Fashioning a Self in the Contemporary World

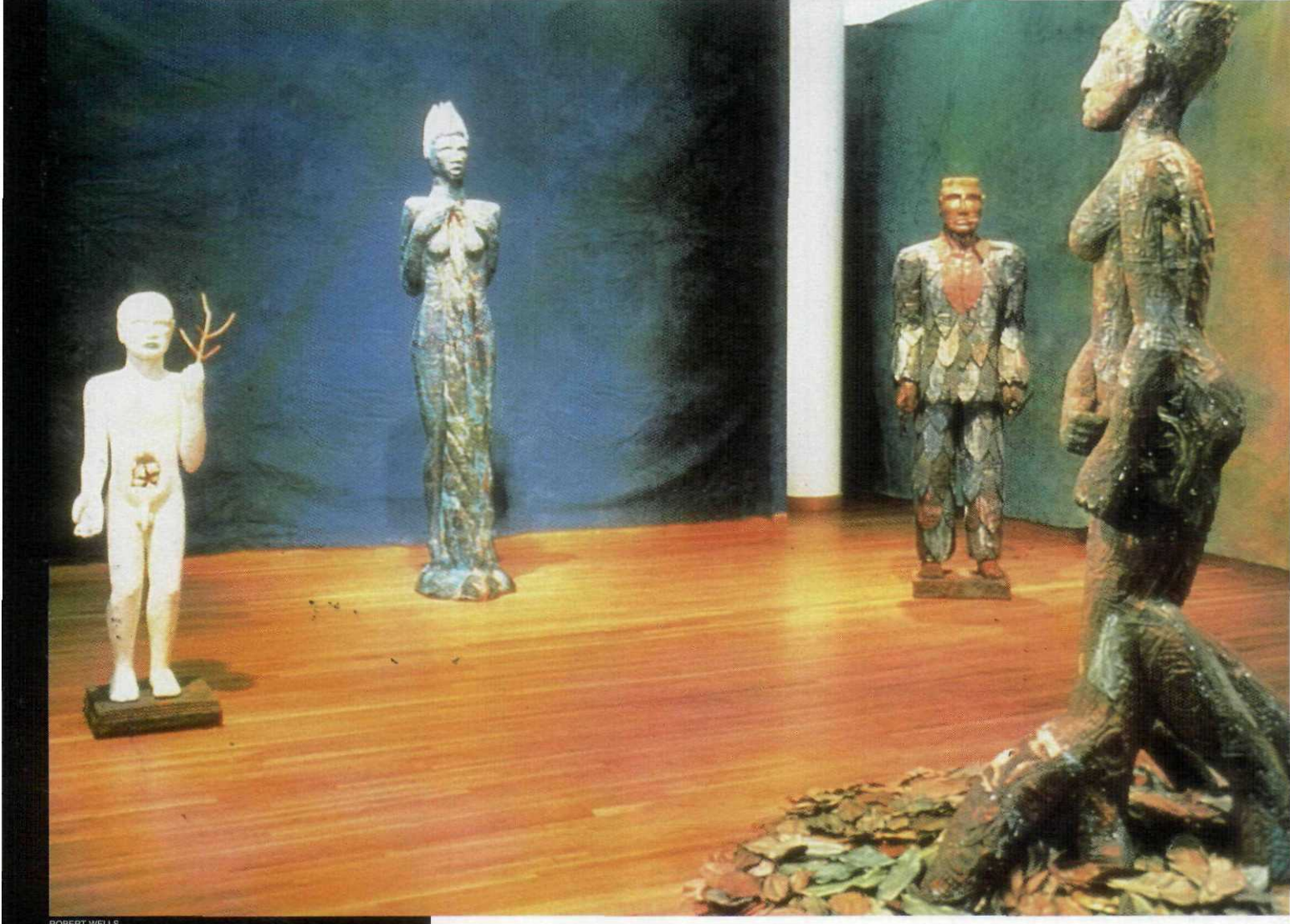
Notes Toward a Personal Meditation on Memory, History, and the Aesthetics of Origin

ABENA P. A. BUSIA
With sculpture and commentary by **ALISON SAAR**

My invitation to the symposium at the Metropolitan Museum of Art was occasioned by my work as a poet and a literary critic much concerned with issues of personal and group origin, and the ways we try to articulate those issues in our contemporary life and work. The peoples I focus on are in fact two groups of dispossessed peoples. Not the peoples we see dance with elegance and certainty of purpose in the films on display in the "Genesis" exhibition, but those who, if they do dance the "Antelope Dance," as it's called in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, no longer recognize that they're doing it, or what it means. I am interested in Africa's New World children, two groups of them: the long gone and the newly gone, whose experiences have been shaped by worlds other than those from which they might claim their origins (Fig. 1). I am interested in what myths of origin one does claim if one's origins can be seen as "hybrid," and hybrid in often contestatory ways.

