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From Myth to Reality: A Study of the Theme of Rebirth in the Tragedies of Aimé Césaire

by

Cheryl Walker Casey

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INTRODUCTION

Aimé Césaire is only one of many Black writers to have emerged since the 1930s. Owing to the specific historical moment in which they find themselves, these writers have produced works that are by and large political. Césaire is no exception, for, being Mayor of Port-de-France and Député from Martinique to the French Parliament, he is undoubtedly a man extremely committed to the political needs of his fellow Martinicans. His writings, as many critics point out, express this commitment. Nonetheless Césaire, despite the Black politico-historical context in which he exists, does not limit himself to this narrow framework and transcends it to produce writings of truly universal content and beauty which would be of value to any culture or origin. This, in fact, separates him from some of his contemporary Black artists who seem to be much more tied to their historical times.

A brief background on Césaire's role in the cultural/political movement in Black literature from 1930 on will help situate him and his work. Born in Martinique in 1913 he spent the first nineteen years of his life on the tiny island and in 1932 went to Paris to study. Ironically enough, it was on the banks of the Seine that African and Antillean students met, discussed and came to know themselves.
Césaire went to Paris to escape Martinique, and yet it was in Paris that he discovered himself as a Martinican. Between 1930-40, Paris teemed with activity as Afro-American writers Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and W.E.B. Du Bois made contact with African and Antillean students. The next 10 years were crucial to the emergence of "Négritude" and the ensuing Black literary movement. Césaire was without doubt one of the most important figures in this movement.

In 1932, a periodical called *Légitime Défense* was created in Paris by a group of Black students from Martinique headed by Etienne Léro with their first act being to reject the works of their predecessors. This attitude was a shocking departure from Antillean literary tradition since all previous literature coming from the island had been pure and simple imitation of French literary standards and movements.¹ Etienne Léro says the Black at that time tried to be white in every respect in order to gain European acceptance: "Il se fait un point d'honneur qu'un blanc puisse lire tout son livre sans deviner sa pigmentation."² This situation was anything but auspicious for the development of an original, authentic literature: "Ayant pris l'habitude de se mettre à la remorque de la France, les écrivains antillais ne se sont pas aperçus qu'ils se plaçaient eux-mêmes dans une situation fausse. Ils ont fini par regarder leur pays avec les yeux de l'étranger et par ne plus en voir que l'exotisme."³ Léro proposed to cast off the shackles of assimilation and
in the words of Jean-Paul Sartre "... briser les murailles de la culture prison ...". To aid in this revolutionary effort, the founders of *Légitime Défense* proposed a literary creed adopting the tenets of Surrealism: "Nous acceptons sans réserve le surréalisme auquel—en 1932—nous lions notre devenir." At the same time they sanctioned writers like André Breton, Louis Aragon, Paul Eluard, Salvador Dali, and Tristan Tzara. The Surrealist ethos of ego liberation and revolt against occidental standards of civilization and patterns of thought lent itself well to the early period of the Black renaissance movement. *Légitime Défense* had a short life span of one issue, but the ideas presented fomented action by other Black students in Paris. In 1934, Aimé Césaire, the Senegalese Léopold Senghor, and the Guyanais Léon Damas founded the review *L'Étudiant Noir* in an effort to help unify all Black students. Their basic premise was: "On cessait d'être un étudiant essentiellement martiniquais, guadeloupéen, guyanais, africain, malgache, pour n'être qu'un seul et même étudiant noir." Contrary to *Légitime Défense*, that had given top priority to political concerns and had used Western terms (Communism, Surrealism) to stage the revolt, *L'Étudiant Noir* emphasized cultural problems. It was in this review that the term "Négritude" was first used by Césaire, a concept that opened the floodgate of Black literature. After five years of fruitful production, the second world war broke out and the Parisian students dispersed. In the year 1939 Césaire wrote his long
poem *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal*, and he and his wife returned to Martinique where they, along with René Ménil, Aristide Maugée, and Georges Gratiant, founded the review *Tropiques*. With this review, Césaire and his colleagues attempted to disseminate the information garnered from their active years in Paris and, in order to suffuse new life and originality into a stagnated Martinican culture, they proposed four methods: 1) "le ressourcement africain"—a return to African roots and a rediscovery of past heritage; 2) "l'originalité raciale"—acceptation of Blackness and destruction of stereotyped images of the Black as exotic or grotesque; 3) use of Antillean folklore to help stir nationalistic or patriotic feeling about Martinique and; 4) the use of surrealism. To appreciate the vigor and freshness of *Tropiques*, one need call to mind the historical situation of the island during the war years. Vichy France was in control of the island and blockaded it so that there was complete isolation from other countries along with an influx of White soldiers that had little more to do than bully the natives. The misery suffered by the islanders is described in part by Claude Lévi-Strauss and André Breton who, after a chance discovery of a copy of *Tropiques*, was led to say: "La parole d'Aimé Césaire, belle comme l'oxygène naissant." The stifling atmosphere imposed on the island during the war years found its only escape in writers like Césaire who were forced to some degree, in order to escape censorship, to use language coded in Surrealist imagery. It was during
this period that Césaire wrote his poems in the collection *Les Armes miraculeuses* that show most clearly Surrealist influence.

After the war, Black intellectuals regrouped and, led by the Senegalese Alioune Diop, founded the review *Présence Africaine* in 1948. This review was the expression of Black writers who, more mature and less idealistic, put less emphasis on past African glories in order to emphasize modern problems of the modern Black. The ideals of Négritude opened out into action. Many Blacks were elected to political positions in their countries and *Présence Africaine*, emphasizing both politics and culture, still exists today.\(^\text{12}\)

In 1945 the poet Césaire took on direct political responsibilities by being elected mayor of Fort-de-France and député to the *Assemblée Nationale* as a member of the *Parti Communiste Français*. According to Susan Frutkin, who has written a concise but informative book on Césaire’s political development, his Communist involvement between 1939-1955, outside of his official membership in the PCF, was extremely limited and ambiguous at best in his poems *Les Armes miraculeuses* (1946) and *Soleil cou coupé* (1948; revised and published together with the collection *Corps perdu*, 1949, under the title *Cadastre*, 1960).\(^\text{13}\) He never contributed to the Communist propaganda organ *Les Cahiers de la Libération*. In 1950 he strayed from poetry to write the short treatise entitled *Discours sur le colonialisme* where he lambasts Europe ("L’Europe est indéfendable.")[14]
and the colonial philosophy in general. He continues this theme, showing increasing disillusionment with Western-based Communism, in his paper presented at the Premier Congrès des écrivains et artistes noirs held in Paris in 1956 and entitled "Culture et Colonialisation." He asserts that politics and culture are inextricably related: "... un régime politique et social qui supprime l'auto-détermination d'un peuple, tue en même temps la puissance créatrice de ce peuple." Césaire calls for Black leaders to bring their people out of the cultural chaos inherited from colonial oppression and to forge Black nationalist cultures, that is to "... libérez le démiurge qui seul peut organiser ce chaos en une synthèse nouvelle, une synthèse qui mériterait elle le nom de culture, une synthèse qui sera réconciliation et dépassement de l'ancien et du nouveau."¹⁶

Perhaps Césaire is the demiurge of which he spoke for it was in that same year, 1956, that he 1) resigned from the Communist party in a letter to Maurice Thorez in which he establishes race over class; 2) wrote the preface to Daniel Guérin's Antilles décolonisées in which he posits the advantages of Martinican autonomy and 3) wrote his first tragedy Et les Chiens se taisaient. According to Michel Benamou, these three events are a crestline in Césaire's career and that henceforward he would come to exert a truly demiurgic role to create a national consciousness for his people. Benamou takes a Hegelian view of the nature of theatre which is that the birth of a people is accompanied
by the birth of a theatre, and that no theatre is possible without nationalist consciousness. In 1956 Martinique was no nation; Césaire took upon himself the demiurgic role of creating one.17

Benamou points to the radical shift in Césaire's thinking by recalling that ten years earlier in 1946, the same man who now touts autonomy, had voted for French departmentalization of Martinique. In fact in 1946 Césaire greeted André Malraux, come to Martinique to encourage support for that island's departmentalization, with the words, "Je salue en votre personne la grande nation française à laquelle nous sommes passionnément attachés."18 Though his stance on departmentalization has soured somewhat, he feels no regret for his decision in 1946. He says, "Que je dise tout de suite qu'au sujet de la loi du 19 mars 1946 je n'éprouve, contrairement à ce qu'une psychologie sommaire eût attendu de moi, ni sentiment de culpabilité ni tendresse partisane."19 His current view is to provide for an autonomous Martinique within the framework of a French federation. In the 1977 municipal elections Césaire was re-elected Mayor of Fort-de-France after having campaigned on an "autonomiste" ticket, while his opponent had wanted to make Martinique the "petite capitale française des Antilles."20

According to Frutkin, Césaire is the unequivocal leader in Martinique; Alain Baudot lists him as one of the four heroes held in esteem by the people of Martinique (the other three being Victor Schoelcher, father of the abolition of
slavery in 1848; the empress Joséphine, and General de Gaulle).21 As an indication of his popularity it can be noted that up to 1956, Césaire won each election he ran in on the Communist party ticket. When he resigned from the PCF he formed a new party (Parti Progressiste martiniquais) and was immediately re-elected with 82% of the vote.22

Since 1956, the major theme of Césaire’s writing has been the problems of decolonization and independence in the third world. To date he has written four plays all dealing with these themes: 1) *Et les Chiens se taisaient* (1956) dealing with personal liberation; 2) *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* (1963) dealing with post-independence Haiti; 3) *Une Saison au Congo* (1966) dealing with the assassination of Congolese prime minister Patrice Lumumba; and 4) *Une Tempête* (1969), an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Besides these plays, he wrote an historical novel in 1961 entitled *Toussaint L’ouverture: La Révolution française et le problème colonial*. It is highly significant that Césaire has turned from his extremely hermetic poetry to the more popular dramatic form. As his political thinking evolved, he naturally needed a more accessible form of expression than that found in his earlier poetry. Thomas Hale sums up his evolution simply and accurately. Césaire has gone from poetry to drama, from “je” to “histoire” and from language to myth.23 His dramatic work is political, mythopoetic and historic; the interaction and analysis of these elements will provide an approach to the study of his theatrical works.
FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 Liliyan Kesteloot, Les Ecrivains Noirs de langue française: Naissance d’une littérature (4th ed.; Brussels: Editions de l’Institut de Sociologie de l’Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1971), p. 38f. According to Kesteloot, prior to 1932, Martinican writers were mere imitators of White, occidental styles and dutifully followed the course of French literary history from Classicism to Romanticism and so on. As late as 1945 a literary exhibition was shown in Paris called "Les Antilles heureuses" and presented writers (René Maran, St. John-Perse, John-Antoine Nau, etc.) who described the islands in idyllic, exotic terms. Césaire was only mentioned.

2 Ibid., p. 29.

3 Ibid., p. 41.


5 Kesteloot, Ecrivains, p. 45.

6 Ibid., p. 91.

7 Léon Damas wrote Pigments (1937) and Retour de Guyane (1938); Senghor wrote Ce que l'homme noir apporte (1939); Césaire wrote Cahier d'un retour au pays natal (1939).


9 Kesteloot, Ecrivains, pp. 220-249.


11 André Breton, Martinique Charmeuse de Serpents (Mayenne, France: L'Imprimerie Floc'h, 1972), p. 110.

12 Kesteloot, Ecrivains, pp. 253ff.


16Ibid., p. 194.


22Frutkin, p. 50.

CHAPTER 1

The Theme of Rebirth in the Works of Aimé Césaire and its Relationship to the Origins of Tragedy

Many elements, both traditional and modern, reside in the tragic theatrical works of Aimé Césaire. Contemporary themes plus traditional structures provide a tragic oeuvre both rich and exciting for the twentieth-century reader.

Herbert Weisinger says that any artist must use contemporary symbols in order to communicate to his audience and he goes on:

But if he is a serious artist, he will infuse his immediate and contemporary symbols with permanent and universal meaning; he will attach to them a significance greater than that of his times alone, one which men of other times and other places will be able to translate into their own terms and then appreciate, ... And if he is a great artist, he will bring himself, consciously or otherwise, into harmony with patterns of belief so old and so basic that they form the ultimate stuff out of which meaning is derived, ... 1

By taking contemporary symbols from the socio-political context of his own time and infusing them with mythic symbolism and meaning, Césaire imbues them with universal appeal and achieves a work of permanence, thus satisfying Weisinger’s definition of a great artist. To continue borrowing from Weisinger’s analogy, layers of meaning can be peeled away in Césairian drama and we have a multi-level pyramid with form
and contemporary symbols being the first layer; universal appeal being the middle layer and the final layer being a sense of harmony with basic old patterns of belief. Césaire exploits all three layers of meaning in his theatrical works.

The top layer would pertain to the political superstructure of the play providing plot and action in a political setting. In *Et les Chiens se taisaient* we see a slave who gradually works up the courage to rebel against his master and finishes by killing the latter to achieve a very momentary freedom before he is jailed and killed for the deed. In *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe*, we see a former slave who, having participated in Haiti's successful war for independence, becomes king of Haiti and as a result of his misguided leadership sees his people revolt against him and tragically dies a political failure. In *Une Saison au Congo*, Patrice Lumumba is first prime minister of the newly independent Belgian Congo and is dealt defeat and assassinated by his political enemies. Although the first play is pure lyricism, the latter two follow the political careers of the historical figures Henry Christophe (1767-1820) and Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961). By taking historical and political situations relevant to the Black world and using them as a basis for his dramatic intrigues, Césaire issues forth writings of timely political interest. Yet the appeal of these plays certainly extends beyond Black audiences and political scientists, for the theme of an oppressed people in the throes of revolution is not unique to the Black race and is a truly universal one. Also Césaire's imagery and writing
style in general give his work a timeless value that is of universal interest; good writing can be appreciated by any reader at any time. These first two layers have been dealt with rather extensively by Césairian critics, as will be later shown, and it is only with the third layer that one finds an almost total lack of attention. This is not to say, however, that Césaire’s work does not penetrate the third layer; on the contrary it is most evident to the observant reader and it will comprise the content of this thesis.

Weisinger states that a great artist brings his work into harmony with age-old beliefs which have an impelling effect on man; Césaire does just that. Incorporated into his three tragedies is the pattern of birth, death and rebirth, which as Weisinger points out in his Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall, is the basic structure out of which tragedy evolves and provides an almost irresistible attraction to all mankind. This archetypal pattern will be discussed in greater detail later where its application to Césaire’s plays will be shown. There is little wonder that André Breton ranked Aimé Césaire as "un grand poète noir."²

The political orientation of Césaire’s work is obvious after only cursory reading and many critics have been quick to point it out. In fact, after surveying the field of Césairian criticism, one can observe that political interpretations comprise by far the majority of all work done on Césaire to date. To cite a few examples, Seth Wolitz³ sees the Césairian hero as a political martyr and his theatre as
the cultural manifestation of Negritude resulting in a socialist realist epic theatre of the Left. He analyzes all four plays in terms of a Hegelian-Marxist dialectic: act I is the thesis (hero attempts or gains independence), act II is the antithesis (colonialist aims reasserted) and act III is the synthesis (neo-colonialism). Wolitz asserts however that despite unsuccessful political ventures on the part of the heroes, they do attain personal psychological freedom and thus are prevented from total ignominious defeat. He admits of a general optimism pervading the plays and indicates by way of example Christophe’s apotheosis on the Citadelle. King Christophe’s untimely death, though ostensibly tragic, serves as an indicator of future greatness for his fledgling nation in that the king’s coat of arms heralds a reborn phoenix—the great mythic bird of death and rebirth. Wolitz then, in his analysis, points out the political defeats suffered by the hero and yet allows that a certain victory is gained if only on the level of individual psychological freedom. Thus the Césairian hero is spared total defeat.

Alfred Cismaru emphasizes the revolutionary aspect of Césaire’s theatre, while Mineke Schipper de Leeuw concurs that revolt is the major Césairian theme and analyzes Césaire’s work from the sociological aspect of the relation between Blacks and Whites.

Helina Bobrowska-Skrodzka, on the other hand, sees Africa as the major theme in Césaire’s works and feels that
the Black writer is issuing a political warning in his plays for Third World developing nations: "... there is no way possible other than the spirit of one's own ideology with its roots in Africa if Africans are not to find themselves locked in others' ivory towers."6

E. A. Hurley7 feels the key to understanding Césaire is through the author's commitment to his people and his desire to communicate to them. Tracing Césaire's literary career in terms of his political involvement, Hurley avers that Césaire's switch from poetic hermetism to prosaic clarity was owing to the writer's desire to communicate political messages to Martinicans specifically, and to all Blacks in general. He feels that Césaire's theatre developed as a result of the frustrations he encountered as politician (inability to achieve political goals for Martinique) and poet (inaccessibility, in the main, to a Third-World audience). Stating that the major theme of his works is decolonization, Hurley classifies the four major characters in Césaire's plays. The Rebel is exemplary of the slave condition (Et les Chiens se taisaient); Caliban is the slave freed by his master (Une Tempête); and Lumumba and Christophe are leaders of a tenuous independence (Une Saison au Congo and La Tragédie du Roi Christophe respectively). He concludes by stating that these plays reflect the Black political scene as Césaire perceives it. Hurley also mentions that the Rebel's death is an end to a frustrating situation, but is a step towards creation of another more
valid existence. Here again, as with Wolitz, the death-rebirth theme is merely hinted at but never elaborated. It is the intent of this study to show that the death-rebirth theme is of major import in Césaire’s work.

Graziano Benelli\(^8\), in a survey of Césairian criticism in Italy, states that La Tragédie du Roi Christophe was well received in Italy and that the critics generally considered it the quintessential drama of a revolutionary who has gained independence (e.g., Danton, Robespierre, Stalin) and recognize it as having universal appeal. With Une Saison au Congo Benelli ascertains that this very Brechtian play (due more to its director Jean-Marie Serreau than its author) combines epic realism with elements of song, dance and poetry and feels it has a socio-cultural relevance:

"C'est ainsi que le théâtre africain, qui était jadis la mimesis de la vie noire, le moment d'une rencontre mystique avec la nature, est maintenant le reflet de son époque, et il prend une fonction sociale précise. Pour cela Une Saison au Congo ne veut pas être romantiquement émotive, mais épiquement instructive."\(^9\) Benelli concludes with a discussion of Césaire's latest play, Une Tempête, wherein Césaire proves that classic drama can be adapted to political theatre. He notes that many critics feel Césaire weakens the Shakespearean play while others feel he enhances it by giving it politico-social dignity.\(^10\)

Both Sandra Williams\(^11\) and Juris Silenieks\(^12\) discuss Césaire's theatrical works in terms of their relationship
to tragedy and seem to imply that the modern Third World political situation provides a tragic context for these writers. Williams feels that with the twentieth-century Theater of the Absurd, the sense of tragedy is greatly altered. By basing her comments on theories by Nietzsche, Camus, and Artaud, she argues that it is the Third World that is today producing literature's great tragedians. She concludes by saying that Césaire and other Third World writers have filled the lacuna in modern tragedy, and thus it is most natural that Césaire has three tragedies in his theatrical repertoire. Silenieks agrees that Césaire, and Edouard Glissant whose work he also discusses, do indeed fill up the gap in modern theatrical tragedy and he says that the two artists "... dotent le théâtre actuel d'une nouvelle conscience politique et historique qui, provenant d'une épreuve personnelle, ajoute des accents authentiquement tragiques."

Robert P. Smith, Jr. considers the Césairian hero as liberator, father-king, outcast, and sacrificial victim of his people, and he perceives an optimistic slant to the plays despite political failures:

Thus they may be physically defeated for the moment by this imperfect world, but because these heroes have unshakable faith in the future their intransigent spirit lingers on through slavery and colonialism (Le Rebelle), revolt and independence (Christophe), neo-colonialism and civil war (Lumumba), victory and total freedom in communion with nature, after a permanent rejection of all that is synonymous with the oppressor (Caliban).
Jacqueline Ormand analyzes the characters under the double aspect of the impossible (objective dimension of failure) and the absolute (subjective dimension of action). She believes each of the three Césairian heroes tends toward an absolutism which is one of the dynamics of the Black dramatist's revolutionary ethic. Although the heroes fail to accomplish their self-imposed lofty goals toward their nation and people, they succeed in a personal way. Their political goals go unrealized, and in the end the heroes must be viewed only in terms of themselves: "Cette courbe de l'héroïsme qui va de l'action 'collective' à une lutte qui perd (ou a perdu) toutes ses chances objectives, et dont la nécessité finalement n'existe plus que dans la conscience du héros, est commune au Rebelle, au Roi Christophe et à Lumumba."¹⁵ So according to Ormand, the heroes all suffer apparent failures—on the political objective level—yet she sees a chance for victory on the personal, subjective level.

Bakary Traore¹⁶ takes stock of modern African theatre by pointing out its similarities to, yet differences from, traditional African theatre. Traditional theatre was engendered by religious rites and, by combining music, dance and poetry, it "sought to create an alliance with the forces of nature and, ... it contributed to community cohesion and edified common values."¹⁷ Modern theatre has retained its function in the individual's daily life but the new values it must impart are considerably different for a considerably
different society. The goal of modern African theatre according to Traore is largely a socio-political one and must "... fulfill the new demands of an urbanized society (among which those of entertainment), struggle for better days, engender collective action, organize the peasantry and develop and enrich the African personality." Thus Traore sees modern theatre from a Marxist viewpoint and concludes his article with an analysis of the work of Aimé Césaire.

He feels that the latter's writings are essentially political with the main theme being that of decolonization; his theatre serves both as a mirror and a guide for the modern African and ushers in the new African era of responsibility. Seeing theatre as an edification tool, he feels that Césaire's political theatre responds to modern Africa's political needs.

Judith Miller sees in Césaire a merger of poetry and politics and describes his theatrical works as "a poetry imbued with humanism countered by a political conception designed to shock and question the humanistic point of view" with images and language that challenge French tradition and eurocentrism and bring into focus problems of developing African nations.

Not all critics limit themselves to political analyses of Césaire and some point out a universal, mythic dimension in his work. In so doing however, they tend to link Césaire's characters with one or another specific mythological being. The most often cited member of the Greek Pantheon to be compared with the Césairian hero is none other than the
mighty Prometheus. Helina Bobrowska-Skrodzka\textsuperscript{20} states that the theme of \textit{La Tragédie du Roi Christophe} and \textit{Et les Chiens se taisaient} is the solitude of the hero who longs to be the Prometheus of his age. Serge Sautreau and André Velter\textsuperscript{21} see Christophe as a combination of buffoonery and pathos and style the Haitian hero as "le bouffon Duvalier et le prométhéen Castro."

Henry Cohen\textsuperscript{22}, in an interesting article on \textit{La Tragédie du Roi Christophe}, likens the king to the two mythic figures Prometheus and Icarus. Like Prometheus, Christophe, from on high in his Citadelle, attempts to steal the creative principle from heaven in order to build a nation; like Icarus, he dares to defy the heavens and his bold daring leads to his fall. Cohen asserts that the play is a personal tragedy for Henry Christophe and a political tragedy for Third World Haiti.

Georges Ngal\textsuperscript{23} compares the Césairian hero to a Prometheus who fails to communicate his passion and revolutionary zeal to those around him and who is in fact blinded by his promethean pride.

Barthélemy Kotchy too compares the Césairian hero to Prometheus and says, "Le théâtre de Césaire, comme le théâtre grec, est une réflexion, au double sens physique et philosophique, sur le monde: c'est-à-dire un miroir qui renvoie à l'homme noir sa propre image ..."\textsuperscript{24}

Michel Benamou\textsuperscript{25}, in an interesting article on demiurgic imagery in Césaire's plays, considers \textit{Et les Chiens se
taisait a parody of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and, though pointing out specific similarities, refrains from elaborating this point. He continues by observing that the Rebel is also like Oedipus who killed his father (the White master) and was blinded for the deed and that the Mad Women in *Et les Chiens se taisaient* who go into fits of surrealistic drivel parody the Furies of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. Finally he states that *Une Tempête* adapted from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* leaves the realm of the devious and enters blatant parody. These remarks seem a bit facile but only serve as an introduction for Benamou's article. He mentions the above in order to put Césaire in the light of a culture-thief—a role to which he is however not limited. Benamou asserts: "But Césaire is not content with the role of a culture-thief; he has demiurgic aims as a culture hero." What follows is an insightful look at imagery in Césaire's theatre, which is the most interesting and most valuable part of the article and which will be discussed later. His introductory remarks wherein he parallels Césaire's characters to specific ones in Greek mythology are not without merit but require further elaboration. They nonetheless point up the interesting fact that Césaire's heroes do indeed call to mind certain mythic legendaries. The issue becomes problematic only when one tries to relate specific Césairian figures with specific characters in the Greek pantheon. What one finds in Césaire's work is not direct sources of borrowing from the ancient Greeks but instead a basic underlying mythic structure.
This analysis will unfold to point out—not specific sources—but basic structures in Césaire's theatre which leads to a thoroughly mythopoetic work.

In an interview with Césaire, Michel Benamou asked the author if the Rebel of *Et les Chiens se taïsaient* served as a Black Prometheus. Césaire responded by saying that if it was, it was not consciously, and added that it was not Prometheus specifically but the virile, solar archetype to which he adhered.  

Many critics, when discussing Césaire, parallel him with the Greek tragedians. Rodney Harris finds that *Et les Chiens se taïsaient* respects the form of a Greek tragedy. Helina Bobrowska-Skrodzka finds the element of Greek pathos in Césaire's tragedies and Bakary Traore goes so far as to compare Césaire to Sophocles:

L'on ne manquera pas de rapprocher Césaire de Sophocle et les peuples Africains des Anciens Grecs. A juste raison, nous l'avons fait pour notre part. C'est le même sens religieux uni à celui de la nature, la même noblesse de sentiments, la même ivresse verbale, le même sens du beau exprimé par la danse et le chant.

All this leads to the fact that critics almost unfailingly notice a relationship between Césaire and myth or at least between Césaire and the ancient mythographers. Georges Ngal gets a bit more specific when illuminating mythic themes and structures in Césaire's theatre. He opens his article by quoting Geneviève Serreau who, in her *Histoire du "Nouveau Théâtre"* discusses Césaire under the heading "La Relève de l'avant-garde." In this framework, the writers
discussed have in common "le refus du théâtre psychologique, le rejet du naturalisme, le retour au mythe, à la magie, la royauté de l'onirique, de la poésie au théâtre," which constitutes the heritage of Antonin Artaud. Whether Césaire falls into this category or not could be the subject of an entire thesis of its own, and Ngal does not belabor the point. He states that Césaire's work is a double effort for personal and political emancipation and he describes the Césairian hero as "voyant, prophète, révolutionnaire." Asserting that Césaire's heroes evolve in an atmosphere of solitude, failure, and death, he feels nonetheless that in fighting to retain liberty their deaths serve as emergences: "Le héros césairien ne meurt donc pas avec sa disparition physique. Il participe de l'immortalité du mythe tout comme le caractère archétype de son geste participe de son exemplarité. Ainsi Césaire fait-il entrer l'histoire des nations décolonisées dans celles de ses mythes."

In another article, Ngal pursues the "l'image de l'enracinement" in Césaire's work. Noting that vegetal imagery is abundant in the author's work, he offers the reason for same being a need and a search on the author's part to secure roots. Césaire and his people, uprooted by the Black diaspora, now search to "re-plant" themselves. Ngal observes that Césaire's use of tree and plant images (idea of mythic tree of life) actually take on mythic dimensions but he is careful to state that he feels the source of these images is not the Jungian collective unconscious
but instead the shadow of Léo Problénius. Ngal continues an interesting and enlightening analysis of plant and solar imagery in the context of African mythology.

Thus many critics find in Césaire's work mythic themes of some kind, be they ancient Greek, African, or simply general cosmic dimensions. Yet to date none have done extensive work on developing and elaborating these mythic themes. Only seldom passing mention has been afforded that part of Césaire's work. What most critics agree on, whether political, aesthetic, or any other guideline be used, is that Césaire's tragic heroes, though suffering ostensible failure, seem to somehow reign victorious. The tone of the plays does not portray pessimism to the extent that the objective plot data would lead us to expect. So just what is the reason for this overall optimistic feeling after reading Césaire's tragedies? The best contention is that it is owing to the underlying mythic dimension of the plays in which themes of death and rebirth are emphasized. In his tragedies, following the death of each of his three heroes, there is a rebirth or resurrection to ensure the reader that all is not lost. The Rebel is put in prison, tortured and killed; King Christophe commits suicide to avoid death at the hands of his enemies; and Patrice Lumumba, at the height of his career, is put in prison and executed. That is a brief plot summary of Césaire's three plays. Even so, critics point constantly to an underlying hopeful note in the plays that keeps the reader from total despair.
What is this hopeful note? Why doesn't the reader feel depressed after reading Césaire? The answer is that the death of the hero is overridden by a symbol of rebirth in all three plays. It is this symbol that prevails and supersedes the sorrowful lot of the heroes themselves. These three men (the Rebel, Christophe, Patrice Lumumba) are not killed and done away with; on the contrary they are merely sacrificed for the good of the community and born anew in different form.\textsuperscript{39} Why are the plays optimistic? Why are we content after reading them? The answer lies in the archetype of rebirth. It is this mythic theme of death and rebirth which I plan to analyze in Césaire's theatre.

The image or archetype of rebirth is discernible not only in Césaire's theatre but also in his poetry. Although this thesis will deal strictly with the three tragedies written by Césaire, it is interesting to note that this image, so strong in his theatre, is in fact a recurring motif in all of his work.

Some critics have noted this fact, such as Emile Snyder\textsuperscript{40} who points out that in his poetry, Césaire counter-balances images of violence and destruction with images of renascence. In his poem "La Roue" from \textit{Cadastre}, Césaire writes "et qui renaît au jour de l'herbe et de l'année germe," and according to Snyder is the key to the writer's private obsession which is to reintegrate himself into the vegetable, animal and mineral world. The precise nomination one finds throughout his works is an avoidance of the disenfranchised
Black past. He destroys all, then reconstructs and names things, like Noah, to reclaim the land for the Blacks.

Lilyan Kesteloot says the Césairian poetic itinerary is composed of a discovery of one's sources (African and personal), a metamorphosis, and a return. The despairing Black finds himself and returns filled with courage and vitality. She says:

Dans ce rôle de révélateur de la personnalité de sa race, d'accoucheur d'humanité, de héraut, de réveilleur de Belles-au-Bois-dormant (Batouque), il s'aide des symboles éternels qui parlent directement à l'inconscient collectif sans passer par la médiation du raisonnement. Du plus profond de son peuple abattu, il hèle les énergies enfouies de la force virile, du courage et de la vitalité; et spontanément, il emploie les archétypes des mythologies primitives.41

In another book, Kesteloot analyzes in detail one of Césaire's Surrealistic poems "Les Pur-sang" in which she describes images and ideas closely associated with his later theatrical works.42 The general movement of the poem is from liquidation of the old world to creation of a new one with the poet as creator.

Kesteloot, in an admirable book written in collaboration with Barthélemy Kotchy analyzes Césaire's poetry while Kotchy analyzes his theatre. In Kesteloot's section she explicates several of his poems and finds in all of them the recurring theme of rebirth. She says of "Perdition" found in Les Armes miraculeuses that the poet describes a "crépuscule du vieux monde pourri qui va mourir, mais crépuscule riche d'un futur délivré du racisme, du colonialisme, de l'impérialisme, du
néo-colonialisme, du capitalisme, etc. In "L'An neuf" from Soleil cou coupé she notes that catastrophe and cataclysm is a necessary step toward rebirth of a new world. To destroy the old is equivalent to building anew. In "Patience des signes" from Ferments she points out the image of fire that first represents the destructive aspect of that element and then afterwards the hope and joy of a bright warm light. She concludes that the structure of death-rebirth is found in abundance in his poetry.

This image of rebirth will constitute the heart of this thesis, but it will not be a study of that symbol alone. With Césaire the image of rebirth is couched in poetry so rich that it penetrates the entire mythic context surrounding the rebirth idea. It is this mythic context that I plan to elucidate in this thesis.

That mythic dimensions are to be found in Césaire's theatre is not entirely surprising since it is virtually agreed upon by all scholars that serious theatre had its origins in religion. "Although it [theatre] may become profane and lose all conscious connection with its sacred beginnings, beneath the surface there always remains the mystery of man on the stage becoming what he is not, the god made man, or man made the hero: the mystery of trans-substantiation." Wallace Fowlie describes tragedy in these terms: "In its eternal joining of life and death, and in its constant concern with life after death, the concept of tragedy is perhaps unique in its power of illuminating the
entire cycle of life-death-life." He adds that the tragic hero must be, "... in some sense or other, a prince, a representative, an archetype, a single man sufficiently profound to assume the lot of others." Speaking specifically about traditional African theatre, Jacques Chevrier describes it as essentially religious and dealing with cyclical communal rites where gesture, music and words all play a role, and Bakary Traore points out that African theatre, engendered by religious rites, seeks to integrate the individual into the community and harmonize the whole with all of nature.

Of the four scholars cited above, two refer specifically to modern European theatre and two to African theatre; yet all four reflect the general sense of tragedy and differ not at all in their basic intent. Césaire's theatre is a good example of the fundamental religiosity inherent in dramatic tragedy.

In researching the birth-death-rebirth theme, which is so clear in Césaire's first three plays, one is led to a study of myth and ritual as origins of drama. The archetype of rebirth carries with it the very origins of dramatic tragedy and it is not surprising that in Césaire's tragedies this same archetype appears. For some background on this approach to mythology and its literary implications, the reader is referred to an article by Stanley Edgar Hyman in which he gives an excellent historical overview of the myth and ritual theory as well as how it has been applied to literature and history. Briefly, in 1912 Jane Ellen Harrison
asserted that myth arises out of rite and that it is
"... the spoken correlative of the acted rite, the thing
done; ..."49 Carrying this view to its logical extension,
we see the "... dynamic or evolutionary conception of
process whereby rites die out, and myths continue in religion,
literature, art, and various symbolic forms ..."50 From
this postulate, such notable scholars as Gilbert Murray
and F.M. Cornford (The Cambridge School) traced the origins
of Greek drama in ancient ritual, and since then many studies
have appeared applying the theory outside of Greek studies
and to such diverse works as Shakespearean drama51 and the
Grail romances.52 Hyman continues his survey by stating:
"Since the ritual approach to myth and literature does not
claim to be a theory of ultimate significance, but a method
of study in terms of specific significances, it can cohabit
happily with a great many other approaches."53 This approach,
though not exclusive, is beautifully suited to analyze
Césaire's theatre. The theme of birth-death-rebirth, an
essential element in the myth/ritual theory, is easily seen
in Césaire's three plays.

One prominent illustration of the birth-death-rebirth
cycle is the dying-rising-God theme. This specific manifes-
tation of the greater cycle is the one most prevalent in
Césaire's theatre for it is the three demiurges in his three
tragedies that all die and are sacrificed in one way or the
other only to be reincarnated onto a higher level.

