling community.

In "Photograph," the grandmother, a figure of "ancestral story magic," is a storyteller who teaches her granddaughters how to cope with both tangible and intangible worlds, the intangible spirit world that Jamaica Kincaid notes was a reality in Caribbean life. Kincaid asserts that in the Caribbean "reality is not to be trusted" (Cudjoe 230). People thought to be alive might, in fact, be dead.<sup>7</sup>

The narrator of "Photograph" describes the storytelling atmosphere in which the granddaughters receive vital information about dealing with this world:

It was in the darkness on the veranda, in the honey chuckle back of my grandmother's throat, that we learned how to catch a soucouyant and a lajables and not to answer to the "hoop! hoop!" of duennes, the souls of dead children who were not baptized, come to call living children to play with them. To catch a soucouyant, you had to either find the barrel of rain water where she had left her skin and throw pepper in it, or sprinkle salt or rice on your doorstep so that when she tried to enter the house to take your blood, she would have to count every grain of salt. . . . (72-73)

The complex ritual is related in a way that combines practicality with immediate oral performance and sensual pleasure. The narrator also relates that the grandmother sat in her rocking chair, "the seat bursting from the weight of her hips," and spun stories that "languished over the darkness whose thickness we felt. . . . Some nights the darkness . . . would be suffused by the perfume of lady-of-the-night" (72). The grandmother's stories, then, are associated with the fullness of the grandmother's body, and are transformed into material objects that float in the air around the children and create a way to control and manipulate the world. "Sucked at the [grand]mother's breast," this material story also serves as a buffer, a protection from evil forces. "Suffused" with the perfume of the night, the story becomes a sensual pleasure that draws the initiate into the world of story magic.

The magic of the grandmother's story transforms the girls' world. Story itself makes the granddaughters merge with the grandmother in a way that goes beyond the notions of a semiotic, pre-oedipal bond associated with pre-language and the rhythms of the mother; the granddaughters "become full of the grandmother." Indicating that the language of story and the Creole language become the bases for life and communication, the narrator states, "[a]ll the words which we knew belonged to my grandmother" (74). The language of story conveys both story and history in a way perceived by the granddaughters as an immediate event.

Mildred A. Hill-Lubin notes that in the "Motherland [Africa], the grandparents were honored because it was believed they were closer to the ancestors" (259). If we consider John Mbiti's analysis of "African" concepts of time<sup>8</sup> and the importance of the past, the idea of the grandmother being closer to the ancestors becomes a crucial aspect of "Photograph." Mbiti asserts that the far past, the immediate past, and the present are the only parameters of time that exist in the pre-colonial African world view. The future (beyond two years) does not exist. All that is important is the "lived event" found in the present and the immediate present, and the person "experiences life partly through individual life, communal life, and through generations" (17). The older relative knows the names of the ancestors, and may have actually known the immediate ancestors who recently died; Mbiti calls these dead the "living dead." The grandmother in Brand's narrative knows the living dead; she conveys information about the grandfather who escapes the "legahoo" who would take his soul (72). The act of storytelling keeps the dead alive, transporting the past into the present.

The grandmother and her story become the world in which the children live. The narrator notes: "We dreamed in my grandmother and we woke up in her, bleary-eyed and gesturing for her arm, her elbows, her smell" (75). Boundaries of "western" reality do not exist in this world, where the living and dead, the conscious and unconscious meet, and where waking and dreaming worlds intermingle. The story sucked at the grandmother's breast, the story which "suffused the night" and hung in the air

like a sensual blanket, acts as both a protection and a cure. In passing it on to her granddaughters, the grandmother ensures the perpetuation and remembrance of the story of the people.

Brand's "words that burn," that "destroy and lighten," also "protect and cure." These narratives "destroy" and illumine colonial discourses that fuel the continuation of colonialism and neocolonial enterprises. In creating fictions that draw on the storytelling tradition, Brand discursively connects, across the imposed boundaries of time and geography, women and all postcolonial peoples; she also joins other writers in transforming the vision of the postcolonial subject. In hearing tales that are a "protection and a cure," the postcolonial subject begins to move closer to an era of true decolonization in which racism, colourism, sexism, and suffering are not accepted norms. In lighting "dreams that contain fires," Brand works discursive magic and offers hope to postcolonial worlds still burning in an inferno of oppression.

#### NOTES

- 1 See Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Brand's "At the Lisbon Plate" and "St. Mary's Estate," and Michelle Cliff's "If I Could Write This In Fire, I Would Write This In Fire" for various fire images and allusions.
- 2 I am using the term postcolonial as a term of convenience to refer to formerly colonized nations, now politically independent from their "mother" countries. However, many critics and writers feel that there is "no post in postcolonial" because the material and social conditions of colonization are still extant in postcolonial worlds.
- 3 "Subjective imagination" is a term coined by Harris to represent the vehicle the individual fiction writer uses to delve into the collective memory ("A Talk on the Subjective Imagination"). Both Harris and Trinh believe in a collective memory into which the artist may tap. Harris prefers the term "universal unconscious" to Jung's "collective unconscious" and he differentiates his term by asserting that all things, including natural phenomena, are part of this "universal unconscious"; this larger psychic reservoir does not just preserve the "human psyche" (Interview 193). While Harris claims that the artist may enter the fossil spaces of time, "architectonic time" ("A Talk on the Subjective Imagination" and "Fossil and Psyche"), to make connections to eclipsed or exterminated peoples who cannot be erased from the landscape, he suggests that this is an individual endeavour that has little to do with the telling and retelling of the memory of the people.
- 4 Although I focus on Brand's fictional narratives, it is important to note that her narrative poetry also draws on a women's storytelling tradition. For example, the persona in "Old II" speaks of becoming an old woman storyteller:

... I've got some shabby secrets  
 like who I saw with his hand in my blood.  
 They better leave me alone then,  
 pretend I'm mad  
 'cause I've got some rattling stories. (Morrell 182)

"Ars Poetica" refers to the griot tradition and the telling and retelling of the communal story:

... griots take one hundred years  
 to know what they say  
 four hundred years to tell it. (Morrell 207)

- 5 According to Wilentz, Chinua Achebe sees in the Igbo cosmology a sense of juxtaposition rather than opposition, citing as proof the Igbo proverb: "Wherever something stands, something else will stand beside it" (xxiii).
- 6 Oya, of West African origin, is a goddess who "manifests herself in various natural forms: the river Niger, tornadoes, strong winds, fire, and lightning" (Gleason 1). Gleason notes that Oya is one goddess who survived the middle passage; she has a large following among women of the African diaspora.
- 7 Kincaid is referring to the "living dead," those met in "Figures in the Distance" in *Annie John*, who appear to be alive but are not.
- 8 The concept of African culture may be problematic because Africa is culturally diverse. However, Mbiti notes that it is possible to find similarities in concepts found in many of the peoples of Africa. This unified view does not negate the multiculturalism of Africa.

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