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THE MYTHIC IMAGINATION AND LITERARY CREATIVITY OF WILLIAM BLAKE AND WOLE SOYINKA

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Abstract

This paper examines mythic creativity in the works of Blake and Soyinka. In a sense, it is a general survey of the creation and application of myths as artistic structures for interpreting the nature of human life as depicted in the literary works of William Blake and Wole Soyinka.

Key Words: Mythic Imagination, William Blake, Wole Soyinka.

Introduction

These writers employ myths, which Phillip Wheelwright classified as Primary, Romantic and Consummatory. (155.) The Primary myths often constitute cultural projections of knowledge that is meant to be accepted as literal truths. The Primary myths present knowledge poetically. They draw upon intuition and faith. On the other hand, Romantic myths draw upon man's desire to create systems that rise above the ordinary. Man indulges in Romantic myths in his quest to add a sense of wonder to reality. Consummatory myths draw upon Primary and Romantic myths and create symbolic insights into the nature of man and his world.

Primary myths are simply, imaginative and harmonious reflections of man's life. Blake and Soyinka utilize simple visions of the Primary myths to capture a phase of man's perception of reality. The Primary mythic impulse, being universal, creates idyllic visions that are meant to be literal reflections of significant introductory stage of man's perception of reality. At this stage, man accepts explanations given in the myths as truth. The nature of God, his relation to man, man's fall from paradise and his struggles to regain paradise are as true to the Jewish mythic tradition, in Blake's visions, as the story of the heavens, as the abode of Olodumare, is true to simple Yoruba folks in Soyinka's literary imagination. Furthermore the tales of man's loss of strong ties with the gods not only come in diverse forms in the Greeco-Roman, Judeo-Christian, English and Yoruba myths but are all believed to be true.

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In the works of Blake and Soyinka, this impulse is effectively demonstrated in their drawing upon myths from Christian, English, classical and Yoruba traditions, which in their various ways provide visions of the origin, course and possible end of life – and visions that are meant to be regarded as literal truths. For example, God and Satan in Blake's work as well as Orisa-nla and Atunda in Soyinka's works are real to those whose original visions gave birth to these mythic figures.

Blake and Soyinka also create Romantic myths that explore man and his world imaginatively in keeping with the Coleridgean traditions of suspending disbelief in moments of artistic faith. (Myths of the Romantic type, assume fictive worlds created through art – "le roman". These kinds of myths consciously draw upon empirical and imagined reality as a means of creating artifacts that reflect the real world.

These myths – of origin, course and end of the world in the Romantic imagination are anchored on man's normal experiences of his universe. These experiences undergo some fictive (Romantic) reordering in which the myth maker provides new poetic insights into the hitherto acknowledged eternal truths of the primary tradition. For instance, the Judeo-Christian God may no longer be the supreme infallible God of creation or controller of the universe, but a giant political Lord who sets the pace for humanity in political management. The fictionalized experiences express new poetic insights into eternal truths that defy normal or conscious experiences of man. Blake poetically places Albion at the same level as the Almighty God and Soyinka, in the same vein, allows Ogun to occupy a place comparable to that of Olodumare in a new Romantic scheme. This new trends shows how the imagination can expand existing structures in myth or create new structures in order to throw more light on human existence.

The Consummatory myths used by Blake and Soyinka draw upon the Primary and Romantic perceptions of reality. They recognize myths as possible literal realities that can be transferred into artistic structures. These myths issue out of man's desire to be firmly rooted in scientifically provable truths as well as his desire to transcend empirical reality. They project and interpret life through symbols. In the works of Blake and Soyinka, there are symbols that reflect man's religious, social, political, cultural and psychological realities. God and Olodumare are not just sacred figures; their activities reflect many aspects of life. God seriously represents supreme political power, ideal artistic creativity and the apex of psychological integration.

The Primary mythic imagination authenticates Hook's observation that "myths offer explanations... as to why the world is the way it is,"(191.) underscoring man's desire to explain natural processes in his native simplicity. For Blake and Soyinka, the mythic activities of this stage relate to cultural values that are accepted in child-like innocence.

