Legon Journal of the Humanities is indexed on African Journals Online (AJOL) and Ghana Journals Online (GHANJOL)

EDITORIAL BOARD

Nana Aba A. Amfo .................................................................Chair
Associate Professor of Linguistics
Dean, School of Languages, College of Humanities
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
namfo@ug.edu.gh

Augustine H. Asaah ..............................................................Editor
Professor, Department of French
School of Languages, College of Humanities
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
ahasaah@ug.edu.gh

Rosemary Amenga-Etego ....................................................Assistant Editor
Senior Lecturer, Department for the Study of Religions
School of Arts, College of Humanities
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
rmetego@ug.edu.gh

Esi Sutherland-Addy .............................................................Member
Associate Professor
Institute of African Studies, College of Humanities
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
esutherland-addy@ug.edu.gh

Susanne Gehrmann .............................................................Member
Professor of African Literatures and Cultures
Department of Asian and African Studies
Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany
susanne.gehrmann@rz.hu-berlin.de

Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni ......................................................Member
Professor, Department of Development Studies
Professor and Head, Archie Mafeje Research Institute (AMRI)
University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa
ndlovs2@unisa.ac.za

Cas Wepener .................................................................Member
Professor of Religions and Head
Department of Practical Theology
University of Pretoria, South Africa
cas.wepener@up.ac.za

Joshua Amuah .................................................................Member
Senior Lecturer and Head
Department of Music
School of Performing Arts, College of Humanities
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
jamuah@ug.edu.gh

PAST EDITORS
1974-1977: Lawrence A. Boadi
1987-1994: John N. D. Dodoo
1994-1999: Alex K. Dzameshie
1999-2003: E. Kweku Osam
2009-2015: Helen A. Yitah

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Denkyira Susuana Kwaning
ADVISORY BOARD

Moradewun Adejunmobi, Professor, African American and African Studies, University of California, Davis, USA; President, African Literature Association (ALA).

Charity Akotia, Associate Professor of Psychology; Dean, School of Social Sciences, College of Humanities, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana.

Emmanuel K. Akyeampong, Professor of History; Professor of African and American Studies, Center for Government and International Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA.

Jane Ande, Professor, Department of Accounting, Faculty of Management Studies, University of Jos, Nigeria.

Li Anshan, Professor of International Relations; Director, Institute of Afro-Asian Studies and Center for African Studies, Peking University; Vice-President, Chinese African Studies, China.

Elizabeth Ardayfio-Schandorf, Professor Emerita, Department of Geography and Resource Development, School of Social Sciences, College of Humanities, University of Ghana, Legon; Vice-President (Arts), Ghana Academy of Arts and Science (GAAS), Accra, Ghana.

Richard Boateng, Associate Professor; Head, Department of Operations and Management Information Systems, University of Ghana Business School, College of Humanities; University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana.

Perpetua S. Dadzie, University Librarian, Associate Professor; Department of Information Studies; College of Education, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana.

Audrey Gadzekpo, Associate Professor of Communication Studies; Dean, School of Information and Communication Studies, College of Education, University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana.

Hyun-Chin Lim, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Founding Director of Asia Center, Seoul National University; President, Korean Social Science Research Council, Korea.

Dorothy Odartey-Wellington, Associate Professor of Spanish, School of Languages and Literatures, University of Guelph, Canada.

Tope Omoniyi, Professor of Sociolinguistics; Director, Center for Research in English Language and Linguistics (CRELL), Department of Media, Culture, and Language, Roehampton University, UK.

David Owusu-Ansah, Professor of History; Executive Director, Faculty Access and Inclusion, James Madison University, Harrisonburg-VA, USA.
Nicola Piper, Professor of International Migration, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, Director of Human Rights and Democratization (Asia Pacific), The University of Sydney; Convener, Sidney Asia Pacific Migration Network (SAPMIN), Australia.

Laud Ato Quayson, Professor and Director, Center for Transnational and Diaspora Studies, University of Toronto, Canada.

João José Reis, Professor, Department of History, Federal University of Bahia, Salvador, Brazil.

Maria Koptjevskaja Tamm, Professor of General Linguistics, Department of Linguistics, Stockholm University, Sweden.
Email: editorljh@ug.edu.gh; ahasaah@ug.edu.gh

For further details, (e.g. guide for contributors, copyright, etc.), kindly go to the journal’s website: http://coh.ug.edu.gh/ljh
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media Exposé of Judicial Corruption in Ghana: Ethical and Theological Perspectives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adwoa S. Amankwah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginn Assibey Bonsu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter White</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lure of the Image in the Mirror: A Reading of Kwame Nkrumah’s Towards Colonial Freedom</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atta Britwum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards English in Ghana</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kari Dako</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millicent Akosua Quarcoo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Discourse of Sustainable Farming and the Environment in Bessie Head’s When Rain Clouds Gather</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dokubo Melford Goodhead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Role of the International Community in Ghana’s Democratic Transition in the 1990s</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maame Adwoa Gyekye-Jandoh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Intertextual Analysis of Jími Šólàńké’s Önà Lá (In The Path) via the Multiple Star System Theory of Mutual Illumination and Interaction</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obádélé Kambon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Poetics of Demythologisation in Kunle Afolayan’s The Figurine</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abiodun Olayiwola</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pelumi Folajimi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccessible Built Environments in Ghana’s Universities: The Bane of a Weak Legal and Regulatory Framework for Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Paul Tudzi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Tiah Bugri</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Kwame Danso</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ebenezer Ayesu**
Abstract
Article 162, subsection 5, of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana states that “all agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the principles, provisions and objectives of this constitution, and shall uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana”. Using this constitutional provision that gives the media the power to serve as one of the agents to ensure accountability, this article discusses the media exposé of judicial corruption in Ghana by using the recent video evidence of the investigative journalist, Anas. The article considers issues of judicial corruption, the causes, consequences as well as their ethical and theological dimensions. It posits that those who pervert justice through corrupt practices, will eventually be named and shamed. The article concludes that when the media play their role by respecting high journalistic standards, the cause of justice will be served.

Keywords: judicial corruption, Ghana, media and society, constitution of Ghana, Anas Aremeyaw Anas.
The solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly, by a public official or any other person, of any goods of monetary value, or other benefit, such as a gift, favour, promise or advantage for himself or herself or for another person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance of his or her public functions. (African Union, 2003, p. 4-5)

There have been several claims of judicial corruption in Ghana but many of these claims were seen as mere perception. A survey done within the courts in Accra, Tema, and Kumasi, by Ghana Integrity Initiative revealed that over 52% of the judges and magistrates, 64.2% of Lawyers, and 513% of litigants agreed that judicial corruption is very real in Ghana (Ghana Integrity initiative, 2007). Furthermore in August 2011, Abraham Amaliba, Raymond Atuguba, Chris Ackumey, and the late Larry Bimi (all lawyers of the Ghana Bar Association), stated categorically that several judges were corrupt and selling justice. The premier national newspaper in Ghana, the Daily Graphic in its September 9, 2015 edition disclosed that the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), had prior to Anas Aremeyaw Anas's revelations, corroborated these assertions, while the Judgement Debt Commission of Ghana attributes the loss of gargantuan sums of money by the State to corrupt practices in the judiciary.

Anas Aremeyaw Anas is a Ghanaian investigative journalist who conducts his mode of journalism using covert means to hide his identity. His use of anonymity for his investigations is designed to enhance his surreptitious identity, especially as he gathers incriminatory evidence from subjects, personalities, and issues interrogated. He focuses on human rights issues and corruption in Ghana and many parts of the world. His major focus is, however, sub-Saharan Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, etc.). He has won many awards, including Best Journalist Awards (Ghana), Heroes acting to end Modern-Day Slavery Award (US) in 2008, and Africa Achievers’ Award (Kenya) in 2013. In 2015, he was recognized by Foreign Policy as one of the most influential personalities in the world. Operating with the mantra, “name, shame, and jail”, he, in September 2015, shook the very foundations of Ghana’s judiciary with an indicting exposé on endemic and systemic corruption by judges, magistrates, and other judicial functionaries.

Although many of the claims of perceived corruption in the judiciary were not taken lightly by some members of the Ghana Bar Association and the Association of Judges and Magistrates of Ghana, the recent exposé of Anas's investigation confirmed that some members of the Bench are corrupt. In Ghana, the media have been referred to as the fourth arm of the realm of government after the Executive, the Judiciary and the Legislature. Article 162, subsection 5 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana states that “all agencies of the mass media shall, at all times, be free to uphold the principles, provisions, and objectives of this Constitution, and shall uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people of Ghana”.

By this constitutional provision, the media are to serve as watchdogs of the government as they act in public trust or serve the public’s interest. They are also to bring to public attention and consideration issues of salience that will enable the public access vital information for surveillance purposes.

In view of the informative and investigative role of the media, this article discusses the role of the media in ensuring justice delivery in Ghana. The article considers issues such as media and society, causes and consequences of judicial corruption, as well as the ethical and theological dimensions of judicial corruption from an interdisciplinary perspective. Literature study, descriptive, and content analyses were the data gathering tools used for the study. Wimmer and Dominick (2011), define content analysis as a method for studying and evaluating communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables. Content analysis is useful for describing communication content, testing the hypotheses of message characteristics, comparing media content to the “real world” and assessing the image of particular groups in society among others (Wimmer & Dominick, p. 60, p.156).
The Media and Society

As part of the media’s efforts at informing the public, they bring issues of salience to public attention. The concept underlying this phenomenon is agenda-setting. Agenda-setting is where the media act as mediator “between the world outside and the pictures in our heads” (Scheufele & Iyengar 2011, p.11). Thus the media connect us to events in the world and images of the world in our heads. The concept crystallized later into the agenda-setting theory. It posits that the media may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think. However, it is very successful in telling readers what to think about through the images and information it presents to people.

The term “agenda-setting” usually refers to the transfer of salience from mass media to audiences. The original model posits that if a particular issue is covered more frequently or prominently in news outlets, audiences are also more likely to attribute importance to the issue. Schaeufele and Iyengar (2011), in their seminal study, operationalized the issue of significance and relevance among audience members as judgments about the perceived importance of issues. Later studies replaced perceptions of importance with terms such as salience, awareness, attention, or concern.

Agenda-setting is more than an issue or object of salience. It tells us what to think about; and how to think about the agenda in the news. Both the selection of topics for the news agenda and the selection of frames for stories are powerful agenda-setting roles and have grave ethical implications (Schaeufele & Iyengar, 2011). Furthermore, agenda-setting could originate from the media, the public or as part of or an outlet of policy. At the first level of agenda setting is the notion that the media influences the kinds of issues that are important to people.

Closely related to agenda-setting is a kindred concept, framing. The media tell us not just what to think about issues but also how to think about them by providing appropriate frames for them, a concept known as framing. Frames emerge in public discourse in part as an outcome of journalistic routines that allow it to quickly identify and classify information and “to package it for efficient relay to their audiences” (Gitlin 1980, p. 7). Gamson and Mogdalini (1987, p. 143) define frames as “a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events … The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue.”

In the present study, the central frame is corruption among members of the judiciary. The controversy is played out in a paradox of executors of justice, allowing the handle of justice to fly off the wheel through corrupt practices. Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman, 1993).

Anas Aremeyaw Anas frames judicial corruption in Ghana by “selecting some aspects of a perceived reality.” In the face of pervasive corruption among the judiciary, Anas, through his genre of reportage--investigative reporting--that relies on multimedia applications of text, video, and audio, makes the issue very salient in a communication text.

Anas’s evidence made other media houses to frame headlines such as “Bribery rocks judiciary, 34 judges others cited,” “34 judges, others caught on camera taking bribes,” “22 judges suspended.” In effect, Anas Aremeyaw Anas and his team of investigative journalists called Tiger Eye carried along the wheels of mainstream media and new media technologies, and set the agenda of judicial corruption.

One of the objectives of the mass media is to influence audience perceptions by highlighting the importance of issues (first level agenda setting) or issue attributes (second level agenda setting, equivalent to framing). Thus through framing, Anas promotes a definition of the problem of corruption in the judiciary and enjoins the Chief Justice and the Ghana Bar Association to interpret the evidence or frames he has presented. As a result of the agenda set, the judiciary, the media, and the general public are encouraged to evaluate the frames provided.

The essence of framing assumes that the effects of particular frames are strengthened or weakened, depending on how applicable they are to a particular cognitive schema. In other words, the mode of presentation of a given piece of information (i.e., frame), makes it more or less likely for that
information to be processed using a particular schema (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2011). Relating Anas’s exposé to the framing theory, one could say that Anas’s revelations of judicial corruption strengthened the frame within the background of earlier perceptions and allegations of corruption (cognitive schema) by some members of the public and the four members of the Ghana Bar Association (Abraham Amaliba, Raymond Atuguba, Chris Ackumey, and the late Larry Bimi). The ethical, theological, social, and economic implications are daunting to the extent that it can provoke the public to have total distrust and disregard for the judiciary and encourage mob justice.

The exposé did not only strengthen the perceived judicial corruption in Ghana, but also made the annual conference of the Ghana Bar Association (GBA) held in Kumasi, Ghana from September 14-18, 2015 a time of reflection on how to address issues of corruption in the judiciary and also restore public confidence in it. The Chief Justice of Ghana, Justice Georgina Theodora Wood at the Conference, assured the public that the current happenings offered an opportunity to clean and sanitize the judiciary in order to strengthen the rule of law and democracy.

A former president of Ghana, John Agyekum Kufuor, who also attended the conference said access to justice was not only the foundation of a fair and democratic society but an index to the level of civilization of a nation. He underlined the need for the State to initiate strategies that would promote access to the law by all including the vulnerable and the disadvantaged. Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the Asantehene (the King of the Asante Kingdom), said corruption posed a serious challenge to the administration of justice and rallied all Ghanaians to work together to salvage the integrity of the nation’s judicial system (Ghana News Agency September 15, 2015).

In a nutshell, the role of the media is to exercise social responsibility in the society whose interest they ought to champion. They have the obligation of serving as the watchdogs, rather than the lapdogs, of power brokers. They are therefore, to operate by the highest journalistic standards of truthfulness, accuracy, fairness, balance, and objectivity among others. According to the Ghana Journalists’ Association (GJA) and the International Center for Journalists (ICJ, 2009) journalists ought to be truthful and accurate, i.e., saying or writing exactly what was said. They also have the professional duty to be fair, i.e., being unbiased and giving equal treatment to various sides of issues.

Judicial Corruption

A well-functioning justice system is crucial to addressing corruption effectively, which in turn fosters development (Gloppen, 2014). However, since the judicial system consists of humans it is prone to corruption. This has made many institutions and organizations to probe the legal systems in order to expose such practices. Among such institutions is the Ghana Integrity Initiative (GII), which conducts surveys, to bridge the gap between perceived corruption and reality. In a report by GII (2007), it was apparent that corruption exists among legal practitioners in Ghana. The findings by GII suggest that judicial corruption is undermining justice in Ghana, denying victims and the accused the basic human right to a fair and impartial trial. Corrupt judges therefore fracture and split communities by injury created by unjust treatment and mediation which destroys the integrity fiber of the legal and judicial systems in Ghana (GII Report, 2007, p.5).

Judicial corruption is defined as the use of public authority for the private benefit of court personnel. It undermines the rules and procedures to be applied in the provision of court services. Judicial corruption is categorized in two: administrative corruption and operational corruption (Buscaglia, 2001). Administrative corruption occurs when court administrative employees violate formal or informal administrative procedures for their private benefit. Examples of administrative corruption include cases where court users pay bribes to administrative employees in order to alter the legally-determined treatment of files and discovery material, or cases where court users pay court employees to accelerate or delay a case by illegally altering the order in which a case is to be adjudicated by a judge, or even cases where court employees commit fraud and embezzle public property or private property in court custody. These cases involve procedural and administrative irregularities.

The second type of abusive practices involves cases of operational corruption that are usually part
of grand corruption schemes where political and/or considerable economic interests are at stake. This second type of corruption usually involves politically-motivated court rulings and/or undue changes of venue where judges stand to gain economically and career-wise as a result of their corrupt acts. These cases involve substantive irregularities affecting judicial decision-making. Anas Aremeyaw Anas’s recent judicial corruption exposé, provided evidence on both administrative and judicial corruption. His video revealed how some judges were bribed both in cash and in kind.

**Causes of Judicial Corruption**

Judicial corruption per administrative dimension is not only concerned with the outcome of a judgment but the procedural influences of a judicial decision (Bedner, 2002). The causes of these influences which yield judicial corruption are very difficult to determine in reality since empirically, most of the causes are perceived data derived from survey of lay people, lawyers and judges who are not culprits. Judicial corruption relating to bribery corruption is mostly initiated by individuals within the judicial terrain, which grows into an organizational culture and for this reason, becomes highly resistant and resilient to change (Bedner, 2002).

Bribery or systematic corruption in the judiciary mostly happens because of social tolerance of corruption by some judges who value social capital rather than the rule of law (Transparency International, 2007). Another reason for judicial corruption is that some judges have problems fulfilling their needs so they succumb to bribes to meet these needs, which are mostly socially oriented. In other words, some judges accept bribes and illicitly amass economic wealth in order to achieve social capital and fulfill the societal perception about them (Bedner, 2002).

The next cause is the inadequacy or absence of legal information due to unreliable impartial judgments pronounced and concealed legal documents which are used by corrupt judges as leeway to perpetuate their wrongful practices (Bedner, 2002). Contributing to the debate on the causes of judicial corruption, (Abdulkarim, 2012) explains that the judges who practice corruption do so because the hedonistic theory posits that humans naturally gravitate towards pleasurable things and move away from anything that constrains and produces pain. However, since judges operate in a system with set rules and regulations, it is their duty to conform to these rules and regulations.

In light of these insights into the causes of judicial corruption, it becomes apparent that this social vice can be minimized since the causes are acquired and cannot be justified. In the case of Anas Aremeyaw Anas’s recent judicial corruption exposé, there is no clear evidence on the causes of both administrative and judicial corruption, thus making it difficult for a conclusion to be drawn on the causes of judicial corruption in Ghana. The factors above are, however, some of the general views on the causes of judicial corruption in the world.

**Economic and Social Consequences of Judicial Corruption**

In every society, rule of law which ensures that legislation is applied to all in a fair, reasonable, and understandable manner is crucial for socio-economic development (Abdulkarim, 2012). In every community, human behavior is controlled by societal norms and values which are either inherent in its culture or have been built into it. Culture, in this regard, serves as one of the means of promoting, nurturing, and sustaining peace in a society. The modernization of our societies has brought about laws which were obtained from our culture for regulating societies to foster peace and punish the law breakers as an art of refining them through separation in some cases (Abdulkarim, 2012). However, when law-breakers go unpunished on account of judicial corruption, this creates malfunctioning societies with little or no trust in the judiciary. This mistrust incites the societies to mete out instant justice to law breakers, thus creating a system of the survival of the strongest as a means of correcting injustice and moral decadence. Economic growth is retarded and degraded in some instances due to judicial corruption visible in impartial trials in favour of officers who have misused State funds and looted the nation's coffers for their personal gains. Funds meant to help businesses grow and the country develop end up in the account of a single person or his/her accomplices and when such people are arrested but later freed as a result of injustice, it incites others to also engage in such acts of
impunity. This culture of impunity, lawlessness, and near anarchy destroys the societal moral fiber and creates an unsecured social system and a manipulative judicial system.

Ethical and Theological Implications of Judicial Corruption

Ethics involves the basic concepts and fundamental principles of right human conduct. The ethical standards required from judges call for perhaps the highest and most rigorous standards, sacrifice, and discipline of any profession in the community (Thomas, 1988). Ethics is a concept central to the judge’s role. To confront some of the issues facing the judiciary, it is necessary to look at the meaning and requirements of judicial ethics (MacKay, 1995). According to the 1992 constitution of Ghana, “a Justice of the Superior Court or a Chairman of the Regional Tribunal shall not be removed from office except for stated misbehavior or incompetence or on ground of inability to perform the functions of his office arising from infirmity of body or mind” (chapter 9:6). Even though the Constitution mentioned “misbehaviour”, it did not give instances of what constitutes misbehavior. However, the judicial ethics training manual for the Nigerian judiciary, states:

Violation of a disciplinary rule may constitute misconduct or misbehaviour and may entail disciplinary action, while ethical principles are self-regulatory standards of conduct. While there may be an overlap or an interplay, the latter are independent of the former in the sense that failure to observe such principles does not of itself constitute either misconduct or misbehavior (nd)

Using this definition as a point of reference, one could say that “misbehavior” as spelt out in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, suggests a violation of rules of engagement for judges.

The three philosophical indicators that undergird the ethics debate are the principle of utilitarianism espoused by John Stuart Mill, the Golden Mean principle, and Emmanuel Kant’s categorical imperative. The principle of utilitarianism stipulates that the final decision to be taken by the decision-maker, in this case the journalist, is one that will ensure the greatest good for the greatest number of people and the least harm to a few people. This is like a cost-benefit approach to reach a decision in journalism situations (ICJ, 2009). The Kantian principle of the categorical imperative indicates that decisions that can be justified ought to be made no matter the consequences (ICJ, 2009). The golden mean principle posits that decision-makers ought to put themselves in the place of the other, see the problem from several perspectives and take a decision on the right course of action (ICJ, 2009).

Justice is a core biblical component and embedded in the statement, “You must not distort justice; you must not show partiality; and you must not accept bribes, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and subverts the cause of those who are in the right”. Without impartial justice, it would be impossible to “live and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you” (Deut. 16:19, 20). Furthermore, an important component of the Old Testament prophetic movement is its uncompromising demand for a just society where the relationship between humans and God is intrinsically measured by, and correspondent to, the right relationship among humans (Kakkanattu, 2012).

The Old Testament prophets spoke against the corruption, exploitation, and injustice prevalent in their society. Justice is ultimately connected with the way people’s lives go and with the nature of the institutions surrounding them (Sen, 2009). This theological understanding of justice is based on Israelites’ understanding of God. In the Bible, God is the standard of justice and those who properly relate to Him become just.

According to Nardoni (2004), the two terms “justice” (mispât) and “righteousness” (zedâqāh) are employed by the prophets, especially Isaiah, Jeremiah (Jer 7:5-6; 9:13; 22:3, 13), Amos, and Micah, to designate the contours of a society founded on a covenant relationship (p.102). In this regard, Zechariah 7:9-10, says, “execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien, or the poor.” In many contexts, those who experience injustice are the poor and the vulnerable. Brueggemann (1978) submits that just like political power,
money can become a power, insensitive to the principles of justice, such as fairness. It can become a negative determinant force in the society. Because of its purchasing strength, the rich can silence many dissonant voices.

Isaiah 10:1-4 presents clear evidence that, unjust judges bring the anger of God upon their lives and they will face the divine justice of God. He wrote:

What sorrow awaits the unjust judges and those who issue unfair laws? They deprive the poor of justice and deny the rights of the needy among my people. They prey on widows and take advantage of orphans. What will you do when I punish you, when I send disaster upon you from a distant land? To whom will you turn for help? Where will your treasures be safe? You will stumble along as prisoners or lie among the dead. But even then the Lord’s anger will not be satisfied. His fist is still poised to strike.

One could argue at this point that the “sorrow that awaits the unjust justices and those who issue unfair laws” as mentioned in Isaiah 10:1, came to reality in the lives of the judges that were exposed in Anas’s video on judicial corruption in Ghana. In the video, some judges went home with bribes in the form of goats, sheep, waakye meal for lunch (waakye is a Ghanaian dish of cooked rice and beans), guinea fowls, foodstuff, and other freebies, while others took as little as GH¢500 (about $100) to influence the determination of cases. They met at places such as their chambers, residences, restaurants, car parks, hotels, shopping malls, and other popular landmarks to collect their bribes.

The video evidence provided by Anas brought shame to the judges involved and also to their relatives. In a response to the videos on the judicial corruption, the Judicial Council set up a five-member committee to discipline those implicated after the outcome of the investigations. Following the investigations by the panel, the guilty judges and court officials have been suspended and asked to return all State property in their possession. This therefore serves as a warning to all those who pervert the course of justice through corrupt practices that one day whether here on earth or dead, the just God will grant justice to all those who were unfairly treated by any judge.

**What should the Church do?**

The Scripture says “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute” (Proverbs 31:8). The implication of Proverbs 31:8 is that, the Church has a missional call to serve as the prophetic voice to speak against corruption and injustice in society. Christians are called upon to be a prophetic people, bearing witness to God’s word; a priestly people, offering the sacrifice of a life lived in discipleship; and a royal people, serving as instruments for the establishment of God’s reign. Further, the Church, as the body of Christ, acts by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue Christ’s life-giving mission in prophetic and compassionate ministry, thereby participating in God’s work of healing a broken world (Lorke & Werner, 2013) and also recognizing the moral imperative of confronting injustice as an integral part of “costly discipleship” (Welty, 2013, p.1).

The Church should keep reminding believers that they are the salt and the light of the world. The salt, in this context, serves to preserve and give taste to life while the light imposes on people the obligation to show the way and also become good examples in all matters of life. Being the light also implies the imperative of exposing the dark spots (that is to expose those involved in corrupt practices both within and outside the Church). On the other hand, the role of the Christian, as the salt and the light of the world, may be hindered or prevented through choices that compromise our integrity or incline us settle for to that what is convenient or comfortable, rather than that which is truly best and pleasing to the Lord. In this light, Lloyd-Jones (1960) submits that:

For effectiveness the Christian must retain his Christlikeness as salt must retain its saltiness. If Christians become assimilated as non-Christians and contaminated by the impurities of the world, they lose their influence. The influence of Christians in and on society depends on their being distinct, not identical...The glory of the gospel is that when
the Church is absolutely different from the world, she invariably attracts it. (p. 46)

Final Reflections and Conclusion

Taking these various scenarios of judicial corruption through the three ethical lenses (Mill’s principle of utilitarianism, the Golden Mean principle, and Kant’s categorical imperative), it becomes obvious that Anas, as an investigative journalist is likely to have used the utilitarian ethical principle that espouses the dictum “the greatest good for the greatest number of people and the least harm to a few people”. For, in the process of carrying out this ethical principle, Anas’s exposé has caused some harm to the judiciary as a whole, the judges themselves, and other court workers in that it has stripped them naked, chipping off a huge chunk of their mantle of respect, integrity, and public confidence in them as fair adjudicators of justice. Nonetheless, to the extent that the majority have benefited from it, the exposé has offered the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people.

The role of the journalist is to ensure accuracy in reportage, truthfulness, fairness, objectivity, and balance. Anas and his Tiger Eye team have displayed these standards in the execution of their journalistic functions and duties, all the more so as none of the judges/magistrates have come out to allege falsity regarding the evidence Anas has provided. Future justice seekers have been exposed to the dark side of what happens in the corridors of power. Additionally, those who might have been victims of the greed, avarice, and egotism of corrupt judges/magistrates have been vindicated. For the rest of the judiciary, a light has shown on them as the Scriptures say, the “people who sit in darkness have seen a great light.” Metaphorically speaking, Anas and his Tiger Eye team have made the justice-givers know that they are being watched even in the secrecy of their law and private chambers.

On the basis of the frame and agenda-setting theory, the present study concludes that Anas’s revelations have succeeded in exposing the administrative and operational corruption within the judiciary. He has managed to set a sizzling agenda, the outcome of which will help rid the judiciary of corrupt elements. The result of the judicial enquiry into these misdemeanors that ended in the suspension or dismissal of the judges involved suggests that when the media play their role by exhibiting the journalistic standards of fairness, truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity and, balance and also operating from utilitarian premise and disregarding self-interest, the cause of justice will be served, the wrongs in the society will be exposed. As efforts are made to correct wrongdoing even among adjudicators of justice, seekers of justice are likely to be assured of receiving fair judgements and following the rule of law.
References


Braungart & M. M. Braungart (Eds.), *Research in political sociology* (pp.143-148). Greenwich, UK: JAI Press.


The Lure of the Image in the Mirror: A Reading of Kwame Nkrumah’s *Towards Colonial Freedom*

Atta Britwum  
Associate Professor, Department of French,  
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana  
attabritwum@gmail.com

Submitted: May 18, 2016 / Accepted: July 2, 2016 / Published: May 31, 2017

Abstract

Nkrumah’s *Towards colonial freedom* is a statement on the nature of colonialism and imperialism; and a strategy for combating them. The work, cast through a nationalist framework, carries a fixation on the superstructure of colonial society to the exclusion of its economic base. Thus conceived, the anti-colonial struggle, at a superficial level, fights colonialism and imperialism. At a fundamental level, it leaves intact the structures—capitalism—that define colonialism and imperialism. Such is the trajectory that Kwame Nkrumah, in this work, traces towards colonial freedom.

Keywords: capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, mode of production, superstructure.

Placing the Author and the Text

*Nkrumah’s Towards colonial freedom* is Kwame Nkrumah’s second published work, following his autobiography, *Ghana*, which appeared in 1959. It was written, according to the author’s ‘Foreword’, in 1945 and published in 1962. Nearly twenty years separate the year of composition and the year of publication. The author affirms that his thinking on imperialism and colonialism, which the work examines, had remained unchanged over the near-twenty-year period.

1945 is the immediate aftermath of World War II. The period saw a resurgence of liberation struggles throughout the colonial world. Nkrumah was some two years away from his return from his passage through the US and Britain to the Gold Coast (later to be named Ghana after independence in 1957) to join and eventually to lead the struggle for independence. Nkrumah, at the thesis phase of a Ph.D. programme in philosophy at Lincoln University, in the US, found himself in London caught in an irresistible pull towards anti-colonial agitation. He gave up his doctoral studies (Nkrumah, 1959) to devote his intellectual, emotional and physical energies to the anti-colonial struggle in London and subsequently in the Gold Coast. In 1958, in the wake of Ghana’s independence, Kwame Nkrumah, become a bright star of Ghana, of Africa and of the world, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by Lincoln University, his alma mater (Nkrumah, 1959; Powell, 1984). *Towards colonial Freedom*, produced during his years as a student in the US, represents clearly an effort to ready himself intellectually for the struggle.

Nkrumah shared, at the time, a perspective that drove what Harold Wilson, then Premier of Great Britain, famously characterised as the ‘wind of change blowing through Africa’ but that engaged the entire colonial world. That perspective was nationalist. The nationalists variously thought the wind they were stirring was aimed at ridding the world of colonialism and imperialism. Imperialism sought to use that wind to reformat itself applying the formula of self-determination or independence; and through wars aimed at maintaining the colonial status quo. The nationalist outlook was shared by political figures such as Mahatma Ghandi and Jawaharal Nehru of India, Sukarno of Indonesia, Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam, Abdul Gamel Nasser of Egypt, Sékou Touré of Guinea, Modibo Kéita of Mali, not to leave out so-called moderates of the ilk of Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal, Houphouët-
Boigny of Côte d’Ivoire, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Kamuzu Banda of Malawi.

The nationalist perspective, as is known, is populist. It assumes the shared identity of oppressed colonial peoples propelled against their colonising oppressors also seen as wearing a single classless identity. The perspective targets abuses of governance; but also assorted apologies of the colonial system generated around the supposed cultural and racial inferiority of colonised peoples. Racial prejudice and related frameworks are, in reality, mental constructs emanating from, and protective of, the capitalist economic base. These cannot be effectively fought without relating them to the colonial (which is to say) capitalist economic base of which they are a reflection. Nationalism does that. It loses sight therefore of the real nature of colonialism.

Leaders of the nationalist movements, in search of radical colouring, borrowed, every now and then, concepts from Marxism, which they did not use in any consequent manner, combating capitalism in favour of socialism. *Towards colonial freedom* functions within this nationalist colouring.

The work seeks to characterise the phenomenon of colonialism and to propose a strategy for fighting it. We fit our reading of it within the materialist conception of history and the theory of imperialism that Lenin develops out of it.

**Theory**

Frederick Engels, in a speech at the graveside of his life-long friend, political comrade and intellectual companion, Karl Marx, affirmed: ‘mankind must first of all eat, drink, have shelter and clothing, before it can pursue politics, science, art, religion, etc.’ (Engels, 1962, p. 167). The position of Engels was informed by the materialist conception of history, also known as historical materialism, which conceives of human society as characterised by two sets of activities that engage the humans who inhabit it. These are activities of production of the material means of life; and mental activities or reflection or thinking. On the basis of this, the materialist conception of history conceives of human society as having two essential components: a mode of production (of the material means of life); and a superstructure. The superstructure is the world of mental activities, ideas and their application in science, technology, art and social institutions. The superstructure arises out of, is conditioned by, the mode of production. The mode of production draws its identity from, is characterised by, the mode of ownership of means of production named also as production relations or property relations.

Means of production, the unit of production, is made up of raw materials (object of labour) and tools/machines (instruments of labour). Qualitative changes that occur in society are identified by changes that occur in the mode of ownership of means of production. Ownership of means of production is either public (as in a communalist, classless society) or private (as in a class society). Thus the qualitative change that occurred in the first human effort at constructing a society, communalism, was marked by the passage from communal, public, ownership of means of production to private ownership of means of production. This change gave rise to social classes, to struggles between them and to the State as an instrument of class domination. Re-configurations of the private mode of ownership of means of production have given rise to qualitatively different societies. These are slave, feudal and capitalist societies. This way of conceiving of social change led Engels to assert, in *Socialism: Utopian and scientific* that the history of the world since the disintegration of communalism has been the history of class struggles leading to qualitative phases in social evolution, marked, each one, by a reconfigured mode of appropriation of means of production (1962, p. 134).

What we retain from the foregoing is that the mode of production of the material needs of life, also called the economic base, the material base or the basis (of society) is the primary, fundamental component of society. The superstructure derives from it, and therefore is secondary relative to the economic base. The superstructure, the world of ideas and social institutions, is reflective of, emanates from, and is protective of, the distinguishing feature of the mode of production: the mode of ownership of means of production. The mode of production, which Marx represents also as ‘the material conditions of life’ (1971, p. 20), is primary, objective reality. The brain generates ideas out of this primary reality. Ideas, derived from the mode of production, constitute a subjective reality, secondary then, relative to the mode of production. Ideas, which Marx calls also social consciousness (1971, p.
20), are mental images of material conditions of life. They are NOT generated by some independent operations of the brain. Marx formulates it thus in the ‘Preface’ to A contribution to the critique of political economy: ‘It is not the consciousness of men [and women] that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness’ (1971, p. 21). Material conditions of life are not determined by ideas; rather, ideas are a reflection of, derive from, the material conditions of life; material conditions of life determine ideas. This follows from an earlier affirmation, still in the ‘Preface’, that ‘neither legal relations nor political forms [can] be comprehended whether by themselves or on the basis of a so-called general development of the human mind, but that on the contrary they originate in the material conditions of life’ (1971, p. 20). Ideas, as mental images of the material conditions of life, typified by the mode of ownership of means of production, attain understanding in reference to the material conditions of life of which they are a reflection.

