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Native Intellectuals Static Positions and the Advancement Towards an Active Role

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Abstract

This paper discusses how the native intellectual can come to terms with the challenges of associating with both the West and East. Some intellectuals are left in a contradicting position where if they choose either West or East, that entails that they become a tool for one side against the other. I argue that resistance does not necessarily have to be a binary situation where the intellectual is cornered to choose one or the other and therefore cannot reconcile the two sides. Intellectuals who are trapped in this dichotomy feel that they have to choose, while others who break free do not have to choose between these two sides. This essay demonstrates how it is possible for native intellectuals to reconcile the two sides of themselves. The traditions and discourses through which characters/intellectuals address this tension or binary is achieved by a shift in their paradigm to a different framework of "witnessing" and "testimony" which triggers their agency.

Keywords: Native Intellectuals, Oppression, Politics, Postcolonialism, Theory to Practice, Witness.

I. Introduction

The main predicament which many native intellectuals find themselves at is the static position and inability to become active members of their people challenging colonialism, neoliberalism, imperialism, and capitalism. Educated in western universities, when intellectuals return to their homeland are usually cornered into a binary situation between their western and native selves. By examining several literary fictional and no-fictional texts, I discuss the traditions and discourses through which intellectual characters or writers address this tension or binary. The relationship between the east and the west is typically a confrontational one filled with tensions. We can remark Edward Said's perspective on the relationship of power between the west and the east: "the relationship between occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying

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degrees of complex hegemony" (5). The hegemonic power of capitalism which can be found everywhere and the only other power is resistance power attests to the pervasiveness of this the current system that constructs binaries. Although some intellectuals feel limited by the current system that constructs binaries of West/East or rules of contestation according to paradigms of nationalist resistance, others find ways out of this construction. The intellectual/activist writer breaks away from this position by their engagement with the people rather than writing from an ivory tower. As we realize the importance of the intellectual/activist and writer for awakening and educating a movement of contesting oppression, it is imperative to ask how does one become an activist intellect? What are the turning points or scenarios that trigger them to change? While the constructed west vs east binary has negative effect on some intellectuals leading them to perhaps hesitate taking action, the mere fact of witnessing oppression inflicted on others prompts a more activist stance towards injustice. Therefore, for several intellectuals, the turning point that transforms them from a static position into agents of resistance and change is the moment when they think of themselves as witnesses of oppression willing to give their testimony by writing.

II. The Static Position:

The native intellectual-activist portrayed in a number of literary works encounters a difficult situation while trying to come to terms with the challenges of associating with both the West and East. Many of these figures have had some sort of connection with the West, either in their education, work, or both. By examining three texts in this section, I attempt to study the possibility of reconciling the conflicting sides of the self that some figures may face. I argue that because these intellectual characters do not truly break free of the bonds of the constructed binaries, they never evolve into a progressive form of resistance. In this section, I argue that the following figures resist being forced into a West/East binary system, they struggle to find a "Third Space", they are torn between West and East, but at the end, even after they make their choice, they are left in a complicated situation. The three figures are Olunde (or Soyinka), Changez, and Qayyum whom appear respectively in Wole Soyinka's play Death and the King's Horseman (1975), Mohsin Hamid's novel The Reluctant Fundamentalist (2007), and Kamila Shamsie's novel A God in Every Stone (2014).

