

AFRICAN POLITICS, AFRICAN LITERATURES: THOUGHTS ON MAHMOOD MAMDANI'S CIT- IZEN AND SUBJECT AND WOLE SOYINKA'S THE OPEN SORE OF A CONTINENT

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It has become fashionable these days to be critical of nationalism and the ideology that ties land to blood and identity in a seamless narrative, where the relationship is that of a primordial bond. The break-up of many national entities in different parts of the globe underpins and – some will say, validates – this trend. In the context of Anglo-American social theory and cultural criticism, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* comes readily to mind. Anderson argues that modern nations came to be as a consequence, in part, of the development of print capitalism in Europe. For Anderson, the rise of print capitalism made possible a new model of individual and collective self-understanding in post-Reformation Europe. If the reordering of Christian theological worldview occasioned a new way of processing reality and the subject's place in the scheme of things, it also generated a new set of questions with regard to the intricate dialectic of self and other, the individual and the collective. Where Christendom had in theology a ready thread with which to suture extensive communities together in a deep-felt allegiance to one God, the increasing secularization of the eighteenth century forced a new set of questions to the surface. Community, then, needed to be imagined and sustained by means of a different social and phenomenological mechanism. It is this vacuum that the ideology of nationhood came to fill. Nations, then, are constructed to answer particular pressures: they do not exist as organic entities outside of the conjunctural pressures that called them into being, and keeps them in the collective imaginary.

By and large, current Anglo-American social theory and cultural criticism retains this basic claim. Although individual theorists might take issues with some of the details of Anderson's book, they share with him the basic idea that national identities are constructed, not natural; that the nation is neither primordial nor immutable. Yet, in the attempt to go beyond ontologizations of national identities and instead point to their "constructedness," there is a danger of losing sight of different modes of construction. By this I mean the historical co-ordinates of particular constructions, the ensemble of features that are specific to different kinds of nations, different modernities.¹ To be sure, Anderson himself is not guilty of this kind of reductive constructivism. However, the rhetoric of much of recent cultural criticism – especially those allegedly informed by poststructuralist critiques of essentialist thought – often slips into a blanket suspicion of nationalism as a theoretical principle. I write as someone

who has learnt a lot from contemporary Anglo- American critical theory; indeed, Anderson's analysis of nationalism, his linking of it to issues of print literacy and colonial hangover, is broadly compatible with the story Mamdani tells in *Citizen and Subject*. *Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (1996). At the same time, it is difficult to accept without qualification the conclusions most often drawn from the critique of nationalism in current Anglo- American criticism. Against this background, Mamdani's *Citizen and Subject* is thought-provoking, providing as it does a plausible account of the specific mode of construction of those entities we call African nation- states. By the lights of the book, it is possible to see the sense in which a perfunctory rejection of nationalism – understood as a catch-all term – may be unproductive, where sub-Saharan Africa is concerned. In turn, this new seeing can have important consequences for our understanding of the past and present of African literature and the criticism that contemplates it.

In what follows, I am not so much interested in the veracity of the details of Mamdani's historical reconstruction. I expect that such assessments will be undertaken by political scientists, historians and sociologists who are better equipped to take on the quantitative empirical basis of the analysis. In discussing *Citizen and Subject* here, my primary concern is with three basic issues: (i) the conceptual implications of the story he tells for ongoing discussions of nationalism and nationalist discourses; (ii) the mode of thinking that it takes to view such a story as a useful one to tell; and (iii) the ways of thinking about modern African letters that such a story may be made to facilitate. My thoughts on the book derive from a specific angle of interest, and I am in effect drawing it into an area of inquiry with which it is not directly concerned. It is perhaps a sign of the book's richness that it speaks to me in a way the author himself may not have intended. If interdisciplinarity is indeed a worthwhile direction in the humanities and social sciences, I see a possible value in teasing out of this book of political theory a worthwhile direction for African literary studies. Being a literary critic – a mere reader of words and their constitution into texts – my aim is to use Mamdani's book to think about what we literary critics see as our task to ponder: namely, cultures and representations, their modes of constitution and reproduction. In this discussion, then, I want briefly to explore the implications of Mamdani's book for a contemporary materialist consideration of the *context* of what we teach as "modern African literature" in the literary establishments of the so-called first world as well as the third. If we say that the failure of African states lies in their inability to achieve or sustain genuine democratic societies, what are the conceptual issues brought to light by that failure? On the empirical force of black Africa's political failures, what sorts of questions might one raise about the normative status that "democracy" as a mode of social management has acquired since at least the end of World War II? And what, at any rate, do these questions have to do with literature and criticism?

