ASƐMKA

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CONTENTS

***ASEMKA*: EDITORIAL**

The Number 11(1) June 2021 Edition of *ASƐMKA, The Bilingual Literary Journal of the University of Cape Coast* contains seven (7) papers centred on diverse areas of teaching and research in the Humanities, spanning between themes in Literature and Religion. This Edition contains only one (1) manuscript in French. The remaining six (6) are in English. The papers span between thematic areas in Literature and Religious Studies. The contributors are from Ghana and Nigeria. These papers were taken through rigorous blind peer-review processes and painstaking editorial work.

First Section

*Britwum, A. G.'s paper titled, "***Mariama Bâ/Ramatoulaye en un combat douteux dans *Une si longue lettre* »,** ….

Second Section

Nyatuame, P. N.'s paper titled "**An ecocritical reading of Victor Yankah's *The Pretty Trees* of *Gakwana* and *Sikaman***" examines two plays of Victor Yankah concepts within analytical framework of ecocriticism. It is a critical assessment of Yankah's ecodrama in the light of ecocriticism, a field of literary theory and criticism. It draws on the broader concepts and discourses of ecocriticism and demonstrates how the playwright shares a symbiotic relationship which has become a significant feature of the selected plays. This is to emphasise Yankah's view and preoccupations about the mutual relationship between the human other and nature - the natural world of environment with the view to prove the playwright's concern about the interference of human beings into the world of nature. A situation which adversely results in the disruption of the symbiotic (human-nature) relationship. The significance of the paper lends credence to ways in which Yankah provokes environmental debate and a rethinking in African playwrights concerning environmental issues to raise awareness and inspire environmental consciousness and ecological sustainability among people in Africa, Ghana in particular. The findings reveal both the epistemic and retributive forces of nature as well as raising concerns about the environment, ecological consciousness in advocating for ecological sustainability in modern African theatre and dramatic literature scholarship. The paper offers insight into and expand the frontiers of the discourse of ecocriticism in the global south and adds to the relatively new and developing interest in environmental discourses on the African continent and what they reveal about African environmental consciousness and ecological dimensions.

Amissah-Arthur, H. W.'s paper, "**Examining mothering: Race and abjection in Wilson's *Our Nig* and Walker's *The Color Purple***" analyses the concept race and abjection in African-American women's writings. It specifically emphasizes the idea of mothering during the freedom epoch of the African Americans after slavery. The focus is on mother characters in the novels of Wilson and Walker. The paper borders on some thematic components which come together in unravelling the identities of both the mother characters and their children when faced with issues of race and abjection.

Awojobi, P. O.'s paper, "**The Ministry of Moses Orimolade and the prophetic tradition of Israel: An ecclesio-historical study**", examines the minisrty of Moses Orimolade and the prophetic tradition of Israel from An ecclesio-historical perspective. The thrust of his paper is to investigate the origin, and the place of ecstatic prophecy in ancient Israel and its reflections in Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry in Nigeria. Historical method was used for the research. It uses historicity and ecclesiology as conceptual framework to contend that Israel's prophetic tradition started before Israel settled in Canaan where she interacted with other nations. While it cannot be disputed that Israel must have been influenced by the culture of its neighbours, there were some elements in the religion that were peculiar to Israel. The study concludes that Israelite prophetic heritage cannot be compared with the divination in ancient Near East. There exist a parallel between ecstatic prophetic ministry in ancient Israel and Moses Orimolade prophetic ministry in Nigeria. The paper recommends that contemporary Prophets in Nigeria and beyond must strive to fulfil divine mandate received by them at all cost.

Ofei, D. & Oppong Adjei, D.'s paper titled, **"Sexual Identities in Africa: A Queer Reading of Chinelo Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees*"** analyses queer sexual identities in Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees*. It draws on the broader concept of queer analysis and demonstrates how *Under the Udala Trees* uses its narrative to conceive space and language whose midpoint encompasses literary innovations and the significance of some experiences of queer individuals within an African setting. Ultimately, instead of simply emphasizing these sexualities as alternative solutions in adverse conditions to some individuals who cannot help being the way they are, the paper unravels the literary merits such as shock, characterization and thematic values of queer sexualities in Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees*.

Sam, C. A.. & Nkansah, S. K's paper, "**Evidences of our Inhumanity: Representations of Evil and the Quest for Postcolonial Healing in Tadjo's *The Shadows of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda***",

explores the literary representations of evil in relation to the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda while simultaneously looking at therapeutic strategies in healing the wounds of the past as depicted in Veronique Tadjo's *The Shadows of Imana: Travels in the heart of Rwanda* using Kant's conceptions of evil and postcolonial literary theory. The results of the analysis is that hatred, otherness, genocide and remembrance constitute conversations for understanding travel writings and historical violence.

Inusah, A-R.'s paper, "**Lundaa as speech surrogate of Dagbamba**" examines surrogate language in Dagbani, a Mabia language spoken in the Northern Region of Ghana. The paper pays attention to its functions and its transformation from traditional to the contemporary sociocultural issues. Premised on participant-observation, the paper supports the multi-toned language represented on a pressure drum capable of many pitches. It attests that the *lundaa* 'pressure drum' is a speech surrogate used among Dagbani speakers. The *lundaa* has a wide distribution of functions but this paper is focused on the core functions of drum language that include *molo* 'announcement', *salima* 'Panegyric', *gɪŋgaani* 'invocation' and *ŋaha* 'proverbs' as examples of drum literature and transformation. The paper suggests that the communication potential of the *lundaa* rhythms and its interpretation leads to an understanding of the sociocultural life of the people.

FIRST SECTION - FRENCH

Mariama Bâ/Ramatoulaye en un combat douteux dans *Une si longue lettre*

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Abstract

In the early part of *So Long a Letter,* Ramatoulaye bristles feminist as she chastises polygamy, and. by implication, patriarchy that subtends it, and subordinates the woman to the man. She upholds thereafter same patriarchal order as she employs it to her benefit. Further, her narration pits women against each other; and, through the roles she makes them play, minimises them in relation to men. This undercuts the initial feminist posturing and claims made for the novel and its author. Besides, the socio-economic context that frames the events narrated gets given a colouring that endorses the neocolonial order plaguing Africa.

Keywords: gender, gender roles, neo-colonial political economy, patriarchy, property relations

Genre

On sait depuis déjà des décennies que la différenciation strictement biologique qui ne reconnaît dans l'espèce humaine que le sexe mâle et le sexe femelle n'est pas connue à la nature (Dave Zirin, 2009 ; Hilary Rose and Steven Rose, 2011). Il y a des êtres humains qui ne sont ni l'un ni l'autre. Mais la société humaine continue à s'exécuter comme si notre espèce n'est faite que des hommes et des femmes. En effet, les rapports entre les sexes et les inégalités qui en découlent partent de cette différenciation toute sociale entre les sexes (placée sous le concept de genre) pour distribuer des rôles et fonctions sociaux de manière à subordonner la femme à l'homme (Wright et Rogers, 2011).

Relevant du concept genre, sont des rôles dits reproductif, et productif que le patriarcat distribue. Le rôle reproductif, que le patriarcat réserve à la femme, cumule ce qui relève de la biologie — la grossesse, l'accouchement, le port du lait maternel — et l'extrapole jusqu'à l'ensemble des travaux ménagers. Ce rôle (de « femme au foyer », selon la précision de Ramatoulaye) n'est pas rémunéré. Le rôle productif, par contre, est rémunéré. Le patriarcat en fait la réserve de l'homme. Dans le cas où la femme n'exécute que le rôle reproductif, son conjoint, exerçant le rôle productif, s'impose, comme le seul gagne-pain. Ce qui rend la conjointe dépendante vis-à-vis de son conjoint, la lui subordonnant. Le travail rémunéré donne alors la possibilité d'éliminer la dépendance de la femme. Le monde a mis du temps pour reconnaître le droit de la femme au même salaire que l'homme pour un même type de travail. Selon de nombreuses études, la femme professionnelle se trouve souvent à s'exécuter dans des catégories moins rémunérées par rapport à l'homme professionnel. Il se trouve rétablies, dans ces conditions, les inégalités qui jouent contre la femme !

Ces rapports genre se cadrent dans le contexte social plus grand de rapports de propriété (mode d'appropriation des moyens de production) qui (Karl Marx, 1975) donnent à toute société son identité et permettent d'expliquer les « formes de conscience sociale déterminées » dites réflexion.

Une lecture d'*Une si longue lettre,* roman créé par une femme, ayant des femmes pour personnages clé, lecture projetée à travers le cadre que nous venons d'évoquer, permet des éclairages utiles.

Thèse

En effet, les événements présentés dans *Une si longue lettre* arborent, pour commencer, une posture féministe combattante, mais finissent par s'ancrer dans des considérations genre biaisées contre la femme. Dans l'ensemble, la mise en récit ainsi que les prises de position livrées par les fonctions narratives se conjuguent à avaliser les normes patriarcales subordonnant la femme à l'homme, mais aussi à cautionner le statu quo socio-politique (néo-colonial) du monde du roman et, par extrapolation, celui de l'Afrique contemporaine.

Le contexte romanesque

À la suite de la mort de son mari, Ramatoulaye subit le rite de veuvage (relevant des normes patriarcales) qui la confine à la maison pendant quarante jours. Elle se trouve, durant la période, à revivre sa vie de mariée qui lui a valu douze enfants. Elle fait porter cette vie dans une lettre de plus de cent pages

— une bien longue lettre, un monologue — qu'elle adresse à une amie proche nommée Aïssatou.

Ramatoulaye raconte aussi la vie de mariée de deux autres femmes : Aïssatou, la destinataire de la lettre et Jacqueline dite l'Ivoirienne. Toutes les trois subissent le même sort dans le mariage. Ces femmes sont de la petite bourgeoisie citadine de l'Afrique moderne, de l'après-indépendance, produite de l'école bourgeoise occidentale. Cette école inculque à ses clients un système de valeurs qui fait de la polygamie un délit. Ce qui rend la polygamie inacceptable à ces femmes. Elles contractent le mariage monogame dans le contexte social sénégalais où la polygamie, produit du patriarcat résistant, continue à subsister légalement et légitimement. Les trois maris ne se croient pas tenus de respecter les obligations, exclusivement morales, non légales, qu'impose le mariage monogame dans le contexte social sénégalais. La fidélité qui consiste, en principe, à exclure des liaisons formelles avec d'autres femmes, n'est, dans ces conditions, qu'un choix personnel que les maris s'imposent comme ils peuvent ne pas se l'imposer, en faisant abstraction du mal qu'ils font à leurs épouses. Une injustice alors dont d'aucuns se saisissent pour voir dans *Une si longue lettre* un cri de douleur contre le statu quo patriarcal (Opoku-Agyemang; Jànos Riesz; Nnaemeka; Geraldo).

Les évènements narrés remontent à une vingtaine d'années après les indépendances de l'Afrique ; une Afrique caractérisée par la misère écrasante de la classe populaire et l'aisance d'une couche mince de privilégiés, des petits bourgeois, faite pour une bonne part des *hommes* de la profession libérale. Ces hommes, dans le contexte du roman, sénégalais, ont les moyens matériels de leurs désirs et besoins. Ce qui donne de la force aux dispositions patriarcales qui permettent à l'homme de circuler.

C'est ainsi que Modou Fall, le mari de Ramatoulye et le père de leurs douze enfants, à l'âge d'une cinquantaine d'années, après vingt-cinq ans de mariage monogame, se laisse attirer vers une écolière adolescente, Binetou, camarade de classe de sa propre fille, Daba. Modou Fall, juriste, a une bonne situation dans la direction des organisations syndicales. La mère de Binetou, de la masse appauvrie, voit dans cette liaison une chance de sortir de sa misère. Cette mère (de Binetou), ménagère, « femme au foyer », travaille dans le secteur reproductif que les sociétés humaines ne rémunèrent pas et dont elles font le domaine de la femme, de l'épouse. Elle n'a pas les moyens de satisfaire ses aspirations personnelles et sociales. Elle déclare avoir envie de vivre dans une vraie maison. Modou Fall la promet et plus : le pèlerinage « à la Mecque pour les deux parents, voiture, rente mensuelle, bijoux ». Pour cela, Binetou doit couper court à sa scolarité et devenir épouse à plein temps, c'est-à-dire « femme au foyer », enfermée dans le rôle reproductif, exclue du rôle de gagne-pain, réduite à se subordonner à son homme.

Si Modou Fall choisit la polygamie par concupiscence, Mawdo-Bâ, le mari d'Aïssatou, s'y laisse pousser, selon lui, par sa mère. Sa mère, Tante Nabou, n'accepte pas que son fils à elle, une princesse, se marie au-dessous de sa classe. (Le concept de princesse relève d'une société de classe, de la société féodale. Il n'a pas de place dans le contexte d'une société communaliste, une société sans classe. La précision qui met 'caste' à la place de 'classe' rectifie le contresens). Aïssatou est d'une famille de bijoutiers, donc d'une caste inférieure. Tante Nabou, toute femme qu'elle est, suit les normes patriarcales pour imposer une deuxième épouse à son fils. Mawdo Bâ va finir par céder, soi-disant, à la pression de sa mère pour épouser sa cousine germaine, la petite Nabou. Mais c'est Aïssatou que Mawdo Bâ aime, selon lui. Il ne remplit ses obligations de mari auprès de la petite Nabou que comme pour accomplir son devoir de fils auprès de sa mère : « pour que sa mère 'ne meure pas' prématurément ».

Samba Diack, le troisième mari de l'histoire, s'installe au Sénégal avec Jacqueline, l'Ivoirienne. Il ne s'empêtre pas dans la polygamie, mais il se saisit des droits, en matière de rapports avec le sexe opposé, que le patriarcat confère à l'homme. Il redécouvre les Sénégalaises fines qu'il n'arrête pas de courir, sans s'en cacher. Il y fait noyer son mariage.

Le combat de Ramatoulaye

Le comportement des maris, dans les trois cas, crée des misères à leurs conjointes. La narratrice sélectionne ces trois cas parmi de nombreux autres de la même espèce pour mener son combat contre les injustices faites aux femmes : « J'avais entendu trop de détresses pour ne pas comprendre la mienne. Ton cas, Aïssatou, le cas de bien d'autres femmes, méprisées, reléguées ou échangées, dont on s'est séparé comme d'un boubou usé ou démodé » (p. 62).

Le patriarcat contraint la femme, non l'homme, à la fidélité. C'est que dans le cadre polygamique, qu'impose le patriarcat, tromper sa femme n'est qu'une façon de parler puisque le système donne à l'homme le droit de chercher et d'épouser d'autres femmes, quitte à se croire ou à se dire n'être attaché qu'à l'une d'elle. Comme l'observe Ramatoulaye,

> Alors que la femme puise, dans le cours des ans, la force de s'attacher, malgré le vieillissement de son compagnon, l'homme, lui, rétrécit de plus en plus son champ de tendresse. Son œil égoïste regarde par-dessus l'épaule de sa conjointe. Il compare ce qu'il eut à ce qu'il n'a plus, ce qu'il a à ce qu'il pourrait avoir (p. 62).

L'homme perd progressivement l'attraction physique envers son épouse au fur et à mesure qu'elle prend de l'âge. D'ailleurs, l'homme n'a pas besoin d'attendre que son épouse perde son attraction physique pour courir d'autres femmes. Un privilège qui n'est pas permis à la femme. Le patriarcat reconnaît qu'il faut des brides aux impulsions sexuelles (tout à fait humaines) pour endiguer la dérive à l'anarchie sexuelle. Et il les pose du côté de la femme en en faisant gardienne de grille, comme on dit. On se rappelle que l'incantation magique, que la mère de l'enfant (Camara Laye (1954). *L'Enfant noir*) récite pour faire lever le cheval, recèle son rôle de gardienne de grille : « S'il est vrai que, depuis que je suis née, jamais je n'ai connu d'homme avant mon mariage ; s'il est vrai encore que depuis mon mariage, jamais je n'ai connu d'autre homme que mon mari, cheval, lève-toi ! » (p. 75).

