Daniel A. Nkemleke, "Entry on: Lituolone by Clyde W. Ford", peer-reviewed by Courage Yaah and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/179. Entry version as of November 06, 2026.

Clyde W. Ford

Lituolone

United States (1999)

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions





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General information	
Title of the work	Lituolone
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Angola
Original Language	Unknown
First Edition Date	1999
First Edition Details	Clyde W. Ford, *The Hero with an African Face: Mythic Wisdom of Traditional Africa*. New York: Bantam Books, 1999, 227 pp.
ISBN	0553105442
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	1999 (date of publication)
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
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Creators



Clyde W. Ford (Author)

Clyde W. Ford is African-American native of New York City. He is the author of three other books: *Where Healing Waters Meet: Touching Mind and Emotion Through the Body* (1989); *Compassionate Touch: The Body's Role in Healing and Recovery* (1993) and *We CAN All Get Along: 50 Steps You Can Take to Help End Racism* (1993). As a prominent guest speaker on American TV, he has taken part in more than 150 TV shows. He has written numerous articles in journals and newspapers. For more on Ford see here (accessed: July 3, 2018).

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Cultural Background*: Angola, Basuto area in South Eastern Africa
The Basuto of Angola share the same cultural background with the Mbundu. Their main activity is agriculture and their society is matrilineal. That is why land is inherited through it, and access to the land also requires lineage membership, and communication between the living and their ancestors. Furthermore, the Bundu have a diviner widely called kimbanda, who communicates with spirits and looks into people's difficulties to determine whether they are linked to sorcery or not. Still, they celebrate the mukanda, a passage ritual (birth, death, puberty, seasonal) done during the dry season.

Date and place of collection: Unknown. However, Clyde Ford states in the Preface to his book that "the myths in this book come from numerous sources, principally from the published transcriptions and translations of missionaries, ethnographers, and anthropologists" (p. xiii).

* Sources:

Mbundu (Ambundu) People: Angola's Matriarchal Tribe that Ruled the Kingdom of Ndongo and Matamba in the Ancient Kingdom of Kongo, kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com 16, 2013 (accessed: May 28, 2019).

Mbudnu, britannica.com (accessed: May 28, 2019).

Summary

The full text of this myth is found in: *The Hero with an African Face: Mythic Wisdom of Traditional Africa* by Clyde W. Ford, in the United States and Canada by Bantam Books, 1999, pp. 36–37). This is only a brief summary of the story. The full text of the myth and others can be read in the book cited above.

A huge shapeless monster, called Kammapa has swallowed all the inhabitants of the land except one – a pregnant woman. She escapes into hiding and gives birth without the help of a man. Her son is born wearing magical amulets around his neck. So, she names him Lituolone, which literally means "he who is like a god." The child

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grows into adulthood in a day. Upon hearing about the monstrosity of Kammapa, the beasts, he vows to kill it. Upon meeting the beast, a fierce fight ensues. Sadly, the hero-child is over-powered and ends up in the belly of the beast, where he meets all the others earlier swallowed alive by the beast. While in the belly of the beast, Lituolone keeps on fighting and at the end, is able to tear it open, freeing himself and the other villagers.

He is immediately crowned king as a reward for his bravery. However, some people of the village think a person born without a man's help is not worthy to be their king. Therefore, they begin conspiring to kill him. They try to push him down a deep pit, and later into a huge fire but each time they discover that they have rather pushed a fellow conspirator into the pit and fire. The third attempt at his life is made at a precipice, and again mysteriously, it is one of theirs that is pushed down in his stead. Lituolone, however, shows compassion to the villagers by restoring the falling men back to life. Undaunted, the conspirators still organise a hunting party and while the king is sleeping at the opposite end of the cave, they sneak out and set a huge fire at the entrance, but when they turn around to go, they find Lituoune standing behind them.

Finally, tired of their conspiracy and hate, Lituolone offers himself freely and is killed by the people. At his death, his heart goes out, transforms into a bird and flies away into the sky.

Analysis

In most world cultures, children who are born with some adult features or objects of some kind attached to their bodies, often grow up to be heroes who would save their communities from some calamity. These children, usually, are endowed with supernatural powers, which help them accomplish superhuman deeds. This is the case of Lituolone of the above myth who is born with amulets around his neck. Another example is found in the West African folk story of Kirikou, who starts speaking in his mother's womb, asking to be born. Like Lituolone, he begins understanding things that have happened in his village the same day he was born and finally saves his village from Karaba' the sorceress. Lituolone's heroic self-sacrifice at the end of the myth finds parallels throughout history and mythology. Men and gods alike have offered themselves to be sacrificed for the common good of their societies. In all, the myth exhorts such virtues as courage, justice, bravery and above all, the ability for self-sacrifice.

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Child, children Death Emotions Heroism Magic Sacrifice Supernatural creatures (non-classical) Transformation
Further Reading	*Heroic Self-Sacrifice*, hellenicgods.org (accessed: May 28, 2019). Werner, Alice, "The Swallowing Monster" in *Myths and Legends of the Bantu*, London: George G.Harrap & Co., Ltd., 1933, 206–221 (accessed: September 13, 2021).

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