Cultural values encoded in Primary myths deal with basic issues in life; growth, social norms, natural phenomena and folk knowledge. In a sense, the Primary myths are in Hook's view, tales which a society tells its young⁷ in order to socialize them by introducing them to what defines individual and group consciousness. In Blake's works Albion underscores British nationalism while in Soyinka's works the Yoruba pantheon of gods provides the basis for a distinctive world view for the Yoruba. The world views

revealed through these Primary myths are expected to be acceptable to the simple folks as well as the community's children.

The Primary mythic imagination also deals with mysteries of the universe as they affect man's life. The mysteries pose questions for which the mythic mind seeks answers. The answers sought are not necessarily scientific. Poetic solutions are offered for all mysteries by the mythic mind. Primary myths explore the nature of all things. Blake sees Angels in the sun while Soyinka sees spirits in the Idanre forests. Every tree, river or mountain exudes with mythic life that parallels human life and serves as a reflection on man and his mission on earth.

Soyinka, operating at the Primary mythic imaginative level, proffers a myth of creation of man and his world. Soyinka declares that "Ogun overtakes the void and weilds life in the beginning" (28.).⁸ According to Obi Maduako, this notion is prefaced on the Yoruba myth of creation⁹ derived from the Yoruba culture in its simple attempt to understand the mysteries of the creative force that brought the universe into existence.(285)

The creative act in *Idanre* starts from the deluge while in *The Interpreters*, there are watery marshes, flood, fogs and void. The creative act organized the watery chaos into dry land, the earth. Soyinka characterizes the vision of the arch divinity of the world and its initial product: "... those floods of the beginning, of fevered fogs of the beginning" (222.). These "fevered fogs of the beginning" reflect the obstacles that must be overcome before the world can assume its concrete form. The deity "seeks the spot where to scratch and create a peopled island".(222). The deity attempts to order chaos. Eventually, systems and patterns emerge out of the "watery marshes and fogs". These patterns can, according to Vico, be said to be products of the Deity's primitive impulse aimed at ordering the chaotic elements of the world. This creative process, being divine in most Primary myths compel man's "chamber of primary imagination"¹² to accept them as literal events, albeit events in the supernatural realm.

Blake, operating within the sphere of Judeo-Christian and old English mythic schemes, paints an equally stimulating picture of creation. Albion literally means the father of the English race or of all humanity. In *The Book of Urizen*, the myth of Albion is that of God the creator recognized as the "Primeval Priest," whose place was the highest of all places, the North. Yet, like Soyinka's arch deity, the picture of His situation is heavily coloured by words like "obscure, shadowy, voids."("The Book of Urizen" CW. 222.) The need to create is made obvious by the existence of a world that was "obscure, shadowy and void." These mysteries, shrouded in chaos can be unraveled through the application of God's mighty powers. In assessing Blake's treatment of the supreme God and the chaotic universe, Northrop Frye notes that he re-orders the universe by recognizing the eternal Albion, who "includes presumably all the humanity we know in the universe."(125.) Like Soyinka's treatment of Ogun, Blake's handling of Albion, in relation to the creation of order out of formless void, establishes the genuine desire of the Supreme Power to create a universe that is habitable by man.