Voilà pourquoi les épouses de la lettre de Ramatoulaye (et de tous les pays) se retiennent de se livrer au même jeu, du moins ouvertement, que leurs maris. C'est ainsi que Mawdo Bâ se permet de brandir l'étanchéité savante, interdite à la femme, qu'il pratique entre ce qui relève de la chair et ce qui relève du cœur. C'est le cul entre deux chaises. C'est jouir à la fois du meilleur de chacun des deux mondes. L'homme peut alors courir d'autres femmes tout en étant sentimentalement attaché à son épouse. Cette considération permet surtout de « changer de saveur », ravalant les femmes, comme le remarque Ramatoulaye colérique, « au rang des mets ». C'est ce contre quoi Ramatoulaye, défenseur de la cause de la femme à ce stade de la narration, s'insurge : « J'étais offusquée. [Mawdo Bâ] me demandait compréhension. Mais comprendre quoi ? La suprématie de l'instinct ? Le droit à la trahison ? La justification du désir de changement ? je ne pouvais être l'alliée des instincts polygamiques » (p. 53).

Ce qui se dit ici 'trahison' n'est que le droit, donc légitime, que le patriarcat reconnaît à l'homme, à l'époux, de conduire des liaisons avec d'autres femmes. Ce droit à la trahison ne scandalise que dans le cadre monogame. Droit que ces maris importent, pour ainsi dire, dans leur mariage monogame. Inacceptable, souligne Ramatoulaye. La tentation, par trop forte, des normes patriarcales donnent ce que la citation nomme « les instincts polygamiques » contre lesquels Ramatoulaye se bataille.

Chacun des deux ménages constitués par les couples Ramatoulaye/ Modou Fall et Aïssatou/Mawdo Bâ s'écroulent. Le premier parce qu'Aïssatou n'acceptant pas la polygamie rompt le mariage avec Mawdo Bâ. Dans le deuxième cas, Modou Fall se trouve à abandonner le foyer qu'il a constitué avec Ramatoulaye et aussi leurs douze enfants parce que Binetou insiste là-dessus. Mawdo Bâ et Modou Fall se retrouvent dans un arrangement monogame durant le reste de la narration, même si, selon le principe

patriarcal « millénaire », comme le précise la narratrice, l'option d'épouser encore d'autres femmes, leur est ouverte.

Néanmoins, le choix que font les hommes n'est pas sans chagrin. Modou Fall s'essouffle à trouver les moyens de ne pas mériter les surnoms méchants que les jeunes lui collent : « Vieil homme ! Ventru ! Le Vieux !... » En vain, puisque son corps se refuse à se rajeunir. Binetou en profite pour lui arracher concessions sur concessions. Mawdo Bâ ne s'accommode pas aux insuffisances de la petite Nabou par rapport à Aïssatou. Il cherche dans une épouse une ménagère. La petite Nabou n'est pas aussi bonne ménagère qu'Aïssatou. Par surcroit, elle ne sait pas être indifférente vis-à-vis de la misère environnante : « Ma maison est devenue une banlieue de Diakhao. Impossible de m'y reposer. Tout y est sale. La petite Nabou donne mes denrées et mes vêtements aux visiteurs » (p. 51). Ramatoulaye rappelle ces comparaisons comme pour plaire à son amie. Ce faisant, elle donne du relief au rôle reproductif que le patriarcat impose à la femme et le cautionne. Elle joue aussi la femme contre la femme.

Le contre-pied de la perspective féministe
Femme contre femme: *image piètre de la femme*

En effet, la narration projette systématiquement les femmes contre les femmes, même au sein de sa posture féministe initiale, la fragilisant. Pendant la période de veuvage, Ramatoulaye se déclare énervée par la présence à ses côtés de Binetou, sa co-épouse. Aïssatou lui achète une voiture qu'elle se trouve obligée d'apprendre à conduire. Pendant des moments de frustration lors de l'apprentissage elle se rappelle que même Binetou sait conduire. Lors du partage des biens après le veuvage, Binetou et sa mère, n'ayant pas été suffisamment prévoyantes, se retrouvent pratiquement démunies. Ramatoulaye et sa fille Daba en jubilent. Daba surtout est sans pitié devant les sanglots de 'Dame Belle-mère', comme Ramatoulaye la désigne railleusement: « Souviens-toi. Ma mère a tellement souffert. Comment une femme peut-elle saper le bonheur d'une autre femme ? Tu ne mérites aucune pitié. Déménage » (p. 103). La narration ignore que les épouses de Modou Fall sont toutes victimes d'une situation qui subordonne les deux femmes à leur homme.

La narratrice en veut encore à d'autres femmes : les belles-sœurs et les belles-mères. Elles dérivent de l'autorité du pouvoir que le patriarcat octroie à leur frère, à leur fils et en usent pour faire la loi dans le foyer qui autrement n'est pas le leur. C'est ce qui permet à tante Nabou d'imposer une co-épouse à Aïssatou. La narratrice monte Aïssatou, mais aussi le lecteur, contre la petite Nabou. Cette dernière a fini par avoir le dessus, mais elle ne vaut pas

Aïssatou, « si belle, si douce » qui sait éponger le front de son mari ; qui lui voue une tendresse profonde, parce que désintéressée ; qui sait trouver les mots justes pour le délasser » (p. 51). Les qualités célébrées dans Aïssatou sont celles relevant du rôle reproductif mis au service de l'homme, subordonnant la femme à l'homme, renforçant les normes patriarcales. Mariama Bâ oppose les deux femmes, l'une contre l'autre, en faisant triompher l'homme. On se rappelle qu'Ama Ata Aidoo fait tout à fait le contraire dans *Changes*. À aucun moment Esi Sekyi et Fusena n'ont à se heurter en tant que rivales. Il y a un heurt créé par le *terzo incomodo,* mais il oppose Ali, l'amant d'Esi à Oko son ex-mari, dans la maison d'Esi. Esi quitte la maison avec sa fille laissant les deux hommes à se régler leurs comptes. Ce sont alors les hommes non pas les femmes qui souffrent du dépit que la rivalité dégage.

Certaines des sœurs et la mère de Modou Fall, ne sont pas aussi fortunées que leur frère, que le fils. Il y va de l'inégalité d'accès aux ressources biaisée contre la femme dans le monde du roman, mais aussi dans la réalité sociale marquée par des rapports de propriété qui créent des misères. Les sœurs de Modou Fall envient à Ramatoulaye sa vie d'aisance de petite bourgeoise qu'elle doit à son mariage avec leur frère : « Avec tes deux bonnes ! » Ramatoulaye rappelle que ses belles-sœurs n'étant que ménagères, ignorent le lot de la femme professionnelle qu'elle est qui a à traîner aussi le travail domestique : « des charges doubles aussi écrasantes les unes que les autres ». Ramatoulaye fait ce rappel avec une pointe de mépris à l'encontre de ses belles-sœurs : « Allez leur expliquer (…) », puisqu'elles sont incapables de comprendre. Ramatoulaye est institutrice. Elle exerce un métier moins rémunéré que celui de son mari, qui, lui, est juriste. Cette disparité au niveau de la rémunération, crée des inégalités que l'homme peut bien exploiter, que Modou Fall exploite. D'ailleurs, le travail d'institutrice, ayant à fournir des soins aux jeunes, s'apparente, au rôle genre reproductif de la femme. Les belles-sœurs, à la faveur de l'autorité masculine de leur frère, quittent leur maison, accompagnées de leurs enfants, pour encombrer le foyer que Ramatoulaye constitue avec son mari. Mais être chez leur frère c'est un peu être chez elles. Elles se font nourrir et choyer. Leurs enfants se livrent à un comportement désordonné sans se faire corriger. Elles traînent de surcroît des habitudes insalubres, crachant au salon et glissant adroitement leurs crachats sous le tapis.

La mère de Modou Fall devient une habituée de la maison de son fils. Elle s'en enorgueillit surtout en épatant les amies, tout aussi de la classe populaire démunie, qu'elle traîne dans la maison. Elle jouit ainsi comme par procuration, de l'arrivisme de son fils. Le tout énerve Ramatoulaye. Il se produit ici encore une autre manière d'opposer les femmes entre elles.

Ramatoulaye trahit un ressentiment qu'elle éprouve à partager, avec les parents pauvres, les avantages sociaux auxquels son statut de petite bourgeoise lui donne droit.

La narration s'en prend ainsi aux individus, aux maris, aux hommes, aux belles-mères, aux belles-sœurs, non pas aux structures patriarcales, non pas à l'économie politique néo-coloniale qui sont à la source des agissements (présentés comme abusifs) des uns et des autres.

L'emprise du patriarcat

Ramatoulaye, frappée de plein fouet par le fait de se trouver devant une co-épouse que son mari lui impose, de surcroît la camarade de classe de leur fille aînée, Daba, délibère l'option de rompre son mariage. En effet, Daba, sa fille, l'y pousse vivement. L'un des facteurs qui retiennent Ramatoulaye est son besoin d'homme, contrairement à la disposition d'esprit de son amie Aïssatou. Ramatoulaye serre ce besoin : « Cette nuit je suis agitée, ne t'en déplaise. La saveur de la vie, c'est l'amour ; le sel de la vie, c'est l'amour encore » (p. 94). Les rapports hétérosexuels, donc avec un homme, se substituent à « l'amour » dans la citation. Ramatoulaye ne peut pas se séparer du besoin du mâle dans précisément les conditions qu'impose le patriarcat. La femme, deuxième sexe, doit être physiquement attrayante pour « conquérir » l'homme. La possibilité de n'attirer aucun homme ne lui semble réelle, se croyant usée par vingt-cinq ans de mariage et douze maternités. Elle ne pense pas avoir gardé cette « jeunesse florissante » qui chez d'autres femmes offre des chances de « conquérir un homme valable qui alliait situation et prestance et que l'on jugeait mieux que le partant » (60). Elle ne lâche pas le mariage, conçu selon les normes patriarcales, subordonnant la femme à l'homme. Pour favoriser cette subordination, il faut que l'homme soit valable, qu'il allie « situation et prestance ». Triomphe du patriarcat qui se repère *chez* Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2014, p. 91) qui semble s'associer à la pensée livrée par le nom « Ogbenyealu » que les Igbos, selon elle, donnent communément aux filles : « ne pas se marier à un homme pauvre » (notre traduction). Le mari qu'il faut est l'homme fournisseur, l'homme gagne-pain, l'homme providentiel : le premier sexe. C'est cautionner les rapports de force biaisés contre la femme. Mariama Bâ, tout comme Adichie, avalise les normes patriarcales qui jouent contre la femme. Les prises de position se voulant féministe qui animent Ramatoulaye aux premiers moments de la narration s'écroulent.

Offensif de la séduction

Débarrassée de ses velléités de combat contre le patriarcat, elle va découvrir vers la fin du veuvage, qu'elle aura sous-estimé la force d'attraction physique qui lui reste, malgré les vingt-cinq ans de mariage et les douze maternités. Les hommes se succèdent pour lui faire la cour : « des vieillards qui cherchaient une source de revenu facile, des jeunes gens en quête d'aventures pour meubler leur oisiveté » (p. 103). À commencer par les plus « valables » : Tamsir, le frère de Modou Fall, puis Daouda Dieng.

Daouda Dieng est bien un homme valable selon les critères émis par le patriarcat et auxquels Ramaoulaye se soumet. Il est médecin, il est député à l'Assemblée nationale. Sa voiture qu'il gare en face de la maison de Ramatoulaye est encore un indice de l'aisance où il roule. Un mari à désirer ! Le jeu de rapports de force qui s'établit entre les deux est biaisé contre Ramatoulaye, qui se distingue à côté de ses belles-sœurs mais qui se subordonne à Daouda Dieng, au mâle. Ce qui ne semble pas la gêner — du tout.

Daouda Dieng était le préféré de sa mère. Ramatoulaye, à la manière d'Anowa, héroïne éponyme de la pièce de théâtre d'Ama Ata Aidoo qui reprend le conte traditionnel *fante*, insiste sur son choix à elle qui est Modou Fall; dédaignant, comme Aïssatou, les conseils de mère. Daouda Dieng, qui entretemps a constitué sa famille à lui, s'amène devant Ramatoulaye et lui fait la cour. Ramatoulaye, débarrassée de ses prises de position féministe initiales, ne le repousse pas. Elle se plaît au jeu et ne tarde pas à saisir l'initiative, selon son propre terme, de « séduire ». Dès la première visite de Dieng pendant le veuvage, Ramatoulaye monte à la charge : « Je donnais un ton taquin à mon propos, en roulant mes yeux. Éternel féminin, même dans le deuil, tu pointes, tu veux *séduire*, tu veux intéresser ! » (p. 88) (emphase ajoutée).

Ignorant la dynamique inhérente à toute chose, Ramatoulaye gèle la femme dans un profil stéréotypé qui en fait une séductrice, 'éternel féminin', livrant une perspective que favorise le patriarcat. Elle met en veilleuse le fait qu'elle a en face d'elle le mari d'une autre femme ! Qu'elle est sur le point de causer à une autre la même misère qu'elle souffre au début de la narration. Qu'elle s'ancre dans les normes patriarcales pour livrer l'assaut de la séduction !

En tout cas, elle saisit avec délice le frémissement que Daouda Dieng déclenche en elle et aussi l'impression qu'elle fait sur lui. Elle jouit des deux pleinement : « Daouda Dieng savourait la tiédeur du songe intérieur qu'il projetait sur moi. Moi, je m'emballais, tel un cheval qu'on libère et qui se grise

d'espace. Ah, la joie d'avoir en face de soi un interlocuteur, de surcroît amoureux » (p. 90).

Daouda Dieng en vient à sa déclaration d'amour, recourant, selon les termes de Ramatoulaye, à des « mots usés qui ont servi, et qu'on sert encore » (p. 95) ; mais qui ne la laissent pas indifférente, et qui, nous nous hâtons d'ajouter, menacent le bonheur d'une autre femme. Elle ne les repousse pas ; bien au contraire, ils lui font plaisir. Ils « avaient prise sur moi » (p. 95) déclare-t-elle. Elle n'a pas honte, dit-elle, d'avouer que leur « douceur, dont j'étais sevrée depuis des années, me grisait » (p. 95). Cette douceur, elle la retrouve du côté de la polygamie. Et elle ne s'en prive pas tant qu'elle dure.

Ramatoulaye reçoit, à bras ouverts alors, les attentions amoureuses que lui prête Daouda Dieng. Il en vient finalement à une proposition de mariage. La réaction de Ramatoulaye devant cette proposition est bien frappante : « J'écarquillais les yeux, non d'étonnement — Une femme peut infailliblement prévoir une déclaration d'amour de ce genre — mais *d'ivresse* (emphase ajoutée) » (p. 95).

Elle ne lâche toujours pas l'image fixe, stéréotypée, qu'elle se fait de la femme. Qu'on la dise féministe ! Elle repousse la proposition, non pas par principe. Elle aurait bien voulu dire oui. Mais c'est que c'est seulement son esprit non pas son cœur qui apprécie cet homme ! Elle se livre à un jeu de mots similaire à celui de Mawdo Bâ qui aime Aïssatou de son cœur et la petite Nabou de sa chair. Mais elle avoue apprécier le mari qu'elle a tente de séduire. C'est eveiler dans Dauda Dieng les instincts polygamiques contre lesquels elle s'insurge dans un autre contexte.