This is saying that the struggle for social change—as in change away from colonialism—that limits itself to fighting mental processes to the exclusion of the economic base of society, which is to say, the mode of production typified by the mode of ownership of means of production, amounts to whipping the image in the mirror. The distinguishing feature of the nationalist framework is its focus on the image in the mirror that excludes, still less specifies, the defining moment of society, the mode of production typified by the mode of ownership of means of production. It is also the distinguishing feature of Towards colonial freedom.

Lenin constructs the theory of imperialism within the framework of the materialist conception of history. Imperialism is the product of objective social economic processes. It is capitalism having attained, as the title of the work states, its highest stage. The two stages immediately preceding it are the mercantilist and the stage of free competition. Colonialism which is a feature of imperialism is driven therefore by capitalist economic factors not by considerations of race or skin colour which translate into racial prejudice reflected in language, literature and other cultural manifestations; and yielding abuses of governance such as, exclusion from the business of government, racist discriminatory administrative practices, forced labour, pass-laws, arbitrary arrests and imprisonment...

Towards colonial freedom: The Text

Characterising Colonialism/Imperialism

Towards colonial freedom moves to characterise colonialism as a feature of imperialism. It starts with an effort at characterising imperialism in general. The effort distinguishes between modern capitalism and the imperialism of the ancient world of Greece and Rome. This is a conception that conforms to standard dictionary definitions. The work settles then to tackling modern imperialism attempting to use in places Lenin’s theory of imperialism as argued in Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism (1971).

However the outlook that dominates reflection in Towards colonial freedom is nationalist and therefore, falls into the subjective category, reflected in strictures against elements of the superstructure of colonialism. Above all, colonialism is perceived as driven by subjective factors. The perception leaves out the objective: the economic base of society. Thus the major missing objective indicator is the class factor in the development of capitalism leading to imperialism, one of whose features is colonialism. The class factor is indicated by the private mode of ownership of means of production. The perception in the quotation that follows picks out intentionality, the subjective, in the operations of colonialism:

Under the influence of colonial aggressive self-consciousness and the belief that in trade and commerce one nation should gain at the expense of the other, and the further belief that exports must exceed imports in value, each colonial power pursues a policy of strict monopoly of colonial trade, and the building up of national power. The basic notion, that of strict political and economic control, governs the colonial policies of Great Britain, France, Belgium and other modern colonial powers (p. 2). [emphasis added]
The ‘aggressive self-consciousness’ and also ‘the belief that in trade and commerce one nation should gain at the expense of the other’ are subjective categories. They are mental images reflective of the objective conditions of capitalism in its imperialist phase. Focusing on these is focusing on the image in the mirror: unreal. Also missing in the perception is the class factor. Imperialism, as capitalism, is the appropriation by the ruling bourgeoisie of the major means of production. Imperialism has thus, as prime mover, not entire nations but the ruling bourgeoisies of those nations. Apologies for, and rationalisation of, the colonial system, as well as nationalist rejection of them, substitute nation for class. All of them are protective of the colonial/capitalist economic base. The use of the term ‘notion’ obscures the economic determinants that drive what the text names as ‘strict political and economic control’. Besides, the designations ‘Great Britain’, ‘France’, ‘Belgium’, ‘colonial powers’ give a cover to the class interests of the ruling bourgeoisies of those countries. These class interests, it is not uncommon, may be appropriated by the class victims of bourgeois exploitation within the colonising nation state. In reality, the drive to colonise generated by imperialism serves primarily the interests of the ruling bourgeois class.

Still by way of reinforcing its characterisation of colonialism, the essay quotes Jules Ferry’s statement to the French Chamber of Deputies in 1885. The statement makes the drive to acquire colonies, again, a subjective category but not the effect of objective social economic forces. Further, it focuses on ‘nations’ and misses out on the class interests obscured by the designation ‘nations’:

The nations of Europe desire colonies for the following three purposes: (1) in order that they may have access to the raw materials of the colonies; (2) in order to have markets for the sale of manufactured goods of the home country; and (3) as a field for the investment of surplus capital (p. 3) [emphasis added].

Again, Towards colonial freedom appropriates a quote from another political representative of the French bourgeoisie, Albert Sarraut, Colonial Secretary of State in 1923, which carries a subjective representation of colonialism: ‘The origin of colonisation is nothing else than enterprise of individual interests, a one-sided egotistical imposition of the strong upon the weak. (p. 4) [emphasis added].

‘Individual interests’, ‘one-sided egotistical imposition’ are subjective categories. The driving force is, shall we repeat it, rather the development of capitalist productive forces serving primarily the dominant bourgeois class; not ‘individual interests’. Here again the objective factor is missed out in favour of the subjective, ‘individual interests’ which are no more than mental pictures of the objective reality. Sarraut’s wrongful reflection of objective reality attracts an approving comment: ‘Such is the phenomenon of European capitalist aggressiveness, one which has been rightly termed ‘colonial imperialism’” (Nkrumah, 1962, p. 4). The use of ‘European’ again obscures the class factor; and ‘colonial imperialism’ is a tautology. This is because Lenin’s theory makes colonialism a feature of imperialism.

Chapter Two entitled ‘Colonial Economics’ attempts to characterise the operations of imperialism within the colonies. The effort yields some misunderstanding and misapplication of concepts that otherwise point to the materialist conception of history, as the following: ‘Since we feel that mercantilism—as an aspect of imperialism—is the basis of colonial economics, a brief history of the term is essential here. In fact, it was the next historical development of feudalism’ (p. 9).

Far from being an aspect of imperialism, mercantilism is a phase in the development of capitalism, two removes away from monopoly capitalism from which originates imperialism. Mercantilism cannot be fitted within the development of feudalism. It cannot be, at once, imperialism (i.e. capitalism) and feudalism. It does happen though within feudalism; i.e. within the framework of a predominantly feudal mode of ownership of property as means of production. The text continues its characterisation of imperialism thus:

Colonial economics may be traced through three main phases corresponding to its history. The mercantile period, the free trade period and the period of economic imperialism, all
being respectively dominated by merchant capital, industrial capital and finance capital. We are here concerned with the last phase, economic imperialism with its dominance of finance capital. (p. 11)

This could be the effect of reading Lenin’s theory a bit too hastily. Lenin’s theory names mercantilism, free competition and imperialism as phases in the development of capitalism but not in the development of colonialism. Imperialism is the highest phase in the development of capitalism. Colonisation occurs in this phase.

Borrowing correctly from Lenin’s theory, Towards colonial freedom makes the re-scramble for colonies the deeper cause of World War I. This rightly makes colonialism the child of imperialism. However, a further distortion of Lenin’s theory soon occurs on page 12: ‘Industrial capital thus fuses with financial capital’. Lenin’s characterisation of the features of imperialism fuses INDUSTRIAL CAPITAL with BANK CAPITAL to constitute FINANCE CAPITAL. It identifies monopoly capitalism’s basic features as:

1. The increasingly high concentration of production and capital leading to the creation of monopolies, cartels and trusts negating the preceding phase of free enterprise capitalism;
2. Merging of bank capital and industrial capital to constitute finance capital and the creation of financial oligarchies [rule of the rich few];
3. The export of capital superseding the export of commodities;
4. The formation of international monopoly unions of capitalists which divide the world;
5. The appropriation of territories (colonisation) by the national bourgeoisies of the capitalist powers). (Lenin, 1971)

(We note quickly, in passing, Lenin’s insistence pinpointing ruling classes, national bourgeoisies, as the driver of imperialism).

Clearly, the effort to characterise colonialism and imperialism in Towards colonial freedom hinges on inadequate hold on Marxist theory. The categories used to characterise colonialism are all subjective, including those borrowed from political and intellectual representatives of imperialism. These subjective categories as mirror images are distorted. Distorted as they are, they are traceable to physical referents which are rooted in the economic base of capitalism. The net effect is a confusing representation of colonialism and imperialism.

Way out: Towards colonial freedom

These distortions/misapplications of historical materialism are reflected in the strategy that Towards colonial freedom proposes for combating colonialism/imperialism. Distinctly missing in the strategy proposed is, still, the class perspective: ‘The basis of colonial territorial dependence is economic, but the basis of the solution of the problem is political. Hence political independence is an indispensable step towards securing economic emancipation’ (p. vx) [emphasis added].

The strategy is aimed at capturing State power. But what will the class base of this power be? The State is an instrument of class domination. It is an instrument that the dominant class uses to protect, enhance and perpetuate its domination. The dominant class is the class that owns the major means of production. The State, the control of which is targeted here, is the colonial State, configured to serve the interests of the class of owners of means of production in colonial Gold Coast. The class of owners of the major means of production in colonial Gold Coast is the British bourgeoisie. The State that is targeted in the effort to attain political power is thus the colonial State configured to serve the bourgeoisie that rules Great Britain. Such a State cannot meaningfully serve an independent Ghana whose class basis has to be otherwise than as under colonialism.

The misconception is reflected in the slogans that drove the nationalist movement Nkrumah led. One such was scripted on the pedestal that carried his first statue: ‘Seek ye first the political kingdom’.
The statue stood in front of the very first Parliament House. It was demolished by the leaders of the CIA-orchestrated reactionary coup d’état of 1966. The slogan also echoes an idea that occurs in the last quote from *Towards colonial freedom*: “Hence political independence is an indispensable step towards securing economic emancipation” (1962, p. vx). Economic emancipation is not captured as the end of capitalism and its replacement by socialism that ends the exploitation of one class of humans by another class of humans. There is a rider to this slogan, still playing around political power as a fundamental target: ‘We prefer self-government with danger to servitude in tranquillity’. This was carried on every issue of the *Accra Evening News*, the major organ of the Convention People’s Party, edited by Eric Heyman. Still on the motif of political power (with an undefined class base as paramount) is this statement Kwame Nkrumah made on the eve of independence: ‘We shall prove to the world that the black man is capable of managing his own affairs’. All of that gives a cover to the capitalist economic base which remains unscathed, especially as the political power being sought is indeed configured to serve, protect and enhance it. A firm grasp of the materialist conception of history will configure such political power away from its colonial/capitalist identity. But its re-configuration, to be meaningful, has to respond to a re-configured economic base. Colonial freedom requires thus a re-configuration of the dominant mode of ownership of the means of production. Then state power, particularly its instruments of coercion, its entire administrative machinery and related social institutions, should be smashed, at any rate reconfigured, to reflect the class interests of the working class. Lenin (1971) goes over the grounds in *The State and the revolution*.

What was the class identity of the forces that Nkrumah mobilised against colonialism? Was there an awareness of the need to determine a class basis of the struggle against colonialism? That would have required clearly identifying colonialism as capitalism. In the era of capitalism, the only class movement antithetical to the bourgeoisie is that of the working class. The nationalist movement should have been configured under the leadership of the working class. That is the only condition for aiming to smash the colonial (bourgeois) State and replace it with a working class State. An understanding of the science of social change, of historical materialism, is of course indispensable for all that. Did Nkrumah have it at the time? Clearly not. And what will ‘economic emancipation’ be? Did Nkrumah understand that ‘economic emancipation’ will be to free the productive forces from the shackles of capitalist property relations? Did Nkrumah understand that colonial freedom follows in the wake of a socialist revolution, and not just in one country? Certainly not.

**International Alliance of Oppressed Nations**

An important element in the strategy for achieving colonial freedom, as canvassed in the essay, is reaching out to constitute a common front with other colonial peoples in an alliance that overrides ethnic and regional differences. This gives the independence movement a shield against imperialism’s weapon of divide-and-rule. But it also assumes that ‘colonised peoples’ as a whole, irrespective of class identity, are opposed to imperialism. It assumes especially that ‘colonised peoples’ are the only victims of imperialism:

This point of view irrevocably calls for an alliance of all colonial territories and dependencies. All provincial and tribal differences should be broken down completely. By operating on *tribal differences*, and colonial provincialism, the colonial powers’ age-long policy of divide-and-rule has been enhanced. (p. xv) [emphasis added]

The ‘alliance of all colonial territories and dependencies’ will include the national bourgeoisies of the colonies welded to the metropolitan bourgeoisies and therefore allies, in an objective sense, of imperialism. Worse, it excludes the teeming, formidable mass of working peoples within the colonial metropolises, victims of capitalist exploitation, therefore enemies, in an objective sense, of imperialism. A united front of working people the world over, driven by the framework for the construction of socialism, is a necessary condition for ridding the world, including the colonial/neo-colonial world, of imperialism.
In colonial Gold Coast, Nkrumah’s sights, as canvassed in the quotation, were set on the broader national platform, and beyond, on all colonial peoples of the world as against the rather short-sighted politics of the rivals of his Convention people’s Party, such as the Northern People’s Party (NPP) and the National Liberation Movement (NLM). These shared the same populist outlook as the CPP: we against them, we victims of colonial oppression against the colonial oppressors. What distinguished the CPP was its outlook which was not just national, (with a clientele which cut across ethnicity and religious affiliations…) but projected out towards a united West Africa, indeed towards a union of the world’s colonised peoples. The platform of the major rival party, the National Liberation Movement, led by Kofi Abrefa Busia, was narrow: the ‘liberation’ of the Ashanti Region to be secured through constituting the Gold Coast as a federation made up of autonomous units.

Thus, within the Ghanaian national environment and the still broader context of the colonised world, Nkrumah had a perspective which was distantly superior. The problem with the perspective canvassed in the quotation is that the unity achieved over the tribal differences does not identify its class composition and therefore gets hazy about the direction of the struggle. The direction of the struggle stays, as a result, within the capitalist (therefore) colonial status quo.

The point about the 1966 coup d’état that toppled the Nkrumah administration was to ensure, not a projection beyond nationalism (stuck in the colonial/capitalist status quo) into socialism, but a slide back into open embrace of neo-colonialism, i.e. continuing capitalism. Imperialist propaganda against his administration played up abuses within the superstructure— one-party-state, preventive detention, corruption. These are motifs that easily allow for the whipping up of adversarial sentiments. Attention is thus diverted away from the fundamental issue of the capitalist economic base that defines neo-colonialism against which Nkrumah battled. The hundreds of public-owned enterprises that his administration set up within the short duration of this administration are signal elements of that battle. The logic that drives public-owned enterprises within the colonial, post-independence environment, progressive, at one level, consists in diversifying the dominant ownership of means of production which was private and controlled by the British bourgeoisie, a foreign entity. At a more significant level, these state enterprises functioned within the logic of capitalism which defines colonialism. They represent a far cry from a qualitative change to ownership of the means of production by the producers who, by the same logic, gain access to, and run, the State reconfigured as the antithesis of the colonial/capitalist State, and resting on a reconfigured economic base of society. The Nkrumah aftermath has seen the former colonising entity, owners of major means of production worldwide, mutate, wearing consummate generosity as donors, as development partners.

The present essay argues thus against the proposition, for instance, that ‘The influence of Marxism and the Communist manifesto is clear enough in Towards colonial freedom’ (Rooney, 2010, p. 37). Rooney does not indicate how this influence shows. Towards colonial freedom carries references to Marx, Engels and Lenin, but they stop as passing references, and do not result in the use, or manifest influence, of the framework Marx created. In the case of Lenin, specific references are made to sections of his Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism. But, as we have shown, Lenin’s work gets misread. Our position is also contrary to the claim by the Soviet writer, Smertin, who clearly is not operating from within the Marxist perspective, that Nkrumah ‘cites Lenin’s definition of imperialism and uses it in his analysis of the prospects for independence’ (Smertin, 1990, p. 42).

Three quotes, consistent with the subjectivism of the nationalist frame of reference, are rather given prominence. They precede the actual text of Towards colonial freedom, serving as props or at any rate as thinking that lends support to its central thesis. These fit within what technically are known as paratexts. The first is by the Italian nationalist, Giuseppe Mazzini, reflecting on revolution. The same quote appears in the later Consciencism (1964) and made to serve the argument of the text:

"Every true revolution is a programme, and derived from a new, general principle and organic principle. The first thing necessary is to accept that principle. Its development must then be confined to men who are believers in it, and emancipated from every lie or connected to any principle of an opposite nature. (1964, p. vii)"
The Mazzini quote stays wholly at the subjective level. It talks about revolution deriving from a new principle propelling itself against an old principle and requiring ‘men’, i.e. humans, who believe in it to develop it. What are named as principles are subjective categories, mental images, unrelated to the defining moment of society: the economic base of society typified by the mode of ownership of means of production. The revolution then, as principle, stays as a mental image. The next quote by the German Wilhelm Liebknecht (1962, p. vii) reflects likewise on a principle in the abstract: ‘To negotiate with forces that are hostile on matters of principle means to sacrifice principle itself. Principle is indivisible. It is either wholly kept or wholly sacrificed. The slightest concession on matters of principle infers the abandonment of principle.’

The third, by the Ghanaian Joseph Ephraim Casely-Hayford, is a nationalist call for a United West Africa. The context within which the union being canvassed fits the mode of production, the economic base of the projected United Africa, is not specified:

The future of West Africa demands that the youth of West Africa should start life with a distinct objective. Of brain power we are assured. Of mechanical skill there is no dearth. What is wanted is the directing hand which will point to the right goal. A united West Africa arises, chastened and inspired with a conviction that in union is her strength, her weakness in discord. (1962, p. vii)

Casely-Hayford functioned within the early nationalist National Congress for British West Africa. Missing in Toward colonial freedom are key texts by Marx, Engels, Lenin or Trotsky...that would have helped frame a more rigorous scientific study.

There are moments, however, when the discourse steers close to the class perspective, as on page xvii. We find here words that, within a clearly delineated framework of historical materialism, would have led to fitting out the economic base of capitalism/imperialism and possibly relating it to colonialism: ‘Therefore these colonies become avenues for capital investments, not for the benefit of the colonial peoples, but for the benefit of the investors whose agents are the governments concerned’ (Nkrumah, 1962, p. xvii) (emphasis added). Indeed governments are agents of investors. Governments serve investors. Governments operate state power that serves the people as a whole but primarily the owners of property as means of production; i.e. the ruling class. The investors, operatives of the colonial economic base, are of the bourgeoisie, of the ruling class under capitalism. Their interests get served first. The driving force behind imperialism is determined primarily by the interests of the ruling class. Imperialism is the creation of the bourgeoisie, the ruling class of capitalist society. Lenin mentions that the stage of imperialism is marked by the phenomenon of the export of capital superseding the export of commodities. The export of capital is a major feature of imperialism; it is crucial in the drive to colonise. Of course we meet again the designation ‘colonial peoples’ occurring as a homogeneous category shorn of class distinctions.

We discern hints at the class perspective earlier on page xv:

the aim of all colonial governments in Africa and elsewhere has been the struggle for raw materials; and not only this, but the colonies have become a dumping ground, and colonial peoples the false recipients of manufactured goods of the industrialists and capitalists of Great Britain, France, Belgium and other colonial powers who turn to the dependent territories which feed their industrial plants. (p. xv) [emphasis added].

‘Industrialists and capitalists’ are of the ruling bourgeois class, but not otherwise specified. Besides, the class phenomenon is further obscured by the use of ‘colonial powers’ against which the perception pits ‘colonial peoples’.

The essential nature of colonialism and imperialism does get buried in the fixation on the subjective, on the image in the mirror. This results from the theoretical inadequacies of Towards
colonial freedom. A good grasp of the materialist conception of history is a requirement for teasing out the nature of imperialism and colonialism and the strategy for combating it.

**Concluding**

It bears re-affirming that the perspective that informs Kwame Nkrumah’s *Towards colonial freedom* is nationalist. There is some effort to reach beyond the nationalist perspective. It is evidenced in references to Marx, and some indication of reading from Lenin’s *Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism*. However, all is swamped by the nationalist perspective or outright misreading. The nationalist perspective is wholly misleading, as we have pointed out. It canvasses the subjective as against the objective. It focuses on the superstructure of colonial society making abstraction of its economic base, and of the economic base of the society rid of colonialism (of capitalism in its imperialist phase).

The subjective, the ideal, the idea, is the image in the mirror. The lure of the mirror image, in the absence of a strong hold on the materialist conception of history, gets overwhelming in the text. The mirror image, as Marx points out, stands reality on its head. That is what Hegel’s dialectical idealism does. Materialism, joined to dialectics, allows for standing reality right side up. As Marx puts it, with Hegel the dialectic ‘is standing on its head. It must be turned right side up again’ (Marx, 1962, p.456).

At the deeper level, nationalism defends the capitalist status quo of colonialism. At a superficial level, it purports to be combating it. Imperialism turned out to be a lot more discerning and stopped Nkrumah before he led Ghana too far into grasping a perspective, the socialist, that would have provided a solid basis for fighting imperialism. The BBC has had Kwame Nkrumah proclaimed Africa’s man of the 20th century. It buttresses other efforts at holding him up for admiration throughout Africa. What this encourages is to freeze, not just him, but political discourse in Africa and generally among the earth’s wretched, within the nationalist perspective. The reading proposed in here is projected through the science of historical materialism. It is aimed at reaching Kwame Nkrumah beyond the effort he makes to project *Class struggle in Africa* (1970) through a Marxist perspective.

---

1. An intertextuality extracted from the first line of the anthem of the International Working Men’s Association: (‘Debout les damnés de la terre’) (‘Arise the Wretched of the Earth’). The ‘International’ was composed by the 19th century French song writer, Eugène Pottier. The title of Frantz Fanon’s celebrated essay, *Les damnés de la terre (The wretched of the earth)* has the same line as hypotext.
References

Attitudes towards English in Ghana

Kari Dako
Associate Professor, Department of English,
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
karidako@ug.edu.gh; karidako@gmail.com

Millicent Akosua Quarcoo
Senior Lecturer, Department of English Education,
University of Education, Winneba, Ghana
maquarcoo@uew.edu.gh; akosquarcoo@gmail.com

Submitted: May 16, 2014 /Accepted: September 4, 2014 / Published: May 31, 2017

Abstract
The paper considers official and individual attitudes towards bilingualism in English and a Ghanaian language. We ask whether bilingualism in English and Ghanaian languages is a social handicap, without merit, or an important indicator of ethnic identity. Ghana has about 50 non-mutually intelligible languages, yet there are no statistics on who speaks what language(s) where in the country. We consider attitudes to English against the current Ghanaian language policy in education as practised in the school system. Our data reveal that parents believe early exposure to English enhances academic performance; English is therefore becoming the language of the home.

Keywords: attitudes, English, ethnicity, Ghanaian languages, language policy

Introduction
Asanturofie anomaa, wofa no a, woafa mmusuo, wogyae no a, wagyae siadeé.
(If you catch the beautiful nightjar, you inflict on yourself a curse, but if you let it go, you have lost something of great value).

The attitude of Ghanaians to English is echoed in the paradox of this well-known Akan proverb. English might be a curse but it is at the same time a valuable necessity. Attitudes are learned, and Garret (2010) reminds us that associated with attitudes are ‘habits, values, beliefs, opinions as well as social stereotypes and ideologies’ (p.31). In order to get the type of data we sought, a direct approach was used to elicit information about attitudes to English, English medium education, preferred language in the workplace, in commerce and in the media.

Ghana, as a former British colony, is among the ‘Anglophone’ countries of Africa. Even though Ghana has about ‘50 non-mutually intelligible languages’” (Anyidoho & Kropp-Dakubu, 2008, p.142), English is the official language, and at the same time also the most prestigious language (Guerini, 2008). Competence in English is highly regarded (Sey, 1973; Saah, 1986; Andoh-Kumi, 1997) and all evidence suggests that fluency in English is both admired and respected. English is the key to social mobility in Ghana, and throughout the education system, a pass in English is a necessity in propelling one to the next level of the educational ladder. As a result, English is encroaching on some domains previously reserved for local languages. In a second-language situation, the official language will always put the local languages at a disadvantage for it is only through the official language that access to official documents such as, for instance, the constitution and educational opportunities is possible. English is also socially diagnostic in that it appears to suggest that speakers of English belong to a desirable class, or are engaged in sought-after activities in society and thus ‘creating a language-based
system of social stratification that favours a small, educated African elite’ (McLaughlin, 2009, p.3).  

**English in Ghana**

According to a 2007 estimate made by the United Nations, only about 31.8% of Ghana’s population can be said to have English proficiency. So we agree with Mufwene (2010, p.59) when he raises the question: ‘Who counts as Anglophone?’ And when he further probes what ‘demographic or ethnographic criteria’ and ‘what proportion of its population, with what level of competence’ a country should have in order to consider itself Anglophone, i.e. be considered an English-speaking country.

At present British Standard English (BSE) is the written target language of education, and from Primary Four it is, or is supposed to be, the language of instruction in all subjects, except the subject: Ghanaian Language. Received Pronunciation (RP) is the examinable spoken norm and thus the target in spoken English. But whereas Ghana has examiners that are competent to examine BSE, Ghana is short of competent examiners of RP in spoken discourse. On the other hand, information from both high schools and colleges of education suggests that Oral English is no longer part of the syllabus. Although a British accent has always been the official target, it is not popular among Ghanaians. Dako (1991) and surveys among students at the University of Ghana over the years show that Ghanaian English (GhE) is initially conceptualised as an accent, and that Ghanaians are comfortable with and identify with their mode of speech. Koranteng (2006, p.23) describes the situation as: ‘an interesting state of affairs … the educated Ghanaian thinks he speaks British Standard English, and yet frowns on any type of pronunciation that approximates RP’. There is, however, some disagreement on what constitutes the “educated” Ghanaian accent, and who should be thought the ideal speaker. (Dako, 2003; Adjaye, 2005; Koranteng, 2006; Huber, 2008).

On the other hand, an American accent appears to be both acceptable and popular among younger speakers. This is especially noticeable on the numerous local FM stations where we hear young announcers speaking with an attempted American accent. This phenomenon is locally referred to with the acronym: LAFA, which stands for ‘locally acquired foreign accent’ (Huber, 2008; Bruku, 2010; Arthur-Shoba, Dako & Quartey, 2012).

Ghanaian English (GhE) is a new variety, one of the New Englishes (Platt, Weber & Ho, 1984; Bamgbose, 1995) in the process of nativisation (Schneider 2003) and is identified through phonological features, lexis, pragmatic peculiarities and idiomatic usage. Structurally, there are tendencies that mark GhE as distinct from BSE (Huber & Dako, 2008), but these are tendencies mostly identifiable in terms of frequency and along the performance cline. There is the debate whether some persistent features of usage should be accepted as local variety markers or discouraged as grammatical mistakes (deviant structures). Many Ghanaians consider English a Ghanaian language that should set its own norms. A distinct concept of acceptable local usage is therefore evolving. Whereas BSE, as an exolanguage (alien language), is formally the written norm, an indigenised GhE is the written and spoken code in non-formal intra-national discourse. GhE has not assumed an endonormative status (Anderson, 2009) (i.e. assuming local forms). The spoken language carries more local markers than the written, but whereas evidence from Dako (1991) reveals that educated Ghanaians claim that local lexical variety markers are used exclusively in spoken discourse, Dako (2003b) shows that local lexical variety markers are recurrent in almost all genres of written discourse.

**The Ghanaian English Speaker**

Most Ghanaian English speakers are bilingual with at least one local language in addition to English. We also reckon that more than 70% of Ghanaians can speak an Akan dialect (Twi, Fante, etc.) If we say that most Ghanaian English speakers are bilingual, yet find in our surveys that most urban middle class parents interviewed appear indifferent to ensuring that their children get access to a local language and are thus encouraging monolingualism in their children, how do these parents view their own bilingualism? What is the relationship between identity, attitude to English and attitude to

---

1 See also Chimbutane (2011).
the mother tongue\(^2\) (L1)? Is speaking English and a local language in Ghana viewed as a social handicap, as without merit, or as an important indicator of a person’s ethnic identity?

We have over the years asked students at the University of Ghana whether they consider their bilingualism an asset. The responses have invariably been that their bilingualism is not a social handicap, but that bilingualism in English and a local language(s) might be considered without merit, as the knowledge of a local language hardly ever has any economic value. This perception is clearly demonstrated in class when students are introduced to strategies on how to write a Curriculum Vitae. Students do not consider the item: ‘languages spoken’ - and if they do, they invariably list: ‘English/French/Spanish/Russian’ etc. but not any Ghanaian languages. On the other hand, the Ghanaian L1 is by most students considered an important indicator of ethnic identity.

**Official Attitudes to English in Education**

For Baker and Prys-Jones (1998, p. 178), ‘any policy for language, especially in the system of education, has to take account of the attitudes to those likely to be affected.’ And as Tollefson (1991, p. 6) as quoted in Chimbutane (2012, p.15) emphasises, ‘language policy is one mechanism for locating language within social structure so that language determines who has access to political power and economic resources’.

It is not clear what general language policy prevails in Ghana today, and officialdom has never systematically sought information on who speaks what where in Ghana. The present language policy in education appears to accommodate the attitudes of the urban middle class: that the child is best catered for in an English medium school. Whether the attitudes of non-English-speaking parents of rural as well as urban children have been taken cognisance of in any language policy is unclear. When a former Minister for Education in the New Patriotic Party (NPP) administration introduced an English-only policy in 2002, he gave some reasons for his decision, and one of these was that ‘students are unable to speak and write good [emphasis added] English sentences even by the time they complete the senior secondary school’ (TheStatesman 2002, p. 3.). In addition he argued that English was the lingua franca of the State and that everything must be done to ensure that children acquire the right level of competence in both the spoken and written forms of the language. The minister did not consider whether there were competent teachers available to teach English from kindergarten.

In 2006, therefore, four years later, Ghana introduced yet another policy on language in education – the National Literacy Accelerated Programme (NALAP). According to NALAP, the child will be taught in its L1, or the dominant language of the locality, for the first three years of primary school while being introduced to English gradually first in speech and later in writing. From the fourth year, English is the sole medium of instruction, and the local language is taught as a subject. The Ghanaian language of the community will be offered as a compulsory subject to BECE (Basic Education Certificate Examination). Exception to this policy is granted to a select few schools in urban areas that have a large number of expatriate children, such as Ghana International School and École Française Jacques Prévert. Other English medium schools now have to offer a Ghanaian language as a subject, but they do not feel obliged to teach in a Ghanaian language for the first three years. On the other hand, a Ghanaian language is now one of the ten compulsory subjects at BECE. The pupil must pass in all the ten subjects, but only six subjects constitute the aggregate necessary for admission into a Senior High School, and ‘Ghanaian Language’ is not one of these six subjects.

As a consequence of this language policy, very few Senior High Schools offer a local language. Pupils have tended not to take their Ghanaian language lessons seriously, because a pass in the subject cannot help them to advance academically. This attitude has then also been supported from the home in that parents encourage their children to concentrate on ‘important subjects’ i.e. subjects that count towards the admittance aggregate for high school and university. Consequently, young people come out of school unable to read or write any of the indigenous languages, because no premium is put on this competence.

Till a couple of years ago, therefore, the educational philosophy as practised in private urban

\(^2\) Also first language
schools and by middle class parents in urban Ghana is what Garcia (2007, p. 51) calls ‘subtractive bilingualism’ in that the child ‘speaks a first language and a second is added while the first is subtracted’. What this means is that the dominant language, which in Ghana’s case is English, will ease out the L1 and replace it.

**General Attitudes to English**

Ghanaians are proud of their competence in English and, as mentioned above, competence in English is highly regarded. Students in the Department of English, University of Ghana, interviewed over the years have been close to unanimous in the view that the Ghanaian speaks better English than any other English-speaking African. The reference points for most of the students are restricted to Nigerian English and Liberian English. But the same view tends to be expressed by Ghanaians in the African Diaspora. On the other hand, newsreaders and reporters in the Ghanaian media are not often publicly taken to task for shortcomings in either pronunciation or usage or structure. Privately, though, the Ghanaian will complain about the inadequate English performance of our TV and FM stations. Whether Sey’s (1973, p.7) claim that the Ghanaian aims at perfection and will not “accept anything other than educated British Standard English” is true also today, may be debatable.

**English in the School System**

Sutherland-Addy notes: ‘We are turning our children into machines to pass exams!’ (Sutherland-Addy 2011)³. Tollefson also observes: ‘At a time when English is widely seen as the key to the economic success of nations and economic well-being of individuals, the spread of English also contributes to significant social, political, and economic inequalities’(2000, p. 48). There is a general perception in Ghana of ‘falling standards’ in English performance, and this is not peculiar to this nation, but the statistics of performance in English at examinations countrywide support this view. The school system is designed to ensure that the young person leaves school fully equipped to participate in the life of modern Ghana, but not all young Ghanaians are able to realise their potential. The Ghanaian education system is highly competitive, as will be shown below – and one can understand that parents are worried that their children will not make it in an educational structure that puts so much emphasis on competence in English.

An urban public Junior High School (JHS) had these results in English at the BECE (Basic Education Certificate Examination) in 2010:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
<th>Grade 7</th>
<th>Grade 8</th>
<th>Grade 9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to get into a good school, a pupil should have no more than an aggregate of 12 – i.e. not more than grade 2 in every subject. So only about 12 – 13 pupils out of the 82 from this school would have had a chance of getting into a high school.

The SHS (Senior High School) takes three years of study after completion of the basic school. The students write the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) after these three years to enable them to enter the university or any other post-secondary institution. The West African Examinations Council grades the exams on a scale of A1- F9. A1 is excellent and represents the highest/ best grade and F9 is fail and represents the lowest grade.

The university accepts results from grades A1-C6 where C6 represents a credit. D7 and E8 are passes but are not accepted for admission to the university. In order to gain entry to a public university, a student would need an aggregate of not more than 16 points accumulated from six subjects which must include at least a credit in English and a credit in Mathematics.

---

³ Keynote address at the Faculty of Arts Colloquium, University of Ghana, 12th April, 2011. *Musings on creativity as the spark for modern nationhood.*
An urban public Senior High School (SSS) had the following results in Core English in 2011:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A1</th>
<th>B2</th>
<th>B3</th>
<th>C4</th>
<th>C5</th>
<th>C6</th>
<th>D7</th>
<th>E8</th>
<th>F9</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>691</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, the majority of students were within the lower C range. This means that with the aggregate of 6 subjects required by a candidate to enter university today, any student with a lower grade than B 3 in any subject might not have much of a chance.

In 2009, only 43.90% of students passed the WASSCE in English. In 2007 the pass grade was as low as 28.03% and in 2014, it was 45.2% (233livewews.com-2014/08/19). The trend shows that performance in English is still below 50%. Our surveys in Tema, an industrial port city close to the capital Accra, in 2006 and 2010 indicate that urban parents, irrespective of their educational background believe children will perform better academically if they are exposed to only English in school and at home.