Starting with Wole Soyinka's play Death and the King's Horseman, it can be examined to show how an intellectual can come to terms with the challenges of associating with both the West and the homeland. My main point is that Soyinka's voice, as an African intellectual

educated in the west, can be traced in this play taking an ambivalent stance between East and West. The play tells Elesin's story, the horseman of an important Yoruba chief, and how the British colonizer prevents his ritual suicide. Soyinka's Author's Note in the preface complicates the play as it cautions from thinking of it as a "clash of cultures" (3). Soyinka affirms that reading the confrontation in the play as "clash of cultures" between West and East would reduce its value and change the intended meaning (3). Rather, the confrontation in this play is individual human action "which is Elesin and the universe of the Yoruba mind" (3). Unexpectedly in a postcolonial text, by reducing the play to an individualistic arena Soyinka does not want the source of friction to be seen as one between colonizers and colonized. And so, before the play is even read, we are given a hint that Soyinka wants to avoid a dialectical dichotomy between East and West. So the questions is: what is Soyinka insinuating here? That the tragic events of the play are not the fault of the colonial institution, but maybe the faults of individuals? This may seem like taking the side of the colonizer by finding excuses in order not to blame them. His note asks that you don't read the drama as an attack on the colonizer as the source of problems, but look at it from a personal level. Soyinka wants to stand by the side of the colonizer, taking away some of the blame, assuming that the suicide was going to happen no matter what, and the colonizer was secondary to the terrible events. However, he cannot help himself but reveal that the colonizer is a problem and contributor to the escalation of the number of dead bodies. It can also be a message for the colonized people to commit themselves to their traditions and culture just as Olunde did.

Reaching a firm conclusion in the play that Soyinka is siding with the colonizer is difficult to find, and despite the fact that he does not wholly blame the colonizer for the tragic events, he does not refrain from condemning them for other faults and hence showing that he doesn't side with them. For example, Even though Mr. Pilkings, as a representative of the colonial administration, claims that his purpose for saving Elesin from suicide is merely in the lines of civilizing of the Yoruba, Soyinka suggests that the real objective is Mr. Pilkings' narcissism. Even Mr. Pilkings' wife Jane tells Olunde that her husband is preventing the suicide for him but by showing his amazement in reply, Olunde questions the colonial motivations. The motifs of Mr. Pilkings are explicit when he declares: "I don't have to stop anything. If they want to throw themselves off the top of a cliff or prison themselves for the sake of some barbaric custom what is that to me?" (2.25).

In this conversation between Jane and Olunde, Soyinka articulates the position of the African intellectual, such as himself and Olunde, in the East versus West dialectic. Despite the fact that Olunde spent four

years studying medicine in England, he proclaims the Yoruba tradition by agreeing to replace his father in the ritual suicide and concurrently showing the limitedness of Western effect on native intellectuals. Contesting Western thought, Olunde tells Jane that "You [the colonizers] have no respect for what you do not understand" (4. 41). This statement has two purposes, the first is to show that even though he is highly educated in England, the commitment of the native intellectual remains to his indigenous culture. Additionally, it shows that since he, the native intellectual, has the ability to understand both East and West, he becomes torn between the West and his people. Thus, through Olunde's statement Soyinka urges the West to appreciate and accept what they do not understand instead of taking an arrogant position. Not only a state of acceptance of differences, but perhaps engaging in a productive dialectic communication reaching a synthesis.

Soyinka's contest of the colonizer is evident through many places in the play, but his Note becomes a cause for confusion as it seems he is unwilling to overtly accuse the colonizer for the tragedy. Soyinka's statement in his Note that the "Colonial factor is an incident, a catalytic incident" (3) demonstrates his position here which is that at the end, Elesin committed suicide and there was no way of preventing the tragedy as the Yoruba will carry on doing their traditions, with or without British intervention. The Note does not undermine colonial role in the tragedy, as in fact it did escalate the problem from having one to having two dead bodies. Given these points, it is safe to claim that Soyinka's torment between his people and culture on one side and his Western education on the other is behind the obscurity of his Note and reluctant positon to fully accuse the colonizer for the tragedy.