Citizen and Subject is a quantitative empirical study of the past and present of

African nation-states as well as a reflective looking ahead into what the future might look like. Mamdani's analysis might be said to be an account of where – to adapt Chinua Achebe's famous metaphor – the rain began to beat us, and why it might do so for some time longer. Building part of his argument on case-studies of Uganda on one hand, and South African migrant workers on the other, Mamdani tries to see how tribal self-understandings are an integral part – neither innately wrong or right, neither inherently "progressive" nor "conservative" – of the internal politics of African nations. To use the example with which I am most familiar, it is a common fact that in Nigeria, majority of "the people" see themselves first and foremost in terms of ethnic identifications; the nation, by contrast, is seen as alien – often threatening. By extension, the institution of the nation (and the rights that should come with it) is not necessarily grasped by its putative citizens as theirs on the terms of juridical entitlement or any kind of contractual obligation.

One of the things *Citizen and Subject* undertakes to do is to historicize this phenomenon, tying it to the legacy of colonial rule and what Mamdani calls "the mode of incorporation" of subject peoples into "the arena of colonial power." The accent here is on "mode of incorporation" into, not exclusion from, central power. According to Mamdani, the colonial governments in Africa actively promoted ethnic allegiances in subject peoples in order to reinforce putatively "primordial" identifications tied to tribe and clan. To do this, they supported the native authorities they found in the different communities, and sometimes gave them more powers than those native institutions had within the traditional social order. In doing this, the claim was that the colonial administrations were "respecting" native institutions, but the motive was to rule from a distance and with the complicity of local chiefs. What the British called indirect rule, then, Mamdani calls "decentralized despotism." Britain, writes Mamdani:

...keenly glimpsed authoritarian possibilities in culture. Not simply content with salvaging every authoritarian tendency from the heterogeneous historical flow that was pre-colonial Africa, Britain creatively sculpted tradition and custom as and when the need arose. In this endeavor, other European powers followed it. By this dual process, part salvage and part sculpting, they crystallized a range of usually district level Native authorities, each armed with a whip and protected by the halo of custom. (49)

The implication Mamdani draws from this is that the form of rule that colonialism introduced is the "bifurcated state," that is, a social formation wherein there is decentralization on the surface, each community living within "customary laws." But this decentralization actually serves a higher central power – that of the colonial state itself, grounded on the assumption of racial supremacy. Progressively in the early 20th century, educated Africans started gaining entry into this central body, but still at a subordinate level. The nationalist movement

is on these terms a struggle by those educated Africans to "deracialize" the central body and constitute it into the nation-state. What formal independence achieved, then, is in Mamdani's phrase a "deracialization without democratization": that is, the nation-state is now run by natives, but the decentralized level that is subordinated to the central one remains the preserve of "customary laws." At this level, individuals are subjects, not citizens; the immediate locus of allegiance is the customary chief or community head, not the "President" or "head of state." *Citizen and Subject* goes so far as to suggest that South Africa's apartheid system is a version of this model; the "homelands," on this model, constitute the native authority that is subordinated to the despotism of the central power, one that refuses to name itself as such.

Sub-Saharan Africa is one place where the failure of the modern nation-state is incontestable, bringing with it violent assertions of various forms of ethnic particularisms. Such assertions undercut the fiction of primordial national identities, and Anglo-American critical theory has had a lot to say on this. Yet, it would be easy to show that this is not a new discovery – Frantz Fanon's "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," or Amílcar Cabral's "National Liberation and Culture" never confused the nation with some naturalized essence. But quite apart from this, there is a tendency to easy generalization in the critiques of nationalism currently fashionable. It is for this reason that I find the interplay of specificity and theory in *Citizen and Subject* particularly instructive. There is a sense in which theory, if it is understood as an attempt to formulate *a priori* stipulations about human interaction – that is, outside of or beyond datable interactions – can only be thick on assertions, thin on the evidence of history and brute realities. It may well be that abstractions are in themselves useful because they can function as a norm of what we should aim to reach. Precisely because they so function, however, it should follow that when we confront situations where the norm is unintelligible to the real human beings who are supposed to aspire to it, theory is called upon to reassess its parameters. As I understand *Citizen and Subject*, to reassess the parameters of conventional thinking about modern identities and modern nations is to entertain two possibilities. The first is that ethnicity may mean different things in different contexts; the second, that the question of the regressiveness (or otherwise) of nationalism on one hand, ethnic self-assertions, on the other, may in fact be substantively hollow.