These tales of the beginning in the visions of Blake and Soyinka have a lot in common with the notions of creation in most other traditions that view myth as literal truth. Ogun and Albion are, in a sense, mere fictional entities. They are as real as they are imaginative. Hamilton's notion that the real and the unreal are inseparable in myth because there is no distinction is operational in these instances(13.) Hence, Soyinka, in *A Dance of the Forest*, brings men side by side with gods. The forest, undifferentiated into the abode of gods and men remains, conducive for men and gods who interact in harmony. For instance, Demoke is the servant of Ogun. Demoke is mortal and Ogun immortal. Demoke is a literal reality and Ogun is an imaginative reality, yet there is no distinction as to their positions in the tale (myth). Being a servant of Ogun, Demoke is like Ogun, endowed with the special gift – art of creativity. Oremole is apprenticed to Demoke but belongs to the cult of Eshuoro, interpreted by Oyin Ogunba as Ashu and Oro, a special god who embodies the qualities of two gods: Eshu and Oro.(76.) Man's relationship with supernatural forces in the Primary mythic imagination is not subject to rational scrutiny. Blake in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, interacts with the Devil, old prophets like Ezekiel and Isaiah and John Milton; (CW. 149.) He walks along hell with the Devil, and partakes of the lives of both the devil and other mythic figures as he speaks to them and they speak to him. Such rather unusual situations are consonant with the mythic sensibilities of the primary stage.

At the Primary level also, the simple needs of man are addressed through an innocent interaction of the real and metaphysical worlds. The mythopoeic mind focuses on aesthetic explanations which man accepts in his native simplicity.

Soyinka's poem "Abiku," is an illustration of a popular myth of "the spirit child, born to die and be reborn by the same mother."(1969: 28.) In the Yoruba and Igbo traditions, Abiku or Ogbanje is a reality. Kirk insists that this form of reality is explanatory, iterative or validatory. (25). In the first instance, Abiku as a concept serves as an explanation for infant mortality. Since it is "unnatural" for young ones to die, the Primary mythic imagination, in its simple approach to knowledge, generates the Abiku myth as a satisfactory explanation for the death of babies. This explanation accounts for an unusual occurrence. Secondly it gives sufficient moral support to man, who must resign his fate to the uncontrollable forces of the universe while lending credence to the religious and emotional needs of those whose lives it affects. In addition, its iterative quality is premised on the obvious repetitions involved in the myth. Soyinka's imagination recognizes the cycle: from the world of the living, Abiku moves to the world of the dead, from which it crosses over to the world of the unborn and then back again to the domain of the living. More interestingly the rituals associated with the efforts to appease Abiku reinforce the iterative dimension of the myth; the sprinkling of ash and the offering of palm oil and yams are meant to break the circle and tilt the balance in favour of a longer stay in the world of the living.

In Blake's mythograph, literal or primary myths have mainly explanatory functions. There are reverberations of acceptance of the myths as "attributes and acts of God, as... they are revealed to man..."(A Vision of the Last Judgement". CW. 605). Blake believes in, and accepts the scriptures as literal truths, hence he writes about scriptural mystery thus:

The Hebrew Bible and the Greek Gospel are

Genuine...

This world of imagination is the world of Eternity.

It is the divine bossom

(1979: XXXII).

The imagination Blake refers to here is that capable of producing primary myths. It projects the world as eternal, whole and divine. The harmony of the intellect and instinct is further illustrated in Blake's fusion of the imaginative and real worlds in his visions. Early in his childhood days, he was reputed to have returned home to his mother with a strange story where he has seen God and angels and Ezekiel. He writes: "God put his forehead of the window". He has also seen Ezekiel sitting one summer day in the open field. In the same vein, he writes that in the fields at Peckham Rye, he passed a tree full of angels, their bright wings shining among the boughs.(XIII).

Blake's Primary mythic impulse projects beliefs and acts of the imagination as literal realities. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, there are vivid portraits of God, Angels and Satan:

As I was walking among the fires of hell, delighted with the enjoyment
of genius which to angels look like torment and insanity. CW. 149)

Prophets of the old like Isaiah and Ezekiel:

The Prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel dined with me, and I asked them how
they dared so roundly to assert that God spoke to them ...(CW. 149)

Sages and writers like Swedenborg and Milton:

And Lo! Swedenborg is the angel sitting at the Tomb: his writings are the
linen clothes folded up...

("The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" CW. 149).