In discussing the dying-rising-god theme, a variety of
sources will be used including Jane Ellen Harrison's
Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion (already cited); Gilbert Murray’s The Classical Tradition in Poetry\textsuperscript{54}; his essay “Greek and English Tragedy: A Contrast”\textsuperscript{55}; and his “Excursus on the Ritual Forms Preserved in Greek Tragedy”\textsuperscript{56} found in Harrison’s book Themis. Also used will be Theodore Gaster’s book Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East\textsuperscript{57} and Herbert Weisinger’s Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall (previously cited) as well as his article “The Myth and Ritual Approach to Shakespearean Tragedy.”\textsuperscript{58}

Briefly stated, these scholars assign a ritual origin to tragedy, a ritual wherein a king is annually killed and his body scattered over the land in order that the earth may be renewed. Aristotle, perhaps the first authority on tragedy states that this genre “... originated with the authors of the Dithyramb ...,”\textsuperscript{59} the dithyramb being the festival to Dionysus celebrated in the springtime. Sir James Frazer\textsuperscript{60} has amply pointed out the element of a renewal spirit or Vegetation spirit at the heart of all Mediterranean religions, be he Osiris, Tammuz, Adonis, Dionysus, or any other dying-rising-god figure. It is this celebration in honor of the Vegetation Spirit or Year-daimon that constitutes the origins of tragedy. As the theme becomes spiritualized and evolves into art, the king as tragic protagonist represents both the best and the worst in the community and suffers and dies, both as their hero-savior and their plague-causing scapegoat. Traditionally
tragedies center around kings and end with the dissolution of one reign and the inception of a new. Thus we see the Aristotelian guideline for the tragic hero as "not too good, not too bad" with his tragic flaw—a man both admired and despised. This theory is most pertinent to my analysis of the tragedies of Aimé Césaire.

Both Murray and Harrison agree that dramatic tragedy evolved from the Spring dithyramb and Murray says: "Fundamentally Tragedy was the mimetic dance of the Dionysus Religion developed and transfigured by certain influences... It is the ritual of the Spring, of the New Year, of 'le Renouveau'—the Renewal after the dead winter of all the life of the world."61 Tragedy's external form, he contends, is affected by the worship and recurrent life-history of the Year-spirit who meets an enemy, dies, is wept for and revived in glory. It is the dance of this religion of the "Renouveau" developing and evolving under the three influences of epic and contemporary history as well as the inherent dramatic nature or spirit of the Sacer Ludus.

Murray describes the ritual pattern in tragedy as comprised of the following elements: a) combat b) passion c) lamentation and d) final epiphany, all of which are basic ingredients of the sacred pantomime revolving around the seasonal combat (life vs. death, summer vs. winter), passion, lamentation and eventual restoration of the god of fertility. He then shows how the tragedies of Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus correspond, some more than others, to that pattern.62
Jane Harrison describes the life history of a Vegetation Spirit as simply contest, death, and epiphany with a new king, and states that these simple rites form the very structure of tragedy. "What the ... Eniautos-daimon gave to Attic drama was, not its content, but its ritual form, a form which may be informed by beauty or by ugliness, according as it is used by the imagination clean or coarse." Thus the forms of Attic drama are the life history of the Year-Spirit whereas the content is based on individualized epic and contemporary history.

We find much the same in the tragedies of Aimé Césaire. As we will see later, Césaire retains the ritual substructure of tragedy but uses various sources to form his tragic content. In *Et les Chiens se taisaient*, the Rebel takes on remarkably well the attributes of a Vegetation Spirit; Christophe, in *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe*, is an historical legendary of epic nature and finally Patrice Lumumba, in *Une Saison au Congo*, is a contemporary figure whose life and death were of a tragic nature.

The idea of rebirth is, of course, an extremely important one in the context of the Year-Spirit. Harrison points out that from two facts, group permanency and individual death, arose the idea of reincarnation. She states "The individual dies, but the group and its incarnation the king survive. Le roi est mort, vive le roi." This is precisely what occurs in Césaire's three tragedies. Though the individual dies, their deaths are followed by an epiphany
scene in which the permanence of the group they represent is assured.

Whereas Harrison and Murray trace the ritual origins of Greek tragedy, Theodore Gaster shows how ancient Near Eastern literature reflects the seasonal pattern and are mythic and literary articulations of the same. Gaster's book includes a foreword by Gilbert Murray in which the latter states that the primitive seasonal rituals of the ancient Near East all contain a conflict between God and an enemy; death often in the form of mutilation, a lamentation, an anagnorisis or Discovery, and a theophany bringing comfort. Often the god is reborn in the form of his son rather than he himself but the basic tenet of the seasonal pattern is redemption of the old dying world and introduction of a new kingdom free from stain. This is the essential vegetation rite.65

Gaster deals with the origin of the dramatic genre as a whole and not with specific texts. His theory states that the seasonal pattern in the dramatic genre underwent normal artistic evolution and ended up a mere literary convention. Gaster describes the ritual and myth pattern by pointing out that primitive society existed on a series of life leases calling for annual renewal, which renewal was achieved through mankind's efforts. These efforts fall into two categories: 1) rites of kenosis--emptying--which comprise an eclipse of life and vitality occurring at the end of each lease and 2) rites of plerosis--filling--which mark the beginning of the new lease manifest by renewed fertility.
These activities, according to Gaster, are both immediate direct experience (ritual) and sempiternal representation (drama). Myth is the connecting link and is the expression of a parallel aspect inherent in them from the beginning. Gaster lists the following as ingredients in the seasonal pattern: 1) mortification (interim between the two leases) 2) purgation (society rids itself of noxiousness and contagion) 3) invigoration (attempt to procure the new lease) and 4) jubilation (relief when new lease begins).

Though at first these rites were done by the entire community, later they were performed by the king only. Thus instead of a communal fast, the king suffers a ritual passion, fasting and abasing himself and being ultimately killed or deposed (mortification and purgation). Often there is a ritual marriage followed by reinstatement of the king or his successor (reinvigoration and jubilation). Gaster contends that myth translates the immediate function of ritual into the ideal situation involving the gods. As an example he cites the reinstatement of the king in the New Year's festival as the Horus/Osiris myth. He avers that the sacral act and the associated myth are parallel expressions, on the punctual and durative planes, of one and the same thing. With urbanization, ritual is less and less needed in daily life and is subsumed by myth. Participants are no longer protagonists of a direct experience but actors reproducing an ideal one; yet drama retains the basic foundation of the ritual pattern, namely conflict, discomfiture
and restoration. Thus the pattern of ritual becomes the plot of drama. Gaster continues by applying his theory to various Near Eastern myths and divides them in groups according to their varying degrees of compliance to the pattern. In some, it is treated comprehensively and embraces all stages, while in others one or another of its aspects are eliminated, and in yet others, it is merely vestigial and used as scaffolding for an artistic structure.

Weisinger studies the myth/ritual pattern by showing its application to tragedy and differs only very slightly with Gaster as to the relationship between drama and the myth/ritual pattern. Whereas Gaster basically equates the two, Weisinger attempts no more than a comparison. Although the two show parallel forms, he is adamant about the fact that they are not the same.

To get an overview of Weisinger's ideas, it is wise to read first his book *Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall* and then a study complementary to that, an article entitled "The Myth and Ritual Approach to Shakespearean Tragedy." The idea of the paradox of the fortunate fall was original with Arthur O. Lovejoy in his article "Milton and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall"66 and is exemplified by man's fall in the Garden of Eden which led to the paradoxical reaction of bitter sorrow and great joy. Man's darkest moment (fall into sin) was converted into his greatest joy (promise for salvation and eternal life in the hereafter). Weisinger asks the question as to why spectators enjoy so
happily and willingly watching another man's torturous lot? What makes man respond and enjoy reading about the plight of the ill-fated Oedipus for example? Certainly not just sheer grisly sadism on the part of the spectator. On the contrary, Weisinger makes a rather sound case for the fact that tragedy actually teaches man how to enjoy life. Having developed from the ancient Near Eastern ritual, tragedy employs the archetype of rebirth which has a compelling effect on mankind. At the moment of death, rebirth occurs; when man is at his lowest despair, he is merely on the brink of his greatest joy. This archetype can be found in ancient religions, Judaism, and Christianity. And it is this same archetype which worked its way into tragedy and accounts for its great appeal.

Weisinger allows that the myth/ritual pattern of the ancient Near East constellated the archetype of rebirth, then was transformed into the paradox of the fortunate fall, and finally evolved into tragedy with the paradox as its ideological backbone. In his book, Weisinger traces the development of the myth/ritual pattern into the paradox of the fortunate fall and in his article he traces the transformation of the paradox (in brief the essence of the myth/ritual pattern) into tragedy. The myth and ritual pattern centers in a divine king who was killed annually and reborn in the person of his successor. Later the king was only killed symbolically and went through a symbolic rebirth or resurrection.
Starting out as a magical rite designed to ensure the success of the crops in climates where the outcome of the struggles between water and drought meant literally the difference between life and death, the pattern was gradually transformed into a religious ritual, designed this time to promote man's salvation, and finally became an ethical conviction, freed now of both its magical and religious ritual practices but still retaining in spiritualized and symbolic form its ancient appeal and emotional certitude.67

Regional differences in the pattern among different religions does not change the fact that they all possessed in common certain significant features of the myth. "In this single, idealized ritual scheme, the well-being of the community was secured by the regular performance of certain ritual actions in which the king or his equivalent took the leading role."68 An important correlate of this ritual was the assumption that the well-being of the community depended on the well-being of the king. From an analysis of seasonal rituals, New Year festivals, coronation, initiation and personal rituals of the ancient Near East, Weisinger reconstructs the following model of the basic ritual form: 1) the indispensable role of the divine king; 2) the combat between the god and an opposing power; 3) the suffering of the god; 4) the death of the god; 5) the resurrection of the god; 6) the symbolic recreation of the myth of creation; 7) the sacred marriage; 8) the triumphal procession; and 9) the settling of destinies. He continues:

Not only do these rituals symbolize the passage from life to death, from one way of life to another, but they are the actual means of achieving the changeover;
they mark the transition by which—through the processes of separation, regeneration, and the return on a higher level—both the individual and the community are assured their victory over the forces of chaos which are thereby kept under control. 69

Let us look more closely at the nine elements listed above. The first element is the significance of the king and his central position in the community. This is a reiteration of the Frazerian idea that a healthy king equals a healthy society. Frazer states that this basic assumption is the reason for which primitive peoples sacrificed their kings while the king was still completely healthy and potent. To let him die of old age or become infected with disease would be no less than destroying the community. 70 Weisinger feels that Frazer's basic tenet that the vitality of the king must be kept alive and passed on to a successor is an accurate one. Frazer, however, speaks of a time when the king was actually killed whereas Weisinger speaks of a more advanced time when the king's death and resurrection were mimetically re-enacted. The divine king is indeed identified with the forces of fertility and vitality:

The king faces the most insurmountable obstacles; he engages in the most desperate of struggles; he is plunged into the bottom-most pits of despair and humiliation; he makes the greatest sacrifice of all, that of himself; and, at the very moment of his final degradation, and, indeed, precisely because he has taken on himself the burden of all and has undergone all that man can suffer, at that moment he bursts forth victorious over his opponents and carries with him to success the fearful aspirations of his people. 71
Another important element is the sacred combat followed by humiliation, suffering and death of the king. " ... he is plagued by many and terrible evils, by enemies, by revolts, by the loss of friends, by the destruction of his house, ... "72 and all this followed by his death:

For the God must die, and if at first he dies because he merely represents the flowering and decay of the vegetation, he soon takes on to himself much more than mere representative action. He dies that the people might live; through him they vicariously expiate their sins and pay their penance; in his suffering they suffer; and in his death is their life. In time, the dying God becomes a God of redemption, and in his own person undergoes the searing experiences of combat, suffering, and death.73

This is followed by a rebirth or resurrection:

But the God does revive, the vegetation reappears, the waters flow again, the sun rises once more, spring comes again, and man renews his hopes for the coming year; the victory of the God symbolizes man's conquest for the coming year of all the forces which stand threatening and ready to overwhelm him.74

Often there is a recitation of creation following the king's rebirth to ensure the new lease of life. "Moreover, the act of creation was indissolubly connected with the resurrection, for, as the God dies, so he is reborn in a fresh and new act of creation ... "75 The hieros gamos follows to confirm the king's potency and finally a triumphal procession and a subsequent settling of destinies.

The myth and ritual pattern is now defined, but what are the implications of this pattern for tragedy? According to Weisinger and in agreement with Harrison and Murray, it
is the very seedbed of tragedy, "the stuff out of which it was ultimately formed." He notes that the form and content of tragedy closely parallels the form and content of the myth and ritual pattern but, and this is important, the myth/ritual pattern and tragedy are not the same. The myth and ritual pattern was designed by priests and magicians to imitate nature, and through and with this imitation, to control it.

If we describe the myth and ritual pattern as the passage from ignorance to understanding through suffering mimetically and at first hand, then we must describe tragedy as the passage from ignorance to understanding through suffering symbolically and at a distance. To speak of symbolic meaning is already to have made the leap from myth to art. In the myth and ritual pattern, the dying-reborn god-king, the worshippers for whom he suffers, and the action of his agony are identical; in tragedy, the tragic protagonist undergoes his suffering at an aesthetic distance and only vicariously in the minds of his audience.

Finally Mr. Weisinger points out that tragedy takes from the myth and ritual pattern only what it wants and leaves the rest. Thus of the nine elements mentioned above, he claims numbers four (death of the god), six (symbolic recreation of the myth of creation), seven (the sacred marriage), and eight (triumphal procession) are eliminated; number one (indispensable role of the divine king) and nine (settling of destinies) are only implicit and the remaining three, combat, suffering and resurrection (with death subsumed) are the structure and substance of tragedy. Weisinger continues by analyzing the differences between the two, the
changes that took place, and he observes that the settling of destinies and the well-being of the king tied in with the community, which are of ultimate importance to the myth/ritual pattern, are only tacitly observed in tragedy. He also notes the moment of doubt between death and resurrection of the god is even more emphasized in tragedy than in the ritual itself and as a logical extension of that change we find in tragedy an emphasis on freedom of choice of the tragic protagonist along with its subsequent responsibilities.

For in that small moment of doubt and indecision, when victory and defeat are poised in the balance, only the moral force of man wills him on in action to success. The tragic protagonist acts in the conviction that his action is right, and he accepts the responsibility for that action;

.........................
Tragedy therefore occurs when the accepted order of things is fundamentally questioned only to be the more triumphantly reaffirmed.78

The protagonist's inevitable defeat is a symbolic sacrifice for all mankind who are themselves potential challengers. In the myth/ritual pattern the settling of destinies is the ultimate goal whereas in tragedy this element recedes and is replaced by heightened self-awareness. The cathartic element comes into play here because the hubris in all mankind is purged through the daring deed and subsequent suffering of the hero; his sacrifice saves us from our own futile rebellion against God.

The theory put forward by the above scholars is most convincing, yet as with any theory, it has its opponents as
well as its proponents. Geoffrey Brereton in *Principles of Tragedy* admits of a religious origin of tragedy and also admits of the great archetypal situation of a king who dies to save the community. He feels it has a definite relation with a fundamental principle in mass psychology but doubts its basic relationship to tragedy.

Brereton's chief argument against this religious pattern, with its supreme development being Jesus Christ, is the element of rebirth. This happy note, he contends, does not engender fear nor is it final or disastrous, all elements he feels are necessary in tragedy. He says "The moment one envisages either a successful sacrifice or expiation or a reward beyond death one has moved away from the tragic, for these things can only imply, on some plane or another, a happy ending." Only an ineffectual sacrifice could be tragic because only then would the notions of failure, waste, horror of recognition or irreparable disaster come into play. Damnation, not salvation, must be the end result of tragedy. The dying/rising god, according to Brereton, simply is not tragic.

Brereton's argument is hard to take; his view of tragedy seems particularly revolting and horrible, elements which Aristotle felt were too mean for the noble tragic genre. In fact, it is the transcendence or conquering of death that elevates tragedy to its lofty position. If one saw only failures in dramatic tragedy, the spectator would be only depressed and not uplifted or satisfied in any
way. Both Weisinger and Murray point out that one of the fundamental reasons for our pleasure in tragedy stems from its ability to put mankind above death, have him conquer it. Otherwise, the spectator becomes a sadist who delights in grisly scenes of horror. Thus Weisinger points out the rebirth element as fundamental to our continuous reception of tragedy, and Murray feels that the triumph over death engenders our affection for tragedy: "The Greek hero, when he suffers, almost always suffers to save others. And the artist knows how to make us feel that such suffering is a better thing than success." The cathartic element, the idea of atonement, enters in so that the entire play operates on a deeper level of reality. In this way, the spectator, through the protagonist's sacrifice, atones for the sins of all. He thus becomes the saviour of the spectator as well as that of the characters of the play.

Brereton concludes his discussion by stating that religion is not implicit in tragedy. He feels that the hero's acts are transferred to a political, sociological or psychological plane with the gods and damnation being replaced by society and rejection or alienation. I can agree with Mr. Brereton as to his suggestion of transference from gods to society in the process of dramatic evolution. These different outer accoutrements, however, do not seem to really alter the religious structure. Sociological and political elements or what have you, superimposed on the ritual structure, do not negate the inherent religiosity of tragedy.
Thus says Murray "I wish to suggest, however, that while the content has strayed far from Dionysus, the forms of tragedy retain clear traces of the original drama of the Death and Rebirth of the Year-Spirit." 83

When we speak of a ritual aspect intrinsic to tragic drama, it must be clear that we speak only of structure. That is why Aimé Césaire, a twentieth-century writer dealing with twentieth-century topics, can still recall the ritual origins of tragedy. This thesis proposes to approach the tragedies of Aimé Césaire by way of the myth/ritual pattern. The basic mythic structure of Césaire's plays is manifest especially in his constant use of the death-rebirth motif. The focus is always concentrated on the actions of a main hero who is leader or king. The demiurgic hero fights an enemy, is defeated, dies and then is reborn. This pattern, which is remarkably similar to the myth/ritual pattern described above is easily recognized in Césaire's first three tragedies (Et les Chiens se taisaient, La Tragédie du Roi Christophe, and Une Saison au Congo), the exception being his fourth play Une Tempête. The latter play will not be treated in this thesis for the obvious reason that it is not a tragedy. Adapted from Shakespeare's The Tempest it is closer to comedy and is classed as romance. A tragic structure would hardly be applicable to a non-tragic work, and for this reason, it will not be considered in the framework of this study.

This thesis poses no argument with political interpretations of the plays and in fact the theory herein
proposed resides neatly alongside the obvious political analysis. A political scientist might see in Césaire's plays the story of a Black revolutionary leader pitted against the White colonial régime, death and defeat of the former, with a final somewhat hopeful "we will overcome" type ending. It is the "he lost the battle but will win the war" approach. A political interpretation allays the political failures of the protagonists with the contention that despite death and defeat suffered by the Césairian hero, the death poses a symbolic stepping stone toward eventual success. The value of the myth/ritual approach to Césaire's tragedy is that the optimism is accounted for and provided for in the structure of the ritual itself. It need not be explained in idealistic terms of slow evolution toward a classless, raceless society. The death of the hero, in terms of the myth/ritual pattern, is merely a step in the ritual that will be later remedied by a rebirth bringing on renewed life and joy. Both interpretations tend to give equal results; the hero's death is not futile but is a step toward eventual success. However, by tracing the traditional structural element in Césaire's theatre that ties him with the origins of tragedy, the ending becomes a structural component and not just political idealism.

Other scholars, in researching modern French drama, have found this same religious, mythic tone. Leonard Pronko, in discussing the European Avant-Garde, speaks of its relation to communal myth and points out that myth, through
symbols, suggests more than is immediately apparent; by embodying archetypal ideas, it transcends outer reality to penetrate to the core of universal depth meaning. He feels that the Avant-Garde is similar in that though seemingly superficial, it portrays a deeper meaning. Césaire's theatre, too, though political on the superficial layer, reaches further and expresses deep universal meaning. Pronko continues by acknowledging that myth time is cyclical—the re-enactment in time of what happened in eternity—suggesting the rhythm of nature and the seasons. He feels that with such writers as Beckett and Ionesco, ties with the ground of being have been snipped and cyclical time "... is no longer vital and has lost touch with a meaningful eternity."84 This is not true of Césaire because the universe, though oppressive, retains hope and meaning, and cyclical time, which will be discussed later, is retained and emphasized. Pronko does not compare Beckett and Ionesco with the ancient mythographers but states:

... I do believe they have taken a step away from the play that is based upon more superficial theatrical values, such as suspense, involved intrigue, ... and in the direction of the profound dramatic encounter suggested today, for example, by the Mass, and in an earlier age by the tragedies of Aeschylus; and that it is a step sufficiently great to justify the epithets "cosmological comedy," "ontological theatre," and "metaphysical farce."85

Césaire takes a greater step still toward the original religiosity of theatre and utilizes tragedy in its original sense. Much like Pronko describes the works of Genet, sal-
vation in Césaire's world comes through death and each of his plays is a ceremony ending in death. Here is a point of commonality between the two playwrights and Pronko, speaking of Genet, could well be speaking of Césaire,

...the criminal hero must die in order to retain his power, just as the religious hero becomes himself fully only through death. And the lesser mortals who remain behind, whether consciously or not, imitate the pattern he has set, and his life and death are re-enacted symbolically in the Mass or in the ceremonial theater.\(^{86}\)

This is not to equate Césaire with the Avant-Garde dramatists but only to show their possible areas of encounter. As shown above\(^ {87}\), Césaire can hardly be placed in the absurdist or anti-theatre tradition. His plays retain traditional form and at the same time make use of age-old archetypal beliefs. Lewis Nkosi indicates the areas of contact between Avant-Garde and neo-African theatre when he says, "It is interesting that the further back the African artist goes in exploring his tradition the nearer he gets to the European Avant-garde. Compare even the wildest Beckett to African sculpture and you see what I mean."\(^ {88}\)

Poetry, symbolism and gesture provide the means and medium through which art is communicated dispensing with naturalistic niceties and suspense which have little to do with the message inherent in the play. This purposeful theatrical goal is the common point between European Avant-Garde and African theatre. Césaire shares both cultures and makes use of the best of each.
Our basic thesis is that Césaire, in his tragedies, utilizes the theme of rebirth in order to project a generally optimistic outlook. In so doing, he relies on both traditional and modern elements. He clings tenaciously to the ancient tragic structure as derived from the dithyramb in honor of Dionysus, yet he wraps the structure in the raiment of modern political history. In the three plays, we see a progressive movement from pure symbolic myth and poetry to political reality and language clarity. The three tragedies, though extremely different in content, are remarkably the same in structure. Césaire’s use of the tragic structure links him indissolubly with tradition and the past; his choice of modern political subjects links him with a modern future. One could almost say his structure resides on ageless tradition whereas his content relies on timely history.

This reliance on tradition, according to Murray, is the indication of a great poet. He feels there is in fact a poetic tradition traceable back to the religious origins that is observed unconsciously and shared by all great poets. That is why we see similarities in, say, Hamlet and Orestes; the similarities emanate from the ritual on which drama is ultimately based. Without denying individual genius, Murray sees this unconscious factor as vitally important. He says:

What does our hypothesis imply? It seems to imply, first, a great unconscious solidarity and continuity, lasting from age to age, among all the children of the poets, both the makers and the callers-forth, both
the artist and the audiences. In artistic creation, as in all the rest of life, the traditional element is far larger, the purely inventive element far smaller, than the unsophisticated man supposes.89

Césaire, as normalien and agrégé is well-versed in classic studies and the classical influence is certainly a conscious one. Yet it is not the purpose of this thesis to denominate specific sources in Césaire's work, but only to illuminate his work through the critical tool of myth. Though many critics have noted the rebirth element, few explain it beyond a politically symbolic level. The myth and ritual theory of tragic origins serves to illuminate the rebirth element in Césaire's play in a highly interesting manner, giving this key Césairian theme an aesthetic, as well as political, basis.

In the following analysis of Césaire's tragedies, the plays will be discussed in chronological order both as to date of writing and date of plot setting. Et les Chiens se taisaient was originally a long poem published in 1946 in his poetic collection Les Armes miraculeuses. In 1956 it was arranged for the theatre and published separately by Présence Africaine. Of the three tragedies this one corresponds more closely to the ritual than the other two and contains more of the ritual elements. Predominant solar and vegetal imagery reinforces even more the idea of a fertility ritual. La Tragédie du Roi Christophe, written in 1963, will be discussed next and portrays Haiti at her independence in 1804. This play takes on more elements of tragedy and less of ritual.
Finally *Une Saison au Congo*, written in 1966 and which also takes on more tragic elements than ritual ones, will be discussed last. It portrays the time of independence for the Belgian Congo in 1960. The last two plays have been revised by the author. In both, all versions will be discussed, but quotations will be taken from the final 1970 version of *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* and the second version, 1967, of *Une Saison au Congo*. 
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 1


2 Breton, pp. 93-110.


17Ibid., p. 34.

18Ibid., p. 34.


20Bobrowska-Skrodzka, p. 53.


26Ibid., p. 167.


29Bobrowska-Skrodzka, p. 48.

30Traore, p. 48.


33I find it most difficult to associate Césaire with the avant-garde dramatists. His work is not in the absurdist tradition by any means and perhaps could only be placed, after labored arguments, in the poetic avant-garde proposed by
Martin Esslin in The Theatre of the Absurd, Anchor Books (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1969), p. 7, which he describes as being more lyrical and far less violent and grotesque than much of the rest of the avant-garde theatre. As to Césaire's associations with Artaud, I find that it is through Jean-Marie Serreau, Césaire's director, where the Black writer is most closely aligned with the Artaudian vision. Finally though Ms. Serreau does place Césaire under the general heading of "La Relève de l'avant-garde" she does so only in an indirect way. She places Césaire and Kateb Yacine in a separate and exclusive section in which their work is discussed only very briefly. In short she mentions the two Black dramatists only in passing.

34Ngal, "Théâtre," p. 621.

35Ibid., p. 630.


37Author of Histoire de la civilisation africaine (Paris: Gallimard, 1936) in which primitive African people were shown to have had a rich and beautifully complex culture. Césaire and his compatriots in Paris in the '30s read his work with interest and enthusiasm.


39This immediately calls to the Western mind the Christian belief in Jesus who dies and is resurrected after three days. The figure of Christ is in fact the supreme development of the dying/rising god motif, present in so many religions, is ultimately traceable to the Ancient Near East from whence it diffused to other parts of the world.


42Kesteloot, Ecrivains, pp. 240ff.

43Kesteloot, L'Homme, p. 32.


46Ibid., p. 282.


48Traore, p. 34.


53Hyman, p. 51.


63Harrison, p. 333.
64Ibid., p. xviii.
65Gaster, pp. 9-11.
67Weisinger, Paradox, p. 31.
68Weisinger, "Myth," p. 150.
69Ibid., p. 151.
70Frazer, pp. 189ff.
71Weisinger, Paradox, p. 49.
72Ibid., p. 59.
73Ibid., p. 65.
74Ibid., p. 66.
75Ibid., p. 72.
77Ibid., p. 152.
80Ibid., pp. 48-50.
81Ibid., p. 51.
82Murray, Classical, p. 57.
84Pronka, p. 119.
85Ibid., p. 121.
86Ibid., p. 144.
87See Supra., p. 23.
89Murray, Classical, pp. 207-208.
CHAPTER 2

Et les Chiens se taisaient: Theatre as Religion

Et les Chiens se taisaient has gotten relatively little critical attention in comparison to Césaire's other plays. Jacqueline Ormand describes the Rebel as a sacred revolutionary who dies for the birth of a new social order, while Georges Ngai discusses vegetal and solar imagery in an article on Césaire's poetry. He says that for Césaire death is an obsession and that "Pour naître à cette dimension (dimension de lumière), le poète doit passer par la mort conçue ici comme baptême—immolation (c'est le sens de Et les Chiens se taisaient)."³

According to Michel Benamou, the central imagery of Et les Chiens se taisaient is the sun. In Act I the sun image is constellated in terms of impotence, but as the play unfolds, its virile, heroic qualities are restored. At the end of the play, the flame of torture becomes the flame of purification made manifest by the Rebel's body which is transmuted into a glimmering vision of the islands.

Rodney Harris analyzes Et les Chiens se taisaient by stating that it is an extension of ideas begun in Cahier du Retour au pays natal where Césaire personally lives out the stages later portrayed by the Rebel. The je of the Cahier prefigures the Rebel; Césaire's revolt is the Rebel's revolt.
One explanation he offers for the title of the play is that les chiens represent the dogs used by white masters to hunt down runaway slaves.6 The Rebel is assigned the role of king, and the theme of the solitude of the misunderstood hero that is begun here will be carried over into his next two plays. The Rebel incarnates Christophe and Lumumba but unlike them, he is not frozen into historical time and takes on more universal dimensions. The Rebel’s vision of Africa in Act II relates him and reunites him to his Black past and imbues him with strength and courage which unfortunately he cannot infuse into his fellow Blacks. However the Rebel’s death, according to Harris, is a purifying experience and the final image of the island is an indication of hope and signifies the dawn of a new day.

Barthélemy Kotchy says of Césaire’s work, “Pour tout dire, le thème fondamental de son oeuvre c’est le nègre en lutte pour des lendemains meilleurs.”7 In analyzing the play he agrees that les chiens represent the colonists who have their dogs chase runaway slaves. He says, “Donc le titre Et les Chiens se taisaient signifie qu’à la mort du Rebelle il n’y aura aucun aboiement de chiens, puisque le nègre marron n’en possède pas; plus exactement, la mort du Héros n’affectera nullement le colon, son maître.”8

Kotchy compares Césaire’s first tragedy to a Greek play in which fate is represented by the colonial machine and the Greek chorus is found in the form of L’Echo. There are three acts however instead of the traditional five found
in Greek theatre, showing Césaire's love for historical dialectic; the unities of time and place are not observed; and the main character is not of noble descent but a slave who would never have been allowed on the Greek stage. Kotchyi points out that the Rebel undergoes temptation and has a moment of weakness but finishes by accepting his task with courage. And he says, "Au fond, la mort du Rebelle est nécessaire; il faut que le grain meure pour que germe la plante." He feels that the Rebel shows traits of a Lumumba or an Nkrumah and that all the plays are a reflection on the solitude and apparent failure of the hero, with, finally, a call to transcend this failure. "La mort du Rebelle c'est le prélude de sa renaissance et de celle de son peuple. Le Héros disparu est plus puissant que jamais, car, en Afrique, l'esprit des ancêtres-héros continue de régir les vivants."

After this brief survey it is clear that all the critics concur on the optimistic ending of the play and the Rebel's underlying success. As suggested in the preceding chapter, the ending is due mainly to Césaire's magnificent use of the rebirth archetype, an archetype that is a vital element in ancient seasonal rituals from which, as many scholars contend, drama developed.

The overall tone of Césaire's first play is that of a seasonal ritual. Besides extensive use of vegetal and solar imagery, the structure itself is very similar to Weisinger's myth/ritual structure outlined in chapter one.
Vegetal and solar imagery predominate in the play and both symbols are important in ancient seasonal myths. Vegetation deities were killed and buried in the ground in order to renew the earth and to ensure that the crops would grow, and the dominance of solar imagery is important as an allusion to the seasonal combat between summer and winter. Thus the two main elements in the nature myths, sun and vegetation, are the basic images found in *Et les Chiens se taisaient*.

Structurally, the story depicts a wasted land that is restored to life through the sacrificial death of its leader and king. In Act I, the reader sees an exposition of the misery of the island country peopled by Black slaves and White masters. This misery is vividly depicted in Acts I and II while the Rebel is preparing to be killed. The land is barren and images of stagnation, decay and ruin abound; the only images of bounty refer to a future, never the present. In Act III, signs of a reawakening gradually come into play and finally after the Rebel's sacrificial death, images of abundant growth and plenty can be seen. The reader enters a wasted and miserable country where no rain falls and no crops grow. Through the efforts of a hero who fights the enemy and in turn is killed, the country is renewed and vegetation is restored. This is the basic outline of the play's movement. The images will be studied in this context (decay/death versus growth/life) and structurally fitted into Weisinger's pattern.

Another aspect of the play which lends itself to the idea of a seasonal ritual is the use of time delineations
and terms indicating periodicity. Soon after the curtain is raised the récitant says, "C'est la saison des étoiles brûlantes qui commence." (p. 9) The significance of the word season lies in its indication of a designated period of time that is about to begin and could easily correspond to Gaster’s concept of a new life lease about to be renewed. Specific time designations are often marked in the play leading to the impression of a step-by-step, well-timed and pre-planned event. In Act I, time is shown to be marching on resolutely amidst the wasted land: the récitante slowly advances the hands of a clock as she laments the misery of the people: "Nous sommes au moment où la princesse lassée essuie sur ses lèvres une absence de baisers comme une pensée de fruit âcre." (p. 21) Making another turn of the hand she continues "Nous sommes au moment où la princesse a cessé de croire au faiseur de pluie hirsute." (p. 21) After another turn: "Nous sommes au moment où brin de sourire par brin de sourire la princesse se tisse une robe de pluie inédite." (p. 21)

Césaire's imagery here is extremely resourceful as he links the natural elements of life force to man's own ability to create life. Reproductive powers of nature and man are dealt with jointly; rain is essential for any type of vegetation to grow just as seminal fluid is essential to man's own procreative capability. In the above image, the princess, a type of earth mother, no longer believes in the "faiseur de pluie hirsute"; man, the hairy mammal, is no longer expected to either produce rain or seminal fluid. Thus the
princess is alone, her life-giving powers unused ("une absence de baisers") and even she no longer hopes for the fruitful rain. Both the earth and the princess lay at waste, unattended by the king. This is the moment when the old year is dying and decayed and a new one must be brought in. The refrain "Nous sommes au moment où ... " is a recurring motif throughout the play and it, along with other time delineations, adds to the idea of a specifically timed seasonal event.

To analyze the play in detail in the light of a seasonal ritual, Weisinger's myth and ritual model as defined in chapter one will be used as an organizational principle. The first element in the basic ritual form is the indispensable role of the divine king, upon whose fate depended the fate of the community. As the central figure in the seasonal rituals, crops were ensured and general fertility was renewed by his healthful life and annual sacrifice. He is thus inextricably linked with fertility and vegetation. Now the central figure in *Et les Chiens se taissaient* is the Rebel who in fact is a Black slave under the colonial regime. Yet he is the divine king and fertility and well-being are dependent on him and his sacrificial death. Though his social status seems hardly regal, throughout the play there are numerous references to him as king of his people.

The Rebel establishes himself as a superior being early on in the play while talking with his lover. He says, "J'ai capté dans l'espace d'extraordinaires messages ... ; j'entends plus haut que les louanges/une vaste improvisation de
tornades, de coups/de soleil, de maléfices ..." (p. 15) He manifests here a somewhat supernatural ability to communicate or manipulate natural forces. There is also a reference to kingly regalia coming from the Rebel himself when he describes his macabre entourage: "Ma cour un tas d'ossements, mon trône, des chairs pourries, ma couronne un cercle d'excréments." (p. 21) The first true acknowledgement of kingship by other characters in the play begins with a scene in Act I and is initiated by a character called la Première Folle who chants this question: "Où est celui qui chantera pour nous?" (p. 31) The chorus responds by describing this sought-for spokesman in terms of ancient mythic symbology: he holds a mint leaf in one hand and a snake in the other while his eyes are those of a hawk and his head that of a dog. The symbols are rich in meaning and interpretation; the mint leaf being a female symbol and the snake being a male phallic symbol, together they combine for an image of fertility. The hawk was the symbol of royalty for Egyptian pharaohs and the dog's head could represent Anubis who guarded over Egyptian kingly sepulchers. Here is presented a king who holds the powers of life and death as they intertwine under his tutelage.

