

of the ghostess's transcendental hand was inspired more by the Yoruba folk belief in the ability of professional diviners to magically tune in on a distant spirit world than it was by Western electronic technology. Tutuola was still operating entirely within a traditional African metaphysical system. He did not change *Weltanschauungs* in the middle of his stream of narrative.

The moral should be obvious. It is not 'A spook in hand is worth two in the African bush', or 'NBC is the mother of invention'. Rather, it is nearer to the Yoruba proverb 'A ki ifi eje dudu sinu ki a tu ito funfun jade', which means 'One does not have black blood inside and spit out white saliva'.¹ Amos Tutuola is a black writer who does not spew forth white culture. He may be a literary freak but he must be recognized as a thoroughly African one.

¹ This proverb is listed in Isaac O. Delano, *Owe l'Esin Oro: Yoruba Proverbs — Their Meaning and Usage* (Ibadan, 1966), p. 1. When Yoruba use this proverb, it has a somewhat different meaning: 'It is better to speak one's mind rather than dissemble one's feelings. It is not good to pretend to love someone we hate.' I have taken the same kind of liberty with it as Tutuola sometimes takes when utilizing English proverbs.

The Tree

This was the tree I'd known.
It had many trapped roots.
Some furnished meals with talk.
Others dragged silence in.

You were the leaves and flowers.
Also the trunk; its curved
Thickness embalmed your frowns.
Its roots gripped the hard earth.

Mine was the branches' role:
A modest one, of course.
Every time your heart beat,
We stared at it and laughed.

J. P. FORD