On se rappelle *L'Homme qui m'offrait le ciel* (2007) de Calixte Beyala paraissant presque trente ans après *Une si longue lettre,* Andela tempête contre un mari hypothétique infidèle :

> Laisser mon mari manger à toutes les marmites ? Autant crever. Je lui brûlerais la queue et je jouerais au basket avec ses couilles ! Je lui concocterais tant de putasseries et de saletés que la maison de la sorcière d'Ebolowa ressemblerait à un paradis ! Je lui ferais manger avec une sauce aux piments ! Je lui rendrais l'air si irrespirable qu'il vivrait de puanteur jusqu'à ce que mort s'ensuive ! (p. 62).

Elle fait cette déclaration à un François marié, qui lui fait la cour. Cette prise de position enflammée ne l'empêche pas de sortir effectivement avec François; et d'hurler à la trahison lorsque François la lâche, et réintègre son ménage. Ramatoulaye affiche un ressentiment similaire à celle qui sous-tend les menaces qu'Andela agite devant la trahison des maris. Dit-elle: « Et je

m'interroge. Et je m'interroge. Pourquoi a-t-il introduit Binetou entre nous ? » (p. 83). Mais elle s'introduit entre Daouda Dieng et son épouse. Ainsi commence-t-elle par s'insurger contre « le droit à la trahison » des maris, contre « les instincts polygamiques » ; et finit-elle par les assumer. C'est s'incliner devant le statu quo patriarcal..

Profil plus raisonnable du mâle

Ramatoulaye détruit les bases rationnelles et morales de l'objection qu'elle fait contre la « trahison » de Modou Fall, des maris. Qui plus est, elle se trouve à disculper la trahison contre laquelle elle déclare s'insurger :

> Nos maris, Aïssatou, si malheureuse que fût l'issue de nos unions, nos maris avaient de la grandeur. Ils avaient mené le combat de leur vie, même si la réussite leur échappait ; on ne vient pas facilement à bout des pesanteurs millénaires. (p. 106).

Pire, elle trouve de la grandeur dans ces maris, dans leur posture de traître. Avis qui n'est pas partagé par sa fille Daba qui pousse sa mère à rompre le mariage : « Romps, Maman ! Chasse cet homme » (p. 60). Daba met du dédain dans son propos. Elle emploie l'expression 'cet homme' pour désigner son père et incite sa mère à le chasser. Ramatoulaye, dans la citation, se fait l'avocate du patriarcat. Elle plaide de comprendre que les maris ne se débarrassent pas de si prestement des habitudes 'millénaires' que le patriarcat leur aura inculqué. D'ailleurs, elle rejette totalement sur la femme, la mère de Mawdo Bâ, la responsabilité du choix que 'l'homme, Mawdo Bâ, fait pour épouser une deuxième femme. « Devant cette mère rigide, pétrie de morale ancienne, brûlée intérieurement par les féroces lois antiques, que pouvait Mawdo Bâ ? » (p. 48)

Dans cet effort de disculper Mawdo Bâ, l'homme, elle use pour sa mère, la femme, des qualificatifs franchement méchants : « *rigide*, *pétrie* de morale ancienne, *brûlée* (…) par les féroces lois antiques » (emphase ajoutée) Mawdo Bâ n'a fait que céder au chantage de sa mère. Surtout que « la petite Nabou était si tentante » (p. 48) ! La petite Nabou n'est tentante qu'àu regard du mâle. Le mâle est ainsi configuré, par défaut ! Autant s'en accommoder.
Ramatoulaye ressent vivement l'invasion de son foyer par ses belles-sœurs et sa belle-mère. Le père, le mâle, par contre, est d'un comportement, plus raisonnable.

Le père de Modou Fall était plus compréhensif. Il nous visitait le plus souvent sans s'asseoir. Il acceptait un verre d'eau fraîche et s'en allait après avoir renouvelé ses prières de protection pour la maison. (p. 33)

Le profil du mâle qui ressort de la narration finit par être sublime contrairement à celui de la femelle qui est dégradant.

La femme selon les normes patriarcales

La perspective projetée par la mise en récit ainsi que la fonction généralisante exercée par la narratrice donne à l'œuvre une orientation tout à fait réactionnaire, en matière de genre, mais aussi en matière de politique. La narratrice juge « affreux » le port du pantalon par les femmes africaines, parce que le pantalon est conçu pour le « relief peu excessif de l'Occidentale », non « les formes plantureuses de la négresse » (p. 112). C'est imposer un code vestimentaire à la femme. La consommation du tabac est nocive dit-elle. Mais elle l'interdit non à tout le monde, homme et femme, mais à la femme seule. La bouche de la femme doit exhaler non une odeur âcre mais celle qui embaume (p. 111), donc faite pour plaire à l'homme. C'est subordonner la femme à l'homme. C'est ainsi surtout qu'elle s'amène à cautionner, voire à renforcer l'ordre patriarcal contre lequel elle s'emporte dans un autre contexte.

Devant Daouda Dieng, Ramatoulaye joue la femme avisée en lui lançant des propos féministes qui accusent le statu quo patriarcal d'avoir exclu la femme de l'espace politique. La femme, observe-t-elle, « a hissé plus d'un homme au pouvoir politique ». [Comme nous disons au Ghana, *behind every successful man there is a woman*]. Mais vingt ans après l'indépendance du Sénégal, la société attend toujours la première femme sur la ligne de front en politique : « À quand la première femme ministre associée aux décisions qui orientent le devenir de notre pays ? ». (p. 89).

Mais elle ne tarde pas à lâcher cette perspective féministe en idéalisant l'outil clé, la domesticité, dont use le patriarcat pour subordonner la femme à l'homme, pour lui interdire le rôle productif. Elle accepte que les exercions domestiques de la femme ne soient pas monnayables. Elle recommande aux « femmes au foyer » d'accepter comme récompense, à la place des « monnaies sonnantes », « la pile du linge odorant et bien repassé, le carrelage luisant où le pied glisse, la cuisine gaie où la sauce embaume » (p. 93).

Le statu quo néo-colonial cautionné

La narration fait allusion à la balkanisation de l'Afrique. Il s'agit de la dissolution des fédérations, que les dirigeants politiques de la bourgeoisie française ont effectuée en usant de la Loi-Cadre de 1956. Ce, en prévision des indépendances africaines qui, dans les années d'après la deuxième guerre mondiale, se sont avérées une vague incontournable. La bourgeoisie régnante

des puissances coloniales avaient une peur bleue de perdre leurs colonies, perte assimilée à une possibilité réelle du démantèlement de l'emprise capitaliste que permet le colonialisme. C'est ce qui explique les nombreuses guerres coloniales de l'époque menée pour endiguer l'effondrement possible de l'impérialisme : la guerre d'Indochine, la guerre du Vietnam, la guerre d'Algérie, les guerres que la bourgeoisie portugaise a menées dans ses colonies africaines ; mais aussi les horreurs de l'impérialisme britannique au Kenya (David Anderson, 2005 ; Caroline Elkins, 2005)… La perspective limitée de Ramatoulaye regrette seulement « ce brassage fructueux des intelligences » (p. 27) que permettait la fédération de l'Afrique Occidentale Française. Elle est insensible au fait que les dirigeants politiques de la bourgeoisie française ont su coopter les nationalistes africains, Houphouët-Boigny en tête, dans leur stratégie de balkanisation et surtout de survie du colonialisme (Grimal, 1967 ; Ki-Zerbo, 1972 ; Suret-Canal, 1972).

En effet, Ramatoulaye avoue militer dans le parti au pouvoir, celui de Senghor réactionnaire, lui infusant ce qu'elle appelle du sang nouveau, œuvrant pour l'unité et s'opposant aux idéologies importées. C'est la modération. Être modéré, c'est s'engager du côté du statu quo capitaliste, néo-colonial, tout en clamant ne pas avoir d'idéologie. Son mari, Modou Fall, dirigeant syndicaliste, fait preuve, lui aussi, de modération. Il vise systématiquement, dans les négociations qu'il mène, le possible : « Pratique, Modou Fall conduisait les syndicats à la collaboration avec le gouvernement, ne demandant, pour ses troupes, que le possible » (p. 40). Il est tout aussi réactionnaire.

Ramatoulaye fait état du ressentiment qu'elle éprouve face à l'invasion de son foyer par les parents pauvres : les belles-sœurs et les belles-mères. Mais elles ne s'y présentent que pour se faire nourrir. La belle-mère de Ramatoulaye, en plus, s'enorgueillit du succès de son fils. Ce succès consiste d'avoir su échapper au sort des misérables, en intégrant la petite bourgeoisie. Elle en fait jouir à ses amies. Mawdo Bâ se plaint, lui aussi, de l'invasion de son foyer par tout le village de Diakhao facilitée par la petite Nabou. « La petite Nabou donne mes denrées et mes vêtements aux visiteurs» (p. 51). La mère de Binetou pousse sa fille dans les bras de Modou Fall parce qu'elle n'a pas les moyens de se procurer une « vraie maison » à fin de s'assurer une « fin heureuse ». Il s'agit dans chaque cas des éléments de la masse misérable (des femmes) à la recherche des besoins matériels de base auprès des parents mieux placés (des hommes). La narration colporte ici des éléments de base de l'économie politique de l'après-indépendance africaine qu'un Ahmadou Kourouma (1970) restitue dans *Les Soleils des Indépendance*s. Kourouma. Kourouma y fait grouiller la masse des misérables écrasés par un ordre socio-économique que les indépendances n'ont pas changé. Dans le fond, la

situation dépeinte trahit un accès inéquitable aux ressources. C'est dire que les ressentiments exprimés contre les parents pauvres par les Mawdo Bâ, les Ramatoulaye, les Aïssatou recèlent un monde malade des inégalités sociales, un monde malade du mode privé d'appropriation des moyens de production capitalistes.

Conclusion

La perspective féministe, très passagère, que la narration affiche est floue livrant une perception confuse du réel. C'est ainsi qu'elle se saisit de la situation initiale, le veuvage, pour dénoncer l'institution du mariage. La dénonciation cible des individus : les maris, les hommes, les belles-sœurs, les belles-mères. Elle voile, ce faisant, le patriarcat qui encadre l'institution du mariage et que la narration ne nomme pas d'ailleurs. Le combat des débuts de la narration glisse dans une caution voire dans un renforcement des normes patriarcales. Il finit alors par prendre le contre-pied de l'argument féministe. Un combat qui s'avère douteux. Une guerre qui refuse d'avoir lieu.

Dans tous les cas, la perspective féministe, même conséquente, relève de la politique d'identité. La politique d'identité se limite à lutter contre un abus social isolé. Enfin de compte ce qui domine la narration c'est une posture qui cautionne le statu quo non seulement patriarcal mais capitaliste, néo-colonial.

Les considérations genre [la politique d'identité] laissent de côté la perspective fondamentale, celle qui relève des rapports de propriété et qui donnent son identité à toute société. Le contexte dans lequel la narration insère les événements est celui de la société sénégalaise. Le Sénégal, comme le reste de l'Afrique, est une néo-colonie où sévit un régime de propriété privée sous sa coloration capitaliste. En proie à l'impérialisme global, il est marqué par des inégalités sociales criantes que les hommes de la classe privilégiée, de la petite bourgeoisie, tels les Modou Fall, les Mawdo Bâ, les Daouda Dieng exploitent à leur avantage contre la femme. Une re-configuration du mode d'appropriation des moyens de production permet d'envisager une fin aux inégalités sociales qui soutendent la subordination de la femme.

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SECOND SECTION - ENGLISH

An ecocritical reading of Victor Yankah's *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana and Sikaman*

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Abstract

The increasing environmental concerns of the 20th and 21st centuries have given rise to the term ecocriticism, a field of literary theory and criticism. In this paper, we examined two plays of Victor Yankah using some concepts from ecocriticism as an analytical framework. The paper is premised on the basis that the playwright shares a symbiotic relationship which has become a significant feature of the selected plays. Drawing from the eco-critical theory of ecocriticism and using two of his nature plays: *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana* and *Sikaman*, we intend to demonstrate Yankah's view and preoccupations about the mutual relationship between the human other and nature (the non-human other)-the natural world of environment with the view to prove the playwright's concern about the interference of human beings into the world of nature. This situation adversely results in the disruption of the symbiotic (human-nature) relationship. Yankah has presented both the epistemic and retributive forces of nature as well as raised concerns about the environment, ecological consciousness in advocating for ecological sustainability in modern African theatre and dramatic literature scholarship. Thus, the reading of Victor Yanka's selected plays adds to the relatively new and developing interest in environmental discourses on the African continent. To the extent that intrinsic features of nature are exhibited in his selected plays, we argue that Yankah provokes environmental debate and a rethinking in African playwrights concerning environmental issues to raise awareness and inspire environmental consciousness and ecological sustainability among people in Africa, and Ghana in particular.

Keywords: ecocriticism; ecodrama; environment; human other; nature.

Introduction

The increasing environmental concerns of the 20th and 21st centuries have given rise to the term ecocriticism, a field of literary theory and criticism. In this paper, we examined two plays of Victor Yankah using some concepts from ecocriticism as an analytical lens. The paper is premised on the basis that the playwright shares a symbiotic relationship which has become a significant feature of the selected plays. Drawing from the eco-critical theory of ecocriticism and using 2 of his nature plays: *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana* and *Sikaman*, we intend to demonstrate Yankah's view and preoccupations about the mutual relationship between the human other and nature (the non-human other)-the natural world of environment with the view to prove the playwright's concern about the interference of human beings into the world of nature. A situation which adversely results in the disruption of the symbiotic (human-nature) relationship.

Therefore, in this paper, we glean a wider scope to situate the current study in both theoretical and empirical contexts to demonstrate evidence of the awareness of existing literature on the subject. However, in the current state of the literature in Ghana, there is almost no study devoted to ecodrama, particularly on the Ghanaian experiences of human-nature relationship. The paper is thus an attempt to broaden the scope of ecocriticism and relate it the Ghanaian text and its context. It is relevant to the ongoing discussion on the depletion of the environment and its effect on human life. Similar to the Romantics, the paper illustrates and draws attention to environmental concerns and issues to potently reflect on the human-nature synergy to expand the frontiers of the literature on this new and developing area of ecocriticism and environmental sustainability.

The rest of the paper is structured into various segments. Firstly, we present the background and summarise the conceptual and empirical review to contextualise the study. In the second section, we introduce the methodological procedures to justify the relevance of using interpretivism to explore literary criticism through the lens of the theory of ecocriticism on a Ghanaian text – ecodrama in the light of human-nature synergy and the effects on humans. In this section, we also justify my reasons for selecting two of Victor Yankah's plays, ecodrama, for interpretation in an ecocritical context. Though we admit the limitations of this review in relying heavily on unpublished play texts which are not easily accessible, the paper, still, provides insight into contemporary drama practices and Ghanaian texts in the global south, particularly ecodrama and their criticism in a developing nation such as Ghana. In the final segment, we present the discussions from the literary analysis to inform conclusions derived.

Therefore, we sought to explore the nonhuman presence in the plays of Victor Yankah in line with Jane Bennett's theory on nonhuman agency to defend the thesis that Victor Yankah (like a few other African playwrights) represents nature in ways that call for a broader theorisation on nonhuman agency in African theatre and literature in general and Ghanaian plays in particular. I also examined the implications of anthropocentrism for the Ghanaian society, of this abdication of ecocriticism in contemporary Ghanaian theatre plays. This, we did through exploitation of positive cultural forms like ecodrama to underscore the epistemic and retributive voices or manifestations of nature. To achieve this, the paper sought answers to the following questions:

a) How is the nonhuman agency (nature) scripted in Yankah's plays?
b) In what ways and to what effect is ecosecurity seeping into contemporary Ghanaian theatre and literary culture?

Art and the natural environment symbiosis

The discourse on art and the natural environment relationship cannot be overemphasised in research and scholarship since the concepts are symbiotic in nature; hence, the need to recognise the realistic interface between them, particularly the impact of one over the other.

