

Literary analysis

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Full Full Submitted The Sundiata Epic: A Testament to Griot's Historical Importance in Malian Society Niane introduces the Sundiata Epic saying that it may enlighten more than one African and make him learn Malian history from the ancient teacher of wisdom and history – the griot, himself (xxiv). This shows that the epic is much more than Sundiata's historic tale. Rather, it is more about the griots' historical importance in keeping Malian society intact since time immemorial.

In fact, Griot Kouyato opened the epic, ensuring that what he tells is the truth. He immediately established griots as reliable keepers and truthful transmitters of Malian history. It is actually they who have kept Malian society alive from generations to generations. (Niane 2) Without them, Malian society would have not known its rich historical past and could have been blind of its future. Griot Kouyato says: "... whoever knows the history of a country can read its future" (Niane 41). Simultaneously as griots are oral traditionalists, the epic also emphasizes the importance of storytelling in keeping Mali's history alive. It asserts the efficacy of words over letters as letters lack the fervor of the human voice. And words are even more powerful than swords. (Niane 41) These assertions are effectively made with Griot Kouyato telling the Sundiata Epic. As he tells the epic, he constantly reminds readers of griots' role in preserving Malian history, saying that seers may know the future, but griots preserve the past (Niane 41).

Evidently, the Sundiata Epic is not simply all about the heroic exploits of Sundiata. It is all about the historical importance of griots and oral tradition in keeping Malian society intact.

Work Cited

Niane, Djibril Tamsir. *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*. Trans. G. D. Pickett.
England: Pearson education Limited, 2006.