Parents’ Attitudes to Language

The educational system in Ghana can be likened to a very broad-based pyramid, where about 20% get access to a Senior High School and where a fraction of this percentage gets into a university. Parents are aware of the inequality of the education system and invest heavily in their children’s education to ensure that they progress from one stage to the next. It is generally thought that English is the main obstacle to academic progression. Consequently, especially in urban areas, English is gradually assuming L1 status as more and more children are sent to English medium schools, and more and more parents choose to speak English in the home. And as life styles and social attitudes are often reflected through language, it becomes difficult to distinguish attitudes to language from attitudes towards social groups (Garret, 2010; Coupland, 2009).

A sample of 100 middle class parents with at least secondary education was interviewed in Tema, to find out how they viewed the role of English in the school and as a language for their children. The findings show that the majority of the parents interviewed were of the opinion that early and exclusive exposure to English promoted higher academic performance in the child (Quarcoo, 2006). In very many higher income homes English has, therefore, become the language used in interaction with the child, and children are sent to English medium schools, so-called ‘International Schools’. Interestingly, parents appear not to consider reading an essential teaching tool for language acquisition. A Ghanaian publisher could tell that it is difficult to market children’s books in Ghana, but parents are willing to purchase textbooks in a variety of subjects, including English, for their children to use in school and in ‘extra classes’.

We asked 20 Senior Members and Senior Staff at the University of Ghana how many books they had bought for their children in the previous year. Five of them had bought what in Ghana is called a ‘story book’ and eleven had bought set textbooks for their children or grandchildren or relatives’ children. Parents, therefore, appear to have more faith in spontaneous language acquisition through speaking and listening than in guided language acquisition through reading – irrespective, it appears, of the competence of the models, be they at home or at school.

Our findings indicate that although most parents believe that their wards will perform better in a monolingual environment, parents also feel coerced into choosing English as the code in the home, because sought-after private schools interview children in English and test their vocabulary before admission. One parent, who had just moved to Ghana from the UK, tells of her daughter’s school giving her a list of 200 vocabulary items for the child to learn before being considered for admission to Class One. The parent could see no pedagogical basis for the selection of the items: one of the words was ‘carbohydrates’. So in the private schools, children are started off in English already in the nursery school. Because of this early exposure to an English-speaking environment, many parents believe that children from the private schools perform better at the Junior High School level than those from the public schools. This is apparently confirmed because children from private schools get more placements in the prestigious Senior High Schools than their public school counterparts. As a result of
this, policies have been introduced that give some percentage of placements to children from public schools, especially public schools in the rural areas, in these prestigious Senior High Schools. This is an indication that the English medium school has an advantage over the public school that adheres to the official educational language policy.

In Quarcoo (2006), parents were asked to give at least 3 reasons why they had chosen English over their L1 in communicating with their children. The following are some of the responses in order of importance. These responses were collated as general replies to the question: ‘Give three reasons you have for choosing to speak English with your children’. Responses of similar nature were then put together to give the following:

• a) 44% of the responses stated that selection interviews for admission into nursery schools are conducted in English, and so the three-year old child attending such an interview should be able to speak English to enable it to pass. Where else will a child of three learn English before school apart from the home?
• b) 30% of the responses stated that it will help the children to be fluent and speak English with confidence.
• c) 28% of the responses argued that it was the medium of instruction in school and in order not for the children to be handicapped when they go to school, it is better to start them off with English at home.
• d) 26% stated that since the parents were from different linguistic backgrounds, English served as a common language between them.
• e) 22% chose it because it would improve their children’s living standard in future.
• f) 14% answered that it was the norm of the day.
• g) 12% stated that English was an international language, which everyone needed.
• h) 6% had no particular reason.
• i) 4% said children who speak English fluently are admired.

Only in response a) can be discerned a critique of the practice. The following two responses give pedagogical reasons why the child should speak English. The excuse of response d) that parents might speak different languages does not sound too convincing – a child can easily acquire two Ghanaian languages. But these responses give the impression that most of the parents interviewed had a positive attitude towards the English language. Their attitude to the local language is not necessarily negative, but it is a competence that is considered of little importance in the child’s educational progression, and so the parents are willing to set aside their indigenous languages in favour of English. From talking with the parents, one could only conclude that, so long as the child is in Ghana, it will acquire a local language or two. But the responses also indicate that the parents feel compelled to use English at home because the schools of their choice will admit only children who speak English. And so the importance given to English overrides personal preferences.

Even though we hear dissenting voices from parents, our students at the University of Ghana have obviously not thought too much about this matter. They are, to a large extent, products of English medium schools, so students who were surveyed had a positive attitude towards English because they claimed it is the only language that can push them through the university. Yet the majority of male students at the universities in Ghana hardly ever speak English in informal discourse; their preferred code is Student Pidgin, an acrolectal variety of Ghanaian Pidgin, (Huber, 1999; Dako, 2002, 2013, 2014; Forson, 1996, 2006). This notwithstanding, more than three quarters of the students responded that English is the most important language for them and also worldwide, when asked how they view it. However, some still felt that their L1 was more important in that it gave them their identity and

4 Student Pidgin (SP) first appeared in the Ghanaian secondary schools in the late 1960s and then moved into the universities. As is the case with Ghanaian Pidgin, SP was from the beginning a male code. We now observe an increasing number of female students adopting this code.
assured them of who they were.

**Official Attitudes to Language**

Whereas much lip service is paid to the preservation of culture and tradition in Ghana, little attention is paid to the vehicle of culture: language. A Ghanaian language is not needed for a person to function officially in Ghana. A Ghanaian language is not a requirement for entering either the civil service or the public service, and the constitution does not require a president to speak a Ghanaian language. In fact, the constitution does not state that English is the official language of Ghana, and the Constitution mentions the word ‘language’ only five times. The first mention is in Article 9:2: ‘Except as otherwise provided in article 7 of this Constitution, a person shall not be… registered as a citizen of Ghana unless at the time of his application for registration he is able to speak and understand an indigenous language of Ghana.’ The next two references are found in Article 19:2 where it is stated ‘A person who is arrested….shall d) be informed immediately in a language that he understands…and in h) be permitted to have, without payment by him, the assistance of an interpreter where he cannot understand the language used at the trial.’ Then again in Article 26.1 it is stated ‘Every person is entitled to enjoy, practise, profess, maintain and promote any culture, language, tradition or religion subject to the provisions of this Constitution’ and in Article 39:3 we read ‘The State shall foster the development of Ghanaian languages and pride in Ghanaian culture [emphasis added].

From the above, we can conclude that language does not feature prominently in the Ghanaian agenda and discourse.

**English in the Public Domain**

English is the main language for all official duties in Ghana. English is therefore expected to be used in all public domains. We tried to ascertain whether this is what actually pertains. A random survey undertaken in 2010 in the Accra-Tema metropolitan area shows that though English is the official language, it is mainly used at formal meetings, when an official visits or when deference is shown towards a superior or a customer. The languages observed used in public offices in the Accra-Tema area are mainly Twi and Ga. To gather our data we asked the managers of four different banks, Ghana Telecom, the Internal Revenue office in Tema, offices of the Tema Development Corporation, two insurance companies and the offices of Urban Roads, whether we could make a survey on language attitudes and practices among their staff. We had unexpected cooperation, and 400 questionnaires in all were distributed to the managers of the various establishments who then distributed them to their staff.\(^5\) We got 120 questionnaires back. 76% of the respondents claimed they speak only English at work. Meanwhile the area manager in one of the banks in Tema actually gave instructions to the secretary in Ga in the presence of the researcher after he had told her that he uses only English. The secretary subsequently spoke Ewe to another colleague and Twi to the researcher. In three other public offices in Tema, Twi and Ga were the only languages used with all the clients that came to transact business, except in the few cases when the customer initiated the discourse in English and thus compelled the officials to respond likewise.

The workers also claimed they use more English with their superiors than any other language. Out of the 120 respondents, 98 (84%) said they use only English with their boss or senior. Only 6 (5.2%) said that they use an indigenous language, and 12 (10.3%) said they use both English and an indigenous language\(^6\) Twi seems to be the indigenous language most frequently used when the boss or a senior colleague is addressed.

62 (54.9%) employees claimed they spoke only English with colleagues. This appeared not to be the case, however, for when the researcher placed herself on a chair in some of the offices to listen to what actually took place, the results indicated that Twi and sometimes Ga were the languages mostly used. 27 (23%) said they used both English and an indigenous language, and 24 (21.2%) said they used an indigenous language only. Again, Twi seemed to be the language most commonly used. It was

---

\(^5\) Using the SPSS statistical package for the Social Sciences

\(^6\) Some code switching was observed, but in most cases language alternation was noted.
noted that some male employees spoke SP (student pidgin) to male colleagues. But speaking Twi or Ga, etc. actually meant ‘codeswitching’, for the local languages were frequently interspersed with English items.

When asked whether English should replace the local languages in Ghana, 97 (89%) said no, indicating that Ghanaians still want their languages, yet when asked whether an indigenous language should be made a national language, 68 (59.1%) said no, and only 47(40.5%) said yes. This corresponds to Guerini’s (2008) findings.

In an interview with some of the employees who were asked why they use an indigenous language instead of English, some said that it makes communication with those who cannot speak English easier and also does not intimidate customers. Some also said they did not see why they should speak English with someone who can speak their language.

These responses are somehow baffling because these same people claim they speak only English to their children (83 responses representing 91%) because they want them to be competent in that language, yet they themselves do not see why they should speak English with someone who can speak their local language. There might be a conflict of identity here. The parent raising a child to conform to the perceived values of a desired English speaking social class, adopts a different identity from that assumed by the same person as a wage earner in a public office surrounded by Ghanaian colleagues of a similar background and with the same level of education. Yet we can also argue that English is a Ghanaian language that has carved distinct domains for itself in the urban setting and that one of the domains of English is the middle class home with its television, computer, video games and CD player. And so the responses from the questionnaire indicate that English is a valued language used mostly in formal situations whereas the indigenous languages are used in other domains. But the responses also show that though many Ghanaians do not want an indigenous language as a national language, they still want to maintain their ethnic language. Ghanaians clearly have a positive attitude towards English, but their attitude towards the indigenous languages is not so clear.

Discussion

The UNESCO declaration on the use of the vernacular in education states: “It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue” (UNESCO, 1953, p. 11) and in 2003 it reiterates that it is thus urgent to take action to encourage broad and international commitment to promoting multilingualism and linguistic diversity, including the safeguarding of endangered languages.

Recent evidence from research done in rural districts of Ghana (Ameka, 2009; Brew-Daniels, 2010), in which teacher trainees who teach in English under supervision in the higher classes of Primary School and Junior High School are recorded, reveals that the teacher in training has an inadequate grasp of English at all levels of performance and can therefore not be a desirable model in the English-speaking classroom. Extensive code switching is therefore the norm. In a situation where teachers do not have the vocabulary in their L1 to teach adequately and also lack the English resources they would need to deliver adequate lessons in the classroom, codeswitching seems to be the obvious language strategy. English-Twi codeswitching is also the language mode of the study groups monitored at one of our universities (Quarcoo, 2013).

The English Medium School encourages the dilution of local language education and the knowledge, learning and teaching of local culture. And as local languages are denigrated and marginalised, the values of the urban middle class come to dominate the cultural debate in the country. It is the children of the urban middle class, products of the English Medium Schools, who dominate the University intake. This demonstrates that while English opens the door to higher education to a few, it at the same time bars access to higher education for the majority.

It is the creation of this minority elite, whose strategy of symbolic dominations is what Myers-Scotton (1993b) calls ‘elite closure’, that is compelling many Ghanaians to choose English over their L1. Even though Ghanaians have great respect for English and are prepared to choose it over their L1 in speaking to their children, it is still seen as a foreign language by many. There have been voices
who are concerned about the exclusion of the local languages in favour of English. Some have even decried the insertion of English words into the indigenous languages through either borrowing or code switching. An editorial in a national daily reported that “Ghanaians seem to be losing the ability to communicate fluently in their mother tongues, their own Ghanaian languages.” (Ghanaian Times, July 10, 2008 p. 2). The same editorial singled out Akan as the worst culprit: “Akan speakers are especially guilty of what one can term the ‘Akanglish’ phenomenon – or what others call ‘Twinglish’ i.e. extensive code switching. This could suggest that Ghanaians have a love-hate relationship with English. On the one hand it is necessary to have it since it puts the English speakers in a position of authority and enhances their social and economic power. On the other hand, it is a usurper which threatens the Ghanaianness of the Ghanaian.

Concluding Remarks

We have tried to look at Ghanaian attitudes towards English in relation to the indigenous languages. The work has shown that English is a high language in some domains in Ghana (Ferguson, 1953; Fishman, 1967), firstly because it is the de facto official language and is therefore used for official duties, in parliament, in the judiciary, in the media etc. and because it is the main language of education. Secondly, the language policies on education are skewed towards the use of English. Again, these policies are enforced in the public schools whereas the private schools are allowed to interpret the Ghana Education Policy to suit their individual attitude to local language education, thus giving children from private schools some advantage over those from the public schools.

Our findings further show that Ghanaians have a positive attitude towards English because it is the sole language that can enhance their chances of moving up the educational ladder and thus ensuring that they get secure and well-paid jobs. Our findings have also shown that although English is a highly regarded language, Ghanaians still want to keep their indigenous languages, but that they subconsciously refuse to transmit these languages to their children by speaking English to them at home. Parents appear to have the misconception that the children will easily pick up a local language so long as they live in Ghana. They appear not to consider that if a child has English at home, in school, in church, and among friends, it will not get any opportunity to learn the indigenous language and so will not know it at all.

---

7 See also Yankson (2009).
8 See also Kiessling and Mous (2004) and McLaughlin (2009).
References


The Discourse of Sustainable Farming and the Environment in Bessie Head’s *When Rain Clouds Gather*

Dokubo Melford Goodhead
Formerly Assistant Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Spelman College, Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Currently an Independent Researcher
dmdgoodhead@gmail.com

Submitted: August 12, 2016 / Accepted: March 23, 2017 / Published: May 31, 2017

Abstract
Starting with her pioneering novel, *When rain clouds gather* (1968), Head has left behind an impressive body of eco-literature. In this debut novel, Head tackles some of the most pressing problems of the environment as they affect the lives of poor rural dwellers in Botswana trying to leave hunger and poverty behind and gain a foothold in modernity and self-sufficiency with respect to the basic amenities of existence. Head’s novel gives a global dimension to this project that unambiguously gestures toward a cosmopolitan ecocriticism.

Keywords: environment, sustainable farming, ecocriticism, cosmopolitan ecocriticism, postcolonial ecocriticism

Introduction
The need for sustainable agriculture and environment, which Bessie Head (1968) portrays in her novel, *When rain clouds gather*, has become increasingly urgent in a world that is now universally regarded as under the threat of apocalyptic-scale disasters from humanity-induced changes to the climate. In Moore and Nelson’s *Moral ground: Ethical action for a planet in peril* (2010), for example, over eighty-five prominent persons including President Barack Obama, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu come together to make an appeal for saving the planet. The earth and, in a broader sense, Nature have always been of interest to the literary artist. For example, the ancient Greek poet, Theocritus, is credited with inaugurating the pastoral form in which the simplicity of country life and humanity’s happy co-existence with Nature are celebrated. In the *Idylls*, Theocritus contrasts this simple and joyous existence of humanity with an urban life, ridden with problems and anxieties. Theocritus’s nostalgia for rural life is carried even further by Virgil, who in the *Georgics* depicts a golden age where everything was healthy and in abundance vis-à-vis humanity’s subsequent lapsarian loss of that idyll.

However, for Virgil, humanity’s descent from the bliss of the golden age also meant a fall into the prosaic world of work, the adoption of the ethos of responsibility, and the reproduction of culture in order to adapt to a fallen world that now required humans to work for their very sustenance and survival. Nonetheless, in the *Georgics*, Virgil still celebrates rural life and Nature in the way Theocritus did in the *Idylls*, hence the designation of the former by the classical scholar David Ferry (2005) as “the pastoral of hard work” (p. xvii). The “fall” into labor and culture notwithstanding, most societies lived fairly harmoniously with Nature until the Industrial Revolution and unregulated capitalism. While capitalism has created unimaginable wealth and lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty, capitalism, when unregulated, thrives on the use of Nature as a perceived inexhaustible source of raw materials that should be maximally exploited for the most profit. The result of this unbridled
exploitation of Nature by a few is the imperilment of life for all, hence the near-universal call for the earth’s sustainability. In regions of the earth where droughts rise to the proportion that Virgil describes in the plague at the end of the third section of the Georgics and make life unbearably difficult for rural dwellers, the call for a sustainable earth is even more urgent. Head lived in one of such regions of the earth, Botswana, and her representation of rural life and the struggle of its wretchedly poor villagers to scrap out an existence in the face of constant drought and disastrous farming practices that make life even tougher for them and the environment puts the novel in the category of what Leo Marx (2000) has called the complex pastoral. In the novel, as in Head’s other literary works set in rural Botswana, for example, Maru (1971), A question of power (1973), and The collector of treasures (1977), drought constitutes an ever-present backdrop against which she explores the difficult lives of the poor rural dwellers, whom she consistently calls the “people with no shoes”, within a cosmopolitan discourse of sustainability of the environment and the empowerment of the “shoeless”.

Pastoral novels, such as When rain clouds gather, that underscore humanity’s intimate connection to the environment, how human activities affect it, and how it in turn affects humans are increasingly being classified as ecoliterature whose critical appraisal is referred to as ecocriticism. Glotfelty (1996) has defined ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the environment” (p. xvii). Expanding on the definition, she writes: “Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman” (p. xix). As Buell (1995) reminds us, ecocriticism, the belief that the fate of the earth and that of humanity are intertwined and that we should be proactive in maintaining its wellbeing in the face of rapid industrial and technological advancements following the Industrial Revolution, has been in existence for a long time. In The machine in the garden, for example, Marx examines the 19th century debate in the West on what technology would do to Nature, subsequent to the visible deleterious effects of the Industrial Revolution on the wildernesses and the countryside. However, in spite of these early concerns about the impact of technology on the environment, the environment has not fared any better because technology has been used to exploit it for maximum profit without regard for its wellbeing. It is into this breach that ecocriticism has stepped, assuming greater clarity in the wake of ecology and increasing natural and environmental crises. Head is a bold, pioneering ecoliterary writer, who uses the pastoral to explore the concept of sustainability in a region of the earth where pre-industrial agriculture, disastrous farming practices, poverty, droughts that sometimes rise to apocalyptic levels, and the imperative of raising the shoeless out of hunger intersect. In the novel, Head stresses how science and technology could be used to promote the sustainability of the environment and the wellbeing of the rural dwellers who make their living off the land.

**Sustainability: Dissent and Consensus**

The concept of sustainability or sustainable development is a widely debated one and draws very sharp reactions. Nevertheless, I argue that the concept remains the most useful in helping us to imagine our role as human beings in the context of our interdependence with the environment. As I would show from the works of several prominent critics of the term, their dissatisfaction with the term actually arises from its initial definition by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987), as development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs” (p. 7). However, it is useful to keep in mind the caution of Kirsten Halsnaes and Anil Markandy (2002) that there are several hundred alternative definitions of the concept (p.2). Nevertheless, most critics take their cue from the WCED definition. While some critics argue that the concept, as defined by the WCED, is vacuous, fails to give proper guidance on what should be done to rescue the earth, and does not hold anyone accountable, others contend that it creates the erroneous impression that science and technology can be used to keep the resources of the earth flowing in perpetuity. These criticisms are outlined in varying degrees in Newton and Freyfogle (2005), Davies (2010), and Hayden (2010) and have been superseded, to a large extent, in the responses
of the UN and various world bodies that followed the WCED report. Noteworthy too is the inability of critics to wholly abandon the concept. Unable to dismiss it, they often end up suggesting useful ways to modify it to incorporate their criticism. Even where the critics have turned to alternative concepts, a careful examination of these concepts is very likely to underline the necessity of the concept of sustainability.

In “Sustainability: A dissent” (2005), Newton and Freyfogle remark that there is an ambiguity in who is doing the sustaining in the WCED definition and that the ambiguity only disappears when the concept is applied to matters such as agriculture or development. Only then, they argue, does it become clear that human beings are the ones doing the sustaining. They imply, however, that nonhuman forces could be the sustaining agent if we modify our actions in ways that allow these forces to maximally shape the future (p. 25). The authors ought to have explained the term “modification” to show whether it means that we should alter our lifestyles or the way we use science and technology since the type of far-reaching changes that would make it possible for non-human forces to maximally shape the future are today practically impossible without the intervention of science and technology. Newton and Freyfogle concede this key role of science when they write: “When we deal with nature we deal with real places, yet inevitably we are guided in our dealings by our mental understandings. Indeed, this mind-narrative gap is a big reason why we use science. Science brings the real and the mental into closer alignment by improving our understanding of the real” (p. 28).

Therefore, in the matter of who is doing the sustaining, it is important that we do not lose sight of the critical role of the human factor, since humans have long moved past basic existence in the state of nature into a modernity that is driven by human-authored science and technology. However, in spite of this centrality of the human factor, Newton and Freyfogle are right when they say that sustainability can only be achieved when the roles that both human and non-human forces play are fully taken into consideration.

Newton and Freyfogle attribute the idea that “we can aggressively manage nature so long as we are prudent and scientific in doing so” (p. 25) to the late conservationist Gifford Pinchot, whose vision of conservation they see as limited because it gives us the impression that we “could have it all” (p. 25). In the Pinchotian view of the environment, they argue, we could “use better science and economics to get nature’s resources flowing in perpetuity” (p. 25). They conclude that, “Pinchot had little to say about nature’s overall limits or about the wisdom of bending our lives to respect nature’s time-crafted ways” (p. 25). Their reading, then, of the WCED definition of sustainability is that it has been influenced by Pinchot’s thesis. If we are to move away from disaster, they contend, our green turn should be toward Aldo Leopold whose construct of “land health,” “include[s] the soils, waters, plants, animals, and people” (p. 26), is more appropriate. In the Leopoldian vision of conservation, the emphasis is “on the ecological whole, sometimes accentuating the biotic parts, at other times the processes that knit them together” (p. 27). In this vision, humanity and the environment operate in an organic system where there is a “focus on soil fertility in terrestial systems and on the maintenance of intact, efficient systems for the cycling of nutrients from the soil, through plants and animals, and back to the soil” (p. 27). This is clearly an elaboration of the concept of sustainability where human actors must still take the sort of decisions as well as act in ways that bode well for the environment and for humanity. Thus, in the end, the authors return to the concept of sustainability: “If sustainability were to gain stature as an overall vision of human life on Earth, land health might properly stand as an independent viable component of it” (p. 30). In effect, except the notion of land health is stripped of its human component as outlined in the Leopoldian definition, what Newton and Freyfogle have elaborated in their dissent and their preference for the alternative construct of land health is no more than an elaboration of the concept of sustainability.

Like Newton and Freyfogle, Davies (2010) also has reservations about the concept and like them he is unable to escape it. However, unlike Newton and Freyfogle, who, as conservationists, are well acquainted with the genealogy of the concept, Davies, who is not trained in the field, is forced to rely solely on the 1987 WCED definition. This greatly narrows his imagination in the use to which the concept can be put. He notes its practice in the West in the form of the new culture of energy saving
and recycling of waste material. However, in spite of this new culture of environmental consciousness, he believes that the orientation toward sustainability is utopian (p. 263). In spite of this antipathy toward the concept, Davies sees its usefulness and the need for its retention if it is reformulated to dispel “its desire for permanence” (p. 264).

Davies raises a valid point that there is a desire for permanence in the concept if sustainability is understood to mean a perpetual flow of raw materials through the use of science and technology. As Newton and Freyfogle have correctly stressed, this belief does not take the earth’s carrying capacity into account. A good example is ozone layer depletion resulting from excess greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. In a similar manner, we can talk of the pollution of marine ecosystems and excessive use of forest resources or terrestrial and marine wildlife. In these instances, it would be wise, as Newton and Freyfogle suggest, to bend our lifestyle to suit Nature’s ways. Nevertheless, in spite of Davies’s skepticism about recycling and the concept of sustainability, we should not lose sight of the ways in which science and technology do indeed help us to turn waste material into reusable material, find and exploit renewable forms of energy, like solar energy, and reduce pollution to the environment. It is worth emphasizing that even restoration projects like the successful reforestation efforts of the late Nobel Peace Prize laureate Wangari Maathai, in Kenya, need good science and technology. Yet another example is the rapid and substantial decline in the global consumption of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) between 1987 and 1996 as a result of the 1985 Framework Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the 1987 Montreal Protocol (Simonis & Bruhl cited in Hayden, 2010, p. 365). There is therefore a real and practical sense in which the concept of sustainability is not based on nostalgia for the future analogical to the nostalgia we have in the pastoral form of writing as Davies argues. And, yes, it is indeed true that the actions we take today can ensure the future of generations yet unborn, for if we are able to avoid the catastrophes associated with, for example, global warming, who is to say that we have not succeeded in not only securing the present but the future too? Sustainability is, therefore, neither a nostalgia for the future nor a retreat into utopia.

Therefore, Davies’s recourse to nostalgia appears pretentious. Citing Susan Stewart, he writes that the nostalgic “seeks to imagine an alternative kind of narrative in which desire is not marked by the necessity of absence. In the same way, the narrative of human progress that is kept within the bounds of sustainable development will free itself from the threat of irreversible loss, guaranteeing for itself the constant presence of its own material basis” (p. 266).

If sustainability means that our desire does not consider loss, especially irreversible loss, the whole edifice that the concept has erected will collapse since the threat posed by the rapidly encroaching absence of resources, whose supply we once took for granted, constitutes a hard ineluctable reality. When, for example, smog fills the air as a result of carbon emissions and other chemical effluents from automobiles and industrial activities, it is not nostalgia for the past or the future that compels us to pass laws to sanitize the air and free ourselves of the smog. It is because we are confronted with a reality whose consequences could be quite devastating if we do not take action. To imagine sustainable development, then, as a “hermetic withdrawal or even a form of nihilism, transforming life into a deathly stasis” (p. 267), is, therefore, the real flight into a hermetic world since our bodies force us to experience the environment in ways that make it impossible for us to take flight into the past or the future. We are reminded of this in a water supply polluted by an oil spill or in a land where the rivers and streams have dried up because all the trees have disappeared. Therefore, as embodied beings, we live in a material world that we must constantly engage.

**African Literature, the Turn toward Ecocriticism, and Bessie Head**

In his now influential survey of the field of ecocriture and ecocriticism in Africa, Slaymaker (2001) makes the impossible claim that “the African echo of global green approaches to literature and literary criticism has been faint” (p. 132). However, to his credit, Slaymaker makes the pertinent observation that “Black African writers take nature seriously in their creative and academic writing” (p. 132). Interestingly, however, while Slaymaker makes this pointed observation on the ecocritical writing and criticism “in the white literary establishment in South Africa” (p. 132), nowhere does he
mention the remarkable ecoliterary work of Bessie Head, perhaps the most important ecology-conscious writer of the continent then and now.

Nonetheless, Slaymaker’s essay made enough of an impression on the scholar Sonja Darlington (2007), whose article, “The Significance of Bessie Head’s Response to ‘The Call of the Global Green,’” is, in her own words, a direct response to Slaymaker’s article. Darlington seeks to bring Head’s “influential voice on the environment” from the margins to the center by redefining “her environmental concerns for the international public” (pp. 97-98). Additionally, Darlington’s interest in Head is “to re-engage ecocritics and ecoliterature writers to keep the earth’s precarious sustainability as their primary focus of conversation with an inclusive global community” (p. 98). Darlington’s two concerns, sustainability and global inclusivity, are major themes in When rain clouds gather, which demand a cosmopolitan ecocritical reading as opposed to a postcolonial ecocritical reading, as is now the norm. An example of this norm is Elspeth Tulloch’s (2012) article, “Husbandry, agriculture and ecocide: Reading Bessie Head’s When clouds gather as a postcolonial georgic.”

Tulloch claims inspiration for her article from Darlington. In Tulloch’s ecocritical reading of the novel, she turns to the georgic mold with regard to the postcolonial issues that the novel raises and Head’s status as an outsider in Botswana (p. 138). However, Head’s outsider status barely features in Tulloch’s reading of the novel except as the contentious outsider/insider binary with respect to two of the novel’s major characters, Makahaya and Gilbert, which opposition Tulloch stretches to the point of essentialism. Appropriately, Tulloch places the novel in the tradition of the pastoral, drawing inspiration from the Georgics. However, she starts off on a problematic note when she makes reference to Virgil’s use of outside knowledge in his famous poem about humanity’s fall from a golden age of abundance and absence of labor into culture. She does this in order to establish an analogical comparison to Head’s use of the agricultural expertise of the English expatriate, Gilbert, and Makahaya, a South African refugee. She then uses the outsider/insider binary to critique the narrative of development in the novel but this ultimately proves to be a dead end since in order to undermine the narrative she invokes two conceptual frameworks, imperial georgic, which turns the novel on its head, and postcolonial georgic, which relies on a very problematic reading of a passage in the novel. The passage actually presents overwhelming evidence in favor of the opposite of Tulloch’s reading of it. In the end, Tulloch turns to a mystical resolution of the plot and the representation of Head’s peasants as some kind of noble savages.

The novel cannot be an imperial georgic since its focus on Gilbert’s work with the villagers of Golema Mmidi is on the one hand not about empire’s children going to the colony to strip people of their land, which they then exclusively use for growing cash crops to the detriment of the people and, very often, to the land itself, and on the other is actually a critique of such imperial expropriation of land and exploitation of the colonized. We see a classic example of the imperial georgic in Maathai’s discussion of colonial Kenya in Unbowed (2006) where she talks of how the colonial settlers in colonial Kenya displaced native trees in favor of nonnative trees in the Aberdare Forest for commercial purposes. Maathai writes: “These trees grew fast and strong and contributed to the development of the newly emerging timber and building industry” (p. 39). But this “development” came at a huge cost to the land and to the people. Maathai further notes “They eliminated local plants and animals, destroying the natural ecosystem that helped gather and retain rainwater” (p. 39). In the end, “underground water levels decreased markedly and, eventually, rivers and streams either dried up or were greatly reduced” (p. 39).

Head’s novel is a critique of this kind of spurious development in favor of direly needed sustainable development to get the shoeless out of perpetual hunger into enduring sustenance through the restoration of the fertility of the land. In art, as in life, several factors usually stand in the way of such a noble goal. She writes that Gilbert’s work had “destroyed Matenge’s [the tyrannical local chief] lucrative cattle-speculating business overnight” (p. 47). Matenge exploited his people in collaboration with the white colonial settlers, who made enormous wealth on the backs of the poor peasants from cattle speculation. Head writes: “The cattle-speculating monopolies were in the hands of a few white traders…” (p. 47), who became “rich at the expense of the people” (p. 46). She revisits the issue with
greater elaboration in the story of the faith-healing priest in The collector of treasures (1977). Moreover, she is unambiguous about the status of the novel as a counter-imperial georgic. Again and again, she represents Gilbert as doing his work in opposition to both the colonial settlers who make their enormous wealth from the ill-fed cattle of the peasants and the feudal chiefs, who use their enormous power over the people to exploit them. At a poignant moment of the novel as an anti-imperial georgic, she writes: “One day, these colonial authorities were so unfortunate as to pick up a rumor that all was not well with Gilbert in the village of Golema Mmidi. They wrote him a pally letter: ‘Why not come and join us, old boy?’ He sent back an unprintable reply” (p. 42). The novel is, therefore, a counter-imperial georgic and is instead about cosmopolitan relationships.

There are a number of passages in the novel on which Tulloch bases her reading and they are worth a closer look. There is the fencing incident. Tulloch talks of studies about the detrimental effects of fencing on the rural poor and wild life but is silent on the contexts in which fencing may be detrimental to wild life and the rural poor (p. 141). If a few people, colonial settlers and local elite, fence off huge swaths of land for themselves at the expense of the rural peasant it would be condemnable. This is a very contentious issue and Head presents an analogical situation in the novel to address it (pp. 36-38). The land in the community, she writes, is not meant to fall “into the hands of a few rich people” (p. 38). The first time Head introduces fencing in the novel is in the context of saving chickens from avian predators and raising a healthy and well-fed stock. The old man Dinorego provides the context: “There was my friend, Mma-Millipede, who had fifty-two fowls. They were wandering free, being eaten by the eagles” (p. 27). The old man took Mma Millipede to Gilbert, who advised her to build a coop fifteen feet by twenty-five feet and six-feet high and house one cockerel with fifteen hens. The old woman stopped losing her chickens to the eagles and became a successful poultry farmer (p. 27). There is a sense in which such details look pedestrian in a creative work but Head knew that she was dealing with real-life problems of hunger and backbreaking poverty and dispensed with fanciful metaphors for a creative detailing of daily existence and survival in one of the poorest places in the world at the time she was writing the novel.

The second time that Head brings up fencing, it is for the purpose of the scientific restoration of the land to its once fertile and bio-diverse state. She uses two brief juxtaposed passages to make this point economically. The old man Dinorego recalls a time “when the whole area had been clothed by waist-high grass and clear little streams had flowed all the year round. The pathways of the streams were still there but dry and empty now” (p. 37). The disappearance of the life-sustaining little streams and fertile land forced the people to abandon their villages. Accordingly, years later when Gilbert travels through the region, he encounters abandoned villages and an ocean of sand throughout the journey. However, having gone to England to study how to nurse the land back to health to make it arable, he comes to the conclusion “that only large-scale fencing of the land and controlled grazing would save the parts that had not yet become completely eroded and uninhabitable for both man and animals” (p. 38). To put the lie to the claim of the tyrannical local chief that he is a typical colonial settler who had fenced off the land for his own use, he takes the people to the fenced-off land to see the remarkable recovery of the land. Head writes: “All the old men could not but agree that they had not seen such grass in Golema Mmidi for a long time. He also took them to the cattle ranch where the same miracle had occurred” (p. 39). Writing in an ecocritical fashion, Head shows that the devastated land, like the human body when sick, needs favorable conditions to recover hence the need for fencing it. Context is, therefore, very important because in its absence, one could be led into wild speculations that would be wide off the mark.

Tulloch is critical of the narrative of development in the novel, even though Head shows throughout the novel that she is talking of the sustainable kind, and not the type that brings disaster to both the environment and the people living in it. As a result, Tulloch argues that the Turkish tobacco that Gilbert introduces into the community to help finance the restoration of the land and the agricultural projects is “a controlled form of species invasion introduced by neocolonial pressures…” (p. 144). Constrained by a postcolonial eco-critique that is clearly inadequate, at least as she uses it, to read the novel Tulloch in spite of acknowledging that Gilbert’s goal is to use the sale of the tobacco to
transform the village into an agricultural center of activity able to feed itself and supply the rest of the country with fruit and vegetables is constrained to dismiss Head’s real-life oriented pragmatism with the words “invasion” and “neocolonial.” If Tulloch were to be constrained more by a cosmopolitan eco-critique rather than a postcolonial critique the real question she would be asking is whether the tobacco plant is good for the land. Even though Tulloch points out the need for extra water for the tobacco and, therefore, the digging of a drainage pit in the compound of each woman involved in the project to capture rainwater, except for aesthetic concerns, Head presents the drainage pits as a temporary measure, to be replaced by a centralized source of water supply when the community generates enough money to build more than the one borehole servicing it (p. 114). The backbreaking poverty of the shoeless has to be factored into any kind of ecocriticism in ways that account for both the wellbeing of the land and the escape of the shoeless from hunger and poverty.