As a socio-cultural product, art has a connection with the natural environment. Suffice it to say that the burgeoning interest of researchers in the domain of ecocriticism offers provision to the emerging perspectives on such assessments of the human and the non-human "others" on each other.

Slymaker (2001), in his observation about African literary practice and Ecocriticism, notes that: "The African echo of global green approaches to literature and literary criticism has been faint… [even though there] is no lack of writing in Africa that might fall under the rubric of nature writing" (p.132). He further observes that literary discourse on "the rubrics of nature writing" in the African context is still "faint", especially in relation to critical paradigms on nonhuman representation. It goes without saying that African ecocriticism is mainly Anthropocentric. Caminero-Santangelo (2014) in his *Different Shades of Green*, notes that: "In terms of environmental representation, [African] writers are concerned with lived environments, the social implications of environmental change… [African] writers do not focus on nature in a supposedly pure state and its preservation" (p. 17). Consequently, African ecocriticism is preoccupied with "the impact of the environment on the human rather than the other way around" (Hugan & Tiffin, 2010, p.16). This anthropocentric critical focus raises questions regarding the impact of human

activities on the African environment which is evident in the works of some African (Ghanaian) playwrights such as Victor Yankah. Ecocriticism is thus "concerned with the relationship between literature and environment or how the relationships between humans and their physical world are reflected in literature" (Ahmed & Hashim, 2014, p. 1). This is to provoke the growing awareness of environmental issues (Habeeb & Habeeb, 2012).

As, perhaps, one of the most recent works on African ecocriticism, Iheka (2017) equally notes the anthropocentrism in African ecocriticism. He observes that, "the exciting work being done in African environmental scholarship … brilliantly articulates the impacts of ecological degradation on humans in the narratives they examine. However, their socio-environmental perspective does not take sufficient cognizance of the nonhumans in these environments…" (p. 2).

Globally, the earth's natural environments have been converted, perhaps, mainly because of ignorance of what is being lost and a desire for short-term financial gain. Regardless of the plethora of international fora held to address concerns of, say, sustainable development goals, no clear solutions appear forthcoming to resolve the global dilemma on the security of the planet's natural ecosystems. Little wonder contemporary Ghana is currently under the affliction of environmental insecurity largely due to water related economic activities for survival and development (Owusu-Boateng & Kumi-Aboagye, 2013). This has culminated in ecosystem (water related and climate change) hazards; water insecurity (pollution), perennial flooding, and poor sanitation, among others (Boadi & Kuitunen, 2002; Danquah, 2010; Gyau-Boakye & Biney, 2002; Owusu-Boateng & Kumi-Aboagye, 2013). Illegal small scale mining (*galamsey*), in particular, has resulted in heavy pollution of rivers and ponds which have been the main sources of drinking water for inhabitants over the years. Although the dangers of *galamsey*, particularly, have been explicitly communicated in extant literature (Owusu-Boateng & Kumi-Aboagye, 2013) and strict policies have been put in place by the government to prosecute offenders in Ghana, the practice still persists (Owusu-Boateng & Kumi-Aboagye, 2013). As noted earlier, Hugan and Tiffin (2010) reveal the largely anthropocentric focus of African ecocriticism, veering attention from the impact of human activities on the environment. However, Glotfelty (1996) observes that since the current environmental problems are largely of human interference - our own making and thus a by-product of culture, there is the need to combat emerging cultural problems – ecological insecurity with positive culture. Since nature can be conceptualised as a narrative construct, it can equally be constructed through scientific methods and indigenous (cultural) forms like the performing arts in general, and theatre (plays), in particular.

Ecocriticism, 'Ecodrama' and Ghanaian literature

Ecocriticism as a literary theory is relatively new and a developing area of research. It has been developing rapidly since the 1990s, focusing mainly on the study of the relationship between humans and the natural world (Ahmed & Hashim, 2014). It has evolved out of many traditional approaches to literature and it is interdisciplinary in nature. The plays in question are thus viewed in terms of place or the environment. The concept of ecocriticism as used in this study have been adapted from other fields such as ecology and eco-philosophy, which are directly linked to literature under the umbrella term of ecocriticism. These concepts are ecosystem, interrelationship and ecological consciousness (Ahmed & Hashim, 2014). Interrelationship thus is among the most basic of ecocriticism tenets as ecocriticism takes as its subject the interrelationship between humans and nature.

The terminology 'ecodrama' as used by Victor Yankah to describe some of his plays could be explained as relating to dramatic literature, particularly play texts with ecocritical intent. In other words, ecodrama describes ecological or environmental play texts to illustrate literary and artistic concerns for environmental or ecological issues and sustainability. In the context of literary theatre, 'ecodrama' may be synonymously and or interchangeably used with 'ecotheatre' to reflect dramatic literature (play texts) primarily concerned with environmental issues and themes.

Yet, ironically, a survey of the current ubiquitous stage plays in Ghana reveals the ecocritical deficit, paucity of plays on ecological/environmental themes. Concerns of most theatre productions are domestic dramas, social themes, and spiritualism. A look at Ghanaian classical theatre tradition reveals quasi-ecological/environmental Ghanaian theatre forms in the likes of two of Victor Yankah's unpublished plays: *The Pretty Trees of* Gakwana and *Sikaman*, albeit on experimental ecodrama/theatre basis.

It would appear that the superabundant artistic energy that characterises Ghanaian theatre practice and many a theatre performance in Ghana do not find equal expression in ecocriticism. Playwrights appear to be more interested in social, domestic and romantic dramas, and the few plays that appear to announce any ecocritical intent quickly slip into the social mode. So, the paper problematises the anthropocentric approach to African (Ghanaian) ecocriticism and proceeds from a couple of premises. One, much remains to be said about the "environmental representation" of playwrights like Victor Yankah whose deployment of the nonhuman biota manifests biocentric preoccupation. Also, in some texts that carry human concerns through nature metaphors and allegories, we can find a subtext of biocentric concerns that warrants ecocritical enquiry that privileges the nonhuman. The

intent is to argue for the need of an alternative paradigm – 'ecodrama', to chart a unified solution to articulate the nonhuman agency and how it could be represented in creative performances and dramatic literature to support the course of an enabling environment towards the repositioning of the value of our natural environment for the benefit of mankind.

Yankah could basically be described as a theatre scholar and playwright who finds expression in African treasures of Ghanaian culture to write plays which reflect his concerns about the African world and this is proven in the characters and themes of his plays. His appreciation of nature from an aesthetic and ecological perspectives is illustrative of his emotional connection with the African landscape. Two of his experimental unpublished plays: *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana* and *Sikaman* appear eco-critically inclined and so have been sampled for analysis in this article. In the selected corpus, Yankah draws attention to nature and the natural environment and also emphasizes the mutual bond shared by the human and non-human "others", a key element in the discourse of ecocriticism.

Methodology

Drawing on the qualitative method of inquiry, and theories of ecocriticism, the paper situates in literary paradigm, assuming the dimension of literary criticism on the dramatic literature of African (Ghanaian) theatre. Particularly, two of Victor Yankah's plays are purposively sampled for analysis due to their ecocritical intent. Qualitative content and literary analytical methods are subsequently applied to the selected play texts in the analysis and interpretation for the discussion of the primary texts to inform the conclusions and recommendations derived.

Analysis and Discussion of *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana* and *Sikaman*

In this section, the selected plays *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana* (2017) and *Sikaman* (n.d.) are analysed and discussed based on the principles of literary criticism; play analysis and interpretation guidelines framed by the concepts and theory of ecocriticism. Topical subheadings relating to emerging themes are used to guide the discussion and summary of the plays are also provided. As indicated earlier, the discussion will be guided by following questions:

a) How is the nonhuman agency (nature) scripted in Yankah's plays?
b) In what ways and to what effect is ecosecurity seeping into contemporary Ghanaian theatre and literary culture?

Summary of *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana*

The Pretty Trees of Gakwana is an ecodrama since it basically focuses on environmental issues. The play is structured into 2 movements (acts), with movement 1 sub-divided into 4 steps (scenes), and movement 2 sub-divided into 5 steps (scenes). The plot of movement 1 revolves around Naa Atchoi, the first lady of Gakwana, who goes on a trip with her personal assistant, Esi. In making a stopover, Atchoi inspects the environment along the way and suddenly comes to the realization that the one-time beautiful natural environment and its benefits of eco-friendliness have been lost. As she laments the degradation of the natural green vegetation, mostly due to modern activities of humans in terms of illicit mining, the rest of the actions in Movement 1 raise the following questions: Is the situation out of control? Are we losing the battle, and are politicians committed to the call to duty to confront the situation head on? Thus, the incumbent and opposition political figures are called to debate the way forward, led by a moderator and in the course of an intermission, the plot of the story transitions to pave way for movement 2 which introduces anansesem and or anansegoro, led by the character of Ananse. On one of his usual hunting expeditions, Ananse accidentally steps on two beautiful trees which miraculously later transforms into two pretty ladies, Voice 1, Voice 2, Tree 1 and Tree 2, and subsequently, Mamayi and Mamadze, representative of the natural environment (trees). Before being transformed and personified as human figures and wives of Ananse, Tree 1 and Tree 2 blame mankind for the woes of the natural environment and so negotiate with Ananse to treat them with care and affection, a condition upon which they accept to become Ananse's pretty wives. However, Okyeame, Nana's linguist and spokesperson, out of envy and jealously, lures Mamayi and Mamadze to become Nana's wives. This awkward situation forces Ananse to challenge Nana for his pretty 2 wives in an open competition at the palace. This leads to a climatic effect which ends on a note of suspense, where 3 alternative endings are offered by Ananse for audiences to choose from in determining the way forward towards ecological sustainability. The play advocates for environmental sustainability by calling for a rethinking, especially behavioural and attitudinal change towards the treatment of our natural environment.

Man (human society) and the environment in *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana*

This play portrays environmental issues ranging from causes of environmental degradation to advocacy for ecological or environmental sustainability.

Evidently, Movement 2, Step 1 portrays nature (trees) personified by two pretty women: Mamadze and Mamayi who happen to be 2 wives of Ananse, the hunter who luckily finds them in the forest during a hunting expedition. The introduction of Voice 1 and Voice 2 (p. 15) (initially trees) representative of nature, the non-human other (agency), who are later gets personified as women characters to engage in affectionate conversations with the lonely and curious hunter, Ananse, the human other (agency) suggests the playwright's attempt to blame woes of nature (the trees), the non-human other on the activities of the human other (mankind). The following conversation extracts between Ananse and Voice 1 and Voice 2 and subsequently Tree 1 and Tree 2 portrays the inflictions of the Anthropocene (the human agency) on the non-human agency (the natural environment):

> **Voice 1**: You spoke to us and made a wish.
> **Voice 2**: Your wish can come true.
> **Ananse**: Really? You can become women?
> **Voice 2**: On one condition only. One condition.
> **Ananse**: Any condition. I'm ready to grant it even before you say it.
> **Voice 2**: Mankind is so destructive and so uncaring. You depend on us for your survival, yet you abuse us and do us harm.
> **Ananse**: Never! I have never done you any harm.
> **Voice 1**: We know that. We know all about you. After all, you come here every day. That's why we are giving you this opportunity to get us into your world.
> **Ananse**: Our world?
> **Voice 1**: Yes, your world. The world of man. We are ready to become your wives on condition that you don't abuse us.
> **Ananse**: Not me. I have never been married before, but I do respect women a lot. I swear by my father's coffin that I will never abuse you if you become my wives.
> **Voice 2**: That you will never call us mere trees? Do you swear?
> **Tree 1**: Now you must give us names.
> **Ananse**: Must I? Okay. You are from trees, and trees give us life. So, I shall call you my mothers. Mama. You are the dark skinned mother, so you are Mamayi. And you are light skinned, so you are Mamadze. (p.16)

Clearly, Ananse's statement above, that "…trees give us life…" (p. 16) signifies Yankah's admission of how guilty the human agency is with regard to

the depletion of the natural environment. Hence the deliberate plea and advocacy for paradigm shift, so humans can embrace acts of ecological sustainability by treating the natural environment with affection as though they are humans in the form of the 2 pretty women (wives) Ananse finds in the forest. In this respect, Voice1, Voice 2, Tree 1 and Tree 2 represent voices of advocacy for environmental sustainability, specifically as they put the blame at the door steps of human. In Movement 2, Step 2, Mamedze and Mamayi (symbolic of the natural environment) unequivocally blames humans (man) for the woes of nature (the earth and natural environment). The conversation extract between Okyeame and Mamayi and Mamadze gives credence to this:

> **Okyeame**: ….Where do you come from?
> **Mamadze**: We come from nature and everywhere.
> **Mamayi**: We sprung from the soil.
> **Mamadze**: We are children of nature.
> **Okyeame**: Enough! You aren't making sense to me…
> **Mamayi**: We belong with this land, that land and every land.
> **Okyeame**: You are still not making sense. This is our land and I know everyone in it.
> **Mamayi**: your land? We know only one land: the Earth, our land.
> **Mamayi**: Human wisdom partitioned it.
> **Mamadze**: And you fight over it.
> **Mamayi**: And you murder each other for it.
> **Mamadze**: And you destroy it and destroy nature. (p. 18)

From the above extract, it stands to reason that ecocriticism unifies humanity and nature (Kandemiri, 2018). Hence, Yankah's attempt to portray the remarkable relationship between human beings and nature as presented in his plays: *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana* and *Sikaman*. The paper observes that by reading *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana* (2017) as a modern and or contemporary ecodrama, there is ample evidence in terms of the play's accounts at providing a realistic reflection of operations and activities of humans, which deplete the natural environment and by extension adversely affect humans in turn.

The use of the dramatic effect of suspense on a climatic note at the latter stage in Movement 2, Step 5 to offer 3 alternatives by Ananse for audiences to choose from in determining the way forward (solution/remedy) at the end of the play, reveals the playwright's conscious effort to heighten and sustain attention and interest of readers and audiences in order to have a catalytic effect which is necessary to arouse conscientisation and probably trigger processes of behavioural and attitudinal (social) change through

critically thinking and dispassionate reflections. This feature of providing alternative endings to plays is similar to some of the dramatic techniques usually used in the activities of applied theatre, particularly in theatre for development (TfD) communication processes. This is one way Yankah aims to enhance audience participation to provoke open debate among readers and audiences to chart a unified solution together on the emerging environmental issues, particularly environmental degradation and or depletion of the natural environment by people in their efforts to eke out a living. Thus, audiences at a live performance of the play would be challenged to proffer practical and or pragmatic solutions for the way forward as the verdict is theirs to determine.

Also, characters like Atchoi, Dzifa and Yawa represent voices of environmental advocacy. Yankah's way of deliberately crafting feminine characters for purposes of environmental advocacy in the play suggests that the author prefers females to take the lead in the campaign for environmental sustainability in that females tend to be more emotive and vulnerable, requesting affection, love, and sympathy from their male counterparts as to feel loved and secured. This is consistent with the intentions of Voices 1, Voices 1, Tree 1, and Tree 2. Little wonder Voice 1 and Voice 2 demand from Ananse never to abuse them. Like Tree 1 and Tree 2 in the case of Ananse in the play, Yankah is entreating the human agency to have the needed attiditional and behavioural change towards the natural environment by desisting from abusing it. Ananse's plea to Nana in Step 5 of Movement 2: "Nana, with all respect, they are so delicate and deserve respect and care" (p. 22), suggests a practical and valuable alternative for the way forward in terms of human-nature relationship. This is a strong statement to all humans to treat the natural environment like women, delicately with affection, care and respect. In this sense, it is suggested that feminine characters take the lead as they are more likely to draw attention to and affection for nature.

