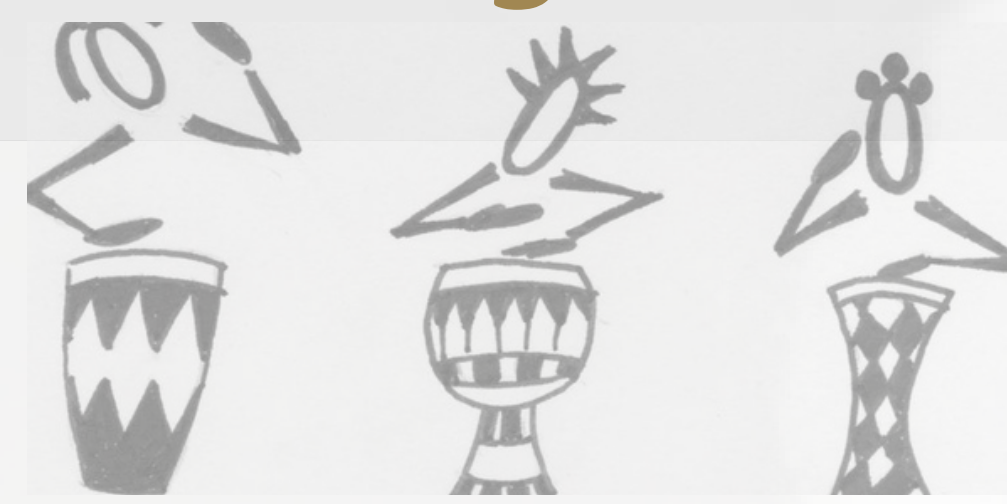




The Road Is Made by Crossing: Cultural Knowledge and the Making of Postcolonial Identity

This project examines how cultural knowledge is created, transmitted, and transformed in the plays of Nigerian playwright Wole Soyinka. Rather than treating culture as a fixed body of knowledge that can simply be recovered or passed from one generation to another, I ask what happens when knowledge is encountered through performance, lived practices, discursive frameworks, and hermeneutic lenses. This question is particularly important in postcolonial contexts, where cultural traditions have often been disrupted, translated, categorised, or represented through external systems of knowledge.



I develop a four-part framework: resonance, enactment, mediation, and opacity to explore these processes alongside Peter Paul Ruben's Four Studies of a Head of a Moor. Through close readings of Death and the King's Horseman, A Dance of the Forests, and The Bacchae of Euripides: A Communion Rite, I examine how Soyinka represents knowledge as something experienced through sound and affect, produced through ritual and performance, transformed through writing and adaptation, and ultimately resistant to complete explanation. My methodology entails textual analysis, close readings, and postcolonial theoretical approaches.



The research concludes that resonance resists the reduction of experience to what can be immediately said. Enactment resists the reduction of identity to what can simply be declared. Mediation reveals the alteration that occurs whenever knowledge moves between forms. Opacity names the remnants that survive all three processes: the part that cannot be exhausted by hearing, doing, or translating. The four heads therefore do not describe four different identities. They describe four different relations to the same problem. Each turn makes something visible while carrying something else beyond the frame. The face remains the same, but the conditions of encounter change. For this reason, the incompleteness of Rubens' studies matters. The inability of any single view to contain the whole is not a failure of representation.

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