This is the crux of the developmental narrative in the novel and the work of Gilbert. He does not arbitrarily impose science and development on the land. He painstakingly tests his hypotheses, including the introduction of new species into the community, to determine their suitability for the land and the community (pp. 36-37). By the time we meet him, he has been conducting observations and experiments on the land for three years (p. 36). Consequently, what Head demonstrates in the novel is not ecological imperialism but crop migration, which is as old as the earth, as crops have migrated from one part of the earth to another by wind, water, insects, birds, animals, and human agency. Head astutely underscores this point by juxtaposing the plot that each woman uses to grow the tobacco in her compound to the plot she uses to grow her maize, a staple crop with origins in South America. Crops with origins in South America that have since become staple crops in Africa include the peanut and cassava. Head’s project of sustainable farming is, therefore, one that is attuned to the needs of the environment as well as to the freedom of the millions of “shoeless people” all over rural Africa from hunger and poverty.

However, because Tulloch is committed to a postcolonial ecocritical paradigm, she is uncomfortable with Head’s use of Gilbert, an English expatriate, to lead the project. Consequently, she reads into two passages in the novel that which is obviously not there. The first passage deals with the model village built by Paulina’s little daughter. The child bases the model village on what she sees all around her, a village with no trees. Throughout this representative mini-narrative or mise-en-abyme (pp. 108-115), there is no place where Makhaya is presented as expressing reservations and uncertainty about the bio-diverse, sustainable agricultural work he is doing with Gilbert and the villagers as Tulloch argues (p. 144). Read in the context of the evidence presented by the passage, Makhaya’s request to Paulina for permission to place a tree in the model village is an act of politeness and mirrors the greening of the village with plants and trees. As a matter of fact, at the end of the passage, Head writes of him: “[H]e was absorbed in studying the future needs of the tiny village…” (p. 115). Therefore, Gilbert’s search for the most suitable spot to place the last of the trees that Makhaya has carved for the model village actually captures an essential aspect of the overall narrative – doing the most suitable thing for the environment and the villagers and not imposing things by fiat on either of them. It is why Gilbert does not arbitrarily place the tree anywhere but in the most suitable spot.

However, building on her problematic reading of the model village, Tulloch contends that Gilbert begins to experience serious doubts that lead him “to challenge his own developmental ambitions for the people and his role as agro-husband/developer” (p. 144). The passage Tulloch is talking about is bookended by the moment after he puts the last tree in the model village and is so ecstatic about how the real village would ultimately turn out to be (p. 114) and his feeling of great goodness about the country after engaging in a reflection on whether the actual motivation for the work is to enable the villagers “to catch up with the Joneses in the rich countries?” (p. 184). Therefore, if this reflection about superhighways and skyscrapers is juxtaposed to his ultimate goal that every household should have potable water and that the village should have palm trees, fruit trees, flower gardens (p. 114), be self-sufficient in food production, and supply fruits, vegetables, and the best grade beef to the rest of the country (p. 155), we immediately realize that the reflection is a way of reminding himself to focus on what really matters for the shoeless villagers.
As already stated, it is a problem for Tulloch that Gilbert, a white Englishman, should be the initiator of the projects even though he is an Englishman with a cosmopolitan sensibility. She writes: “From a postcolonial perspective, it is problematic that the narrative situates the impetus for this renewed husbandry in outsider figures led by Gilbert, who represents Western science” (p. 143). Here, as elsewhere, Tulloch uses the anachronistic term “Western science” to pigeon-hole and discredit Gilbert’s scientific work. When, however, she is talking about scientific work that supposedly discredits his work, the tag “Western” is omitted from the science. Since Tulloch’s postcolonial perspective has a problem with Gilbert being a Westerner, she has to find a way of grounding the direly needed recuperation of the environment and the escape of the villagers from poverty in something that at least appears to rupture Gilbert’s cosmopolitan identification with the villagers. To do so, she resorts to mysticism and the transformation of the villagers into noble savages. She writes about Gilbert’s repeated losing of his way in the bush paths of the village in the following words: “For all his science – his purported enlightenment -- Gilbert cannot surpass the local people’s hidden (to him) knowledge, symbolised here as darkness” (p. 143). This needless mystification of what is otherwise pedestrian knowledge gathered from a lifelong use of the footpaths and bushes of the village turns the Tswana into noble savages, who possess a mystical knowledge of the footpaths and bushes in a way that is knowable only to them because they are Tswana by birth. Tulloch continues: “The solution to the problems of the land must be locally generated, one specifically African,” “one controlled by a higher, rurally sympathetic power” (p. 146). This power is a “mischievous, bored, distinct, overseeing presence above science” (p. 146). In the end, to resolve her opposition to Gilbert’s sustainability-driven scientific project, Tulloch couches her recourse to mysticism in the postmodernist language of uncertainty in a manner that confers some kind of mystical fertility resulting from the marriage of Paulina and Makhaya on the land. She writes: “In assenting to take a husband, Pauline [sic] is ‘settling into’ or figuring the attitude needed for producing/finding food in the region’s unpredictable environment, acknowledging the paradox that to settle her – in Botswana – is to accept the possibility of unsettledness” (p. 147). She goes further: “Their union bears the promise of fruit, so the narrative’s rural God ordains” (p. 147).

In this final recourse to postmodernist uncertainty and mysticism to resolve the plot of the novel, Tulloch seems to be unaware that whenever Head brings God and the spiritual into her fictional work it is usually to deal with ethical and moral issues and that though she frequently juxtaposes it with the realities of the human condition, she never confuses her forays into the metaphysical realm with the hard realities of natural situations that invite scientific inquiry and resolution. This is clearly evident in her story about an old female herbal healer of the village of Bodibeng, whom fellow villagers accuse of using witchcraft to kill children and sick woman. The old herbalist cures sickness through her knowledge of the medicinal properties of herbs not witchcraft. The paramount chief knows this as well as the fact that the villagers have conveniently made the old woman a scapegoat for their negligence in protecting their children from cold and pneumonia. He rightly turns the table on them by asking for the autopsy reports of the dead children and the dead woman (pp. 51-54). Another example is her short story, “Looking for a rain god” (1977). We see this turn to the metaphysical and the spiritual to deal with ethical and moral issues and their juxtaposition to the realities of everyday life most prominently in her novels, Maru and A question of power.

The Problem with Postcolonial Ecocriticism

Tulloch’s problematic resolution of the novel through mysticism and postmodernist uncertainty are in many ways anticipated in Vital’s articles (2008; 2005). In the 2008 article, Vital takes some time to reflect, along with Graham Huggan, Rob Nixon, and Dominic Head on the necessity of a rapprochement between ecocriticism and postcolonial critique. However, in Vital’s view, it is only Dominic Head that takes note of the difficulties in bringing about such rapprochement and the one who gave him the insights into the topic for his own article. Both he and Dominic Head wonder whether such rapprochement is possible, knowing that while ecocriticism is grounded in ecology postcolonial critique is informed by a poststructuralist understanding of language with its seeming
denial of a physical ground of meaning (p. 89). According to Vital, Dominic Head resolves this impasse in his reading of Michael K by attending to the “intimations of the material” in the novel, “the literal, that the dominant code elaborating ideas of ‘textuality’ cannot absorb, Head can then read the novel as being about ecology, necessarily extratextual” (p. 89). This is unsatisfactory because in postructuralist discourse, nothing escapes language and language, according to this view, invests everything, even ecology, with both uncertainty and an endless deferral of meaning. Head’s other insight, which actually enables Vital to propose a materialist understanding of discourse, is actually more appropriate to Vital’s project. Vital writes:

Discourse stands in arbitrary but also power-laden relation to the material world but not all discourses are equal in guiding societies to interact well with earth’s biophysical processes or to address inequities among human populations and the attendant suffering and meager life-opportunities (p. 90).

In his 2005 article, Vital identifies the appropriate discourse for an African ecocriticism as one rooted in the concept of environmental justice, which he thinks in the specific case of South Africa, enables the ecocritic to talk about the country’s apartheid past, modernity and those it has left behind, as well as South Africa’s place in the contemporary global capitalist system. Therefore, according to him, South African environmentalism has to be unrepentantly anthropocentric (p. 298). However, Vital realizes that an unrepentantly anthropocentric environmentalism will introduce conflicts between the needs of those that South Africa’s colonial past as well as the current global capitalist system has left behind and the needs of the environment. Moreover, Vital had earlier come to the conclusion that any worthwhile African ecocriticism must “enable social worlds to find more equitable, sustainable, and healthy ways of inhabiting their place - as well as strengthen historical self-understanding” (p. 87). But an unrepentantly anthropocentric ecocriticism cannot in the same breath talk of sustainability. As a matter of fact, an unrepentantly anthropocentric ecocriticism will find good company in unregulated capitalism, which would supposedly provide more profit as well as more jobs and material goods for society. Vital resolves this impasse by asking that we view ecology as actually acting in our own interest because “it provides a vision of kinship with other living and non-living beings that are part of the material systems that make possible our embodiment” (p. 305).

Vital’s article, while underlining the inescapability of the concept of sustainability in addressing the environmental problems of our time, also shows, as does Tulloch’s article, that there is a disparity between ecocriticism and postcolonial criticism. Moreover, as we have seen from Tulloch, while it is true that in decentering the Western subject, postcolonial critique aims for a more inclusive world it loses its salience if this is stretched to breaking point and makes any meaningful cooperation between the West and post-colonial Africa impossible. But the magnitude of the problems facing contemporary Africa and the peril, which the planet as a whole faces from contemporary environmental problems, can only be addressed by a cosmopolitan vision. This, I argue, is the ideal vision that most readers encounter in Head’s novel.

Towards a Cosmopolitan Ecocriticism of When Rain Clouds Gather

The concept of cosmopolitanism has been attributed to Diogenes, who when he was asked where he came from answered that he was a citizen of the world (Kleingeld, 2012, p. 2). Diogenes “held that all human beings are owed certain positive duties of hospitality and brotherly love, as if they were common citizens of the world” (Brown & Held, 2010, p. 4). Brown and Held give a comprehensive definition of the concept that is quite useful for this article. They write:

In its most basic form, cosmopolitanism maintains that there are moral obligations owed to all human beings based solely on our humanity alone, without reference to race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, state citizenship, or other communal particularities (p. 1).
One of the most important explorations of the concept with regard to the environment is Patrick Hayden’s article, “The Environment, Global Justice and World Environmental Citizenship” (2010). Like many scholars who have written about the environment, Hayden takes his cue from the 1987 WCED definition of sustainability. Similarly, like Newton and Freyfogle and Davies, Hayden takes issue with the WCED definition and, again like them is unable to escape the concept of sustainability in the end, especially as he follows the development of the concept from its first intimations in the earlier UN Conference of the Human Environment (UNCHE) of June 7 1972 to its fuller development in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992). Unable to rid himself of the concept, Hayden incorporates it into his construct of sustainable justice, an amalgam of sustainability, social justice, and environmental justice. Like Vital, Hayden admits that the concept of environmental justice, upon which he builds his notion of sustainable justice, is anthropocentric but like Vital he too resolves this impasse by noting the interdependence between human beings and the environment. He writes that “its concern with human health and wellbeing is grounded in the recognition that the quality of human life is inseparable from the quality of the supporting ecosystems upon which human life depends” (p. 360).

Hayden imagines a global approach with a cosmopolitan vision of environmental crises. He argues that since countries in the developed world have contributed more to the global environmental crisis than developing economies and are at the same more economically prosperous and technologically advanced, they should do more to help countries in the developing world with their environmental problems in order to foster greater justice and improvement in the quality of life of people everywhere on the planet (p. 360). In this regard, Hayden talks of “the emergence of a global civil society in which networks of actors spanning different levels and different sectors of society are linked by their shared concern for the environment and human development, which results in local groups taking action based on globally embedded ideas” (p. 367). Taken together, the concepts of cosmopolitanism and sustainability provide the most resilient tools to resolve the global environmental crisis and its negative effect on local communities. They also have the capacity of freeing the shoeless from hunger and poverty, and ushering them into a sustainable modernity.

Eilersen (1995), Head’s biographer, tells us that the portrait of the English expatriate, Gilbert, is actually based on the Englishman Vernon Gibberd, an agricultural worker whom Head met in Serowe. Eilersen quotes Head as saying of the Englishman, “I liked the ideas of the man … and how he had fitted himself into the position of very poor people” (p. 85). Head transposes this into the novel when she writes of Gilbert’s identification with shoeless villagers, treating them “as though they were his blood brothers” (p. 24) when he could have acted as the colonial officer, George Appleby-Smith, or the colonial cattle speculators. The cosmopolitan, as we have seen, regards the entirety of humanity as his/her kindred. The outsider/insider binary, which postcolonial critics, such as Tulloch and Caminero-Santangelo (2014) impose on the novel, is therefore an artificial one. Gilbert, by adoption and cultural immersion, becomes a Tswana. Talking about Gilbert to Makhaya, when the latter newly arrives in the village, the old man says:

Just as I take you as my own son, so do I take Gilbert as my own son, which fact surprises me, since he is a white man and we Batswana do not know any white people, though some have lived here for many years. Many things caused me to have a change of mind. He can eat goat meat and sour-milk porridge, which I have not known a white man to eat before. Also, whenever there is trouble he comes to me and says, ‘Dinorego, should I stay here?’ (p. 27).

Even though there are white settlers amongst them, the Tswana “do not know” any white people because the white settlers are the colonial type, who have erected distinct boundaries between them and the Tswana. The two, therefore, live in two parallel worlds. When, however, Gilbert, a cosmopolitan, enters the village, he collapses the two worlds into one and becomes not a settler but a fellow villager with the villagers, a reality which the old man formally recognizes by adopting him as
his son.

Moreover, Head lived and worked on a similar farm like the one she writes about in the novel. In a letter to Randolph Vigne that he later published with Head’s other letters in A gesture of belonging (1991), Head talks of translating her experience on the farm into a novel (p. 21). Additionally, Head was well acquainted with the history of the Tswana, parts of which she publishes in Serowe: Village of the rain wind (1981). In this brief history of the Tswana are some of the key issues which she writes about in the novel. Serowe, like Golema Mmiddi, is often a drought-stricken place. She writes of the town, “During my ten-year stay here, the two or three seasons when it rained for a whole month in one long, leaden downpour were so exceptional and stunning that I cannot even describe them. I am more familiar with the rain pattern of drought years” (1981, p. x).

The natural and human-made environmental problems that Head represents in the novel, like the projects of reversal of loss and renewal of the land, are therefore translated from a reality that spills out of the fictional world of the novel to circle back into the real. Contrary, then, to Tulloch’s request that Gilbert’s agricultural scientific project be read as metaphor it should in fact be read as being firmly rooted not only in reality but also in the history and the environment of the Tswana, as continuation of the project of Tshekedi Khama. Head writes that following in the footsteps of his father, Kham the Great, Tshekedi Khama, ruler of the Tswana, transformed the age-group regiments of the tribe into self-help regiments to build community projects. While the efforts of Khama the Great in using age groups could be described as *ad hoc*, his son transformed them into permanent self-help regiments. Head stresses what Tshekedi Khama did as revolutionary: “His time was famed for educational progress, and the ideal of self-help was introduced into Serowe life long before it became an international byword or necessity” (p. 76). She adds: “I worked on self-help projects in a much later period and was amazed at the old men who would come and peer at the work and join in the pick-digging. When I commented on it, people replied: ‘They used to work like that with Tshekedi. My father who passed away helped to build Masokola School, you know’” (p. 76). Another participant in Tshekedi’s self-help projects, Lekoto Digate, an eighty-six-year-old retired cattleman, tells Head that the participants in the projects built “schools and roads and dams for watering cattle” (p. 93). The idea of self-help projects was therefore not new to the Tswana.

The shoeless people are the ones who drive the project to bring modernity into their land as a kind of sustainable pastoral, that is, to restore the environment to what it used to be in order to usher them into a sustainable modernity. It is because the villagers cannot do this alone that the development project is located within a cosmopolitan framework. The shoeless villagers give the two outsiders, Gilbert and Makhaya, hospitality, a cosmopolitan act. Instead of turning the hospitality into an exploitative one, as in a colonial relationship, the two return the hospitality. In what could be considered a classic cosmopolitan relationship with the people, they turn themselves into insiders, abolishing artificial differences between them and their hosts. The village becomes their home but since they were previously urban dwellers, they have seen modernity up-close and noticed the difference that science and technology could make to humanity’s existential problems in the village. This is why Gilbert goes to England to get the requisite knowledge he needs to make an intervention in the tradition of Khama the Great and his son, Tshekedi Khama. This is one of the instances in the novel where Head unambiguously signals the idea that the contents of the novel spill outside of the novel into the real world and that even though the story is presented as fiction, she is dealing with material conditions outside of the text.

The march toward and into modernity is therefore not a roughshod one over the land and the people. The land would be returned to the bio-diverse pastoral environment it used to be and this restoration will in turn improve the lives of the shoeless villagers and enable them to adopt sustainable ways of farming and raise their livestock with the benefit of the advances in science and technology. Head differentiates this development project from the work of the colonial agriculturists and the get-rich-quick schemes of the colonial cattle speculators (p. 42; p. 46). In one, the outside agent is a cosmopolitan agent and in the other, the outside agent is an imperial agent working for the exploitative interests of self and empire. The two sets of people come into the land by different methods. The
imperial agent enters the land through the guns of empire and seizes the land with the guns. The cosmopolitan agent comes as a visitor seeking hospitality and service to the community. The one sets up settler communities and builds an unbridgeable chasm between themselves and the host community. The other goes into the community and lives and works with their hosts to confront the existential problems of the community as members of the community. This is why the old man Dinorego tells Makhaya that before Gilbert the villagers had not known any white person even though there are white settlers living close by.

The work of empire and its commercial agents is dictated by the needs of empire and the material aggrandizement of imperial agents, not by what is good for the colonized or the environment. Maathai has shown us how this occurred in colonial Kenya. We encounter another example in the Belgian Congo in Conrad’s *Heart of darkness*, where Conrad’s Marlowe recounts the needless and reckless abuse of the environment: “A heavy and dull detonation shook the ground, a puff of smoke came out of the cliff, and that was all. No change appeared on the face of the rock. They were building a railway. The cliff was not in the way or anything; but this objectless blasting was all the work going on” (pp. 31-32). In contrast, we have seen the rigorous regimen of experiments that Gilbert in his role as an agricultural scientist undertakes to ensure that the scientific innovations and new species of plants that he is introducing into the community are good for both the environment and the people.

**Conclusion**

No nation can go it alone in solving the current global environmental crisis. Poor countries, especially, need help in tackling their environmental and food production problems, hence the call for a cosmopolitan ecocrítica. Head’s novel is about a cosmopolitan ethic of place, the sustainable pastoral, and the sustainability of the shoeless. According to the 2015 Human Development Report, “In 2014 the richest 1 percent of the world’s people owned 48 percent of global wealth, a share that could rise to more than 50 percent in 2016” (p. 75). In stark contrast, “[i]n 2013 about 370 million people in developing country regions were working but living on less than $1.25 a day” (p. 75). Also, in 2014-2016, 780 million people in developing countries were suffering from chronic hunger. 90 million of this number were children under the age of five (p. 75). In a recent article that he did on climate refugees from Mali, Niger, and the Gambia, Somini Sengupta (2016) writes: “They do it because the rains have become so fickle, the days measurably hotter, the droughts more frequent and more fierce, making it impossible to grow enough food on their land.” He adds that in 2016 alone, “more than 311,000 people have passed through Agadez on their way to either Algeria or Libya, and some onward to Europe....” Can these devastations be reversed? Yes, some of it at the least can be reversed. According to the 2015 Human Development Report, “Between 2000 and 2010 the global net loss in forest fell from an average of 8.3 million hectares a year to an average of 5.2 million hectares a year thanks to afforestation and the natural expansion of forests” (p. 74).

As scholars of cosmopolitanism, such as Hayden, Brown and Held have noted, this reversal is only likely to come about if the rich nations of the world who have greater scientific and technological resources put those resources at the disposal of developing nations. Hayden puts such interventions under the concept of environmental justice. However, environmental justice projects even when they are undertaken successfully are very often what a handful of people undertake for others. Sustainability, on the other hand, is something we all do to ensure our wellbeing and the wellbeing of the ecological community, locally, nationally, regionally, and globally. Sustainability places agency in the hands of all human actors, asking them to take responsibility for the fate of the environment in which they live. Makhaya’s blowing up of the earth with dynamite in order to reach down to deep subterranean water levels with borehole technology therefore takes a new meaning from the one Tulloch gives to it. The 2015 Human Development Report reminds us that, “Water scarcity affects more than 40 percent of people around the world” (p. 74). If people in poor and drought-stricken nations are to remain in their homelands instead of fleeing them, then, as Head writes in her novel, a cosmopolitan partnership between those who have the science and technology to bring about reversals to the damaged and deficient environments and those who need to use them to thrive in their homelands.
is the road that we, as humanity, must take. Worthy of note though is Head’s suggestion that these cosmopolitan partnerships might even come about as a result of cosmopolitans, such as Gilbert, who turn themselves into technological migrants. The world is, of course, more familiar with economic migrants, whether of the individual type or imperial agents, who settle down in colonized territories and accumulate wealth for themselves and empire. Today, multinational companies often follow a similar path because all that matters to them is the profit they make from the host community. However, in a rapidly shrinking world where people are becoming more and more globally conscious and cosmopolitan minded, we are likely to find more technological migrants going, in the opposite direction, into communities where, like economic migrants, they put down roots and become part of the community, bringing along with them valuable scientific and technological knowledge to their new homelands to make it easier for the new homelands to deal with climate and environmental challenges.

The entire earth was once a pastoral environment. In Virgil’s metaphoric reading of this natural history, the beginning was a golden age of abundance. There was no work because the means of sustenance were everywhere around us. However, we “fell” from that age into the age of work and culture. Our numbers expanded all over the earth and cities sprang up and the pastoral environment of the golden age was no longer guaranteed to us. It became something that we, as producers of knowledge and culture, must sustain if we are to live in harmony with Nature. This is the tradition in which Head has written her novel, complete with a flight of urban dwellers to the rural area, who must work with the rural poor in a spirit of cosmopolitanism to restore the fertility of the land and in doing so enable the rural poor to be self-sufficient. The shoeless, who have long looked from the outside at a modernity that has left them behind, can now be participants in it. However, it is a modernity not of reckless exploitation of the land but one based on the knowledge that there is an intimate interdependence between the wellbeing of the land and the wellbeing of those who dwell on it.
References


The Role of the International Community in Ghana’s Democratic Transition in the 1990s

Maame Adwoa Gyekye-Jandoh
Senior Lecturer, Department of Political Science,
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
mgyekye-jandoh@ug.edu.gh / mgyekyej@yahoo.com

Submitted: June 13, 2016 / Accepted: November 14, 2016 / Published: May 31, 2017

Abstract
This article argues that Ghana’s democratization took place through a two-stage process, where the first stage saw the international community play a more dominant role leading up to Ghana’s transition in 1992. Rawlings’ decision to democratize was the outcome of a rare convergence of domestic and international pressures. In the first stage, international forces provided the structural context for political reform. There are two facets of the international impact: snowballing/demonstration effect, and implicit political conditionality. Evidence is given to show that it was only when snowballing and implicit political conditionality held sway over Rawlings that the transition to democracy was given a boost.

Keywords: international community, Ghana, democratic transition, snowballing, political conditionality

Introduction and Background
In many respects, the case of Ghana’s transition to Western democracy in the 1990s is an unusual one, because none of the recent standard explanations of how the international community impacts regime change works there. For example, Levitsky and Way’s (2003, 2005) works on the role of international factors in regime change demonstrated that both Western leverage and linkage to the West raised the cost of authoritarianism during the post-Cold War period, in hybrid or competitive-authoritarian regimes. Diplomatic pressure, or conditionality, two mechanisms of “leverage” were, however, insufficient for authoritarian regimes to democratize; “linkage”, with its more subtle and diffuse effects, rather contributed more consistently to democratization. Western leverage meant governments’ vulnerability to external pressure, while linkage meant the density of a country’s ties to the U.S., the European Union, and Western multilateral institutions (Levitsky & Way, 2003; Levitsky & Way, 2005).

If this new framework helps one to understand many cases, it does not completely work in Ghana’s case, because while “leverage” did indeed raise the cost of authoritarian acts such as repression of demonstrations in Ghana in the late 1980s and early 1990s, there is no evidence (except subtle un-measurable evidence, if any) that “linkage to the West” contributed immensely to democratization in Ghana. Thus the assertion by Levitsky and Way (2005; 2010; 2012) that “linkage contributed more consistently to democratization” does not apply to Ghana. Rather, “leverage”, in the form of conditionality, played a larger role in Ghana’s democratic transition, and this buttresses the “leverage” aspect of the authors’ framework.

While snowballing did have an influence on the occurrence and timeline of political liberalization events in Ghana, its implicit political conditionality through the PNDC’s extensive engagement with the World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) in implementing the Economic Recovery Program/Structural Adjustment Program (ERP/SAP) was the more dominant international factor in promoting democracy in Ghana. Having gained an international reputation as the “darling of
the Bank/IMF”, Flight-Lieutenant John Jerry Rawlings did not want to risk this reputation through large-scale abuse or crackdown. As Nugent (1996, p. 202) has argued, there were three choices available to Rawlings at the point of transition: to dig in further by repressing opposition, to capitulate and let opposition forces take over the transition process, or to come up with fresh initiatives and take control of the political reform process, which by the late 1980s was definitely on the agenda.

Rawlings, as an agent constrained by structural forces (Bermeo, 1990; Przeworski, 1991), chose the last course, based on his “own long-range calculations” (Nugent 1996, p. 202), including protecting his international reputation and his regime’s all-important need for continued foreign aid that came mostly from the Bank/IMF. The re-awakened, re-energized opposition movement was surprised by Rawlings’ announcement of liberalizing reforms and the timing of these reforms. In so doing, he managed to retain the initiative and control of the transition process.

Implicit political conditionality promoted democracy in Ghana in two ways: by increasing popular demands due to the ERP/SAP’s unpopularity, especially among urban workers and students in the late 1980s; and second, due to Ghana’s increased dependence on foreign aid from the Bank/IMF. Increased dependence meant that the regime was more vulnerable to conditions that were placed on it for continued aid, in the form of calls for good governance (World Bank, 1989) as an important facilitator of economic reform.

Thus, the Ghana case involved a subtle puzzle, in which calls for democracy in particular were not an explicit part of World Bank/IMF conditionality. Nonetheless, the international factor still mattered because Rawlings’ Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) had invested massively in engaging with the Bank/IMF via the SAP and because of the attendant aid it received. The PNDC was in quite a tight position, because no other aid was forthcoming from its earlier allies, including Cuba, Libya, and even the former Soviet Union. It was widely believed that the PNDC could not survive to the end without the external assistance it received (Nugent, 1996, p. 187). This prognosis actually answers the counterfactual question, of what would have happened to the Rawlings-PNDC if foreign aid was no longer forthcoming. It most probably would not have survived its eleven years in office, as most of the funds used to provide infrastructure, give rents to those who supported it, bring the economy back from the brink, and build a political base that eventually helped it win the 1992 elections came from external sources, especially the Bank/IMF.

This paper’s discussion shows that structural factors of the international system do have an impact on democratic transitions, as they constrain the choices of political actors, in Ghana’s case, Rawlings, during the process of regime change (Skocpol, 1979; Haggard & Kaufmann, 1995). The Ghana case shows that a combination of both structural (Skocpol, 1979; Levitsky & Way, 2003; 2005) and contingent/voluntarist (Linz, 2000; Linz & Stepan, 1978, 1996; Przeworski, 1991; Geddes, 1991; Diamond, Linz, & Lipset, 1995) explanations are needed for both transition to democracy and further democratization. The international community worked in constraining Rawlings toward the transition by increasing the costs of crackdown, but it could not determine the choice he made. He could have capitulated to demands for democracy by giving up power and handing over to an interim government, but he gradually democratized, largely on his own terms rather than the opposition’s. Rawlings also made the choice to engage the international environment in the 1980s, and this differentiates him and Ghana from other African countries that did not engage with the Bank/IMF or did not engage in a timely fashion.

Ghana’s transition to democracy has attracted much interest from the academy. Boafo-Arthur (1998), for example, argues that Ghana’s multilateral and bilateral donors leveraged her dependence on them financially and economically to bring about democratization. However, this current paper argues that leverage, in the form of “implicit political conditionality” that raised the costs of authoritarian acts by the Rawlings’ PNDC, as well as the impact of snowballing, i.e. increased liberalizing events in Ghana coinciding with liberalizing events in Eastern Europe, and the fall of the Soviet Union, led to the Ghanaian transition to democracy in 1993. The difference between this paper

1 In other words, unintended and not particularly pre-strategized or explicit push for democracy.
and others in the current literature is its combination, in one paper, of an analysis of the details of the conditionality dynamics of donors through the SAPs and increased aid with that of the snowballing, or impact of international environmental events on Ghana.

Methodology

The article employs a qualitative method of research through both primary and secondary data. The primary data consists of field interviews and analysis of newspapers and important statements and relevant documents, while the secondary data reviews relevant literature from books and journals. The article includes evidence to back its two main arguments. First is the analysis of the timeline and significance of important democratizing measures in Ghana taken by the Rawlings-PNDC and roughly paralleling liberalizing events in Eastern Europe, statements by Rawlings, and activists’ statements on the importance of the international environment for the timing of Ghana’s democratic transition furnish evidence of snowballing.

Evidence of World Bank/IMF political conditionality promoting democracy in Ghana is seen in increased popular demands for democratic rule from workers’ and students’ demonstrations and strikes in the late 1980s. An examination of the ERP/SAP and its successes and costs show why there was an increase in popular demands among these previous supporters of the PNDC. Data is also provided on the amount of Bank/IMF aid received by Ghana as a result of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), together with an analysis of the government’s increased dependence on aid.

Brief Political History of Ghana

Ghana was the first African country south of the Sahara to gain independence from the British. It began its post-independence life on a very good pluralist democratic footing, having inherited the Westminster parliamentary system of government and constitution from the British. Its first democratically elected government was led by Kwame Nkrumah of the Convention People’s Party (CPP) in 1957 (Ninsin, 1998). Ninsin (1998, p. 2) points out that multiparty politics and spirited public debate were key features of politics in Ghana both before and immediately after independence. Unfortunately, Ghana experienced its first coup d’état by senior military officers on February 24, 1966. Nkrumah was ousted, and the National Liberation Council (NLC) took power. Led by General A.A. Afrifa, the NLC handed over power to the democratically elected Progress Party (PP) government of Kofi Abrefa Busia on August 29, 1969.

Unfortunately, the pattern of civilian-military cycles set in motion in 1966 continued, with the PP government’s overthrow on January 13, 1972 in a military coup, led by the National Redemption Council’s (that later became SMC I in 1975) Lt-Col. I. K. Acheampong. On July 5, 1978, Acheampong was ousted in a palace coup by Lt-Gen. F.W.K. Akuffo, ushering in the Supreme Military Council (SMC II). The SMC II was in turn ousted by another coup, which successfully brought Flt-Lt. J.J. Rawlings, a junior officer, to power as head of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) on June 4, 1979. With the coming of the AFRC, senior military officers were executed, including Acheampong and Akuffo. On September 24, 1979, Rawlings handed over power to Ghana’s third civilian multiparty government, under the elected People’s National Party (PNP) of Dr. Hilla Limann.

The pattern of military-civilian cycles continued with another military coup on December 31, 1981. The Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) era was characterized by an authoritarian ruling strategy, which allowed the government to pursue an IMF-World Bank Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) almost to the letter, beginning in 1983, dubbed the Economic Recovery Program (ERP). The PNDC was in office for 11 years, until January 7, 1993, when after multiparty elections in November 1992, it handed over power to a metamorphosed version of itself, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government, with now civilian John Jerry Rawlings as president.

Thus, between 1957, when Ghana became independent, and January 7, 1993 when the new civilian government of Rawlings took effect, Ghana had been ruled under four military governments, with a total of 22 years and 3 months, and three civilian governments, which shared a total of 13 years and 9 months in office. The pattern of civilian-military cycles was not conducive to fostering the
growth of democratic culture and practice. It was in such a historical context of constant abortion of democratic institutions and rules of behavior and relapse into authoritarianism (Ninsin, 1998, p. 2) that the transition to democracy in Ghana took place. How did the international community impact Ghana’s transition to democracy?

The International Community

Two dimensions of the international community that had an impact on Ghana’s democratic transition were snowballing or demonstration effect, and (implicit) political conditionality. Donor pressure worked in Ghana because the Rawlings government had embarked on the SAP in 1983 supervised by the World Bank and IMF, and had gradually become very dependent on the foreign aid that came as a result of implementing the SAP. When political conditionality for good governance was included, the PNDC government could not reject outright the call to liberalize, and ultimately abandoned its “populist ideas and plans that ran into the constraints of the international system” (Green, 1997, p. 5). In effect, “donor pressure for political reform, whether based on the value of political liberalization in governance and the success of structural adjustment, or their own predilection for particular political regimes, was important both in terms of giving support to internal demands and forcing the government to liberalize” (Jebuni & Oduro, 1998, p. 40).

In this regard, the following sub-section examines snowballing while the next assesses political conditionality by the World Bank and the IMF.

Snowballing

Snowballing, or the “demonstration effect”, as characterized by Huntington (1991) and others, was one aspect of the international environment’s influence on the move to democratization in Ghana. As some have argued (Jebuni & Oduro, 1998, p. 21), the developments in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, where authoritarian governments were replaced by democratically elected ones, had not only a direct impact on the domestic society, but also were important in explaining the emergence of the international donor community “as a strong and in some cases effective lobby of political reform” (Jebuni and Oduro, 1998, p. 21). The collapse of the Eastern European Socialist bloc and the emergence of democratically elected governments “seriously flawed the logic of the one-party and military autocracies in Africa and the rationale for the ban on multi-partyism” (Jebuni & Oduro, 1998, p. 21).

In Ghana, for example, officials interviewed stressed the importance of the international community and especially the events that occurred in East Germany in 1989 and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 in making the opposition’s case as well as that of pro-democracy civil society groups much stronger and worth taken seriously by the PNDC regime. In addition to the international wind of change that was blowing in the late 1980s and early 1990s, one journalist highlighted problems of neighboring countries as well as lessons of failed states, as factors contributing to the PNDC’s decision to embark on the transition to a multi-party democracy.