Summary of *Sikaman*

Sikaman is structured into 3 acts; act 1 with 4 scenes, act 2 with 5 scenes, and act 3 also with 5 scenes. The play recounts the environmental predicament of a traditional Ghanaian society that is only just learning non-traditional values. Sikaman, a traditional village, once blessed with the wealth of natural resources of gold, suddenly suffers from persistent drought and famine resulting in hunger and starvation. The play opens with a prologue from the Narrator, who laments the unbearable plight of famine, drought, hunger and starvation in the land of Sikaman. Stricken with severe drought, famine, hunger and starvation, Arobote, King of Sikaman, must seek remedies to the sudden pathetic predicament of his kingdom and people. Amidst their frustrations, Kubi, son

of Goka, a dignified elder of Sikaman, equally laments the hopeless predicament of his village but lays the blame at the door steps of King Arobote for selling the land to "the strange man to bring his machines to dig into the baked earth for gold". To deepen the dramatic conflict, the play pitches the younger generation and voices of change, represented by the bravery, courage and innovation of Kubi, against the older unscrupulous generation, symbolict of King Arobote. Determined to find the cause, or the solutions to their predicament, Kubi, gets support from two of his loyal friends, Ali and Anane as they journey to farther lands in the forest in search for solutions to the never ending harmattan, from the Great Shrine of Okuntungbaga. Eventually, the solving of the riddle of the seven palm fruits offers practical and innovative solutions for Kubi to lead in mobilizing the people to dig a canal to link river *Memor* to provide soothing water.

Man (human society) and the environment in *Sikaman*

This section also reflects on the non-human other agency (nature) in Yankah's *Sikaman*. The hero character, Kubi, is representative of voices of change and or symbolic of the progressive, proactive, pragmatic, and innovative younger generation, with real determination and commitment toward the common/shared/greater good. The play also explores post-colonialsm, with focus on humanity pertaining to issues of power, religion, and culture in the traditional community of Sikaman, particularly drawing attention to environmental issues of degradation or depletion of the natural environment for modern industrialized purposes like mining and the aftermath effects of global warming resulting in climate change, drought, famine, hunger and starvation in Sikaman, representative of modern communities suffering from similar environmental crisis, partly due to colonialism and modernity and their associated foreign values and the effects on everyday or ordinary people in most African settings.

In *Sikaman*, Yankah laments the adverse effects of global warming and climate change on the landscape of his once treasured heritage. In act 1, scene 1, the Narrator, in a prologue, relates the following:

> There was a time people added sand to their flour to
> Give weight to the brown kokonte.
> The staple food of our ancestors;
> That was in the days of Ananse, you who plough your farms with
> Roaring hoes that carry the farmer. Who would believe
> That in spite of these monstrous machines we would

> Cry and die of hunger. Oh! Sikaman, land of gold, land of our fathers!
> Our greatest heritage! What has become of you?
> What is the cause of – that the earth roasts the cassava in its bowels?
> What is the cause – that the baked earth dents the digging hoes
> That bounce back to hit the bony foreheads. (pp. 2-3)

In the above lines, images illustrative of drought and famine, dry land, hunger, and starvation are portrayed to reflect the plight of the society which is plagued by eco-insecurity, resulting in "the snore of no satisfaction" (p. 3) as "he'll sell the land to the strange man to bring his machines to dig into the baked hearth for gold." (p. 4). Clearly, the narrator laments over the effects of global warming and the effects of drought, famine, hunger and starvation since there is shortage of food supplies due the persistence of the dry vegetation caused by the sophisticated machinery used in these modern times of illicit mining which adversely affect the natural environment in the longer period.

The images created in the Narrator's statement, "the earth roasts the cassava in its bowels" (p. 3), is illustrative of the severe effects of global warming due to human activities which result in global warming and climate changes and conditions. The following extract of conversations shed light on these:

> **Kubi**: Yes, mother, the land is dead.
> **Ayele**: What makes you say so?
> **Kubi**: (*shouting*) Can't you see it mother, the land is dead! Dead! Dead! (p. 3)

So Kubi's frustrations and lamentations as expressed in the above extract attest to the issues of land degradation by some unscrupulous inhabitants of Sikaman leading to environmental insecurity and its associated negative effects in the form of drought, famine, hunger and starvation of the people. The land being described as "dead" simply suggests that the natural green vegetation cover and its benefits for farming and cropping have been depleted and lost, denying the people of Sikaman the benefits of environmental friendliness and fertile lands for crops to yield as desired to provide food supplies in abundance for the consumption and sustenance of human lives. Instead, "deaths, losses, weeping" (p. 4), and "…the trees – bare…" (p. 4) have become the predicament of the people of Sikaman as they continue to bear the brunt of the outcomes of ecological insecurity which are cultural products of human activities on the natural environment. In the

process, perhaps, readers and audiences could discern the relevance of Yankah's life in northern Ghana in his familiarity with scarcity in the environment, particularly depicting life in the Sahel in the following lines:

> Men, turned skeletons, living skeletons with sunken eyes,
> With ribcages bare – cages that can hardly contain
> The turbulence within; these are the men of Sikaman…

Unlike in the past, today, we are not oblivious of the causes of global warming. Unequivocally, the causes are known and attributable to human activities that negatively affect our natural environment. The digging of carnal from the river *Memor* which flows close to Sikaman to support the making of farms along the river, and also "bring the river to our farms" (p. 13) as suggested by Ali and Kubi, respectively suggest the clear case of human dependence on the natural environment for survival and sustenance. Hence, it is of the essence for humans to have a healthy relationship with nature. Little wonder that Kubi's words in the following extract provides the way forward for the people of Sikaman:

> Goka: And what solution did you have?
> Kubi: …We realised we had crossed seven rivers, and that water is an important source of life. Since it is the drought that has caused the famine, irrigating our land with the river *Memor* would solve our problems. (p. 19)

In the above, Kubi's dialogue with the father points to one of the pragmatic benefits humans gain from the natural environment (the non-human agency) - the river, the source of water which is an important source of life.

Thus far, the review has shed light on Yankah's view of nature. Reading Yankah's *The Pretty Trees of Gakwana* and *Sikaman* reveals a repeated reference to the world of nature in which the various aspects of nature are fully connected to the human world. The selected plays of this article are fine illustrations in which one can trace the kind of relationship the playwright has developed between the world of human beings and the world of nature. References to the various phenomena of nature abound in his plays such as forest, trees, fruits flowers, and cassava. By such words, insightful aspects of human connection with their environment is established.

The non-human other (nature) has seen visibility in literary circles in recent times. This has been a conscious attempt and strategy to sensitise thoughts and thoughts of playwrights and dramatists. As Shende (2012, p. 22) notes, the epistemic, creative, retributive, destructive, healing and smoothing

dimensions of nature are explicitly brought out by different playwrights to highlight different aspects of their views of the world and its people (Ahmed & Hashim, 2014). Increasingly, literary works devoted to global environmental concerns and issues have found expression in ecocritical contexts. This appears to be reflective of playwright's strategies and techniques to express their thoughts and feelings to sensitise humans about nature.

Furthermore, Yankah's plays provide suitable examples through which we can imbue environmental awareness and inspire ecological consciousness among Ghanaian people. The playwright has succeeded in highlighting the visible and invisible relationship between human world and the world natural environment. Indeed, he has a direct appeal to the core of the field of ecocriticism (Ahmed & Hashim, 2014).

Yankah has presented both the epistemic and retributive forces of nature as well as raising concerns about the environment, ecological consciousness in advocating for ecological sustainability in modern African theatre and dramatic literature scholarship. Thus, the reading of Victor Yanka's selected plays adds to the relatively new and developing interest in environmental discourses on the African continent. To the extent that intrinsic features of nature are exhibited in his selected plays, I argue that Yankah provokes environmental debate and a rethinking in African playwrights concerning environmental issues to raise awareness and inspire environmental consciousness and ecological sustainability in Ghana and Africa.

Conclusion

`In this article, I have attempted to analyse the ecocritical insights in the plays of Victor Yankah, by specifically engaging some selected plays rooted in nature and the natural environment of Ghana. Since the paper situates in literary paradigm, it is refreshing to note that the selected play texts reflect the literary ecocritical language of the author, Victor Yankah. Yankah's ecodrama is representative of the reality concerning prevailing environmental issues and ongoing global and national discourses on the depletion of the environment and its effect on human life. Hence the language is literary to augment the ecocritical intent and this gives significance to the primary play texts selected.

Like the Romantics, Yankah's ecodrama illustrates and draws attention to the common maxim that when the last tree dies, the last man dies. Its reflections on the human-nature synergy are potent. Thus, Yankah's ecodrama is a ground breaking literary theatre (play texts) to some extent, bordering on interesting and topical issues of environmental sustainability and adds to a new and developing area and thus has the potential to become a significant contribution to the African (Ghanaian) ecocritical literature in this regard.

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Examining mothering: Race and abjection in Wilson's *Our Nig and Walker's The Color Purple*

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Abstract

The end of slavery sought to grant freedom to Blacks. However, a plethora of African-American novels portray different impressions that this perception of freedom is not as entailed as should be. African-American women writers have subtly and bluntly, portrayed how the African-American mother characters in their novels deal with segregation and abjection as freed women in the society. Employing the Race theory, this paper focuses on mothering as a unique and complex practice of motherhood that empowers the African-American woman and as a non-patriarchal experience in Walker's *The Color Purple* and Wilson's *Our Nig*. The paper concludes that Walker and Wilson's novels analysed in this paper are hinged on race and abjection through the mother characters as well as thematic issues discussed in the study. This paper also has implications for African-American studies.

Keywords: abjection; african-american; mothers; mothering; race; slaves.

Introduction

In describing race, Delgado and Stefanic (2000:8) describe identity as being ordinary and not aberrational. This means identity is an everyday activity which is difficult to address except where the concepts of equality is vividly spelled out. This definition brings to the fore the idea of the segregation between the whites and the blacks which is evident in both novels under study. In defining abjection, we employ Kristeva (1982:4) who is of the view that it is neither lack of cleanliness nor health that causes abjection but rather what disturbs identity, systems and order. To her, abjection does not respect borders, positions, rules, etc. This paper discusses the black mother characters and how they deal with racial segregation and abjection as freed people, as well as the children they

bear and how the children survive race and abjection in the society. By employing the terminology "freed people", we imply the era of freedom when slavery has been abolished and Black mothers are allowed or made to live anywhere they want. The analysis will focus on the characters Frado in *Our Nig* and Celie in *The Color Purple*. These two characters are justifiably used because the novels are set in the era when chattel slavery no longer exists, but black people go through segregation and abjection in communities. These two characters, Frado and Celie, are victims of circumstances taken by their freed mothers who are expected to know better. The victimization will affect them all their lives, both as daughters and as mothers themselves.

The Color Purple by Alice Walker focuses on two sisters, Celie and Nettie, who grow up together but are separated due to the diabolic nature of their stepfather, who wants to rape both sisters. Celie, the elder of the two, who is married off at a very tender age narrates her life in letters to God and her sister, Nettie, who has relocated to Africa, and describes all the horrors she goes through as a mother and a wife.

Wilson's *Our Nig* is about a young woman, Frado, who is abandoned by her mother at a very tender age to a white family, the Bellmonts, and the problems and abuses she faces as a result of being a mulatto. She finally leaves the place after so many years and gets married to an ex-slave and has a child.

In analysing the two literary texts, it is important to observe that the institution of motherhood and the practice of mothering have undergone various redefinitions. Some scholars are of the view that motherhood is under the influence of patriarchy, whereas, mothering is an experience which is a source of power and without patriarchal influence (Green 2004; O'Reilly 2004; Rich 2004). The African-American woman writer therefore portrays mother characters who are empowered to be independent and nurture their children as well as take various decisions concerning their welfare whether it favours the children or not. It is based on this view of the term mothering, that the mother characters in these novels will be analysed. These novels facilitate my response to the research question: In what ways racial segregation and abjection help define mothering amongst women in black communities in Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*? This analysis is an attempt to answer the research question on race and abjection in relation to mothering amongst women in the black community. The focus of this analysis, therefore, is to critically examine the mothers and their children in the novels *Our Nig* by Harriet Wilson and *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker as black women who lived in societies surrounded by racism and abjection. Based on these concepts and definitions, we analyse the two novels by Wilson and Walker based on the components of abandonment, step-fathers, religion and society.

Abandonment by mothers

The issue of racial segregation which entails restricting people to certain areas on the basis of their race is constructed and poignantly revealed through various issues. The first issue to be discussed is the idea of abandonment by mothers which is linked to poverty. The issue of poverty is closely associated with women in the two novels. Black women are always poor due to lack of education and the unconscious quest of mothering which inhibit them from seeking for more profitable ventures. In the quest to alleviate themselves from poverty, Mag Smith and Celie's mother (name not mentioned), the mothers of Frado and Celie respectively abandon them. This abandonment is to make the young girls fend for themselves. Frado's mother abandons her to a white family whilst Celie's mother dies and leaves her together with her siblings. The idea of abandonment by these two women is implicated by a literal death and an actual death. This idea of death is supported by the novel which confirms that Frado never came across her mother again even though she had the hope that one day she would be reunited with her. The idea of never meeting her mother again signifies the end to the relationship and bond they never had together. The literalness of this death is evident in the psychological state of the child. Hence, Frado, though might never have voiced her feelings and emotions towards her mother for abandoning her, psychologically, erases all memories of her mother so she can forget her, move on and progress in life. The idea of shutting her mother out of her life is captured in the following passage:

> Why the impetuous child entered the house, we cannot tell; the door closed and Mag hastily departed. Frado waited for the close of day, which was to bring back her mother. Alas! It never came. It was the last time she ever saw or heard of her mother." (p. 23).

In Celie's case, though her mother physically dies, it would be inadequate to ignore the fact that before her mother's death, she had "cussed" her (Celie). She writes, "Dear God, My mama dead. She die screaming and cussing. She scream at me. She cuss at me… she ast me bout the first one Whose it is? I say God's…Finally she ast Where it is? I say God took it" (1982:2). The screaming and "cussing" are because Celies's mother is aware of the amorous happenings between her husband and her daughter Celie but is refusing to discuss it with anybody. She is aware that her husband is taking advantage of her ill health to rape her daughter. She, therefore, vents her anger

on her daughter through the screaming and "cussing" even though she knows the fault is not from her daughter.

Interference of step-fathers

It is important to note that the interference of step-fathers in the lives of these characters is another factor that does them more harm than good. These men are in no way kind towards their step-daughters. Frado's step-father, Jim, an African, encourages her mother to abandon her at an age when most children begin to bond with their parents. It is assumed that his advice to Frado's mother concerning the abandonment is to enable them (himself and Frado's mother) have enough time for each other without any interference whatsoever from a highly exuberant child. It is quite intriguing to realise that a mother would abandon her only daughter and refuse to look back ever. This advice by the step-father initiates the entire plot of the story of Frado as well as her life. It is obvious that the bond between the two is strained even at that young age. The step-father, in my opinion, does not have any affection for her and as such is able to channel his nonchalant feelings towards the girl through her mother.

It can be argued from one perspective that Frado is hated by her own mother because she is a mulatto who does not fit wholly into any of the two recognised societies; the black or the white. She is a product of the two opposing societies and as such cannot lay claim to belong to any of them. According to Ernest (1994:428), cultural identity is maintained at the expense of an individual's moral character, hence though Mag Smith, the mother of Frado who is also a white woman repents of her prejudice, she remains an outsider and Frado becomes the outcome of the transgressions. She is, therefore, the cultural product who is defined before birth. This identity eventually finds way on the title page as *Our Nig*. Ernest opines that Frado is a victim of both an oppressive culture as well as her experiences. It is of interest to note that Mag Smith, mother of Frado, after the death of Frado's father, whom she married willingly, marries another black man. Therefore, it can be established that the idea of racism on the part of Mag Smith pertains not to the men she marries, but to the children she has. It is interesting, therefore, to note that the issue of racism does not only pertain to the society but also in some instances, from mother to child in the case of Mag Smith and Frado and also among the blacks themselves. This idea of intra-racism in the novel extends to the step-fathers as well. Their cases challenge O'Reilly's (2004:11) assertion that:

> In a racist culture that deems black children inferior, unworthy, and unlovable, maternal love of black children is an act of resistance; in loving her children the mother instills in them a loved sense of self and high esteem, enabling them to defy and subvert racist discourses that naturalise racial inferiority and commodify blacks as other and object.