Posed less awkwardly, what Mamdani's book shows is that, with regard to how individuals view themselves and their place in the world, the bifurcated logic of African states renders the two terms "nationality" and "ethnicity" somewhat mutually exclusive. Surely, where the terms under discussion have not been adequately pinned down, it makes little sense to talk about their status relative to abstract notions of the good and the bad. On these terms, the really useful question is the adventure of such ideas as the nation, the tribe, and indeed, democracy, in specific societies. If Mamdani's story is accurate, a comprehensive account of these terms with regard to modern Africa shows their profound

but contradictory interdependence. From this contradictory interdependence, Mamdani draws out the limitations of various African nationalist movements. Yet, his procedure is ultimately one of sublation, not simple negation. That is, his critique of nationalism is in the service of a deeper historical thesis. Stated simply, the thesis is that the nation-state in Africa is a formal legacy of colonialism, one that is far more resilient than politicians and their apologists care to acknowledge. For him, the challenge of African governments is that of bridging the gap between the rural (where customary law prevails) and the urban (the preserve of civil society). Viewed this way, ethnicity is to be de-emphasized so that nationality can acquire content and meaning. Looked at this way, the nationalist movement is far from being outdated: the nation is indeed a fiction, but it is a fiction that needs to be more coherently constructed, not set aside.

This mode of thinking is more interesting than abstract rejections or defenses of nationalism as rhetoric or structure of feeling. I can imagine a number of ways in which Mamdani's call for de-emphasizing ethnic identity in the pursuit of national identity may be problematic. It can also be argued that the opposition of ethnicity to nationality may be needlessly schematic, at least with regard to some African countries. On this question, it will be interesting to see how far Mamdani's opposition proves to be valid. Here however, my interest is in the uses his account does have. One illustration of its use can be found in the political crisis that engulfed Nigeria in the late nineties – the situation addressed by Wole Soyinka in *The Open Sore of a Continent: A Personal Narrative of the Nigerian Crisis* (1996).² Let me therefore turn, for a moment, to Soyinka's book. In *Open Sore*, Soyinka suggests that the entity Nigeria is a fiction that has a meaning and can continue to have that meaning. Like any product of the human mind and labor, the nation can have an essence precisely *because* it was made up. In this sense, the nation's constructedness is enabling: it devolves on human agency, because those who happen to have been born there can shape, reshape, or destroy it. Thus, for Soyinka, the relevant question is not "What is a nation," but "when is a nation"? We can see here an attitude to nation-hood and nation-building that is closer to Mamdani's in at least this respect, closer than the simple rejection of nationalist aspirations and discourses in recent Anglo-American theory.

Open Sore also lays stress on the way ethnic groups take up notions of a primordial identity as a way of coping with circumstances that threaten what they see as their collective welfare. Soyinka offers an explanation of the loud return of ethnic tensions in the aftermath of June 93. Here, he has in mind the feeling in southern Nigeria that northern (Hausa) ethnic chauvinism was at the core of the Nigerian crisis, and needs therefore to be countered with Yoruba ethnic counter-assertion. It is a consequence of the polemical nature of Soyinka's book that he ends up almost collapsing northern Nigerian leaders with the human mass that goes by the ethnic tag Hausa. Where he explains why southerners across the classes were against the cancellation of the 1993 elections by the military government then in power, the location of the Hausa common people

is not easily perceivable in his account. Thus, he does not quite wrestle with the question of why northern common folk may have been in support of the northern elite during the crisis.

Soyinka's text is careful to point out that "the people" – and we shall return to this phrase soon – are often used against one another by politicians in power, and he means this to apply to the entire populace. Clearly, then, he is not singling out any particular group for demonization. As he puts it:

Let us hasten to absolve the Nigerian populace, the ruled, almost in its entirety, from this regression into narrowed entities. We must identify the cause where it manifestly is, where it is always to be found, and that is a minority that constantly plays up innately innocuous differences, be they of ethnicity or religion, in order to set one section against another and thus assure itself of political control (128).

Yet, what is interesting about this passage is the dual movement by means of which Soyinka poses a problem and immediately disposes of it by naming a culprit. After rightly raising to the surface of his text a commonplace fact – that ethnic chauvinism is rampant in the nation – Soyinka immediately displaces the challenge of that fact by blaming the nation's civilian and military leaders. In this way, the demon of narrow ethnic identifications and polarization is rhetorically exorcised, the blame for its intrusions placed on rulers who, in Soyinka's words, "set one section against another and thus assure [themselves] of political control."