The scene continues with the deuxième folle who chants "Où est celui qui nous montrera le chemin?" (p. 31) to which the chorus responds with the supernatural image: "ses sandales sont de soleil pâle/ses courroies sont de sang frais." (p. 31) These two powerful life images (sun and fresh blood) certainly indicate an extraordinary being who is
far superior to those around him. Chanting and singing take place as the royal coming is prepared: "Préparons la maison pour le bel hôte triomphant," (p. 32) "Préparons le sentier pour le bel homme plein de force." (p. 32) The entire scene is one of religious ritual and royal pomp as the participants chant, clap, sing psalms, and offer praises and prayers to the kingly arrival. The prayers are linked with a desire for the leader to restore fertility: "seigneur tout près des larmes, monte dans le désert comme l'eau ...; monte, très imminent seigneur, ..." (p. 33) His tears can be as the rain which is needed in the desert-like land. Finally the king arrives in the personage of the Rebel who appears while the chorus intones "O roi debout." (p. 34) This regal scene carries through to the end of Act I in a beautiful atmosphere of royal procession and thus the Rebel is firmly established as a King-god and rather soundly linked to natural processes of fertility. He speaks of his powers in alternation with the chorus who continues their chant of "O roi debout." The Rebel says: "des violetttes des anémones se lèvent à chaque pas de mon sang." (p. 35) This verse is particularly interesting since it is almost certainly a reference to Adonis whose death and flowery resurrection were commemorated each year by Greek girls. Adonis, beloved of Aphrodite, was killed by a wild boar and the goddess, in her grief, caused the crimson anemone to spring up where each drop of his blood had stained the earth. Adonis is a classic vegetation deity--dying/rising god type
of figure—and this allusion reinforces the reflection of the dying/rising god in the character of the Rebel. As if to ensure his power over nature (and his role as propagator of crops) he says, "... à chaque pas de ma voix, à chaque goutte de mon nom/... des pommes d'arauaria, des bouquets de cerises/... des arcs, des signes, des empreintes, des feux." (p. 35) After this brief exaltation, the Rebel/king prepares for and submits himself to his forthcoming abase-ment and sacrifice. Lying flat on his stomach, he submits: "Me voici." (p. 38) When a temptress tries to talk him out of his courageous deed, he refuses and says, "ils ont tué le soleil il n'y a plus de soleil, il ne/reste plus que les taureaux de Basan." (p. 40) A possible explanation of this verse can be seen in the light of a seasonal combat where the sun has been taken away from the earth and only a bull remains. Perhaps the bull, representing the sacrificial animal, is all that is left to appease the cosmic forces and restore the sun. The Rebel is the sacrificial bull; let winter end and summer begin.

In Act II the demiurgic imagery continues with "Et maintenant le voici le nautonnier noir de/l'orage noir, le guetteur/du temps noir ..." (p. 43) and "il ne sait plus que l'orage/muré dans la passion noire du voyage noir,/un vieillard têtu, fragile, noire interrogation du/destin dans le cycle perdu des courants sommaires." (p. 43) It is interesting to note the youthful Rebel here described as "un vieillard têtu," and is perhaps a reference to the fading
old lease on life that is ready to expire or the king whose reign is about to end, and though physically vigorous, his imminent sacrifice cloaks him in symbolic age.

To relate even more to crops, nature cycles, etc. the Rebel calls himself a "moissonneur," and in preparing for his coming death he says, "J'ai commandé pour mes funérailles/un troupeau de buffles sauvages/un cent d'ennuques des sacrifices des tumultes/un vol de couteaux de jet de sagaies de cuivre rouge/Non corps mon corps." (p. 45) His forthcoming death is then described in ritualistic terms and as announced from the beginning, the Rebel knows full well he will die and so anticipates. This is no suspenseful or accidental death; it is a pre-ordained rite serving a useful purpose for his community. A moment of suffering is felt by the Rebel while the chorus continues their litanies to the king: "je [le chœur] suis le tambourinaire sacré, il est celui qui/dans l'éclairage tâtonnant et les relents lance/d'un geste sûr sa paume ligneuse et le maillot,/il est le roi des aubes et des dieux, il est/le pêcheur roux des choses profondes et noires." (p. 51) After a brief sleep the Rebel awakens and the chorus asks, "T'es-tu levé?" (p. 52) to which he responds "Je me suis levé." (p. 52) But there is more: this is no ordinary physical awakening because he is getting up now to take on his momentous task and thus the chorus adds "T'es-tu levé comme il convient?" (p. 52) and the Rebel with aplomb answers simply "Comme il convient." (p. 53) Then in a long passage the Rebel lucidly proclaims his mighty ambitions amidst a plethora of vegetal imagery:
Monde, prends garde, il y a un beau pays qu'ils ont gâté de larves dévergondé hors saison
un monde d'éclat de fleurs salies de vieilles affiches
une maison de tuile cassée de feuilles arrachées sans tempête
pas encore
pas encore
je ne reviendrai que grave
l'amour luira dans nos yeux de grange incendiée comme un oiseau ivre
un peloton d'exécution
pas encore
pas encore
je ne reviendrai qu'avec ma bonne prise de contrebande
l'amour vivant herbeux de blé de sauterelles de vague de déluge de sifflement de braisers de signes de forêt d'eau de gazon d'eau de troupeaux d'eau
l'amour spacieux de flammes, d'instants, de ruches, de pivoines, de poinsettias, prophétique de chiffres, prophétique de climats (p. 53)

The passage commences with a caveat from the Rebel indicating that he has come to restore the wasted country. The first part of the passage is replete with images of waste, sterility, and violence and is punctuated repeatedly by his words "pas encore." The four-time repetition of those two words gives staccato emphasis to his powerful and assertive assurance that the impending task, though not completed, will be upheld. He describes the land before his coming as "gâté de larves" "dévergondé" and "hors saison." The flowers are dirty and ugly; the homes are broken and leaves are scattered. The middle section, framed by the "pas encore" refrain describes the method he will use to change the former old society into the new life described in the final part of the passage. He describes the combat, the method by which he will destroy the enemy, when he refers to the "grange incendiée"—prophetic of the burning of the master's house.
and the Rebel's attempt to free the slaves. On a deeper level—from the myth/ritual viewpoint—it is the combat by which the frozen processes of nature will be thawed.

The final part of the passage teams with lush fertile images and is a description of all that is to come with renewed life. Such terms as "l'amour vivant herbeux de blé de sauterelles ... de gazon d'eau de troupeaux ... l'amour spacieux ... " and other terms of healthy vegetation and existence contrasts powerfully with the larvae and dirty flowers of the opening lines. Thus this excerpt shows a progressive movement from the old, stained world (lines 1-6) via the ritual combat (lines 9-16) into the new, healthy world (lines 17-23). This passage is a beautiful one and illustrates the movement of the entire play. Through the Rebel's sacrifice, the old, stained world is cleansed and made new.

Vegetation images are abundant throughout the play with the Rebel constantly cast in the light of a fertility god—a king upon whose actions the health of the community depends. In one passage the Rebel likens himself to the very soil in which the seed is planted and in offering himself tells his people to cultivate his body as they would the earth: "laboure-moi, laboure-moi, cri armé de mon peuple;/ ... et piéteine piéteine-moi/jusqu'à la brisure de mon coeur/jusqu'à l'éclatement de mes veines/jusqu'au pépiement de mes os dans le minuit/de ma chair ... " (p. 54) This is a powerful image showing the body of the Rebel becoming part of the earth itself in an effort to fructify it and make it produce. The phrase "pépiement de mes os" links the Rebel's body to nature
by using a word from the fauna realm to modify the Rebel's bones. With Césaire's great sensitivity to language, it is not impossible that the "pêp" prefix could be a reference as well to the word "pêpinière," signifying a young plant that will later be transplanted. Thus when the Rebel says "pépiement de mes os," it could be a double meaning indicating that his bones are the cuttings from which the new tree will be transplanted and take root. He becomes the very seed from which the vegetation will grow. The scattering of his body can also be taken as an allusion to a fertility god whose death, as Gaster and others point out, is almost always in the form of a mutilation. The Rebel continues setting out his role as earth creator with such phrases as "O douceur de mes mains à bâtir/et jamais mains créantes n'auront à ce point/caressé/l'aventure dans la chose à créer/... et il n'y a pas un petit nuage dont ma main dès/maintenant n'ait lissé les fragiles plumes d'oiseau/tremblant au bord du nid."

(pp. 54-55)

The Rebel admits of his need for combat, not out of hate or resentment, but combat and death only "s'il meurt/à faire renaître une terre sans pestilence, riche,/délectable, fleurant non l'engrais mais l'herbe/toujours nouvelle."

(p. 56) Then follows the beautiful and oft-cited passage in which the world is envisioned as a huge forest:

Il y a des baobabas, du chêne vif, des sapins noirs du noyer blanc; je veux qu'ils poussent tous, bien fermes et drus différents de bois, de port, de couleur, mais pareillement pleins de sève et sans que l'un empiète sur l'autre,
différents à leur base
mais oh!
que leur tête se rejointe oui très haut dans
l'éther égal à ne former pour tous
qu'un seul toit (p. 56)

The rest of Act II is a series of dialogues between
the Rebel and his lover and the Rebel and his mother. Both
women desperately try to dissuade the Rebel from combat and
sure death at the hands of the White master\textsuperscript{16}, and their
dialogues prove to be of interest for several reasons. The
fact that the Rebel's mother and lover, with whom he has a
son, are introduced brings out the image of fertility to
a greater degree and sharpens the context. The fact that
his woman is introduced as his lover and not simply as his
wife heightens the idea of sexual love. The lover's very
first words to the Rebel are "Embrasse-moi" (p. 11) which
indicates their sexual union\textsuperscript{17}, a union necessary for fer-
tility and reproduction. In fact one of the nine elements
listed by Weisinger is the sacred marriage and the presence
of the lover and her constant references to their sexual
union serve the purpose of a \textit{hieros gamos} in the play. The
Rebel continues the thread of vegetal imagery in his dialogue
with her. He must die, despite her pleas to the contrary,
since the land lays waste: "... ce confus amas de collines
coupé de/langues d'eau!" (p. 61) and he explains "mais je
sais qu'il lui [ce peuple] fallait autre chose qu'un/
 commencement/quelque chose comme une naissance./Que de mon
sang oui, que de mon sang/je fonde ce peuple." (p. 62) Her
final words of beseechment to the Rebel continue to emphasize
their union but as she speaks the Rebel's mother enters to
push her aside. Here again the fertility context is sharpened. The reader is reminded that the Rebel came from the womb of his mother, that his union with his lover produced another male child. All this is obvious perhaps, but it serves to hammer in on the idea of fruitful reproduction. In the dialogue with his mother, the Rebel continuously explains his purpose of releaser of fertility by first describing the old world "La mer indocile ... [perhaps a pun--unconscious or not--on the contrariness of his mother!]

... la famine, le désespoir ... " (p. 67) and then describing the new world to come "... et la mer est feuillue, et je lis du haut de son faîte/un pays magnifique, plein de soleil ... de perroquets/ ... de fruits ... d'eau douce ... d'arbres à pain." (p. 67) He prophesies the proverbial land of milk and honey that he will bring to bear.

Of course, the political intent is obvious since instead of the old, worn-out world versus the new, stain-free world in the Gaster concept of life leases, one sees the corrupt world instigated by the colonial powers versus the new world to come of independence. The lover and mother of course are those people who, fearing change, prefer the status quo to any unknown future. But that's only a minute part of Césaire's work and couched in vegetal imagery, the myth and ritual theory veritably shines through.

At the end of Act II the Rebel's body is partially mutilated; he is blinded and his hands are cut, but as the act ends, one hears the chorus still chanting "O roi debout." (p. 74) Finally the Rebel associates himself closely with
the earth and its corresponding connotations of abundance and reproductivity by undergoing a baptism. This baptism however is not with water but with dirt. As soil is sprinkled over his neck, he says "Terre farineuse, lait de ma mère, chaud sur ma nuque, ruisseau riche, demi-ténèbres, exige,/ dirige ... " (p. 74) The adjective "farineuse" and the phrase "lait de ma mère" emphasize fully the earth as food-producer and sustainer of life, and the Rebel is one of her baptized children.

In Act III the vegetal imagery continues contrasting between the present "pays ... maudit" (p. 82) and the future world to come. The Rebel retains identity with nature and the land; in the passage below he describes himself in organic, geophysical terms:

je démêle avec mes mains mes pensées qui sont des lianes sans contracture, et je salue ma fraternité totale.
Les fleuves enfoncent dans ma chair leur museau
de sagouin
des forêts poussent aux mangles de mes muscles
les vagues de mon sang chantent aux cayes
je ferme les yeux
toutes mes richesses sous mes mains
tous mes marécages
tous mes volcans
mes rivières pendent à mon cou comme des serpents et des chaînes précieuses (p. 83)

His body becomes the land as rivers hang from his neck and forests sprout from his muscles. With complete physical identification, his health certainly corresponds to the country's health. Allusions to the Rebel as king continue throughout the third act as he begins to die: "Le Roi a froid ... le roi grelotte ... le roi tousser." (p. 91) Of course this encroaching infirmity makes his death all the more
needful since his incapabilities will be passed on to the entire community. As the Rebel lay dying the récitante and récitant repeat successively: "L'île saigne" (p. 111) which is tantamount to saying Le Rebelle saigne. In the direct relation of king to country/Rebel with country, as the Rebel bleeds, so bleeds the island. Chants of "O roi" and "O roi debout" (p. 112) continue up to the moment of his death. The Rebel is King and his welfare and that of the community is linked. Element one of Weisinger's pattern is respected in the play.

As the sacrificial lamb, to what extent can or does the Rebel exercise freedom of choice? The Rebel certainly exerts his will as an independent being, yet the tone of the play mitigates this to some extent. On the one hand, we see the Rebel as a victim humbly submissive to his sacrificial task; on the other hand we see a man coming to terms with his own oppressed ego and exerting his independent will.

Throughout the play, the Rebel is placed in a central position as the other characters revolve around him. He is tempted, cajoled, taunted, scorned, beseeched and generally preyed upon by all the other characters. Staying in one position, the other personages seemingly dance around him and interact with him in various ways. In this sense, he seems almost the pawn figure, as he is tossed back and forth amidst the parade of characters. At times he is brave and confident; at others he is weak and forlorn.
Nonetheless his determination and free choice certainly come into play as we see the Rebel evolve into a freedom fighter. His attack on the master indicates a strength of will on his part. Though his freedom of choice is seemingly more limited than that of Christophe or Patrice Lumumba, as we will see later, the Rebel does not lack this quality altogether. His role as king/god would indeed require a great conviction on his part as to the task he is to perform, and his own belief and firm conviction as to the efficacy of the sacrifice must be strong. From a political viewpoint, the Rebel believes in the future nation and contributes to nationalism; from the myth/ritual viewpoint the Rebel believes in the sacrifice needed to restore the country.

Element two in the myth/ritual pattern is an extremely important one; it is the combat between the god and an opposing power. This element is the nexus around which the play revolves; without this combat, the suffering, death and resurrection of the king would be hardly necessary. On a political level, the combat is simply White colonial machine versus oppressed Black slaves. From a myth and ritual standpoint it is a seasonal combat, summer versus winter, rain versus drought, fertility versus sterility, all personified by the king/leader/god versus nature and the cosmic forces.

Though the actual combat is described by the Rebel in a flashback to his mother (a scene occurring in Act II), it is foreshadowed in Act I with references to the White enemy that will later be killed and who contributes to the sterility crisis. In a sense the enemy is the winter that must
be fought and killed by the summer sun. The Rebel, associated with the sun, must defeat winter so that vegetation can be restored. Even before the play begins, the Echo issues a warning to the future enemy: "Architecte aux yeux bleus/je te défie/prends garde à toi architecte, car si meurt le Rebelle/ce ne sera pas sans avoir fait clair pour/tous que tu es le bâtisseur d'un monde de pestilence." (p. 8)

The White race ("architecte aux yeux bleus") is cast in the light of an inhumane conqueror—supermasculine, greedy, selfish and disregardful of all that is nature. He is the enemy. He must be killed since he is the builder of this ruined land: "architecte sourd aux choses clair comme l'arbre/mais fermé comme une cuirasse chacun de tes/pas est une conquête et une spoliation et un/contresens et un attentat." (p. 8)

The political intent is obvious; Césaire is issuing out stern criticism of the Western philosophy of conquest, blind progress, and colonialism. This concept is indeed the prime enemy of the Black man and it is the colonialist attitude that the Rebel seeks to destroy. From the myth and ritual standpoint the analogy rings just as true. The images of decay and corruption refer to the old world—the enemy that must be put to final rest by the hero-god—and the images of freshness and life refer to the new world to come.

The parade of White ecclesiastics in Act I is a blatant satire on Césaire's part, and though limited, is of some significance to this analysis. For instance two of the key figures in this parade of White characters that come to expose their positions and philosophies are L'Administrateur
and *le grand promoteur*. The former expounds on the theory of the White Man's Burden and their civilizing mission of bringing Christianity to the Black people:

Et nous leur aurions volé cette terre?
Ah! non!

.................................
Dieu nous l'a donnée ...
.................................
Oui nous l'avons prise
Oh! pas pour nous! pour tous!
Pour la restituer, inopportune stagnation, à l'universel mouvement!

.................................
Ah nous sommes seuls
Et quel fardeau!
Porter à soi seul le fardeau de la civilisation!
(pp. 10-11)

With the *Grand Promoteur* the satire intensifies as the stage instructions indicate that the noise of a machine should be heard whirring in the background while he describes the monstrous technological machine that goes about building up and paving over every last square inch of land and gobbling up every last drop of the earth's resources. "Traquez, traquez/ ... /serrez, serrez .../qu'il n'y ait pas une motte de terre non piétinée, non retournée, non travaillée."
(p. 22) This is an interesting contrast to the passage wherein the Rebel asks his people to "laboure-moi, laboure-moi, ... / ... et piétine piétine-moi ... " (p. 54) In both cases, the earth is being used for its source of production, but with the *Grand Promoteur*'s machine we have a land squeezed dry of all resources while with the Rebel, we have the land used for its productive yield and at the same time paid back for this yield. The body of the Rebel is torn asunder and thrown back to the land in order to renew and replenish what
has been taken. With the Promoteur's machine, nothing is returned to the land as man frantically tries to get all he can from it. The Grand Promoteur continues: "Mon nom c'est le Découvreur, mon nom c'est/l'Inventeur, mon nom c'est l'Unificateur,

...............................

Je suis l'Expropriateur.../Faites chauffer la machine!/
Je briserai tous ceux qui tenteront de ralentir/ma marche./
Je suis l'Histoire qui passe!" (pp. 23-24)

Besides the obvious satire, this passage presents a difference in cultural attitudes dictated by the Western idea of linear time as opposed to the Eastern concept of cyclical time. The former is based on the assumption that time is a straight-line process in which events that come will never be repeated. Thus it follows that such a culture teaches a "get all you can now" life style whereas a cyclical time-styled culture teaches a "no need to rush" attitude since anything missed one time around can be done when the cycle repeats.19 Suffice it to say that the entire satirical element herein presented simply reinforces the position of old world (represented by White exploitive colonialism) versus new world (represented by Black freedom) and heightens the combat context seen in Act II. In Act I the enemy is presented along with the misery that has been wrought on the Blacks by this same enemy. Its importance is valid but need not be dealt with in further detail.

In the play the combat is described by the Rebel in a flashback to his mother. The description is prefaced by
a dialogue between mother and son in which her negative, static attitude counterbalances his positive, aggressive one. These attitudes are reflected through vegetation images. He describes the future land that he is preparing as "... un pays magnifique, plein de soleil ... de perroquets ... /de fruits ... d'eau douce ... d'arbres à pain. ........................................ Un pays d'ânse, de palme, de pandanus ... un/pays de main ouverte ... " (p. 67) The mother's outlook is reflected in the use of hard, cold, inorganic images: "... un désert de béton, de campfre, d'acier, de/charpie, de marais désinfectés, un lieu lourd miné d'yeux de flammes et de/ champignons ... " (p. 67)

The timelessness of his role and his all-pervading, durative purpose is reflected when he says "Mon nom: offensé; mon prénom: humilié; mon/état: révolté; mon âge; l'âge de la pierre." (p. 68) The Rebel then describes to his mother the combat that took place between him and the White master. The scene is set when the White master comes to the Rebel's home to see the latter's new son and wants to take the infant away because: "... ce n'était pas trop de/vingt ans pour faire un bon chrétien et un bon/esclave, bon sujet et bien dévoué, un bon garde-/chiourme de commandeur, oeil vif et le bras/ferme. Et cet homme spéculait sur le berceau/de mon fils, un berceau de garde-chiourme." (p. 69) Thus explaining his motive, the Rebel describes how, that same night, he and other slaves snuck up to the master's house and barn and set them on fire.
As to the master, the Rebel himself killed him. "Tué... Je l'ai tué de mes propres mains..." (p. 69) This death was not gratuitous; it was a necessary step in the renewal of life and fertility. The Rebel says, "Oui de mort féconde et plantureuse..." (p. 69) The murder was committed in terms of bringing on a new day. When the Rebel's mother laments her son's act she says, "J'avais rêvé d'un fils pour fermer les yeux de sa/mère." (p. 69) and the Rebel responds and justifies his deed "J'ai choisi d'ouvrir sur un autre soleil les yeux/de mon fils." (p. 69) Thus his fight with the winter enemy will bring on the fruitful summer sun. To ensure the fact that in this deed he is the representative of the entire community, he says, "Il n'y a pas dans/le monde un pauvre type lynché, un pauvre/homme torturé, en qui je ne sois assassiné et/humilié." (p. 70) The Rebel concludes his description of the momentous combat in a final passage to his horrified mother. He depicts the murder and death in ritualistic, quasi-religious terms; the scene as described is reminiscent of a mystic, mysterious happening. In the black of night, flames suddenly burst forth from the master's property. The flames are portrayed in positive terms and take on a purificatory nature. In essence, the horrible scene of pain and destruction is transmitted in terms of freshness and life: "Nous frappions. La sueur et le/sang nous faisait une fraîcheur/.../et la flamme flaqua douce sur nos joues." (p. 71) The flames produce healthful warmth, not destructive heat. Always reflective of solemn ritual he details the actual murder: "je frappai, le sang gicla;
c'est le seul baptême/dont je me souvienne aujourd'hui."

(p. 71) This scene of death and destruction is reconstructed in religious, life-giving terms. It is not useless violence or revenge; it is a natural step in a life-continuing process. From the point of view of the myth and ritual pattern, the scene is easily understood as an important element in the kingly representative's efforts to ensure his people of a new life lease.

This combat scene can be viewed in terms both of victory and defeat. Politically we see the oppressed conquering the oppressor, yet this conquest is fleeting at best because the Rebel is immediately taken into custody and eventually executed for his assault on the master. His victory is a brief one.

If we view the scene between master and slave as a seasonal combat, we see the Rebel, associated with the sun and vegetation, as representing spring and summer. The master, associated with barrenness, would be winter. In the seasonal combat then, summer defeats winter. After winter is over, the seed lies dormant for some time before it grows and sprouts in the spring. Thus after the death of the master, or winter, the Rebel himself is mutilated and killed, buried like the seed, only to undergo rebirth and resurrection later.

One very interesting aspect of the combat scene which lends, I think, to the myth and ritual analysis is found in two references by the Rebel to the month of November. While describing the deed to his mother, he first tells of the
master viewing the Rebel's child "Je me souviens d'un jour de novembre; ..." (p. 68) In describing the actual assault he reiterates: "C'était un soir de novembre ..." (p. 70) The double reference to November leads the critic to question its significance. Why is it mentioned twice within the combat scene? A possible explanation lies in a seasonal context. In Martinique, there are actually two seasons: the dry or "Carême" season which lasts from December to June and is the pleasantest period of the year. The other is the wet or "hivernage" season, during which hurricanes may occur, which lasts from June to November and is the hottest season. In Martinique then, November marks the end of the unpleasant season and the beginning of the pleasant one. In the Caribbean context, it would be less summer vs. winter than good season vs. bad season, but the significance is the same, and the Rebel, in his associations with the sun, still retains importance since in effect he represents the pleasant, non-wet, season. Thus, in a myth/ritual analysis, the month of November is of great importance and could explain its place in the play. Otherwise, I can see no great significance. The play has no historical basis and dates as such lose all but symbolic meaning.

The combat with the White master leads the Rebel into suffering and death. The theme of suffering, which is the third element in the myth and ritual pattern, is a prevalent one throughout all of Césaire's works. In Ét les Chiens se taisaient, the Rebel's suffering is depicted throughout the entire play but is especially vivid in Acts II and III.
Despite the Rebel's pain and agony, he courageously assumes the heroic act of sacrifice. Barthélemy Kotchy, for instance, compares him to the suffering Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. Amidst his determined aggression, he is seized by fear, doubt and weakness. Gaining no support from others, his ordeal is all the more terrible since he must face the deed totally alone and unaided. In Act I, emphasis is on general exposition and the Rebel's personal battle is underplayed. Instances of his personal desolation can nonetheless be found; he says, "Je ne suis plus que pâture; ..." (p. 16) He realizes the isolation of his task: "Et maintenant/seul/tout est seul/j'ai beau aiguiser ma voix/tout déserte tout/..." (p. 36) A brief flood of courage ("Vous ne m'effraieriez pas fantômes je suis fort." [p. 37]) is followed by a relapse of fear ("mais ils me regardent, ils m'épient, et j'ai peur/des dieux méchants et jaloux." [p. 37]). Act I serves as a prelude to Acts II and III where the suffering and death of the Rebel take place. In Act I he shows his readiness to be sacrificed by saying "je me prosterne, je baisse la tête/et le chevreau bêle en mon coeur." (p. 38) His humility and self-abasement are clearly manifest in his attitude of prostration and lowered head; the reference to the "chevreau" could easily be an allusion to the bouc émissaire which the Rebel has in fact become. Despite tempting voices, the Rebel holds firm as Act I closes. As Act II opens, the Rebel once again is undergoing self-doubt: "Va-t-en je ne suis qu'un vaincu/retire-toi/je ne suis qu'un coupé/donné et rejeté/........................................................................
mes amis je n'y suis pour personne/..." (pp. 43, 45) "Mais je/suis faible. Oh je suis faible." (p. 47) He is tor-
mented by visions of his own helplessness and memories of past suffering. After a long soliloquy by the Rebel in
which he seems to therapeutically unburden himself of these memories, he falls exhausted into sleep. Renewed by sleep,
he awakens full of courage and determination. Throughout the rest of Act II the dialogue between the Rebel and his
lover and the Rebel and his mother takes place. The suffering inherent in these dialogues is his painful confrontation
with two beloved ones who cannot understand the reason for his actions. Being forced to reject those most dear to him,
he is truly left alone. At the end of Act II, he is likewise rejected by all of his people as they shout the death
sentence at him.

The opening line of Act III, spoken by the Rebel, por-
trays his anguished solitude: "Ténèbres du cachot, je vous
salut." (p. 75) He now has only the shadows of the prison
to greet. His failing physical vigor, despite mental deter-
mination and bravery, is evidenced by shivers and coughs.
Horrible memories of slavery haunt him: "Et l'on nous vendait
comme des bêtes, et l'on/nous comptait les dents ... et l'on
nous tâtait les/bourses et l'on examinait le cati ou décati
de/notre peau et l'on nous palpaet et pesait et/soupesait
et l'on passait à notre cou de bête/domptée le collier de la
servitude et du/sobriquet." (p. 91) His physical suffering
is vividly portrayed in this final act: he is blinded,
hands cut, rejected by his closest friends and all his people.
Despite moments of weakness and fear, he readies himself for death, the necessary sacrifice, which is the fourth element in the basic ritual model.

From the beginning of the play, the Rebel's death is announced and taken for granted. The very first line of the play, spoken by *l'Echo* before the curtain is raised plainly indicates the Rebel's forthcoming death: "Bien sûr qu'il va mourir le Rebelle." (p. 7) No suspenseful intrigue revolves around the fate of the tragic protagonist; his fatal outcome is a formalized, pre-ordained and unquestioned event. *l'Echo* continues proclaiming the Rebel's death sentence: "Bien sûr qu'il va quitter le monde le Rebelle ton/monde de viol où la victime est par ta grâce/une brute et un impie." (p. 8) Thus having set the scene, *l'Echo* gives way to begin the play. The Rebel is under obligation to die and with him will die his enemy and the old world of pestilence and ruin. Adumbrations of his death are spotted throughout the first two acts but his actual death is not focused upon until Act III.

In the final act, *La Récitante* announces the imminent sacrifice of the Rebel and indicates the commencement preparations: "C'est le jour de l'épreuve/le rebelle est nu le bouclier de paille tressée est/à sa main gauche ... il s'arrête, il rampe ... il s'immobilise un genou en/terre ... le torse est renversé comme une muraille./la sagaie est levée ..." (p. 83) This passage calls to mind a scene of sacrifice, the victim humbly kneeling as the knife is raised above him. The Rebel tells of his impending self-sacrifice: "Ma loi
est que je cours d'une chaîne sans cassure/jusqu'au confluent de feu qui me volatilise/qui m'épure et m'incendie de mon prisme/d'or amalgamé." (p. 87) The fire that will burn him will purify him and concomitantly the world around him. He continues: "Eh bien, je périsai. Mais nu. Intact./

je suis nu dans les pierres/je veux mourir

Approchez donc flammes effilées, paquets de frissons./Que la senteur des feux jette son javelot/autour de ma tête." (pp. 87-89) He stands ready and beseeches the sacrifice to begin. Finally un orateur enters and, almost in the role of high priest and definitely as representative of the enemy, designates the Rebel as a public enemy to be put to death. The crowd agrees with cries of "A mort, à mort."21 (p. 101) There follows a scene wherein the Rebel exchanges remarks with his executioners, la Geôlière and le Geôlier, in which Césaire's incisive, sardonic humor is seen. For instance the Rebel says while taunting them to go ahead and kill him: "ils font les scrupuleux. Ne vous gênez pas, j'étais/absent au baptême du christ!" (p. 105) to which the geôlier responds "ça se voit à l'œil nu!" (p. 105) And when they began to beat him and the blood begins to flow, la geôlière comments, "Dis c'est marrant le sang rouge sur la/peau noire." (p. 108) This is Césairian humor at its sharpest and most bitter point and serves here to contrast the Rebel's noble courage to the cruelty of the world to be displaced. In contrast to the geôlière's observation of the Rebel's blood the demi-chœur
points out its health-giving aspect: "O sang plus riche et salé que n'est doux le miel." (p. 106) So that no one may forget the Rebel's worthy deed--his role of community representative--in this death he says as he is being beaten, "Le Roi ... répétez: le roi!" (p. 106)

His mutilation death is emphasized, and, as previously mentioned, this is a significant fact. Gilbert Murray indicates that most deaths suffered by vegetation deities were in the form of a mutilation.\(^{22}\) The récitant says, "dépecé, éparpillé" (p. 111) and the Rebel himself says, "mon âme nage en plein coeur de maelström/là où germent d'étranges monogrammes/un phallus de noyé un tibia d'un sternum." (p. 111) By listing parts of the bone structure that seem to float by themselves, dismemberment is suggested. Furthermore, "un phallus de noyé" could easily be an allusion to Osiris who is also considered a vegetation deity.\(^{23}\)

The Rebel dies at the end of Act III; however, the play does not end flatly with his death. The scene of resurrection follows shortly thereafter, but before discussing it in detail, it is interesting to see adumbrations of his resurrection that begin in Act I and carry through to the end of the play. Césaire sets the scene beautifully in anticipation of the hero's death and resurrection.

The death/rebirth theme begins soon after the play begins. Throughout the first two acts and partially into Act III there is a veritable plethora of images suggesting death, decay and sterility. The island-country is plainly in the midst of a fertility crisis; the land lays waste.
The only life-giving images to be found are pitted in terms of the future as the Rebel announces his aims and goals of restoring fertility. Following the Rebel's death, there is an immediate burst of vegetal imagery and a shining vision of a healthy country. Thus the rebirth theme is enacted through the contrast of sterility crisis/fertility explosion.

As a prelude to resurrection of the god and its concurrent renewal of the land, it is interesting to examine the images of sterility that precede the renewal. If the land were not plagued, no renewal, no sacrifice would be necessary.

The opening scene of the play is in a vast collective prison and marks the thirtieth day of famine and torture. The récitante warns young girls to return home since death's shadow is over the land: "les orbites de la mort poussent des yeux fulgurants à travers le mica blême." (p. 9) Throughout the play there are various descriptions of visions that take place--visions of another time or another place. In Act I such a vision occurs in which references to a wasteland are made. It is a "Vision de forêt et de broussailles. Des cavaliers noirs." (p. 18) The Black knights trade observations of the countryside but all suggest sterility. They talk of "aloès aveugle," "Fougères bêgues," "Paroles sechées des herbes," "Couleuvres endolories." Thus each natural object is coupled with a physical handicap of some sort, be it pain, blindness, a speech impediment or whatever. As is common with Césaire a natural object is given a human
characteristic thus suggesting life and death in terms of the animal, plant, and mineral world all interdependent. Man and nature share joint fates. Thus we have ferns that stutter, blind flowers, etc. As quickly as the vision occurs, it is gone. Could this not be a passing allusion to the theme of the wasteland found in the knights' quest of the holy grail? 24

Everywhere death and misery reign: "... la ville s'effondre sur ses jarrets ... dans le vertige lent du viol ... " (p. 20) and " ... la fosse est pleine de sang ... " (p. 20) The récitante explains that to release the frozen process of nature "Il n'est que de cogner à la vitre du soleil. Il n'y a qu'à casser la glace du soleil." (p. 25) This is of course suggestive of the seasonal combat between winter and summer. The long absence of the sun during the winter months leaves the land barren. The spring and summer sun is necessary for life to grow and thus the sun's ice (la glace du soleil) must be broken and released. After this allusion to the sun's necessity, the Rebel himself is linked to the rising sun. He is a solarized hero who rises from the dark and brings the light with him. In Act II, after the Rebel has been asleep for a period of time (just as the sun disappears at night) he arises and the chorus chimes "Une aube juste battait sourire/Une aube juste battait espoir ... " (p. 52) In his identity with the sun he represents the male, phallic power and carries with him associations of fertility and life, death and rebirth. The sun dies each
night only to be born anew with each new day. This continuous death/rebirth cycle was represented in Egyptian mythology by the khepri, the scarab or dung beetle, who pushes the ball of dung before him just as though pushing the sun along its skyward journey.25

Images of waste and impotence abound as the land, the rain, and even the sun are tired and fatigued: "La terre est une fatigue, ... Le soleil est une fatigue, ... La pluie est une fatigue; ... " (p. 30) They all however will regain their fructifying power by the end of the play. While describing the land and country of the Rebel, many references are made to Africa. This is not particularly surprising since Césaire is of African descent and Africa is a major theme in his works. In the play, Africa bears the onus of barrenness much like the islands: "L'Afrique qui saigne, ma mère/L'Afrique s'ouvre fracassée à une rigole de vermines,/à l'envahissement stérile des spermatozoïdes du viol." (p. 39) In Act II the chorus indicates that the land is not yet cured: "et c'est toujours pour nous la saison des pluies/et des bêtes venimeuses/et des femmes qui s'écroulent enceintes d'avoir/spéré ... " (p. 52) The "saison des pluies" is probably a reference to the June-November hot, rainy season unpleasant in Martinique. The Rebel admits of the necessity of his bringing on a new world, because if not, "C'est vrai on accepte la puante stérilité d'une glèbe usée, ... " (p. 56) instead of a " ... terre sans pestilence, riche/délectable, fleurant non l'engrais mais l'herbe/toujours nouvelle." (p. 56)
In Act III, images of sterility gradually recede as ever increasing promises of fertility come through. The Rebel takes on a greater attitude of confidence and signs of victory can be seen. This third act is the climax of the play and tends to reverse the negative tones found in the preceding two acts. Signs of fertility build as the Rebel gets closer to the sacrifice. He says: "Et maintenant le passé se feuille vivant/le passé se haillonne comme une feuille de bananier." (p. 77) This past is an obvious allusion to the Black past, once rejected, but exalted and glorified by the Negritude poets. It could also refer to the fact that now the old world of the past can once again be glorious and radiant. The Rebel notes this day is special—a turning point—and although the past is bitter ("il est des jours amers à ma lèvre ... " [p. 79]), the promising future is now close at hand (" ... mais aujourd'hui je/suis en paix et le filao me fait des signes et la/mer me sourit de toutes ses fossettes et chaque/mancenillier se double et se suicide de l'olivier/propice." [p. 79]). This last image is worth noting since the mancenillier is a tree native to the Antilles whose venom is poisonous and is considered the tree of death. Thus the tree of death gives way to the olive tree, a symbol of wisdom, peace, abundance and glory. In Act III there still remains some references to the wasted land: " ... ce pays est un ulcère," " ... malheur à qui frôle de la main la/résine de ce pays," "ce pays est maudit," "ce pays mord! ... " (p. 82) In contrast to this, a vision of ancient Africa comes on the scene: "magnifique reconsti-
tution des anciennes civilisations du Bénin." (p. 84) After this brief allusion to greatness the chorus re-echoes the glories of Africa: "Bornou, Sokoto Bénin et Dahomey, Sikasso/Sikasso/je sonne le rassemblement: ciels et seins, bruines/et perles, semaines, clefs d'or." (p. 86) The images are those of plenty: sky and womb, rain (giving way to lush vegetation) and pearls, sowing and gold. All are either nature's resources (gold from the earth and pearls from the oyster) or are natural life-giving functions (rain, sky, womb, seeds). In foresight of renewed fertility, the Rebel asks: "et tu ne vois rien parmi l'herbe nouvelle?/rien parmi le barattement de la terre et le convulsif/ chahut végétal/rien dans la mer n'est-ce pas?/Je vois, J'entends ... Je parlerai ... " (p. 90) The récitant describes the same thing: "Le vent s'est levé,/les savanes se fendent dans une gloire de panache/folles ... " (p. 92) In describing the island, the Rebel says "Iles heureuses;/jardins de la reine." (p. 94) This is a reference to abundance and goodness in the framework of the garden of the goddess—a mythological motif. It conjures up the type of bounty found in the Judaic myth of the Garden of Eden or the Sumerian Land of Dilmun.