One of the truths "Genesis" made so clear is that we live all the time with multiple myths of origin, or perhaps, as was articulated by other symposium participants, we live with myths of multiple origins. Even societies that consider themselves cohesive and coherent live with foundational myths of creation, and of civic origins sometimes in tension—and, to recall John Thornton's contribution (p. 32), in real political dispute. In Western terms, for example, we can consider the distance traveled from the abode of the Furies to Mount Olympus to the law courts of Athens. The book of Genesis takes us from "In the beginning God created" to the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. That is foundational; the rest, as they say, is history. For the children of Israel, as for the ancestors whose representations of their divine story were on display in the "Genesis" exhibition, the sense of collective coherence lay in their beliefs and in the performance of rituals that give coherence to those beliefs. Thus the symbols of those ritual performances undergird their sense of identity. The headdress of the dance of the *ci wara* is as central to the Bamana as the appearance of the Mask of Apollo was to the Greeks.

The artworks presented in "Genesis" negotiate two sets of identity, of human origins and of social origins. The tension we live with in Africa today is often that we have many conflicting myths, in particular those of social origin. In addition the modern nation-states in which we currently live are not coincident with the nations of those myths of origin that we call our own or that govern our lives. I frequently have to remind my students that in terms of origins I am older than my country. I was born not in Ghana but in the Gold Coast, being a pre-independence baby. For instance, the myths of origin that govern the Bamana have little to do with the existence of the contemporary state of Mali in which the Bamana reside. Nonetheless, I was struck by the commentary at the start of the exhibition that points out that the *ci wara* today has become a national symbol of creativity and possibility. This is a wonderful manifestation of a recognition that Mali today is made up of many diverse peoples—Bamana, Dogon, and so on—who have, in their attempt to become a coherent nation-state, transformed the meaning of an originary set of symbolic representations that they did not all initially claim. To give



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At the "Genesis" symposium, Alison Saar reflected on ideas of origin that are expressed in her works (Figs. 1, 3–8).

1. Alison Saar (United States, b. 1956)
Detail from *Fertile Ground* installation
1993
Mixed media
Private and public collections

"I started thinking about the role a center like Atlanta played in the slave trade. This was, in a weird sort of way, a calling to the reality of Africans being brought to this place with really ugly beginnings. It was also really interesting in terms of the relationship with nature as well as with the agriculture that was set up here. Therefore, I created another mythology about African slaves coming here to the United States and the relationship to the agricultural issues of slavery, which was a bit of a turnaround from the *ci wara* in terms of being a positive thing. Here it was a negative thing; it was cruel, and often a successful crop meant twice as much work. There is this topsy-turvy that turns the positive aspects of agriculture upon its head."

another example, the borders of the empire of the Golden Stool reached far beyond the administrative region of Asante in present-day Ghana, and also had nothing to do with the borders of the modern nation-state, whose legal regulations and official decrees circumscribe our lives. Yet today the world over, "kente cloth" is recognized as "Ghanaian," not necessarily Asante (or Ewe). In order to keep the contemporary state together, we are all, in our various nation-states, fashioning modern myths of liberation, of civic origin, of identity. Even if they do not always hold and do not supersede the ones which keep together a different fabric of ethnic community, we all still struggle with myths and symbols of origin and community when the make-up of that community changes.

For those of us late-twentieth-century Africans occupying multiple spaces of faith, place, and even time, trying to give concrete expression of *our* sense of origins can be a challenge. I subtitled my paper "Memory, History and the Aesthetics of Origin" because what I am struggling with is the question of fashioning a self for Africans in a contemporary world, and the extent to which, in our contemporary world, that sense of self is dependent on memories which are both personal and collective, and a history which is both personal and national. This struggle is not new. In the context of the inheritance of myths—whether creation or foundational, internal to Africa or through conquest by Europe—these myths can be seen as radically and ideologically in conflict. In the exhibition we are told that in the wonderful piece called *Adoratrice*, or *Worshiper*, Paul Ahyi, a contemporary Togolese artist, is attempting the refusion of forms at a crossroads of tradition between the West and the rest of us (Fig. 2). The explanatory quotation from Ahyi: "Modern Africa should be a continuation of ancient Africa without disjunction, rupture, or relinquishing of values that belongs to us." The artist's recognition of the question of continuity without disjunction or rupture is important to note. But note also his concern with the transcendence of what he calls ethnic boundaries, because his *Adoratrice* is the stylization and modernization of a *ci wara* headdress, and as he is Togolese I doubt that he is Bamana or Dogon. This is very important in terms of both the attempt to create continuity and to

resist certain kinds of disruptions: the symbolic iconography that Ahyi uses to create a sense of continuity is not the symbolic iconography one would assume that he would look at, but it is still one we all recognize.