I am not entirely satisfied with this account, primarily because its implication is condescending in a way Soyinka does not intend. To represent the people as simple dupes of their leaders evacuates them of a certain level of agency – that is, a basic capacity to make decisions on their own and to act on those decisions. Moreover, it problematically makes the intellectual the one who knows, more or less as European colonialists used to claim to know "natives" in their malleable simplicity. We may choose to tackle this issue in Marxist terms by, for instance, using Louis Althusser's account of the dynamics of ideology and subjectivity. If we adapt the Althusserian account for our present purposes, we would get something like this: "the people" know exactly what they don't like in their situation, what they don't quite grasp is the deep-structure and full range of that situation. In short, what "the people" know is not false, but it remains at the level of experience, the *necessarily limited* perception based on felt stimuli.

This can get us a bit farther, but it still leaves "the people" in the role of the deluded. They are still objects whose recognition is at once a limitation; hidden from them is some deeper truth or reality, and the critic is the sovereign subject who knows what they miss and can name it "misrecognition." Evidently, then, even the Althusserian formulation stops short of taking on the native's specific

rationality on its own terms.³ Precisely because part of the impetus of African letters is to affirm the humanity and rationality previously denied African peoples, it is important that we take the actions of common folk respectfully enough as to accord it the status of an epistemological drama. We know by now some of those things our archives say about them – they are communal agrarians or pastoralists who have a way with drums; they are in all things religious, and so forth. When, as in Rwanda, "they" take to the streets and wreak the kind of havoc that negates our sense of basic humanity, they are indeed expressing their reality as bodies and minds.⁴ Even if – indeed, especially when – one disagrees with "their" understanding and actions, criticism has its job cut out for it, and good old moralism cannot be adequate to the job. To the extent that they make visible certain perceptions of social reality that should compel a reevaluation of what our books say (or want to say) about them, to that extent are the actions of common folk epistemological dramas.

Also worthy of note is the role the term "democracy" is made to play in Soyinka's book. In *Open Sore*, Soyinka presents the general reaction of majority of Nigerians as the people's voice in glorious self-assertion, a mass of humanity streaming into the streets to protest the election cancellation. Following Mamdani's analysis, it is possible to argue that "the people" were indeed protesting Babangida's action, but they were not necessarily doing so in the name of "democracy." What I am getting at here is the unoriginal claim that the very idea of democracy can be historicized. Such a historicization would reveal that democracy as an idea and a material ritual originated at a specific place and a specific time. That place, as is well known, is not black Africa. This is not to imply that pre-colonial African societies did not have structures and rituals of popular participation. It does mean that, as inner-content rather than mere form, democracy requires an apprehension of society and the state that logically could not have taken solid roots in sub-Saharan Africa. One way of clarifying this is to suggest that the college-educated civil servant in Lagos and the road-side hawker of oranges in the city are less likely to share a similar internalized confidence in nationhood and democracy than, say, the average American school-teacher and the average American trucker. Tied as it is to literacy and an internalized discourse that state structures are, as they say, by and for the people, democracy cannot be willed into being in the nation-states that resulted from the independence struggles of Africa. A state that was founded on colonial imposition, structured as a bifurcated one – that is, with "citizens" being the elite minority, and "subjects" the teeming populations held under customary laws – could not pretend for ever that its structures had any organic handle on "the people" and their self-understanding. Following this logic, it is consistent that African countries fail in their attempt at forging democratic societies, insofar as they retain the structures pointedly forged by the contingencies of colonial rule. Mamdani underscores this view when he writes: "Although its capacity to dominate grew through a dispersal of its own power, the colonial state claimed this process to be no more than a deference to local tradition and custom....The most important legacy of colonial rule... may lie in the inherited impediments

to democratization" (25).

We are thus back to Mamdani's historicization of the nation-state in modern Africa. Considering this book alongside Soyinka's, it is possible to see the ways in which the former's account takes us farther than Soyinka's furious prose. Unlike in Soyinka's activist/polemical prose, Mamdani's *Citizen and Subject* operates on a distinction between the burden of disentangling social processes through analysis, as against the ethical obligation of praising or denouncing it and, farther down the line, transforming it. We see this at work, for instance, in Mamdani's account of the urban inter-tribal violence that erupted in the early 1990s in post-emergency South Africa. In Mamdani's analysis, the flocking of South African hostel dwellers of Zulu ethnicity to the Inkatha Freedom Party was a choice the people made because the party offered them support from what they saw as ANC attempts to abolish the hostel system. For him, then, understanding this phenomenon requires a mode of thinking that seeks to go beyond abstract valuations – reactionary, self-defeating, revolutionary, or whatever – of their choice. In other words, Mamdani does not simply pronounce on what "the people" need to do to emancipate themselves, but begins by asking why the people chose what they did.