Another character who felt tormented between his Western side and the Eastern other is Changez. Mohsin Hamid's novel The Reluctant Fundamentalist employs the role of the native intellectual or activist in the main character Changez. The main issue is that Changez is limited by the discourse of the current capitalist system into a state of disorder leading to constructed binaries of West/East. Nishat Haider affirms in "Globalization, US Imperialism and Fundamentalism" that "Changez's embracing of religious fundamentalism…[is] a sort of response…to the disparity, futility and nihilism of late capitalism" (Haider 225). Nonetheless, Changez remains "a lover of America" (1) and concurrently smiles as he feels "remarkably pleased" (72) at the collapse of the World Trade Center. These conflicting positions within himself portray his inability to reconcile the two sides of himself all the way to the end of the novel.

When Changez says: “I am a lover of America” (1) during the teatime with the Stranger, it becomes clear as one reads on that he is unable to comfortably position himself in one camp or the other. He does not feel the need to hate America in order to love Pakistan, however, the binaries of “late capitalism” insist that there is no alternative space where one could challenge neoliberalism and still remain out of the binary line drawn between West and East. In fact, this can be clarified in the non-fictional statement by former U.S president George W. Bush back in 2001 remarking that nations “will be held accountable for inactivity,” and that “you're either with us or against us” (CNN). Before the terrorist attacks of September 11 Changez actually wanted to be an American, in fact, in many instances he proudly thought of himself as a New Yorker. However, after the terrorist attacks, he began to notice the fallacious binary line drawn between West and East as polarized aspects. Seemingly, the Western discourse after the attacks leads Changez to realize how the system drives towards a consistent uniformity of the status quo, which he as a Pakistani Muslim doesn’t qualify for. Haider asserts that the novel “perceives fundamentalism not only in militant Islamism, but also in the West’s unselfconscious belief in its own social and economic system” (225-6).

Chagez’s new realizations made his life more complex as he says: “I did not know where I stood on so many issues of consequence; I lacked a stable core. I was not certain where I belonged–in New York, in Lahore, in both, in neither” (148). His education, work, and his love Erica (and America) were in New York, while his family and national identity were in Lahore. It was difficult for Changez to keep his loyalty in one space or the other; he believed that due to the lack of a “core” he divided his allegiance between the two spaces and the result was the breakdown of that core.

Apparently, before the attacks Changez believed in “hybridity”, as Homi Bhabha refers to it, which accepts the personal affiliations to exist in a “Third Space”, neither west nor east. Conversely, after the terrorist attacks this understanding of a “Third Space” vanished from his mind and he began to think within the paradigms of a binary relationship between his homeland and America. Thus, he questioned his position as a Muslim Pakistani in the middle of Capitalist America figuring he must be the modern-day janissary. As a Janissary, his work at Underwood Samson strengthens America while it supports the Indian war on his homeland (151). He is disgusted to think that his work in Underwood Samson involves being a tool in the hands of America destroying his homeland. Therefore, Changez decides to go back home and use his knowledge as a subversive tool against American neoliberalism which leaves him at where Mr. Bush positions him: “either with us or against us”. Changez was unable to reach a

reconciling conclusion of the Western and Eastern sides of himself but remained “a lover of America” (1).

It takes some figures, like Changez, a long time to realizing their position as tools in the hands of the west or the colonizer. The affiliation of some characters with either the West or East raise different tensions demanding the activist to fall into a binary situation. However, with time, the main character of A God in Every Stone, Qayyum, seems to have found himself in situations where the two dichotomies are not as clear cut as he thought they would be. Kamila Shamsie’s novel A God in Every Stone tells the story Qayyum Gul, a loyal soldier in the British Indian Army from Peshawar who loses an eye in World War One and returns home due to his injury. Shamsie takes her readers on a journey to examine the inner conflicts of loyalty between East and West faced by the protagonist. In the beginning, Qayyum seems to be unaware of this binary situation of affiliation and thus thinks within a conclusive wholeness joining Pashtuns and English together without realizing any contradiction. Gradually, he realizes the polarization of the two and struggles with mending the two sides of him, the one proud to be a Pashtun tribesman and the other proud to be British Indian soldier.