The overall consensus among prominent members of Ghanaian society was that the transition to democracy and the promulgation of the 1992 Constitution were the result of a combination of internal and external pressure on Rawlings’ PNDC. In the words of one interviewee regarding the transition to democracy in Ghana,

Internationally, the breakup of the Soviet Union and the third wave of democracy played roles, but we should not downplay the role of civil society internally. The PNDC was also

---

2 See also Bratton and van de Walle (1992); Hofmeier (1991).
3 Interview with Mrs. Lucia Quachey, President, Ghana Association of Women Entrepreneurs (GAWE), September 1, 2003; Interview with Dr. Edward Mahama, opposition party People’s National Convention (PNC)’s flag-bearer, August 22, 2003; Interview with Dan Botwe, New Patriotic Party (NPP) General Secretary, August 29, 2003; Interview with Ben Ephson, Editor, Daily Dispatch, August 21, 2003.
4 Interview with Ben Ephson, Editor, Daily Dispatch, August 21, 2003.
willing to let go and transition to democracy, and in 2000, the big key was that Rawlings stepped down after his two terms of office for John Atta-Mills to run as the NDC presidential candidate; Prof. Mills eventually lost after the second round.5

The timeline of external events below buttresses statements made by civil society activists, leaders, and journalists. 1989 was a significant year, because it was the year that the Berlin Wall fell, and the communist regimes of Eastern and Central Europe began to fall in quick succession. Ceausescu’s demise in Romania in 1989, after a week-long series of violent riots and protests in late December 1989, showed that societal groups, if persistent and strong, could even overcome authoritarian systems such as communism, and hence other autocracies as well. If Ceausescu of Romania could be “so ignominiously deposed, then perhaps Rawlings was not such a formidable adversary after all” (Nugent, 1996, p. 186).

With the end of the Cold War in 1990, it would seem that Western governments and multilateral donors rediscovered political liberalization as a possible panacea for unimpressive and unsustained economic reform in Africa (Boafo-Arthur, 1999). Then came 1991, which was a significant year because it marked the breakup of the Soviet Union, and many of its republics began processes of political liberalization and democratization. These global events prompted renewed optimism for regime change in Africa. Beginning with the Republic of Benin, where after a series of strikes and popular demands for a national conference, the incumbent president, Nicephore Soglo, lost in subsequent elections in 1990, one regime after the other faced strikes and street protests, and was forced to accept popular demands for a national conference. These national conferences, once convened, sought to allot to themselves sovereign powers and strip incumbent regimes of their powers to govern (Nugent, 1996; Heilbrunn, 1993).

The main movements toward political liberalization in Ghana began in 1988 with the election of the District Assemblies in 1988 and 1989. First, the PNDC’s publication of The “Blue Book” or District Political Authority and Modalities for District Level Elections on July 1, 1987 outlined the regime’s philosophy and policy on future political reforms for the country. It laid out a decentralized system of government where the District Assemblies would be elected on a no-party basis to be the highest form of political authority, but also form the basis for any future representative institutions that would emerge at the national level.

The Blue Book’s proposals and the District Assembly elections and inauguration were significant because, rather than appeasing or forestalling civil society group demands for more say in economic reform and in politics, they ironically led to calls for proper competitive party elections at all levels of government. This was because opposition pro-democracy groups felt that the government’s proposed reforms contradicted their demands and meant that their political rights and freedoms would not be realized (Ninsin, 1996).

Second, the PNDC had earlier created the National Commission on Democracy (NCD) in 1982 to spearhead the evolution to a “true” democracy. In 1990, the NCD held regional public forums throughout the ten regions of Ghana from July to November, to ascertain people’s views on “The District Assemblies and the Evolving Democratic Process.” The NCD presented its report on the public forums to the PNDC government in March 1991. However, the fact that these public fora were held in the first place was significant, because this was the first time that Rawlings’ government had actually tried to discern the views of ordinary people on the political process.

Prior to this, the PNDC had been reluctant to expose both the political reforms and the ERP/SAP to any debate for fear of vocal opposition from workers, students, and radical intellectuals, and thus, until 1990, it did not offer any platform on which this debate could occur (Nugent, 1996, p. 166).

Third, the National Commission on Democracy’s (NCD) report regarding the overwhelming preference of Ghanaians for a constitutional multi-party form of government went a long way in

5 Interview with Larry Bimi, Chairman, National Commission on Civic Education, August 25, 2003; see also Ayee (2001).
compelling a shift in the government’s position of reluctance to a participation in a constitutional multi-party form of government. Prior to the submission of the NCD’s report, Rawlings had announced an inconclusive and limited transition program on both radio and television in his New Year’s address of January 1, 1991, which angered many. In this address, there was a shift in rhetoric, from an insistence that “true” democracy can be achieved only through a grassroots decentralized form of government based on the District Assemblies, to talk of a new constitutional order. It also demonstrated his contempt for a constitutional liberal democratic form of government. Among other things, he stated that:

the NCD has been requested to present its report by the end of March this year to enable the PNDC convene a broad-based national consultative body which would use the report as well as the 1957, 1960, 1969, and 1979 constitutions and other constitutions, as the basis for further consultation…Our eyes are now dimly set on the final phase of our journey as a provisional government and the road to establishing for Ghana a new constitutional order. But I believe we have learned over the years that a Constitution as a mere legal document is of no real value, however fine the language and however lofty the sentiments, unless it is a true reflection and embodiment of the perceptions and noble aspirations of ordinary Ghanaians.6

This was the first time that Rawlings had actually spoken of a constitution as part of the move toward a change in the form of government. In spite of Rawlings’ long-standing insistence on a “popular democracy”, most of the feedback from the public regional forums conducted by the NCD showed that most Ghanaians were not in favor of this non-partisan so-called popular democracy. While most Ghanaians were not against decentralization and the District Assemblies per se, they wanted freedom of participation and association in a competitive, national multi-party government.

Fourth, the PNDC issued its statement on the NCD report in May 1991, in which it accepted the views of the general population in favor of multi-party constitutional rule (NCD Report 1991, p. 36). Thus, the government’s Statement highlighted the report’s assertion that “Ghanaians see the existence of political parties as an expression of the fundamental freedom of association, but that the operation of future political parties should be shorn of the excesses and iniquities of the past.” In the Statement, the PNDC further declared that it would constitute a Committee of Experts to formulate constitutional proposals (Ninsin, 1996, p. 99).

Thus, the Committee of Experts was formed in 1991 to formulate constitutional proposals, a significant liberalizing event in itself. The PNDC also announced that the draft constitution would be submitted to a national referendum. It signed into existence the Consultative Assembly law, which established a broad-based national Consultative Assembly in 1991, to discuss and determine the content and form of the 4th Republican Constitution. This was indeed the precise moment that solidified the change in Rawlings and the PNDC’s rhetoric and position. Nugent (1996, pp.199-200) puts it aptly that “this was an extraordinary moment because it amounted to the total abandonment of an alternative vision of democracy (grassroots democracy), with which the PNDC had grappled since the start of the revolution.”

It is significant that the PNDC government, in its own words, accepted the wishes of Ghanaians for a future constitutional democratic government, in spite of the fact that the government had for most of the 1980s, resisted such calls by pro-democracy civil society groups. By 1991, however, it was fair to say that the regime was suffering from “pro-democracy pressure fatigue” and had realized that it could not ignore the wishes of majority of Ghanaians. A PNDC regime insider, confirming the above analysis, has argued:

A major factor in the PNDC’s decision to transition was that after the fall of Communism, African governments could no longer play Western governments against Eastern governments. Secondly, the PNDC had been in office for 10 years (by 1991) and could sense that people wanted change. Prof. Adu-Boahen [1992 presidential contender for the NPP] had become popular with his lectures on the culture of silence. The timing of all the local government reforms, the Blue Book, and the decision to go round the country to solicit views about the type of government – all coincided with the external developments. When the NCD report was written, there was no way they (PNDC members) could deny the people’s wishes for multiparty democracy.7

Finally, both the international wave of democracy and internal demands for democracy ensured that the transition process moved along until the Consultative Assembly completed its work on March 31, 1992. A referendum was then held on April 28, 1992, and the ban on political party activity subsequently lifted on May 15, 1992 (Ninsin, 1998, p. 65; Daily Graphic March 31, April 28, May 15, 1992). Notably, an Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) had been inaugurated in February 1992 to oversee the registration of political parties and the conduct of elections. The referendum on the draft constitution saw overwhelming Ghanaian approval for its adoption, paving the way for the registration of political parties by INEC in July 1992 and for competitive general elections, the ultimate liberalizing events, to be held in November and December 1992.

These liberalizing events in 1992 were highly significant because, here was a leader that had been so adamantly against pluralist politics, and who, only two years earlier (in 1990), had emphatically declared in a New Year message that Ghana was not ready for a return to pluralist politics (Africa Confidential, 1990, p. 2) – here he was allowing party registration, a constitution, and competitive elections (see Table 1 below for a timeline of liberalizing events in the late 1980s and early 1990s). The counsel of PNDC members and close confidantes, such as P.V. Obeng, political advisor; Kojo Tsikata, security advisor and close friend of Rawlings; Obed Asamoah, foreign affairs secretary; and Justice D.F. Annan, chairman of the NCD, was also very important, because these were counselors that Rawlings listened to and depended on. Rawlings also felt there would be mass unrest if he tried to continue with military rule.8

It is interesting to note an alternative argument made in some quarters that although both civil society and the international environment constituted influences on the government to democratize, it had been the PNDC’s intention from the start to establish something permanent ultimately, since it was a provisional government. According to the parliamentary minority leader:

The PNDC regime’s intention was to clean out the political environment and transition to a real democratic system and culture where the will of the people would prevail and be reflected in government. That is what led to the decentralization and to the establishment of the District Assemblies, zonal councils, and unit committees. The question is whether they were there (in power) for too long and so became unwilling to hand over (power). But with the above-mentioned pressures (civil society and international) they began to set in place structures for what the people wanted. So they set up the National Commission on Democracy (NCD) that culminated in the Consultative Assembly that led to the 1992 elections.9

7 Interview with Paa Kwesi Amissah-Arthur, Accra, December 27, 2005.
Table 1. Snowballing: Main Events In Eastern Europe And Main Liberalizing Events In Ghana (1988-1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>MAIN EVENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND THE FORMER SOVIET UNION</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>MAIN LIBERALIZING EVENTS IN GHANA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988; 1989</td>
<td>Dissatisfaction, from within some Eastern European communist countries, with closed societies and markets and authoritarian practices; Glasnost and Perestroika under Gorbachev in the USSR (began in 1986); beginning in 1989, many Eastern European countries began peaceful transitions to democracy</td>
<td>July 18-31, 1988</td>
<td>Exhibition of voters register for impending First District Level elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 9-10, 1989; October 3, 1990</td>
<td>Berlin Wall fell; East Germany eventually united with West Germany</td>
<td>December 6, 1988; February 28, 1989</td>
<td>First District Level elections organized by the NCD for 110 districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 22, 1989; Dec. 25, 1989</td>
<td>Romania; Ceausescu’s communist authoritarian government brought down after week-long series of violent riots and protests; he and his wife, Elena, were executed</td>
<td>January 13-March 17, 1989</td>
<td>Inauguration of First District Assemblies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>The fall of the Soviet Union and its breakdown into several republics, many of which began liberalizing and democratizing processes, including Russia</td>
<td>March 25, 1991</td>
<td>NCD presents its report on the regional forums conducted across the 10 regions in 1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May 13, 1991</td>
<td>PNDC government issues its statement on the NCD report. Consultative Assembly Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 26, 1991</td>
<td>Inauguration of Consultative Assembly to consider Constitutional Draft Proposals by the Committee of Experts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 8, 1991</td>
<td>Promulgation of Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC) Law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1992</td>
<td>Inauguration of INEC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1992</td>
<td>Consultative Assembly finishes its work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28, 1992</td>
<td>Referendum on the Draft Constitution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 18, 1992</td>
<td>Ban on political party activities lifted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 14-30, 1992</td>
<td>Registration of political parties by INEC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 13-30, 1992</td>
<td>Political parties hold Congresses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 3, 1992</td>
<td>Presidential elections held, in which Rawlings and his NDC won</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 29, 1992</td>
<td>Parliamentary elections held, which were boycotted by the opposition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


What is not mentioned by the minority leader of Parliament, however, is the fact that the NCD was created in 1982 while the Consultative Assembly did not convene and was not even seriously discussed until 1991, nine years after the creation of the NCD. The delay in democratizing, and subsequent ambiguity regarding the type of government system to have gives credence to the notion that the regime would not have transitioned to a multi-party democracy had there not been substantial international and internal pressure, and had it not been expedient for Rawlings and his followers, who realized, in their calculations, that they might actually be able to win multi-party elections if they played their cards right and maintained a tight control over the transition program (Ninsin, 1996, p. 57; Nugent, 1996).
Interestingly, in an August 1991 address, Rawlings alluded to the influence of the international environment on the extent of political reforms toward democracy undertaken by the PNDC. In his words:

We should also give thanks to all those whose efforts have in diverse ways contributed to the attainment of the stage we have now reached...The last decade of the twentieth century will certainly be remembered as one of the most spectacular and eventful of transitional times. We have seen the growth of détente between the seemingly rigid power blocs of East and West. We have seen the reunification of Germany. And we are witnesses to the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. In many countries on our own continent, various political and administrative structures are facing their first challenges in decades. These challenges are characterized by manifestations of mass discontent and dissatisfaction with systems, which had long failed to provide their people access to the decision-making process.10

The above statements by Rawlings demonstrate that by mid-to-late 1991, he was aware of the enormous impact of external events on other African countries and global developments. Hence, snowballing or the demonstration effect provided an impetus for the eventual transition to democracy led by Rawlings and the PNDC. It was no accident that the major liberalizing events took place between 1989 and 1992, when liberalizing events occurred in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

It must be noted, however, that while some other African countries also felt the demonstration effect, what made Ghana’s transition to democracy more unique and interesting – was the extent to which Rawlings engaged with the World Bank/IMF. Leadership agency (Linz & Stepan, 1978; Diamond, Linz, & Lipset, 1996), and not just structural factors of the international system (Skocpol, 1985, 1989), also mattered. This is because Rawlings actually chose between engaging with the World Bank/IMF and how deep this engagement should be, and not engaging at all, or partially engaging on a more superficial level. Rawlings also did not have to democratize; he could have dug in deeper and resorted to more repression, and continued to force his own slow pace of reforms toward a “true” democracy. The fact that he chose to engage with the World Bank/IMF beginning in the mid-1980s, and then later took the democratic transition route can be explained through a look at circumstances that beset his regime in the early days of the “revolution”, as well as the increased costs of crackdown that came with the territory of an extensive dependence on the World Bank/IMF. In other words, within the structural context in which he found himself, there was room for agency, for Rawlings to make some choices. The costs of crackdown were, in the end, perceived to be higher than that of giving in to multi-party democracy (Nugent, 1996).

Political Conditionality

It must be emphasized that the information garnered in this section were from people who had really been there, had worked with or been involved with the World Bank/IMF, providing good evidence of implicit political conditionality. The change in Western governments’ lending policies by the late 1980s to include political liberalization was exemplified by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), other bilateral donors, and the World Bank (Jebuni & Oduro, 1998, p. 21). USAID and others were even more upfront, than the World Bank, about the need for democracy. In the late 1980s, for example, the USAID director in Ghana went to see the PNDC Deputy Finance minister about furthering democracy.11 In the view of one World Bank official, however,

---


There was no explicit political conditionality put out by the World Bank. Rather, Jerry Rawlings and his group decided themselves to democratize due to pressure from within Ghana itself for the PNDC government to democratize and the democratic winds blowing worldwide in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Were the World Bank to give political liberalization conditionalities, President Museveni of Uganda would not still be in power in Uganda. The fact that he is still in power even though his country receives aid from the World Bank demonstrates the reality that democracy is not necessary for the World Bank’s facilitation of economic development.

But there was implicit political conditionality from the World Bank/IMF in the form of calls for good governance, although they did not specify any clear political liberalization programs that had to be embarked upon by the PNDC. There is a difference between good governance and party politics or democracy. Good governance is concerned with how to make “economic development inclusive, consultative, and operating under the rule of law, local government and decentralization.”

While good governance in the World Bank’s parlance is different from democracy, the article argues that the World Bank implicitly placed a political conditionality for aid on the PNDC in its calls for good governance. The key aspects of ‘good governance’ – the rule of law, consultative and inclusive economic development, for example – presume political regimes which are more open and which allow criticism of policy to secure better use of resources and less corruption. These aspects of “good governance”, ultimately, can best be realized under multi-party democracy. This is how good governance relates to democracy.

In general, then, although not made explicit, democratic transitions were viewed as necessary for improving the credibility of such donor programs as the widespread structural adjustment programs, and creating the enabling environment for better responses (Jebuni & Oduro, 1998, p. 37) in many an African country in the 1980s and 1990s. Donors were themselves influenced, and their confidence boosted, by the end of the Cold War and the absence of any viable global competitor to democracy, to push for political reform as an important means of realizing stable and effective economic programs. According to one PNDC official,

After the fall of Communism, we began to hear more and more about good governance and democracy, because they (Western governments/multilateral institutions) now had no ideological battles to fight. At the Annual Meeting in Seoul in 1988, the World Bank asked serious questions about democracy, such as what the role of civil society was in the economic reforms being undertaken in Ghana.

The World Bank, though careful to distance itself from the hypothesis that a link between political regime type and economic performance exists (World Bank, 1992), nevertheless has been in the forefront of the call for sound economic management, which, it argues, requires good governance. Good governance is explained in the World Bank’s 1989 study on Africa thus:

Underlying the litany of Africa’s development problems is a crisis of governance. By governance is meant the exercise of political power to manage a nation’s affairs. Because countervailing power has been lacking, state officials in many countries have served their own interests without fear of being called to account….This environment cannot readily support a dynamic economy (World Bank, 1989, p. 601).

---

12 Interview with Amarkwei Amar, World Bank official, February 11, 2005.
In the view of the Bank, therefore, the absence of good governance proved to be particularly damaging to the “corrective intervention” role of government (World Bank, 1992, p. 10), and could explain the slow response to policy reform. Multi-party democracy in particular, was favored to provide good governance because it had competing political parties that could articulate alternative options, a multi-party parliament that could provide a venue for scrutiny of government expenditures and programs, and a freer press and open debate that would force governments to be more transparent and accountable for their actions (Jebuni & Oduro, 1998, p. 37).

**Rawlings’ PNDC, the World Bank/IMF, and How the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) Contributed to a Change in Governance in Ghana**

What made Ghana different from other African countries was its relationship with the World Bank and its single-minded implementation of the ERP/SAP. Ghana became known as the darling of the IMF, and its implementation of the SAP illuminates the way in which implicit political conditionality from the Bank/IMF helped promote democracy: by increasing Ghana’s dependence on foreign aid from the Bank/IMF and thus deepen its vulnerability to the call for “good governance” as a requisite for additional infusions of aid. This worked to constrain Rawlings by increasing the costs of crackdown - withdrawal of aid; tarnished international reputation; and possibly the demise of his regime - aiding him in the decision not to dig in further but to liberalize.

Regarding World Bank policy, another World Bank economist has made it clear that the Bank/IMF did not impose any precise political conditionality:

15 The World Bank did not directly insist that Ghana change from military to civilian rule, but it promoted “good governance” for many years. Good governance has many dimensions – political, economic, social accountability – and the Bank tries to promote all these aspects of governance progressively. The Bank has a rating under Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA). This assessment is often shared with governments, where based on certain criteria such as the extent of rule of law, human rights protection (basically democratization), particular countries are given more aid if they are perceived to be progressing with regard to the criteria for the assessment. In effect, there is no hard and fast rule about not supporting military regimes, but when the good governance conditions are adhered to, aid is scaled up. Of relevance to Ghana is the fact that promotion of good governance was a key concern under the SAP program conditions. Under the SAP, a whole list was given of what needed to be done and the time allotted. If the country agreed, then the loan was approved and the country had to implement the conditions.15

16 One may therefore ask how the SAP contributed to democratization in Ghana. The SAP is related to democracy in the sense that although the Bank/IMF never explicitly discussed human rights issues with Rawlings, or stressed that democracy mattered in the early 1990s, Rawlings “understood that to get continuous flow of money from the IMF, he needed to be less authoritarian and have a more open society. He was also very close to President Bill Clinton, who encouraged him on the democratic path. Without money, Rawlings’ government would have been weakened, and since the U.S. had to agree to loans, Rawlings’ move to democracy pleased the U.S. and opened the doors for further aid.”16 This shows that Rawlings was concerned about his international reputation, but for more instrumental reasons, the most important of which were the further infusions of aid and therefore the more likely survival of his regime.

By the start of the SAP in 1983, Ghana had experienced a continuous decline in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth due to policies that resulted in an accelerating rate of inflation, a control system that failed to supply commodities in sufficient quantities or at controlled prices, and urban unrests, all

---

16 Interview with Eugene Nyambal, Senior Strategy Officer, International Finance Corporation (IFC), November 5, 2005.
beginning in 1975. To placate urban groups, government expenditures financed by borrowing from the banking system increased (Jebuni & Oduro, 1998, p. 23). Notably, the policy change to the World Bank/IMF sponsored SAP occurred as a result of an internal struggle in the PNDC which marginalized the anti-reform elements, rather than as a result of any compromise (Jebuni & Oduro, 1998, p. 26). These ultra-leftists were brazenly opposed to any form of relationship with the Bank/IMF (Boafo-Arthur, 1999, p. 14). Even after the purge of the ultra-leftists in December 1982, Nugent (1996, p. 97) argues that the PNDC’s ideological definition still involved some trial and error. The Rawlings regime’s turn to the West and the ERP/SAP in 1983 was a major policy reversal, and starkly contrasted with its earlier Neo-Marxist ideas.

Jebuni and Oduro (1998, p. 26) highlight the reasons why the PNDC adopted a liberal economic system: the failure of Rawlings’ populist economic strategy, the disappearance of rents, and the threat to the survival of the regime. Others have also pointed to the absence of significant assistance from Libya, and an abortive trip to Eastern Europe and Cuba to solicit financial support, as explanation for this perceptible shift in perspective (Hansen, 1987). Rawlings also had to deal with drought and bush fires, as well as the return of more than 1 million Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983 (Tsikata, 2001, p. 79; Nugent, 1996).

From 1984 to 1989, foreign exchange availability was the binding economic constraint. The PNDC government needed more foreign aid money for programs and various sectors such as agriculture and education. It is clear therefore that indeed, Ghana needed Bank/IMF aid in the 1980s and 1990s to meet various needs and as a corollary, sustain the Rawlings regime.

Implicit political conditionality and democracy came up mostly in discussions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassies. It was not coherent or organized in any way – in the sense that “we need you to do this and that or else”. Rather, the Rawlings economic team just “got snapshots or single interventions, but it was still clear that democracy issues were important to Western governments and multilateral institutions.”

The economic affairs technocrats and the Bank/IMF, however, mostly focused on development issues in their negotiations.

What Made Ghana/Rawlings the Darling of the Bank/IMF?

When SAP lending was introduced by the IMF in the 1980s, 24 African countries embarked upon the programme with the aim of improving poor policies that accounted for the 15 percent decline in Africa’s GDP per capita between 1977 and 1985 (World Bank, 1994). By 1993, SAPs were being implemented in 36 Sub-Saharan African debtor countries (Ibhawoh, 1999). The adoption and implementation of the ERP/SAP in Ghana from mid-1983 ironically earned Ghana the title of “darling of the Bank/IMF”. Why? Simply put, it was first, the PNDC’s successful implementation of adjustment, in terms of macroeconomic indicators. Additionally, an official of one of the Bank’s institutions has highlighted that Rawlings became the darling of the Bank/IMF because:

although facing a deep economic crisis, African countries, especially the Francophone countries, were reluctant to embark on the SAP; Rawlings was one of the first to volunteer because the Ghanaian economy was in shambles. To reinforce and consolidate his own power base, he went to seek international assistance.18

Second, the Bank/IMF “found in Rawlings the tough-mindedness that, in their thinking, was the most appropriate prerequisite, in the 1980s, for the pursuit of such tough economic policies in Africa...consequently, Rawlings became a bridgehead through whom the long-term efficacy of adjustment policies in Africa was experimented” (Boafo-Arthur, 1999, p. 2). In fact, the new “technocratic staff” that was doggedly in favor of the SAP, led by Dr. Kwesi Botchwey, the finance minister, worked in close collaboration with World Bank officials and foreign consultants who were

---

often found in the government ministries. In 1987 alone, the World Bank had over 40 missions to Ghana (Riddel, 1992).

The PNDC regime was propped up with steady loan inflows without a single condemnation of its domestic intimidating tactics throughout the 1980s in order to demonstrate the efficacy of the Bank/IMF’s new thinking on how best to save and develop an economy in crisis through structural adjustment (Boafo-Arthur, 1999; Callaghy, 1989). The IMF bent its rigid rules on program application in some instances, just in order to ensure the political survival of Rawlings (Martin, 1991). It gave maximum support to the PNDC regime perhaps because of the initial success and impressive outcome of the policies (Anyemedu, 1993; Rothchild, 1991; Toye, 1991), which strengthened its resolve to make a success of Rawlings, one of the few African leaders to have followed so closely and single-mindedly its economic reform tenets.

The international financial institutions’ (IFIs) unwavering support for Rawlings in implementing adjustment regardless of his human rights record explains why it was difficult for Rawlings to conceive of an about-turn against these IFIs when implicit political conditions were added in 1989/1990. Also, if Rawlings had continued on a repressive path, “local conditions would not have been good for any long-term developmental work, and the Bank/IMF would probably have not given the government much money.”

Evidence of this prognosis in the form of documentation is limited, but interviews with officials from the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank lend support to this argument.

Clearly, from the evidence above, it would seem that the World Bank did not stress the adoption of Western democracy per se, particularly throughout the 1980s, but because Rawlings was so engaged with the IFIs through the SAP, he nevertheless became subsequently constrained on the path towards good governance and democracy.

**Conclusion**

After 1992, and once the democratization process was in motion, the international community’s influence did not suddenly disappear, but was channeled in an almost behind the scenes supportive role. Bilateral and multilateral donors, especially Britain, Canada, France, Germany, the USAID, and the World Bank, contributed towards the smooth running and quality of elections in 1992, 1996, 2000 and beyond by supplementing funding for the operations and logistics of the Electoral Commission, and by helping to fund some domestic civil society organizations (CSOs) that monitored the elections.

Wright (1990) has highlighted the fact that the ERP/SAP implemented by Rawlings ironically fostered continued heavy dependence on foreign development assistance, and this, in her view, tainted the limited success Ghana achieved under the SAP. With a population of a little more than 14 million in 1990, Ghana received more than $500 million a year in aid, and the International Development Association contributed more to Ghana than to any other country except China and India. Such continued dependence definitely exerted some constraints on Rawlings before the transition to democracy and on his subsequent actions once in office as an elected president, in an era of Bank/IMF resurrected ideas of the importance of an enabling and pluralistic political environment for successful economic reform.

The international community’s impact on Ghana’s gradual democratization has been shown through the importance of “leverage” in the form of political conditionality (Levitsky & Way, 2005; 2010) viz. Rawlings’ implementation of the ERP/SAP, and through the snowballing effect of the global democratization wave, which combined to convince Rawlings of the need to liberalize politically. The international factor worked from above to raise the costs of crackdown by the Rawlings regime. Structure and agency combined to explain Rawlings’ decision to democratize, but on his own terms and after careful calculations of the likelihood of keeping his job, this time as an elected civilian president.

---

References


An Intertextual Analysis of Jīmi Šōlańkẹ’s Ṫọnà Là (In The Path) via the Multiple Star System Theory of Mutual Illumination and Interaction

Ọbádélé Kambon
Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies,
University of Ghana, Legon, Ghana
obkambon@ug.edu.gh

Submitted: August 3, 2016 / Accepted: February 14, 2017 / Published: May 31, 2017

Abstract

The concept of mutual illumination between texts, genres, arts, and disciplines has been used in scholarly work for decades (Weisstein, 1973, 1993). Nevertheless, much of this literature lacks a firm anchor with regard to a literal source of the analogy “mutual illumination.” We argue that by observing natural phenomena that actually mutually illuminate, influence and otherwise affect each other, greater insight into how texts interact in similar ways can be achieved. Thus, drawing concepts from astrophysics, with specific reference to multiple star systems, a conceptual framework is derived in which analogous relations are proposed and interrogated. This framework couches the discussion in a stylistic analysis of our primary text, Jīmi Šōlańkẹ’s Ṫọnà Là, which is analyzed both on its own and also with reference to other texts which are interconnected, interrelated, and serve to “mutually illuminate” each other. We find that when considered in light of other related texts, the analysis of Ṫọnà Là becomes much richer and, in the process, the understanding of the other texts is also enriched. Stylistic tools used in the analysis include various types of intertextual and intratextual parallelism, repetition, and silence.

Keywords: mutual illumination, Ṫọnà Là, Roche lobe, intertextuality, stylistics

Introduction: Conceptual Framework

The term “mutual illumination” has been used for decades in scholarly literature primarily to refer to “intertextuality” between disciplines or arts (e.g. fine arts and written literature) (Chang, 1988; Fitzmyer, 2008; Kristeva, 1980; Weisstein, 1973, 1993). Nevertheless, “interarts” – the conception of which embraces intextuality and mutual illumination – may still seem to be theoretically, methodologically, and terminologically immature (Riechel, 1994, p. 385). This perceived immaturity may, in part, be due to using analogies, such as “mutual illumination” without truly interrogating the analogy or returning to any literal source from which it is derived. I argue that when using the analogy of mutual illumination, it would be useful to look at natural phenomena that actually mutually illuminate (and otherwise influence) each other and then see the degree to which the nature of such phenomena is analogous and applicable to texts being studied or compared. An example of actual mutual illumination that could potentially re-inject meaning into what may otherwise simply be a hackneyed cliché can be observed in the perception of color gradients (Bloj, Wolfe, & Hurlbert, 2002). An even more intriguing case may be that of multiple star systems in which one star literally shines light on the others and vice-versa (Crockett, 2014). In such multiple star systems, interactions between such stars may include orbits around a common barycenter, gravitational radiation, tidal friction, magnetic braking, magnetic activity driven by rapid rotation, stellar winds, the influence of more

---

1 Dedicated to the Dogon astronomers who taught us about sígí tolo, po tolo and emme ya tolo. The author would also like to thank Professor Daniel Avorgbedor of the University of Ghana for reading an earlier version of the article and sharing useful insights on African rhythmic patterns.
distant bodies within the system, and Roche-lobe overflow (which may lead to loss of mass or exchange of mass between stars) (Eggleton, 2006). We argue that one must realize that the term “mutual illumination” is merely an analogy and that, at times, to truly apprehend the significance of such an analogy, one must go back to the literal meaning of mutual illumination, such as that which occurs in star systems. Further, when the analogy is extended to other forms of influence beyond only illumination to other interactions that occur between such natural phenomena as stars, the result is enriched theoretical, methodological, and terminological understandings. In other words, theories, methodologies and terminology used for explaining mutual illumination and interactions in the natural world may be co-opted or appropriated for use in comparative intertextual analysis. This is because the relationships possible between any two stars may be analogous to the relationship between any two texts, disciplines or arts compared. What we call the multiple star theory of mutual illumination (and interaction) will, thus, serve as an innovative conceptual framework from which the primary text, Jimi Ṣọlańkẹ’s Ṣọna Là is understood in and of itself and with reference to other metaphorical stars – Òkwan Atware Asuo and The Road is clear – texts from which it is ultimately derived. Beyond just the relationships and interactions between the textual stars themselves, there is also a relationship between stellar bodies and with the planetary observers affected by (and perhaps affecting?) the stars at a distance. By analogy, this would be the listening audience who may be shaped by (and in turn may play/ have played a role in shaping) the texts in question.

This article presents the first scholarly intertextual and stylistic study of an original African poem entitled Ṣọna Là as expressed in the Yorùbá language. As a poem, Ṣọna Là is singular in that it follows a very unique path with regard to its origin and subsequent transformations from one medium to another and one language to another. Looking at each text as a metaphorical star, one observes that from the original Òkwan Atware Asuo, just as in multiple star systems, other stars (texts) may form around it and interrelate with it in various ways. Prominent among the ways in which texts may interrelate is the medium of a shared theme, which is analogous to sharing a common center of mass (barycenter) around which two or more bodies orbit. They also may share stylistic elements, which is analogous to Roche lobe overflow (Jackson, Arras, Penev, Peacock, & Marchant, 2016). Roche lobe overflow occurs when the mass of a star escapes from its gravitational sphere of influence and this mass is pulled into the Roche lobe of another star. Additionally, just as in the formation of multiple star systems, the older star may donate some of its mass to newer stars (e.g. the Algol paradox) (Pustylnik, 1998). In what is known as the Algol paradox, for example, the older star is smaller due to exchange of mass to the larger star when its surface extends beyond its own Roche lobe. Again, we can look at exchange of mass as analogous to the adoption of stylistic tools and devices in a new text based upon those present in an older text. How subsequent texts are formed is analogous to a theory of how stars are formed, which holds that:

extra stars can pop up within another star’s protoplanetary disk — the dense saucer of rotating gas that surrounds a newly formed sun. These disks are the byproducts of the large clouds of dust and gas that form stars. Sometimes a massive cloud will collapse in on itself and pull in more materials, causing the core of the cloud to grow so dense and so hot that it begins the nuclear reaction that births a star. As this happens, the cloud starts rotating around the star, forming the disk. Many researchers believe that the spinning disk can start pulling in even more materials, growing so gravitationally unstable that parts of the disk collapse again into new stars. (Grush, 2016; Tobin et al., 2016)

The analogy being made here is that just as stars can form around the initial newly formed sun, so too can additional texts form around the initial text.

(Inter)Textual Background

With regard to the texts under study, the first metaphorical star to be formed – Òkwan Atware Asuo – originates in the Akan language of Ghana, West Africa, which was then reinterpreted into
English of the United States as a separate star – The Road is clear. From there, it was again re-conceptualized, reformulated, and ultimately performed in the Yorùbá language of Nigeria, West Africa, in our primary text – Ònà Là.