The procedure, in other words, is retroactive-explanatory and not simply normative-prescriptive: what intersection of circumstances gives logic to their course of action, and what are the consequences, in concrete terms, of their choice(s)? As he puts it:

Although material conditions do explain the constraints under which we make real choices in real life, they cannot by themselves explain the choices we do make within those constraints. The old argument between structure and agency, between sociological and historical constraint and human will, cannot be resolved simply by holding up one end of the pole (226).

We can take this point a step further. The same course of action may have both positive and negative consequences; on these terms, it is in the nature of social processes that human actions set off ripple effects such that the founding act cannot entirely control its impact or consequences. A book like Mamdani's *Citizen and Subject* can thus help to complicate, through rich historicization, the demonization of "tribal fanatics" that media images of war-torn African countries offer on a regular basis, within and without Africa itself.

There is yet another area where *Citizen and Subject* can be useful. As I noted earlier, Soyinka's discussion of the Nigerian crisis relies on the idea of democratic participation to denounce the military government's flagrant disregard of the results of a supervised election. The genre of Soyinka's book explains this reliance, for he is not interested as such in the epistemological basis of democracy as an ideal; justifiably, his interest is simply in the violation of that ideal.

For cultural theory and criticism at this point in history, however, we need to ask some questions that an activist book like Soyinka's cannot have the patience to ask. The genre to which Mamdani's book belongs demands that we ask some such questions. As we have seen, the collapse of African states reveals the lack of vision of the politicians, but it also reveals the immanent incoherence of the colonial formation that was more or less kept intact after the formal end of colonial rule. Between colonial rule and the coming into power of the indigeneous elite, the most fundamental change is not of structures but of personalities: to replace the European colonial governor, we have the native politician (and invariably soon after, the soldier) – a *shon of the shoil* (the Yoruba- language corruption of "son of the soil") – dressed in traditional attire and speaking the language of universal human rights and democratized modernity. In this sense, the contemporary failures of African nation-states point to the errors of rulers and policy makers, but they also point to inherited impediments to democracy that are specific to black Africa's history. The challenge of criticism, then, is that of sharpening the conceptual tools we have to understand and articulate the reach of those impediments.

If this is true, then a close look at the normative status of democracy as an ideal is one way of going about this sharpening. If the notion of democracy has, with the economic power of the West, become the universal good all other societies must aspire towards, it is because ideas and material practices become normative when they are ritualized, not because they are transcendental or indispensable. It is necessary to stress this distinction because, although Mamdani opens up provocative ways of thinking about democracy in the specific context of black Africa, he does not interrogate, as fully as I imagine possible, the space where ideas and material practices – rhetoric and reality – live out an opaque relationship. Rhetorically, *Citizen and Subject* sometimes takes as self-evident the assumption that democracy is a useful goal to seek. For him, what the present calls for is a forging of structures that might achieve a different incorporation of the masses of the people into the political process and the civil society that sustains it. I do not reject this assumption, especially when it is formulated as he does, namely, in pragmatic and not simply moralistic terms. What I am pointing to is the need to sharpen our use of the term democracy itself, such that sheer rhetoric does not overwhelm historical specificity.

Even as criticism grants the importance of forging democratic structures in African societies, constant reflection on what the term *should* entail, as against what it conventionally lugs as baggage, will serve us well. Too often, democracy is cast as a natural, universal category: the assumption is that we all can recognize it when we see it. But what we do see as democratic polities – namely, Western democracies – cannot be universalized. This is a way of saying that, if it does come to pass, the democratization of African societies should, on the terms of Mamdani's own analysis, take its own course. It is the twists and turns of that course, the painful process whereby history unfolds and social alignments take shape, that will give black African democracies their specific form

and content. For now, of course, most African countries continue to speak the universalist language of democratic aspirations in order to be taken seriously in the assembly of nations. By extension, opposition to dictators is most effective – and most-assuredly gains Western attention – if it is crafted in the abstract, ideologically bound rhetoric of “democratic values,” “freedom of expression,” and so forth. This, it seems, is a compelling sign of Africa’s profound dependence on the forms and contents of humanistic discourses forged in the crucible of the European enlightenment. If, following Paulin Hountondji, we cast this dependence as one of the many instances of what he calls “theoretical extraversion,” this particular one is unavoidable. But there is a point to, and a lot to be learnt from, remarking it each time a camera closes up on a starving child or slaughtered woman in Africa south of the Sahara.