When Qayyum was injured in Ypres, he was hospitalized in the Royal Pavilion and this had great effect on him. As he says: “The king-Emperor himself had sent strict instructions that no one should treat a black…soldier as a lesser man. The thought of the King-Emperor made Qayyum rest a hand against his chest and bow his head” (55). Qayyum admired this equality of treatment between the Indians and the British and glorified the king for this equality. However, when he experiences a number of injustices Qayyum slowly questions his understanding of the presumed equality, nevertheless, he is unable to discuss such matters with anyone else and keeps these challenging questions within himself. Later, when Qayyum and his brother listen to a story told by the Storytellers about Hadda Mulla’s jihad against the English, Qayyum walked away from the Storyteller because “for a moment he pictured himself in the uniform of the British Indian Army, and what he felt was shame” (119). In a struggle, Qayyum cannot think of himself without his British Indian Army uniform however, he cannot allow himself to kill his own tribesmen. In the Storytellers tale of conflict, the struggle between East and West reaches the inner experience of Qayyum forcing a clash between his two sides, a British soldier and a Pashtun. At this stage it is difficult to choose one side over the other, but he realizes that as the events escalade, he must make a choice because it is impossible for him to reconcile the two sides of himself. Accordingly, Qayyum is forced into this binary system and chooses, in a nationalist resistance stance, to side with his people

in a struggle against the colonizer and finally realizing that the English only see themselves as masters, not equals (192).

This state of nationalist resistance is complicated when the line between the two dichotomies became fuzzy and obscure. To illustrate this statement, during the unarmed revolution Qayyum becomes surprised by the "unexpected love he felt for the uniformed men of the British Indian Army, seeing in each one the comrades he had lost at Vipers, and himself, too" and when the soldiers "refused to fire on the unarmed men ranged against them he felt terror on their behalf rather than any sense of victory" (212). At this moment, Qayyum must face these tensions while challenging the colonizer, "and so, rather than enmity, it was love he felt; love and pity…pity for those Indian soldiers whose minds were enslaved" (212). Therefore, seeing Indian soldiers challenging the revolution places Qayyum in a complex position in terms of his nationalistic understanding leaving him unable to fit this situation under a binary one.

III. A Framework Towards an Active Role:

Fires on the Border (2013) by Rosemary Hennessy raised some interesting questions which initiated the argument in this essay about moving towards an active role for intellectuals. Hennessy investigates the responsibilities of an intellectual-activist who witnesses oppression and she asks about the witness' obligation to speak for and represent a collective group encountering injustice (70). Proceeding from this standpoint I focus on three intellectual writers to situate their struggle against injustice within the framework of "bearing witness" as Hennessy refers to it. In this section I show how working within the framework of "bearing witness" for native intellectuals was a progressive method to break free of the constructed West/East binary. Three African writers: Ken Saro-Wiwa, Wangari Maathai, and Chinua Achebe, succeed in forming a progressive resistance by adopting this framework. So, rather than confining themselves within the binary which is constructed by the West, it is preferable for native intellectuals to break free of this dichotomy and take an active role by setting for themselves a new path of resistance. This path should be a new way of thought which does not conform to the aforementioned binary and hence shift their paradigms to an active resistance within a different framework. I have purposely chosen to examine two non-fictional works in order to extract the commonalities which can be found among them; specifically, how intellectuals go about transforming theory into practice in real life. Certainly, such transformation cannot be achieved without the intellectual's engagement with the common people. In fact, in order to have the oppressed people believe in the struggle for liberation, Paulo Freire, in

Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970), suggests that "The correct method for a revolutionary leadership to employ in the task of liberation…lies in dialogue" and hence, transforming theory into "praxis" (67).