Toward the end of Act III, the ritual death begins to take place. It is introduced by the récitant and récitante who say "nous sommes au moment où dans la nuit croulière/le piège sans murmure commence à fonctionner." (p. 96) Note the use of the opening phrase which was used earlier in the play.26 The refrain is continued with "Nous sommes au moment
où l'ombre se projette/sur le mur assassiné la main lourde," (p. 97) and is used twice more in succession. This introductory phrase once again serves the purpose of connoting mythic periodicity as well as emphasizing the pre-planned, timed aspect of the ritual death. The chorus spotlights the Rebel ("Homme toutes les paroles d'aujourd'hui sont/ pour toi/Homme toutes les paroles d'homme ont les yeux/ braqués sur toi." [p. 97]) who accepts the responsibility ("Et moi je veux crier et on m'entendra jusqu'au bout du monde (il crie)/mon fils, mon fils." [p. 97]). The call to his son alludes to his kingly successor. In the myth and ritual pattern, resurrection often takes place in the form of kingly succession; thus when the Rebel calls on his son, just before he is about to die, it reinforces the idea of rebirth. However, in the play, the Rebel will undergo a more overt rebirth than found in the symbolic one of kingly succession.

After a final soliloquy of past misery, music erupts in the jail while a crowd carrying torches enters. Un Orateur acting as the official sacrificer designates the sacrificial victim. The crowd agrees and the Rebel harangues their lack of courage while telling of his prophetic dreams: "j'ai rêvé de lumière, d'enseignes d'or, de/sommeils pourpres de réveils/d'étincelles et de peaux de lynx." (p. 103) As he is being beaten, he talks of the generative powers of his blood: "Frappe ... frappe commandeur ... frappe jusqu'au sang ... il est né du sillon une race sans gémissements ..." (p. 107) In his dying speech allusions are constant to the
fertility he will bring: "et je me lève, et je tiens ferme/au milieu de toutes ces eaux charrieuses/de branches, de/boues et de serpents." (p. 115) Water being a female symbol, the Rebel is erect and firm amidst the swirling currents. This certainly connotes sexual union of the male and female and reinforces the Rebel's fertile potency. He continues: "C'est vrai, j'ai dans l'oreille le vent gris/des/semences,/mais que me font les semences,/je sais l'heure, mes terres, mes semences." (p. 115) Here is a play on words between semences and semences. Perhaps semences refers to the lack of support and derision the Rebel receives from his own people and his colonial enemies. If so, he can cast aside any doubts poured onto him from outside ("Que me font les semences") because as representative of a fertility principle he will rectify all ("je sais l'heure, mes terres, mes semences"). His fertility (semences) will overpower the wrath (semences) of his enemies. The following lines are replete with vegetal imagery of growth and rebirth: "je dis toujours qui lève le beau mil de l'espoir:/Aile sûre des/graines, je suis prêt:/glèbe tassée, je suis prêt, eau de/vertelles, je/suis prêt!" (p. 115)

He calls to the underworld: "j'emporte dans ma gueule/délabrée/le bourdonnement d'une chair vivante/me voici ... " (p. 116) He offers himself and his life-giving flesh. In a passage that follows (pp. 116-117) there are many images of movement--active, agitated motion: "une rumeur de chaînes," "un gargouillement de noyés," "un claquement/de feu un/claquement de fouet," "... la mer brûle/ou c'est l'étoupe
de mon sang qui brûle." All this excited activity indicates an explosion brewing and about to erupt: "chaque goutte de mon sang explode dans la/tubulure de mes veines." (p. 117) This explosion will be an explosion of fertility.

Among his last words are "J'embrasse ..."—a reference again to his union with the female as it was the lover who throughout the play beseeched him continuously, "embrasse-moi." As the Rebel falls to the ground, Césaire indicates: "à ce moment des tams-tams éclatent, frénétiques, couvrant les voix." (p. 118) and finally the récitant announces "Mort, il est mort." (p. 119) His death is then described in incredibly fertile images: "Mort dans un taillis de clérodendres parfumés," "Mort en pleine poussée de sisal," "Mort en pleine pulpe de calebassier," "Mort en plein vol de torches, en pleine fécondation de vanilliers ..." (p. 119)

There is little or no moment of doubt between the Rebel's death and the ensuing enactment of his regenerative function. As myth and ritual developed into tragedy, the interim moment between death and resurrection and the burden of doubt placed on the community becomes more and more important. In Césaire's first tragedy, this moment of doubt is less emphasized but becomes increasingly important in the next two plays. In Et les Chiens se taisaient any doub'trulness seen in relation to the Rebel's ultimate victory is shown coming from the Rebel himself and prior to his death, thus not as an interim moment. As mentioned in chapter 1, this essential lack of suspenseful doubt ties Césaire's first
tragedy more closely to the ritual form than to pure tragic form. In fact, immediately after the Rebel's death, his resurrection commences. The moment he dies, he is pictured among flowers, sisal-hemp in full bloom, vegetation and fecondation. His life-renewing function is immediately fulfilled and is a part of the resurrection scheme. The wasteland has come alive and has burst into bloom as a result of the King/Rebel's death. The frozen processes of nature have been melted; plants can grow; the crops will be harvested.

The Rebel's resurrection will be manifest even more explicitly in the final scene of the play. As the body of the Rebel lay on the ground, the récitant and récitant spin and fall, and the chorus slowly retreats. All of this fades away as a: "Vision de la Caraïbe bleue semée d'îles d'or et d'argent dans la scintillation de l'aube." (p. 122)

The body of the Rebel is symbolically displaced to give way to the burgeoning country—the shining islands. The image is beautiful, and dawn time reinforces the newborn or reborn spirit. The fertility crisis has passed; vegetation has reappeared and the sun shines brilliantly on the now dazzlingly beautiful islands. Certainly this is a sharp contrast between the ulcerous, miserable island depicted in Acts I and II. In this final scenario following the Rebel's death, we see the fruits of his labor come to bear. All through Act III hints of victory and signs of new life are apparent; this final vision marks the successful culmination of his
efforts. In terms of the myth and ritual theory, the combat, suffering and death of the god-king are over; he is resurrected and the blight on the land is lifted.

In a political analysis, the ending is only vague at best. The Rebel's revolt against the White master was no more than a partial victory. After all, he is immediately jailed and executed for the murderous act. The final vision, in terms of politics, is a mere symbol for future hope, and is so vague as to be almost gratuitous. It is to say that although the Rebel died, he has perhaps contributed to a future nationalism. The scene takes in the whole Caribbean, not just Martinique, and could be a reference to Césaire's discussion of a Federation of Caribbean states.27 His view is expanded then to include more than his own native island of Martinique.

From the myth and ritual theory, the final resurrection is the highlight of the play's movement; without it the play would become virtually meaningless. The ending becomes an integral part of the play just as resurrection is an integral element of the myth/ritual pattern. This is an explicit rendering of the rebirth archetype.

Another way this archetype can be seen, implicitly, is from the cyclicity of Césaire's first three plays. They all in fact represent the ever-turning wheel of life with parallel structures of death and rebirth. Et les Chiens se taisaient displays the cycle in a timeless atmosphere dated only by virtue of the fact that the Rebel is a slave. Thus the play would likely take place at an historical moment when
slavery was legal.\textsuperscript{28} The cycle repeats itself with \textit{La Tragédie du Roi Christophe} when Henry Christophe is king of Haiti in the early 1800s. Finally the cycle recurs in \textit{Une Saison au Congo} when Patrice Lumumba is prime minister of the ex-Belgian Congo. Thus Christophe is a reincarnation of the Rebel as is Patrice Lumumba of Christophe. This is certainly a more tenuous application of the rebirth image but is not out of the question.

As discussed above, the first five of the nine elements stipulated by Weisinger can be found rather clearly in Césaire's play. The latter four (symbolic recreation of the myth of creation, the sacred marriage, the triumphal procession, and the settling of destinies) are present only implicitly and are of much less significance in the play.

Often, according to Weisinger, following the king's rebirth was a recitation of the story of creation as a means of ensuring the new lease on life. The annual resurrection is no less than a restatement of the culture's cosmogony. In the play various passages suggest the cosmogonical story. A veiled reference can be found when the chorus says: "je me souviens du matin des îles/le matin pétissait de l'amande et du verre/les grives riaient dans l'arbre à graines/et le vesou ne sentait pas mauvais/non/dans le matin fruité!" (p. 110) "Le matin des îles" seems an obvious enough reference to the beginning of time for the island. The description that follows portrays a lush, rich, and happy island; almonds and sweet juice from sugar cane ("vesou") contribute to the sweetness and fruitfulness of early time.
Aside from this reference within the play, the structure of the play itself reflects a creation narrative. Many creation epics show the world formed from the body of a deity\textsuperscript{29}, just as the Rebel's body gives way to become the islands. Another creation mythologem is separation of the world parents\textsuperscript{30} as a means of introducing order into the primeval chaos. The Rebel kills the White master, his symbolic Father, and also his mother who is so shocked at his actions that she falls to the floor. This action could perhaps be seen as a separation of world parents which leads to eventual creation of a new world. Politically, the Rebel, as leader of his people, is the ultimate catalyst for the birth of the nation. These are mentioned only as possible suggestions or allusions in Césaire's play to the recreation of the creation myth.

The hieros gamos as part of the myth and ritual pattern is a means of manifesting the king's potency. No sacred marriage as such follows the Rebel's death and resurrection, yet his relationship to and dialogue with the lover is indicative of a sacred union. She is immediately associated with bounty and fertile abundance and her major endeavor is to guarantee their union. Her very first words to him, and ones she repeats often, are "Embrasse-moi." (p. 11) She represents life and life power if the Rebel will but release it. In their first dialogue she is identified with shadow (female principle) and he with the sun (male principle). Their union is symbolic and representative of natural processes and wholeness, and she asks him:
Beau doux ami, le ciel ingrâtement nous se peuplera-t-il de faucons désillés,
les huitres perlières sans nous sous le couvercle du temps apaiseront-elles de longs gestes dormants le serpentement de la blessure obscure?
beau doux ami, sans nous le vent s'en ira-t-il déflorant, gémissant vers l'attente cambrée?
(p. 13)

She realizes that together they contribute to nature's bounty. As she talks of life and love, he talks of death and destruction. They do not meet again until the second act in which their dialogue is much the same. However, more pragmatic now, she is less the goddess and more the realistic wife who is soon to be a widow. But her association with life and fertile union is assured when she again beseeches him: "Que je te laisse mourir? embrasse-moi le monde est jeune." (p. 62) "Embrasse-moi: l'air comme un pain se dore et lève." (p. 62) "Embrasse-moi: le monde flue d'aigrettes, de/palmes/de spicenards, de désirs de canéfices." (p. 62)
"Embrasse-moi; embrasse-moi; dans mes yeux/les mondes se font et se défont; j'entends des/musiques de mondes ... " (p. 63)
Thus fertility and conjugal union are associated with her all of which bespeak a sacred marriage. This is certainly only implicit but is nonetheless worth noting.

The final two elements (the triumphal procession and the settling of destinies) cannot really be found in any substantial way in the play. The triumphal procession is no more than suggested as various characters or the chorus sing praises or glorify the Rebel-king-god. The only other possibility of a triumphal procession is done in an ironic sense and could hardly be treated as an observation of one
of the basic ritual elements. It occurs in Act III when the Echo says: "gloire au restaurateur de la patrie" and "gloire et reconnaissance à l'éducateur du peuple." (p. 93) The stage instructions indicate however that this is to be done in an ironic manner; after that les chantres enter and laud the Rebel in Latin. However Césaire notes that it is done as if they were braying! Thus this "triumphal procession" is a mere mockery and insults the suffering king.31

The final element, the settling of destinies, seems to be omitted completely. Weisinger points out that the settling of destinies was when the king sat on the throne and ruled wisely. It marks the flourishing of justice and shows the risen king to be wise and a good ruler.32 This is not to be found in Et les Chiens se taisaient.

It is interesting now to see which elements are present in Césaire's first tragedy, implicitly or explicitly, and which are absent altogether and compare this to Weisinger's findings on which elements comprise tragedy in general. In Et les Chiens se taisaient, all the elements are clearly present with the symbolic recreation of the myth of creation, the sacred marriage and the triumphal procession only implied and the settling of destinies omitted entirely. The play then is a fairly comprehensive model of the myth and ritual pattern.

According to Weisinger, "the theme of the settling of destinies which is the highest point in the myth and ritual pattern ... is no more than implied in tragedy, just as the
correspondence between the well-being of the king and the well-being of the community, again so detailed in ritual, is only shadowed forth, ... "33 Now in *Et les Chiens se taisaient*, it has already been shown that the king/community relationship is strongly emphasized and constitutes the very heart of Act I while being an integral element in all three acts. However the settling of destinies, in accord with Weisinger, is not to be found. Weisinger also points out that the moment of doubt between the death and resurrection of the god is far more important in tragedy than in ritual. As shown above34, there is only a very small amount of time or doubt between the death and resurrection of the Rebel. Thus in the categories mentioned above, Césaire's play resembles the ritual pattern more than the tragic pattern. Weisinger also points out that the symbolic recreation of the creation myth, the sacred marriage and the triumphal procession are all virtually eliminated from tragedy. In Césaire's play those elements, though not absent, are certainly present only by implication. Finally Weisinger states that tragedy's substance and structure lies with the three remaining elements of combat, suffering (with death subsumed) and resurrection. Obviously these three are the strong points of the play.

It is interesting to note how closely, by and large, the ritual pattern shows forth in his first play. The following two tragedies (*La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* and *Une Saison au Congo*) are much more in line with Weisinger's analysis of tragedy as a derivation of the ritual pattern.
But in his first play, beginning with his use of vegetal imagery and continuing through with the structure of the myth and ritual pattern, Et les Chiens se taisaient is beautifully reminiscent of ancient ritual from which the origins of drama took shape.

One interesting point cited by Weisinger is that tragedy emphasizes man's freedom of choice to the extent that the settling of destinies recedes and "... the messianic vision implicit in the settling of destinies is personalized and humanized in tragedy in the form of heightened self-awareness as the end of the tragic agony." 35 This aspect is emphasized in one of the play's passages when the récitant says to the Rebel: "J'ai interrogé les dés sacrés. Je dis qu'il habite en toi un être royal sommeillant sur un lit étroit." (p. 84) This royal being asleep inside the Rebel is none other than his own ego which will undergo a parallel renewal and rebirth with his physical being. 36 The concept of self-fulfillment goes hand in hand with Weisinger's contentions, with Jungian individuation symbology, and with Césaire's political assertions. The Rebel, while uncovering the boon of fertility for his people, does no less than uncover his own true self. No longer willing to be oppressed as a slave, he searches his soul and does what is necessary to assert his own being. There are numerous references to this desire for personal freedom on the part of the Rebel, and in fact this idea is the very essence of the Negritude quest. The psychological ramifications of colonialism bring up a complicated question of inferiority complexes suffered by colonized peoples and
is dealt with extensively by Frantz Fanon in *Peau noire masques blancs*. Césaire’s *Cahier d’un Retour au pays natal*, a long lyric poem first published in 1939, attests to the author’s own identity crisis, and reflections of this can be found in the character of the Rebel. For example, at one point in the play the Rebel says, "Et laissez-moi, laissez-moi crier à ma suffisance/le bon cri saoul de la révolte, je veux être seul/dans ma peau,/je ne reconnais à personne le droit de m’habiter,/est-ce que je n’ai pas le droit d’être seul entre la/paroi de mes os?" (p. 50) Thus one reason for his revolt is a need for self-fulfillment or self-discovery—a need to be his own man—which the colonial regime violently stole away from him. This also corresponds to the idea of a myth of Katabasis and the Jungian concept of individuation in which one must delve into the unconscious to re-establish original wholeness. Jean-Paul Sartre, in *Orphée Noir*, his famous introduction to Senghor’s anthology, says: "Et je nommerai orphique cette poésie parce que cette inlassable descente du nègre en soi-même me fait songer à Orphée allant réclamer Eurydice à Pluton." Descent movements are numerous throughout the play—the underworld, the chthonian land of the unconscious is often alluded to around the Rebel. Descent into one’s own self would be a valid way in which to read the character of the Rebel and could comprise a study in its own right.

Finally another interpretation here could be an alchemical one. The philosopher’s stone and the alchemist’s search was for pure gold—the arcane substance. This, in
Jungian terms, is also a symbol of wholeness, of the Self, of complete individuation. As the Rebel dies and is reborn, the image is one of sparkling gold, possibly representing the complete Self found finally after the Rebel's long search.

Several thematic threads then are woven throughout the play including ritual, religious, political, and psychological. The interesting thing, and a tribute to the writer Cesaire, is that they all mesh together to form a beautiful finished tapestry—a work of art that can be admired by many.

Lilyan Kesteloot has said that Cesaire's source of imagery is highly personal, and biographical research is a key to understanding his poetry. Certainly Kesteloot has a valid point and the work she has done on Cesaire is admirable and enlightening. Nonetheless Cesaire's imagery network is far more universal and not limited to such a personal interpretation. The myth and ritual approach enables a deeper understanding of many of the images that seem frankly puzzling out of that context. Also the myth and ritual approach in this case takes in all of the play's elements. No major aspect of the play is left out with this approach. For these reasons, the myth and ritual approach seems a valid and enriching one as a means of illuminating this play.

Thus we saw the Rebel's sacrificial death bear out the fruit of resurrection to assure a life renewal. But Weisinger points out:

In the early stages of the development of the myth and ritual pattern, ..., the best that man could hope for was an uneasy truce
between himself and chaos, because the cycle merely returned to its beginnings; the God fought, was defeated, was momentarily triumphant, and thus ensured the well-being of the community for the coming year, but it was inevitable that in the course of the year he would again be defeated and would again have to go through his annual agony. Thus nothing new could be expected nor was anticipated, and year after year man could hope for no more than a temporary gain which he was sure would soon be turned into an inevitable loss.41

Thus the Rebel's final victory—was it only momentary? Perhaps yes—indeed Césaire seems to indicate as much because his next play, La Tragédie du Roi Christophe, shows the same problems, the same pattern, the same structure clothed only in the trappings of a different time and a new king. What the Rebel did before him, Christophe in turn must do. The wheel of life keeps turning, the seasonal cycle continues and now it falls upon the shoulders of Henry Christophe the task of waging the combat and dying in the hope of rebirth.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 2

10rmand, pp. 1049-1055.


3Ibid., p. 7.


5Harris, L'Humainisme, pp. 19-69.

6It is interesting to note here what Césaire himself has to say about the significance of dogs in his work:
Le chien, on peut le concevoir de plusieurs manières ... Evidemment, le Nègre marron n'a pas eu tellement à se louer de cet ami de l'homme que le Nègre marron a dû voir, mais il a dû d'abord voir le molosse qui le poursuivait. Il est vraisemblable qu'il y a dans certains poèmes un symbolisme plus antique: le chien Anubis, si vous voulez, un peu comme le chacal Anubis, qui est un animal psychopompé ou un animal funéraire. (Cited from Gérard Georges Pigeon, "Interview avec Aimé Césaire à Fort-de-France le 12 janvier 1977," Cahiers Césairiens, III (Spring, 1977), p. 5).

Yvan Lapepe, Martinican actor and director, says that dogs signify two things to a Martinican: 1) guard dogs for the Whites and 2) the belief that certain persons are reincarnated into dogs such that these animals are not killed in Martinique but run in wild packs. For Et les Chiens se taisaient, he says, "... même les chiens ne hurlaient pas à la mort devant l'intensité de la tragédie du Rebelle, avertis qu'ils sont, mystérieusement, de la gravité exceptionnelle de l'événement." (Cited in Kesteloot, L'Homme, p. 154)

7Kesteloot, L'Homme, p. 133.

8Ibid., p. 138.

9Ibid., p. 150.
10Ibid., p. 152.

11The vegetal imagery is a typically Martinican/African aspect of the play in that the botanical references are mainly to flora native to the island. Such plants as frangipanier and mancenillier (Antillean) and aloës and baobab (African) serve to emphasize the Caribbean/African influence.

12By way of example, Gaster cites one myth, in the Yuzzat Tablet, which describes the paralysis of the earth by the demon frost (Hah-himas) and the efforts by the gods to locate the absent sun. Finally the demon is worsted and life is restored followed by offerings to Telipinu, god of fertility, and to the sun. (Cited in Gaster, p. 88)


14The use of the image of the Rebel as a "pêcheur roux des choses profondes et noires" is rich in symbolic meaning. First of all it could be a Christian symbol as Christ and his disciples were the fishers of men, and the fish was a predominant early Christian symbol. This too could correspond to the wounded fisher king in the wasteland who must be restored to health so that the country can be restored to fertility. See my note, infra, p. 107.

15Dionysus, Osiris, Attis, Adonis, Tammuz and other dying-god types suffered death in the form of a mutilation. Gilbert Murray in Euripides and His Age, (2nd ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp. 39-40, says that the Dionysiac ritual which lay at the back of tragedy includes a "Pathos or disaster, which very commonly takes the shape of a 'Sparagmos,' or tearing in pieces; the body of the Corn God being scattered in innumerable seeds over the earth; ... "

16This part of the play is well suited to the Jungian idea of heroic individuation. An analysis from that approach would be interesting and enlightening since the ego about to emerge from the uroboros must fight off the female principle before beginning the individuation adventure.

17Even though the term "embrasser" has taken on the more innocent physical expression of love in the form of a kiss, I feel that its constant repetition throughout the play by L'Amante indicates its wider significance of sexual love. For example, the lover has a rather limited role in the play. She appears in only three scenes in the first two acts and is altogether absent in Act III. Of the twenty-four separate verses that she utters, she says "Embrasse-moi" seven times which is almost 1/3 of her total speech. She opens and closes with "embrasse-moi" and uses it in other verses in an emphatic manner. Thus these two words take on added importance and are of especial significance.
18Césaire in his Discours sur le colonialisme lambasts the equation established by colonialism: "christianisme = civilisation; paganisme = sauvagerie, d'où ne pouvaient que s'ensuivre d'abominables conséquences colonialistes et racistes, dont les victimes devaient être les Indiens, les Jaunes, les Nègres." (p. 7)


20Kesteloot, L'Homme, p. 143.

21This scene invites comparison with the death of Christ when the people yelled to Pilate "qu'il soit crucifié!" Matthieu 27:22 (Douay).

22Murray says "A Pathos of the Year-Daimon, generally a ritual or sacrificial death, in which Adonis or Attis is slain by the tabu animal, the Pharmakos stoned, Osiris, Dyonysus, Pentheus, Orpheus, Hippolytus torn to pieces." Cited in Harrison, p. 343.

23Set, Osiris' evil brother, dismembered Osiris and scattered his parts in the river. Versions vary but basically Isis was able to find all his parts except the phallus which she fashioned for him out of wood. (See Erich Neumann, The Origins and History of Consciousness, trans. by R.F.C. Hull, Bollingen Series, Vol. XLII (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 220ff.

24Many versions of the Grail legend exist but in most, including Perceval by Chrétien de Troyes, one sees familiar elements in the legends taken from ancient fertility cults. There is a wasteland, a wounded king, and the need to heal the king in order to restore the wasted land. Despite variations, in general it is the task of the knights to find the holy grail, ask about it, or what have you, in such a way to restore the dying king and the wasted land. Thus we see the mythic motif of the god-king who represents the fertility of the land along with the ritual of restoration of fertility.

Jessie L. Weston, in From Ritual to Romance, sees the Grail myth as a fertility ritual, with the quester being the novice who is initiated into the fertility cult.

25Erich Neumann discusses the symbology of the khepri: "The god who begets himself is depicted more particularly as the khepri, the scarab or dung beetle. Because he rolls a ball of dung before him, this beetle was venerated as the sun-moving principle. Even more significant is the fact that, his task completed, he buries the sun-ball in a hole in the ground and dies, and in the following spring the new beetle creeps out of the ball as the new sun, risen from under the earth." (Neumann, p. 236)

26See Supra., pp. 60-61.
In his introduction to Les Antilles décolonisées by Daniel Guérin (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1956), Césaire says, "Nous ne refusons pas de croire qu'un jour, dans un avenir qu'il est impossible de déterminer, les pays Antillais arrivés chacun par les voies qui lui sont propres à la pleine maturité nationale décideront librement de s'unir pour mieux se maintenir. (Dans ce cas, il ne s'agira pas d'une Fédération antillaise, mais d'une Confédération d'États antillais, comme Guérin en convient lui-même)." (Cited in Césaire, "Décolonisation", p. 12).

Slaves were sent to Martinique in 1635 when Pierre d'Esnambuc founded the colony of Saint-Pierre and claimed it a French possession. In 1790 the population of Martinique acquired all the rights of French citizenship.

A creation myth of the Northwest Coast Indians shows an earth mother, a goddess named Kugun Chantu, whose body becomes the world.

For example a Sumerian creation myth states that the sky father An (top) and the earth mother Ki (bottom) who are lying together are separated by their child, the atmosphere Enlil, and thus the universe takes shape. See also Neumann, pp. 102-127.

Perhaps this too is an allusion to Christ who was given a crown of thorns and mocked by the Roman soldiers.

Weisinger, Paradox, pp. 88ff.


See Supra., p. 93.


The idea of a royal being asleep inside the Rebel is analogous to the Jungian concept of the significance of the king in which becoming king and ascending to the throne represent a progressive level of individuation. "The apotheosis of the king, the renewed rising of the sun, means, on our hypothesis, that a new dominant of consciousness has been produced and that the psychic potential is reversed. Consciousness is no longer under the dominion of the unconscious, in which state the dominant is hidden in darkness, but has now glimpsed and recognized a supreme goal." (C.G. Jung, Mysterium Conjunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy, in The Collected Works of C.G. Jung, ed. by Sir Herbert Read et al., XIV, trans. by R.F.C. Hull, Bollingen Series XX (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963), p. 355.) Thus the Rebel with his kingly resurrection has, on a psychological level, accomplished a sort of heightened self-awareness.


40 Maurice Lecuyer in his article "Rythme, Révolte, et Rhétorique, ou Aimer Césaire," *Rice University Studies*, LXIII, No. 1 (1977), p. 110, observes the universal appeal of Césairian poetry by commenting on the powerful effect of the poems. Serving not only as a personal identity quest on the part of the poet, the poems also reach out specifically to Blacks and generally to all twentieth-century readers, who, in the world of today, share this identity issue.

CHAPTER 3

*La Tragédie du Roi Christophe*; Theatre as History

With *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe*, Césaire mythographer becomes Césaire historian. Before analyzing the rebirth structure of the play it is interesting to note its historical context. Césaire's choice of the historical king Henry Christophe is as significant as it is understandable; as a poet of Négritude, one of Césaire's main goals was revalorization of the Black past—a past too long portrayed as inferior and worthless. Haiti is certainly a great source of pride for the West Indian for it was in 1804 that Black slaves in Haiti witnessed the triumphant outcome of their war for independence—a feat not imitated in Africa until more than a century later. Césaire says of the island:

"... Haiti où la nègritude se mit debout pour la première fois ..." ¹ A host of national heroes came out of that war including Toussaint Louverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines and Henry Christophe.

History tells us that Henry Christophe, a Black slave, won fame as a General in the war for independence under Toussaint Louverture and later as Commander-in-Chief of the Haitian army under the rule of Emperor Dessalines. The latter declared Haiti independent in 1804, but political unrest and racial tension between Whites, Blacks, and Mulattoes
never ceased. When Dessalines was assassinated in 1806, Christophe was his obvious successor, but civil strife between the Mulattoes and Blacks prevented Christophe from ruling a united Haiti. In 1807 the country was divided roughly along the Artibonite River with Christophe being elected President of the State of Haiti in the North and the Mulatto Pétion being elected President of the Republic of Haiti in the South. Conflicts between North and South continued and as a power-consolidation measure, Christophe declared Haiti a kingdom on March 28, 1811 with himself as king. Besides reasons of vanity on the part of Christophe, the psychological aspect of a king and a kingdom was expected to increase Haiti's dignity and reinforce the former president's authority.

Christophe imposed a draconian regime on his people and despite their discontent the kingdom prospered. By exacting heavy toil from his subjects, he managed to have built many monuments designed to show Haiti's glory, including the famous Citadelle built on the Pic de la Ferrière (a fortress intended primarily as protection against any possibilities of a French return to the colony), and countless residential palaces for the king's own pleasure, the greatest of which being Sans Souci lying at the foot of the Citadelle. Although tales of his cruelty abound, he also established schools and hospitals for his people and managed to set up prosperous trade channels with other countries. In comparison with Pétion's lax rule in the South, Christophe's kingdom was remarkably progressive.
On August 15, 1820, Christophe collapsed of a stroke and remained paralyzed for the remaining seven weeks of his life. His troops, unbridled from the reins of their once-powerful king, mutinied, and the kingdom fell to the Mulatto Boyer, Pétion's successor, who reunited the country. Hubert Cole, Haitian historian, quotes Christophe as saying, on hearing news that his personal guard had deserted him: "Since the people of Haiti no longer need me, I know what I must do." On October 8, 1820, he bade farewell to his family and then shot himself through the heart. As rebel soldiers flooded the palace, his family and a few loyal supporters carried the king to the top of the Citadelle where they hurriedly buried him in a heap of quicklime. In 1847, Christophe's body was given a proper burial in a concrete tomb on the Citadelle's place d'Armes.

Césaire uses the Haitian historical situation as a point of departure for the play, and while staying more or less within historical bounds, his own personal stamp of interpretation is indelibly present. The play is not a history manual but a creative work of art.

La Tragédie du Roi Christophe has attracted a great deal of critical attention, and scholars have dealt with many of its aspects. An examination of their work will shed further light on this interesting play. Lilyan Kesteloot discusses the play in terms of African independence and states that the problems faced by post-independence countries are: "Souci de se redéfinir, de se retrouver, de rétablir de contact avec soi-même, de rétablir la continuité psychologique,
... indispensé pour tout colonisé conscient de son aliénation: ..." She feels that Haiti provides a useful lesson for all of Africa and states that in order to understand the failure of such leaders as Patrice Lumumba, Kwame N'Krumah, Sékou Touré, and Modibo Keïta, one need only read La Tragédie du Roi Christophe.

Although Christophe seems vicious at times, Kesteloot feels that his goals are indeed the welfare of the Haitian people. In the end, she feels that Christophe's failure is due to his challenge to the gods, his violation of taboos and his disturbance of the innate order of existence. "Le prix de Prométhée et de Spartacus, celui d'Oedipe et de Sisyphe. Orphée Noir à son tour s'est rendu coupable d'ubris. La Némésis le frappe." But she agrees that his failure does not remain beyond death because he is entombed standing up, facing the enemy: "Christophe, c'est le défi de l'homme toujours à renaitre, comme le phénix dessiné sur ses armes non périssables." The true tragedy of Christophe, according to Kesteloot, is his failure to educate his people to the responsibilities of their independence. That, she adds, is a tragedy shared by the député-maire of Martinique, writer of the play.

Rodney Harris analyzes La Tragédie du Roi Christophe emphasizing the theme of decolonization and states that Christophe follows in the footsteps of the Rebel; after the revolt, the ex-slave becomes his new nation's leader and must extricate his country from all the effects of colonization. He compares the play to a Shakespearean drama with
its juxtaposition of the poetic and the profane, the king and the fool. This combination of seriousness and buffoonery, he adds, renders the character of Christophe highly ambiguous. He describes one of the characters in the play, Metellus, as a spokesman for Césaire. Metellus, the soldier who fiercely fought to create the new nation, has his hopes dashed as he sees civil war tear it apart. Harris feels that this character prefigures Patrice Lumumba, tragic protagonist of Césaire's third play Une Saison au Congo. He asserts that another character in the play, Hugonin who is the court jester, recalls King Lear's fool.

Harris feels that Christophe's ambiguities (his dreams of glory and his abuse of power) are highlighted by the structure of the play itself with scenes succeeding each other in a rapidly contrasting and colorful fashion. He cites various anecdotes in the play that are grounded in historical fact and concludes that Césaire is a rather scrupulous interpreter of history.

Henry Cohen however does not find Césaire to be so scrupulous and in a comparison between the Henry of Aimé Césaire and that of history, he finds quite a divergence. For instance chronology is often altered, and Césaire borrows indiscriminately from history and legend. Besides failing to cite any of Christophe's achievements, Césaire even maligns the king without any basis in historical fact. By way of example, Cohen points out that Césaire implies that the king changed his name from Henri with an i to Henry with a y upon accession to the throne only for purposes of self-
aggrandizement, whereas Cohen can find no historical proof for this at all. Césaire's Christophe, he adds, is cast in the role of a Racinean Nero or a Camusian Caligula.

