



Culture and Identity in African and Caribbean Theatre

By Osita Okagbue

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What connects Africa and the Caribbean is trans-Atlantic slavery which transported numerous sons and daughters of Africa to the plantations of the New World in the service of Western European capitalism. Because of this shared experience of trans-Atlantic slavery and European colonialism, issues of culture and identity are major concerns for African and Caribbean playwrights. Slavery and colonialism had involved systematic acts of cultural denigration, de-humanisation and loss of freedom, which left imprints on the collective psyches of the colonised Africans and enslaved peoples of Afri-

can descent in the Caribbean. Both experiences brought intense cultural and psychic dislocations which still impact in various ways on the lives of Africans and peoples of African descent around the world.

African and Caribbean playwrights try to help their peoples regain their dignities by affirming their cultures, histories and identities. The book focuses on the similarities and differences between Caribbean theatre and the theatre of sub-Saharan Africa, showing how identities and cultures are negotiated and affirmed in each case.

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He has taught at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University of Plymouth, United Kingdom, and since 2002 at Goldsmiths,

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