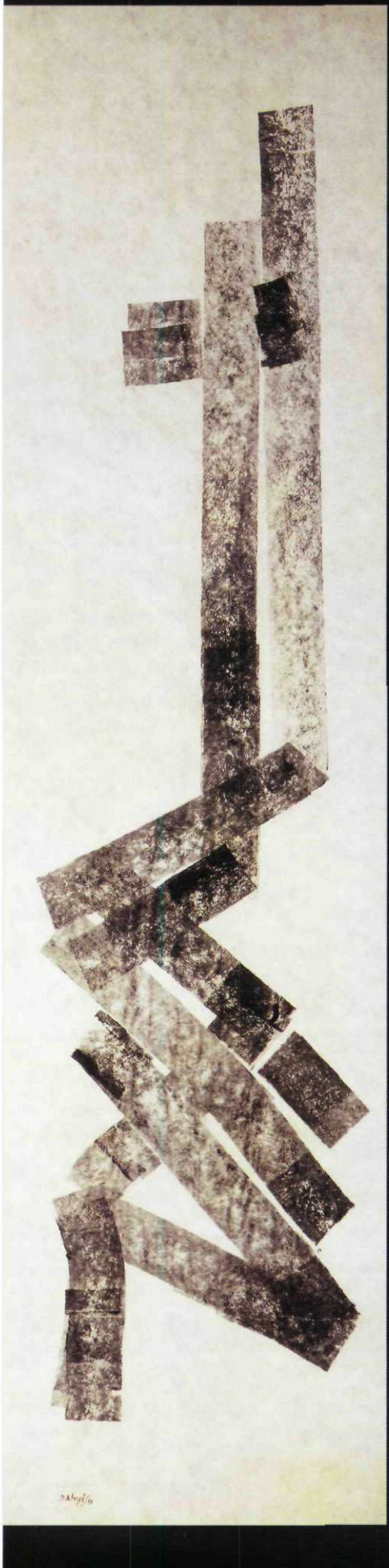
The question of origins, mythical and personal, remains a driving force in both the contemporary art and the contemporary literature of Africa, and of Africa in the New World, desperately in need of sustaining roots. In the literature, this question has been responded to in a host of ways by many different writers and thinkers.

Derek Walcott's essay "What the Twilight Says—An Overture," a celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Trinidad Theatre Workshop, originally appeared as a preface to his collection *Dream on Monkey Mountain and Other Plays* (New York, 1970). The essay frames his meditation through a walk across his island. Walcott observes the peoples that he, his brother, and the other actors of the Trinidad Theatre Workshop were hoping to represent in their creation of a new national theater. He comments on the poverty of their lives and the impoverishment of their roots in the onslaughts of history: "the folk knew their deprivations and there was no fraud to sanctify them. If the old gods were dying in the mouths of the old, they died of their own volition."

Almost twenty-five years later, in "The Antilles: Fragments of an Epic Memory," his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Walcott takes a walk through that same island and comes to different conclusions. In "What the Twilight Says" he was looking at people of African descent and noticing what was missing—the absence of rituals, the impoverishment of the old gods. In "Antilles" he is looking at the East Indian community, who are more recently arrived on the islands of Trinidad and Tobago. The Indians brought with them their remembrance and the rituals of their myths of origin, which they still practice. Here Walcott observes the presence rather than the absence of those rituals.

For a long time it was believed that the problem for the dying old gods was they could not, or would, not, endure the Middle Passage and could only be artificially resurrected in the New World. Today we know that is not true. They walk among us everywhere in many forms, from the practitioners of the Yoruba religion in Brooklyn to the devotees of Santería or of Vodun in Brazil and Haiti, but they have come to wear different masks—like the sculpture of Alison Saar (Fig. 3).