The transformations undergone from Ėkwan Atware Asuo to Ònà Là are are similar to the stages in the evolution of a multiple star system. However, it is worth noting that the Yorùbá poem does not fit into any pre-existing sub-genre of Yorùbá poetry whether ewi, rârâ, ijâlâ or any other as it has remained more faithful to the texts upon which it was based than to pre-existing subgenres of Yorùbá poetry (Babalola, 1966; Bamboše, 1970; Beier, Gbadamosi, & Wenger, 1972; Okùnoyè, 2010; Qlabimtan, 1977; Olàtùnjí, 1984). Pre-existing types of Yorùbá poetry can be distinguished from one another by the stylistic vocalizations that are employed and by the skills and idiosyncratic traits of the performers. According to Babalola, “Yoruba traditional poetry in general is best classified not so much by the themes as by the stylistic devices employed in recitals”, making specific reference to styles of vocalization (Babalola, 1966, p. 23). Babalola states:

Although Yoruba scholars have recently selected the word “ewi” to connote “poetry in general,” the vocabulary of the Yoruba language has always contained specific words for the different types of Yoruba oral poetry classified according to the manner of voice production employed for a particular poetic utterance. Esa or ewi is a type of Yoruba oral poetry in which a falsetto voice is employed. Ijala is another; this is chanted in a high-pitched voice. Rara is yet another, recognized by its slow wailing, long-drawn-out chanting style. Ofò or Ogede is another type and this is distinguished by its being entirely a stock of centuries-old magic formula sentences uttered very fast with the normal voice of ordinary speech. (Babalola, 1966, p. vi)

We find that the poem Ònà Là does not share any of these distinguishing features in terms of styles of vocalization. Rather than being chanted in “falsetto” or a “high-pitched voice,” (as typical of the vocalization style of Sângó-pîpê (Isola, 1977; Philips, 2006, p. 367)) Ònà Là is chanted in a low-pitch, breathy voice. It can also be distinguished from rârâ, which is characterized by its “slow wailing, long-drawn-out chanting style,” as there is no wailing nor are the words drawn out. Further, it neither has the “magic formula sentences” nor is it uttered in a particularly fast manner. Òrìkì is yet another genre wherein, according to Barber, “In Okuku, the only named chanting modes based on oriki are ijala, iwi and rara iyawo” (Barber, 1991, p. 80-1). Barber further defines orìkì as “collections or strings of name-like attributive epithets, ‘praises’ which are neither narrative nor descriptive but vocative. They are addressed to their subject or ‘owner,’ and are felt to encapsulate, and evoke in some way that subject’s essential powers and qualities” (Barber, 1994).

Not only does Jimi Sọlánkî—the noted dramatist and poet who performs Ònà Là—not employ the typical vocal styles associated with the pre-existing sub-genres of Yorùbá poetry as explicated above, he also cannot readily be subsumed under the profile of a typical performer of any of them (Adeniran, 2009). Okpewho, drawing on Olàtùnjí’s research, states that, in terms of the feature types or themes of Yorùbá oral poetry:

The first feature is the oriki, or praise, which indicates a theme; the second is ese ifa, or divination poetry, which identifies the context of the poetry; the third is ofò, or incantation, which identifies the form; and the fourth feature embraces the owe and alo apamo, which are gnomic forms representing proverbs and riddles respectively. (Okpewho, 1992, p. 128)

Again, we find that Ònà Là, as will be explicated below in our stylistic analysis, cannot be neatly subsumed under any of the above themes, forms, or contexts. Here, we argue that rather than focusing on faithfulness to a pre-existing genre of Yorùbá poetry, Ònà Là is influenced by and actively draws upon the form, content, and stylistic devices of the literary and musical texts and the African historical experiences upon which it is based. This influence is analogous to a star whose development is
influenced by gravitational forces around a common center of mass, stellar winds, etc. The poem also mirrors the movements of the song “The Path” for which it serves as an opening formula. In other words, the formation of a single star may be, in many ways, analogous to the formation of larger systems of which they are a part.

“The Path” recounts the history of African people kidnapped from Africa and taken to the diaspora who eventually return to Africa and/or the ways of African people in what has, in recent times, been termed the “Sankofa Movement” (Akoto & Akoto, 2000). In this paper, we argue that Ọ̀nà Là intentionally transcends the bounds of Yorùbá verbal art to become truly African in the broader sense where, again, Africanness is not delineated by association with a specific ethnic group but by its firm rooting in the Global African experience which takes into account multitudes of African people of the continent and the diaspora. This poem, composed in 1978, reflects and anticipates greater interrelation and interdependence among African people where the pre-existing indigenous and/or illusory colonial markers of division among us are de-emphasized in favor of a progressively more and more global African whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lived African Historical Experiences</th>
<th>Akan Text</th>
<th>English Text</th>
<th>Yorùbá Text</th>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Lived African Historical Experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ọ̀kwàn Atware Asuo</td>
<td>Ọ̀kwàn Atware Asuo</td>
<td>The Road is clear</td>
<td>Ọ̀nà Là</td>
<td>The Path</td>
<td>O ̣̀kwàn Atware Asuo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Intertextual Parallels of Ọ̀nà Là

As shown in Table 1, the subsequent texts are influenced by the anterior texts and all are influenced by their historical context. Secondarily, subsequent texts can influence how we see and understand older texts. This sphere of influence is analogous to the Rosch or Hill Sphere – the gravitational sphere of influence – within which a text may influence another just as a star in a multiple star system may influence another.

As Ọ̀nà Là is based on pre-existing texts, a clear path of the transformations undergone to arrive at the final orally recited poem can be represented below:

(0) Akan Oral Text (1) Akan Drum Text (Ọ̀kwàn Atware Asuo) \(\rightarrow\) (2) Akan Oral Text (Ọ̀kwàn Atware Asuo) \(\rightarrow\) (3) Akan Written Text (Ọ̀kwàn Atware Asuo) \(\rightarrow\) (4) Written English Translation (Ọ̀kwàn Atware Asuo) \(\rightarrow\) (5) Original English Written Poem (The Road is Clear) \(\rightarrow\) (6) Written Yorùbá Poem (Ọ̀nà Là) \(\rightarrow\) (7) Yoruba Oral Text (Ọ̀nà Là)

**Figure 1: Transformations of Ọ̀nà Là**

As can be seen, the source text upon which the others are based is an oral text “transcribed” as a drum text which is “spoken” on drums before being recited orally in live performances as can be heard here:


Although ultimately the source of the drum text language is the spoken language, as shown by step (0) in Figure 1, in the performance we have the drums are played first and then a person says out loud what has been performed on the drums. Because many African languages, including Akan and Yorùbá, are tonal, these tones are able to be reproduced via language surrogates such as drums, horns, and other musical instruments as discussed by Kaminski (2008) with regard to the source text Ọ̀kwàn Atware Asuo. Speech is reproduced by using these surrogates to articulate the tones of the words, which can be understood by those who are able to interpret them. When such drum language becomes institutionalized in a set poetic form, it becomes what is known, in common parlance, as a drum text. Appendix B shows one of the most common versions of the original Akan drum text known as Ọ̀kwàn Atware Asuo from which the Yorùbá poem Ọ̀nà Là is derived (MacDonald, Salter, & Eaton, 1978; Nketia, 1974). The full text of Ọ̀nà Là, in turn, can be found in Appendix A; both texts are included in the original language plus an interlineal self-translation and gloss for each line. Appendix C includes
the English language text entitled *The Road is Clear* which effectively serves as a bridge between the Ėkwan Atware Asuo and Ŭnà Là. Appendices can be found here: https://goo.gl/NpuO5u

There are two primary metaphors at play in the Akan, English and Yorùbá texts that serve as thematic elements around which the three texts “orbit” in their intertextual parallels that will be discussed more fully below: these are the stream/river and the path/road. The stream/river represents African people, the road represents a man-made dialectical force of utility, yet destructiveness, which cuts through the stream/river. Interestingly, similar metaphors have been employed by other African artists as they also feature prominently in the novel *Two Thousand Seasons* by Ayi Kwei Armah (incidentally written around the same time that “The Path” was produced). In the prologue of *Two Thousand Seasons*, Armah (1979) utilizes similar imagery of African people looking for a way back to our way and stream water flowing senselessly and uselessly towards its destruction in the desert. Meanwhile, those who already have experienced the destructive death of the white city move away from it looking for a way back to our way (Armah, 1979). According to Lakoff and Johnson, “no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis” (2008, p. 19). Armah’s use of these metaphors is representative of the collective experiences of African people (the stream/river) having been cut through by the road of colonialism/enslavement.

In “The Path,” which can be heard at the link in example (3), the composer, Ralph MacDonald is certainly aware of the Akan drum text as the first five lines of its translation into English can be found in the liner notes of the original album (MacDonald et al., 1978). MacDonald then composed his own original poem in English, entitled *The Road is clear*, demonstably based upon the Akan text (which can be read in Appendix B) dealing with how the road has cut through the river, but how the river—symbolic of nature and that which is original and from ancient times—will eventually be victorious. As shown in Appendix C, this notion is conveyed in the following lines:

2. The road has brought the whole world together
   Like a power drill cutting through portions of the earth
   With all these happenings, the rivers of the world remain undaunted
   (MacDonald et al., 1978)

This theme is carried forward by Jimi Şọlańkẹ in his Yorùbá rendering in which similar metaphors and the same overall theme persist. This again supports the argument that Ŭnà Là is unique in that it prioritizes faithfulness to contextual and intertextual parallels over the maintenance of expectations of existing sub-genres of Yorùbá, the language in which it is chanted. The poem, Ŭnà Là, in turn, is a microcosm of what transpires in the song, *The Path* as a whole. In *The Path*, through all of the transitions, eventually the original African sounds (with an additional rhythmic enhancement) pervade once again in the end showing that which is ancient and from the Creator (African people) will ultimately be victorious.

**Musical Background**

At this juncture, it is important to provide a breakdown of the entire song, *The Path*, of which Ŭnà Là, in many ways, is a microcosm as the two parallel each other with respect to the core elements included (MacDonald et al., 1978). The full song can be heard here:

3. https://youtu.be/3y4cc8lzPBI

As in *The Path*, there are a number of “metrical accents” and “aural cues”, which the music requires the listener to extrapolate (Hasty, 1997, p. 17). According to Hasty “The primary aural cue is the first beat of the meter in question as the first beat marks the beginning and end of a series of equal
metrical durations” (Hasty, 1997, p. 18). Here, all first beats are accent as first beats (and metrically identical as first beats) where the “first position” and ‘accent’ may be regarded as interchangeable expressions” (Hasty, 1997, p. 18).

The entire rhythmic pattern, as such, is repeated in “continuous succession of equal durations,” or meter (Hasty, 1997, p. 14). As is the case for the musical accompaniment, stress in the spoken poem is also placed on the first beat. This rhythmic pattern exists as either “multiples” or “equal divisions of a metrical pulse” (Hasty, 1997, p. 14). Ōnà Lá can most readily be thought of as a musical hybrid of a Pan-African sort. It retains important African performance practices/principles throughout. There is, undoubtedly a typical 12-unit time line rhythmic phrase typically referred to by African musicologists as the “Yoruba Bell Time-line” which is also dominant in areas such as those of the Ewe, Fon, and Central Africa (Collannino, Gómez, & Toussaint, 2009). In the “Yoruba Bell Time-line” as it is typically arranged, there is a consistent and evenly-spaced subdivision, or stressed beat, of these 12 units into four equal-time sub-phrases. These four (4) beats could be marked by another bell, drum, etc., and with the main time-line usually assigned to an idiophone or “loud” instrument that is loud enough to remain audible since it guides the entire performance. The metrical structure can be thought of as the canvas upon which Ōnà Lá as verbal art is painted and with which the verbal artist, Jimi Şólańké, creates his personalized, yet universal, Pan-African masterpiece which cannot be thought of as entirely Akan, Yorùbá, amaXhosa, or Diasporan, but must be regarded as an intentional combination of these and more as representative of the Global African World.

**Stylistic Analysis of Ōnà Lá with selected Comparisons to Òkwàn Atware Asuo and The Road is clear**

This section presents a stylistic analysis of Jimi Şólańké’s Ōnà La, the Yorùbá poem, which sets the tone for the overarching theme at the outset of the song The Path. In this analysis, the primary research question relates to how this poem is an example of transcendent African verbal art that parallels its source text(s) and the historical experiences of African people that it is meant to encapsulate. This will be done with regard to how Ōnà Lá is organized and explicated aesthetically, stylistically and thematically. Ōnà Lá is a manifestation of African verbal art in a broader sense than what is typically connoted by the term and there are several criteria that that can be applied in defining it as such. This is because it is not situated within the context of a specific continental African ethnic group, but rather, because it transcends such divisions to mean “African” in the most comprehensive sense of the term to include various ethnic groups and African people of the Continent and the Diaspora.²

Oyelaran uses several criteria specifically for defining Yorùbá verbal art:

- Syntactic structure
- The basis of rhythm and tonal and structural parallelism
- Prominence
- Repetition
- Tone grouping, etc. (Oyelaran, 1975, p. 762)

While the poem does indeed evince some of these characteristics, it is quite unique in speaking to the experiences of African people throughout the Global African World including Akan and Yorùbá people of the continent, Africans of the Caribbean and the United States as well as being in conversation with the African past and future. Because of its ambitions to be more African than rigidly Yorùbá, the poet makes a sustained effort to understand how the African story is conceptualized and told, which is also reflected in the stylistic devices that serve as a conduit for elements of the Akan and English texts in different ways. It is argued herein that all of these stylistic features move the poem from the realm of exclusively Yorùbá (the language of its expression) to a Universal African category

² See Gomez (1998) for a discussion of the transformation from the culturally particular to the composite universal African which occurred in the African Diaspora.
of verbal art which unites African people not only by means of thematic criteria but also aesthetic criteria. This paper will proceed through a stylistic analysis and argue for Ônà Là as an example of Pan-African verbal art which encompasses both the continent and the diaspora in content and form. Further, a stylistic analysis will be made in which recurring structural parallel patterns and formulae, phonological parallelism, lexical parallelism, syllabic parallelism, repetition, silence, syntactic parallelism, and semantic parallelism will be explored. In the conclusion, an account of the overall significance of Ônà La within the larger context of The Path and within the even larger context of African people of the continent and the diaspora as a whole will be given.

**Intertextual Parallelism**

This section will explore the intertextual parallels between Ônà Là and the other texts of which it is cognizant and to which it intentionally refers. The primary focus on parallelism is due to several reasons including the fundamental role it plays in verbal art. Succinctly, the nature of parallelism is that of patterned repetition where a single idea is affirmed or restated in a variety of ways. According to Okpewho:

> As a repetitive device … parallelism is a tool of pleasure and of convenience. On one hand, there is a touch of beauty in the skill with which the performer plays one set of words or images against another without altering the structure of statement or the central message. On the other hand, there is a real need for a balanced framework which will order the vast amount of information harbored into a set of harmonious relationships. To that extent, then, parallelism is, like repetition, the soul of the oral performance. (Okpewho, 1992, p. 82)

However, in Ônà Là parallelism is viewed as manifesting itself on two levels. One is the more obvious intratextual parallelism wherein, in a single literary piece, the same or similar elements recur systematically. On another level, intertextual parallelism is also found wherein, for two (or more) pieces of oral literature, one is based upon the other(s). The newer creation is conscious of its sibling(s) and, while not being identical twins, assimilates and dissimilates in various ways as do stars of multiple star systems. This intertextualism is relevant in this case because, as mentioned previously, Ônà Là is based on the poem *The Road is clear*, which is, in turn, based upon the Akan drum text Òkwan Atware Asuo, “the path crosses the river” which is drummed and spoken. As shown in Figure 1, there are many transformations that have taken place – just as in the case of Africans of the Diaspora, there were many transformations. However, as Malcolm X argued “Just because a cat has kittens in an oven, you don’t call the kittens biscuits” (Marable, 1995, p. 211). This means that even though Africans may have been born in a different place, we are still essentially Africans. Similarly, through various transformations, there are similarities and dissimilarities, but through it all, the ties that bind Ônà Là to the texts to which it refers run throughout. This is one of the major points of the song and is a requirement for texts analyzed using the Multiple Star System Theory of Mutual Illumination and Interaction.

In the course of these transformations, the second major stage is the English re-rendering of Òkwon Atware Asuo. The English rendering as shown in Appendix C is entitled *The Road is clear* and is an original poem based on the concept of Òkwon Atware Asuo. Then Ônà Là is based on *The Road is clear* as a translation and re-interpretation from English to Yorùbá. So, intertextual parallelism can be found between the Akan text (drummed and voiced), the English text and the Yorùbá text through the various transformations where each successive stage is acutely aware of its parent form.

It is also evident that transformations have occurred from speech surrogate (drum) to speech to the written text and back again. In all of these transitions, the most prominent motif is the interaction between nature and man and the inevitable triumph of nature. Thus, there are images of the road representing man-made creation and the river representing creation from The Creator. Another correlation that permeates each text is that in all of them there is a degree of conflictual interaction and ambiguity with regard to seniority in each stage. In the original Akan drum text, there is a repetition of the line *Ọpànìn ne Hwan?* “Who is the elder?” as a chanted refrain as shown in Appendix B.
This concept is carried over into Ônà Là as shown in the following lines:

4. A kò rí èni sọ fún wa
   1PL.SUBJ NEG see someone speak give us
   “We didn’t see someone who could tell us”

5. Bọyá odò l’ègbôn
   may beriver be’elder
   “whether the river is the elder”

6. Tábí ọnà ní o
   DISJ road be EMPH
   “or if it is the road”

Anteriority/eldership is one of the major themes that permeates both the Akan and the Yorùbá texts. In each, the stream or the river is representative of nature, which hails from ancient times and was created by the Creator. The road, on the other hand, is representative of man-made creation. In the conflict, a dilemma is presented as to who is the elder, which, in the African context is a question of superiority as well as anteriority. In each text, the verdict is that the river is from ancient times; the river is from the Creator of all things and is therefore the elder and, therefore, superior. While in the Akan text, we are given this as the answer, in the Yorùbá text, the answer comes via the river proving itself by bursting out onto the road which cut through it previously in its youthful arrogance. This theme is laid bare in the English bridging text in the following lines:

7. Is the river the superior one?
   Or is it the road?

This parallel extends into the song itself which documents the journey of Africans from Africa, to the Diaspora and back. Analogously, one could see enslavement, colonialism, and their insidious updated forms – neo-enslavement and neo-colonialism – as the road, which cut through Africa and African people. However, as was the case in the English poem, the elder of the two, representative of African people, the first people on the planet will eventually be victorious. Thus, both the English and the Yorùbá text have taken the philosophical Akan text and injected an additional politicized element of ideological clarity and justice in its retelling. Therefore, the Yorùbá text is “in conversation with” the African audience, the African past, and the African future as well as the Akan text from which it is ultimately derived and the English text through which the theme passes. This phenomenon is what is meant by intertextual parallelism and could also be referred to as textual transcendence. This is analogous to the common barycenter around which all of the texts orbit.

Phonological Parallelism

In this section, phonological parallelism will be discussed. In this case, Ônà Là makes use of line-internal sound patterning. This is understood as parallelism between sequences of sounds (Fabb, 1997, p. 148). Indeed, (8-10) include a repeating sequence of consonants in what may be termed “consonant harmony.”

8. ọnà là, ó já gbaragada /l/ /dʒ/ /t/
   road split, 3SG.SUBJ burst open/wide
   “the road is clear, it passes open and wide”

9. ayé lù jára /l/ /dʒ/ /t/
   world beat burst’body
   “the world is brought together”

10. ọnà ti là àarin odò rẹ́ kojá /l/ /t/ /t/ /dʒ/
    road PERF split middle river this pass
“the road cut through this river” [bold emphasis added].

In this sequence, repeated consonants are /l/ /dʒ/ and /r/. Interestingly (10) maintains this sound patterning but, this time, in a partially inverted order. Thus, ironically (perhaps only to phoneticians and phonologists), there is a repetition of liquids (and palatals) in a poem about a river and a path. This patterning of voiced alveolar liquids and palatal consonants calls attention to the intentionality of structuring the form of the oral literature here as verbal art as opposed to ordinary speech. Secondarily, it acts as an organizing principle at the inception of the composition of the poem.

Bamgbọ̀se identifies tonal, lexical, and semantic word play in Yorùbá poetry, but here we have something entirely different in what may be termed “phoneme play” at a level smaller than the lexeme (Bamgbọ̀se, 1970, p. 110). This sound play at a level of units smaller than the lexeme is, no doubt, intentional and serves as a marker of this poem which, among other unique features, distinguishes it from other Yorùbá poetry.

We find similar alternations in the original Akan text as shown in Appendix B.

In examples (11) and (12), we have alliteration with an alternation of voiced and voiceless consonants where /m/ /d/ /b/ /b/, /m/ /d/ /b/ /b/ are repeated representing the voiced while each of the first two lines ends with words containing /s/ and /t/. This voiced/voiceless alternation is then partially flipped with /t/, /k/ and /f/ representing voiceless sounds, then we have /bI /m/ as voiced and /p/ as voiceless. There is also an intentional play on sounds where the first lines end with /a “firm”, while the third line begins with /a, as an abbreviation of /a. Also, the first two lines have /brebre “slowness,” while the third line has /berempɔn “Great One” in an intentional combination of phonological elements which serve as organizing principles for the lines in question.

Lexical Parallelism

Lexical parallelism may be understood as opposition or similarity of meaning maintained in different locations within the verbal artistic work. According to Fabb, when parallelism is manifested at the lexical level, this is when “two words are interpretable as being parallel to one another; the relation of meaning between the two words determines the relation between the two larger sections of
text which include those words” (1997, p. 139). According to Bamgboṣe, “The main difference between tonal word play and lexical word play is that whereas tonal word play involves only one lexical item without any change of meaning, lexical word play involves two lexical items, each with a distinct meaning” (Bamgboṣe, 1970, p. 111).

The sixth and seventh lines of Ṭôrà Lâ contain such words that are interpretable as being parallel to one another. These are odò “river” and èkùn omi “fullness of the water/flood” and sàn, sàn, sàn, sàn “flowed, flowed, flowed, flowed” paired with sàn títí “flowed endlessly/until.”

14. Odò ti sàn, sàn, sàn, sàn.
river PERF flow flow flow
“The river has flowed and flowed and flowed and flowed.”

15. Èkùn omi sàn títí
fullness water flow endlessly/until
“The fullness of the water/flood flowed endlessly/until.”

In the above lines, emphasis is marked in the repeated sàn “to flow” in line six of the poem. This repetition serves several aesthetic functions. Namely, repetition functions to draw the listener’s attention to the action being performed and to assist the listener in differentiating that which is being chanted from everyday speech. This is expressed in the English poem (shown in Appendix C) as the replacement of “flowed” with “over flowed.”

16. The river has flowed and flowed
Until the river flowed and over flowed

The Yorùbá repetition of sàn, however, seems to add to the visceral and visual imagery more than a single employment of this word could and, indeed, even more than the English rendering is able to evoke. These same lines can be seen as an exemplification of syllabic parallelism.

An instance of lexical parallelism also occurs in the original Akan drum text:

17. asuo yi firi tete.
river this from ancient
“The river is from ancient times. The river is from the Beneficent Creator” (Nketia, 1974, p. 54)

In these lines, we see tete ‘ancient’ and Œdomankoma Œboadeœ “Beneficent Creator” linked together through lexical parallelism to convey both anteriority and superiority of the river vis-à-vis the road. Anteriority exists in the sense that the river is from ancient times while the road is a recent creation. Superiority is conveyed in the sense of the river being from Œdomankoma Œboadeœ “Beneficent Creator” while the road is merely a man-made creation. We find that in both the source poem, Òkwàn Atware Asuo, and the target poem, Ṭônà Lâ, lexical parallelism adds to the weight and the aesthetic feel of the overall composition. Again, we find both the source text and target text using similar stylistic elements to convey the core ideas maintained throughout the various transformations undergone.

**Syllabic Parallelism**

What is meant by syllabic parallelism here is the same number of syllables over two or more lines. In examples (14) and (15) there is a case of the quadruplication of sàn in the first half of the parallel structure, which accommodates the syllable number in the second half. Further, the relationship between the two lines is clear thematically and structurally. Each half of the couplet contains seven syllables, creating poetic harmony and balance. Indeed, syntax and syllable are important in the
formation of parallel structure in Yorùbá verbal art (Ọlátúnjí, 1984).

A similar example of syllabic parallelism is found in Ἆkwan Atware Asuo in the following lines:

19. Konkon Tanọ
   Konkon Tanọ
   “Tanọ’s praise name”
   Birefia Tanọ
   Birefia Tanọ
   “Tanọ’s praise name”
   ...
   Agya Kwaante e.
   Father Kwaante e
   “Tanọ’s praise name”

Each of the above lines maintains four (4) syllables. Although each line is saying something different, each is a praise name of Tanọ and intentionally retains the same syllable structure. A similar device is even found in the English poem, *The Road is clear*

20. The Road is clear
   Long and endless

As shown in examples (20), each line possesses four (4) syllables. Here, again, we find intertextual parallels in terms of the stylistic devices used in the original Akan drum text, the English text, and Ônà Là.

**Repetition**

Vocalized repetition in the poem is useful for patterning, which structures the form of the chant. An example of this is the repetition of the formula `Èrùò bodò “The river is unafraid’ in lines (5) and (24) of the poem as shown in Appendix A, which divides the chant into two distinct groups of images. Additionally, the phrase `Èrùò bodò “The river is unafraid” contributes aesthetically to the gradual building of tension as well as the marking of successive distinct stages of the poem. This tension ultimately culminates in the phrase’s appearance in the ultimate line of the poem, forming the emphatic core. This type of repetition is also found in the Akan text which reiterates the question *Asuo atware Ókwan, Ókwan atware Asuo, Ópanin ne hwan?* “The path has crossed the river; the river has crossed the path; who is the elder?” by articulating this full utterance twice. These repetitions harken back to the periodic repetition of the chorus in the song itself where the only words uttered, “Awe! Awe!”/“Our way! Our way!” feature at several key points throughout the song.

According to Okpewho, repetition is useful in the extemporaneous organization of a "convenient framework for holding the distinct elements of the composition together" (Okpewho, 1992, p. 78). In each of the two texts, repetition serves the purpose not only of structuring the poem, but also of being a feature that produces auditory delight for listeners. It also may impress upon the listener a sense of the oral artist’s diversity of wisdom providing fullness of effect. Okpewho states that “fullness of effect is achieved through the repetition of a key word or phrase in a variety of settings” (Okpewho, 1992, p. 72). Thus, repetition occurs at the level of the word, at the level of the sentence and, via intertextual parallelism, at the level of the entire poem as a whole.

**Silence**

In Ônà Là, silence is used adeptly in the creation of tension and anticipation at the outset of the poem. Here, although the background music continues to play, Šólaňké pauses at specific points throughout to punctuate his performance. Thus, silence should not be thought of as the complete absence of any sound whatsoever, but rather the pauses between breath groups. In the very first
utterance, the phrase Ònà là “The road is clear” is stressed while a brief pause is allowed before the second phrase O já gbaragada “It bursts out wide”. In a similar complementary situation to that of matter and anti-matter, the silence, when understood as a marker of breath groups, is necessary not only biologically (for breathing), but also crucial in Ònà Là to the creation of aesthetic atmosphere as the vocalized utterances are.

Punctuated interlinear silence, as it occurs repeatedly throughout Ònà Là, may be conceived as a type of repetition or as a response to the call of the preceding line. In this manner, it could be understood as similar to the function of a vocal response by a chorus. Due to silence, the repetition of the metrical time interval alternating between the vocals and intense punctuating silence with pauses of pronounced lengths helps structure the oral performance. Silence serves a similar function as evident in the recitation of Asuo Atware Òkwàn whereby, when the drums “speak” the particular line, the accompanying translator is silent and while the translator speaks, the drums are silent. This forms a composite turn-taking that, in typical call-and-response format, adds to the overall aesthetic feel of the poem as African.

Silence serves a crucial function as the defining element that separates the vocalized utterances of the poem itself from the distinct breath groups of the poem. Further, it gives each element of the message an emphasis and integrity of its own. The breath group is the silent period – again, a response to the vocalized call. Silence is also utilized in the creation of “rhythmic language, divided into regularly recurring units of rhythm (or abstract time) characterizable as lines” (Bird, 1972, p. 207). The patterned repetition of silence contributes to the structural and aesthetic character of the poem in a manner similar to its vocalized elements.

2.6 Syntactic Parallelism

Syntactic parallelism is also evident in Ònà Là in lines 22 and 23, as shown in Appendix A, in the syntactically parallel, odò l’ayé, omi l’èniyàn “the river is the world; the water is the people”. These two statements are the same at the level of structure, despite being of variable lengths in terms of number of syllables (which, when the same, constitute syllabic parallelism):

21. odò l’ayé  
river be’world  
“The river is the world”

22. omi l’èniyàn  
water be’people  
“people are water”

Fabb defines such phrases as “parallel in that they have the same phrase and word classes in the same orders, and these phrase and word classes have the same functions in the clause in both parts” (1997, p. 137). Thus, these lines are examples of syntactic parallelism in that the order is the same as well as the functions of words in the clause of both parts.

Another example of syntactic parallelism can be found in the ninth and tenth lines wherein there is merely a differentiation in the subject noun phrase of each:

23. Odò l’oun l’ègbôn  
river say’3SG.QUOTE’ be’elder  
“(The) river says it is the elder.”

Onà l’oun l’ègbôn  
road say’3SG.QUOTE be’elder  
“(The) road says it is the elder.”

Again, harkening back to Òkwàn atware asuo, Asuo atware Òkwàn, Òpanin ne hwan? “The path crosses the river, the river crosses the path, who is the elder?”, this particular parallel structure serves
the purpose of providing not only intratextual parallelism but also intertextual parallelism as discussed above. This parallelism is also seen in:

24. asuo no firi tete.
river DEF from ancient
asuo no firi Œdomankoma Œboadeɛ
river the from Beneficent Creator

Thus, again, we find similar stylistic elements linking the texts together in addition to the intertextual parallelism of core themes that run through each.

Semantic and Tonal Parallelism

In the following lines, there is an exemplary case of semantic parallelism (which can also be viewed as an example of gapping) in example (25) which features parallel names for Olódùmarè (The Creator) as:

25. Òba Adédàá “Ruler who created creation”
___ T’ó dá ọkè “The one who created the hills”
___ T’ó dá ọnà “The one who created the road”
___ T’ó dá odò sílé ayé “The one who created the river into the world”

As in the case of simple repetition, semantic parallelism lends itself to the idea of fullness of effect as articulated by Okpewho. The oral artist, Ṣọlánké, expands on ideas of Olódùmarè, “Creator of the Universe” through a sense of imagistic variety. This semantic parallelism provides a kind of fullness, which may be found in the diversity of image that is employed for aesthetic effect. This same fullness adds to the aesthetic appeal of the chant and also helps to structure the material within it. In a sense, one may call all such instances cases of functional aesthetics or aesthetic function. Nketia gives an alternative version of line thirty-one (31) found in Appendix B where the creations of the Creator are recounted as follows:

26. Œdomankoma bọ-ọ adeɛ
Beneficent Creator create-COMPL thing
“The Beneficent Creator created a thing”
Børebone bọ-ọ adeɛ,
Hewer create-COMPL thing,
“The Hewer created a thing”
Œ-bọ-ọ deẹ-bẹn?
3SG.SUBJ-create-COMPL thing-which
“He/She created which thing?”
Œdomankoma bọ-ọ adeɛ
Beneficent Creator create-COMPL thing
“The Beneficent Creator created a thing”
Børebone bọ-ọ adeɛ,
Hewer create-COMPL thing,
“The Hewer created a thing”
Œ-bọ-ọ deẹ-bẹn?
3SG.SUBJ-create-COMPL thing-which
‘He/She created which thing?’
Œ-bọ-ọ esẹn
3SG.SUBJ-create-COMPL court/town crier
“He/She created the court/town crier”
Because, the liner notes of ‘The Path’ only have the translation of the first five lines of the Akan drum text in translation, it is unclear which of the full texts Ralph MacDonald and Jímí Şọláńké used. It is worth noting, however, that the English poem The Road is clear also has a similar listing of creations as follows:

27. Olodumare (God in Yoruba belief), the creator of all things and beings
   He created the hills
   He created the roads on Earth
   He created the rivers of the World

Given the parallels in the recounting of the creations made by Olódúmarè, “the Creator”, in the Yorùbá text and the English text as well as those made by Ọdomankoma, “the Creator”, in the original Akan text, again it becomes clear that the “descendant texts” were making a concerted effort to remain true to the spirit of the “ancestor text” via intertextual parallels. This is analogous to multiple celestial bodies orbiting a common center of gravity without being ejected from the system (Kohler, 2016).

Conclusion and Theoretical Implications

In this paper, we have analyzed Ọnà Là based on a conceptual framework wherein the interactions between texts are seen as analogous to the interactions between multiple stellar bodies. Although, in this analysis, we focused on the Yorùbá text as the primary text, it is clear that Ọnà Là is related to other texts Ọkwan Aware Asuo and The Road is clear in addition to the historical context and the people who share this common history. When actual words and stylistic tools are shared between texts, where one is derived from the other, this is analogous to the exchange of mass between two stars via Roche lobe overflow or stellar winds in which gas is expelled from a star’s upper atmosphere and may be caught in the Roche/Hill sphere of another. The majority of the examples of shared stylistic devices illustrated above are of this type. However, when two interrelated texts share a common theme, this is analogous to two stars orbiting around each other or a common center of mass – the point in astrophysics referred to as the barycenter. In this common theme, we see interconnections between the contemporary African present to both the ancient and the futuristic in which the rivers reestablish their supremacy. In The Path in general and Ọnà Là in particular, African people can see a metaphorical identification of themselves with the river. This is the undaunted river which will survive current hardship to ultimately overcome. In Ọnà Là, we get a vista of the inevitable victory of the river as a metaphor for the inevitable victory of African people; for Odò l’ayè; Omi l’èniyàn, “The river is the world; water is the people”. Is it any wonder, then, that ẹrù ọ̀ bodo “the river is unafraid”? On a deeper level, Ọnà Là is a revolutionary and visionary text. It is an extremely unique Pan-African musical composition in terms of function, structure, content, and aesthetics incorporating African people from various backgrounds united in the telling of a collective African story.

We have argued that Jímí Şọláńké’s Ọnà Là has transcended the bounds of existing genres of Yorùbá poetry. In our view, this transcendence has occurred as an intentional endeavor engaged in by Şọláńké on the basis of the artist’s knowledge for the purposes of bringing this verbal art into alignment with other texts already in existence. As such, Şọláńké is argued to have intentionally departed from
the typical features of identification associated with forms of poetry such as rará, ewi, and ịjálá and, in doing so, has acquiesced to the thematic, stylistic, and aesthetic imperatives laid out in the kindred texts along which Ọnà Là runs parallel. This is analogous to a star of a specific type being influenced by those in its multiple stellar system.