All these interactions reveal that Blake's active imagination is capable of generating unique myths and equally admitting him as a character in the mythic schema, where shares in the activities of other mythic figures and this gives life to all mythic characters. From a layman's point of view, he ordinarily would be living in two worlds; the world of myths and the world of reality, but for him, there is no distinction between the worlds of imagination and reality. He; however, distinguishes between moments of primary mythic imagination and other intellectual activities: he writes: "I came to the abyss of the five senses, where a flat-sided steep frowns over the present world." (*Marriage of Heaven and Hell* CW.150). There is a valid suggestion that primary mythic imagination can be distinguished from the activities of the five senses. Moments of primary mythic imagination are beautiful, holistic and pleasurable. They transcend both intellectualization and sensation.

God and Satan are realities to Blake even though they are redefined to shock orthodox

Christian sensibilities. The giant figure whom Christians refer to as God is the same as His opposite whom they call Satan in Blake's primary mythic imagination. Blake boldly states that "the Jehovah of the Bible being no other than he who dwells in flaming fire" (CW. 150). Fire is the major element in the dwelling of Satan, the same fire, according to Blake, forms a strong and radiant component in the total being of God. It is implied that it conditions both heaven and hell, thus the marriage. In other words, to the primary imagination, Heaven and Hell are the same; just as their Lords, God and Satan, represent different aspects of the same reality. God, Satan, angels as well as the virtues and vices they represent, are as real as the human beings who believe in them at the primary level of the imagination.

Since the myth-maker does not only create and "believe" the myths but shares in their projected activities, therefore, it becomes possible for Blake to behold the devil who is Milton's Messiah; interact with the prophets like Isaiah and Ezekiel; and dine with them as he threads the paths of hell.

Blake and Soyinka use these myths to bind together the scattered elements of the real world in the newly established imaginative worlds of their own. Thus, the imaginativeness of the primary myths reveals myth making as akin to creation by God and therefore an indication of man's participation in the divine act of creation.

At the primary level, man may be unconscious of the tendency in him to create like God because his concern at this stage is with explaining and partaking in the world of mysteries. He grows into awareness of his creative ability and the fictive nature of his creativity; however, at the next stage of his development. Bidney proposes that myth at this later stage must be "viewed empirically and functionally, without prior conviction" (*Myth, A Symposium*, 6.). The Romantic process of myth making is more imaginative than enunciative of truths about life. For Blake and Soyinka, there is an indication of a conscious urge to create or fabulate new structures which, unlike those of the Primary imagination, are consciously produced to cater for man's aesthetic needs. Blake endeavours to fashion out his own world that is capable of satisfying his over all needs. He asserts: "Create a system or be enslaved by another man's" (CW.629.) Implicit in this statement is Blake's strong belief that systems created by the Primary myths are capable of holding their believers in captivity. The believers adhere to the prescriptions of such systems and work towards their sustenance and preservation. Based on this conviction; therefore, Blake engages in a process of Romanticization in which he deliberately builds up a new mythograph whose fictive nature he is conscious of. His fictive world, however provides visions which reflect realities in the normal world.

Revising the orthodox Judeo-Christian myths of a God of creation, angels, and Satan, Blake produces fictive visions with new roles for these supernatural forces. There is a new Jerusalem, which replaces Eden and a new Lord, Albion, entrusted with its control. Albion's throne is divine as Blake notes:

I elected Albion for my glory: I gave to him the Nations of the whole Earth. He was the Angel of my Presence, and all the sons of God were Albion's sons, and Jerusalem was my joy. (CW. 653).

In this new Jerusalem Albion replaces the orthodox figure of Jesus.

Blake further creates new visions of Albion and the Zoas: Urizen, Luvah, Thamas and Urthona. The Zoas in Blake's Romantic imagination, regarded as emanations of Albion, are obviously deliberately devised to satisfy an innate urge to achieve aesthetic relevance. Blake's romanticization, through new myths is noted with care by Martin Nurmi. For Nurmi, although Albion may have been adapted from the old English mythology, the Zoas are entirely Blake's creations. He continues:

The word "zoas" was formed by Blake by adding an English plural to a Greek root: Zwa which translates as beast. It is also said to mean animal or living creature; as adapted from Ezekiel and other sources, it is the allegorical symbol for the divine state of the chariot drawn by animals.(CW. 27.)