In order to understand the content of his detention diary A Month and a Day (1995), Ken Saro-Wiwa briefly described the historical situation of Nigeria at that time; and specifically the political stance towards minorities and material minerals to be found in their regions. Before Nigeria's neocolonial state, Saro-Wiwa says that the regions of mineral extractions were "entitled to at least 50 per cent of such proceeds, in addition to rent and royalties" (55). However, during the military administration the Nigerian constitution "left the ethnic minorities totally unprotected in terms of their economic resources and their culture… [and] by 1980 the Federal government had left the oil-bearing areas with only 1.5 per cent of the proceeds of oil production" (55). This massive drop from 50 per cent to 1.5 per cent leaves the regions of extractions very impoverished. For example, a land rich in oil resources such as the Ogoni land had an insignificant amount of revenues for the development of their area.

Ken Saro-Wiwa was a witness to the different injustices done to his people and land. He bore witness to Shell and Chevron oil pipe leaks poisoning the Ogoni land and water, and consequently the Ogoni people who ate and drank from that land. According to Rob Nixon in Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor (2011), the fact that Saro-Wiwa witnessed these poisonings is the main provocation which triggered in him the desire to embrace the life of protest (103). Moreover, Saro-Wiwa proclaims yet another reason for his persistence in adopting this role as a representative of the oppressed; he asserts that "the fact that the victims of this injustice were too timid or ignorant to cry out against it was painful in the extreme. It was unacceptable. It had to be corrected at no matter what cost. To die fighting to right the wrong would be the greatest gift of life!" (19). It is understandable that as a result of witnessing injustice and oppression inflicted on the Ogoni people Saro-Wiwa's emotions are stirred as he feels pain to that end; and therefore, he cannot help but adopt the role of an intellectual-activist.

After being triggered by "bearing witness", the intellectual-activist goes into the process of identity transformation, in this case Saro-Wiwa decides to leave the life of a politician and businessman and adopts the life of a writer-activist. Discussing the benefits of his struggle, he says that "the most important thing for me is that I've used my talents as a writer to enable the Ogoni people to confront their tormentors. I was not able to do it as a politician or a businessman. My writing did it… I think I have the moral victory" (xiv-xv). The feelings which triggered Saro-Wiwa's activism in the first place were necessary

for him to accept this new identity. He willingly left behind his materially better and easier life for a cause which touches his emotions as an Ogoni man. Saro-Wiwa is not only satisfied with his new identity, but he is joyful about it recognizing it gave him a moral victory over the neocolonial oppressor. With this new adopted writer-activist position he is no longer an object of history, rather he acquired agency and subjectivity. His agency comes in the form of mobilizing and enabling the Ogoni people to confront the oppressor.

The process which Saro-Wiwa took in order to transform theory into practice (mobilizing the common people) involved him moving away from thinking within the framework of West/East dichotomy and towards being a co-founder of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). Hennessy asserts that "to be an organizer [of a] campaign is to bear witness… [which involves] responsibility to others and carry their message to the wider community" (69). Through MOSOP, first, he was able to awaken and educate the Ogoni people, and then he successfully mobilized them to move for their cause, and finally attracted international attention. With the MOSOP leadership, the Ogoni were able to demand political autonomy and the right to use part of Ogoni resources for the development of their land. Finally, and most importantly, transforming theory into practice entails the activist's engagement with the common people to achieve authentic success. Saro-Wiwa affirms that "the writer must be…the intellectual man of action. He must take part in mass organizations He must establish direct contact with the people and resort to the strength of African literature" (81). Saro-Wiwa effectively employs writing and literature, which directly interact with the people, as tools for struggle to achieve change in his society. This method of utilizing African literature and writing to awaken the people and mobilize them is a technique used by a number of African intellectuals to contest different forms of oppression. Writing is one of the first steps towards the vital establishment of mass organizations to achieve these previously mentioned goals.

One of these mass organizations that make an effort to mobilize the people in Africa is Kenya's Green Belt Movement (GBM), co-founded by Wangari Maathai. This movement was established in 1977 to save Kenya from deforestation and soil erosion. The GBM would have had a much easier job in their environmental efforts if they were located at a more democratic state, however, Kenya was under an authoritarian neocolonial ruling (Nixon 129). Kenya's capitalist neocolonial state was into developmental plans which required selling off public forests and building commercial projects on them. As a result of the capitalist's negligent position towards the Kenyan environment, the deforestation and soil erosion led to loss of fertile soil.