Finally – and here we come to the tiny little corner where I earn my keep – *Citizen and Subject* inter-textually invites us to reassess a commonplace view of postcolonial Africanist literary criticism. This commonplace view is that the mission of literature is to facilitate the march of African societies towards modernity and the nation-state, that of criticism to explicate the ways in which the literature goes about its lofty mission. On this view, literature oversees Africa’s teleological move towards modernity, while criticism oversees literature by means of the labor of explication. To construe the tasks of literature and that of criticism in this way is, however, to overlook an important question. Here is the question: how does one account for the fact that, in correlation to the turmoil the continent has undergone since the independence euphoria of the nineteen sixties, the literary production has been growing and becoming more assured in terms of craft? It is almost as if the progressive collapse of the continent’s political structures is accompanied by an expansion of literary-aesthetic accomplishments. The claim that social upheavals have historically proven to be fertile events for the flowering of powerful literature has a point; but it still leaves cultural criticism with the burden of specifying the logic of the social angst and what it implies about the capabilities and limitations of literature. Perhaps, then, what the current situation in Africa implies is that literature cannot in fact facilitate social change in tangible ways. What it can do, and has always done, is to comment upon social processes, thereby participating in them. In Althusserian language, literature alludes to reality, without mirroring, let alone “changing” it.⁵

If I am right, then criticism cannot usefully limit itself to simple explication. Insofar as literature seeks to persuade only by the affect of rhetoric, criticism is called upon, so to speak, to fill in the blanks. In other words, criticism is called upon to bring to the surface the real social contradictions that literary language can afford to smooth over in the heady flow of metaphor. Where the literature at issue is that of contemporary Africa, the story set out in Mamdani’s book offers a welcome invitation to this sort of orientation in criticism. Many influential writers and critics of African Literature have never construed their work to be one of aestheticist disengagement from politics. In this sense, it will be accurate

to say that African literature and criticism has always been political. Nonetheless, African literary criticism has tended to take certain inherited concepts for granted, such that those concepts are shorn of their historicity – their constitutive European provenance. In the foregoing pages, we have touched on some of these concepts: literature and its so-called humanist/messianic vocation, nationhood, and democracy as a normative ideal. Perhaps more than before, it is necessary to problematize these concepts at a level of theoretical engagement that might seem beyond the proper concerns of both traditional (eurocentric) literary studies, and African studies as a disciplinary formation. The exquisite urgency of Soyinka's narrative depicts a context that legitimizes such a mode of engagement. The conceptual motions of Mamdani's book suggest a way of doing theory from which literary criticism can learn. Above all, the ongoing crisis in Africa demands it.

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Endnotes

1. For a book that makes a similar argument at length, see Partha Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*. Along the way, Charterjee provides an engaging critique of some of the broader epistemological implications of Anderson's book.
2. For brevity, I shall henceforth refer to this book simply as *Open Sore*. See "Works Cited."
3. Althusser is of course writing about class identity under capitalism. His theory is therefore about the formation of subjectivity as it relates specifically to the working class. What I do here is to replace "working class" with "the people," conceived as an ethnic collective. See Althusser, 127-86. For a discussion that takes Althusser's concept of ideology and subjectivity in the direction of racial/ethnic politics, see Stuart Hall's "Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and Post-Structuralist Debates."
4. This is a good place to note the way in which my words up to this point reproduces an "us-them" polarity, where the intellectual (us, we) is on one side and "the people" (they) are on the other. It should be clear that this polarity is in part what I am contesting by dwelling on an unintended consequence of Soyinka's representation of "the people" as self-evident objects of manipulation by elites. There are indeed teeming masses often at the mercy of unscrupulous leaders; what I am suggesting is that the masses are more complex and contradictory than the rationalist rhetoric of academia, or the moralistic language of journalism, often allows us to see. For an analysis of the Rwandan crisis that is as rich in its implications as the analysis conducted in *Citizen and Subject*, see Mamdani's "From Conquest to Consent as the Basis of State Formation: Reflections on Rwanda."
5. See Althusser, 221-227. I should add that I am not in agreement with everything Althusser had to say about "art" in the essay.

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