The mothers of these two characters do not attempt in any way to provide sufficient love to them or instill in them these acts of self and high esteem. The racist discourses are dominant in their own households, and as such there is no need to search for them elsewhere. Even at home where there is to be love and care and show of affection, Celie and Frado are made to feel less important and a burden to their families because their mothers do not inculcate in them the love and affection needed in a household setting.

Celie's step-father treats her badly when he rapes and gets her pregnant at a very tender age of fourteen. The death of Celie's mother marks the beginning of adulthood for Celie as she takes on the role of a mother to her siblings and a 'wife' to her step-father. Her two babies both disappear mysteriously leaving her to imagine that one is killed, and the other, sold. Celies's step-father finally marries her off to 'Mr_ and describes her to Mr._, according to Celie, as:

> She ugly. He say. But she ain't no stranger to hard work. And she clean. And God done fixed her. You can do everything just like you want to and she ain't gonna make you feed it or clothe it… Fact is, he say, I got to git rid of her. She too old to be living here at home… (1982:8).

It is not surprising that Alphonso, Celie's step-father illegally inherits the house in which they live from Celie's father and indirectly evicts the dead man's children from the place. By marrying Celie off and by attempting to have sexual affair with Nettie, Celie's younger sister, Alphonso chases both children out of their rightful house. It is only years later that the truth comes to light and Celie together with her sister Nettie are able to rightfully own the house after his death.

It is significant to note, therefore, that the step-fathers of both Celie and Frado maltreat and care less for them. Considering the period of freedom, where blacks also have access to free education, it is significant to note that these girls are not put through school by their step-fathers. Instead, they are tagged with derogatory names and looked down upon by their step-fathers. Celie is continuously raped by her step-father which affects her both physically

and psychologically. The freed man, specifically the African-American man, is not exceptional with regard to rape. The issue of rape is a universal phenomenon. As such, I do not in any form connect the psyche of the African-American man raping his step-daughter to any trauma experienced during slavery. The African-American man under slavery would kill to protect his kind, especially the females. It is at this point that I would agree with Freud in what he refers to as the pleasure principle. This principle has been defined as the desire of instantaneity of satisfaction of instinctual drives and which ignores both moral and sexual boundaries. It is the ignorance of the sexual boundaries by the unconscious mind and instinct that propels the act of rape between a step-father and a step-daughter.

It can be argued that all these forms of maltreatment, be it physical or psychological, stem from the fact that their mothers helplessly look on whilst all these happenings are ongoing. The refusal of these mothers to stand up for their children might be based on the reason that there is the fear of losing these men who had agreed to marry them after the deaths of their husbands. This, therefore, raises the question whether these mothers looked on helplessly because there were not enough "quality" African-American men in the society or did they sacrifice their daughters for the phallus? Mag Smith, Frado's mother, who is white, is shunned by the white society because of her association with a black man and her pregnancy. She welcomes another man after the death of her husband Jim. It is this new husband, also a black man, who advises her to leave Frado behind and journey with him to seek greener pastures.

Similarly, Celie's father is lynched by a white mob, a situation which leaves her mother deranged and ostracized by the community because the community does not want to associate with the wife of a man who had issues with the white community. This ostracism continues until the arrival of Alphonso who marries and stays with her till her death. The marriage to Alphonso is a mark of acceptance and care by at least one person in the community. Its significance is of immense importance to Celie's mother. The fear, therefore, of being neglected by him like the rest of society makes her vulnerable to the control of her husband, resulting in her inability to protect her children. It is worth clarifying that these women embrace the new men in their lives wholeheartedly even to the detriment of their own children because of the assurance of love demonstrated by these men which caters for their emotional well-being as well as the economic and the physical assurances added to it. These vulnerable women, both illiterates and poor, relieve their roles and duties to the men they marry due to the psychological stigmatisation they endure from the society over time: being a Black mother without a husband. Therefore, the step-fathers assume hegemonic roles over the

households and play very important but negative roles in the lives of their step children. It must be noted, therefore, that children like Frado and Celie not only face abjection in the society, but right within their homes in the forms of their step-fathers who call them "black devils", "ugly" and all sorts of names which is a hallmark for identifying black people in the communities whilst their mothers helplessly look on.

Religion as source of comfort

Another important issue to discuss under the issue of racism and abjection is religion. Religion plays a very important role in the lives of both Frado and Celie and is a very substantive issue with regards to racism. Frado seeks solace in God right from the moment she learns to read and dedicates most of her time to read the Bible and attending church meetings. She expresses such love in God and this is obvious in her active involvement in church activities and the things of God. She also expresses her hatred for God at a particular point in time when she has a conversation with James, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Bellmont.

> "Who made me so?" "God", answered James
> "Did God make you?" "Yes"
> "Who made Aunt Abby?"
> "God"
> "Who made your mother?"
> "God"
> "Did the same God that made her make me?"
> "Yes."
> "Well, then, I don't like him"
> "Why not?"

"Because he made her white, and me black. Why didn't he make us both white?" (1859:60)

The conversation between Frado and James signifies the essence of religion in the politics of colour. It also buttresses the importance of Celie's fear and outburst. Frado expresses her hatred for God because of being coloured. The purpose of the hatred is not in the colour per se, but in the observations she has made with regard to Black people and religion. She is also of the view which is expressed through her attitude and thoughts that religion is for the White man and no matter how hard she attempts, she (a Black person) would in no way be associated with heaven which is for religious people. Though she reads the Bible daily and religiously, she has no confidence

in going to heaven like all those around her. Though she feels she loves God, she is so unsure of many tenets of the religion. Her thoughts on heaven reveal her inconsistency with whatever she is doing.

> Her doubt was, is there a heaven for the black? She knew there was one for James, and Aunt Abby, and all the good white people, but was there any for blacks? She had listened attentively to all the minister said, and all Aunt Abby had told her; but then it was all for white people (1859:73).

The level of abjection of the Black people concerning the religion is vividly spelled out in the mind of Frado. The Black person is relegated to the background in church and scarcely mentioned. It is therefore very easy to assume that salvation is for only the whites or all persons. If heaven is for the white, why did God hate her so much as to make her black? Her hatred for God can be justifiably argued from her standpoint. To sum up her argument, there is no essence of making a person black if only whites would be allowed in heaven. To compound her insecurity as pertaining to heaven, Mrs. Bellmont, her guardian discusses with Mr. Bellmont about Frado's consistency in going to church. She says,

> I have let Nig go out to evening meetings a few times, and if you will believe it, I found her reading the Bible today, just as though she expected to turn pious nigger, and preach to white folks. So now you see what good comes of sending her to school (1859:74).

Mrs. Bellmont voices the fear inhibiting Frado all this while. She does not expect a black person reading the Bible to become pious, not to talk about preaching salvation to the white. It has to be vice versa according to Mrs. Bellmont. Frado's consistent attendance to church services is abominable to Mrs. Bellmont who does not believe in educating the black person.

Celie, on the other hand, writes her feelings and thoughts to God at the initial part of the novel. She seeks solace in writing to God. Her strong belief in God as a confidante is expressed in her letters. All her letters begin with "Dear God" to signify how emotionally close she feels God is to her. According to Priya K (2014:52), Celie's "only confirmation of existence to herself is the letters initially written to God both in hope and hopelessness". Her trust in and self-reliance on God is portrayed in her telling God about how she feels, what she thinks and how she thinks. To her, the ability to spell the word God is an achievement and an assurance of some sort. To her

therefore, "Never mine, never mine, long as I can spell G-o-d I got somebody along" (1982: 17). This indicates the reliance on and commitment of Celie to God at the beginning of the novel. This is frequent in the novel as Celie shows so much love and dedication to God till the latter part of the novel. After learning all that there is to know about her late father and late mother, her affection for God takes another dimension. She accuses God of all the bad happenings in her life and likens God to man. She says:

> What God do for me? I ast…Yeah, I say, and he give me a lynched daddy, a crazy mama, a lowdown dog of a step pa and a sister I probably won't ever see again. Anyhow, I say, the God I been praying and writing to is a man. And act just like all the other mens I know. Trifling, forgetful and lowdown…Let 'im hear me, I say. If he ever listened to poor colored women the world would be a different place, I can tell you. (1982:192)

The essence of Celie's blasphemous statement is an attempt to criticise and draw God's attention to the fact that she has been ill-treated because of her colour. There is a dramatic dialectical change in her psychology: from loving God to hating God. This can be attributed to maturity. Celie has matured and psychologically grown as a character as compared to how she was presented at the beginning of the novel. She is, thus, presented as a dynamic character who undergoes changes as the plot of the story unfolds. Her growth is accounted for on the basis of experience whilst living with her husband and her interactions and relationships with other characters. As Faurar (2011:494) puts it:

> The interrelation between the individual and the whim of locations Celie is subjected to is meaningful in the sense that the spaces that Celie occupies have the power to bring about redemption. Therefore, the spaces she experiences, either domestic, spiritual or indulged in fantasies, although eliciting inhumane experiences, they also represent an essential means to convey the engulfing element of transformation which integrates physical healing and spiritual salvation (p. 494).

Celie is of the view that maybe God would have made her life much easier if she had been of another colour. The acceptance of being a poor coloured woman is an important identification observed by Celie. This blasphemous announcement by Celie comes out after so many years of staying faithful and writing to God almost every day. It is obviously a turning point for

a woman like Celie to make such pronouncements. The life of a coloured woman is one that requires so much yet, given less. In terms of education, power, mothering as well as working, the Black woman feels woefully inadequate as compared to her fellow woman who is a White. Celie is asking for equality between the White woman and the Black woman from God. In buttressing this point, I refer to Araujo and Schneider (2017:199) who are of the view that Mrs. Bellmont is observed to be the aggressive, abusive figure in the household though she is a woman. They agree with Leveen (2001:200) who argues that the Bellmont house follows the imperatives of slavery and challenge the notion of white female authority by showing how unjust and aggressive a white woman in a position of power can be in relation to a Black woman.

Celie's strong belief in God and His abilities give her the courage to ask such a question. She represents the black woman, in what she stands for and what she inwardly seeks. Religion at this moment therefore becomes a tool with which the Black woman seeks to curb the issue of abjection and racism. To her therefore, only God is responsible for stopping the racial canker. Thyreen (1999:51) asserts that the identity of God in the novel is reduced to a being identified with oppressive white patriarchy, hence the reason why Celie addresses her letters to God. This is because she is ashamed of speaking directly to Him. The idea of God being reduced to oppressive white patriarchy, I agree to the extent that Celie displays that thought in the latter part of the novel when she refers to God as a man and displays her disappointment in Him. The other part which talks about Celie addressing her letters to God because of being ashamed speaking directly to Him is arguable to the extent that the whole idea of writing instead of speaking is a form of discourse for a suppressed individual. Her suppressed nature which is explained through oppression, sexual exploitation and physical abuse she undergoes is confined in her letters to God. She writes to God not because of shame but because she is lonely and suppressed and therefore finds it therapeutic to write.

The concept of religion is very important to the Black community. Frado and Celie for instance take solace, consolation and peace from their association with God through writing and reading. They are of the view that God alone is responsible for the life and plight of the Black woman and as such He alone can make things better or worse for them. To sum this interpretation up, I quote Fanon (2008:55) in his book, *The Wretched of the Earth* when he says, "a belief in fatality removes all blame from the oppressor; the cause of misfortunes and of poverty is attributed to God: He is Fate. In this way the individual accepts the disintegration ordained by God, bows down before the settler and his lot, and by a kind of interior restabilisation acquires a

stony calm". In my conclusion, when God fails, He is likened to a common man or a racist. At other times, God is hated for the role He plays. The effect of racism therefore on religion is akin to that of the prejudice of whites against the blacks in the society.

The role of society in race and abjection

The role of society is another key factor in analysing the issue of race and abjection. Though both Frado and Celie find themselves in a free community, they are still victimised because of their colour. Frado has her share of the abjection right from the moment she sets foot in the Bellmont house. Her name becomes Nig, shortened form of the word Nigger. She is reminded of her colour every day of her life and made aware of not being in any way equal to the whites who have been kind enough to provide her with shelter. Leeven (2001:562) purports that the sub title of the novel "*Sketches from the Life of a free Black, in a Two-Story White-House, North. Showing that Slavery's shadows fall even there"* gives the novel a set of both relations and disjunctions. To her therefore, the identity "nig" though assigned to a free black seems quite odd. The use of *Our Nig* itself indicates a collectively owned object rather than a self-owned subject.

> She is ostracised during dinner time, and in the night, given a strange place to sleep. "Where would she sleep" asked Mary. "I don't want her near me". "In the L chamber," answered her mother. "How'll she get there?" asked Jack. "She'll be afraid to go through that dark passage, and she can't climb the ladder safely." "She'll have to go there; it's good enough for a nigger," was the reply (1859:51).

The various racist remarks by Mrs. Bellmont and her daughter Mary are clear indicators that they are not ready to accommodate or feel comfortable getting themselves involved with a black person. The incessant attributes and insults meted out to her represents the notion of the black being inferior in all aspects compared to that of a white person in a society. Farber (2014:472) likens *Our Nig* to a slave narrative and argues that the only deviation of the novel from the conventions of a slave narrative is that the level of oppression in *Our Nig* is through racism and not slavery.

With regard to education, the Bellmonts argue over whether to send Frado to school or not. This is because Mrs. Bellmont is of the view that there is no sense in attempting to educate people of colour who are incapable of elevation. Even at her tender age, Frado recognizes that she is going through

all the hardships at the Bellmont house because of her colour. She thus remarks:

> Oh! Oh! I heard, "Why was I made? Why can't I die? Oh, what have I to live for? No one cares for me only to get my work. And I feel sick; who cares for that? Work as long as I can stand, and then fall down and lay there till I can get up. No mother, father, brother or sister to care for me, and then it is, You lazy nigger, lazy nigger-all because I am black! Oh, if I could die! (1859:69).

The colour of a person, when reiterated over a period of time in a negative way, influences the person in one way or the other. This is exactly how Frado feels after incessantly being called Nig by her guardian. The name Nig may not have had any implications on her, but the abuses that follow indicate that being of such a colour, has its negative appeal. According to Kocsoy (2013:1258), the title of the novel signifies racism and not affection. The dualities in the title and descriptive subtitle are evident as the words are juxtaposed to create the dualities of Nig/ Free Black, Free Black/ White house and North/ Slavery's Shadows. These represent the contradictions of racist ideologies of the North. Though it is essential to note that not everyone in the house refers to her as Nig or abuses her, the impact made by Mrs. Bellmont and her daughter, surpasses all the love and affection shown her by Mr. Bellmont, James and Aunt Abby. This is because the acts of abuse together with the name Nig become one and complement each other.

> She ast me Who is my husband, now I know all bout hers. She laugh a little. I say Mr._. She say, Sure nuff? Like she know all about him. Just didn't know he was married. He a fine looking man, she say. Not a finer looking one in the county… We sure do thank you for your hospitality. She laugh again, look at the horses flicking flies off they rump. Horsepitality, she say. And I git it and laugh. It feel like to split my face. (1859:15).