The question for Walcott and his generation, however, was of old gods invoked to represent a precolonial mode of existence—ancient Africa as recovery and resistance. The writer struggles with this issue, and as he casts his mind back to the



PAUL LACHENAUER & EILEEN TRAVELL, THE PHOTOGRAPH STUDIO, THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

2. Paul Ahyi (Togo, b. 1930)
Adoratrice
1981
Monotype
168.9cm x 44.5cm (66 1/2" x 17 1/2")
Collection of A. Vitacolanna

The Togolese artist Paul Ahyi sees himself as responsible for imbuing traditional forms of African expression with new life. In *Adoratrice* (Worshiper), displayed in the "Genesis" exhibition, Ahyi pays tribute to the vital force o *ci wara*, the divine agent from the Bamana people's account of genesis that confers the knowledge essential to human sustenance.

foundation of the Trinidad Theatre Workshop, he recognizes that the New World they were making had to be in opposition to the one in which they had been enslaved. Their dignity therefore lay in making the world anew with the scarcely remembered tools of a prior identity.

Yet that those gods whose inevitable death Walcott laments have lost their sacral force is not at all a foregone conclusion. Walcott worries that New World peoples are caught in the twilight between old gods dying of their own volition and a new God perforce served dead so he may not be tempted to change his chosen people. Both these worries are, for some, ungrounded. The old gods are still worshipped. As Walcott himself acknowledges when speaking of Soyinka's plays, "Ogun is not a contemplative but a vengeful force, a power to be purely obeyed" ("What the Twilight Says," p. 9). Even when Ogun is not worshipped with the full force of a devotee's exclusive faith, his rituals are still performed, and these rituals remain an inspiring metaphorical force, even to those who are not devotees. An old god is not necessarily a dead god; it's just that on the one hand, acolytes may now come from unexpected places—not Benin, but Brooklyn—and on the other, those people you might expect to be his children have become apostate, so many libation bearers now make their supplications through the Virgin Mary and not Assase Yaa.

One can read Kamau Brathwaite as an acolyte from Jamaica. When I first read the great poems of "Masks," the central collection of his *Arrivants: A New World Trilogy*, I was stunned to discover that he was not a Ghanaian. In those poems he captures so completely the familiar ritual cadences of Akan. For example, through the rhythm of his language, he evokes the sound, the occasion, and the worldview of the people he is representing, as in his prelude to the opening poem sequence, "Libation":

I

Prelude
Out
of this
bright
sun, this
white plaque
of heaven,
this leavening heat
of the seven
kingdoms:
Songhai, Mali,
Chad, Ghana,
Timbuctu, Volta,
and the bitter
waste
that was
Benin, comes
this shout
comes
this song.

He goes on in that prelude first to pour the libation, then to make the drum through which the voice of the gods must speak; he cuts the sacred tree, he kills the goat, he bends the sapling twigs, and finally, the drum completed, he makes the gong-gongs.

5

The Gong-Gong

God is dumb
until the drum
speaks.

The drum
is dumb
until the gong-gong leads

it. Man made
the gong-gong's
iron eyes

of music
walk us through the humble
dead to meet

the dumb
blind drum
where Odomankoma speaks:

III

Atumpan

...Odomankoma 'Kyerema says
Odomankoma 'Kyerema says
The Great Drummer of
Odomankoma says
The Great Drummer of
Odomankoma says

that he has come from sleep
that he has come from sleep
and is arising
and is arising

like *akoko* the cock
like *akoko* the cock who clucks
who crows in the morning
who crows in the morning

we are addressing you
ye re kyere wo

we are addressing you
ye re kyere wo

listen
let us succeed

listen
may we succeed...

In this incredible poem, you feel the gathering of the assembly until there is nothing left *but* for Odomankoma to speak.

The power of the poem reminded me of possibilities, made me eager to hear again the cadences of my youth through which the whole world—divine, communal, and familial—was marshalled to order. When I discovered that poem I was twenty years old and beginning exile, for the second time.

So I wish to speak here of the second group of people I referred to, people like me, the newly gone. Though in my case, apostasy may be too strong a word, my work on the question of identity has been motivated by the reality of exile. More than half my youth between the ages of six and thirteen, and eighteen and twenty-five, were spent in exile away from home. The desire, or perhaps the need, to work through this toward an understanding of the poetics of exile has been hard to exorcise, though I have discovered so many poets along the way grappling with the same issues—Czeslaw Milosz in "Bypassing Rue Descartes" ends up killing a sacred water snake and accepting that "what [he has] met with in life was the just punishment / Which reaches, sooner or later, everyone who breaks a taboo." At what point does the acquisition of new knowledge or a new Faith make you, individually or collectively, forget, and what call do you hear to make you remember again, and how?

In my case it was indeed the discovery of a number of people on similar journeys that made me remember. Some of the most confident voices to quell what I consider the "Walcottian" angst about the persistence of old gods are to be found here in the United States. I would like to refer to the phrase that Kwame Appiah used in his symposium talk: "the context of exclusion" (Fig. 4). Africans in the New World are having to shape a world precisely because they are sojourners in a land they are trying to make their own, but whose originary myths exclude them.