If Césaire had followed history, objectively presenting both the good and bad achieved by Christophe, the king would not be a tragic hero: "As he is depicted by Césaire, this man of titanic proportions who is swept away by formidable forces that well up inside him, overtake his humanity, and make him bigger than life is a true tragic hero ... He is a special combination of tyrant and sacrificial offering, whose death will nourish the renewed efforts of Haitians to realize his vision correctly."10 The real tragedy of Christophe, according to Cohen, is the difference between the king's dreams for his nation and his own perverted enactment of those dreams. He concludes that Césaire tends to take liberties with history and comes nearer to approaching myth with La Tragédie du Roi Christophe. The reason for this, he states, is because "... he seeks to communicate a deeper, more poetic truth than mere historicity could possibly furnish."11

Maximilien Laroche12 offers a variety of interpretations regarding this play commemorating one of his own nation's heroes. He provides the added insight of a Haitian, and he takes umbrage with Césaire owing to that author's description of Christophe's reign as a tragedy. Laroche feels that the use of the word tragedy in the title immediately imposes Césaire's own negative view of Christophe's reign, and he adds that no Haitian feels tragedy at Haiti's history.
He agrees with Cohen that from an historical standpoint, the king's reign was a balance between good and bad and not the disaster portrayed by Césaire. He makes the valid point that Christophe, in the play, is his own worst enemy and really faces no adversary save himself. He argues with Kesteloot's contention that Christophe paid the fatal price for having violated the laws, the taboos, and the world order. Laroche questions these laws and retorts that independence destroyed precisely those laws and that all was re-begun in absolute equality: "Car précisément la conquête de l'indépendance qui est l'affirmation de l'égalité de tous les hommes, et notamment celle de l'ex-colonisé et de son ancien colonisateur, n'a-t-elle pas été la démonstration qu'il n'y avait d'autres lois, de tabous, de destin ou d'ordre que celui que les hommes voulaient bien se donner ou se laisser donner?"13 Laroche, in questioning Kesteloot's thesis, simply fails to concede any religious aspect to the play at all. The laws and taboos referred to by Kesteloot do not regard man-made maxims or political treaties but rather a higher law of nature. Christophe, and I agree with Kesteloot, was not necessarily transgressing the laws of man but rather those of a supreme natural order.

Bakary Traore14 feels that La Tragédie du Roi Christophe is highly relevant to the African spectator and that its edificatory effectiveness far surpasses any political propaganda. Traore quotes Césaire regarding the play:

Le cadre à la fois mystique, historique et politique me paraît favorable à l'introduction du problème qui se pose à l'Afrique aujourd'hui.
la décolonisation. En effet, après la révolution, le roi Christophe a pris la charge du pays et ses échecs démontrent qu'il est plus facile d'arracher son indépendance que de bâtir un monde sur de nouvelles bases. Les qualités requises sont tout autres et elles sont rares, nous le voyons maintenant. Le temps de la colonisation sera plus difficile pour le monde noir parce que nous n'avons plus à nous dresser contre un ennemi commun aisément discernable mais à lutter en nous-mêmes, contre nous-mêmes. Il s'agit d'un combat spirituel qui ne fait que commencer. 

In a Marxist interpretation of the play, Hervé and Nicole Fuyet along with Guy and Mary Levlain take up Engels' theory of work as a regenerating force—as a builder of man—and state that with Christophe however, it tends to alienate rather than integrate his people. They take a look at the three classes in Haitian society: 1) the colonists with full civil and political rights; 2) the Mulattoes with civil rights; and 3) the Blacks with no rights. After analyzing the historico-social structure of the play they conclude that Christophe exploited his people and failed to ameliorate the Black slaves' pre-independence colonial situation.

Lilian Pestre de Almeida contends that Christophe is too much the buffoon to be a purely tragic character. There are certain traditionally comic scenes to be found in the play, such as the court scenes where Christophe and his courtiers ridiculously imitate European customs, that tend to tone down the tragic element. Hugonin, the king's fool, is a vitally important factor in the comic context of the play; he is the mythic trickster, the Shakespearean fool,
and a character reflecting Haitian local color in his role as a guépé (i.e. one who arrives always at the end of the Voodoo ceremonies after the loas have already left). She concludes that Haitian and African laughter fill the play and give it energy and vitality. The king's funeral cortège signifies that despite apparent defeat, Christophe is the "... nouvelle semence de la pierre, source de force et de renouveau."\(^{18}\)

In another article by Henry Cohen\(^ {19}\), he analyzes the imagery in the play and points out Christophe's obsession with physical coherence. The Citadelle becomes more than a symbol of nationhood, it becomes the nation itself as human slaves turn into the Citadelle's building blocks. During a hurricane, an explosion is touched off by lightening in the arsenal and buries alive many of the soldiers. Thus the great monument, instead of building a nation, pulverizes it. Cohen states that the play is a personal tragedy for Christophe and a political one for Third World Haiti. Christophe does exactly what Césaire decries in his Discours sur le colonialisme, namely that "colonisation=chosification."\(^ {20}\)

The peasants who are Christophe's subjects believe only in the earth and the higher Christophe goes, the further he gets from the land, source of true freedom.

Frederick I. Case\(^ {21}\), in an excellent and informative article, illuminates Césaire's constant allusions to the Haitian Voodoo religion found throughout the play. His main contention is that the King Christophe becomes a reincarnation of the Haitian/African deity Sango. He points out
passages in the play that reflect the structure of a Voodoo prayer and cites the various Haitian loas or gods referred to throughout the play. He notes that the use of rebirth symbols at Christophe's burial on the Citadelle lends itself well to the Haitian idea of life as transition and metamorphosis. For instance, he observes, the king is buried facing Africa so he can return to his homeland of Guinea, the ultimate aim of every believer in the Voodoo religion. Case concludes, "La notion de l'immortalité de l'esprit n'a pas été introduite par les missionnaires chrétiens." 22

Thus it seems most scholars agree that Césaire uses poetic license in creating this play and that it often seems Shakespearean in tone. Almost all concede that Christophe's apparent failure is not final and is offset by victorious terms of renewal and rebirth that surround him at his burial. A mixture of myth and history provides us with a play that, shorn of many elements in the myth and ritual pattern, still retains its basic structure.

*La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* is quite different from Césaire's first play *Et les Chiens se taisaient*. The lyricism and rich imagery of the latter are cast aside as the Martinican author tackles the problem of dealing with an historical subject. Political and historical emphasis dilute but do not erase Césairian imagery. Whereas solar and vegetal imagery predominate in *Et les Chiens se taisaient* lending greatly to its overall tone of a seasonal ritual, stone and wood imagery predominate in *La Tragédie* taking us away from nature and into the man-made realm of building
materials. Whereas *Et les Chiens se taisaient* proved to be a fairly comprehensive model of the myth and ritual pattern, *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* carries only the bare remnants. The differences in the two plays follow closely Weisinger’s description of the evolution of ritual into tragedy; thus the differences in the two plays can be analyzed as the difference between ritual and tragedy. This is not so surprising since Césaire did not intend *Et les Chiens se taisaient* to be a tragedy; it was written first as a long poem and only later arranged for the theatre. *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe*, on the other hand, was written as a tragic theatrical piece. Thus we leave the realm of nature myth and enter the realm of dramatic tragedy.

Weisinger describes ritual to tragedy as a movement going from religion to literature. Most of the ritual elements disappear in tragedy, and freedom of choice of the tragic protagonist is emphasized. With the Rebel, his fate is acknowledged from the beginning and his own free will is greatly limited. Though he is a willing accomplice to the sacrificial act and appears aggressively ready to take on his communal responsibility, he never seems to have any real choice in the matter. He accepts without hesitation, but he does not choose. He is committed in his deed and lucid to the end, but his death is inevitable from the first page on where it is unceremoniously announced.

The case is different with Christophe. He is free to choose and is responsible for the consequences of his own acts. He has the opportunity to rule Haiti as he sees fit,
outside of any pre-ordained plan, and he consciously directs
his own actions. His free will is evidenced by his constant
use of "je" throughout the play. He refuses to be guided
and chooses instead to guide. His plans are grandiose and
his mind never wanders from what he can and will achieve
with Haiti. The Rebel often shows signs of weakness and is
batted to and fro by the chorus and the narrators. Christophe
takes the fore, dominates the play entirely, orders, directs
and builds Haiti.

An analysis of the play's imagery will help define
Christophe's aggression and his will to overcome nature.
The Rebel searches to be in harmony with nature; Christophe
fights it. Cosmic forces seem to sweep the Rebel along
whereas Christophe seeks to overpower these same forces. The
imagery in Et les Chiens se taisaient is entirely natural
whereas in La Tragédie du Roi Christophe it is entirely anti-
natural. Thus theatre as religion cedes the place to theatre
as political tragedy.

Michel Benamou23 is the author of an excellent article
that proves useful in helping to interpret the images found
in La Tragédie du Roi Christophe. He states that the images
in the play focus on two main elements: wood and stone. He
points out that early in the play, Christophe sees his sub-
jects as trees that will sprout to build the new nation, but
by the end of the play the king, frustrated by this slow
natural process, sees his people as clay to be molded and
manipulated. "He ... has to choose for stone against wood,
against time, against natural growth."24 and his fatal choice
is his downfall since Christophe, struck with paralysis, becomes like stone himself. Finally at death, incorporated into the stone Citadelle, he is metamorphosed into a monument. Thus he achieves success only after his death. Benamou concludes: "What it all means is perhaps that demiurgic politics may succeed only by the sacrifice of the demiurge. Ironically, it is only after the King's death that his people pronounce him to have been 'a great tree'."

The vegetal imagery of *Et les Chiens se taïsaient*, making the play seem like a seasonal ritual, disappears entirely in *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* and is an accurate indication that nature and vegetation are not King Christophe's concerns.

Throughout the play Christophe, unlike the Rebel who is constantly surrounded by nature, shows himself hostile to nature. He cannot wait for things to happen naturally; with his hubris he tries to mold, manipulate and coerce the elements. Whereas the purpose of the ritual is to keep at bay natural forces and bring them into harmony with man, Christophe challenges nature and tries to place it, like his peasant subjects, under his dominion. So unlike the Rebel, Christophe is anti-nature at every turn; the ritual elements recede as tragic form takes the fore. Christophe refuses the role of fertility god; he is a full-blown tragic protagonist.

The change in imagery from vegetation to stone in *Et les Chiens se taïsaient* and *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* respectively indicates this movement away from nature rituals. As Benamou points out, Christophe early in the play offers
the image of a tree bearing fruit for the symbol of the new nation. Yet within one scene, he is no longer the farmer or gardener who cares for his plants and helps them grow but the potter who molds the clay to his own liking. Christophe says in Act I, scene 1 when speaking of the Haitian people: "La liberté ... mais pas la liberté facile! Et c'est donc d'avoir un État. Oui, ... quelque chose grâce à quoi ce peuple de transplantés s'enracine, boutonne, s'épanouisse, lançant à la face du monde les parfums, les fruits de la floraison, ... " (p. 23) This image reflects sentiments similar to those put forward by the Rebel when he spoke of the universe as a forest wherein all different species of trees grow and shade each other in mutual co-existence. 26 But after this single allusion to natural growth, Christophe fiercely takes an extremely aggressive stand and wants to shape and mold all of Haiti. In scene 6 of Act I, he talks of stone and cement in his frantic desire to build. The rhythm of his words bespeaks his frenetic pace: "De la pierre, je cherche de la pierre!/Du ciment! je cherche du ciment!/Tout ce disjoint, oh! mettre tout cela debout!/Debout et à la face du monde, et solide!" (p. 45) He wants to pour cement, lay bricks and build. Christophe is certainly the phallic hero and not the sacrificial lamb. Later in the same scene he indicates his manipulative desires when he says to his aide: "Voyez-vous, Vastey, le matériau humain lui-même est à refondre." (p. 50) Human life is here likened to the mortar and clay Christophe will use to remake and rebuild his nation.
Christophe's reaction to his friend Wilberforce's advice is indicative of the former's disdain for nature's timetable. Wilberforce counsels him wisely: "On n'invente pas un arbre, on le plante! On ne lui extrait pas les fruits, on le laisse porter. Une nation n'est pas une création, mais un mûrissement, une lenteur, année par année, anneau par anneau. ... Semer, ..., les graines de la civilisation." (p. 57) Christophe's impudent reaction clearly spells out his attitude: "Mais nous n'avons pas le temps d'attendre quand c'est précisément le temps qui nous prend à la gorge! Sur le sort d'un peuple, s'en remettre au soleil, à la pluie, aux saisons, drôle d'idée!" (p. 58) Thus subjugation to seasonal cyclicity is out of the question; Christophe cannot await the allotted times for planting, growing, and harvesting. He wants to transcend the rain, the sun, and the seasons. He does not have time to be a farmer; he forgets however that even the construction engineer cannot pour a foundation in wet weather. The use of the word "temps" in Christophe's lines above is perhaps a pun indicating time and weather. Christophe philosophizes that time is of the essence and the nation cannot wait, but he can only combat time, and weather, for so long and he must eventually submit.

One of the most dramatic scenes in the play comes at the end of Act II and shows Christophe mounting the Citadelle, brandishing his sword, in the midst of a violent thunderstorm. This is the epitome of the king's hubris and though he fights bravely against the heavenly powers, he cannot win.
His figure would seem small against the stormy background. As he waves his sword, he yells "Saint-Pierre, Saint-Pierre, voudrais-tu nous faire la guerre?" (p. 107) The reference to Saint Pierre is twofold: F.I. Case contends that it alludes to the Haitian loa who is akin to Sango.27 This is certainly plausible but I see no reason why it could not refer as well to the Christian St. Peter, who, as keeper of heaven's doors, represents the heavenly powers. Either allusion seems valid in the play, and it is not out of the question that Césaire, product of a double heritage, intended the double meaning.

In Act III Christophe refers to nature as "imbécile" (p. 129) and later he indicates his total disregard for any difference between good and bad seasons. While ordering materials transported across the mountain he says: "Inutile d'attendre ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler 'la bonne saison'. Toutes les saisons sont bonnes quand le roi l'a décidé." (p. 132) Finally he lambasts nature as if to put the blame on the earth for its lack of fruitfulness: "Ce fut un temps sévère. Je ne regrette rien. J'ai tâché de mettre quelque chose dans une terre ingrate." (p. 138) Thus we see Christophe, unheedful and disdainful of natural processes. Trying to supersede them, he assigns himself overblown dimensions that are likely to burst.

In tone, then, the play is far from the nature ritual seen in Et les Chiens se taisaient and into pure dramatic form, with only the remnants of the ritual pattern apparent. Of the nine elements originally mentioned by Weisinger as
part of the myth and ritual pattern, which are retained in the play? Of the nine the first five remain; that is the indispensable role of the divine king, the combat between the God and an opposing power, the suffering of the God, the death of the God, and the resurrection of the God. Christophe is the king of his people, and his welfare is intertwined with the welfare of the community. He fights an enemy, who is now only symbolic, he suffers, dies and is reborn. These elements, as Weisinger points out, form the structure of tragedy:

... the tragic protagonist, in whom is subsumed the well-being of the people and the welfare of the state, engages in conflict with a representation of darkness and evil; a temporary defeat is inflicted on the tragic protagonist, but after shame and suffering he emerges triumphant as the symbol of the victory of light and good over darkness and evil, a victory sanctified by the covenant of the settling of destinies which reaffirms the well-being of the people and the welfare of the state.28

This is no less than a schematic description of the play at hand; King Christophe fights against the dark recesses of his soul, his hubris, is shamed and temporarily defeated, but is reborn, thus reaffirming the Haitian state he represents. Let us now examine the five elements as seen in the play.

The first element is the indispensable role of the divine king. Christophe, like the Rebel, is an ex-slave, a former cook at the Auberge de la Couronne, but despite his humble background, by the opening of the play, he is king of the Haitian people. In fact he proclaims himself king
after refusing the presidency of the Republic of Haiti offered him by Pétion and the Haitian Senate. The Rebel is proclaimed king by his people; Christophe, in a Napoleonic fashion, crowns himself. His court is not the macabre one presided over by the Rebel but is instead a mere mockery and an apish imitation of European regalia. Act I, scene 3 takes us into Christophe’s palace and gives us a view of the royal ceremonies in progress. The scene is a ludicrous satire and Césairian humor shows keenly as the technical assistant sent from France is none other than a master of ceremonies come to instruct the newly founded court in the pomp and protocol of French regal customs.

Despite this burlesque aspect however, Christophe is ruler of his people and asserts his responsibility often. While discussing his role as nation-builder, he says in an almost paternal fashion: "Alors je les [his subjects] prendrai/j’en sais le poids/et je les porterai!" (p. 38) At his coronation he is feted as the "régénérateur et bienfaiteur de la nation haitienne, ... " (p. 39) and cries of "Vive le roi Christophe" (p. 29) are chorused by his subjects.

Though his role as king is undisputed, the attitude he shows toward his people is often ambivalent. At times he seems a man of integrity with only the interests of his subjects at heart, such as when he tenderly, almost lovingly, declares: "Allons/de noms de gloire je veux couvrir vos noms d’esclaves,/de noms d’orgueil nos noms d’infamie, de noms de rachat nos noms d’orphelins!/C’est d’une nouvelle naissance qu’il s’agit!" (p. 37) Christophe wants to participate in
the birth of his nation, but he will not settle for being the midwife, he must be the father.

In another passage, Christophe explains the motive for his draconian rule by revealing his grandiose and inspired vision of a prosperous Haiti:

A qui fera-t-on croire que tous les hommes, ... ont connu la déportation, la traite, l'esclavage, le collectif ravalemment à la tête, le total outragé, la vaste insulte, ... l'omni-niant crachat! Nous seuls, ... les nègres! Alors au fond de la fosse! ... Au plus bas de la fosse. C'est là que nous crions; de là que nous aspirons à l'air, à la lumière, au soleil. Et si nous voulons remonter, voyez comme s'imposent à nous, le pied qui s'arcboute, le muscle qui se tend, les dents qui se serrent, la tête, oh! la tête, large et froide! Et voilà pourquoi il faut en demander aux nègres plus qu'aux autres: ... C'est d'une remontée jamais vue que je parle, Messieurs, et malheur à celui dont le pied flanche! (p. 59)

His sincere desire to create a glorious Haiti is evidenced in the above lines, and his aide, Vastey, reinforces the king's just and good intentions while talking to two women who are complaining about the imposed work laws. Vastey explains: "Savez-vous pourquoi il [Christophe] travaille jour et nuit? Savez-vous, ces lubies féroces, comme vous dites, ce travail forcé ... C'est pour que désormais il n'y ait plus de par le monde une jeune fille noire qui ait honte de sa peau et trouve dans sa couleur un obstacle à la réalisation des voeux de son coeur." (p. 82) This is a rather touching tribute to the powerful king and is an indication of his universal concerns for all oppressed people.

At other times however Christophe seems to disdain and even hate his subjects. He refers to them at one point as
"canaille" (p. 88) and at another point as "de la merde et de la poussière!" (p. 49) His dictums are harsh; he places the nation under martial law with the following prescript: "Tous les gérants, conducteurs et cultivateurs seront tenus de remplir avec exactitude, soumission et obéissance, leurs devoirs---comme le font les militaires." (p. 76) His cruelty toward the people is often blatantly atrocious; as the play progresses he brutally murders an old peasant taking an afternoon nap, has the archbishop Corneille Brelle smothered to death, has the French envoy Franco de Médina attend his own funeral mass, and kills countless soldiers with his frantic construction schedule for the Citadelle. His good intentions get lost in the background in the face of such cruel actions. Even though the king does perhaps have the welfare of his subjects in mind, he often fails to manifest this good will.

Despite all this, however, the king's well-being does correspond to the well-being of the community. While Christophe is healthy and active, the country prospers. After his sickness, the country fails; his demise brings with it the downfall of the community. Christophe had so concentrated his royal power that the kingdom could not survive without the presence of the founding king; when he died, so too died the kingdom.

An indication of the king's and community's mutually dependent welfare comes in Act III, scene 4. Here Christophe, for the first time in the play, is shown as weak, sick, old and virtually powerless; it is also the scene in which
news of the kingdom's imminent downfall is brought to the ailing king. In this scene, Christophe, described as "vieilli et infirme" (p. 132) receives nothing but bad news from his most powerful and loyal officers. Richard, governor of the Northern province, enters and informs the king that his soldiers are tired and morale is low. The scene immediately following is described as a "Va-et-vient d'officiers--Agitation et panique." (p. 133) as the king is barraged with messengers bearing gloomy reports of popular insurrection against him. He learns that General Boyer, successor of his arch enemy Pétion, is rapidly gaining ground, and that the population at the Cape has rioted and taken over the arsenal. Finally comes news that his personal guard has deserted and given up defense of the kingdom: "Ils battent le mandoucouman." 30 This blow proves lethal for Christophe; he now understands he has failed to build an invulnerable kingdom. He says: "Cela signifie qu'il est temps pour le vieux roi d'aller dormir." (p. 40) His combat is over, he has lost, and now he must die.

This scene lends itself well to the Frazerian idea that a king must not be allowed to grow old and weak, for in his health is represented the health of the country. Christophe, in effect, lived too long, and his sickness brings with it the decay of the kingdom. Thus he proves to be indispensable to his community; his disease infects the kingdom and his death marks its end.

The second element in the pattern, the combat, is found in La Tragédie du roi Christophe but takes on a different
form from that seen in *Et les Chiens se taisaient*. The
Rebel physically fights the White master, representative of
the evil forces, and he suffers defeat by being jailed and
sentenced to death. His defeat, as we saw, is only tem-
porary however as he undergoes a resurrection. Christophe
too must fight an enemy and he too undergoes a temporary
defeat before being reborn. Christophe's enemy however is
no physical, corpulent being but is the symbolic monster of
his own hubris. As Laroche\(^31\) well pointed out, Christophe
faces no antagonist besides himself. In *Et les Chiens se
taisaient* we witness the hero Rebel take on a physical,
external enemy, the White master. In *La Tragédie du Roi
Christophe* we enter in *medias res* as the external foe has
been conquered and Haiti has gained independence. Christophe's
glorious days as a distinguished soldier and general in the
Haitian revolutionary war are over when Act I opens and he
takes up the duties of peacetime government. His only re-
mainng opponent is himself as the combat turns inward. This
inner fight--the battle with his own nature, his own over-
whelming desires for grandeur, and his pride--makes up the
line of action for the play and is a common denominator of
tragedy.

During Christophe's reign, as we have already seen,
the king is impatient and unwilling to let nature take its
course. Seeking to control and manipulate all things and
all people, he is eaten up with his own sense of power.
Renamou points out the fatal choice made by Christophe when
he chooses stone against wood and natural growth.\(^32\) The
monarch opts for man-made building materials over natural
growth processes, and this choice, a wrong one, spells
disaster for the king. He is defeated, not by an outside
enemy, but by his own uncompromising nature and by the
belief in his own infallibility.

The height of the combat is depicted in the final scene
of Act II when Christophe climbs the Citadelle, his sword
waving, in the midst of a thunderstorm. Here the battle
lines are visibly clear as Christophe gets so carried away
with his power he tries to climb to heaven and fight the
gods in hand-to-hand combat. The storm not only highly
dramatizes the scene but also sharpens the effect of man
versus the heavenly elements. The Rebel was willingly
sacrificed to bring his community into harmony with nature;
Christophe refuses this method and chooses instead to take
matters into his own hands, to settle this heavenly account
between man and god once and for all. The problem is that
the gods prove stronger.

Elements three and four of the pattern, the king's
suffering and death, take place following the above described
heavenly combat scene and make up the third and final act.
Christophe, in Act III, is struck down and punished by the
gods for his prideful stand. One of his cruel deeds, the
murder of the archbishop Corneille Brelle, comes back to
 haunt him in a chilling way. Christophe, tired of the old
archbishop, had him killed by sealing him up in his room and
thereby suffocating him. Much later, after Brelle's death
and after his successor, Juan de Dios Gonzales, has been
named, Christophe is attending mass celebrating the feast of the Assumption. It is here in the church, abode of the gods (both Christian and Voodoo gods are worshipped in Haiti and both are represented in Cézair’s play), that Christophe receives heavenly vengeance. During the mass he sees an apparition in the form of Corneille Brelle which is so shocking to him that he falls to the ground paralyzed. Christophe had killed many innocent victims during his reign, but it is fitting that direct retribution for his acts comes by way of the archbishop, God’s earthly representative.  

From this point on in the play (Act III, scene 2), Christophe grows less and less powerful and his kingdom suffers with him.

After his stroke, Christophe is not yet ready to submit, and he maintains his prideful stance. The doctors inform him that despite paralysis, all dangers for his life are over. He responds furiously: "Est-il rien de plus fatal qu’un homme trahi par la nature imbécile, ... Je ne suis roi ni par la grâce de Dieu ni par la volonté du peuple, mais par la volonté et la grâce de mes poings. ... Et vous [le médecin], et vous, vous laissez se perpétrer cette fraude! Cet attentat du Destin! Ces voies de fait de la nature." (p. 129) The recalcitrant Christophe has not been humbled one whit. Nature strikes her blow, but Christophe refuses to accept it. He gathers his ministers and aides around him and orders them to continue his project of nation building. He shows his indomitable spirit: "Oui, genoux brisés, la fortune/envieuse m’a frappé. Mais mon âme, sachez-le, est debout, intacte,
solide, comme notre Citadelle." (p. 131) He finishes by stating that he does not beseech, he proclaims: "Dieux, je ne supplie pas, mais ... je réclame pour ce peuple/son droit!/sa part de chance!" (p. 131) He appears undaunted, sick of body but vigorous in spirit. Yet the scenes following this brave speech show his failing health and his impending defeat.

It is not long before news comes of the peasants' revolt against the king and General Boyer's successful advances. Christophe, paralyzed, is a helpless spectator to the disintegration of the kingdom that he wanted so badly to build. The biggest obstacles were, sadly enough, his own pride and impatience. Benamou points out that ironically the king, who fatally chose stone over wood, pays his due by being turned to stone himself—paralyzed and immovable.34

Finally Christophe, unable to fight any longer, admits defeat and retires into his room where he shoots himself. Even in death, the king refuses a natural exit. He takes matters into his own hands and commits suicide. No one but Christophe should be allowed to kill the king.

It is interesting to recall here Henry Cohen's observance regarding the Citadelle. Though the monument was supposed to have been the very symbol of the Haitian state, it ended up burying a commander and many soldiers inside when lightning touched off an explosion in one of the arsenals inside. Thus Cohen points out, the stately memorial ended up pulverizing, not edifying, the nation.35 Christophe is much the same, and he even compares himself to the great
monument when he speaks to his ministers from his sickbed and proclaims that despite paralysis his spirit remains intact and solid like the Citadelle. He adds that he is the very image of the great monument: "Foudroyé, mais inébranlé, l'image même/de notre Citadelle, Christophe."

(p. 131) The juxtaposition of Citadelle and Christophe in the passage above indicates the kinship of the two. Unfortunately, Christophe too, like the Citadelle, ends up destroying, rather than building, the nation. Despite his ambitions, his over-zealous attitude proves destructive. He works his people to exhaustion in order to build the great Haitian monument as an impenetrable fortress against any outside military threats. But hear what James Leyburn, Haitian historian, says of this fortress:

... La Ferrière (the Citadelle) is certainly one of the most impressive and one of the most futile, edifices in the world. If the silent cannon had ever been fired, their balls would have rumbled harmlessly down the mountainside. The suspicion grows that Christophe achieved his architectural miracle not primarily as a defense against the French, but to make his subjects proud of what a nation of despised ex-slaves could accomplish.36

And so, too, the suspicion grows in the reader's mind whether Christophe makes no more than a futile attempt to lead his nation.

When the death scene occurs in the play, Christophe is completely defeated in every way. His life has come to a tragic end and he has witnessed his life's project, the kingdom of Haiti, crumble before his very eyes. However the play does not end on this sad note. On the contrary we see that
Christophe's death and defeat are only temporary and that shortly thereafter resurrection occurs. Two scenes follow Christophe's death: one to announce his death, the other to portray his burial from atop the Citadelle. But first let us examine his death scene more closely, for in it is contained the preparations for his subsequent rebirth. Christophe's final speech is most significant for its allusion to rebirth and its purificatory nature:

Afrique! Aide-moi à rentrer, porte-moi comme un vieil enfant dans tes bras et puis tu me dévêtiras, me/laveras. Défais-moi de tous ces vêtements, défais-/m'en comme, l'aube venue, on se défait des rêves de/la nuit ... De mes nobles, de ma noblesse, de mon sceptre,/de ma couronne./
Et lave-moi! Oh, lave-moi de leur fard, de leurs/baisers, de mon royaume! Le reste, j'y pourvoirai/seul. (p. 147)

First of all there are several allusions to rebirth as the king asks to be carried and cared for like a baby, and he uses the image of the dawn (birth of a new day) to emphasize his plea. More significant yet however is that he asks to be absolved of his earthly possessions—symbols of his hubris—such as his clothes, his nobles, his nobility, his scepter and his crown. He ascribes to them the title of "fard," a further indication of their superficial, decorative function. It is in this speech, his last, that Christophe finally bows and pleads to the gods. He addresses himself to Africa and indicates his desire to return to his natal country—the final goal of the Voodoo religion. By divesting himself of earthly attire and ornaments, he is exculpated and ready to undergo resurrection.
The rebirth element in the play manifests itself in a variety of ways, the least of which occurring when Christophe designates the Mulatto Vastey as his successor. As has already been noted, one type of rebirth takes the form of the king's successor. Christophe passes the leadership of Haiti onto Vastey in a phrase tinged with ceremonious religiosity: "... je te baptise; te nomme; te sacre nègre ... " (p. 146)

The rebirth element however comes through in a far clearer fashion in the final scene of the play following the king's death. It is made manifest in three ways: 1) by poetic images laden with rebirth symbolism; 2) in the context of afterlife as seen in the Haitian Voodoo religion; and 3) in the political context associated with the Voodoo religion.

The poetic imagery of the final scene in the play is replete with rebirth and renewal symbols. To begin with, the king, so sick and helplessly paralyzed in the third act of the play, now once again takes on the image of strength and power. He is buried standing up and facing southward—poised and ready in an upright position to take on the enemy in the South and to help guard the kingdom in the North. Vastey, future leader of the nation and Christophe's comrade in arms, orders: "Qu'on le mette debout./Dans le mortier gâché. Tourné vers le sud./C'est bien. Non pas couché, mais debout./Qu'il se fraie lui-même, dans la difficulté de la pierraille/et l'industrie du rocher inventé de main d'homme,/sa route!" (p. 151) Christophe's subjects, still believing
in their king's power, are allowing him to find his own way out of the sepulchral chamber. P.I. Case points out that a horizontal burial better enables the deceased spirit to rejoin its ancestors and thus Christophe is being forced to use his own strength even after death. These attitudes of independence and might surrounding the king bespeak of his ultimate victory over death.

Madame Christophe's eulogy to her husband invokes the image of the scarab beetle, previously mentioned for its association with the daily birth of the sun: "Et ton pays t'aura dénié la cave de boue du scarabée/" (p. 151). She promises her husband a small measure of immortality by her own efforts at keeping his name alive. She says: "défais-toi de ton orgueil de pierre/pour songer d'une petite vieille/qui claudiquant à travers poussières et pluies dans/le jour ébréché jusqu'au bout du voyage glanera ton/nom." (p. 152) It seems then she will do her part in assuring her husband's eternal memory.

The next speech comes from the mouth of an African page who describes Christophe's duality: good and bad, right and wrong, defeated and victorious. He says: "À l'origine/ Biface:/Ici patience et impatience/défaite et victoire/ ... /*" (p. 152) Christophe suffers defeat and victory at once; although his death marks defeat, it also marks the beginning of his resurrection.

Finally Vastey, the king's confidant throughout the play and his chosen successor, utters the ending words of
the play in a manner that fairly covers the king with epithets of rebirth symbolism. He says, addressing the king, "Et te revoilà roi debout," (p. 152) an indication that the king, deposed by death, is now restored to royalty. He concludes the play with the following lines abounding with rebirth images: "Vous astres au coeur friable/vous nés du bûcher de l'Ethiopien Memnon/Oiseaux essaimeurs de pollens/dessinez-lui ses armes non périssables/d'azur au phénix de gueules couronné d'or." (pp. 152-153)

Addressing himself to the heavenly stars, he asks that they bring on the rebirth of his king. The line "nés du bûcher de l'Ethiopien Memnon" contains a dual affirmation of rebirth imagery. The words "nés du bûcher" could refer to the phoenix bird which is the renewal and rebirth symbol par excellence. The Larousse describes the phoenix as such: "oiseau fabuleux qui était unique en son espèce. Il vivait plusieurs siècles au milieu des déserts de l'Arabie, se faisant périr sur un bûcher et renaissait de sa cendre." Thus the phoenix perishes by fire and is reborn from the ashes. This allusion is combined with another rebirth reference, this time to Memnon, a mythic legendary whose ancestry leaves him an heir to immortality. This Ethiopian king was the son of Aurora, the Goddess of the Dawn, and Tithonus. Aurora's function as a rebirth symbol is obvious; she is the Goddess of the daily newborn sun. But Memnon is blessed with more than one immortal parent; the story of his father Tithonus carries the same connotation. Aurora asked Zeus to make her husband immortal, which the great
god agreed to do. Unfortunately the Goddess forgot to ask
the head Olympian to also keep her husband young. So he
grew old but could not die; he continued to get feebler with-
out the respite of death. One version states that Aurora
mercifully shut him away in a room and another that she
changed him into the grasshopper. In either case, Memnon
certainly carries a heritage of rebirth and immortality. As
a great king he led an army to Troy to help the Trojans but
was killed by Achilles. His own immortality was preserved
in a symbolic way, much like Christophe's: "To Memnon, ...
a great statue was erected in Egypt at Thebes, and it was
said that when the first rays of the dawn fell upon it a
sound came from it like the twanging of a harpstring."38
Thus in one line to Christophe, Vastey iterates two powerful
rebirth images. He continues and in the next line ("Oiseaux
essaimeurs de pollens") we have the allusion to the ever-
lasting fertility cycle of nature with the reference to car-
rriers of pollen. As bees carry pollen from one flower to
another, life continues to be reproduced. The use of
"oiseaux" could be another reference to the phoenix who is
now given the added procreative function of pollen carrier.
The "armes non périssables" speaks for itself and indicates
that the king's arms (either weapons or coat-of-arms) will
never perish; his legend as general (weapons) and king (coat-
of-arms) will reign eternal. Finally the last line mentions
once again the phoenix and designates the colors blue and
gold39, the same as those used in the Rebel's resurrection
scene in *Et les Chiens se taisaient*. This concluding speech by Vastey serves to emphasize and elucidate the idea of rebirth surrounding Christophe and reverses his death and defeat.

Aside from poetic imagery, Césaire uses references to the Haitian religion Voodoo, a factor present throughout the play, to reinforce and highlight the rebirth motif. The religion itself provides for an afterlife, the ultimate goal of all believers being reunion with their African ancestors. Laroche points out: "... la mort-échec, la mort-fatalité qui caractérise le tragique grec ne se retrouve pas en Haïti. Qu'il s'agisse du zombi, le mort maintenu en vie ou du canzo, le vivant qui ne saurait mourir, la mythologie haitienne ne propose de la mort que des images d'une vie métamorphosée. La mort n'est que transformation de la vie. En ce sens, elle n'est pas tragique à la manière occidentale."

The Voodoo element in the play serves to emphasize the idea of the king's resurrection. F.I. Case, cited above, convincingly claims that Christophe is symbolic of the Voodoo god Sango and is metamorphosed into this deity at his death. He points out that his burial facing southward is done in the Voodoo custom of facing southward to Africa as a facilitation for reunion with forebears in Guinea. Case states: "Comme Sango est monté sur la colline d'Ifé pour maîtriser la foudre, Christophe est installé sur les hauteurs de La Ferrière. Comme Sango devient père du peuple et divinité yoruba après un règne de tyrannie, Christophe se métamorphose."

Thus according to Case, Christophe lives on in the form of the
Haitian deity Sango. He observes that Memnon, Sango and the phoenix, all three mentioned in the last lines of the play, are killed only to be reborn; their connection to Christophe renders the latter immortal also.

