

African Freedom

The push for independence in African nations was ultimately an incomplete process, with the people often left to wrestle with a partial, imperfect legacy. Rather than settle for liberation in name alone, the people engaged in an ongoing struggle for meaningful freedom. Phyllis Taoua shows how the idea of freedom in Africa today evolved from this complex history. With a pan-African, interdisciplinary approach, she synthesizes the most significant issues into a clear narrative. Tracing the evolution of a conversation about freedom since the 1960s, she defines three types and shows how they are interdependent. Taoua investigates their importance in key areas of narrative interest: the intimate self, gender identity, the nation, global capital, and the spiritual realm. Allowing us to hear the voices of African artists and activists, this compelling study makes sense of their struggle and the broad importance of the idea of freedom in contemporary African culture.

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How Africa Responded to Independence

Phyllis Taoua

University of Arizona



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*For Bitti, my dear
And in memory of Alain Ricard*

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Caveat: The autobiographical stories that I share in this book are based on true events in which I participated, but the impressions they convey are my own. I do not claim to represent the views or experiences of others.

Note

W. S. Merwin

Remember how the naked soul
comes to language and at once knows
loss and distance and believing

then for a time it will not run
with its old freedom
like a light innocent of measure
but will hearken to how
one story becomes another
and will try to tell where
they have emerged from
and where they are heading
as though they were its own legend
running before the words and beyond them
naked and never looking back
through the noise of the questions