Whether African Americans or Black British, their existence is excluded by the myths that support the notions of those nations as states. Therefore, in the plays of August Wilson or the novels of Toni Morrison and Paule Marshall, or the poetry of Grace Nichols, we have a militant reclamation of the rituals of remembrance to those gods in whose practices they once recognized their own faces. Their works are witness to the endurance at least of rituals of remembrance and the forms they take. However attenuated these rituals may be becoming, they are still here for us to celebrate in the form of the ring shout or the stories they tell. For Alex Haley, for example, the ritual lay in the passing down of the stories inherited from his mother's family. The artistic gestures are multiple.

In my own case, poetry itself became my ritual. I did not set out to write a poetry book. *Testimonies of Exile* simply grew

ROBERT PACHECO, ©2000, THE J. PAUL GETTY TRUST

3. Alison Saar
Afro-di(e)ty, from the exhibition "Departures: 11 Artists at the Getty"
2000
Mixed-media installation
304.8cm x 274.3cm x 274.3cm (120" x 108" x 108")
Private collection

"This piece is also Yemaya, which I did for an exhibition at the Getty Museum that invited eleven artists to respond to the collection. At the risk of offending people, much of the Getty Collection leaves me a little flat, but I was always intrigued with their antiquities. When you first walk into their antiquity galleries there is a Hercules figure complete with his lion's skin in one hand and his club in the other. I was thinking, 'What a drag that these heroic Western figures are all about bludgeoning and conquering and killing opponents.' It made me think of the story of hooking up with the Amazon queen, and she's real sweet and she gives him this girdle and he bludgeons her to death. What kind of way is that to behave? Which led me to think in terms of my own idea of a heroine, which is reflected in this depiction of Yemaya. She stands in a bucket of water, she holds a fan which is a mirror, and in her hand is silk fabric which comes out and weaves around pillars of salt that are supporting basins of water. If you look closely at her abdomen there is a mirror, and if you look into it you see yourself in her womb and you ultimately see her identity as your mother."

out of the experiences of my life, from childhood on. When I sat down to collect those poems together after a lifetime of random writing, I realized they could be grouped into various discrete sections. The first section, "Exiles," is a group of poems that deal with exile in the more narrow sense of political exile—coups d'etat and the loneliness of wandering around the world. The second section is a collection called "Incantations for Mawu's Daughters." These are poems about being a woman, being a daughter, being a sister, being (or not being) in love. The poems mediate between the vulnerabilities and strengths that have arisen from the condition of being a child and a woman in exile, many of them, including the recognition of the goddess Mawu as a force of power and inspiration, inspired by conversations with and the strength of my mother. The last section, "Altar Call," is a collection of specifically sacred verse, sacred verse that springs from my testa-

4. Alison Saar
Tobacco Demon, detail from *Fertile Ground* installation (see also Fig. 1)
1993
Wood, tin, miscellaneous objects
Approx. 71cm (28")
High Museum of Art, Atlanta

"I fashioned this piece after an overseer—often there were black overseers, which was another betrayal. His suit is made out of tobacco leaves. He holds a sickle in one hand and a chain in the other. People often say he looks like a pusher, evoking a narcotic, dark side of tobacco."