Blake's use of the Zoas becomes fictive at the Romantic level. The zoas are regarded not as realities but entities created to serve as representations or reflections of certain aspects of human endeavours, experience or even imaginative projections. Blake and his audience are not, at this stage, in any illusion about the empirical reality of these mythic figures. They are aware that they are creations of the human imagination. And yet these creations assume a measure of imaginative reality that ensure their relevance in the scheme of human affairs.

Romantic mythic creativity in the vision of Blake is demonstrated in the life of Milton when Blake says that...

the reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devil and Hell is because he was a true poet and of the devil's party without knowing it.(CW. 150).

The liberty with which Milton wrote of the Devil and Hell presupposes the free flow of the creative impulse. The imaginative freedom, which Milton exhibits in creating Satan and his abode contrast with that, which is inhibited by Christian conventions about God and Angels. The limitation placed on him by his Christian life and upbringing accounts for the constraints that underscore his creative attempts to fictionalize God and his Angels. If he exhibited as much liberty with God as he did with Satan, he ran the risk of destroying the basis of a belief which he shared with others. For Blake, therefore, Milton was less successful as an artist or creator of fiction when he handled matters whose nature had been fixed by his Christian audience than he was with matters that were still open to imaginative modifications and extensions. Hence, Milton's Romantic mythic creativity, in Blake's judgment, restructures the "truth" in the primary Christian myth.

Blake argues that Isaiah and Ezekiel have been misunderstood by those whose senses still operate within the limits of the Primary myth-making imagination because they see their writings as authentic truths handed down by God Himself, insisting that the writers' works are imaginative encounter with God (which constitutes a myth). The question as to whether or not they saw God was given a creative solution in the following statement put in the mouth of Isaiah:

I saw no God, not heard any in a finite organical perception: but my

senses discover'd the infinite in everything: and as I was then persuad'd and remain confirmed, that the voice of honest indignation is the voice of God, I car'd not for consequences.(CW. 153).

Blake expresses the possibilities of romanticization in the imagination of the myth maker. The crux of the matter is that the claim either to hearing from or seeing God is neither "finite" nor "organical" but a realization of the imagination. Furthermore, the Romantic mythic impulse is capable of giving insight into an artistic explosion, which results in the "animation of all sensible objects." (CW. 149).

Soyinka's use of myth also reflects the Romantic impulse. The pantheon of gods conceived of as eternal reality by the Yoruba people is revisited by Soyinka's Romantic mythic imagination, resulting in new structures. In place of Olodumare, the supreme God, he institutes an Ogun superstructure that constitutes a new pantheon. Other gods like Obatala, Sango, Esu and Atunda, are made subordinates to the new great Ogun. The new emanations are regarded as products of the imagination and not necessarily incontestable truths. For Soyinka and his counterparts, the "tough minded reformers," the gods of the pantheon are artistic tools and are commended particularly by Soyinka for:

their self-sacrifice on the alter of literature...

and possibly

... further service on behalf of human society, and its quest for the explication of being (Wole Soyinka 1976: 9)

Therefore, these gods are used to enhance the writer's aesthetic realizations.

Sango, the god of thunder in *Idanre* and *The Interpreters*, is a creation of the Romantic imagination. Historically, he was the third Alafin of Oyo who was forced to commit suicide, but Soyinka (drawing upon this particular tale) artistically absolves him of the unjust act of suicide and "raises him to a truly superhuman, super demonic level". (Wole Soyinka (1976.9). Sango's admission into the pantheon enriches the comity of gods in Idanre hills. As a functional deity, Sango is in charge of thunder, lightning and electrical power, "the cosmic instrument of swift retributive justice". (9). Sango also holds Obatala in prison. Soyinka incorporates him (Sango) into a mythic framework of creative expressiveness, thus using (Sango) to expand a new aesthetically designed world view. "Swift retributive justice" needs to be addressed; hence it is assigned to a force elevated far above the ordinary.