In our view, by virtue of the intentionality of Jímí Śólańké, Ọnà Là has ushered in a new genre of Pan-African Yorùbá verbal art by means of a confluence of the stream of possibilities enabled by the Yorùbá language merged with the diaspora-engendered collaboration on The Path which epitomizes innovation and improvisation. Further, although demonstrably new with regard to pre-existing Yorùbá poetic genres, in many ways, Ọnà Là is part of an interrelated star system linking the African Diaspora to the continent or various parts of the Diaspora to each other as found in collaborations such as those of Dizzy Gillespie and Chano Pozo in the late 1940s, and others such as

Charlie Parker’s recordings with Machito and his Afro-Cubans, Art Blakey's collaborative percussion records of the 1950s and early 1960s, Babatunde Olatunji’s work with Max Roach and Randy Weston in the early 1960s, the collaborations between Dollar Brand (Abdullah Ibrahim) and Archie Shepp, the World Saxophone Quartet and African Drums, the Art Ensemble of Chicago with the Amabutho Male Chorus of Soweto, Randy Weston and the master Gnawa musicians of Morocco, Steve Coleman and Afro-Cuba de Matanzas, David Murray and Positive Black Soul. (Fischlin & Heble, 2004, p. 89)

According to Fischlin and Heble, these and other collaborations ushered in a tradition of (1) juxtaposing different histories without sacrificing identity and (2) using reflexive notions of “cultural difference as a basis for collaboration” (Fischlin & Heble, 2004, p. 89). Further, these collaborations paved the way for future artists, such as those found on the 2002 Feľá Kúti-inspired Red Hot Riot album, Nas, K’naan and Damian Marley on the Distant Relatives album, Les Nubiens with Talib Kweli on Temperature Rising, Ladysmith Black Mambazo and Salif Keita’s United We Stand and many more. In each of these cases, the musicians themselves function as living suns who mutually illuminate and influence each other (Fu-Kiau, 2001). By providing a quintessential example of what Pan-African collaboration can be, The Path and Ọnà Là have provided an important precedent and inspiration for successive artists to follow, which deserves due recognition and proper placement within scholarship on the subject.

In this paper, we have presented a novel conceptual theory in the form of the Multiple Star System Theory of Mutual Illumination and Interaction. Via extended analogy, we have argued that relationships between texts can be thought of as being similar to relationships between stars in multiple star systems. We proceeded to provide a stylistic analysis of Ọnà Là with reference to interrelated texts The Road is clear and Ọkwany Atware Asuo to elucidate how they share common themes as well as common stylistic devices. These relationships were further articulated with relationship to their historical context and contemporary relevance. In terms of their relevance, this is thought of as being analogous to the influence stars may have on planetary observers much like how music has an influence on the audience and may, likewise, be influenced by that audience. While this is the first analysis of Ọnà Là as well as the first conceptualization of the Multiple Star System Theory of intertextual analysis, future directions include applying the framework to other interarts, intertexts, intergenres, etc., to determine if similar interactions and interrelations apply. We feel that by interrogating the sources and original meanings of the analogies and metaphors we live by, our understanding of natural phenomena as well as arts will be deepened and enriched.
References


http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v538/n7626/abs/nature20094.html#supplementary-information


**Appendices**

https://goo.gl/NpuO5u
The Poetics of Demythologisation in Kunle Afolayan’s *The Figurine*

Abiodun Olayiwola  
Senior Lecturer, Department of Dramatic Arts,  
Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria  
biodunolayiwola@yahoo.ca

Pelumi Folajimi  
Doctoral Student, Department of African Cultural Studies,  
University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA  
pelumifolajimi@yahoo.com

Submitted: September 22, 2016 /Accepted: February 14, 2017/ Published: May 31, 2017

Abstract  
The paper examines the concept of demythologisation as it is expressed in Kunle Afolayan’s film, *The Figurine* (subtitled *Araromire*). The paper argues that, though some influences of supernatural forces appear potent in the early parts of the film (Araromire Village around 1908), natural coincidence and human action (human orchestration) are more convincingly projected in the latter part of the film (which is set in Lagos around 2001). Examining how Femi Osofisan’s drama demystifies and demythologises sacred matters, the paper argues that Afolayan adopts the same technique of demythologisation in his film, *The Figurine* (*Araromire*) the same way Osofisan does in most of his plays. However, deriving its premises from certain revelations in the film, the study concludes that Kunle Afolayan’s attempt at demythologisation is a partial success, as certain occurrences in the film are difficult to completely detach from supernatural influence despite their denotation as coincidences.

Keywords: film, demythologisation, *Figurine*, Nigerian drama, Kunle Afolayan

Introduction  
As noted by Murfin and Supryia (1998), myths are ‘stories chronicling the adventures of gods and other supernatural forces, especially stories about their various feuds and encounters with mortals, are also common fare, as are tales about the fictional humans who must interact with them’ (p. 229). They explain that myths are ‘originally religious in nature’ (p. 229). Epochi-Olise (2013) also argues that myth is an ‘early form of oral tradition closely related to religious observances that are regarded as sacred’ (p. 106). As noticeable in the submissions of these scholars, myths are stories that often deal with issues of the gods, supernatural forces, religious matters and sacredness.

Certain works of Nigerian literature and theatre are rooted in the popular myths of the country. Such works include Soyinka’s *Death and the king’s horseman* (1988), Rotimi’s *The gods are not to blame* (1979) and Achebe’s *Things fall apart* (1958). Femi Osofisan often portrays Yoruba myths in his drama. Interestingly, Osofisan does not only portray myths, he also often demythologises mythical stories and mysterious phenomena. Since mythologisation of stories is often an act of making them (the stories) centre on the gods, supernatural forces, religion and sacredness, demythologisation often involves the opposite – an act of making stories to centre on human beings and secular (profane/non-spiritual) issues. It attempts to derobe certain deities of supernatural powers by adorning them with mortal features.

There is no doubt that, like the Nigerian theatre, certain Nigerian films also portray the myths of the people. Such films include, ‘Ogunde’s *Aiye* (1979) and *Jaiyesimi* (1980) and Kelani’s *Thunderbolt*
This is, probably, why Akwang (2013) notes: ‘Beginning from the moments of their emergence as distinct cultural products, Nollywood films have drawn habitually and extensively from the rich materiality of African oral traditions manifest in singing, dancing, drama, myths, rituals, story-telling, etc.’ (p. 365). It is important to observe that, as hinted by Akwang (2013), ‘What is to be noted, further, about these films is the effort by producers to intervene in the original cultural texts or narratives by disfiguring, contaminating or selecting details, even to the point of misrecognition by their owners’ (p. 365). However, while some Nigerian film producers disfigure, contaminate and select details of orality, filmmakers, such as Kunle Afolayan attempt to demythologise myths. This mythologising gesture is evident in *The figurine*, a film that questions the existence of the supernatural. As opposed to the supernatural forces which the events of the films portrayed at the beginning, the movie may be seen as attenuating the transcendental factor as there is a turn-around of issues to secularity, human orchestration and natural coincidence. This, noticeably, is Afolayan’s attempt at demythologisation of the events and activities in the film.

**Nigerian Drama and the Concept of Demythologisation**

Demythologisation or demystification is not, particularly, an unfamiliar thematic area in contemporary Nigerian drama. The most widely studied dramatist of that important theme in Nigerian drama is, arguably, Femi Osofisan. According to Raji (2014), ‘Osofisan’s outlook is decidedly materialist. At all times, his aim is to dismantle all forms of mysticism and subvert all myths and/or mythologies, projecting instead a scientific but ideologically motivated interpretation of events and issues’ (p. 632). Employing Marxist literary aesthetics, therefore, Osofisan dismantles and subverts mysticism, myths and mythologies; he interprets them to provide scientific explications to certain human and social phenomena. Awodiya (2002) further observes that ‘Osofisan’s drama revises history, challenges and reinterprets myths and legends, and questions consensus opinion’ (p. 5). Interestingly, in his revision of myths, Osofisan often challenges and re-interprets them to address pertinent human issues and problems.

Illustrative of this trend is *Morountodun*, in which Osofisan revised and re-interpreted the myth of Moremi to conform to the human personality of Titubi who fights for the liberation of the oppressed people. The portrait of the mythical (spiritual) Moremi is reconfigured to incorporate human attributes. An attempt at demystification may, therefore, be undeniable in the drama. This trend is also noticeable in Osofisan’s *Many colours make the thunder king* and *Tegonni* in which he emphasises the mortality of Sango, the Yoruba god of thunder, by adorning him with traits that are common to mere mortals. As observed in *Morountodun*, the spirit and essence of Sophocles’ Antigone are re-invoked in *Tegonni* as a force of resistance to tyranny.

Notably, scholars have paid attention to how Osofisan demythologises/demystifies sacred issues in order to address human circumstances in his works. A critical examination of this will, no doubt, help our analysis of Afolayan’s *The figurine* within the purview of the poetics of demythologization. Owoeye (2012), for instance, observes that, in *No more the wasted breed*, ‘Osofisan demystifies the gods by questioning the grounds of the veneration and esteem in which they are held’ (p. 52). In the play, *No more the wasted breed*, Osofisan actually shows the weaknesses and limitations of supernatural beings while, in a parallel manner, he elevates the virtues of the human soul. He celebrates the defeat of the gods and the triumph of the human. The play may be seen as challenging the long-held veneration of the sacred while it (the drama) maximises and eulogises the virtues of the secular. In the drama piece, Osofisan may be seen as taking power away from the gods and giving it (the power) to humans. He may be seen as paralysing the mighty (the gods) and empowering the hitherto weak (humans) – thereby, rendering them (humans) strong, even stronger and more powerful than the gods. He may be seen to have demoted the gods and elevated humans. Certainly, in the play, there is an attempt, on the part of the playwright, to demythologise the concept of fate. Human fate is no longer entrusted to supernatural forces but to human beings, human enterprise and human agency.

In his appraisal of Osofisan’s *Another raft*, Awodiya (2002b) comments thus: ‘Characters in the play who are representatives of human beings and gods are delineated as another technique of
articulating his ideology’ (p. 68). This also agrees with Raji’s view above that Osofisan’s re-interpretation of myths is ideologically motivated. Thus existentialist ideology is discernible in Osofisan’s portrayal of myth in his plays. Human and sacred characters are often deployed to promote the playwright’s ideology. Hence, his plays are centred on virtues and foibles of human beings rather than explication of the potency of supernatural powers. These plays emphasise the freedom and responsibility of humans to exercise their will in making choices without any form of celestial influence.

Irele (1995) has commented on Osofisan’s handling and secularisation of sacred matters in the play, *Esu and the vagabond minstrels*. The observation of Irele is that, in the play, ‘the notion of sacrifice is desacralised at the very outset and centered on human needs’ (p. xxxi). Sacrifice, or ritual – as one may call it, is most often (if not always) a sacred practice. However, in the play, as Irele stresses, Osofisan desacralises the all-sacred sacrifice. He takes the sacrifice beyond a ritualistic and sacred context to the level of human need. One may, therefore, observe Osofisan as demythologising sacrifice (or ritual), here. Though it is arguable to say that the playwright has not repudiated the spiritual essence of the sacrifice/ritual totally, it is however evident that he has paid more forceful attention to its human and social significance – this is, noticeably, a technique of demythologising the sacred. Esu is a Yoruba god that is known for his ambivalence – embodiment of goodness and evil, fortune and misfortune.¹ The sacred essence of this god is often indisputable. However, in *Esu and the vagabond minstrels*, Osofisan demythologises the god, paying more attention to his human essence and human significance, than his (Esu’s) sacred essence. This is probably why Dunton (2002) observes that the portrait of Esu, in *Esu and the vagabond minstrels*, is sanitised (p. 62). In the play, the sacredness of Esu is evacuated to project the god’s (Esu’s) human essence. This fact may, in certain dimensions of critical thoughts, attest to the veracity of the argument of Irele that, in *Esu and the vagabond minstrels*, ‘the only acceptable form of social arrangement is one that is predicated on human values’ (Irele, 1995, p. xxxi).

In a sense, Osofisan’s constant demythologisation of the gods and the concept of fate, by which he often gives credence to the human rather than the transcendental, may justify the contention of Ukpokodu (2002) that ‘what Osofisan shares with Sartre and Camus is that human beings as individuals hold the responsibility for self-actualisation and self-fulfilment because their universe and being are defined by choices and action’ (p. 122). It is against this contemplation that we intend to discuss the extent to which Afolayan treats the subject of demythologisation in his film.

3. The Figurine (Araromire) and the Poetics of Demythologisation

*The figurine* portrays the story of two intimate friends, Sola Fajure and Femi Badmus Kalejaieye. Each of them ardently desires Mona for a wife. Femi bribes his way to Araromire NYSC² Camp where Mona has been posted to. Sola soon joins the two of them in the Araromire Camp. While having their NYSC orientation camp, Sola and Femi find themselves at the Araromire shrine during an endurance trek organised by the NYSC management as part of their training. At the shrine, the duo come into contact with the statue of Araromire goddess. Interestingly, the village is named after the goddess; signifying the importance of the deity in the life of the community. The goddess is portrayed as possessing such mythical power that whoever touches her statue will encounter seven years of fortune and, later, seven years of calamity.³ These were the experiences of the native inhabitants of Araromire Village around 1908; they flourished and made success for seven years and, later, disaster became

---

¹ Indeed, Esu is an ambivalent god who gives blessings and curses, fortune and misfortune. The god (Esu) may be seen to share certain features with Afolayan’s conceived goddess, Araromire – a goddess who gives seven years of fortune and, afterwards, seven years of misfortune to supplicants.

² National Youth Service Corps – a scheme of compulsory national service for young and fresh Nigerian graduates that are usually not more than thirty years old.

³ The tale of Araromire goddess may be compared to the biblical story of Joseph and Egypt. Interpreting the dream of Pharaoh, Joseph prophesied that there would be seven years of abundance in Egypt and, afterwards, seven years of famine. In the case of Araromire, it is seven years of fortune and, afterwards, seven years of misfortune.
their lot – the latter made them to burn down the statue of the goddess and her shrine.

About a century later, Sola and Femi come into contact with the statue again and the events which unfold afterwards confirm the efficacy of the mysterious Araromire goddess. While Sola, who first touches the statue of the goddess, eventually marries Mona and establishes a family with her, Femi continues nursing an affection for the same woman. The two friends who have contacts with the statue prosper in the first seven years; the hitherto poor (orphan) and suffering Sola becomes a successful family man who has a child and a pregnant wife, with a blossoming business. Femi who, hitherto, has asthma, short-sightedness and a sick father recovers from his woes. However, after about seven years of success and prosperity, the two friends begin to experience indescribable misfortunes. Femi’s eye suddenly develops some defects and he begins to experience asthmatic attacks again. His father dies strangely, while Sola’s business comes to a sudden, mysterious ruin. It is, however, in an attempt to find solutions to their untold mysteries that the undercurrents of the story are revealed.

After a critical examination of the last fourteen years of their lives, the two friends conclude that they have been victims of the mysterious Araromire goddess who has bestowed them with seven years of unmerited fortunes, after which they have started witnessing series of inexplicable woes. When Femi eventually loses his only child at the peak of this tragedy, both friends decide to return the mysterious Araromire effigy to her abandoned shrine. The story, however, takes a dramatic turn when Femi kills Sola and attempts to re-establish his love for Mona. He explains to Linda (his supposed girl-friend) that what seems mysterious (the statue of Araromire which constantly comes back after being abandoned) to Sola’s family is due to his (Femi’s) orchestration adding that the experiences of fortunes and, later, misfortunes (by him and Sola) are due to coincidence. Femi later attempts to murder Mona and eventually commits suicide before law enforcement agents arrest him, leaving Mona in a critical condition. This is followed by what appears like a cotton call in a live theatre: we see Femi alive, Mona and Linda also come back to life. Then, Afolayan leaves us with a question: ‘What do you believe?’ (Afolayan 1:59:05).

As Olayiwola (2013) observes, a film is certainly ‘an embodiment of all the cultural elements of the society that produces it, in contents and style’ (p. 319). We may submit that a myth is one of such cultural elements. An embodiment of the peoples’ culture, Nigerian film encapsulates the peoples’ myths, history and religions, creating ‘a tradition that re-affirms the Nigerian peoples’ peculiarities and realities’ (Izuu, 2006, p. 62). Indeed, while certain Nigerian films re-affirm the myths of the people, others disclaim these myths. A good example of such films is, certainly, Afolayan’s The figurine. What Afolayan does in the film may be seen to be similar to what Osofisan has been noted, by scholars, to do in his drama – desacralisation and demythologisation of the sacred in order to incite or challenge human actions and also to empower humans. In the film, the myth (tale) of Araromire is subverted to address human orchestrations which come in the form of bribery (as Femi bribes his way to Araromire’s NYSC camp), love, trust and betrayal (which manifest in the relationships among Femi, Sola, Mona, Lara, Linda and Ngozi), spiritualisation of the non-spiritual (as Femi and Lara arrange the constant replacement of the statues of Araromire in Sola’s family) and natural coincidence – which Femi claims to be responsible for the experiences of fortunes and misfortunes in the film. It goes without saying that, by using the film to subvert the myth of Araromire for the benefit of human action and mortal encounters, Afolayan may be demythologising the sacred.

Jeyifo (2014) once remarked that ‘with only occasional exceptions to the norm, Nollywood films are often very poor in quality’ (p. 595). If, indeed, Nollywood films are often of very poor quality, The figurine may be one of the occasional exceptions that Jeyifo acknowledges. It is not a film that one may correctly categorise with such poor norms of Nollywood productions. The veracity of this thought is confirmed by the opinion of Haynes (2014) about The figurine: ‘The film sets itself outside and

---

4 Femi establishes the view that Mona gives her love to someone (Sola) who does not actually deserve it. Sola is an unfaithful husband and flirt who has extra-conjugal sexual relations with Ngozi (his girl-friend), Lara and Linda, and probably some other women.

5 The theme of coincidence, which Afolayan’s film raises, may be responsible or motivational for Adeoti’s conclusion that coincidence is one of the devices used by Yoruba film makers to resolve the conflicts in their works (2014, p. 48).
beyond the glitzy, self-contained culture of Nollywood which habitually showcases what money can buy but often without much taste or sophistication’ (p. vii). The script of the film (written by Kemi Adesoye), the production quality and the splendid performance of the talents involved may confirm the high taste and sophistication of the work. The appreciable status of the film is noticeable in the argument of Haynes in his appraisal of Afolayan’s *Irapada* and *The figurine*. He argues: ‘Afolayan’s films radiate the warmth, humanism, broad-mindedness and moralism that are so characteristic of Yoruba culture’ (Haynes, 2014, p. viii).

As one observes the features of Yoruba culture in the works of Afolayan, as persuasively highlighted by Jonathan Haynes, it becomes clear that the filmmaker’s leitmotif is multicultural. The film actually portrays the cultures of different parts of Nigeria, not just Yoruba mores. This fact manifests in the use of language, among other factors, in the film. In their study, Adeoti and Lawal (2014) are very conscious of this fact. They describe Kunle Afolayan’s films, *The figurine* and *Irapada*, as creations that are ‘in search of language. They demonstrate how the film maker grapples not only with compositional materials but more importantly with the need to communicate the materials far beyond the shores of the sponsoring culture (Yoruba) and nation (Nigeria)’ (p. 197). In *The figurine*, one comes across different Nigerian and foreign languages and cultures. The film, no doubt, is largely situated in Yoruba culture, as rightly observed by Adeoti and Lawal. Little wonder one sees Junior prostrate in line with Yoruba culture, as he greets his parents in Yoruba language thus: ‘e kaaro’ (Afolayan:0:51:49). The boy is also encouraged to greet his parents in Urhobo language: ‘mi gwo’ (Afolayan:0:51:53), since his mother is from Urhobo. This confirms the multicultural essence of the film. Interestingly, the film also adopts the use of Pidgin, which is widely spoken in different parts of Nigeria. There are also some non-Yoruba characters (or names) in the film; e.g., Linda Chukwu and Ngozi. These manifestations of non-Yoruba features extend the scope of the film beyond the sponsoring Yoruba culture to other Nigerian ethnic groups. The opinion of Adeoti and Lawal is that Afolayan’s use of linguistic pluralism is a reflection of the cultural/ethnic pluralism in Nigeria (Adeoti & Lawal, 2014, pp. 05-6). This fact is, certainly, indisputable. Apart from Yoruba, English is dominantly spoken in the film. French also becomes noticeable as Femi, in his discussion with Mona, says ‘C’est fini’ (1:06:54). The use of these European/non-Nigerian languages extends the accessibility of the film to regions beyond Nigeria – a fact noticed by Adeoti and Lawal.

Significantly, as noted by Lawuyi (2014), the good and the bad in the film are associated with mythology – the mythological story of Araromire goddess, most especially at the beginning of the film, before the notions of human orchestration and natural coincidence ensue (p. 137). The notions of human manipulation and natural coincidence cast much doubt on the twenty-first century mythological outset of the film. The myth is mingled with secularity/profanity. The veracity of this claim may be responsible for Adeduntan’s assertion that ‘The figurine suggests two theories: the supernatural and the empirical’ (2014, p. 108). The supernatural theory, as shown in the film, is associated with the myth of Araromire goddess while the empirical theory is associated with the modern, technological and scientific outputs, which are attributed to human actions, human orchestrations and natural coincidence. This thought does not ultimately contradict the opinion of Adeduntan that ‘The movie’s [The Figurine’s] narrative strength largely depends on the dual denotatory potential of all the events from 2001 to about 2008 as either being (i) caused by human agency or (ii) designed by the supernatural powers’ (p. 109). The concept of ‘supernatural powers’ as the denotatory potential of the events of the film tends towards the mythical aspect of the movie. Indeed, despite the claims of human orchestrations and natural coincidence in the film, one may not be able to negate the influences of the supernatural powers in the movie, especially as it pertains to the fictional events occurring around 1908. However, around that same era, when Araromire begins to show her evil side (since it has both

---

6 Haynes (2014) sees a lot of similarities between Afolayan and Tunde Kelani. The scholar argues that Afolayan, like Kelani, “has conspicuous professional training and technical proficiency, an uncommon level of artistry and a slow, deliberate, careful approach to his work” (p. vii). Haynes also compares the casting patterns of the two film makers and directors. As Kelani, sometimes, features some cultural icons like Adebayo Faleti and Akinwunmi Isola in his works, one sees Afolayan feature some arts icons like Ramsey Nouah and Muraina Oyelami in his film, *The figurine*. 

good sides and evil sides), the people of the village set her shrine and her statue on fire. Then, it is reported thus: ‘They said the rain poured and poured .... on the night the goddess Araromire and her wickedness became no more’ (Afolayan:05:39-50). The impression created by Afolayan’s film, at this important juncture, is that, with the burning of the goddess’ shrine and her statue, the goddess is ‘no more’. Her powers, potency and influences have come to an end as she has been burned – this may, contestably, be seen as the end of the supernatural powers in the film. What may be seen to dominate the events of the film, afterwards, are, apart from natural coincidence, human orchestrations. This may justify the thought of Adeduntan that ‘human agency’ may be seen as the cause of the events in the film.

Interestingly, Okoye (2014), is unable to see human beings as being responsible for their actions as he disagrees with the phenomenon of coincidence in the film. Even when he sees human beings in action and he is familiarised with the possibility of coincidence, he still believes, strongly, that it is the goddess, Araromire, that is in action. This is why he argues that ‘although Femi dismisses all the evidence to the agency of goddess Araromire as mere coincidences, it is obvious that even his agency has become compromised by the goddess’ (p. 130). When Femi begins to kill, Okoye submits that his (Femi’s) murderous acts are unprecedented. According to this logic, Femi is ‘obviously under the power of the goddess’ (p. 130) whenever he murders. While we understand his position, we wish to observe that Okoye fails to realise that anti-social behaviours are not strange to Femi. Even before he comes into contact with the goddess, Araromire, Femi has exhibited the habit of doing evil, surreptitiously. One of the proofs to substantiate this claim is that Femi had to bribe his way into Araromire Camp, for the NYSC Scheme, where he eventually comes into contact with the goddess. The big question here is: could the goddess Araromire have started orchestrating his activities long before the initial encounter? Nonetheless, one realises that, while the forces and potency of ‘supernatural powers’ (noted by Adeduntan) may be indisputable at the earliest (traditional) scenes of the film, ‘human agency’ (proposed by Adeduntan) may be undeniable and indisputable in the latter parts of the film. It may, therefore, be argued that though Afolayan introduces and strongly suggests supernatural forces and mythology in the early parts of the film, he, in the latter part of the movie, through the manifestations of human agency and natural coincidence, proposes the concept of demythologisation. To what extent this is successfully executed, however, demands further interrogation.

At the outset of the film, we are introduced to the mythical and mysterious aspects of the movie when a narrating voice reveals thus: ‘There is an old folktales/That when the goddess Araromire wanted to come to the earth/She asked the priest to bring her forth/From the bark of a cursed tree’ (Afolayan 0:01:30-46). This narrating voice is accompanied with the revelation of a priest who is costumed in a mysterious way. His ritualistic costumes and his artistic make-up become more significant as he holds the statue of Araromire goddess while he recites some incantations. A huge tree is also revealed which is probably meant to indicate the cursed tree from which the statue of the goddess is carved. These, evidently, create an impression of mysticism. The mythical essence of Araromire goddess is further projected by the narrating voice: ‘When worshippers from the village came and touched her, Araromire would grant them wealth, prosperity ... Their lands were the most fertile. Their cows were the fattest. Their rivers flowed and their children prospered. But only for seven years ... Then destruction Plague Misery Death’ (Afolayan 0:02:44-04:25).\(^7\) Indeed, the words of the narrating voice are accompanied

---

\(^7\) The mysterious ambivalence of the goddess is further crystallised by the Professor (a role played by Muraina Oyelami): ‘ARAROMIRE goddess of fortune and luck according to folklore legend anyone touched by ARAROMIRE will be rewarded with seven years of prosperity abundance of rain rivers and streams will be filled with fish women will bear only sons palm wine will flow crops will flourish but thereafter ... there’ll be seven years of destruction wine will become poison waters will dry crops would fade and suns would rot but ... it’s just folk tale fairy tale’ (Afolayan 0:54:24-55:36). It may be important to note that, after his highlight of the ambivalence of Araromire, the Professor attempts to soften the seriousness of the scary nature of the goddess by cautioning that the story surrounding her (Araromire) is just a folk tale, a fairy tale – this may be seen as a way of emphasising the spiritual significance of the goddess; a way of making the story human (based on human narratives), not particularly supernatural.
by action. One sees many (flourishing) cows, happy and healthy children of the people of Araromire. Their river flows and people undertake their activities happily at the river. All these events take place only in the first seven years of their contact with (touching) the Araromire goddess. Afterwards, ‘destruction, plague, misery and death’ become their portion. The priest of the goddess is probably the first victim of the goddess. While people are happy swimming in the river, the corpse of the priest is seen floating in the river. There is a heavy rain fall and many threatening thunder strikes which indicate tumult. Commotion, misery and calamity become evident in Araromire village.

Having benefited, significantly, from the supposed benevolence of Araromire goddess, the people of Araromire village do not conceal their displeasure at the malevolence of the goddess. The narrating voice conveys this fact: ‘the villagers had had enough. What kind of goddess strikes down her own priest?’ (Afolayan 0:04:34). In repudiation of the goddess and her malevolent significance, the people of Araromire burn the goddess and her shrine. As the narrating voice reveals: ‘They said the rain poured, poured and poured ... on the night the goddess Araromire and her wickedness became no more’ (Afolayan 0:05:53). At this juncture of the film, it is clearly established that Araromire goddess (with her potency) has been brought to an end. Araromire goddess, having been set on fire by her worshippers, is ‘no more’. Her powers, potency and spiritual influences, having been obliterated, now belong to the past.

Within a period of about a century after the potency of the Araromire goddess has ostensibly been declared terminated, Sola, Femi and, of course, Monacome into contact with the statue of the goddess. Their (Sola and Femi’s) experiences change for the better as fortune smiles on them. Sola gets a good job and marries Mona, the woman of his dreams. They both have a son and shortly, Mona becomes pregnant again – getting ready for another baby. Before the contact with the goddess, Femi has asthma and eye defect while his father is seriously ill. Soon after his contact with the goddess, Femi and his father are mysteriously cured of their ailments. However, ever conscious of the ambivalence of Araromire goddess, Mona is troubled, even when she and her husband, Sola, are prosperous. This is why she says: ‘Okay I was reading the other day about this idol who gives seven years of plenty and after that it takes it all away’ (1:06:31-7). She has earlier been told the tale of the goddess by her Professor. This tale troubles her mind. Her husband has a statue of the goddess in his study. Apart from the fact that the statue of the goddess looks ugly to her, she seems petrified by the malevolent essence of the goddess.

After seven years of fortune, misfortunes begin to dog the lives of Sola, Femi and their families again. Sola’s wife loses her pregnancy, his company stock crashes and he loses his source of income. A letter of tax evasion is sent to him – a note that he should pay a huge amount of money (which he does not have again) as tax. His son dies and his home is plagued with domestic violence. Femi’s asthma and his eye defect return. He loses his job and his father dies mysteriously. Suspecting that the array of misfortunes must have come from Araromire goddess, Mona orders her statue to be removed from the house and burnt to ashes. But each time it is removed, the statue strangely returns to its former place. This also troubles Sola who had previously doubted the potency of Araromire goddess. With the support of Femi and Mona, Sola decides to return the statue of the goddess to Araromire Village. This, however, introduces a new twist to the story.

On the way to Araromire shrine, Femi decides to take revenge on Sola for maltreating Mona, a woman he (Femi) has adored all his life. To him, Sola is the only obstacle to his marriage with Mona. Femi eventually murders Sola and returns home to reclaim Mona. He explains to Linda that the whole experience of fortunes and misfortunes that happens to him and his supposed friend may rather be traced to his (Femi’s) orchestration and coincidence – not the goddess, Araromire. As he explains to Linda: ‘you know, I really wish I could say that this whole thing was orchestrated by ... me but the truth is it’s all coincidence you know, like they say ... shit happens’ (Afolayan 1:50:24-44). Here, Femi demythologises the experiences of fortune and misfortunes. Further, Sola has once argued that his success/wealth and that of Femi are due to hard work, not the power of the goddess Araromire. He says to his friend: ‘But Femi, we both know we work hard to earn our wealth/And it has nothing to do with that figurine’ (Afolayan 1:24:37-43). It is this belief that makes Sola not to believe, initially, in
the tale of ambivalence that is associated with the goddess. Although, the claims by Femi and Sola above may be strong enough to advance the demythologisation theory, other events in the story may also attest to the potency of Araromire goddess. For instance, Femi dismisses the possibility of coincidence when he questions his father on his strange recovery thus: ‘Seven years ago Doctor diagnosed you of cancer/Did the ailment suddenly disappear?’ (Afolayan 1:08:28-41). The father replies ‘Yes!’ (Afolayan 1:08:48). The affirmative response of the father alludes to the mysteriousness of the case, especially, considering the fact that cancer is not a curable disease. Therefore, the total recovery and unprecedented sound health of the man cannot be seen as facilitated by good medical attention/treatment and/or pharmaceutical services, all the more so as the man has earlier been diagnosed by a medical doctor. This mystery is heightened by the man’s response to the vital question from his son thus: ‘Yes! In one’s life/ Miracles happen all the time/Maybe my time has not come yet [at the time of the illness]’ (Afolayan 1:08:48-59). This important answer crafted to indicate the possibility of (natural) miracles or (natural) coincidence, may also suggest that the supposed strange miracle might have been orchestrated by the magical deity, Araromire. Nonetheless, Femi’s orchestrations and manipulations cannot be denied in the misfortunes that befall Sola. What one is not sure of is whether human action is not induced by supernatural forces. In the first place, he (Femi) artfully influences his own posting to Araromire NYSC Camp, among other cunning actions. He orchestrates the constant re-appearance of the statue of Araromire in the study of Sola and at the scene where the statue is set on fire by Sola. He is also the cause of some of the family problems of Sola and Mona. Noticeably, some of these family problems, orchestrated by Femi, are responsible for the death of Sola’s son and, possibly, the loss of Mona’s pregnancy. However, one may wonder if he is also responsible for Femi’s employment, the financial boom and most especially, his (Femi’s) unusual employment while on youth service and the scholarship for further studies abroad that he is given. The film fails to link all these to any plausible natural occurrences. In the same vein, if Femi has orchestrated the reincarnation of the statue, who is responsible for its re-appearance after it was burnt by the early Araromire inhabitants? It is possible that Femi’s simple explanation of the events on the grounds of coincidence and human manipulation may also have been influenced by supernatural forces.

Conclusion

Following the familiar terrain of Femi Osofisan’s dramaturgy, Kunle Afolayan could be seen as having made conscious efforts at introducing a new and exciting style to the narrative course of Nigerian video films in The figurine. This is the concept of the demythologisation or demystification of the gods. He has questioned significantly the influence of the supernatural forces on natural occurrences. Through the character of Femi, he suggests that global happenings and events, whether positive or negative, are human-induced. However, a critical view of the film reveals some inconsistencies in the narrative that almost obscure the seemingly initial intention of the filmmaker at demythologisation. For instance, the potency of supernatural forces, through the goddess Araromire, is carefully presented. As a myth, Araromire is portrayed in the film with ample conviction as being responsible for the fortunes and misfortunes of the people of Araromire village of the 1900s. However, as established in the film, the burning of the statue of the goddess and her shrine marks the termination and extinction of her potency. A claim of the potency of the goddess is therefore re-examined in the 2000s through fresh contacts with Araromire statue by Sola, Femi and, invariably Mona with the intention of refuting the potency of the goddess. But certain events crafted around the characters seem

---

8 Femi knows that Mona is scared of the statue of Araromire. Therefore, as a way of creating family problems for the woman and her husband so that he may eventually have the woman to himself – a fact revealed by Linda – Femi makes his father carve many images of the goddess for him. He arranges with his sister, Lara, who consistently replaces the statue of the goddess each time it is displaced from the vicinity of Sola. In this way, human orchestration is a factor which cannot be discounted in the film.
to negate this claim.

For instance, the filmmaker fails to convince the audience that the sudden wealth that comes to the duo of Sola and Femi is natural beyond the mere claim of hard work by the two friends. In our own view, Femi’s selection for foreign study and eventual employment are not carefully premised on hard work and dedication to duty. In the same vein, Sola’s unusual turn-around of events with no strong personal efforts appears too magical to be natural. Worse still, the sudden disappearance of Femi’s father’s cancer and its strange re-appearance can only be explained in the light of supernatural influence. However, the possibility of manipulated natural events cannot be denied in the re-appearance of the statue of Araromire, Sola’s tax evasion and its attendant repercussion, Femi’s lust for Mona and, probably, the death of Sola’s son.

