

“Nation and Poetic Narration: Contextualizing the Dominican Republic and Equatorial Guinea in the Poetry of Blas Jiménez and Juan Tomás Avila”

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The concept of “nation” as critical discourse represents an intellectual debate within the Americas and Africa that has its development before the 19th Century. One fundamental aspect of this ageless debate centers the position and importance of literary production in the formation of a paradigmatic space that expresses the traditions, customs, and the quotidian of inhabitants within the defined geo-political/graphical locality or within the confines of the imagined national border-space. It is indubitable, within certain intellectual camps, that the concept of “nation” in the Americas and on the continent of Africa represent a mythic and problematic construction that has provoked a series of articulations and re-articulations that attempt to examine the primordial essence, or political and social strategies in terms of posing fundamental questions such as: who has the power to decide the demographic, ethnic or otherwise, that will *represent* “nation” and *how* will they be chosen? In addition, what are the customs and traditions that will constitute national utterances in terms of essentialized cultural normalization of social institutions such as religion, language, political system, etc.?

A theoretical question of emerging importance in this regard is, how are these intellectual conversations manifested within the contexts of post-colonial Africa and Spanish America? After centuries of colonization oppression, slavery and decades of dictatorship, what is the meaning of “nation” in a contemporary Dominican and Guinean context and how are utterances of “nation” manifested/defined within literature as a representation or mimetic reflection of an archeological construction conceptualized as nation or national identity?

This brief analysis purposes to query the poetry of Blas Jiménez of the Dominican Republic and Juan Tomás Ávila of Equatorial Guinea for poetic articulations relative to “nation” and national identity. If we consider literature as one of the repositories of national understandings, then it becomes the epistemological incarnation of the apotheosis of national identity in written form. For this brief undertaking, two poems of each poet is analyzed: “Discrimination a la Dominicana” and “Africa ancestral” by Blas Jimenez; and, “Mi nacimiento” and “Africa, Africa” by Juan Tomas Avila.