While myths continue to remain useful as instruments of explanation; the minds of artists and those who appreciate myths, at the Romantic level, are capable of distinguishing between imagination and reality, illustration and genuineness. Thus, the previous automatic faith in myths wanes and myths become products of imaginative artistry. Their fictive nature are understood in spite of their other functions and attributes.

Myth as art is a product of the deliberate effort of a myth maker to create an aesthetic world into which he invites the readers. Yet the myth maker demands of the reader who would benefit from the aesthetic voyage, what S. T. Coleridge refers to as a "willing suspension of disbelief".("Biographia Literaria" OAEL.) Nevertheless, myths that are deliberate fictive creations, sometimes function as symbolic statements on the nature of

man, his desires and aspirations. For instance, the gods of the Yoruba pantheon which constitute the major components of Soyinka's myths can be viewed as representing the nature of man's creative endowment. Mythic figures like Orisa-nla, Ogun, Sango, Obatala, Esumare amongst others, while retaining their identities as deities in the myths, also symbolize the creative strengths and fallibilities of man.

Ogun's creative endowment is bestowed on Demoke who is commissioned to create an artistic representation of a new dawn: the gathering of the people. Soyinka strives to explain how man, represented by Demoke, is capable of recreating all things. The creative endowment of man immortalizes landmarks in man's development. In *A Dance of the Forest*, Demoke creates the totem of the gathering of the tribe as a means of enshrining those achievements that distinguish man from other creatures. Yet this creativity is capable of capturing man's failure. The totem carved by Demoke is flawed by the wrong choice of wood. This contrasts with Soyinka's act in *The Interpreters*, where the creative essence of the writer is the same essence that fires the imagination of his character Kola, the artist. Kola, the artist, towers above all the interpreters because he discovers the societal flaws in the gap which exists between creations and realities, between peoples and gods, between histories and fictions. In his own very remarkable efforts, he is able to create a pantheon, another totem similar to, but more potent than Demoke's, because he employs art as a means of bridging the gap between ideals and realities. It is an extra-human Ogun consciousness, drawing upon timeless traditions of creativity established in antiquity.

At some other times, some deities come to embody man's inability to actualize the full potentials of his imagination or man's inability to rise above the mundane in art as is evident in the exhibition of vandalism and wickedness by Ogun in *Ogun Abibiman*. Ogun is portrayed as a blood thirsty, war hungry figure, who ever prepares and embarks on war. The fatality of such campaigns is evident in the defeat of Shaka. Shaka is an Ogun-like leader, whose stiff opposition to change creates the basis for conflict.

In Blake's mythograph, Albion incorporates the original beautiful and sublime man while his emanations, otherwise known as the Zoas, according to Northrop Frye, serve as symbols of the "ugly man" (Urizen), the "beautiful man" (Orc, whose female emanation is Vala) and the divine fourth, loss. The Strongman is a new character called Tharman, "The Zwa of Beulah" (CW. 272.) This new creative dimension in the myths (although concerned basically with the explanatory quality of mythologization, serves as a symbolic reflection of life and, according to Northrop Frye, again, indicate the presence of God in man. He states:

The whole four (Zoas), (represent more or less the four aspects of God's imaginative energy. Urthona being his creative fertility, which appears in the fallen world as Loss; Tharmas, his power to bring what he creates into complete existence... Luvah, his capacity for love and joy, and Urizen, his wisdom and sense of form.(CW. 274.)

The myths of God, Satan and Albion for Blake; and the myths of Ogun, Sango, Esu, Esumare, and Obatala for Soyinka, provide creative reflections of man's social, political psychological and religious life. Blake's use of the myth of God and Satan, in *The Marriage*

of Heaven and Hell, reflects religious conviction in his time as well as fresh instruments for the revelation of the contraries in human life. At another level of symbolization, the same myths of God is superimposed over all things as he rules and commands obedience from all subjects. This is a signification of his supreme creative achievement.