Césaire's use of Voodoo elements is important for its political, as well as its religious, significance. Janheinz Jahn discusses the political aspect of Voodoo in his book *Muntu: An Outline of Neo-African Culture*. He observes that during the Black diaspora, slaves that went from Africa to the Caribbean retained contact with their homeland through performance of their native dances. The Voodoo religion took on its aspect of a secret cult due to persecution by the Christian missionaries in their efforts to stamp out all heathen religions. According to Jahn, Voodoo is the true state religion of Haiti. For instance every hounfof, or Voodoo temple, has a peristyle decorated with the coat-of-arms of the Republic as well as a picture of the president. He notes the interesting fact that the start of the independence war took place during a Voodoo ceremony when a slave, Boukman, sounded the signal to revolt by beating the tom-toms and sending the message across the mountains on August 14, 1791. The Voodoo participants take part in an animal sacrifice in which they swear total allegiance to the cult; this stems from the traditional blood pact of Dahomey which was assimilated into the Voodoo religion. Jahn adds,

Voodoo shares with other faiths, moreover, the custom of promising to righters who die for their country privileges in the life to come. The bullets of the enemy were to ful-
fil for them in their death their most longed-
for wish: to let them return to their kinsfolk in their homeland, Guinea. Thus Voodoo is not an arbitrary cult, it is the true state religion of Haiti. That Christophe, as a figure of state, should be granted the rewards of the Voodoo afterlife is likely, and Case's theory that Christophe is metamorphosed into the Voodoo loa Sango is a sound one. Aesthetically, politically, or religiously, the images and tone of the last scene of the play indicate rebirth and renewal.

Before concluding it is interesting to note the changes made by Césaire in the definitive 1970 version (the one used throughout the above text) of the play that was originally written in 1963. Rodney Harris tells us that changes were made primarily in collaboration with Jean-Marie Serreau, Césaire's director. Thus we see transposition and rearrangement of scenes in such a way as to tighten the action and give the play greater unity, most likely done in the interest of technical staging reasons.

No substantial changes were made however in the character portrayal of Christophe; his obsessive ambition for his country and his people is equally emphasized in both versions.

The single most significant change in the two versions, especially from a myth and ritual approach, is the emphasis on the Haitian Voodoo element. In the second version, two substantial additions are made involving the powerful Haitian deity Sango. In Act I, scene 4, a hymn to this god is added and in the final epiphany scene of the play, the African page is given a speaking part in which he alludes to Christophe as
a reincarnation of Šango. This aspect of the play, absent in the first version, is important in terms of the rebirth theme. Though rebirth images and symbols are presented in the final scenes of both versions, the emphasis on the Haitian Voodoo god Šango sharpens the renewal effect even more. Thus the play is not substantially altered, and the rebirth theme is clearly present in both. The second version however, with its addition of Šango, provides the added touch of a Haitian context as well as added emphasis on reincarnation and rebirth.

Even though Christophe chose wrongly and lived his life in error, he is spared total defeat through the element of resurrection in the final scene. Weisinger asserts: "Tragedy therefore occurs when the accepted order of things is fundamentally questioned only to be the more triumphantly reaffirmed."⁴⁷ Christophe, due to his hubris, questioned the accepted order of nature, but that order was reaffirmed when he was struck down. His was a free choice but in a sense a wrong one. Things do not end so bleakly however and Weisinger points out: "Nevertheless, in Western thought, if man is free to choose, in the end he must choose rightly."⁴⁸ The protagonist chooses wrongly but his choice is righted and he is absolved and saved through resurrection. Thus the community he represents is also spared; the protagonist lives on through the reaffirmation of the state he represents.

As the spectator watches Christophe's actions and adventures, the emotion of catharsis is fulfilled. Christophe, as the tragic hero, rebels against the fundamental order
of things and is punished for that rebellion. The spectator vicariously commits his daring deeds against nature and his sacrifice cleanses us all from our own hubris. Before his death, Christophe is finally seen to be submissive to nature as he purifies himself and divests himself of earthly ornaments. In Madame Christophe's eulogy to her late husband she reminds him to cast off his stoney pride so that she may glean the memory of his name. The juxtaposition of "orgueil de pierre" and "glaner ton nom" signifies perhaps that he casts away the stone to receive the help of the gleaners, an agricultural term. Weisinger says in this regard: "He commits the soul deed which is potentially in us, he challenges the order of God which we would but dare not, he expiates our sin, ..."49 Thus Christophe's death affords us all a victory.

We see in Christophe the dual nature of a tragic protagonist—a man that is not too good and not too bad. In one sense, he is the savior of Haiti; in another sense, by interjecting disorder through his defiance of the gods, he becomes the scapegoat. Both elements enter into this ambiguous character, but his death, seen from both sides, marks a sacrifice for his nation.

As representative of the community, his death marks only individual defeat, while his rebirth marks collective salvation. Thus the protagonist may not he himself attain victory but he attains it for the community he represents. Christophe's personal failure is reversed by his apotheosis on the Citadelle and marks at the same time a reaffirmation
of the Haitian state. Christophe dies, but his sacrifice, successful through rebirth, saves his community and his spectators. We are all purged by witnessing this heroic act.

But now we, like Christophe, who faces toward Guinea, must look to Africa. The cycle continues and as Christophe took on the duties of the Rebel, so we see Patrice Lumumba begin the task again.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 3


3 Ibid., pp. 191ff.

4 Kesteloot, L'Homme, pp. 158-172.

5 Ibid., p. 161.

6 Ibid., p. 169.

7 Ibid., p. 169.

8 Harris, L'Humanisme, pp. 71-122.


10 Ibid., p. 36.

11 Ibid., p. 36.

12 Maximilien Laroche, "La Tragédie du Roi Christophe du point de vue de l'histoire d'Haiti," Études littéraires, VI, No. 1 (1973), 35-47.

13 Ibid., p. 45.

14 Traore, pp. 45-47.

15 Ibid., p. 46.

16 Hervé and Nicole Fuyet and Guy and Mary Levilain, "Décolonisation et classes sociales dans La Tragédie du Roi Christophe," French Review, XLVI, No. 6 (1973), 1101-1116.

18Ibid., p. 71.


20Césaire, *Discours*, p. 19.


22Ibid., p. 24.


24Ibid., p. 172.


26Césaire, *Chiens*, pp. 56-57.


29Léon Panoudh-Siefer in *Le Mythe du Nègre et de l'Afrique noire dans la littérature française (de 1800 à la deuxième guerre mondiale)* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1968), p. 25, gives us more information on "cette jeune fille noire" which is a reference to a novel entitled *Ourika* by Madame Duras written in 1824. It is the story of a young black woman educated in France and though charming and intelligent was rejected by Parisian society, due only to her color, and could not marry the white man she loved.

30Drum signal calling for retreat during war.

31Laroche, p. 36.


as the sacrificial animal was killed, the crowd chanted "Hail Mary, full of Grace." The Virgin, Christ, Bon Dieu, the Saints and the loas all cohabit happily side by side in Haiti.

38 Hamilton, p. 290.
39 Hubert Cole, in Christophe King of Haiti, p. 18, states that the royal device of Christophe was a crowned phoenix and the motto "I rise again from my ashes."
40 Laroche, p. 44.
41 See Supra., pp. 118-119.
43 Jahn, Muntu, pp. 51-61.
44 Ibid., p. 52.
45 Harris, L'Humanisme, pp. 109-113.
46 For example, the two intermèdes of the second version are taken from Act I, scene 8, and Act III, scene 6, of the first version.
48 Ibid., p. 154.
49 Ibid., p. 155.
CHAPTER 4

Une Saison au Congo: Theatre as Politics

Césaire, in Une Saison au Congo, once again uses an historical situation for artistic inspiration. This time however we cross the Atlantic, moving from 19th-century post-independence Haiti to 20th-century post-independence Belgian Congo.¹ The choice of the Congo as the historical setting of the play is important in that the former Belgian colony was among the first of the African countries to become independent, and due to its tremendous mineral wealth, it is of great international interest. Also significant is the choice of Patrice Lumumba as tragic protagonist. He was a well-known advocate of African unity and was instrumental in obtaining the Belgian grant of independence for his country.

A brief background on the historical setting of the play will facilitate its comprehension. Lumumba was the leader of the Mouvement Nationaliste Congolais (MNC) which was the largest party with the broadest political base in the country. This in itself was no easy accomplishment because the Congo is beset by tribalism and any leader has this great stumbling block to overcome before being able to establish a power base. Tribal interests that supersede feelings of nationalism are a major threat to Congolese unity.

In January 1959, riots in Leopoldville stirred Belgium to action and in May 1960, at the Round Table Conference in
Brussels to which Lumumba was a delegate, she enacted the *Loi Fondamentale* thereby granting her colony independence. Kasavubu was named President and Lumumba Prime minister. On June 30, 1960, independence day, Lumumba delivered a strident speech attacking Belgian colonialism, but, reflecting his controversial and complex character, later that evening toasted to the Belgian King Baudouin's good health. An extremely complicated man, he is described by one historian: "Lumumba on independence day was a living symbol of the tragedy and torment that were about to overtake the new republic."\(^2\)

Whereas Lumumba was prepared to instate full and complete independence for his people, the Belgians expected little change. General Jansenens represented this attitude when he formulated his famous quotation: "Before independence=after independence."\(^3\)

The enmity reflected in Lumumba's independence speech proved to be a prologue to disaster; his brief ten-week reign was composed of crisis after crisis. Civil war broke out in the new country almost immediately and United Nations intervention was requested. On July 11, 1969, Tshombe organized and formally proclaimed separate independence for the mineral-rich Katanga province. Lumumba, violently opposed to this secession that gravely threatened Congolese unity, was overcome by enemies and his prime ministership was revoked. Mobutu took power on September 14, and Lumumba continued his fight for Congolese unity over a period of several months but was imprisoned in December at Camp Hardy
in Thysville. On January 17, 1961, he was handed over to his enemies in Katanga by Mobutu and was assassinated that same day.\(^4\)

Césaire follows the historical line rather closely and in fact the play resembles a *roman à clef* as Césaire only slightly changes many of the historical names. Colonel Mobutu in history is Mokutu in the play; Belgian King Baudouin is King Basilio; General Janssens is General Massens; President Kasavubu is Kala-Lubu; Tshombe is Tzumi; and Andrew Cordier, Hammarskjöld's temporary U.N. representative in the Congo, becomes Matthew Cordelier in the play. Pauline and Patrice Lumumba, Ralph Bunche, Dag Hammarskjöld, Okito, and M’polo all retain their historical names. This background of events is reflected rather faithfully by Césaire as he centers his play around the personage of Patrice Lumumba.

Critics have dealt with the play on various levels, and many note its similarity with the epic theatre proposed by Brecht.\(^5\) Judith Miller\(^6\), while discussing Jean-Marie Serreau, Césaire's director, points out that Serreau was the one who introduced Brecht to France in 1949. She also observes that Césaire partakes of the Brechtian idea of theatre tied to contemporary events and historic fact.

Georges Ngai\(^7\) also notes the Brechtian aspect of Césaire's drama, firstly due to its didactic intentions and secondly by its subject matter and staging techniques. The epic aspect is portrayed in Lumumba and Christophe who are symbols of the collective destiny of their people.
Alfred Cismaru\textsuperscript{8} and Graziano Benelli\textsuperscript{9} each note the Brechtian influence in Césaire’s dramatic works.

Rodney Harris\textsuperscript{10} does not fail to note this Brechtian side of Césaire’s play. Such techniques as stage set changes in view of the audience, signs, pictures coming from the rafters, and songs addressed to the spectators all recall the work of the German-born author. Césaire himself admits the influence and styles his theatre as, not individual, but epic.\textsuperscript{11} Harris, in his analysis of the play, points out similarities between Christophe and Lumumba: they are leaders of their people and face problems of decolonization. These two protagonists share problems arising with the emergence of a new nation.

Harris indicates the historical movement of the play by indicating that Act I is from November 1, 1959 to the end of July 1960; Act II is from August to October 1960; and Act III takes place up to Lumumba’s assassination in January 1961.

Lumumba’s intense idealism shows throughout the play and is, as Harris points out, undaunted by the succession of betrayals the leader undergoes. Ready to sacrifice all for peace and harmony in the Congo, his people do not always share his enthusiasm. Once again, as with Christophe, we see the solitary leader at odds with the people he is trying to help. Harris finally points out that \textit{Une Saison au Congo} is filled with political facts that tend to crowd out the poetry, with the exception of the third act. On the dramatic scale, Harris feels this play is less rich than Césaire’s first two.
Jean Decock\textsuperscript{12} states that with \textit{Une Saison au Congo}, Césaire begins with objective data and changes it into myth, symbolism, and timelessness. He feels that the title of the play is a Rimballdian borrowing and signifies the descent of Césaire and Lumumba into the heart of Africa. Decock examines both \textit{Une Saison au Congo} and \textit{La Tragédie du Roi Christophe} by questioning whether or not African theatre should be represented on the Western stage. He contends that Césaire's tragedies are ambiguous because they rely on the dubious identifications between a man and a race, and that Césaire's choice of the tragic form results from acculturation. Thus his plays are meant for Western audiences and indeed have primarily attracted intellectual Europeans. He feels that Césaire's tragedies, though portraying the defeat and death of the heroes, also serve as their apologies. Their deaths are a passage toward mythification. Decock concludes by stating his admiration for Césaire and his disappointment that Césaire's plays only attract white spectators. He feels that something more is needed for the development of an African theatre.

Jacques Chevrier\textsuperscript{13}, in a general study on African theatre, comments on the epic nature of Césaire's \textit{Une Saison au Congo} and says, "\textit{A travers cet homme [Patrice Lumumba], homme que sa stature même semble désigner pour le mythe, toute l'histoire d'un continent et d'une humanité se joue de manière exemplaire et symbolique.}"\textsuperscript{14}

Frédérique Dutoit\textsuperscript{15} denotes the theme of \textit{Une Saison au Congo} as the unification of the Congo and feels that Césaire's
choice of Lumumba "implique une condamnation sans appel du colonialisme." Dutoit compares Césaire's three tragic protagonists and views the Rebel in *Et les Chiens se taisaient* as a Christ-like redeemer figure sacrificed for the salvation of his community. Christophe, he feels, is the victim of an innate justice and is conquered by powerful ancestral forces. In all three plays, the theme of the solitary and misunderstood leader is present. Lumumba, however, is neither Don Quixote or Christ; *Une Saison au Congo* leaves mythology and enters the area of contemporary drama. Patrice is vanquished by pure and simple human injustice. He adds that, like the other two, Lumumba is the "bâtisseur de monde à venir." 

Robert P. Smith, Jr. extracts the vivid word picture of Lumumba in *Une Saison au Congo*. Smith parallels Patrice with the Rebel, Christophe and Caliban, describing him as a liberty fighter and a sacrificial victim for peace in Africa.

Bakary Traore describes Lumumba as the Socrates of our time because his condemnation to death will remain an eternal weight on the Occidental conscience. He adds, "... comme l'échec de Socrate, l'échec de Lumumba est temporel mais temporaire."

Michel Benamou analyzes the imagery in *Une Saison au Congo* and finds it to be much less rich and dense than in the two previous plays. The chief symbolism throughout the play centers around animals, especially birds. Benamou points out the cultural significance of this fact since game birds have been virtually exterminated in Martinique but
carry deep political meaning to an African audience. Lumumba is compared often to birds: the sparrow-hawk (symbolizes his courage and vulnerability), the crowned crane (symbol of his eloquence), the sacred ibis (symbol of beauty) and the magpie (symbol of agitation). The whole tragedy, Benamou contends, is set in the language of the hunt. Lumumba, the flighty idealist is represented by a bird and contrasts strikingly to the slow turtle-like Kala. M'siri, who eventually murders Lumumba, is a hyena; the Belgians a wounded water buffalo, and Sissoko, another of Lumumba's enemies, a black rail. Lumumba the idealist, flies to and fro but never establishes a firm base. Benamou concludes with a quote from the play itself which evokes African disunity and comments well on the imagery:

Africans, this is the tragic thing! The hunter finds out the crowned crane in the treetop. Fortunately, the turtle has seen him. The crane is saved, you say? And, in fact, the turtle warns the big leaf, which is to tell the vine, which is to tell the bird! Result: the hunter kills the bird, takes the big leaf to wrap it, cuts the vine to tie it, bags the turtle in addition. Africans, my brothers, when will you understand?

Barthélemy Kotchy begins his analysis of Une Saison au Congo by discussing the significance of the title. He agrees with Jean Decock on the Rimbaudian reminiscence of the title, but he attributes further meaning to it as well. He describes Lumumba's season, his brief reign from June-September, as a transitory experience. It also signifies, according to Kotchy an evocation of the natural elements
lending meteorological and cosmic tones to the play: the sun barely rises over the Congo before the rain begins.

All of these suggestions as to the title's significance seem valid, but in the context of this thesis, another interpretation presents itself. The seasonal ritual, of which bare remnants remain in the play, is recalled in the title itself. Lumumba's period of leadership in the Congo, his sacrifice for the country, is all done in the space of a season and is perhaps a modern rendering of the ancient ritual.

Kotchy points out Césaire's skillful use of both modern and traditional elements in the play. For instance, Lumumba has a nightmare in which he foresees his ultimate defeat by his friends who are to betray him. Immediately upon awakening, he turns on the radio only to hear that the Congolese president has deposed Prime Minister Lumumba. Thus the traditional dream prophecy is juxtaposed with the modern radiophonic device as a means of information.

Kotchy remarks that the play ends with the termination of one reign (that of Lumumba) and the beginning of another (that of Mokutu). He sees Lumumba as a sacrificial victim for his country and he briefly analyzes this theme using the theories of René Girard in *La Violence et le sacré.*25 His ideas in this regard will be taken up later as they correspond with my own analysis of the rebirth element.

*Une Saison au Congo* is different from Césaire's first two tragedies and shows the Martinican's progressive tendency toward less imagery and more clarity with added emphasis on
political messages. Nonetheless the mythic element remains in the context of the myth and ritual pattern. The play is a thoroughly modern political saga depicting a government in crisis that has been unfortunately typical of twentieth-century Third-world politics. Allusions to current events are rife throughout and some degree of international awareness is helpful, if not necessary, for an intelligible reading of the play. In the first two tragedies discussed, political and historical knowledge enhanced the reading; in Une Saison au Congo, it is fairly necessary. Geoffrey Brereton comments on the political aspect of modern tragedy by excluding its religious emphasis:

The failure in the tragic hero and/or his acts and/or their pre-conditions can be transferred to quite a different [i.e. non-religious] context with no essential change. The "law" which is misunderstood or transgressed may be political, social, or psychological. The nation or community may replace the "god", and rejection by it will replace the damnation of the theologians.26

In Une Saison au Congo, the context is political but religious at the same time. I cannot agree with Mr. Brereton that a political context precludes a religious one and as with Une Saison au Congo, the politico-historical framework does no more than clothe the ancient ritual in modern trappings. The myth structure remains.

In overall tone, the play is less reminiscent of a seasonal ritual and thus different from Et les Chiens se taisaient. The play's imagery centers around animal, not vegetal, symbols and in fact the imagery is rather sparse. Nonetheless there are various references throughout the play
recalling nature cycles and at the end Lumumba is identified with vegetal growth.

The idea of a seasonal ritual is, besides its allusion in the title, denoted at various times in the play. Le joueur de sanza, who represents the voice of the people, lays out the timely affair as follows: "Vienne le temps des pluies, / Viendra aussi la guerre, / Le temps du sang rouge / Est le temps que j'annonce, /

.................................

Le temps que j'annonce est le temps du sang rouge, / La liberté est pour demain." (p. 18) Thus we see the people prepared to undergo the problems of bad weather and war ("le temps du sang rouge" and "Le temps des pluies") as preparation for a brighter tomorrow ("La liberté est pour demain"). The need for a sacrifice is presented in order to put an end to the blight on the land and insure a fertile future.

One allusion to the new world of independence is couched in terms of the seasonal solstice. Lumumba, in his fiery independence speech, refers often to the Congo as a newborn babe, a newly founded nation. He speaks of a new time, a new season when he invites his audience "... procédons de mon unanime pas jubilant/dans le temps neuf! Dans le solstice!" (p. 29) In another passage Lumumba compares the Congo to "une graine en terre," (p. 35) and later he remarks to his friend that "C'est la saison des pluies qui commence! Un peu tôt n'est-ce pas?" (p. 40) Thus there occurs a scattering of seasonal references throughout the play.
Allusions to decay heighten the troubled political context of the Congo. A soldier from Ghana refers to the nation as "ce Congo de merde," and Lumumba describes the nation as "une chèvre entre les dents du fauve!" Perhaps the "chèvre" is another reference to the "bouc émissaire" that must be sacrificed to restore peace. At one point Lumumba, fatigued by the overwhelming task he faces, sings a Swahili song in which life is described as a rotting tree: "T'appuierais-tu/même du doigt/sur un arbre qui pourrit?/arbre pourrissant, la vie!/même du doigt/ne t'y appuie!" (p. 73)

Much of the imagery in the play is iterated by the *joueur de sanza* and he often comments on the developments of the plot with stories or images centered around nature, usually animals. He exudes a wisdom that could be described as "street sense" because while other characters seem to get swept one way or the other by exterior events, the *joueur de sanza* reflects objectively on the matter at hand.

When Lumumba is killed, he identifies himself with nature and the earth and thus draws himself closer to the people he represents. Lumumba has a far closer relationship with his people than either Christophe or the Rebel. He frequents the bars and parties where his people gather and continuously notes their importance. At times however his own idealism puts him at odds with the pragmatic Congolese as he tries to transcend time and events to achieve super-human tasks, and his catalytic presence serves to alienate
him from his people. Trying throughout his life to rush beyond natural forces, at his death he describes his body as one with nature. Thus he establishes a line of contact between himself and the joueur de sanza or people, who have been identified with nature all along. The moment of his death proves to be the closest contact he makes between the earth and his people.

One rather interesting theme that recurs in the play is the motif of beer. The play opens with the bonimenteur praising the liquid substance as one of the good things brought to the Congo by the colonialists. In fact, he points out that beer is the symbol of Congolese liberty because:

_on ne peut pas se réunir, sans que ça termine en prison._ Meeting, prison! Ecrire, prison! Quitter le pays? Prison! ... Depuis un quart d'heure, je vous harangue et leurs flics me laissent faire ... Et je parcours le pays de Stanleyville au Katanga, et leurs flics me laissent faire! Motif: Je vends de la bière et je place de la bière! Si bien que l'on peut affirmer que le bock de bière est désormais le symbole de notre droit congolais et de nos libertés congolais. (p. 11)

Patrice Lumumba was in fact permitted free movement at first because he sold beer and the minister of the Congo owned the Polar beer concession.27 So the Belgian government gives few civil liberties to the Congolese but drinking beer together is one of them.

Rodney Harris28 provides some interesting background on the beer situation. He explains that a rival brand of beer, Primus, had started the rumor that Polar beer caused impotence. Lumumba was chosen by Polar to be their sales
representative precisely because he had the confidence and popularity of the Congolese people. He points out that the beer rivalry doubles as the political rivalry since Prime Minister Lumumba drinks Polar and President Kala-Lubu drinks Primus.

Césaire's use of the beer motif is not fictional as it is based on historical fact; yet it is interesting that he emphasizes it like he does. In Act II, when Lumumba is on the phone to one of his aides in Stanleyville, he hurriedly gives instructions, one of which is "n'oublie pas de commander de la bière! ... des tonnes de bière! ... Oui, de la bière pour toute la population!" (p. 55) Early in Act III, Lumumba is in prison and trying to rally the Congolese soldiers to his cause so they will aid his escape. He stirs them with his words and by giving them all lots of beer. They do of course facilitate his escape. Thus beer is used by Lumumba in the same way as his rhetoric—as a means of persuasion over others. Without undue emphasis, it might be noted that beer is made from various grains (barley, hops) and that Lumumba as a beer distributor could be seen as distributing grain across the Congo thus lending an added touch to his role as bounty giver.

In the play, vestiges of the myth and ritual pattern are present and are those same five elements which Weisinger describes as making up the structure of tragedy. They are the indispensable role of the divine king, the combat, suffering and death of the hero followed by a resurrection. The first of the five elements retained in Une Saison au
Congo is the indispensable role of the divine king. Unlike the first two tragedies, Patrice Lumumba does not carry the official title of king but rather that of Prime Minister. The plot centers around rivalry for power in the government, which is akin to the more traditional theme of rivalry for the throne (eg. Macbeth, Britannicus, etc.), and Prime Minister Lumumba is pitted against President Kala-Lubu and Mokutu, head of the army.

Lumumba is not king but is undisputedly the leader of his people. His power is political and popular and he holds a sort of magnetic sway over the masses. Many references serve to indicate that Lumumba represents the people, who have issued him a mandate. Early in the play the joueur de sanza, symbol of the people, asks for a leader in much the same way the chorus asked for the Rebel.29 He says,

Nous sommes les enfants orphelins,
Nuit noire, après est le chemin,
Dieu puissant, où trouver le soutien?
Père Congo, qui nous tendra la main?

Thus issuing an appeal for help, the Congolese articulate their need for a leader. The words are uttered in the midst of a discussion about the whereabouts and safety of Lumumba. The joueur de sanza's appeal is answered by the group's decision to extricate Lumumba from jail and restore his political power. Lumumba, it seems, will respond to the people's need. Patrice is established as Prime Minister and runs into many troubles, both from within the Congo and without. The President Kala, while musing on how to usurp the prime minister's power, laments the latter's force and
popularity. "Patrice est intelligent, actif, populaire. Oui ça! Il est populaire! On a beau le calomnier, il est populaire! Et c'est une force ça, la popularité!" (p. 70)

Pauline Lumumba, wife of Patrice, urges him to guard against his enemies that seem to be closing in on them. Lumumba’s response is filled with confidence as he flouts his popular mandate: "Pourquoi avoir peur? C'est vrai j'ai des ennemis ... mais le peuple est pour moi, c'est le peuple: ma sauvegarde." (p. 71) When he speaks to the people, his charisma is all-enveloping and he rallies them to his cause. While in prison Lumumba stirs the soldiers by proclaiming he is their "chef légitime" (p. 90) and inciting them to work for the unity of an independent Congo. One soldier, excited by his words, says: "Vive Lumumba! Celui-ci, quand il parle, c'est la grue couronnée qui passe." (p. 90) and they all cry out together "Tu peux compter sur nous! Tu es notre chef!" (p. 91) Lumumba so fully has the confidence of the people that at one point they offer their prime minister the leopard skin, symbol of royalty, and ask him to be their king. The people tell him "Tu as invité les journalistes, qu'ils viennent, on veut bien, mais il faut qu'ils sachent que tu es notre roi! notre roi légitime! Revêts la peau de léopard!" (p. 93) This acknowledgment of kinglyness by his subjects places Lumumba in the royal category; however, he refuses to accept the leopard skin. His totem is the sacred ibis, and it is that sign with which he prefers to enter the new era: "Pour entrer aux temps neufs, de l'ibis la remige mordorée!" (p. 93) He is also offered the clerical
stole which he likewise refuses. Thus the Congolese people ascribe to him the dual function of royalty (the leopard skin) and priestliness (clerical vestments); Lumumba is considered the divine king. When he refuses these two symbols, the *joueur de sanza* says, "Tu as raison! Chefs et rois, ils nous ont tous trahis! tu vaux mieux qu'eux. Tu es notre guide inspiré, notre messie! Rendons gloire à Dieu, mes enfants, Simon Kimbangu is de nouveau parmi nous!" (p. 94) His divinity established, the refrain of "Père Congo, qui nous tendra la main?" (p. 94) is re-echoed further linking Lumumba with the role of royal savior. It is the people that bestow titles on Patrice. He tells the journalist, who questions the legality of his office:

> Je suis le Premier ministre de la République du Congo, investi de la confiance populaire ... et si je suis libre aujourd'hui, à l'abri des entreprises de mes ennemis, c'est grâce à l'action efficace du peuple congolais. C'est donc en toute légitimité et de plein droit que je parle au nom du Congo! (p. 97)

His enemies too must admit of his ties with the people for, when debating his eventual assassination, Mokutu hesitates: "Le peuple est très attaché à Lumumba." (p. 103)

Lumumba is leader of his people and accepted by them. His role as prime minister establishes his power position, and when Kala-Lubu dismisses him, his power remains untouched. Lumumba is deposed as prime minister in Act II, scene 8; yet almost all the references to his popular confidence, and the people's offer of kingship to him, occur after his dismissal. Thus in the eyes of the Congolese community, Lumumba was and remains their king and leader.
Lumumba's welfare and that of the nation are not as notably intertwined as with Christophe and the Rebel. He is indubitably representative of his people and nation, and several references equate the man Lumumba with the country the Congo. Early in the play, some of Patrice's friends are discussing how to save him from prison. During the discussion, one man remarks: "N'empêche que nous ne travaillons pas pour le sort d'un homme, mais pour le sort d'un pays!" (p. 16) Another quickly retorts: "Camarade, tu ne t'es jamais demandé ce qui arriverait si le sort d'un homme et le sort d'un pays se confondaient, non?" (p. 16)

One passage in the play recalls a scene from Ét les Chiens se taisaient in which the Rebel describes his body as parts of the country. In Une Saison au Congo Lumumba shows the palm of his hand in which is engraved the map of Africa: "Tiens, regarde là! pas besoin de carte épinglée au mur. Elle est gravée sur la paume de mes mains." (p. 80)

He describes it as such:

Ici, la Rhodésie du Nord, son coeur le Copper belt, ... terre silencieux, sauf de temps en temps, un juron de contre-maître, un aboi de chien policier, ... c'est un nègre qu'on abat, ... Regarde à côté, la Rhodésie du Sud, je veux dire des millions de nègres spoliés, dépossédés, parqués dans les townships. ... Là, l'Angola! principale exportation: ni le sucre ni le café, mais des esclaves! ... (p. 81)

Comparison of the two passages reflects the differences in the two plays. Symbolically, both tie the hero with the country, equate the two, and portray them as one in the same. Yet in the first play, the poetry is rich and lush
while in the second, it is starkly realistic—a diatribe against the miseries of Africa.

In another passage a pun seems apparent between Patrie and Patrice, thus equating the two. Though we have Mrs. Lumumba to thank for the name Patrice, we have Césaire to thank for its artistic manipulation. By dropping only one letter from Patrice, one has Patrie, and Césaire makes use of this fortuitous event. When Mokutu effects a coup d'état, Patrice is out of power and he feels the Congo, too, is finished. He says, "Le jour où n'importe quel traineur de sabre, n'importe quel porteur de galons, n'importe quel manieur de stick se croira le droit de faire main basse sur le pouvoir, ce jour-là, c'en sera fait de la Patrie." (italics mine) (p. 80) Césaire's capitalization of the P in Patrie (at other times in the play patrie is written with a small p) serves to emphasize the pun between the country and the prime minister, but above all links the two together.

Another reference blending the two comes from Lumumba's mouth when he states his union with the Congo: "Au-dessus, je regarde l'Afrique, et au-dedans, mêlé à un sourd timbre de gong de mon sang, le Congo." (p. 95) The Congo flows in his blood; he is it and it, him, and his blood will eventually serve as the sacrifice to perpetuate his country.

Another aspect of Lumumba's role as leader and chief of his people is provided for in the framework of the Bantu philosophy. Several important critics have described Lumumba as exemplary of Bantu philosophy. Traore says: "Lumumba incarne la philosophie bantoue, la philosophie de la force
vitale, du rapport interne avec les êtres. Aussi est-il entièrement parole et profusion de parole où tout se mêle et se transfigure."33 Benamou34 describes the same when he comments that Lumumba's force is through his words. Césaire himself establishes Lumumba as representative of the Bantu spirit. He describes Lumumba as "l'homme d'Afrique, le muntu, à la fois l'homme qui participe à la force vitale (le ngolo) et l'homme du verbe (le nommo)."35

A very brief description of the Bantu ethos will help demonstrate Lumumba's manifestation of this philosophy. R.P. Tempels36, a Belgian monk, was one of the first to attempt a codification of Bantu philosophy and his book, written in 1948, is still considered a valid authority. Most of his research stemmed from talks with members of the Baluba tribe, located in the Congo and part of Lumumba's country. Tempels contends that the Bantu conception of life centers around a single value which is "la force vitale"37 or vital, life force and energy. All their customs reside on the theory of the intimate nature of beings, and any changes or events reflect an increase or decrease in life force. The supreme being, God, is the life force incarnate, force itself, and from him flows force to all men, or muntu. Tempels says, "... pour le Bantou l'être est la chose qui est force."38

A complex hierarchy reflects the interdependence and interaction of all things and all beings; God is at the head and controls the life force of all men, alive or dead, and the patriarchal forefathers are just below God in the chain of life forces. Under them are deceased ancestors, then living
men and finally animals and objects. Muntu is the vital force; he is the supreme and superior force. God maintains man and man maintains all that falls below him in the hierarchy.

Tempels then describes the concept of chieftain in the Bantu system: "Le vrai chef est donc, suivant la conception originelle et suivant l'organisation politique des peuples claniques, le père, le maître, le roi: il est la source de la vie intense; il est comme Dieu lui-même." He continues his description of a chief as follows:

Par l'investiture on devient et on est "mfumu", [chef] on est force vitale nouvelle, supérieure, susceptible de renforcer et de maintenir tout ce qui tombe ontologiquement sous sa hiérarchie. On devient chef de clan et patriarche, non pas résiduellement, par le décès des autres anciens qui avaient présence et parce qu'on demeure le plus âgé des survivants du clan, mais par un accroissement interne de la puissance vitale, élevant le "muntu" du patriarche à l'échelon d'intermédiaire et canal des forces, entre les ancêtres d'une part, et la descendance avec son patrimoine d'autre part.

What has all of this to do with Prime Minister Lumumba? Simply that throughout the play his force is ever present and, in the context of Bantu philosophy, his claim to chief and leader derives from the force he exudes and uses to control his people. For example, when the owners of Polar beer had to combat the impotence rumor launched by Primus, they needed one of the most forceful men in the community, one whose potency was beyond doubt. They chose Patrice Lumumba. His rival Kala describes him as "une flamme qui court," (p. 69) and remarks "Il allume, il met le feu!" (p. 69)
Lumumba is a man of action and those around him cannot escape his presence. Kala gives a somewhat humorous anecdote to describe Patrice's uncanny sway over others. "Si Lumumba entrait dans une réunion d'hommes politiques congolais, un plateau à la main, comme garçon de café, il en sortirait président du Conseil!" (p. 70) Finally Lumumba himself, in a confrontation with his enemy M'siri says, "Nous sommes deux forces! les deux forces! Tu es l'invention du passé, et je suis un inventeur du futur!" (p. 109)

The Bantu concept of interdependence between things and beings is depicted in the fable of the hunter and the bird already cited by Benamou above\textsuperscript{41}, and also in a statement by Lumumba to his friends. He says, "Merci, brave chanteur! De dix coches, tu eusses, s'il en était besoin, remonté mon courage et gonflé ma force à défier tout entier le monde!" (p. 93) Thus Lumumba acknowledges the force he derives from the people, as well as the force he gives to them.

In speaking of this vital force, this life principle (ngolo) as radiated by Lumumba, the question arises as to how he is able to manipulate and control. By what means does he wield this power? According to Tempels this vital force influence is especially manifest through the word or Nommo. "La parole et le geste de l'homme vivant sont considérés, plus que toute autre manifestation, comme l'expression formelle, comme le signe de son influence vitale."\textsuperscript{42} Jahnheinz Jahn discusses this Nommo power in his book, Muntu, wherein
he describes the African philosophical systems. He says, "The hierarchy of the Bantu is ordered according to the force of each one's word."43 It is through the Nommo that man establishes power over things. He explains the importance of the word by pointing out that a child is not a muntu (being) but a kintu (object) until he has a name bestowed on him. Nothing is effective without Nommo. "Nommo is the concrete entity through which the abstract principle magara [life] is realized."44

There is little question throughout the play that Lumumba's power lies in his oratorical skills. Césaire honors historic veracity by depicting the prime minister as a brilliant speech-maker. He had the ability to electrify his audience, and his rise to power was based largely on his rhetorical talents. He is established as an artisan of words when in jail he is found writing poetry (p. 19); the prime minister is also a poet. He gives many fiery speeches throughout the play, one on Independence day, June 30, 1960. The power of the words ring through as he uses the rhetorical device of repetition centered around the word "Kongo."