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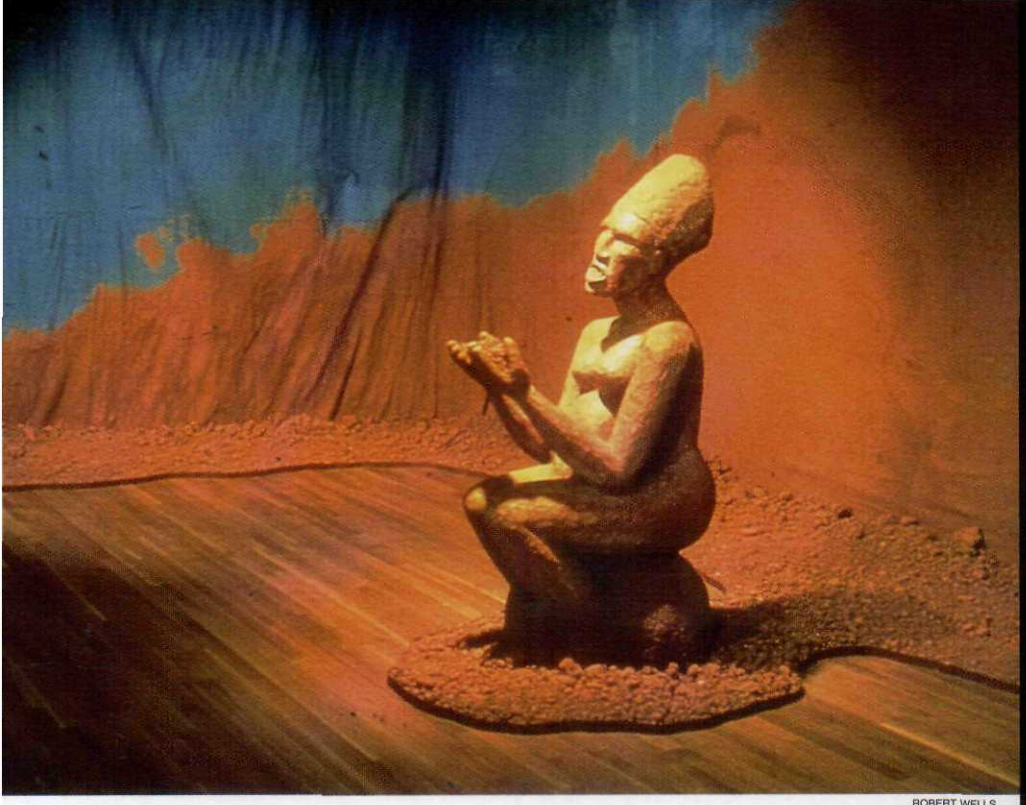
ment of faith as a Christian, and it is this point that I wish to stress.

The question of being a Christian is of course, for a person of faith, not experienced as a question of exile. But in the context of the "Genesis" symposium it *does* become an issue, a new way of looking at the question of faith. The objects in the exhibition are exclusively informed by African origins, many of which naturally predate the arrival of Christianity on that part of the continent. Therefore, for somebody who is a Christian, the question of the Christian myth of origins does indeed "exile" one from the question of the other sets of origins with which one could, or should, be familiar. As a child in Holland, I did not hear about the goddess Mawu from my Methodist father or Anglican mother.

Therefore the aspect of origins I am interested in here is the realization that people like me, who are neither practitioners nor acolytes nor even deliberate apostates, recognize the power of those originary mythologies to express through their images the worldview they lay claim to, which still shapes the social fabric of our lives. I wish to stress the extent to which those myths of origin have indeed still informed my idea of family, community, and peoples. In our daily familial lives it is possible that neither Anthony Appiah nor I will question an aunt who comes to us and says, "Your father said this yesterday in my dreams," or "You must do thus and such to placate your grandmother because you have done something you should not have, and must redeem your transgressive act."

The key point is always the rituals, and particularly the rituals of birth and death. We name our children, holding them up to the elements at dawn, putting water and alcohol to their lips as we pray for truth and blessings upon their lives, and do not ask in the name of what god we perform this rite. We do that, and also give them Holy Baptism in church. We cook festival foods at harvest time and feed it to the waters and oceans for blessing and fruitfulness, then take more of



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5. Alison Saar
Terra Rosa, detail from *Fertile Ground* installation
1993
Wood, Georgia clay
106.7cm x 71.1cm x 61cm (42" x 28" x 24")
Private collection

"The queen of the *Fertile Ground* installation is *Terra Rosa*. She sits on a mound of dirt; she actually comes out of the mound of dirt. She has dirt in her hands that she crams into her mouth. I started doing research about the act of eating soil and it not being nutritious in terms of vitamin deficiency and its lack of magnesium, iron, and calcium, etc. However, when I talked to people, especially people living in Atlanta, they would say, 'Don't tell anyone, but when my family comes to visit me from the farm they bring me dirt and I eat it.' I thought that was such a beautiful thing—ingesting the soil that kept them tied to that land and that was their home. I saw the act of ingesting soil as one that made the slaves part of this land and made this part of their soul, and part of their own history and ancestry as well."

that same produce and place it on the altars of our churches (Fig. 5).

It is part of the nature of being African that the gift of syncretism gives the ability to live in multiple worlds. My personal memories are not of old gods; they are gods I can no longer name, but it *is* their universe I claim. Theirs is the universe that gives shape to the lives of the people among whom I was born and who certainly—wherever in the world I am and whatever it is I think I am doing—claim me (Fig. 6). Their seasons and symbolic demands hold almost as much sway as the Christian calendar or the academic year. We acknowledge their festivals, whether or not we practice them ourselves ritually. It is not so much that their myths of origin have become crucial to me in terms of my own creative impulses as that the social ceremonies of birth, death, and celebration through which these myths are marked give meaning to my life, a life in which ceremonies and rituals of remembrance have become increasingly important.