Celie, on the other hand, meets the woman who adopted her daughter and strikes a conversation with her. Unlike most white people that the other characters meet in the novel, this woman is very friendly and hospitable. She answers Celie's questions and chats heartily with her. This might be interpreted as a switch in norm, considering how other black characters in the novel are stigmatised and face abjection. This act of kindness may also be interpreted to be the role being played by the woman's husband. He is a priest and as such

taught to embrace and love all humankind. This woman might therefore just assume her role as a reverend minister's wife who is supposed to be tolerant and accommodating. Though Celie lives in a society which accommodates both the whites and blacks, she does not encounter any racial subjugation or abjection with the white people. Whatever she encounters that is deemed as racism or abjection comes from her household and amongst her own people.

Conclusion

The issues of race and abjection in the two novels provide enough evidence that the African-American women writers found the need to narrate how women survived the crisis of race and abjection in the form of oppression. Through the characters of Frado and Celie, the mothering dispensation of their mothers is revealed through oppression which is an essential group experience for blacks. As posited by Kristeva (1982), the idea of abjection is immoral, sinister, scheming and shady. The oppression of being treated unfairly because of one's colour becomes a canker which characters like Celie and Frado go through every day of their lives, not only as children of black parents, but also as black children in the community. It is essential to note, that racism and abjection run through the African-American women's personal lives, society, religion, education, poverty, as well as discourses.

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The ministry of Moses Orimolade and the prophetic tradition of Israel: An ecclesio-historical study

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Abstract

The phenomenon of religious ecstasy has been the focus of scholarly investigations and debate for centuries. Israel was believed to have gotten her culture, values and religion from Yahweh through prophetic oracles. The Israelites were warned many time by Yahweh and the prophets to distant themselves from her neighbours and their gods. However, some scholars claimed that Israel borrowed ecstatic prophecy from her neighbours. The thrust of this paper is to investigate the origin, and the place of ecstatic prophecy in ancient Israel and its reflections in Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry in Nigeria. Historical method was used for the research. It uses historicity and ecclesiology as conceptual framework to contend that Israel's prophetic tradition started before Israel settled in Canaan where she interacted with other nations. While it cannot be disputed that Israel must have been influenced by the culture of its neighbours, there were some elements in the religion that were peculiar to Israel. The study concludes that Israelite prophetic heritage cannot be compared with the divination in ancient Near East. There exist a parallel between ecstatic prophetic ministry in ancient Israel and Moses Orimolade prophetic ministry in Nigeria. The Cherubim & Seraphim (C&S) church established by Orimolade grew through the instrumentality of ecstatic prophecy. The paper recommends that contemporary Prophets in Nigeria and beyond must strive to fulfill divine mandate received by them at all cost.

Keywords: ecstatic prophecy; hermeneutics; history; Moses Orimolade.

Introduction

Prophecy is defined as a way of knowing the truth about God, man and the world through a divinely appointed agent (Ellis,537). Israel was believed to have gotten her culture, values and religion from Yahweh through prophetic oracles. The Israelites were warned many time by Yahweh and the prophets to distant themselves from her neighbours and their gods. However, some scholars claimed that Israel's prophetic tradition was greatly influenced by that of her neighbours. It is the view of scholars that Israel interacted sufficiently with her neighbours and this brought some changes to her culture and values (Walton, 13). One of the areas of influence was the ecstatic prophetic tradition. Some scholars are of the view that Israel borrowed ecstatic prophetic tradition from her neighbours. They opined that Israelite neighbours had organized prophetic tradition before Israel settled as a nation. The thrust of the paper is to investigate the origin and place of ecstatic prophetic tradition in ancient Israel and its reflections in Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry in Nigeria.

Conceptual framework: Historicity and ecclesiology

It is expedient at this juncture to define the two basic principles that constitute the fulcrum of this paper. These are: Historicity and Ecclesiology. The word Historicity came from the word History. According to Hornsby (744) in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, History means all events that happened in the past or the study of past events. History could be oral or written. Historicity is the theory that cultural and social events and situations can be explained in history. In other words, historicity is the interpretation or explanation of happenings yesterday in the light of today's realities. One of the main purposes of History is to teach humans some lessons. History has the capacity of regulating human behaviors.

Ecclesiology is the doctrine of the Church (Malomo, 193). In other words, Ecclesiology is the study about the Church. The word Ecclesiology came from the Greek word *ekklesia*, literally means the "called out" ones and translated as "Church" "Assembly" or "Congregation" in the New Testament. The term Church appears 114 times in the New Testament (Douglas, 1). The Church is the people that have been called out. The Church is the people of God worldwide where Jews and Gentiles are united together as "one new man" (Ephesians 2: 11-18). The Church is a spiritual organism (Colossians 1: 24)

Also, the Church is a structural organization and its ministry must be achieved within some structural frame work (Acts 6: 1-7; Titus 1: 5; Hebrews 13: 7-17). According to Donnelly, the Church denotes a building in which

Christians meet for worship. In a wider sense, it denotes a variety of relationship, ranging from that of a group of Christians professing a particular creed to the whole body of the faithful, either in the practice of their faith or in their dealing with the State (696). The Church is composed of believers from all nations, colors, races and tongues (Mk. 16: 15).The primary purpose of the Church on earth is to evangelize humanity. Church requires a standard and unique ecclesiastical organizational structure (Awojobi, 2).

It should be noted that the Church is a product of History. The doctrines, practices and personalities in the Church have their history and as such history and the Church are inseparable. The Prophet is one of the officials of the Church (Ephesians 4: 11). Prophetic enterprise will succeed where the Prophet enjoys the support of his immediate audience (the Church). The Prophet is the mouth piece of Yahweh and the eye of the Church. Prophets were spokesmen for Yahweh in the arena of history. In the Old Testament, ecstatic Prophet is a type of prophetic guild. One of the earliest mention of ecstatic Prophet was when Israel was to choose a king and Prophet Samuel predicted that Saul would meet a group of Prophets on his way back home and he will be turn to another man because he will prophesy (1 Samuel 9: 19-21). Examples of ecstatic Prophets are Elijah and Elisha. The aim of this paper is to trace the origin and place of ecstatic prophetic tradition in ancient Israel and its reflections in Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry in Nigeria.

Origin of prophecy in Israelite religion

On the origin of prophecy in Israelite religion, a school of thought traces it to the time of Moses. They based their evidence on the testimony of the Torah. Scholars argued that the prophetic institution came directly from Yahweh and was not borrowed from any neighbour in the Near East. Three reasons could be given for this position (Akaabiam, 144). They are:

1. On the basis of comparison, Moses was the standard for prophetic parsonage among the Jews (Deut. 18:15-18; 34:10).
2. It was in Moses' era that we began to hear the names of other prophets in Israel (Aaron – Ex. 7:1, Miriam – Ex. 15:20, Deborah – Judges 4:4 and Moses – Deut 18:19; 34:10; Num. 11:26-29; 12:5-8).
3. The only appearance of the term "prophet" before the time of Moses in the Old Testament is in Genesis 20:7 in relation to Abraham.

It was observed that the personalities in the above texts were called prophets because of the way the people saw them. The above persons lived before Israel settled in Canaan. This is an indication that Israel's prophetic tradition could be dated back to the time of the patriarchs. Freeman (28)

maintains that the prophetic institution in Israel started with Samuel. He claims that from the death of Moses to the time of Samuel the voice of prophecy was really heard.Freeman further argues that the prophetic movement became prominent and organized in the time of Samuel. According to Folarin (15), at this time, there were schools of prophets in some cities in Israel and the students were known as 'sons of the prophets'. Therefore, Moses who was the mediator of the old covenant was the founder of the prophetic institution which was formally organized by Samuel.

To buttress the above assertion, Folarin (16) argues that it was in the time of Samuel that the prophets of Israel increased numerically (I Kgs. 13:11; 20:35; 2 Kgs 4:38; 6:1-7 etc). Folarin further maintains that Samuel had some connections with a band of prophets. It is also believed that at a time he became the leader of a prophetic guild. To Freeman (28), this groups or schools of prophets made their living by telling fortunes or performing miracles (cf I Sam. 9:7-8).

Besides, although the prophetic office was instituted in Samuel's time, the classical prophets did not appear until the Davidic kingdom. Along with the kingly and priestly office, the prophetic office forms an integral part of the community. Unlike kingship and priesthood, the prophetic office was seen as a gift given by Yahweh for a purpose. According to Folarin (15-16), the classical prophets were fearless and solitary prophets. These are the prophets whose messages are kept for us today in the books of the Old Testament that bear their names.

Scholars agreed that prophecy is the art of creating a bridge between the natural and the supernatural order. They can be regarded as the link between the natural and the supernatural. Gleaning from ancient Near Eastern sources, we noticed that prophecy then was closely related with that of today (Wilson, 133). The stereotype behaviour of intermediaries or prophets shaped their societies. For instance, in Mesopotamia some intermediaries were required to deliver oracles in specific contexts in conformity with an already existing behavioural pattern. Good examples were the central intermediaries who were also called the diviners.

Like their counterpart in Israel, the ancient Near Eastern intermediaries related with their societies in diverse ways. Some of them were part of the central social structure and as such helped to regulate and maintain the system. It must be pointed out that the central intermediaries were carefully selected, trained and supported by the whole society or at least by the rulers. However, there were peripheral figures who delivered oracles aimed at reforming the political and religious establishments. Some peripheral figures were taken seriously by the ruler whenever they did their bidding (Wilson, 134).

Besides, diviners in the ancient Near East were consulted like the prophets in Israel. They were part of the royal establishment. The monarch of the day consulted them before making political, religious, military and social decisions. They were supported by the powers that be for the services they rendered. In the light of the

aforementioned, it is safe to conclude that there are Ancient Near Eastern materials in Israelite prophetic tradition as a result of interaction Israel had with her neighbors. The affinity is so much that it has become increasingly difficult for one to be discussed in isolation from the other.

Ecstatic prophecy and prophets in ancient Israel

A Prophet is an individual that has the ability to prophesy. To prophesy means to receive a message and then communicate it to the rightful recipient without mincing words. Prophecy is a noun and it is in functional relationship with the verb "prophesy". The communicated word from Yahweh through the prophets is called prophecy (Kareem, 96). The word prophecy came from the Greek word *prophemi,* meaning to say it before or beforehand. To many people, prophecy is talking about what will happen in the future. For instance prophecy is defined as statement that something will happen in the future, especially one made by somebody with religious or magical power or by power of being able to say what will happen in the future (Hornby, 1165).

The above definitions limited prophecy to fore-telling—declaring what will happen beforehand. However, a deeper study of prophecy revealed that it is a combination of Forth-telling (exhortation, preaching, teaching, counseling and praying) and fore-telling (prediction of the future). A prophet is first and foremost concern with contemporary affairs before the future. The prophet speaks about the future as a consequence of the present situation.

A true prophet must not only have message for the present but also for the future. One of the hallmarks of a true prophet is the ability to talk about the future. For instance, Elijah spoke about the famine that will come upon Samaria because of her idolatry (1 Kgs. 17:1); Jeremiah foretold the 70years of Babylonian exile for southern kingdom (Jer. 25:11). The above prophecies were fulfilled at the appointed time. The prophet also speaks of the current issues. They pointed out evils in their days and called people to repentance. They informed the people that while the covenant brought many privileges, it also brought many responsibilities like justice, righteousness, and holiness. The prophets were social and political activists. They speak boldly against injustice in their days. They defended the right of the poor, widows and orphans. Prophets were the life wire and conscience of the nation of Israel. Prophets in ancient Israel championed morality and fight against any form of evil and oppression in their time.

The word Ecstasy describes an experience of being overcome with an emotion so powerful that self-control or reason may be suspended. The Greek compound *ekistanai*, "to set or stand out", thus to put out of (*ek*) place, derange, to be beside oneself. In this case, however, the ecstasy arises from

emotional rapture but from the spirit (ruach) of Yahweh which falls upon a person, takes control of the centre of the self, and makes him an instrument of divine will (Philips, 192). In Number 11:24-29 there is a curious story about the spirit of Moses which was transferred to the elders of Israel, and that caused them to prophesy ecstatically. The first record of ecstatic Prophet is in connection with the philistines' attempt to overrun the territory of Israel (1 Sam.10:5-13). It was a time of great crisis, when the very existence of Israel hung in the balance. Shiloh, the confederate sanctuary, had been destroyed and the people were in despair. Samuel the last Judge of the tribal confederacy, attempted to rally the people to a militant devotion to Yahweh, as Deborah had done at the battle of Megiddo. Samuel was supported by some Prophets who evidently had been carrying on their prophetic activities for sometimes in Israel but their ministries were taken for granted. It was this group of Prophets that Saul met when he departed from Samuel after he has been anointed the first King of Israel. Prophet Samuel told Saul that one of the signs that Yahweh had appointed him King in Israel is that he will prophesy in the congregation of Prophets. The Bible declares:

> And there as you come to the city, you will meet a band of Prophets coming down from the high place with harp, tambourine, flute, and lyre before them, prophesying. Then the spirit of Yahweh will come mightily upon you, and you shall prophesy with them and be turned into another man (1 Samuel 10:5-6)

From the above Scripture, Samuel informed Saul that he will be turned into "another man". In other words, he would no longer be Saul the son of Kish, but "possessed" by Yahweh's Spirit. Some scholars opined that Saul's friends were disgusted when he joined a band of Prophets. These types of Prophets were able to prophesy when inspired by Yahweh. Their oracles were usually of national importance and were often expressed in poetic form (Hinson, 101). In Ecstatic prophetic condition, the unusual things happened. In another instance, Saul in an ecstatic prophetic state, stripped off his clothes and lay naked in a stunned condition all day and all night (1 Sam. 19: 19-24). These stories remind us of those Christians who on the day of Pentecost were "drunk with the spirit" (Acts 2:1-13). They spoke in tongues as the spirit gave them utterance. In the words of Prophet Samuel they were turned to men. This is an indication of ecstasy. The stories in 1 Samuel presupposes that ecstatic prophecy was already in full swing in Israel during the days of the early monarchy.

Stimulated by the rhythm of music and bodily movement, the contagion of the prophetic ecstasy could carry away a person who fell in among them. According to an interesting passage in 2 Kings 3:15, Elisha, when asked for a word from Yahweh, first summoned a musician, "and when the minstrel played, the spirit of Yahweh came upon him" Under the influence of the divine spirit, the body was sometimes stimulated to hyperactivity, as in the case of Elijah who ran before the King's chariot with superhuman energy (1 Kgs. 18:46).

Ezekiel was an ecstatic Prophet. In moments of ecstasy or near ecstasy, he would deliver oracles by symbolic acts to his audience. For instance, drawing a diagram of Jerusalem on a clay brick, ate rationed food, shaved his hair and beard, burned some of his hair in the fire, hacked at some with a sword, scattered some to the winds, and tied a few in the skirt of his robe (Ezek. 4:1-15; 5: 1-4), all these symbolizing what his people will experience. At another instance, Ezekiel made a hole in the wall of his house and carrying his baggage on his back acted the part of one going on exile. When his wife was captured after the fall of Jerusalem, he did not show any sign of grief indicating that the forth coming disaster will be serious. Bright (336) notes: "No stranger figure can be found in all the goodly fellowship of the prophets than Ezekiel. His was a stern personality and not very winsome, in which one senses contradictions. A harsh demeanor concealed passionate and, one suspects, profoundly repressed emotion". All through his life and ministry, Ezekiel was always in trance, visions and in ecstatic mood. Ezekiel was scarcely what one would call a normal human being. Some Scholars believe that Psalms12:5; 14:4;50; 81:6-15; 82:2-7; 95:8-11 were received in ecstatic prophetic condition (Hinson,101). However, these bands of Prophets often join in a corrupt form of ecstasy and prophesy without inspiration from Yahweh chiefly to please the people and to obtain payment for their work (Isa. 28: 7; Jer. 5:31; 6:13; Deut. 18:20).