Matthai, like previously mentioned intellectuals was fixed in the binary position between the capitalist West and the East. She was challenged in her authenticity, so she strived to prove her African-ness with a method which doesn't reject all that is Western. As an intellectual, she was able to use her western relations and what she learned in the west to transform her position to an active one. The matter of loss of fertile soil is precisely what triggered Maathai's identity transformation. For example, she recounts in her memoir Unbowed (2006) how she was sad to notice that diseases and malnutrition were common in children of the central region of Kenya (123). "This was an eye-opener for me," Maathai declares, "since that is where I come from and I knew from personal experience that the central region was one of the most fertile in Kenya… [This] land previously used to produce food for people to eat" (123). Affection plays a great role here as Maathai reflects on her personal knowledge of that area being a fruit basket of Kenya, but unfortunately, now, due to the subversive projects of the Kenyan draconian regime, the children of her country suffer from malnutrition. Maathai begins to "see" that the greatest group of people damaged by this are people of the rural class. Additionally, in a scenario discussing the deterioration of the environment with rural women, Maathai suddenly begins to "see" and consequently assume her role as an intellectual-activist; she says "It suddenly became clear. Not only was livestock industry threatened by a deteriorating environment, but I, my children, my students, my fellow citizens, and my entire country would pay the price" (124-5). It troubled Maathai to think of how her close societal circle (such as her family) and even the larger societal circle (such as fellow citizens) were in danger because the government was mismanaging the Kenyan forests and rural lands. During this significant moment, the system of government oppression is revealed to Maathai, and she recognized that their mismanagement presented great danger on future generations in general and on rural women specifically.

These shocks that Maathai "witnessed" affected her and led to the co-foundation of the GBM in 1977, hence, we begin to see her rejecting the position of an object and becoming a subject of history. She was very practical and organized; she began by doing her research, and then started working without delay. By the year 2004, Maathai received the Nobel Peace Prize and by then "the movement had created 6,000 local tree nurseries and employed 100,000 women to plant 30 million trees" (Nixon 129). This movement worked in two ways, first, it employed poor rural women and second, it saved the Kenyan environment by planting millions of native trees. On the mention of employment, it is imperative to keep in mind that class and gender play a chief role in Maathai's movement as it is a mostly female movement. It is true that the movement may be lead and co-founded

by educated women, but Maathai explicates that the GBM was an inspiration of rural women (92).

The rural women who were the inspiration of this movement were never out of the scenes in Maathai's Unbowed. As part of her intellectual activism, Maathai shows commitment to the people by being present with them at different scenarios. Maathai recounts many instances when she gets down on her knees in the dirt and works on planting with rural women despite the fact that she holds a PhD. She also came to realize that activism must be grounded in the community, and that communication must be at a level all members of the community can understand (133). For the most part, Maathai transformed theory into practice in two ways: first, by the previously mentioned struggle with the Kenyan government to fight deforestation and plant millions of trees. Second, her memoir Unbowed serves as a symbolic work of a writer-activist inspiring others to awaken, move, and take action for their different causes. Maathai's writing is not only an educational contribution for the Kenyan society, but also for activists around the globe.