However, the challenge of God's creative supremacy by Satan points towards an alternate creative essence in man. This alternate creative instinct is essentially rebellious and runs contrary to God's supreme creative potentials.

Soyinka's myths of the pantheon of gods and the individual roles of those gods equally give creative explications to life. Orisa-nla, in his majesty, is a creative figure. Traditionally in Yoruba mythology, he is credited with the art of creation in the plastic form; that is, molding and giving the world its shape. He creates and places man above all other things by giving him creative abilities. On the other hand, Atunda, who revolted against him, with a view to curbing his excesses, can be seen as a symbol of artistic disorder in that he destroys the orderliness of Orisa-nla and a single vision in creativity. Atunda introduces multiple visions to creativity, which Ogun embraces. The two mythic figures, Orisa-nla and Atunda can therefore be said to project opposite sides of creativity.

Blake and Soyinka project creative impulses which attest to the fact that the Consummatory mythic consciousness incorporates into itself the authoritative nature of Primary myths as well as the fictive nature of Romantic myths. Nevertheless, Consummatory myths are distinctive in being able to consider the two other levels as providing materials for a profound exploration and understanding of man, his experiences and his universe. Therefore, in their Consummatory myths, these writers advance creative images and symbols (in the Primary and Romantic myths), which illuminate their speculations on the nature and goals of life. Thus consummatory myths are embodiments of creative symbolizations of life.

"Mythos" as a word or the validation of the word ("logos"), takes root in the Consummatory consciousness which in the visions of Blake and Soyinka, neither contests the claim to truth of the Primary consciousness nor refutes the sheer creative imaginative peculiarity of the Romantic impulse. Truth comes into the total creative endeavour of the Consummatory mythic consciousness through symbolic ratifications of multiple levels of meaning. For instance, the multifarious attributes of Albion in Blake's works and Ogun in Soyinka's, coexist in spite of contradictions, because of mythic symbolizations that can admit of the coalescence of contradictory attributes.

Blake asserts man's consciousness of being created and yet creating in:

The external body of man is imagination, that is God himself... It manifests itself in his works of Art. In Eternity all is vision (CW. 358).

Hence, creativity entails God likeness; understanding, as well, presupposes a good measure of divinity. Blake writes:

The nature of my work is imaginative or visionary, it is an endeavour to restore what the ancients called the Golden age.(CW. 116)

Blake's comment reveals how the mythic imagination, at the consummatory level,

accommodates the characteristics of Primary and Romantic mythologizing.

In *The Interpreters*, Kola creates Consummatory myths. Soyinka uses him to assemble the Yoruba gods in a pantheon. These gods – Ogun, Obatala, Sango, Esumare, amongst others, are however, seen by Kola and the other interpreters as veritable tools in the explanation of life. Their qualities explain behavioural patterns in man and his society. For instance, Ogun reflects man's turbulent, unsteady and uncontrollable characteristics as are manifest in creative and destructive activities. The Obatala trait stands for a good measure of love and passion in man while Sango accounts for the fiery and vibrant nature of man as well as his swift retaliatory proclivity.

In Blake's "Auguries of Innocence", very common phenomena assume multiple relevance for man: There is "a world in a Grain of sand And a Heaven in a wild Flower... Infinity in the palm... And Eternity in an hour..."(CW. 431) The ultimate end of these myths lies in the ability of the user (consumer) of the myth to fulfill his desires in appreciating creative aesthetic, and symbolic meanings of myths. Therefore, myth is capable of taking care of the multiple needs of man; his creative, intellectual and emotional requirements. As K.K. Ruthven puts it, "land scape" can then be visualized as "mindsapes."(26) Hence in *Idanre*, Soyinka walks with Ogun, "silently across a haze of corn..."(1969:63). This encounter reveals a realization of some symbolic insights into life's activities. Such creative endeavours aim at discerning eternal essences in ordinary occurrences, without completely annihilating the material world. Both Soyinka and Blake manipulate myth to interpret and explain human life in such special aesthetic patterns.

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