In my poems for Mawu, those old gods are metaphors rather than figures of worship (Fig. 7a, b). So I would like to end with one of those poems to the goddess Mawu. The aesthetics that empower or engender it are strategically governed by their loss. When I invoke the name of Mawu, it signifies an ideal that has helped inform me and hone my ideas about the potential of women's creative power and force for wholeness, rather than as an act of specific worship whose activities I may not yet know. As a feminist scholar, I regard Mawu as a figure not only of resisting subordination; she is also active, creative, and creating.

It is important to recognize that Mawu is the goddess of my mother's people and that I first heard her story through my mother, an Anglican. When my father passed away in exile and we returned home to Ghana to bury him, my mother's people came to her to soothe her grief. They took her to the ocean for ritual and cleansing, before St. Mary's Guild, of which she is a devotee, came to take her to the Anglican church. For my mother those two gestures were not in conflict, and I know the significance of both through her.

I have two poems invoking Mawu in my collection. One is a simple lyric creation poem, "Mawu of the Waters." The other is more complex and requires an explanation. It is the only poem I have ever completed in Twi, and thus for me represents a long journey of struggle, and, as a performance poet, of courage. The language in which I write is English. Twi is my father's language. It's strange, because I am a professor of English, I write in English, and unfortunately I dream in English. English was not the first or even the second language of either of my parents and was spoken by only one of my four grandparents. For me it was a long struggle and achievement to write a poem in Twi. (It is not good Twi, but it is Twi.) It is also a poem that celebrates synthesis. I was born of parents from two different ethnic groups within Ghana. My mother's language is Ga, and amongst her people, one of the names for the supreme creator, represented as female, is Mawu. This name—said with variations of tone and emphasis, as if in Twi, my father's language—has a variation of meaning, all centered around the idea of women giving birth, such as

Ma Wo, "I have given birth," and Mmaa Wo, "women give birth." Thus this poem arises out of the particular circumstances of my parentage. Using the name of the goddess from my mother's language, it is a play on words in my father's, on the idea of god and the women created in her likeness as life giving.

The poem begins with birthing sounds, which develop into the play on *mama*, the almost universal word for human mothers, dividing itself into *ma ma*, the "I have, I have," preceding the first *ma wo*, "I have given birth." Following this, the *ma wo, ma wo*, "I have given birth, I have given birth," collapses into *mawu*, the first evocation of the name of the goddess, at the beginning of the poem. The *mmm mmm, aaa*, birthing sounds start the poem, which then take us through variations on "I have given birth" and "women give birth," "Mawu has given birth" and so on, all based on a shift in the tones of the vowels and the emphasis on the consonants, to

ANTHONY CUÑHA

6. Alison Saar
Topsy
1998
Wood, tar, bottles, tin
122cm x 40.6cm x 30.5cm (48" x 16" x 12")
Private collection

"I've done a number of figures with bottles coming out of their hair. It of course reflects spirit bottles prevalent in the South, and relates to tree spirits in Africa as well. Instead of attracting malevolent spirits and keeping them from you, I interpreted it as containing your own spirits, your own dreams, and your own ideas in the form of these things hanging about her head."

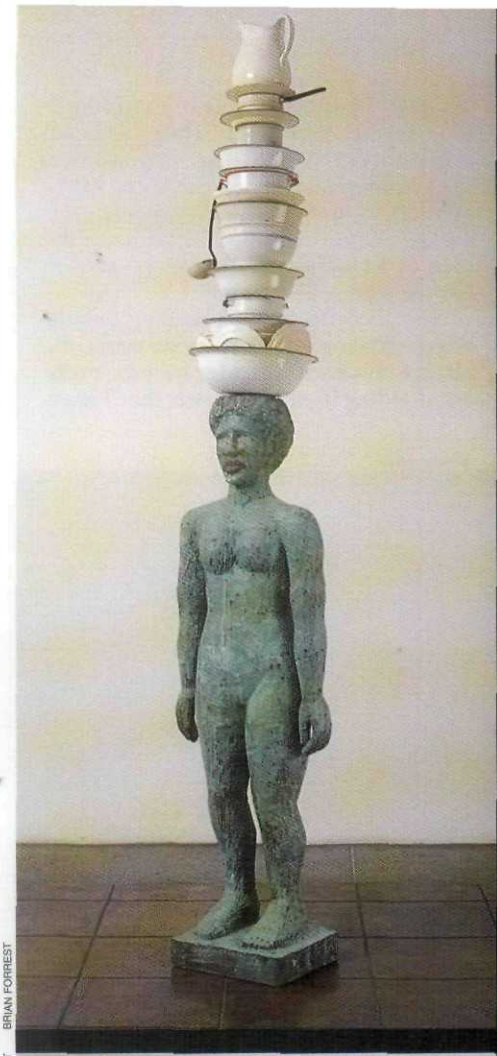
the *mmmmmm* of affirmation and the *A!* of joy and surprise at the close. Whatever the *inspiriting forces, all geneses are rebirths* and new beginnings (Fig. 8).