As mentioned above, African writers tend to utilize African literature to awaken the people as a technique to contest different forms of oppression. And therefore, I consider this statement to be most applicable on the situation of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe in his novel Things Fall Apart (1958). While Achebe too was left in the binary position between West and East, he was able to break from it and use his western knowledge –writing African literature in English– to take the position of the people, subjective of his western side. In the introduction of Things Fall Apart, Kwame Anthony Appiah says that the novel was situated in the villages east of the Niger River just before the 20th century (xv-xvi). He adds, during this period, many instances that were addressed in the novel were accurate. For example, Appiah says that the Christian missionary began their activity at the end of the 19th century and the brutality of the British colonizer in "pacifying" these regions took place around the beginning of the 20th century (xvi). However, the trigger for Achebe's transformation and assuming of his agency occurs mostly because of "bearing witness" to the oppression of African people linked to Conrad's novel Heart of Darkness (1899) as well as other European views about Africa. Reading Heart of Darkness, amongst other texts, was the trigger that changed Achebe, hence, provoking him to "write back to the colonizer" and take action in the same form or field of struggle.

In his article "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's Heart of Darkness" (1977), Achebe argues that "Heart of Darkness projects the image of Africa as 'the other world,' the antithesis of Europe and therefore of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and

refinement are finally mocked by triumphant bestiality" (1785). The main problem for him is that Conrad depicted a negative image of Africa which goes hand in hand with the European idea of "the other". Achebe was irritated at the fact that Africa was reduced to a mute place and its people become silent objects of history. He asks "can nobody see the preposterous and perverse arrogance in thus reducing Africa to the role of props for the break-up of one petty European mind?" (1790). Accordingly, as a form of resistance to the western discourse, Things Fall Apart comes as Achebe's contribution assuming agency in history and re-writing of that history of his people which was distorted by colonial literature.

In Achebe's attempt to assume agency, he contests colonial literature by contradicting European racist assumptions, particularly ones reinforced by Conrad. For example, in order to show that Africans are not as savage and primitive as Europeans claim, Things Fall Apart draws on the sophisticated discourse in Igbo culture. For instance, in a rich and subtle manner, Unoka interacts with his neighbor who comes to collect a debt. The narrator says that "Among the Igbo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten" (4). Moreover, Achebe rejects European definitions of Africans by delineating the complex laws and customs of Igbo in sharing palm-wine and kola nuts (3) and what that entails for the speakers. In Igbo culture, it is not acceptable to speak of the debt directly. Instead, Unoka share's a kola nut with his neighbor and they speak of other matters before debt is lastly addressed. Definitely, by stressing the complexity of Igbo culture, Achebe is able to transform theory of resistance into practice giving voice to the muted Africa in response to the epistemic oppression he witnessed in Heart of Darkness.

IV. Conclusion:

The first three native intellectuals struggle to reconcile the Western and Eastern side of themselves. However, they have proven that the situation is not as easy as one may assume it to be. There are always complications for the intellectuals which prevent them from choosing one side over the other. Soyinka (or Olunde) feels that he should position himself with his people and traditions, but he does not blame the colonizer for all the tragic events altogether. Changez believes he finally found his "core" by siding with Pakistan but he admits that he still loves America. This makes him in a complex place if we were to depend on Mr. Bush's two binaries, and so Changez rejects this binary by remaining a lover of America. Finally, Qayyum believes that he found his place in the struggle against the colonizer. However, his situation is complicated by seeing soldiers of the British Indian Army

on the other side of the struggle. The native intellectual is always at a challenge in trying to associate with both West and East.

Overall, all three African intellectual-writers mentioned in the second section of the discussion took their journey towards becoming intellectual-activists by first passing through a phase of "bearing witness". When these intellectuals witnessed various oppression, their emotions led to discontent about the injustices inflicted on their people triggering change in their identities. So, when the system of oppression was revealed to them, they assumed agency and situated themselves as representatives carrying a message to the wider community in defense of the oppressed people. Saro-Wiwa mobilized the people after he felt frustrated at witnessing his people and land poisoned by western oil companies and a complacent regime. Also, Maathai became annoyed to witness a fertile rural land become infertile leading to the malnutrition of its people and thus she organized protests to stop the government's deforestation projects. Finally, Achebe was bothered as he witnessed in Heart of Darkness a racist epistemic oppression of Africa, thus comes his resistance in Things Fall Apart.

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