

delight readers and scholars. The work closes with words all of us should take to heart:

To realize sustainable development, we must redefine and redirect development itself, vigorously emphasize indigenous knowledge and experience, and take effective socio-political action on behalf of the environment. Only then will we have planted real seeds of change.

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**Derek Walcott . *Omeros*. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1990) v, 325 pp., \$15.00.**

*Omeros* is indeed a poetic epic and as such stands foremost in Walcott's outstanding writing career. The quality of the poetry in this volume reveals why he is a great practitioner of poetry writing in the English-speaking world.

Walcott writes, as critic Christopher Bakken has so aptly indicated, as "citizen, poet, and colonial." Likewise, he writes within a triple heritage: African, Antillean, and Anglo. Because of his knowledge of the ancient classics, he unites in his work the Caribbean and the Grecian seas. The work dwarfs his earlier lyrics and transcends them by the sheer scope of the narrative and its sustained lyricism. He writes ably in the best of the English language traditions but is able to poetize, too, in the patois of St. Lucia.

St. Lucia, his home isle, is Walcott's Ithaca. Much of the personal story is anchored in Castries, his "home" port, but the epic soars into mythology—classic and created Caribbean. Much is local and cosmic at the same time. There are local figures who are the local counterparts of their Homeric cousins of the *Odyssey*. The commentary and narrative go beyond the bounds of the Caribbean to Africa and the "Middle Passage," to Europe, and to the United States both present and past, the past of American slavery and the exploitation of the Native Americans.

Truly, *Omeros* reveals the author's love of the English language, and one is tempted to compare this love to the discovery of the beauties of the language with that of the Jacobean or the Elizabethans.

The work is often intensely political, for parts condemn the exploitation of the islands by the Europeans, or of North America by the Anglo-Americans. Nor does Walcott hesitate to strongly criticize the third world politicians who have seized power in many of the island nations.

I feel that readers of multi-ethnic literature will delight in the excitement of Walcott's extended story, as they will in the beauty of his lyricism.

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