Another fiery speech was delivered before the Parliament. Walking into a room of disgruntled and angry Senators due to the post-independence turn of events, Lumumba buoyed their spirits and procures their commitments to work for the unity of the Congo. He finishes with "Mon frère, chose qui t'appartient/en main tu la tiens/qu'un autre veuille te l'arracher/Accepteras-tu/?Vous savez la réponse? Kizola Ko! Je n'accepte pas!" (p. 44) After this the deputies arise
and shout "Kizola Ko! Je n'accepte pas! Nous n'accepterons pas!" (p. 44) The prison scene already cited finishes in much the same way: Lumumba incites the soldiers, rallies them to his side, and they help him escape.

Just after he has refused the kingship, he acknowledges his source of power as he tells the people:

Je n'ai pour arme que ma parole, je parle, et j'éveille, je ne suis pas un redresseur de torts, pas un faiseur de miracles, je suis un redresseur de vie, je parle, et je rends l'Afrique à elle-même! Je parle, et je rends l'Afrique au monde! Je parle, et, attaquant à leur base, oppression et servitude, je rends possible, pour la première fois possible, la fraternité! (p. 94)

The use of the parallel structure with "je parle" (again a rhetorical device) emphasizes all the more his powers of speech. Lumumba may have only his word as a weapon, but what a mighty weapon it is.

Thus armed for the fight, we enter the second element in the pattern, the combat. This element is an important one in Une Saison au Congo and takes on many guises. First and foremost, it provides the substance and matter of the plot. Political intrigue, from a variety of angles, fills every page of the play. The enemies, or warring elements, are as follows: 1) Lumumba against Belgian government (pre-independence colonialism and post-independence neo-colonialist encroachment in Congolese affairs); 2) Lumumba against President Kala-Lubu, who deposes the Prime Minister; 3) Lumumba against Mokutu, military figure who effects a coup d'état and wrests government from both Lumumba and Kala-Lubu;
4) Lumumba against Tzumi’s government in Katanga; 5) Lumumba against the U.N.; and 6) Lumumba against himself, his own impetuous nature. All these factions are seen revolving around the central figure, Lumumba, and serve to keep him flying from one trouble spot to the other, while never really clearing one matter before going on to the next. All of these different enemies can be subsumed under the general heading of Lumumba’s fight to save independence. It is personified in the play as Dipenda and represents the target of Lumumba’s battle. From this battle to safeguard dipenda is emanated the various intrigues described above.

The Belgian government is actually one of Lumumba’s lesser adversaries. Independence is granted within the first few scenes of the play, thus ending the main fight with this European government; indirect conflict occurs between the two only when Belgian troops are sent to reinforce Katanga’s secessionist movement, vehemently opposed by Lumumba. Relations between Belgians and Congolese were strained during Lumumba’s reign, causing many Europeans to flee the Congo for their own personal safety.

Césaire directs his keen sense of satire against European interests in a manner that recalls le grand Promoteur of Et les Chiens se taisaient. In one scene depicting the Round Table Conference in Brussels, four European bankers are described as such: “Va-et-vient de 4 ou 5 hommes déguisés en banquiers de caricature: habit, haut-de-forme, gros cigare.” (p. 21) Their dialogue centers of course around their own interests in the Congo and they agree to independence as the
best means of retaining these interests. Their language is prosaic and the rhythm of their speeches is stilted and jerky. They represent the stereotype of the cold, calculating businessman devoid of any humanistic attributes.

Another satirical element appears in the form of *L'Ambassadeur Grand Occidental* who presents the White Man's Burden theory of the civilizing mission of the West. While the joyful Congolese celebrate their independence, *L'Ambassadeur Grand Occidental* takes the forefront and says:

> Quand les peuples ne se conduisent pas en peuple décemil, il faut que quelqu'un les ramène à la décence. C'est à nous que la Providence a confié cette tâche. Seigneur, merci! ... Et puis, vous avez entendu, comme dans l'avion, il [Lumumba] a crié: "A Moscou! A Moscou!" Eh bien, qu'on le sache, on n'est pas seulement les gendarmes, on est aussi les pompiers du monde! Les pompiers préposés à circonscrire partout le feu allumé par la pyromanie communiste! Je dis "partout"! Au Congo, comme ailleurs! A bon entendeur, salut! (p. 47)

Throughout the play, when a Congolese is suspected of betraying the African cause for unity, he is called a "flamand". Césaire then plays on Western stereotypes to emphasize and enhance Lumumba's position.

Lumumba's bout with internal, civil strife in his country is by far a more dangerous enemy than that manifested by the Belgians. He fights this enemy on many fronts and just can't seem to control the resulting chaos. Both Colonel Mokutu and President Kala are assumed by Lumumba to be his true and loyal friends, and indeed they are but only up to a certain point. Mokutu, in the first scene of the play, helps plot a way to get Patrice out of jail and to the Round Table Con-
ference in Brussels. However, as Lumumba proceeds to govern in a rather helter-skelter way, these two former friends desert him and seek to establish their own power bases. President Kala is leery of Patrice's impetuosity: "Nos ancêtres avaient raison, le vrai chef ne s'agite pas. Il est. Il demeure. Il se concentre." (p. 69) He is also a little jealous of his popularity: "Ne font-ils pas courir le bruit que Patrice me mène par le bout du nez! ... C'est stupide. Un président est le chef. C'est le roi: ... On a beau le calomnier, il est populaire." (p. 70) He then decides to dismiss Lumumba and take over the government himself. Patrice responds by dismissing the president and continues to see himself as the legitimate head of the Congolese government. Meanwhile, as Kala and Lumumba exchange dismissals, Colonel Mokutu effects a coup d'état, dismisses them both, and puts himself at the head of the government. He explains: "Rien de plus simple. Le président de la République démet le Premier ministre. Le Premier ministre riposte en démettant le président de la République. Moi, je les démets tous les deux! J'écarte les politiciens!" (p. 79)

A bit of tragic irony creeps into the play just before Lumumba hears news of his dismissal. The spectator is privy to Kala's impending actions against Lumumba when the former is in the process of writing his dismissal speech (Act II, scene 7). In the following scene Lumumba brushes off his wife's fears for his safety by assuring her of Kala's and Mokutu's loyalty to him. The spectator, aware of Kala's
treachery, watches the naive Lumumba explain that he has nothing to fear:

D'ailleurs il [Mokutu] ne peut rien contre moi, ... tant que Kala et moi nous serons unis, et nous sommes unis!

................................................
Je te le répète: Jamais l'unité de vues n'a été plus complète entre Kala et moi ...
(pp. 72-73)

In the very same scene, only a few lines later in the play, Lumumba hears over the radio that Kala has deposed him. Several scenes later, Mokutu is in power, and earlier in the play Lumumba says: "Mokutu est mon frère. Je sais que Mokutu ne me trahira jamais." (p. 37)

This triangular power struggle constitutes the substance of the plot line. The other two external adversaries, Tzumbi and the U.N., are not as visible. Tzumbi's government secedes from the Congo on July 11, only 11 days after Lumumba comes to power, and poses the largest threat to Congolese unity faced by the Prime Minister. Tzumbi, reinforced by Belgian forces, refuses to let Lumumba's airplane land in Elizabethville so he can continue his mission for African unity, and at the end of the play, Mokutu and Tzumbi together plot Lumumba's death.

The U.N., at first the object of all Lumumba's hopes, soon becomes his enemy because he feels they act too slowly. He has harsh words with Dag Hammarskjöld and Ralph Bunche, both representatives of the U.N. When he travels to Ghana in order to get on the radio and repudiate his dismissal, he is denied air time due to U.N. intervention.
So we see Lumumba trusting first in his friends, Mokutu and Kala, and later in the U. N. and being disappointed by both. His combat with all these factions requires superhuman activity and in the end, Lumumba's biggest enemy turns out to be himself.

Césaire represented the real-life Lumumba's personality quite scrupulously in the play, and so it seems fair to take a brief historical look at the prime minister's character in an attempt to obtain added insight regarding this personage. In a foreward to Lumumba's book Congo My Country, his close friend Colin Legum describes the prime minister in his later days as ruthless, impatient, and emotionally unstable. Legum tells us that he seldom slept, was in a perpetual state of frenzy and was rude to almost everyone. His failure was partly due to the disasters engulfing the Congo but also, according to Legum, due to Lumumba's idealism and his blind confidence in himself.

This description of Lumumba is one which the reader of Césaire's play would likely deduce independent of historical research. Lumumba is shown to be tempestuous, rash, and impetuous. He flies to and fro, stirring people up, setting verbal fires, but never landing to survey the situation from ground level. His speech on independence day in front of the Belgian king Basilio, historically scandalous, was a rude affront to the Belgian government. His explanation was simple: "... es-tu de ceux qui croient que le ciel va s'effondrer parce qu'un nègre a osé, à la face du monde, engueuler un roi? ... Tu as tort de n'être pas d'accord. Il
y avait un tabou à lever. Je l'ai levé!" (p. 30) Right or wrong, Lumumba's speech was an attack and started things in a less-than-auspicious manner. His lifting of the taboo was perhaps a necessity but such an act carries tremendous responsibilities. The more conciliatory Mokutu's reaction to the speech is mirrored in his advice to Lumumba: "... l'on ne doit pas attaquer une bête [Belgium is referred to as a 'buffe' in the play], si l'on n'est pas sûr de la tuer." (p. 30) Lumumba, it seems, attacks often without being able to kill. He hastily brushes off Ralph Bunche, U.N. under-secretary for Special Political Affairs, (Act II, scene 2) and he is openly rude and nonchalant to Mokutu when the latter offers him a final chance to avoid prison (Act III, scene 2).

He sees himself as a superman invulnerable to everyone and everything. He completely ignores his wife's pleas for him to be more prudent about his own safekeeping. Rodney Harris comments that rejecting his wife's sage advice to join his friends in safety shows his total loss of contact with reality as well as his overblown sense of pride.\(^{49}\) Lumumba, much like Christophe, wants to control time and destiny; impatient to let things happen naturally, he tries to supersede forces beyond his control. He refers to his aides and fellow officials as a "bande de limaçons" and explains to them: "... il faut aller vite, il faut aller trop vite. Savez-vous combien j'ai de temps pour remonter cinquante ans d'histoire? trois mois, messieurs! Et vous croyez que j'ai le temps de ne pas aller trop vite?" (p. 34)
He emphasizes his impatience with nature when he says "Une graine en terre aujourd'hui, et demain un buisson, que dis-je, une forêt!" (p. 35) His growth schedule from seed to forest in a day is a bit accelerated. When Kala explains to him, "C'est doucement que la banane mûrit. Et doucement qu'il va au marigot, le ver de la terre!" (p. 99), he responds furiously, "Je hais le temps! Je déteste vos 'doucement'!" (p. 99)

Hammarskjöld too tries to calm Lumumba. He says: "Monsieur Lumumba, il y a une chose que j'ai apprise très tôt: c'est à dire oui au Destin, quel qu'il soit." (p. 63) Kala too warns him, after Lumumba impudently rejects their offers of compromise: "Je vous apporte la vie! la vie sauve! Ne tentez pas le destin!" (p. 100) Lumumba however does not listen.

Lumumba, a contradictory and controversial figure, is portrayed as such in the play. For instance, he admonishes a strictly pacifist policy and claims his motto to be "Tel l'eunuque qui voudrait déflo- rer une jeune fille, tel celui qui prétend rendre la justice par la violence." (p. 98) He adds "Si je dois mourir, que ce soit comme Gandhi." (p. 98) These are strong words coming from a man who ordered a brutal massacre on the Baluba people to prevent their secession (Act II, scene 4) and who ordered a man arrested and his newspaper confiscated for printing unfavorable articles regarding the prime minister (Act II, scene 2).

Lumumba, despite his shortcomings, is certainly single-minded of purpose. His fight is against all that threatens
to disunify his country and he never gives up. He notes that his fight against colonialism is one begun by the ancestors of his native tribe, the Mutetela, many years ago, and he is proud to carry on his tribal tradition. He explains to his wife Pauline that he hopes to pass on this fighting spirit, even when he is gone. "Si je disparais, je laisse aux enfants une grande lutte en héritage, tu les aideras, les guideras, les armeras. Mais non! Je la continueraï encore, la lutte! Moi-même, et longtemps! et la mènerai à bien!" (p. 96) Brave words spoken by a courageous man, yet Lumumba's enemies prove too many and too strong.

Lumumba's suffering and death (elements 3 and 4 of the pattern) come at the hands of his political enemies, Mokutu and Tzumbi. Lumumba, rejecting escape offers by his friends and also a compromise office in Mokutu's government, writes his own death warrant. When offered a deal by Kala and Mokutu, he says "Vous êtes venu ici chercher une consécration, celle d'une légitimité. Eh bien au nom du Congo, je vous la refuse!" (p. 101) Mokutu accepts his answer ("Tant pis pour vous, monsieur Lumumba, c'est votre pluie, vous l'avez commandée, elle vous mouillera jusqu'au bout!" [p. 101]) and orders him imprisoned.

His death is placed in the context of a sacrifice. Mokutu, in a discussion with Tzumbi's men regarding the fate of Lumumba, tries to convince them to only incarcerate, instead of kill, the ex-Prime Minister. They refuse any solution short of his death and Mokutu, recalling Pilate before Jesus.
says "Adieu! je m'en lave les mains." (p. 104) Another far clearer reference linking Lumumba with the sacrificial Christ comes from Dag Hammarskjöld who, on hearing of Lumumba's deliverance to his enemies, finds he has been misled by his fellow U.N. members regarding the Congolese situation. Thus he feels an ashamed, though unknowing, accomplice to Patrice's assassination. His cohort Cordelier comments coldly on the murder by stating that "... la question Lumumba me paraît réglée à tout jamais." (p. 105) and defending his emotionless attitude says "L'O.N.U. est une organisation, non, un organisme qui supporte très mal ce corps étranger qui s'appelle la sentimentalité." (p. 106) Hammarskjöld, shocked at this attitude retorts "... je vous demande, ... de quel côté vous auriez été, ... il y a mille neuf cent soixante et une années, lorsqu'on arrêta et mit à mort, en Judée, sous l'occupation romaine, un de vos contemporains, un certain Jésus? Allons! Retirez-vous! Assassin du Christ!" (p. 107) Thus Lumumba is clearly linked to Christ, perfect example of the dying/rising god.

Various passages in the play hint at the idea of rebirth surrounding Lumumba. He associates himself, and is a firm believer in, the future. He recognizes the problems and miseries faced by Africa but he feels strong and confident that this is a temporary situation.

... la voilà, notre Afrique! Terrassée, ligotée, piétinée, ... Elle souffre, mais elle espère: ... Elle espère, pourquoi pas? Il y a eu le Grana, la Guinée, le Sénégal, le Mali et j'en passe ... Dahomey! Cameroun! ... Avant-
hier, le Togo! Hier, le Congo! Alors
la prisonnière Afrique se dit: "Demain,
c'est mon tour! et demain n'est pas
loin!" (pp. 81-82)

He styles himself "un redresseur de vie" and "un inventeur
du futur!", and he tells a friend: "... ils peuvent nous
détruire, pas nous vaincre!" (p. 87) This is a man surely
convinced of final victory and willing to accept temporary
defeat to achieve it. Lending to his powers beyond the
grave, Mokutu describes Lumumba: "Mort, il sera plus
reductible encore. Dans votre esprit, c'est un démon. Mort,
ce sera un dieu!" (p. 104)

The death scene marks the preparation for a future
rebirth. M'siri, who soon will push a bayonet through
Lumumba's heart, questions him regarding legends of invul-
nerability attributed to Patrice. Lumumba answers: "M'siri,
c'est une idée invulnérable que j'incarne, en effet:
Invincible, comme l'espérance d'un peuple, comme le feu de
brousse en brousse, comme le pollen de vent en vent, comme
la racine dans l'aveugle terreau." (p. 109) Here Lumumba
equates himself with the hope of his people, an undying hope
likened to the brush fires that spread from bush to bush and
the pollen, constantly scattered in the wind. The imagery
here suddenly centers around growth and vegetation. Pollen,
a perfect symbol for the cycle of life renewal, is referred
to as well as "terreau" which, as compost, serves to fer-
tilize plants. Despite a relative lack of vegetal imagery
throughout, it is predominant in the death scene. M'siri,
unconvinced of Lumumba's invincibility, uses the image of
the "terreau" against Lumumba and says, as he strikes him: "Et ça et ça! tu ne le sens pas? inexorable! tu ne le sens pas à travers le terreau de ta couenne, s'enfoncer vers ton coeur!" (p. 109) Lumumba, undaunted, continues equating his body with Africa: "Méfie-toi, il y a dans ma poitrine un dur noyau, le silex contre quoi s'ébréchera ta lame! C'est l'honneur de l'Afrique!" (p. 110) The honor and hope of Africa are one with Lumumba, and these images serve to say that he, along with Africa, is imperishable. M'siri, confounded says: "Tu vis ta mort, et tu ne la sens pas!" to which Lumumba responds "Je meurs ma vie, et cela me suffit." (p. 110) For Lumumba, life and death are one; his physical death will not terminate the state he represents. Finally M'siri shoves the blade through the heart of Patrice as he says "Alors, prophète, qu'est-ce que tu vois?" (p. 110)

Lumumba's words immediately following the stab reflect more than ever his role as a seasonal sacrificial god. As he dies he says:

Je serai du champ; je serai du pacage
Je serai avec le pêcheur Wagenia
Je serai avec le bouvier du Kivu
Je serai sur le mont, je serai dans le ravin. (p. 110)

This passage reflects Lumumba's ubiquitous powers as he appears in the pasture lands, the cattle lands, the mountains, the valleys; in short, all across Africa. Use of the future tense obviously emphasizes Lumumba's plans after death. He is not here telling us what he did in his past life; he is telling us his plans for the future. The object of each of the short phrases beginning with "je serai" reflect a liveli-
hood related to the land. Thus he equates himself with the
tillers of the earth, the cattlemen, the fishers and herdors,
all relating well to myth and ritual seasonal pattern.
Lumumba, despite the very modern aspect of the play, does
not say "Je serai l'ingénieur" or "Je serai l'avocat!" At
death he relates himself back to the land.

His final words reflect dawn images of a new beginning:
"Oh! cette rosée sur l'Afrique! Je regarde, je vois, cama-
rades, l'arbre flamboyant52, des pygmées, de la hache,
s'affaient autour du tronc précaire, mais la tête qui grandit,
ciè au ciel qui chavire, le rudiment d'écume d'une aurore."
(p. 111) The words "rosée" and "aurore" signify of course
early morning, the birth of a new day. The image of the
"arbre flamboyant" represents the firm and everlasting symbol
of African existence, like the great, long-lasting tree of
life. Despite a precarious base, beset with problems, the
top of the tree flourishes and grows till it astounds the
sky itself. The symbols of dawn and of the tree of life
serve to emphasize ideas of rebirth.

An interim scene between his death and resurrection
occurs when the bankers, Kala, Tzumbi, Mokutu, Hammarskjöld
and Pauline enter and comment on the death of their contem-
porary. Pauline's speech shows her to be uncertain of her
husband's murder though she is filled with dark forebodings.
Words such as "charognards", "peur", "trahison", "chauve-
souris", and "vol des prémonitions" connote evil and fear
and indicate her bleak despair. However, in the latter part
of the passage, she invokes the idea of cosmic activity and
renewed life and beseeches the return of her husband: "le naufrage renouvelle ses petits gestes d'invite amoureuse à la très belle copulation des astres et du désastre. Reviens, mon âme, reviens!" (p. 111)

The *joueur de sanza*, dressed in festive garb, cries to the men and women to sing forth. Calling himself "le nganga"53 he seems to be preparing for the triumphal procession soon to come.

Hammarskjöld, bathed in guilt, laments his role in the Lumumba affair and philosophically relates the Congolese problems to the concept of original sin. In the words of a submissive Christian, he says "Mon Dieu! pourquoi m'avoir choisi pour présider à la démoniaque alchimie? Mais ta volonté soit faite! la tienne, non la mienne." (p. 112)

The banker relegates the whole business to a folkloric episode and Tzumbi fears any reprisals that might come his way in reaction to the murder that took place in his province. Kala, using the image of a tree to represent Lumumba, explains that he wanted only to "émonder l'arbre, non pas de le déraciner." (p. 113) Finally Mokutu objects that he held no personal animosity towards Patrice, but that his duty as head of the Congolese government required that he eliminate the troublemaker Lumumba.

Lumumba's death takes place in scene 7 and his resurrection in scene 8. Lumumba died in January, 1961, and the final scene of the play takes place in July, 1966. Thus there is a five-year interim between his death and resurrection. The rebirth element can be viewed from various angles
which include 1) the myth and ritual seasonal context; 2) the modern political context; 3) the context of sacrificial death as formulated by René Girard in *La Violence et le sacré*; and 4) the context of the Bantu philosophical system regarding death and evil.

The vegetal imagery in the death scene lays a strong foundation contributing to an analysis in the framework of the myth and ritual theory of sacrifice of the king/god in a seasonal ritual for the welfare of the community. As noted throughout the chapter, five of the nine elements can be seen in the play. Lumumba, as leader and representative of his people, fights a fight, suffers, dies and is reborn for the welfare of the state. In addition, two elements, the sacred marriage and the triumphal procession can be seen in a veiled manner.

The concept of a *hieros gamos* can perhaps give some insight into a fairly unusual scene that takes place in Act II. The scene takes place immediately following Lumumba's ill-planned and brutal attack on the Baluba Diamond state. In an effort to justify his actions, which are rather hard to defend, he proclaims the raid a success and orders a victory celebration. In so doing, he chooses a beautiful woman of the Lulua tribe, warring tribe to the Balubas, and dances with her for all to see, thus symbolizing his clear conscience regarding the attack. He dances with Hélène Bijou under a red and green light (life colors) and their conversation is strikingly poetic and full of vegetal imagery. This is in contrast to the rest of the play, where, except in the
final two scenes, the images are stark and center around the animal world. Perhaps the use of vegetal imagery in the dance with Bijou heightens her importance as his symbolic mate and ties her, even if indirectly, to the death and rebirth theme. Patrice and Hélène exchange words six times, each of their speeches beginning with "je danse." Their dialogue corresponds to nature, mainly flowers. A few of their exchanges include: "Je danse l'affleurement de l'homme et sa salive, le sel!" (Patrice); "Je danse la fleur pavonie qui fait la roue autour du soleil ... " (Hélène); "Je danse l'allégresse, aux semaines du soleil, ... " (Hélène); "Je danse l'insecte plus beau que tout nom/qui au tesson du fruit mûr installe/orfèvrerie de jais et d'absidienne, sa lassitude repue." (Patrice). Their concluding words are: "Voilà notre danse dansée/et le refrain qui ferme sa corolle ..." (Hélène) and "C'est bien, Bijou! voilà dansée la danse de ma vie!" (Patrice) (pp. 67-68) These flowery images certainly connote the beauties of natural growth and life's cycle. Obviously Lumumba needs a mate to be an integral part of the rebirth cycle and perhaps Hélène provides this element. Though Lumumba is married to Pauline, she continuously represents only a very pragmatic side of life as she incessantly asks him to protect himself. Lumumba ascribes life-giving powers to Hélène when in his final refrain to her he says: "Bijou, quand je ne serai plus; quand je me serai défaill, ... quand le Congo ne sera plus qu'une saison que le sang assaisonne/continue à être belle ... dansons jusqu'à l'aube et me donne le coeur à marcher jusqu'au bout de la nuit!" (p. 68)
Thus Lumumba admits of the strength he obtains through this woman and their union, their dance of life, links them into the chain of birth-death-rebirth cycles provided by nature. The flowery imagery reinforces greatly their harmony with natural forces.

Thus amidst the realism and politics of the play in general, we see interjected this intensely poetic, almost surrealistic scene. Hélène is more of an image or symbol than a real woman and in this way she contrasts with a very realistic Pauline, wife of Patrice. This scene could easily be dropped from the play without sacrificing dramatic unity in any way. The only link between it and the preceding scene is tenuous at best as Lumumba dances in celebration of his military victory and chooses Hélène due to her ethnic origin as a Lulua. Hélène Bijou, as her name implies, is a combination of myth and beauty—Hélène as perhaps a reference to the mythic beauty whose face launched a thousand ships, and Bijou—for the flawless beauty of a gem.

She appears out of nowhere, dances with Lumumba and disappears almost as quickly. Her appearance is a bit like a flower that buds and blooms showing its beauty only a brief time then fading quickly away. Their dance is compared to the petals of a flower that open and close: "Voilà notre danse dansé/et le refrain qui ferme sa corolle/comme, fière d’avoir soutenu l’insoutenable,/se ferme, ... /la fleur pavonin." The entire passage is permeated by a tone of mythic poetry and nature ritual. Their dance conjures up the image
of intimate nature, as when two animals perform a strangely mysterious yet beautiful mating ritual.

The interposition of this scene, so unusual in relation to the rest of the play, calls out for a mythic interpretation. The dance between Hélène and Patrice, in the context of a hieros gamos, is not out of the question. Hélène, seen as a symbolic goddess-type figure, unites with Patrice, a fertility god figure, and their union signifies life—thus, they dance the dance of life. This is a beautiful passage in the play and is neglected by almost all critics. Its possibility as a sacred marriage in the framework of the myth and ritual pattern is only one suggested explanation for this lovely, but somewhat puzzling, passage.

Another veiled element in the play is the triumphal procession. In 1966, Lumumba's memory was rehabilitated by Mokutu, and the ceremony was held on the joyous occasion of the sixth anniversary of Congolese independence. This tribute to Lumumba is the tangible sign of his rebirth and resurrection and prior to the adulatory speech given by Mokutu, the people dance and celebrate in the streets. Mama Makosi, one of Lumumba's staunchly loyal friends, shouts out "Uhuru Lumumba!" Perhaps this marks a sort of triumphal procession rejoicing at Lumumba's rebirth.

Mokutu gives a speech honoring Lumumba and formally reinstating his memory. His final words are "Congolais, que le jour d'aujourd'hui soit pour le Congo le point de départ d'une saison nouvelle!" (p. 115) A new season commences on the day of Lumumba's rebirth and immediately following
Mokutu’s words, the *joueur de sanza* comments that "le sorgho pousse" and "L'oiseau quitte le sol." (p. 115) The sacrifice seems valid; Lumumba’s rebirth inaugurates the new season; the grain grows and the birds fly again.

Another way to view Lumumba’s symbolic resurrection is through the optical perspective of the political scientist. *Une Saison au Congo* is without doubt a thoroughly modern play; twentieth-century politics make up its very heart. When Mokutu rehabilitates Lumumba’s memory, he does so in a typically modern manner—he names a street after the slain hero and erects a statue in his honor.

*Je veux que désormais le plus beau de nos boulevards/s’enorgueillisse de porter son nom;/Que le lieu où il fut abattu devienne, de la nation, le sanctuaire;/et qu’une statue érigée à l’entrée de ce qui fut jadis Léopoldville/signifie à l’univers/que la piété d’un peuple n’en finira jamais/ de réparer ce qui fut notre crime/à nous tous!* (p. 115)

Examples of similar honors are easy to find in the past two decades. When John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, the former Cape Canaveral and Idlewilde Airport took on his name as an honor to his memory. When Lyndon B. Johnson died in 1973, the Houston Manned Spacecraft Center was renamed the Johnson Space Center. In 1973, 19th street in Austin, Texas became Martin Luther King Boulevard and finally the same was done in Houston, Texas in January 1978 as the former South Park Boulevard was renamed after the civil rights leader Martin Luther King. Thus, this manner of paying honor to national leaders and affording them a certain immortality is
quite common in modern political history and the play reflects historical veracity by doing the same for Lumumba.

This is not to necessarily equate Lumumba's situation with that of Martin Luther King, John F. Kennedy, or Lyndon B. Johnson, any more than the Congo can be equated to the U.S. Lumumba was perhaps a less established figure than those American examples given above, and his honor was the result of a rehabilitation of his memory and not the direct gesture as with the others. Nonetheless the point is that the act of naming streets after national heroes is a modern political phenomenon and this aspect of the play sharpens its modernity. Due to civil strife, Lumumba was never a universally acclaimed hero; he represented the worst to some, the best to others. When his memory is finally honored, it is done in a thoroughly modern manner, and it confers an immortality of sorts, in a very modern sense, on Lumumba.

Another perspective in which to view Lumumba's sacrifice is afforded us by Barthélemy Kotchy. After doing a general act-by-act analysis of the play, Kotchy views its significance from different levels, one of which he calls the "niveau mythique." His discussion, only a few paragraphs long, lends an overall pessimistic tone to the play. He says that "Une Saison au Congo est en réalité l'une des plus grandes tragédies de la violence et cette violence tragique recrée le rituel ancien quasi mythique." Using René Girard's La Violence et le sacré, Kotchy contends that Lumumba’s sacrifice was unnecessary and therefore ineffective, the end result being the inauguration of the tyrant Mokutu's
reign. According to Girard, sacrifice in society is used as a means to deter and contain violence, thus preserving the social order. Unsanctioned violence would lead to chaos, and thus pure blood, sacrificial blood, must be periodically spilled to quell collective violence. Kotchy feels that Kala-Lubu believed in the necessity of the blood sacrifice, but after it occurred, order did not return. The sacrifice was no more than a hideous crime by society and served only to install Mokutu which was "le désordre légalisé." Kotchy sees no redeeming value in Lumumba's death or in the person of Mokutu. He pessimistically implies that all Lumumba's work is now aborted and "Tout sera donc à refaire."

This reading of the play is a bit too negative and in fact Césairian growth and rebirth imagery as pointed out above serves to emphasize the brighter perspective of Lumumba's long-lasting influence. Rodney Harris makes the interesting point that Mokutu, all evil according to Kotchy, perhaps served better the Congo's needs than did Lumumba. The former's realism was possibly the better course over the latter's idealism. Under Lumumba, the Congo was in a state of fire and bloodshed, whereas Mokutu, perhaps less pure of purpose, was the pragmatic ruler necessary to re-establish order. A little of each man might provide the happy medium necessary for a good ruler.

Lumumba was described earlier in the chapter as an incarnation of the Bantu spirit, a quality attributed to him by Césaire himself. It is interesting then to probe into Bantu beliefs concerning life after death in order to ascer-
tain any connection with death and rebirth in the Bantu philosophical system. According to Tempels the concept of death, like that of life, continues to revolve around "la force vitale"; the force continues even after death. He explains that the muntu is comprised of a body, a shadow, breath, and the inner man or the man himself. At death, shadow, body, and breath disappear leaving only the inner man, or true man, left. This inner man he describes as: "C'est là le 'petit homme' qui était caché derrière les apparences perceptibles, c'est le 'muntu' qui, à la mort, a quitté les vivants."65 The dead do not lose their vital force; "Ils croient que les défunts, en général, ont acquis une connaissance plus profonde des forces vitales ou naturelles."66 This deepened knowledge helps then to reinforce the life force of those muntu still living. Thus all the Bantu live in communion with their dead ancestors. The community is made up of the living, the dead, animals, and trees; in short, all of nature.

The element of rebirth is channeled through ancestors to offspring. A person is reborn into life among the living through his progeny. Tempels specifies: "... ce n'est pas un homme déterminé du clan qui renaît, mais que c'est son individualité qui revient participer à la vie clanique par l'influence vitale dont ce défunt informe le nouveau-né, ou le fruit vivant à naître dans le clan."67 The predeceased ancestor is not the agent of conception, nor does he reappear in corporal form. The baby in the womb, who is soon to start
his life, simply will find himself under the vital influence of a particular forebear.

Jahnheinz Jahn explores this same question and points out that the dead, though not alive, exist as spiritual forces. Death as pure thanatos, he says, is a Western concept. For the Bantu, death is rebirth and life-strength. One lives in one's descendents and through ancestors life fertility is promoted.68

Lumumba, as incarnation of Bantu thought, inherently embodies this perennial life force and cannot die. In death, his influence continues to be felt. The relationship between the dead and the living and their associations with fertility and new life enhance Lumumba's role as life generator, in and through his sacrificial death. Lumumba represents the Bantu spirit; thus his sempiternity is assured and his effect on the Congolese people remains as strong, if not stronger, than during his life. Maybe this concept more clearly explains his words, "je meurs ma vie." Life and death are one; vital force remains undiminished. Only the outer body is shed, not the inner man.

Another aspect of Bantu philosophy applicable to the play is the ethical concepts in their system. The Bantu admit of man's freedom of choice between good and bad, and consequently there exist both good and bad men. Bad men can have an evil influence on those around him and "C'est cette influence néfaste découlant de la volonté destructrice de certains hommes qui est désignée par 'buloji' ou 'kulowa' chez les Bantous."69 The Bantu believe in and respect a
world order established by their god; any violation of this world order is evil. God's greatest gift to man is the gift of life and thus life, above all else, must be respected. Any destruction of life and any troubling of the world order is a sacrilege, and society has the right to thus defend herself. Because of their belief in the interdependence of all things, one disorder can severely affect a whole group and this must not be allowed to happen. Various degrees of evil are established by the Bantu such as those people who are purely evil, those who, normally good, are incited to evil, and those who are evil without being aware of it. The latter category of wrongdoers affect the balance of society and are "buloji" unconsciously and unwillingly. The only remedy for the "buloji" is death. "Ce désordre doit cependant être rétabli sous peine d'attirer le malheur. La réparation consiste toujours chez les Bantous à éloigner le mal et la cause du mal de la communauté."70

Now if we view Lumumba in this context, he certainly comes out a little less pure. Perhaps, unknowingly, unconsciously and unwillingly, he was a source of evil for the community. If so, there was no other recourse than to put him to death. Once the evil was then eradicated, the society could be re-established and reaffirmed.

Such an interpretation is not too far different from the myth and ritual idea of the sacrifice of the king-god. The result is the same; the difference is in how Lumumba is viewed. Following a myth and ritual theory, Lumumba, as leader, fights and dies for the community in order that it
be reaffirmed and reborn. No evil is ascribed to the sacrificial king. The Bantu interpretation would see Lumumba being sacrificed due to the evil he unintentionally generates, so that the society can be reaffirmed and reborn. With a character as ambiguous as Lumumba, either interpretation seems valid. His purity of motive however is upheld in both, and that is important. His friends love and worship him; his enemies despise and reject him. Who is right? His effect, good or bad, is still the subject of historians today. Perhaps his ambivalence is best described in the play when M'polo tells him: "Il est certain que tu es un prophète, Patrice. Celui qui marche devant et profère. C'est là ta force et ta faiblesses." (p. 87) His superior vision makes him good and bad, beneficent and malevolent at the same time.

This question of ambivalence refers us directly back to the duality of the tragic protagonist in his role as savior and scapegoat. Not too good and not too bad, he puzzles and confounds us as one minute we love him and the next minute we hate him. As champion of Congolese rights and in his mythic role as bringer of fertility, Lumumba is no less than a god-like hero. As perpetrator of civil strife and subject to his own impetuosity, he introduces disorder and bloodshed into the Congo and as a symbolic causer of plagues, must be removed. His is thus a combination of savior and scapegoat, but in both roles it is his sacrificial death that brings peace to the community and gives the play the optimistic ending.
This literary portrait of Lumumba with all its ambivalency coincides well with the prime minister's historical portrait. Césaire says of the historic Lumumba:

> Without doubt one may not approve of all the political acts of Patrice Lumumba. No doubt he made mistakes, not the least of which was to allow himself to be caught in the trap of the cold war, "this white man's folly". But how can we fail to admit and understand these faults on the part of a man who was so young, and all things considered, so ill-prepared for the tremendous task which, brutally and overnight, devolved on him, and before which, at least his heart never flinched? At all events, there was one thing which cannot fail to command respect and admiration: that was his prodigious vitality, his extraordinary faith, his love for his people, his courage and his patriotism. *Jeune Afrique* 1961.