In a sense, a careful re-working of the screenplay of this film to resolve the above contentions would have put Kunle Afolayan’s *The figurine* on the same artistic pedestal with the plays of Nigerian revolutionary writers such as Femi Osofisan, Bode Sowande, Kole Omotoso, especially in the adoption of Brechtian epic style. Also significant in Afolayan’s film, in the manner of Bertolt Brecht and notably Osofisan, is the adoption of open-ended resolution which allows the audience to determine the conclusion of the film. The last frame of the story reads: ‘What do you believe?’ (Afolayan 1:59:05). This poses a big question to the audience with respect to the presence and potency of supernatural beings and leaves the audience much to reflect on after watching the film. Brecht (1974) notes that the spectator of the epic theatre is one that thinks deeply about the events/activities in the play. The spectator subjects the story to critical appraisal and gives such activities sound contemplations and dexterous interpretations (p. 851). This Brechtian thought may be visible in the final scene(s) of *The figurine*. Femi is declared dead by the members of the Nigerian police force while Linda is also portrayed as dead and Mona as unhealthy, probably unconscious, if not actually dead. But soon after, we see these characters come back to life. This affirms the fictionality of the story, allows the audience to be emotionally distanced and leaves them to resolve the conflicts in their further discussions and arguments. The film allows them to resolve the open-ended conflicts of the film in such ways that may seem appropriate or plausible to them.
References


Inaccessible Built Environments in Ghana’s Universities: The Bane of a Weak Legal and Regulatory Framework for Persons with Disabilities

Eric Paul Tudzi
Lecturer, Department of Land Economy, College of Art and Built Environment, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana
erictudzi.cap@knust.edu.gh; erictudzi@yahoo.com

John Tiah Bugri
Associate Professor, Department of Land Economy, College of Art and Built Environment, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana
jtbugri.cabe@knust.edu.gh; jtbugri@yahoo.com

Anthony Kwame Danso
Senior Lecturer, Department of Building Technology, College of Art and Built Environment, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana
akdanso.cap@knust.edu.gh; akdanso2000@yahoo.com

Submitted: September 19, 2016 / Accepted: February 7, 2017/ Published: May 31, 2017

Abstract
This is a qualitative study of the role of the legal and regulatory framework in making built environments accessible to Persons with Disabilities in six universities in Ghana. It revealed that the local component of legislation dealing with accessible environments was fragile and fraught with compliance challenges, administrative laxity and the lack of a time conscious approach to issues thereby resulting in inaccessible built environments. In effect, the study gives credence to the proposition of the social model that disability is a creation of humankind and recommends an amendment of Ghana’s Persons with Disability Act.

Keywords: accessible built environment, compliance, disability, legal and regulatory framework, Ghana’s universities.

Introduction
With the shift of emphasis toward the Social Model, disability has become a human rights issue internationally (WHO, 2011a). The social model posits that disability is a creation of humankind that creates barriers for persons with impairments. These barriers include those in the built environment. Consequently, society through both international conventions and local legislation has sought to eliminate such barriers so as to create accessible and inclusive built environments. Dion (2005) notes that worldwide, the road toward the recognition of accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) as a human right issue has been long and tortuous. The period from 1981 to 1992 was declared by the United Nations as the Decade of Disabled Persons. In 1987 it was recommended that the UN General

1 The authors wish to acknowledge, with gratitude, the support of the authorities of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) by way of Research Grant for this and other related research activities in six universities in Ghana.

2 Conflict of Interest: We do not have any conflicts of interest to disclose.
Assembly draft an International convention on the elimination of discrimination against PWDs. On the contrary, however, the 22 Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities were rather adopted by the General Assembly in 1993. These non-legally-binding rules served as an instrument for policy-making and as a basis for technical and economic co-operation. It summarised the message of the World Programme of Action (1983) concerning PWDs. In 2000 leaders of some international disability NGOs issued the Beijing Declaration calling on all governments to support the Convention. This culminated in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2006) which opened for signing in 2007 and came into force the following year. It has received the highest number of ratifications compared to any other UN treaty and Ghana is a signatory to it.

The aim of this paper is to use a qualitative approach to ascertain the role of the legal and regulatory framework for ensuring accessible built environments in universities in Ghana. The introduction is followed by a survey of historical developments in the legal and regulatory framework. After the relevant legislation in Ghana dealing with PWDs has been discussed, the accessibility component inherent in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Ghana’s Persons with Disability Act (PDA) are assessed. The methodology comes next and is followed by the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

**Historical Developments**

Individual countries have over the years passed specific laws in line with the equal rights and non-discrimination against PWDs. Trail blazers worthy of note are the United States of America, Australia and the United Kingdom. The United States of America passed its Disabilities Act in 1990. Australia followed suit with its own Disability Discrimination Act of 1992. For its part, the United Kingdom passed the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 which was subsequently amended in 2010 as the Equality Act. A major aspect of these Acts has been the resolve to secure accessible built environments for PWDs. These nations have gone further to provide accessibility codes to guide construction and ensure the operationalisation of relevant laws. Among these codes of practice are the British Standards BS 8300 (2010): Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design of 2010.

Countries in the Global South including those in Africa have tried to keep pace with these developments. According to Venter et al (2002), there are constitutions such as those of Malawi and Mozambique that seek to guarantee the rights of all persons including PWDs. There are also efforts at various stages to come up with disability legislation or accessibility codes so as to secure the rights of PWDs, involve them in the developmental agenda and also to meet international obligations. Oyar (2015) argues that beyond the CRPD, there should be an African Disability Protocol because of peculiar conditions prevailing in Africa. This indeed came into being with the adoption of the Draft Protocol on Persons with Disabilities’ Rights by the African Commission in February 2016. The road towards accessible environments in Ghana has similarly not been smooth (Oduro, 2009). As a member of the global community, Ghana has not been an island with regard to issues on the rights of PWDs and accessibility and has therefore been party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), the African Youth Charter (Article 24), the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Article 23) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Article 13), all of which promote the rights of PWDs. However, the major international instrument that deals with disability issues, the CRPD, was signed by Ghana in March 2007 and ratified only on 31 July 2012. By ratifying it, Ghana is obligated to ensure and promote the full realisation of all human rights for all PWDs without any form of discrimination on the grounds of disability.

**Local Legislation**

In Ghana, there are laws like the Children’s Act 1998 (Act 560) Section 3 and 10, the Labour Act 2003 (Act 651) Sections 3(e) and 14 (e) and the National Health Insurance Act 2012 (Act 852)
Section 29 (c and e) that deal with some concerns of PWDs. They seek to safeguard their rights as children, their working conditions, and their access to health insurance respectively. However, the main Act that specifically addresses issues pertaining to PWDs in Ghana is the Persons with Disability Act (PDA) of 2006 (Act 715). The 1992 Constitution of Ghana also guarantees the rights of all citizens including PWDs. Article 29 is specifically devoted to PWDs. Clause 6 notes that “As far as practicable, every place to which the public have access shall have appropriate facilities for disabled persons”. Secondly, according to Article 75, once international treaties have been domesticated (following ratification) through parliamentary vote and assented to by the President, they become part of our local laws and therefore legally enforceable in the domestic setting. The internal domestic laws must then be amended to conform to the international instruments. Where there is conflict between domestic law and ratified international instruments, the international instrument takes precedence over domestic law. In accordance with judicial precedent, the international treaty could be invoked without formal incorporation into local law where the same rights are also protected in the Ghanaian Constitution (Gyamfi, 2014). Therefore, these international and local legislation ought to regulate issues pertaining to PWDs in Ghana.

The CRPD, PDA and Accessibility

The CRPD has 50 Articles that deal with disability issues and its purpose, as captured in Article 1, is to promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all PWDs and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. The PDA also has 60 sections dealing with eight major issues on disability. Both the CRPD and the PDA deal with the subject of accessibility but in varying degrees. According to the International Standards Office (ISO 21542, 2011), accessibility in reference to buildings or their parts means provision of buildings or parts of buildings for people, regardless of disability, age or gender, to be able to gain access to them, into them, to use them and exit from them. Accordingly, accessibility includes ease of independent approach, entry, evacuation and/or use of a building and its services and facilities, by all of the building's potential users with the assurance of individual health, safety and welfare during the course of those activities. Accessibility is a concern for everyone; it is the key to sustainable development and is necessary for social inclusion (European Commission, 2003). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) therefore emphasise accessibility as a means towards the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda which is to lead to the elimination of poverty (UN Enable, 2016). Sustainable Development Goal 4 states that learning environments should be accessible.

The principle of accessibility may be mandated in law or treaty and then specified in detail according to international or national regulations, or codes, which may be compulsory or voluntary. This then becomes the standard, a level of quality accepted as the norm (WHO, 2011a). Uganda (UNAPD, 2010), Egypt (Samad, 2010) and South Africa (CHRC, 2006) are examples of countries that have developed accessibility codes in Africa. However, it is noted that in the few countries in Africa and others in the Global South where accessibility codes exist, they have not been able to make the needed impact because of monitoring and enforcement challenges (UNAPD, 2010). An accessible built environment is a core element of an inclusive society. It provides citizens with autonomy and the means to pursue an active social and economic life (EC Expert Group on Accessibility, 2003 cited in NDA, 2012). It allows those activities to take place without restricting access to people with certain abilities only (Sawyer and Bright, 2007). It is also the primary step toward fulfilling the rights of PWDs to participate in all areas of community life and national development (INR, 2009).

Many studies on Ghana’s built environment have indicated that it is generally not accessible to PWDs and those in higher education institutions are no exception (Ashigbi et al. 2015; Gavu et al., 2015; Ansah and Owusu, 2012). Studies on the accessibility of the built environments of universities in Ghana mainly focused on perceptions of PWDs and physical assessment of buildings. Only public universities were studied and most of the studies were on the University of Ghana (UG) and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). However much is not known about the role of the legal and regulatory framework in this whole predicament. Article 24 (5) of the CRPD
notes “States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others”. Although Ghana has ratified the CRPD and the Constitution guarantees the rights of PWDs there is still much to be done in this regard. The purpose of this study is to fill this knowledge gap regarding the role of the legal and regulatory framework.

**Methodology**

The qualitative approach was used in this study. It involved the review of documents, various legislation and interview of key informants in Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and purposively selected universities. The key informants were purposively selected because as officers working in their various organisations, they were deemed to have the ability give their organisations’ perspective on the phenomenon under study. Another strategy used after the commencement of data collection was the opportunistic sampling in line with the pragmatic philosophical stance of the study since it helps to take advantage of unfolding events that will help address the purpose of the study (Creswell 2012). Content analysis was used in analysing the data.

Although homogenous sampling was used to select private and public Universities, within each category, the maximal variation sampling was used to select the individual Universities as the study sites. This was to help present multiple perspectives if any, so as to help provide the needed depth for qualitative research. With maximal variation sampling the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait. It requires the identification of the characteristic by the researcher and then finding sites or individuals that depict different dimensions of that characteristic (Creswell, 2012). In this regard, the following factors were considered in the purposive selection of the individual Universities for the study: webometric ranking, age, number of buildings, geographical location, and other unique characteristics. The Ashesi University College (AUC) in Berekusu, the Catholic University College of Ghana (CUCG) in Fiaapre-Sunyani, and the Christian Service University College (CSUC) in Kumasi were the private institutions chosen while the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) in Kumasi, the University for Development Studies (UDS) in Tamale and the University of Ghana (UG) in Legon, Accra, were the public ones selected. Key informants who were deemed knowledgeable on the subject matter in each institution were also identified and interviewed. These were mostly professionals in the built environment and registrars. The information sought had to do with disability policy and how disability issues relating to the built environment were handled in the institutions.

The key informants from the MDAs were from the Ministry of Education (MoE); Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing (MoWRWH); Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP); Ministry of Justice and Attorney General (MoJAG); National Accreditation Board (NAB); National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE); National Council on Persons with Disability (NCPD) and the Department of Social Welfare (DSW). The key informant interviews were at two levels namely national and university level. In the former, the aim was to ascertain what was prevailing nationally with respect to the current state of laws, policies and the general legal and regulatory framework in place for addressing issues pertaining to PWD access in the built environment of the Universities. The latter targeted the Universities to find out what was prevailing at the institutional level. Pseudo names were used for all the informants.

The study was undertaken in 2015 and it is a sequel to another study (currently under review) that quantitatively assessed 110 buildings in the universities and found that the levels of inclusiveness were very low. The private universities had a median Composite Disability Design Inclusiveness Score (CDDIS) of 25.49 % while the public ones had 26.47 %. The assessment involved the use of a checklist developed from the British Standards Institution (BS 8300:2010) to assess attributes of selected buildings on the six campuses. The attributes were parking as well as access routes to and around buildings. The rest were entrance of buildings, horizontal circulation (comprising corridors and passages; and doors), vertical circulation (made up of internal steps/ stairs, internal ramps and elevators), fire safety, communication/ signage and Sanitary accommodation (toilet facilities and bath/
showers). This was followed by the use of the assessment tool (CDDIS) proposed by the researchers and which built on a tool used by Lau et al. (2014) for similar studies.

Findings and Discussion

Weaknesses and Flaws in the Various Laws

During the study, it came to light that the CRPD, the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and the PDA were the major laws on PWDs issues in Ghana. Compliance with them should ideally remove barriers to physical access in the built environment as posited by proponents of the social model. A comparison of the provisions of the PDA and the CRPD shows that the former does not cover some relevant provisions that are in the latter and this gives ample credence to the fact that the Act ought to be reviewed to place it in tandem with the CRPD. This agrees with the findings of Gyamfi (2014) and supports her call for an amendment of the PDA. For example, accessibility which is the key focus of this study is only lightly touched on in a few sections in the PDA. Sections 6 and 7 note:

6. The owner or occupier of a place to which the public has access shall provide appropriate facilities that make the place accessible to and available for use by a person with disability.  
7. A person who provides service to the public shall put in place the necessary facilities that make the service available and accessible to a person with disability.

On the contrary, Article 9 of the CRPD deals exhaustively with the subject. Aspects that are critical to the current study are as follows:

1. To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to,

   a. Buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces;
2. States Parties shall also take appropriate measures to:
   a. Develop, promulgate and monitor the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of facilities and services open or provided to the public;
   b. Ensure that private entities that offer facilities and services which are open or provided to the public take into account all aspects of accessibility for persons with disabilities;
   c. Provide training for stakeholders on accessibility issues facing persons with disabilities;
   d. Provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signage in Braille and in easy to read and understand forms;
   e. Provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate accessibility to buildings and other facilities open to the public.

Secondly, the Constitution, though guaranteeing equal rights for all persons including PWDs has a flaw of not using ‘people first language’. For instance, it addresses PWDs as ‘disabled people’ instead of “persons with disabilities”. Article 4.1a of the CRPD enjoins all States Parties to the Convention “to adopt all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention.” In light of the above, there is the
need to urgently align the contents of the various laws that deal with accessibility to the built environment. This will reduce confusion and strengthen the legal and regulatory framework.

**Lack of Legislative Instrument, Building Codes, and Accessibility Standards**

The study also found out that there was no Legislative Instrument (LI) in place to give effect to the PDA even though the 10-year moratorium given by the PDA was to end in 2016. There was also no national Accessibility Standard or Building Code at the time of the study to guide the construction of accessible facilities. These findings were confirmed by earlier studies by Voice Ghana (2014) and Amos-Abanyie et al. (2012). Julia, an officer at the NCPD noted that,

> The Act should have an LI [Legislative Instrument]. The process has started. It was taken to the AG’s Department. It was worked on and returned. We have to do a few things and send it back. The stakeholders are yet to come together and see what can be done. The process has been slow but by the end of the moratorium, there will be an LI so that we can implement the Act. If it is not in place, you cannot arrest offenders. (Julia, personal communication, August 11, 2015)

Her views were corroborated by an officer at the Ministry of Water Resources Works and Housing who added that Ghana’s Building Code and the Draft Ghana Standard on Accessibility were being worked on at the time of the study:

> The Draft Accessibility Standard was circulated for public comments. The comments have been received. The Technical Committee is to meet to look at the comments and if necessary revise the document. For now, enforcement is a challenge. By next year, things would have materialized. (John, personal communication, November 19, 2015)

According to Julia (personal communication, August 11, 2015), an on-going project, the OSIWA Project was to come up with a document on Accessibility on both buildings and the external environment. The Ghana Standards on Accessibility Design (GS 1119) was subsequently launched in Accra in December 2016 at a time when the moratorium given by Act 715 had already expired.

On the non-enforcement of the provisions of Act 715, John said, “Although the Act prescribes, how do you direct the people? People design and build the buildings and roads so there should be Standards. When it comes, it will give the people a basis for what to do.” He also added that, “Although there is advocacy, there is no regulation so if someone designs, it will be approved” (personal communication, November 19, 2015). He was of the view that the LI would compel members of relevant professional bodies in the built environment to adhere to the laws on disability. Julia also remarked, “The process has been slow but by the end of the moratorium, there will be an LI so that we can implement the Act. If it is not in place, you cannot arrest offenders” (personal communication, August 11, 2015). Danso and Tudzi (2015) agreed that the absence of a building code and an accessibility standard in the country is partly responsible for the situation where construction professionals subjectively decide on which provisions of International Standards to use during their practice.

It is apparent that the weak legal and regulatory framework of accessibility issues in the country would persist without the LI, the Building Code and the Accessibility Standards which are the foremost tools for enforcement. Furthermore, the foregoing communication with officers of the relevant state agencies showed the lack of a clear timetable for the effective commencement of the legal and regulatory framework and the administrative regime to ensure the enforcement of the requirement for accessible built environments in Ghana. Given the apathy and lack of urgency, the draft documents keep going round in circles from one entity to the other. Hence beyond the lack of the requisite complement of laws, there are also weak enforcement capabilities and administrative failures. The
lethargic attitude of the various Ministries could also be due to political reasons. This is because with the expiration of the moratorium given by Act 715, the State itself could be dragged to court for the many non-complying public building designs. Gibilisco (2010) notes that the legal system is a major driving force behind inclusiveness in Australia. As Odoro (2009) contends, the political will on the part of government to enact the PDA was weak, and had to be impelled with constitutional and civil rights challenges. By implication, it would be necessary for various stakeholders to put some pressure on the government in order to see the realisation of the appropriate legal and regulatory framework for the enforcement of the law.

**Enforcement of Legislation**

The Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) in Ghana, are responsible for development control in areas under their jurisdiction and as such, are expected to ensure that Building Codes and Standards are adhered to (Local Governance Act, 2016). Some of the public Universities by their Acts of Incorporation have development control functions with respect to built environment construction activities on their campuses. The Police, the Courts and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) exist to help enforce laws and ensure justice. The NCTE and the NAB also exist to ensure that Universities operate in compliance with requisite legislation. Furthermore Civil Society Organisations and various societies for different categories of PWDs have been formed to advance the cause of PWDs through advocacy. With these entities in place, it is expected that monitoring, enforcement and compliance with laws that exist to guarantee accessible built environments would be adhered to once the relevant legal and regulatory framework is put in place.

**Bodies in Charge of Higher Education**

It came to light during the study that the NCTE and the NAB which are entities responsible for accrediting and monitoring higher education institutions in Ghana did not have clear-cut policies on accessibility in the built environment for these institutions. Although there was a general policy on access to tertiary education at the former it did not touch on accessible facilities in the built environment. At the NAB it was revealed that accreditation was in two stages. There was the Institutional Accreditation and the Programme Accreditation. During the Institutional Accreditation, the physical facilities of the institution seeking accreditation were assessed to determine if they were disability-friendly and met the requirements of a physical facility instrument. A study of the documents used for the assessment by the researchers revealed that they contain very little on the provision of accessible environment and would therefore require some revision. For example the NAB Standards for Physical Facilities for Tertiary Institutions in Ghana (revised in November 2014) together with the Physical Facilities Assessment Questionnaire that an institution had to complete, mentioned PWDs in only few places. In those few places where PWDs were mentioned, some specific requirements were not indicated. Although dimensions for seating spaces in auditoriums, lecture halls and libraries etc. were required, other critical requirements like car parks, facilities to aid horizontal and vertical circulation, and accessible restrooms for PWDs were also not emphasized.

An officer at NAB further indicated that a number of university buildings did not meet the standards. He explained,

> At the inception of the Board [NAB], we were encouraging people to set up Universities but now there are about 60 private tertiary institutions, nine public degree awarding institutions, six degree plus professional institutions and 39 public Colleges of Education. So for the past 2 or 3 years, access for the disabled is a key thing. Accreditation is tight now. So what we do is that you will not be granted accreditation if you do not meet the requirement. (Jonathan, personal communication, August 12, 2015)

He further lamented over the situation in the public universities:
The public institutions are set up by Law so we do not incorporate institutional accreditation for them. However, NAB is part of the Technical Committee especially for younger public institutions like UDS. The public institutions’ Acts are crippling us now. We are trying to get the Laws harmonised. We have made proposals for the NAB Law to be amended. We hope to become a National Accreditation and Qualifications Authority by 2016.

From the above discourse, it became evident that apart from the deficiencies in the documents they worked with, the NAB until recently did not strictly enforce accessibility standards before granting accreditation to tertiary institutions, especially the private ones. According to them, they initially wanted to encourage the setting up of private tertiary institutions so they relaxed the enforcement of the provisions. They waited for the horse to bolt out of the stable before locking the gate. The problem is worse at the public universities where the NAB is virtually constrained because of the laws that established the Public Universities vis-a-vis its own law. The question is why should it be so? No institution should be above the law when it comes to the provision of accessible environment for PWDs. From the foregoing, the oversight bodies (NTCE and NAB) lacked the requisite enforcement tools and they were deficient even where such tools were available. This, coupled with their own misjudgment, has led to compliance difficulties in the universities.

The Universities

None of the six universities studied had a working policy document on accessibility for PWDs on their campuses. The offices responsible for student affairs were in some instances responsible for the needs of Students with Disabilities. KNUST had a comprehensive draft document dated April 2013 which was yet to be approved and implemented. The consequence of the absence of policy documents on accessibility in the universities was highlighted by Mumuni (an officer at UDS) when he commented about the fate of the old structures at UDS: “Since there is no written policy, I am not sure of their fate. I think that soon most will conform but the issue has to do with when because there is no policy.”

He continued:

I think the law and the approach of the school to provide PWD access accounts for the friendly design. The [new] administration [block’s] foundation was commenced in 2003 when there was no [PWD] Act but provision was made for disability access. The Law has reinforced this unwritten policy of the University. With the [coming of the] Law, it is consciously looked at and implemented. The design for the new administration block was completed in 1997 but it had provision for disabled access. I think a combination of professional minds accounted for that. I think the professionals will be a key factor if we will see the needed change. (Mumuni, personal communication, July 21, 2015)

He added that the old administration block was constructed in 1978 and the University started using it in 1996. However, in 2004 when the PDA had not been enacted, PWD access was provided to the ground floor. This was because an officer raised the concern for the disability access and it was provided by the University.

In the absence of policy documents, some concerns of PWDs have been addressed on ad hoc basis in the various universities. For example Percy at the Ghana Hostels (UG) stated that the construction of the Hostels was from 2006 to 2008 and it coincided with the concerns of the President Kufour administration for PWDs. He believed that influenced the inclusiveness of their design. (Percy, personal communication, August 13, 2015)

According to Anita at the PDMSD (UG), a law student took the UG School of Law to court and the University fell on the Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) for funds to provide a lift at the School. At AUC, Agatha, responding to a question as to whether they had a Disability Policy said,
It is not cast in stone. It is embedded in our non-discriminatory stance. For us, diversity includes different people not just cultures/nationalities. Diversity is very broad. There is diversity in body so help all to feel ok. We are very proactive with complaints that come. When the student using clutches came, we became mindful of which room should be given. We decided to provide a hostel that was not far. We were flexible to respond to his request for a particular room. (Agatha, personal communication, July 9, 2015)

Philip, also of AUC, added that the requirement for a disability user-friendly environment was a law in Ghana and as such was being adhered to by their institution.

There was also an instance at the CUCG where a Reverend Sister, a faculty member, personally purchased a tricycle for a student with mobility impairment in the School. She was of the view that the University was guilty for failing to provide facilities for PWDs in its buildings. She also blamed architects for failing to use their professional expertise to advice clients on the need to incorporate certain disability user-friendly facilities in their designs. (Personal communication, June 23, 2015).

An officer at KNUST noted that as and when PWDs were identified and there was the need to help them, assistance was extended to them. To buttress this point, he disclosed that in one hall of residence, a wheel chair user was given a room directly behind the porter’s lodge in the hall where a ramp was constructed to enhance accessibility for the PWD. Between 2005 and 2009, a female student at the Faculty of Law was provided with a special chair because she could not use the normal one. A small ramp was also provided at the Faculty for her.

The foregoing provides evidence that the lack of policy document on accessibility for PWDs in the six universities does not only contribute to the lack of the needed regulatory framework but is also contributing to the ad hoc and slow nature of changes in accessibility issues that are envisaged by Act 715. It is evident that some work is being done but this invariably comes as an afterthought. They are not deliberate and consistent actions targeted at meeting the needs of PWDs on these campuses. They usually happen to be subjective decisions by people in authority which are not based on any policy. The delay in getting the laws and policies in place and also ensuring their enforcement points to administrative failing. For it is indeed unconscionable that at a place like the KNUST where most of the built environment professionals in Ghana are trained, a Draft Disability Policy has been waiting for approval since 2013. There seems to be the lack of consciousness for the need for time lines to ensure efficiency in administration and implementation of accessibility issues.

Conclusion

This qualitative study has given credence to the fact that the legal and regulatory framework for accessible built environments in Ghanaian universities is weak. This is compounded by the situation at the national level. Actions or inactions on disability issues in the Universities therefore generally have to do with the subjective decisions by persons in positions of authority because of the lack of policy and the lack of the full complement of the appropriate legal and regulatory framework. The individual Universities on their own do not have documented Disability Policies in place to direct issues pertaining to PWDs. The WHO Summary Disability Report (WHO, 2011b) confirms a low level of compliance even for countries that have had laws on accessibility for the past 20 to 40 years. The implication is that there should definitely be the appropriate laws. Beyond the laws, there should also be the willingness to see things materialise, requisite technical expertise, vigorous enforcement and effective monitoring and evaluation in place. In effect, the lack of the full complement of requisite legislation, failure to implement the existing legislation and the requirements of the CRPD as well as a weak monitoring and compliance regime are integral to the failure to properly provide for the needs of PWDs by way of accessible built environments in universities in Ghana.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed for the strengthening of the legal and regulatory framework so as to ensure accessible built environments in the Universities.
The NCPD working together with the Attorney General’s Department should as soon as possible submit proposals to Parliament for an amendment of the PDA to holistically incorporate the provisions of the CRPD. With the ultimate launch of the Accessibility Standards, work on the LI ought to be expedited to ensure the enforcement of the provisions of the PDA. There should be clear timelines set for these actions and ideally they should not go beyond 2017. This is because the period set by the PDA for the alteration and retrofitting of existing structures expired in 2016. In this regard there should be a concerted effort from all and sundry to make the concerns a topical national issue. The Ministry of Gender and Social Protection which is directly responsible for the welfare of PWDs in Ghana ought to take the lead in these efforts. Others like the Ministry of Water Resources, Works and Housing, Ministry of Education (Office responsible for Tertiary Education) and the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General can then lend their support based on their unique areas of expertise.

All stakeholders including the relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), NGOs, the NCPD, the Ghana Federation of the Disabled (GFD), students’ associations etc. need to work assiduously to ensure that the provisions in the (amended) PDA are implemented appropriately. This will call for lobbying, constructive engagement with people in strategic positions, advocacy and public education.

Professional bodies in the built environment such as the Ghana Institution of Surveyors, the Ghana Institute of Architects, the Ghana Institution of Engineers and International Facilities Management Association should also mount pressure on Parliament from their end to ensure that the work on disability legislation is expedited. The Ethics Committees of the various professional bodies/associations of the built environment should monitor the activities of their members and sanction those who flout laws and regulations pertaining to the accessible built environment.

As much as possible, “people first language” should be used in all the laws, policies, regulations, and standards etc. that deal with PWDs.

The Ministry of Education and the NCTE should come up with a Policy Document on PWDs who use the built environment of tertiary institutions.

The NAB should hasten its efforts at getting its Law amended so that it becomes an Authority. This will help strengthen its power to address the physical facilities accreditation for both public and private universities. As a matter of urgency, the NAB Standards for Physical Facilities document that is used for the physical audit of the buildings in the Universities for accreditation purposes should be reviewed to incorporate all the relevant provisions in the CRPD and the (amended) PDA. Compliance is very important. Without proper monitoring, evaluation and enforcement, the desired accessible University built environments will remain a mirage.

The Courts, the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), and the Ghana Police Service should strengthen their capacity to address accessibility issues because with the moratorium ending, an avalanche of court cases related to accessibility is likely to ensue.

The MMDAs, being the planning authorities which are mandated by law to ensure that developments comply with laid down regulations, should also strengthen their capacity to deal with accessibility issues so that their Building Inspectorate Divisions can ensure compliance in the private universities. Since some public universities are autonomous when it comes to developmental control issues, the MoE should encourage them to enhance the capacity of relevant staff to ensure compliance with legislation on accessibility. This will enable them to better appreciate the issues related to inclusiveness and the enforcement of pertinent rules and regulations.
References


Equality Act (2010).


ness of University Buildings

Local Governance Act (2016).

National Health Insurance Act (2012).

Ebenezer Ayesu
Senior Research Fellow, Institute of African Studies,
University of Ghana, Legon
eayesu@ug.edu.gh

Philip Atsu Afeadie’s book, *Workplace Anguish and Pleasure in Northern Nigeria: Exactions of Colonial Governing*, seeks to examine the emotional experiences of political officers (imperial European functionaries) and political agents (junior African colonial workers serving mostly as interpreters and messengers) in British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria. Essentially, the work explores complexities of feelings relating to joy, sadness, confusion, stress and their control among political officers, political agents and traditional rulers. The author sheds light on the intricacies of patron/client relationship between the three groups. Primarily using archival material, including government documents, private papers, diaries, memoirs, reports and oral traditions, the author reveals in six chapters the oft-neglected issues involving the power of emotions and sentiments on the consolidation or weakening of imperial authority at the workplace or what the British colonial administration in Northern Nigeria termed ‘attitudes and feelings’.

**Chapter One** discusses ‘inadequate African Assistants’, which inadequacy often meant relatively huge workload for European political officers. With a population of about 43 million then, 1,223 administrators and 938 police officers were grossly inadequate for the management of colonised Nigeria. The author reports that the gloom of loneliness encircled the overwhelmed political officers as there was often no cordiality with the African people, and political officers sometimes refused to take advice from the few African political agents. Battling with loneliness, political officers developed a sense of individuality and self-reliance as they resorted to sport and relished the freshness of the African evening. The inadequacy of political agents made some political officers induce the capable ones with gifts and presents to prevent them from abandoning the work.

**Chapter Two** deals with ‘attitudes of political agents’, perceived to be engaged in extortion and misrepresentation, comportment which both baffled and annoyed the political officers. This was of transcendent importance to High Commissioner Lugard who is noted to have remarked that ‘the absence of honest native interpreters and agents is the curse of the country and renders administration difficult’. This, according to the author, brings to the fore the scarcity of agents and their practice of extortion and attitude of reticence which were variously described as complex and perplexing. However, the author fails to interrogate what could have accounted for this complex behaviour and reported cowardice on the part of some agents. For instance, was their remuneration commensurate with their workload, especially in relation to their European counterparts? Or were the practice of extortion and the attitude of reticence of the political agents meant to subvert the very colonial order they had been employed to serve? Sometimes, political officers resigned themselves to the mischief of political agents. Yet, there were many agents whose forthrightness elicited joy and admiration from political officers.

**Chapter Three** examines the ‘survival of political agents’ whose status the author describes as one fraught with ‘curse and opportunity’. There is not much emphasis on the sweet rewarding moments of those political agents who were joyous at belonging in colonial governance. The danger associated with the work of the political agents rather comes into focus as they were sometimes attacked by ordinary African subjects or intimidated and imprisoned by traditional rulers. These occupational hazards became all the more frequent as
political agents were forbidden from carrying arms despite the dangerous terrain and hostile environment in which they operated. Their grief and anguish were thus understandably enormous amidst vexations of underpayment and the lack of insurance and workplace protection for their services. They survived largely by cultivating patience at work.

**Chapter Four** dwells on ‘engaging traditional rulers’ and rightly so, because the indigenous ruling hierarchy was of utmost importance to the functioning of the Indirect Rule system. Political officers, as the author notes, were imbued with a sense of mission, a ‘fascinating job to do’ which required the use of their power, intelligence and charisma to ensure easy administration. Owing to the sensitive nature of issues relating to taxation, which was equally indispensable for the running of Northern Nigeria, the political officers recognised the vital contribution of some of the chiefs to colonial administration even as they described other traditional rulers as conservative, ineffective and disgusting. Except for instances of mob attacks referred to in the previous chapter, the author did not stress the hostile attitude of the ordinary people towards their own chiefs for cooperating with colonial administration in the collection of taxes.

**Chapter Five** deals with ‘differences in ideology of political officers’. Here, the author reveals that the real story, as far as ‘ideology’ and Indirect Rule were concerned, could be found in the private memoirs and letters of resident and district officers but not in official memoranda and imperial records. The disagreements among political officers and those between political officers and high authority were highlighted as some led to the reversal of decisions and reprimands, and created much anguish. Subordinate political officers coped by resigning themselves to their conditions or deferring to high authority until moments of reprieve.

**Chapter Six** is the last chapter and is mainly devoted to ‘emotions and work efficiency’. This notwithstanding, the chapter appears to be more of a summary of emotions discussed in the previous chapters than an actual exploration of the impact of the emotions on work efficiency. The author, however, examines, to some extent, how the management of the emotions impacted work efficiency, for better or worse.

In all, the author, considering the sources at his disposal, does creditably well by drawing attention to workplace anguish and pleasure in colonial Northern Nigeria. The book is not only well-written, thoughtful and informative, but also well-documented, and therefore instructive to modern-day work engagements. The book’s originality resides in the exploration of the impact of the affect on power relations and imperial construction in African contexts.
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media Exposé of Judicial Corruption in Ghana: Ethical and Theological Perspectives</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adwoa S. Amankwah, Ginn Assibey Bonsu, Peter White</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lure of the Image in the Mirror: A Reading of Kwame Nkrumah’s Towards Colonial Freedom</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atta Britwum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes towards English in Ghana</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kari Dako, Millicent Akosua Quarcoo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Discourse of Sustainable Farming and the Environment in Bessie Head’s When Rain Clouds Gather</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dokubo Melford Goodhead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Role of the International Community in Ghana’s Democratic Transition in the 1990s</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maame Adwoa Gyekye-Jandoh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Intertextual Analysis of Jimi Şólańké’s Ònà Là (In The Path) via the Multiple Star System Theory of Mutual Illumination and Interaction</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qbádélé Kambon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Poetics of Demythologisation in Kunle Afolayan’s The Figurine</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abiodun Olayiwola, Pelumi Folajimi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccessible Built Environments in Ghana’s Universities: The Bane of a Weak Legal and Regulatory Framework for Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Paul Tudzi, John Tiah Bugri, Anthony Kwame Danso</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebenezer Ayesu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>