Mawu/Mawo

mmmmmmmmmmmm
mmm mmm mmm
mm mm mmmmm
mmm mmm a
mma mma aa
maaa
mmmmmmaaaaa
maaa
maaaa
mama mama
ma ma
wo
ma ma wo
mama ma wo
mama ma wo
ma wo
mawu
mawu !
mawu are! ma wo
ma wo
ma wo
mmaa wo
mmaa wo
mmaa wo
mama mawu
mama mawu
mama mawu
a wo
a wo
mawu a wo
mawu a wo
mawu a wo wo
mawu a wo wo
mawu a wo mama
mawu a wo mama
mawu a wo mu
mawu a wo mu
mawu a wo mu ma
mawu a wo mu ma
mawu a wo mmaa
mawu a wo mmaa
mawu wo mmaa
mawu wo mmaa
mawu wo mmaa
mawu wo mmaen
mmmmmmmmmmmmm AA!

Mawu/Mawo

mmmmmmmmmmm
mmm mmm mmm
mm mm mmmm
mmm mmm a
mma mma aa
maaa
mmmmmmaaaaa
maaa
maaaa
mama mother
I, I've
given birth
I, I've given birth
ma, I've given birth
mama, I've given birth
given birth



BRIAN FORREST

BRIAN FORREST

7a. Alison Saar
Cool Maman
2001
Mixed media
304.8cm x 60.9cm x 71.1cm (120" x 24" x 28")
Private collection

7b. Alison Saar
Smokin' Papa Chaud
2001
Mixed media
304.8cm x 60.9cm x 71.1cm (120" x 24" x 28")
Private collection

"These two pieces are paired together as two sides of myself. *Cool Maman* is my rendition of Yemaya. It's curious; when I was three years old I fell into a river and thankfully my father quickly rescued me. I later had recurring dreams of this river trip. It was never a frightening thing; it was always a voyage and it felt like I was being taken somewhere. It wasn't until later when I read Ben Okri's wonderful book *The Famished Road* that I began to understand the experience as being torn between two worlds, as the spirit calling back. So I did both of these pieces to pay tribute to two spirits who have been very helpful in my career and in my life. Yemaya is balancing all these domestic things, which for me, as a mother and creative artist, is a real challenge. Then there is *Smoking Papa Chaud*, who is like Ogun. I should state that I work with chainsaws, axes, and many sharp tools. In light of this I of course felt the need to say thanks that I have not yet lost any limbs—never incurred any major mishaps. There is also a side of me that is very aggressive, a side that is very much about forcing things. This creative process to me is two sided in terms of this very forceful aggressive manner in which I work and then this creative, patient side of me where I *create with ideas and nurture my children.*"

8. Alison Saar
Inheritance
2003
Mixed media
132cm x 60.9cm x 60.9cm (52" x 24" x 24")
Courtesy of Jan Baum Gallery, Los Angeles

"This small figure is actually the most recent of all my pieces. It originally came about as a depiction of a story that my mother told me, that when she was three years old her father called her to his deathbed and said that she was responsible now and had to take care of the family. That's a heavy thing to lay on a three-year-old girl. I see how that shaped who she is today. She is very much in command all the time. It is really curious for me because I see that as a wonderful strong point for her, but I see that it also causes her a lot of suffering. I think that in raising my two children now I am careful how much to lay on them—this idea of being responsible not only for yourself but for your family is pretty daunting. This piece ended up being a child Atlas—a female Atlas. The globe that she bears is bound and concealed. It's questionable whether that is a good inheritance or bad inheritance—we inherit both. We inherit the good and bad things, and we have to deal with them and support them regardless."

BRIAN FORREST

mawu
mawu!
oh mawu! I've given birth
I've given birth
I've given birth
women give birth
women give birth
women give birth
mama mawu
mother mawu
mother mawu
has given birth
given birth
mawu has given birth
mawu has given birth

mawu has borne *you* [s]
mawu has borne *you* [s]
mawu has borne mama
mawu has borne mama
mawu has borne you [pl]
mawu has borne you [pl]
mawu has borne masses of you
mawu has borne masses of you
mawu has borne women
mawu has borne women
mawu bears women
mawu bears women
mawu bears women
mawu bears nations
mmmmmmmmmmmm AA! ■