News accounts of his death are no less interesting:

> ... in London -- COMMONS IN UPROAR OVER MURDER OF MR. LUMUMBA; in Cairo -- AFRICANS STORM CAIRO'S DIPLOMATIC QUARTER. WEST EMBASSIES ATTACK: PALL OF SMOKE OVER NILE; in the Congo -- BLOODSHED FEAR AFTER LUMUMBA'S DEATH; in Lagos -- CROWDS WITH STONES DEMON- STRATE AND ATTACK EUROPEANS; in New York -- FIGHTING AT U.N. OVER LUKUMBA. "MURDERER" CRIES BY BRAWLING NEGROES.

Describing the scene in the U.N., Philip Deane (Observer Foreign News Service, 15 February, 1961) wrote: "In small, private wakes for Patrice Lumumba, the Afro-Asian delegates ... swallow their drinks as if there were a bitter taste in their mouths. ... They may not all have felt such concern for Lumumba alive and active; but out of the buried corpse has arisen a powerful spectre."

The true-life Lumumba was a powerful and tragic figure, and he corresponds to Lumumba the tragic protagonist. It is a tribute to Césaire's keen eye as politician and poet that he can search out such volatile raw material in history and use it in such a way as to produce a true work of art, that
respects both history and literature. In this way, he takes a contemporary event and without undue contrivances, molds it into a traditional pattern. Césaire, as poet and politician, fulfills his own dual nature by combining both in his theatre, and with political reality as a point of departure polishes it into a finished aesthetic work of art.

Once again, Césaire manages to construct a many-layered work subject to a variety of interpretations. Relying on one alone does injustice to the author. We began with the Rebel, travelled to Haiti with Christophe and end in Africa with Lumumba. Who is now wearing the kingly mantle worn by all three? Perhaps it is the deputy-mayor of Martinique.
FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 4

1 The Congo (Kinshasa) was officially renamed Zaire on October 27, 1971. Zaire was the original name of the Congo River, also renamed the Zaire River.


3 Ibid., p. 10.


6 Miller, p. 20.

7 Ngal, "Théâtre," p. 615.

8 Cismaru, pp. 105-111.

9 Benelli, p. 12.

10 Harris, L’Humanisme, pp. 123-156.

11 Ibid., p. 126.


14 Ibid., p. 171.

15 Frédérique Dutoit, "Quand le Congo ne sera qu’une saison que le sang assaissonne," Présence Africaine, LXV (1967), 138-145.
16Ibid., p. 140.
17Ibid., p. 141.
19Traore, pp. 34-48.
20Ibid., p. 47.
21Benamou, pp. 174-176.
22Cited in Benamou, p. 176.
24Decock, pp. 72-75.
26Brereton, p. 55.
28Harris, L'Humanisme, p. 127.
29Césaire, Chiens, pp. 31-32.
30This is certainly a reference to Kibanguism—a politico-religious sect with followers in many parts of Africa. Colin Legum quotes a missionary's description of this sect: "In the countryside and in the big towns and workers' settlements hatred of the White (man) is propagated mainly by the politico-religious sects called Kibanguism Kitawala and others, which can only operate in secret." (Cited in Lumumba, p. 8)
31There are four references to Lumumba as "chef de son peuple" before his dismissal as opposed to seven afterward.
32Césaire, Chiens, p. 83.
33Traore, p. 47.
34Benamou, p. 175.
35Cited in Traore, p. 47.
37Ibid., p. 30.
38**Ibid.**, p. 36.
39**Ibid.**, p. 43.
40**Ibid.**, p. 70.
41See **Supra.**, p. 156.
42Tempels, p. 56.
44**Ibid.**, p. 127.
45See **Supra.**, p. 162.
48**Ibid.**, pp. x-xxix.
49Harris, *L'Humanisme*, p. 150.
50"Alors Pilate voyant ses efforts inutiles, et que le tumulte ne faisait qu'augmenter, prit de l'eau, se lava les mains en présence de la multitude, disant: "Moi, je suis innocent du sang de cet homme. C'est votre affaire!"" Matthieu 27: 24 (Douay)
51Kivu is one of 6 provinces in the Congo, the other five being Leopoldville, Equateur, Orientale, Kasai and Katanga.
52Tree found in Africa and the Antilles having red flowers.
53"Nganga" signifies one who has superior knowledge.
54In the foreword to Lumumba's book, *Congo My Country*, Colin Legum, Lumumba's close friend, admits that historically this raid marked the Prime minister's demise (p. xviii).
55*Pavonie* is an obscure term referring to a genus of plants of the malvaceous family which includes such tropical plants as the *fromager* (African tree), the *cotonnier*, the *hibiscus*, and the mauve flower. The word was perhaps chosen by Césaire for its sound as well as its meaning. It could easily represent a cross between *pavot* and *payanne* thus linking the poppy flower to a popular dance and signifying the flowery dance of Lumumba and Bijou.
56Uhuru signifies freedom.
57Incidentally, this scene was added only in the second version, 1967, of the play. When Césaire first wrote the
play, Mokutu had not yet paid tribute to the fallen hero. When it took place, Césaire revised his play accordingly. In the first version of the play, Lumumba's death is the end and only the Congolese war cry "Luma!" is heard as an indication perhaps that the fight was not over.

58 Kesteloot, L'Homme, p. 189.
59 Girard, pp. 13-51.
60 Kesteloot, L'Homme, p. 189.
61 Ibid., p. 189.
62 Harris, L'Humanisme, p. 156.

Césaire himself seems to vacillate in his own attitude to Mokutu. In the 1967 version of the play, the one used by Harris, Kotch, and myself, Mokutu rehabilitates Lumumba's memory and is shown as mellowing somewhat in his hatred for Lumumba. In the 1973 version of the play, Mokutu still posthumously praises Lumumba but this time he is a despot and kills the *joueur de sanza*.

64 See Supra., p. 168.
65 Tempels, p. 38.
66 Ibid., p. 44.
67 Ibid., p. 75.
68 Jahn, Muntu, pp. 105-114.
69 Tempels, p. 71.
70 Ibid., p. 107.
71 Cited in Lumumba, p. xxviii.
72 Ibid., p. xxvi.
CONCLUSION

Aimé Césaire, as poet and politician, amply manifests both tendencies in his tragic oeuvre. The aesthetic and the political reside together in Césairian drama and though both aspects are present in all plays, different ones predominate in the individual pieces. The change in tone and imagery from *Et les Chiens se taisaient* to *Une Saison au Congo* shows a definite progression away from dense imagery and poetic symbolism toward clarity of message and language. Césaire's literary medium was poetry, often hermetic in style, up to 1956 when he first arranged *Et les Chiens se taisaient* for the theatre in that same year. It was only in 1963 with *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* that we see Césaire's first attempt at bona fide theatre. The Martinican writer explains that his conversion from poetry to drama was prompted by a concern for closer communication with his own people. Says Césaire: "J'ai voulu expliciter à mon peuple ce que ma poésie contenait."¹ Concurrent with the shift in genre comes a proclivity to clearer language and fewer poetic images; the three plays under study are illustrative of this movement.

The motif of destruction and resurrection or death and rebirth is constant in Césaire's poetry as well as his theatre; the theme remains but the poetic *je* is displaced onto dramatis personae. All three of Césaire's tragedies share political themes of colonial oppression, decolonization, and nation
building as well as mythic structures of death and rebirth, featuring heroes that fight and die for their country and are reborn in a reaffirmation of their respective states. Yet all three, despite similarities, have their own individual appeal and are reflective of different aspects of Black nations. This is a tribute to Césaire's virtuosity as a writer.

*Et les Chiens se taisaient* reads like a sacred ritual, and religion permeates the play's atmosphere. A chorus that could represent worshipers is seen, and long poetic passages constitute the bulk of the play, making the verses resemble hymns, chants, or scriptural readings. A certain numinosity surrounds the Rebel, and his death is intimately associated with the land and natural abundance, thus linking him quite clearly with the mythic concept of the god/king or Vegetation/Life Spirit who dies and whose body fructifies the earth and makes it reproduce. Additionally almost all of the ritual elements outlined by Herbert Weisinger can be found, at least by implication, in the play. Thus Césaire's first attempt at theatrical endeavor illuminates in a remarkably clear manner the very origins from which tragedy has sprung. If one were to establish a hypothetical scale with ritual at one end and tragedy at the other, *Et les Chiens se taisaient* would inevitably fall toward the ritual end of the scale.

Concomitant with the intensely religious tone of the play, there is dense poetic imagery and little direct political content. By direct is inferred that the political message is not blatantly specific but largely symbolic. The Rebel could
be any revolutionary hero, Black or White, and represents the universal battle for human freedom and dignity. Certainly anti-Occidental satire and references to a slavery era, an historical experience felt only by the Black race, date the play to some extent. Nonetheless, most specifics are dropped in the play, and it is best described as a conflict between oppressor and oppressed in a generic sense.

The characters in the play stylistically signify different attitudes within a revolutionary schema. The Rebel is, as his name indicates, the revolutionary hero who comes to terms with his own oppressed ego and reacts in rebellious defiance. He is the archetypal revolutionary pitted against opposing forces. La Mère represents the attitude of resignation to the status quo, and L'Amante represents the timid attitude that prefers orderly and controlled domination to unknown and chaotic liberty. These personages are very nearly allegorical in nature and are never developed as individuals. Accordingly they carry no names but only designations of their function. This stylized, quasi-moralistic form lends to the communal religious and ritualistic aspect of the play. In short, the play is universally symbolic rather than historically representative. Et les Chiens se taisaient is religious in tone, poetic in content, and politically expressive only through rich symbolism.

With Césaire's second play, La Tragédie du Roi Christophe, one sees a progressive movement away from the dense poetic imagery and symbolism of the first tragedy and a simultaneous move closer into the political arena. La Tragédie du Roi
Christophe is politically inspired in that its direct source, King Henry Christophe, is a matter of political history. Christophe is not a symbolic revolutionary but a real one; he is a historical figure—a revolutionary in the Haitian war for independence in the early 1800's. On the ritual to tragedy scale, La Tragédie du Roi Christophe moves away from ritual and into the realm of dramatic tragedy.

The lyricism of Et les Chiens se taisaient is replaced by politics and history in La Tragédie du Roi Christophe. In the latter, the political message is clear; Césaire tackles the problem of nation-building and development of national consciousness and provides critical insight into a crucial political problem, while at the same time infusing his play with aesthetic elements drawn from Haitian culture. Throughout the tragedy, references to the native Voodoo religion and use of the Creole vernacular abound; a reading of the play is not adequate without some knowledge of both. His use of the Voodoo element is particularly important as a liberation tool, since the persecution of this indigenous religion is indeed an obstacle to true Haitian cultural liberation.

Despite its didactic aspect, Césaire refrains from pontificating about African political systems or conjuring up nostalgic African images. Instead he encourages a positive Black identity by employing African concepts and points a way to future unity. Instead of meting out fulsome praise and surrounding the autochthonous culture in idyllic descriptions of pre-colonial bliss, Césaire provides an analysis
that enables a critical look at Haiti's growth of national consciousness—her growing pains—and thereby postulates a lesson for future African and Caribbean nationalists. Césaire gives us a great work of art with a political lesson. In the play he accomplishes political, aesthetic, and cultural ends; by evoking the past, he enriches the present and enhances the future.

Though the political aspect in the play is clear, the tragic element is not thereby diminished. Most interesting is that the play, no longer reminiscent of religious ritual, still carries with it basic ritual elements fundamental to tragedy and clothes them in politico-historical garb. The play too, with its root in Haitian history and its political message, is by far and away the more easily readable of the first two plays. By choosing a subject deep within Caribbean history and adding Caribbean cultural elements, the play becomes increasingly more accessible to those people for whom Césaire claims to be writing.

His choice of Christophe as a literary subject is resourceful and in some ways reflects the poet's own career. Christophe's major problem as portrayed by Césaire indicates that his failure was due in part to his lack of sensitivity and responsiveness to his own people. African writers face this same problem: For whom do they write?—their own people or an European audience? Césaire's switch in genre from hermetic poetry to popular theatre is a strong indication of his own desire to avoid Christophe's mistake and to move closer to his own people. In other words, to use a Christophian
analogy, it is useless to create literary "Citadelles" if they are of no value to your own people. Césaire's _La Tragédie du Roi Christophe_, and even more so in _Une Saison au Congo_, deals much more clearly with national problems in a more accessible way and to a much wider audience.

With _Une Saison au Congo_ Césaire, deep within the dramatic tragedy genre, becomes blatantly political. There are fewer images, many references to current events and a much clearer handling of themes and style. A hermit in a cave, cut off from the outside world, could read _Et les Chiens se taisaient_, and though a knowledge of Haitian history is a nice enhancer in _La Tragédie du Roi Christophe_, the rise and fall of the king features an intelligible plot in its own context. _Une Saison au Congo_ on the contrary, with its many references to current world events and its heavy reliance on recent history, would hardly pique the interest of a reader who does not have at least a cursory knowledge of twentieth-century developments on the African continent.

The play's diluted imagery and clear language render it accessible to those with little literary training; _Et les Chiens se taisaient_ on the contrary would be all but an impossibility to any except the highly educated. _Une Saison au Congo_ seems to transcend literary bounds and thus carries a broader base of appeal to readers. Though admittedly not the literary masterpiece of _Et les Chiens se taisaient_, it is not mere political propaganda either. The images, though sparse, show through, and the basic tragic structure, in thoroughly modern trappings, is retained. Thus on our hypo-
ethical scale, we have journeyed from mythic ritual in *Et les Chiens se taisaient* to dramatic tragedy based on history in *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* to realistic political tragedy in *Une Saison au Congo*.

In Césairian drama, the poetic factor seems to be in inverse relation to the political message. As poetry vanishes, politics are underlined, and it all points to one thing, namely that Césaire is moving ever closer to a Third-world audience. The people, a negligible factor in *Et les Chiens se taisaient*, are themselves neglected by the hero in *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* whereas they, in the form of the *joueur de sanza*, are present in almost every scene and are a vital element in *Une Saison au Congo*.

The use of political themes in tragic art is not original with Aimé Césaire, and they form the plot line of many a great tragedy. Geoffrey Brereton, in his discussion on tragedy, observes this secular factor and thereby attempts to deny religious implications inherent in tragedy. He points out that political and sociological factors are in the forefront of many tragedies in which the god is replaced by the community or society and rejection by it replaces damnation. I do not feel however that his point is valid. A play is no less in touch with its religious origins nor less reminiscent of the ritual background of tragedy just because it is politically inspired. In fact a political development out of the original myth/ritual pattern seems most logical. In the ritual, the dying/rising god/king represented and was responsible for his community in much the same way a political
leader is accountable to the constituents he represents. The evolution from ritual to politics—from king to prime minister—seems plausible enough in the tragic context and just because instead of a king there is a president, and instead of a seasonal combat there is a combat of political factions, the essence of the structure is unchanged. Both refer back to the basic ritual structure and in this sense, modern profane tragedy still calls back to its sacred roots.

This religious sense inherent in theatre carries great significance for modern man because in a way, we relate to and retain ties with the ground of being through the medium of communal theatre. Myth and religion, serving as containers or repositories for transpersonal experience, provides man with a viable, and collective, way in which to relate to the ground of being (Meaning, Deity, Self). According to Edward Edinger, it is the primary aim of all religions to keep the individual in touch with the deity. In a stable religious community, then, each person projects his inner god-image onto the religion of the community, thus preventing the dangerous situation of projection onto a secular or banal object such as wealth or power, or such political groups as Nazism or Communism. At the same time, man fails to ever relate to the ground of being in an individual or personal way.

In general, religious symbols have lost their meaning for twentieth-century man and as T.S. Elliot points out, we have no more than a heap of broken images. This sort of loss of belief is indeed a twentieth-century problem and in some
ways perhaps theatre retains the age-old function of fulfilling this collective psychic need. Evolving from religion, the basic religious values can still be found therein. Césaire, by taking this fundamental and ageless myth of rebirth imbues his theatre with deep-rooted meaning. He retains meaningful symbols and projects them through art or literature and relates them at the same time to contemporary events. In this way, we see almost a sort of cosmic or universal myth or religion emerge from Césaire. A man who long ago rejected his Christian background, he still retains an inherent religious approach to life and directly relates this to modern man. I do not intend here to set Césaire up as some modern-day saint. However, his theatre truly carries deep universal importance and it is primarily through myth, --myth imposed on the political reality of today's world-- that he can reach out with such intense meaning.

In Césaire's three tragedies we see the evolution from myth to reality operate before us. *Et les Chiens se taisaient* calls strongly forward the religious background inherent in drama and is one reason why so many critics remark its similarity with Greek tragedy. It, like Greek drama, has the all-prevailing religious atmosphere. As we continue on the Césairian itinerary we see *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* which no longer carries the over-riding religious tone but nonetheless retains its structure. Finally we arrive at *Une Saison au Congo* which is a politically realistic play and yet is still retentive of the ancient tragic structure.
We go from myth and religion to politics and reality, yet all three plays, different as they are, share the tradition of the tragic structure. Using modern elements, Césaire does not weaken his writing quality; instead he speaks through a skillful combination of the old and the new. Despite variations from play to play which serve to continually stimulate anew the reader's interest, there exists an underlying sameness in structure and essence that tends to put all three into the tradition of great tragedy. They are all illustrative of a pattern that features a leader who fights, dies and is reborn.

The Rebel fights and dies for his country and as a result of that death, he undergoes the process of rebirth through the renewal of his country. Vegetal imagery (mainly references to native Martinican flora) depicted as sterile and decayed early in the play, erupts into bloom in the resurrection scene. The Rebel himself does not get up and walk again, but that is not the significance of his rebirth. His death, immediately followed by the unfolding blossoming of his country, clearly denotes it as a bountiful sacrifice enabling the earth's renewal, and, in a symbolic political sense, of the nation. The fertility explosion in the last scene of the play is beautifully powerful and reminds one of the strength and glory in for instance Stravinsky's Sacre du printemps.

The Rebel is a beautiful incarnation of the dying/rising god figure and in many instances calls to mind another great figure, Jesus Christ. These Christ-like attributes fall
right in line with the myth and ritual pattern since Jesus is the perfect example of the dying/rising god as depicted in the pattern. Especially to a Western audience the figure of Christ would shine through quite clearly. And why not? Césaire himself was raised as a Catholic, given the best of Western educations, and his native land Martinique, also presumably the symbolic country of the Rebel, is predominantly Catholic.

Exemplary of Césaire's remarkable talent as a writer, he enacts the rebirth element in *La Tragédie du Roi Christophe* in a very different, yet equally effective, manner. The predominant vegetal growth images used in *Et les Chiens se taisaient* are abandoned for images relating to the Voodoo religion and to the historical Christophe. He keys on the major aspect of Haitian culture and achieves at the same time the strong impact in the final resurrection scene. In this way, Césaire respects the integrity of the cultural cadre in which he writes and at the same time respects the integrity of the tragic structure.

He accomplishes no less a feat with *Une Saison au Congo*. We are plunged headlong into secular twentieth-century politics, yet the ancient tragic structure holds fast. The rebirth element, depicted after Lumumba's sacrificial death, once again embodies the reaffirmation and permanence of the state, this time the Congo, represented by the hero. Césaire's enactment of the rebirth element relies for its basis this time, not on vegetal imagery, nor on Haitian religious elements, but instead on African philosophy. Lumumba's death
and renewal, seen in the light of Bantu philosophy, is neatly coherent within the confines of that play.

Obviously Voodoo elements in *Et les Chiens se taisaient* or *Une Saison au Congo* would be ludicrous; vegetal imagery in all three would be monotonous. Césaire clings to a fundamental structure yet handles it to suit his own needs. Thus the Rebel, man of the Caribbean, recalls the figure of Christ and is surrounded at his resurrection scene with a burst of Martinican flora; Henry Christophe, king of Haiti, reaps the rewards of Voodoo afterlife; Patrice Lumumba, man of Africa, incarnates the ancestral power forces of the Bantu philosophy. The different elements reflected are Christian, Caribbean, and African; no surprise, this, from a Caribbean poet of African descent who holds the degree of agrégé from the French educational system. Césaire uses his background to the fullest to create a rich and interesting, multi-faceted theatre.

The chronological and geographic range of the three plays reflect the rebirth elements to a greater degree, the separate components being enhanced by the whole. Taken as an overall picture, the three plays constitute a trilogy. We begin with a slave under total domination; we continue by witnessing the reign of a Black king as he rules over a newly founded Black kingdom; we close with the view of a Black prime minister as he presides over one of the first African colonies to achieve independence. The Black countries today, though beset by problems, still certainly feel the victory of this historic progression. Césaire pictures the
ever on-going development of Black statehood, and one could view the Rebel being reborn as Christophe, Christophe reborn as Lumumba, and Césaire combining bits of all three. Whatever the view, there is nothing static about Césaire's writing.

Critics have noted a certain ambivalency in the Césairian hero, his combination of bad and good, especially in the characters of Christophe and Lumumba. On the one hand, they represent the nation's savior, and on the other hand they represent the scapegoat and sin-bearer of the community. Their sacrifices are both expiatory and propitiary. Thus the Rebel, embodiment of Spring, is the benefactor who performs the saving act of sacrificial death and thereby affords community renewal. At the same time, he is the malefactor who introduces chaos and disorder into the social order by killing the White master and thus represents the evil that must be expelled from the community.

Christophe, through his death, enables the reaffirmation of the Haitian state; at the same time he is the evil that must be expurgated because his prideful defiance of the gods induces harm to his subjects.

Lumumba too ensures the permanence of his nation via a sacrificial death, yet also represents a source of evil for his people by his disregard for the natural order of events and his own impetuous nature.

Contradictory as this may seem, it is closely in tune with the tradition of the tragic hero. Thus, for example, is Oedipus both the savior of Thebes as he solves the riddle
of the Sphinx and her scapegoat as his presence is the source of blight on the land. Gilbert Murray succinctly states:

"Put briefly, it seems that historically the tragic hero is derived both from the Life Spirit—call him Dionysus or what you will—who comes to save the community with the fruits of the New Year, and from the polluted Old Year, the Pharmakos or Scapegoat, who is cast out to die or to wander in the wilderness, bearing with him the sins of the community."

Is this so very different from the Aristotelian edict that the tragic protagonist be "not too good and not too bad"? If he is too good, we feel revulsion at his fall and experience horror instead of pity. If he is too bad, we can only be complacent with his fall and feel not fear but just satisfaction. This tragic duality is reflected in the Césairian tragic hero, and all three manifest both good and bad qualities and take on the dual role of savior and scapegoat. Césaire neither deifies nor condemns his tragic protagonists. Their deaths were neither completely unwarranted nor completely justified. He endows them with a certain goodness marred by certain flaws; thus we love them for their bravery and hate them for their sins.

Césaire's use of the rebirth theme essentially formulates the equation that death is life. What are the tragic, political, and cultural implications of this equation? Both Weisinger and Murray contend that the rebirth structure is an inherent aspect of tragedy and is the single most important factor as to why tragedy can be pleasurable to view and to read. The cathartic element is important but it, too, must
be tempered to be effective. A feeling of horror derived from the depressing futility of a life ended is not necessarily a purifying or cleansing experience—it is a disgusting one. But if tragedy is offset by the death/rebirth relationship, death is not a futile end but only a re-beginning. Thus our great despair can prove joyful as well.

With Césaire, if the final scene in his three tragedies were lopped off, we would see the product of a writer with a bleak and oppressive world view. The reader would be left with the feeling, not that he had just read tragedy, but that he had just witnessed the depressing aspect of life’s injustices. One would be left in great despair. But Césaire does not paint this dismal picture, instead he adds the renewal element to his plays and in so doing leaves the reader satisfied, if not ecstatic. In such a way, we find a purpose behind the protagonists’ deaths and not futility in their lives. We can see that they died so that life can continue. That is what Gilbert Murray meant when he said that tragedy is a world wherein suffering is not the worst nor happiness the best that can happen.6 In the world of tragedy we are poised somewhere in between, and this is precisely the mixed emotions felt after reading Césaire. Though it is sad to witness the death of the heroes, we are left with the comfort that their defeat is not permanent and that their rebirth insures an ultimate victory.

The political implications of Césaire’s rebirth theme are that the play is endowed with great optimism as to the future of Black nations in general. Within the three plays,
a literal reading calls for the political defeat of all three heroes. After all the Rebel is jailed and executed; Christophe commits suicide as his kingdom falls apart; and Lumumba, besieged by enemies on all sides, is finally captured and assassinated. But here again Césaire's final scenes of apotheosis for the three protagonists clearly indicate that the deaths were never meaningless. The progression in status of the heroes shows an intrinsic upward move from slavery to freedom. The Rebel, a slave, fought and died as a slave gaining only an illusory moment of personal freedom. Christophe, an ex-slave, was able to cast away the chains of servitude and cloak himself in royal raiment. Lumumba, never a slave, was able to politically manipulate his nation into existence and become its first prime minister. Thus the Rebel lived and died a slave; Christophe lived to see his slavery status abolished; and Lumumba never had to undergo the personal experience of slavery and was able to see his country throw off the ties of colonialism. Césaire seems to promise a better world to come.

Additionally the death/rebirth theme carries certain cultural implications. Most neo-African poets express the intimate relation between life and death and between the dead and the living, and they acknowledge the existence of the dead as spiritual forces. Jahn points out that death as a destroyer—as pure thanatos—is a Western concept, whereas African philosophy admits of the life principle inherent in death itself. Césaire then, by using the theme
of rebirth, exemplifies a tragic vision that is enhanced by his ancestral culture.

In the context of twentieth-century drama, a question remains, though. Since Césaire wanted his plays to directly communicate his message to his people, it seems surprising that he did not draw on one or two possibilities that were offered to him by contemporary playwrights whose dramatic works he must have known, namely Sartre and Brecht.

To be sure, Césaire is no blind follower of tradition: his poetry, though marked by surrealism, witnesses his originality and creative power. His three plays we have considered in this thesis do not use well-known classical myths or legends so often re-interpreted by first class dramatists, such as Cocteau, Giraudoux, Anouilh, and Sartre himself. Yet as a revolutionary and a marxist, Césaire surprises us by his drama that so closely adheres to an Aristotelian view of human life as basically never changing and stable. Even if we assume that there is an idea of progress, and not pure stagnation, in the rebirth theme of his drama, it remains that this theme is encompassed in a larger cosmic world which can be viewed as ever repeating.

Let us then turn towards the existentialist and the Brechtian drama in order to answer the question raised above. For Sartre, the characters of a Greek play have only the liberty to conform voluntarily to their archetype as each
man is responsible for universal harmony. The reward for submission to the archetype is individual happiness. For Sartre of course, liberty involves much more than liberty to conform to a pre-conceived essence. Instead, it is liberty to act, to become. In Aristotelian theatre, man is free to realize his pre-ordained essence; in Sartrean philosophy, man is free to forge his own essence, outside of and independently from any set or pre-determined rule. Sartre contends that it is not human nature which is universal but rather situations in which man finds himself that are universal, and in his theatre of situations he attempts to depict not human character but human situations. In *Qu'est-ce que la littérature* Sartre explores his idea of involved writing as well as speaking directly to the concept of theatre. He says "Et chacun [dramatic character], en inventant sa propre issue, s'invente soi-même. L'homme est à inventer chaque jour." Sartre rejects psychological drama and prefers instead a theatre in which man is shown becoming, making a choice, and acting in order to become.

Sartre however, despite his anti-Aristotelian theories, also uses a rather traditionally styled theatre. For instance in *Les Mouches* he uses the ancient Greek myth of Electra and Orestes. One critic goes as far as comparing Sartre's Orestes to a Christ-like figure who takes upon himself the suffering of all mankind. Through matricide, Orestes liberates all his fellowmen and takes their guilt and suffering upon himself.
In Césaire's plays, it is doubtless true, as we have shown above, that Aristotelian structure is maintained. Yet Césaire's characters are far from being totally entrapped and imprisoned human beings. Instead they exercise freedom within their own situations and arrive at a certain personal liberty. Césaire does not provide his reader with a psychological analysis of each character; thus we do not know why or how each hero does what he does. All we see is their actions as they occur on stage. Césaire shows three heroes in essentially the same situation and narrates their actions from that point. The Césairian hero does act and does choose to become himself. If this falls in line with the great archetypal situations as found in Greek drama, so be it. I think Césaire's works are none the weaker for this. Adherence to age-old tradition does not make one less free or less original or even less authentic. In Césaire's case the manner in which he uses tradition serves to enhance, not hamper, his work.

In some ways, Césaire approaches the Sartrean concept of a theatre of situation and certainly none can say that Césaire's work is not totally "engagé". Césaire, through his writing, is exploring and becoming himself just as he portrays heroes that also are in the process of becoming themselves. Each one, by throwing off oppression, finally arrives at self-pride and self-fulfillment. This certainly is another dimension in which to read Césaire's optimism. Though suffering political losses, the heroes do arrive at personal victories and self-attainment that could equal the
Sartrean tenet that mankind must forge his own essence. The same situation, or structure, is universally depicted by Césaire in all three of his tragedies. Yet each hero is shown in a dual attempt of self-fulfillment and community savior.

Perhaps we should move on to the German playwright Bertolt Brecht who achieved a theatre much more revolutionary in style than did Sartre. Brecht intended his theatre as a tool of social engineering and a laboratory for social change. He wanted to shock his audience out of complacency and jolt them into critical assessment of the world around them. Brecht's revolt was directed against naturalistic theatre (especially Goethe and Schiller) which strived toward the dramatic illusion of reality. One of his main goals was to destroy the theatre of illusion and prohibit any identification between spectator and actor. Thus instead of drama recreating a spurious present with the idea that the stage event is occurring here and now, special efforts should be made to place distance between the play and the actor, because it is only from a distance that the spectator can objectively and critically apprehend the stage event. The audience should constantly feel this distance and realize that the play is a historical event and not a present happening. To ensure this distance, Brecht suggested the alienation effect or use of Verfremdungseffekte devices. Thus the audience should see behind the scenes; the lighting should not be hidden; signs should indicate location and time setting of each scene, etc.
Brecht adhered to Marxism and with his revolt against the naturalistic theatre he hoped to create a Marxist aesthetic.

Aristotelian dramatic theory, on the other hand, presupposes a constant human nature that is unchanging and thus unchangeable. If a twentieth-century spectator can still relate to Othello, Oedipus, or Romeo, then this is certainly a proof of the basic sameness of human nature. Now the very foundation of Marxism is that the world can be comprehended only as a dialectical historical procession in which all human values are constantly in flux and changing. Thus Othello, according to Brecht, is only a man conditioned by the social circumstances of his times. Aristotelian theatre, as perceived by Brecht, is a contradiction of Marxism and he was in sharp revolt against this.

Many critics have noted a Brechtian influence on Césaire, especially in his third play *Une Saison au Congo*. Various devices used in his play links him with Brecht, and *Une Saison au Congo* does approach the Brechtian ideal of epic theatre in some respects. However the Aristotelian structure, as I have pointed out, remains in Césaire's plays. Brecht's theatre is a dynamic process whereby views and attitudes of the spectator are shaken up and hopefully changed. Aristotelian drama, on the other hand, with its cyclical repetitions, tends perhaps to lull the spectator rather than startle him. Thus as Brecht saw it, Aristotelian drama is both anti-Marxist and anti-revolutionary. Why then can we see this Aristotelian structure in the works of Césaire, a Marxist revolutionary?
Two questions arise here: Is Césaire, by choosing Aristotelian structure, laying down his weapons and giving up the Black man's revolutionary cause? Or is Brecht's assessment of Aristotelian theatre as static and non-changing really valid? The answer to the second question could well provide us with an answer to the first. I am in no way prepared to answer this question but feel capable only of proposing it as it arises out of my own study of Césaire.

Martin Esslin, in his several works on Brecht, can give us some brief insight and make a tentative step toward solving this problem. Esslin points out that the Brechtian reading of Aristotelian drama need not be quite so drastic as it is. He observes that a twentieth century reader does not identify with Othello the Moorish general but with Othello the jealous husband. Nor does he identify with Oedipus the ancient king but with Oedipus the man desirous of his mother. It is the archetypes as employed by the ancient Greek tragedians that still have a grip on the audiences of today. Brecht wanted to bannish emotion from the stage but that is frankly impossible and even his alienation devices do not prevent spectator identification with Brecht's own characters. Esslin says:

Conversely, in Brecht's own plays the alienation effect invariably fails in performance whenever the emotions portrayed are of such a nature that they correspond to those of the audience: Brecht wanted the audience to criticize Mother Courage for her involvement with war as a business, to condemn her for causing the death of her children. But in spite of songs, anti-illusionist staging, posters with the exact time and date, the distancing effect does not take place; the mothers in the audience—and not only they—still identify with the predicament of a loving mother who loses
her children. Brecht scolded critics and audiences alike for seeing Mother Courage as a Niobe. But they did, and thereby showed clearly that the world of Oedipus and the other archetypes of Greek myth retains its power, that not only might modern audiences identify with Oedipus, but that the even most consciously Marxist conception of a character could ultimately not escape identification with a human type dating back to antiquity.12

I hardly propose in this brief study to discredit Brechtian theories but only to indicate that perhaps there is not so much contradiction after all in Césaire's works following Aristotelian structure. Obviously Brecht was a great poet, playwright, and dramatic theorist but perhaps his theories dealt with theatre as he felt it should be instead of theatre as it is. Frankly the human condition cannot just simply be brushed aside, as he wanted to do.

It is true that Aristotelian drama purports theatre as derived from ritual, a ritual designed only to control and not change the universe. Yet Césaire's theatre, even with this structure, is not a static work devoid of efforts at social change. In looking at this structure found in Césaire, two aspects enter in: perhaps the structure comes through, unconsciously on Césaire's part as is suggested by Gilbert Murray13, as a result of its being an inherent or innate tragic structure.

On the other hand, unconscious tradition apart, Césaire certainly could have consciously chosen the death/rebirth structure. Though stable, it certainly projects an optimistic view and lends this tone to his works. At the same time, though we see a cycle that repeats, there is a progression
indicated throughout the plays. Thus instead of three endlessly repetitive circles, with no progress at all, we see a sort of spiral movement with the cycle moving upward from slavery to independence.

Césaire, with this structure, displays a basic sense of harmony with the universe. Whatever bitterness he may feel toward the past history of colonialism and slavery, we see a man searching to be at one with the universe and also a man in contact with the ground of being.

Thus this structure does not indicate any lack of dynamics on Césaire's part, or any existentialist lack of freedom, but rather a harmonious oneness with a universe that, though oppressive at times, retains its harmonious character. This question that arises as a result of my study is a most interesting one and warrants further investigation, which I hope to do in the future. I do not here try to answer the question but only to pose it and leave it unanswered for future critics to deal with.
FOOTNOTES

CONCLUSION

1Benamou, "Entretien," p. 4.


3See Edinger, p. 62f.

4T.S. Elliot, The Waste Land and other Poems (16th ed. London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 27. Elliot says, "What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow/out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, You cannot say, or guess, for you know only/A heap of broken images, ...

5Murray, Classical, p. 56.

6Ibid., p. 58.

7Jahn, Muntu, pp. 114ff.


13See Supra., p. 48.
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