In search for the background of ecstatic prophecy, scholars like Freeman (18) argued that it was borrowed from Israel's neighbours. They traced ecstasy to Baal religion. This school of thought claimed that ecstatic prophecy started with the Prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18: 28. They argued that these Prophets were imported from Phoenicia, worked themselves into an ecstatic frenzy on top of Mount Carmel as they danced around the altar cut themselves with knives and raised their cultic shout. As far as (Freeman, 25) is concerned, the word 'ecstasy' is used to describe a situation of being overcome with emotion to the extent that self-control or reason may be suspended. The word is from Greek *ekistanai*, to put (*histenai*) out of (*ek*) place, to derange. Hence *ekstasis* Late Latin *ekstasis* is a trance. Freeman (2) opines that inspiration and revelation by the Spirit are definite statements by the canonical prophets. He

cites Ezekiel speaking of the 'spirit' entering into him (Ez. 2:2; 3:24), the 'spirit' also lifted him up and took him by vision to Jerusalem (Ezek. 8:3; 11:1). In the same fashion, Anderson (226-232) goes further to describe Ezekiel's prophetic experience with that of Isaiah using the popular prophetic formula, 'the hand of the Lord,' or 'the Spirit of the Lord was upon me' as a type of experience similar to ecstatic prophets. In most cases an ecstatic person is out of his mind (*existenia*, out of place).

The phrase "Spirit of God" was not used by Jeremiah while delivering oracles from the Lord. Freeman argues that this was the distinction between the early ecstatic prophets who were referred to as men of the spirit and the later canonical prophets who were addressed as men of God (Freeman, 57). This assertion appears to be appropriate because the early bands of prophets were ecstatic as a result of the spirit falling upon them (as claims).

Rowley (978) notes that the distinction between the two groups of prophets lie in the fact that the ecstatic prophets were the ones possessed by the spirit while the canonical prophets were national religious thinkers who were inspired by the message of Yahweh that they received. It should also be noted that the canonical prophets did not connect their ministry with that of the Spirit of Yahweh, which was the source of the ecstatic behaviour of *nebhim*, but claimed to have received their message directly from Yahweh (Freeman, 56).

The ecstatic prophets are often seen either to have served as disciples or apprentices under a master prophet or lived as individuals (Freeman, 56).It is clear from the aforementioned that scholars are divided on what ecstasy is all about. If we agree that ecstasy is abnormal behaviour or insanity (cf. I Sam 9:19-21; Jer. 29:26), then one may conclude that ecstasy was not present among true prophets in Israel. On the other hand, if we consider ecstasy as indicating the presence of the Spirit of God, one will conclude that all the prophets were ecstatic (Rowley, 97).

It should however be noted apart from these superficial similarities, the real difference between the Prophets of Yahweh and the Canaanite Prophets was that the former were active primarily in the political sphere. They were not soothsayers or clairvoyants, but spokesmen of Yahweh in the arena of history.

Moses Orimolade and his prophetic ministry in Nigeria

Prophet Moses Orimolade hailed from Ikare in Akoko district of Ondo State, Nigeria. He was from the royal lineage of *Omo'ba Ode Sodi*of Okorun Quarters, Ikare, in southwestern Nigeria. The year of his birth is traditionally given as 1879 (Omoyajowo, 118).Orimolade was born to a family of herbalist (Ifa Priest) and his father was a powerful oracle consultant. His father's name was

Tunolase and his mother's name was Abigail Odijoroto, he was the third in a family of six children with three brothers and two sisters. Many mysterious occurrences were said to have characterized his birth and life. For Instance,Ifa oracle predicted that the baby in the womb would be an important, powerful servant of God and that the parents should be careful not to stumble through him (Ayanda, 58). He was reported to have spoken to his mother while he was in the womb. Orimolade was also reported to have attempted to walk on the day he was born but his father (being an herbalist or witch doctor) prevented this using the powers of incantation. The result was that Orimolade became crippled and was not able to walk when it was time for him to do so (Ogunewu, 27). Orimolade was later called into Christian ministry as Prophet-Evangelist.

Prior to the start of his ministry, Orimolade was divinely instructed in a vision and dream to take some water from a flowing stream and to use it to wash his legs. He complied and partially regained the use of his legs, though he still limped for the rest of his life (Ogunewu, 27). In the dream, an angel of the Lord appeared to him and gave him three objects: a rod, a royal insignia, and a crown. The rod signified his victory. The insignia implied "the unction to make divine utterances, while the crown indicated that he has been endowed with honor and multi-respect which would make people bow before him to receive blessing" (Oshitelu,48).

Orimolade became an itinerant evangelist, preaching the gospel across major cities in Nigeria with signs and wonders following. Though unlearned, the proficiency with which he recited the Bible was astounding. In spite of this and the miracles, Orimolade's *modus operandi* of performing miracles was challenged as incompatible with that of the Anglican Church in which he was a member and as such he was forced out (Ayandele, 267). Between 1916 and 1924, Orimolade preached the gospel in many parts of Yorubaland, Mid-Western and Northern Nigeria. His ministry was marked with signs and wonders. He was called Baba Aladura (The Praying Father) because he visited many people and prayed for them.

Prophet Moses Orimolade was the founder of the Cherubim and Seraphim (C&S) Church. Although some members of this church believe that, the C & S Movement was not founded by man but God (Ayegbonyin&Ishola, 81). However, history has it that it started as a prayer group in 1925 under the leadership of Moses Orimolade Tunolase in the city of Lagos, Nigeria.

Before he started his ministry, he was said to have received a vision about the future of the ministry that would have members throughout the world (C&S). Moses Orimolade was a Christian and preacher of the gospel. When he started his ministry, he had no intention of establishing a church until when he came in contact with a teenage girl by name Christiana Abiodun Akinsowon.

The Cherubim and Seraphim church is one of the Aladura (owner of prayer) churches in Nigeria. The prophetic Christianity of the Aladura churches represents a demonstration model of a contextualized ecclesiology. It was developed by Africans and shaped by the concerns and aspirations of Africans to make Christianity have an African face (Komolafe, 101).

History had it that on 18th June, 1925, Miss Christiana Akinsowon went to the campus square in Lagos with some friends to witness that year's Catholic Corpus Christ possession. There she saw an Angel of the Lord under the Corpus Christi canopy. She became feverish and was rushed home. Later she fell into trance which continued for many days. Prophet Moses Orimolade was invited to pray for her and after he did she came to life from a deep sleep (Ayegbonyin&Ishola, 84, Adamo, 31). Falling into trance became a recurrent decimal in the prophetic ministry of Orimolade. In other words, trance means a period when the normal faculties of perception and recognition are in suspense.

Reflections of Israelite ecstatic prophetic tradition in Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry

One of the features of Moses Orimolade's prophetic ministry was trance and ecstasy. Trance is

> a hypnotic state resembling sleep in which a person is unable to move or act of his or her own will, daze or half-conscious condition. The Holy Spirit takes full control. When in a trance, is in a higher spiritual pedestal usually on a trip to heaven. (Ayanda, 123)

In other words, trance means a period when the normal faculties of perception and recognition are in suspense. Ayanda went further to give reasons why people go into trance. These include: spiritual growth, to break a yoke, for deliverance, for healing and for regeneration (Ayanda, 124). During ecstasy and trance, Orimolade received messages of all sorts for his audience. According to Odusina, Orimolade was in trance for 3 years and was without food and water. He usually come around once in a while with singing but eventually came to normalcy after the completion of the spiritual journey. Odusina went further to say that it was during this time that Orimolade was empowered for aggressive evangelistic ministry. Most times in his revival meetings and worship services some of the people in the audience often experience ecstasy and trance. Like the biblical Prophet Ezekiel, Orimolade received his ministry and messages in visions (Ezek. 2:1-10). Orimolade is the

acclaimed father of African Indigenous Churches in Nigeria. He was the one of the first *Aladura (owner of prayer)* prophets to introduce faith healing into Christianity in Nigeria. Like his counterparts in ancient Israel, members and Prophets fall into trace for many days to received oracles from God. The C&S members believe that God can use anybody to prophesy whenever the need arises. Before a member or prophet enters into ecstasy or trance, God would have giving a message previously of His eminent visit and worshippers would be expectant. So, when the hour of visitation comes, the spirit of God descends on a chosen vessel at that time to deliver divine message (Bada).

Many prophets and members of C&S church claimed that trance and ecstasy are responsible for the growth of the church. This is because Christian and non-Christians during these conditions received divine visitations that turned their lives around. Deliverance, healings, miracles, salvation and revival take place practically during this spiritual feat (Ayanda, 126; Bada & Abiodun,).Attendees received and delivered divine oracles during trance and ecstasy. Most of the people who received messages from Prophets during ecstasy eventually became members of the church (Abiodun). Most of the branches of the C&S churches today were planted after revival meetings where ecstasy and trance were evident. It should be noted that most of the converts to Christianity during Orimolade's evangelistic campaigns were adherents of African traditional religion and Islam (Adimabua). Like their counterpart in Israel, some of these prophets when in ecstasy can travel for days in the spirit. When they return from the spiritual journey, people come to consult them to know the mind of God on issues of concern.

To Ayanda, (124-125) there are Four (4) types of Trance. They are: 1. Celestial call (the Holy Spirit descends and takes one on a trance. Sometimes it may span 3, 7, 14, 40 or 90 days), 2. Night call (you sleep and go on a trance in a deep dream and when you wake up you are still able to recount the full experience), 3. Casual trance (this happens when one have an accident. The person dies temporarily but was resuscitated.He/she can still recollects what happened during that time), 4. Damned pretext (pretending to be in the spirit and in trance deliberately or forcing yourself to go on trance for personal gains)

As mentioned earlier, scholar like Freeman (18-24) argued that falling into trance and ecstasy were borrowed by the Israelite from her neighbors. Prophets Moses Orimolade and his group received messages from God through trance and ecstasy. For Instance, the name C&S was given to the movement after three days of prayer and fasting. On 9th September, 1925 which was the third day of the prayer programme, a female member who fell into trance and in ecstatic position declared that he saw in the sky the letter SE which was later interpreted SERAFU (Seraph). The movement eventually

adopted the name Egbe Serafu (The Seraphim Society). Consequent upon this, the church was named: The Cherubim & Seraphim Society (Ayegbonyin&Ishola, 84, Adamo, 29-30). The church later elected Archangel Michael its patron and Angel Gabriel its Deputy patron. Members believed that his election was settled in heaven before it was established in Lagos.

Music plays a vital role in the ministry C&S. In C&S churches a long time is allocated to praise and worship. This is to give members the privilege of given quality praise to God as they dance to the tune of intense music. As the music is being played some worshippers fall into trance and ecstasy. Music, when sung repeatedly and intensely, is believed to bring down the presence of God. Worshippers enter the realm of the Spirit and there received oracles for the people on issues of concern (Bada&Odusina). The message could be in the form of warning, judgment, and consolation, rebuked and so on. Ecstasy is not limited to prophets alone as anybody filled with the spirit can have the experience during worship services. The duration of ecstasy or trance depends on God. There is short and long time ecstasy (Adimabua).

In imitation of heavenly Cherubim and Seraphim who are arranged in white robes, Orimolade instituted the wearing of white robes for members. Orimolade and other prophets in the group had their own types of robes. As mentioned earlier, some scholars argued that the adoption of special dress by the Israelite prophets was another Canaanite influence on their prophetic heritage. Prophets in Israel wore dresses of skin (2 Kgs. 1:8; Zech. 13:14) which to some scholars originated from cultic custom. Today, typical prophets in this church wear robe. They also carry rod and a bell in their hands. Because the members believe that the movement came from God, evangelism was considered a serious business and as such by 1928 vibrant branches were established in Agege, Abeokuta, Ijebu-Ode and Ibadan in Nigeria (Ayegbonyin&Ishola, 84, Adamo,30). Today the Church has grown in lips and bond. There are branches of the church in Africa, Europe, and America and so on.

Besides, some scholars opined that it was soothsaying and divination in the ancient Near East that metamorphosed to prophecy in ancient Israel. They maintained that just like diviners in Near East people come to the prophets to know what the future hold in stock for them. Orimolade was considered by Christians and non-Christians in his days as a Prophet of God. People from all walks of life came to consult him from time to time to know the mind of God for their lives. Early in the life and ministry of the church, admission or ordination into the office of prophet was different from that of the others. Every person is known by the gift of God on his or her life. In the C&S church today, the office of the prophet is well recognized and respected. Like in ancient Israel, a prophet is seen as a messenger of God with a message to

the people. They receive messages for people from God through dreams, visions, trance, and audition.

On October 19, 1933 Orimolade died (Omoyajowo, 131). However, a week before his death he had appointed Abraham William Onanuga as his successor. He was buried on October 20 and it was observed that the flocks of white birds hovered continuously over the grave until the burial ceremony was over. Orimolade had been acclaimed as the sole and indisputable founder of the C & S. All the sections of the C & S deified him "Saint" and prayers are said to the "God of Moses Orimolade" in the same way as the Hebrew pray to the "God of Abraham, Israel and Jacob" (Omoyajowo,132).

Conclusion

From inception our task in this paper was to investigate the ecstatic prophecy in ancient Israel and its Reflections in Moses Orimolade's Prophetic Ministry in Nigeria. It is clear from our study that some of the ancient Israelite Prophets were ecstatic. This study revealed that Israel interacted with her neighbours and that the interaction robbed on every aspect her life and religion especially prophecy. It is vivid from the biblical literature that Yahweh spoke to Israel's ancestors and the nation before they settled in Canaan. This confirmed that Israelite's Prophetic tradition started before she settled in the Promised Land where she interacted with nations around her. This interaction as it were had some influences on the culture and religion of Israel. However, the fundamental aspect of Israel's religion was not affected as the influences were at the peripheral level. The prophetic ministry in Israel was unique and cannot be compared with that of the ancient Near East because it came from Yahweh. Ecstatic Prophets in ancient Israel were political and religious reformers. Their main interest was to preserve, defend and protect true worship of Yahweh. Moses Orimolade's ecstatic prophetic ministry is patterned after the ancient Israel prophetic tradition and this is the reason for the parallel noticed in both contexts. The Prophets in our contemporary time must patten their lives and ministries after these topics in other to fulfill divine mandate.

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Sexual Identities in Africa: A queer reading of Chinelo Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees*

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Abstract

In Africa, queer sexual identities have received mixed feelings, leading to the debate in a bid to clearly define the legalization or non-legalization of it in various countries. And, looking at the current changing trends of this concept in Africa, the selected literary text happens to situate itself well within the fluid queer discourse. It follows then that the text provides the sub-plot of characters that have an overtly queer erotic and queer social bonding with some other characters. Consequently, the crust of this study is to draw on the broader queer concept in interrogating some pressing concerns of queer sexual identities in Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees*. Among other things, the research demonstrates how contemporary works of fiction like *Under the Udala Trees* use their narratives to conceive space and language whose midpoint encompasses literary innovations and the significance of some experiences of queer individuals within an African setting. The study ultimately uncovers the literary merits of queer sexualities in Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees* instead of simply portraying these sexualities as alternative solutions in adverse conditions to some individuals who cannot help being the way they are.

Keywords: heteronormative; homophobic; queer, sexuality; udala.

Introduction

Sexuality is a central aspect of human life which is often influenced by the interaction of biological, sociological and religious factors, among others. For a number of Africans, for instance, it is simply explained along binary dimensions. Quite a number of Africans, therefore, mostly express their internal and deeply felt erotic emotional attachments towards the opposite sex. However, an individual within this context who happens to be sexually attracted to another person of the same sex, or something between the binary sexes is seen as going against the norm; hence, may be termed queer. "Queer" is a defining term for an array of possible sexual identities which include: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and intersex, among others. With this definition in mind, many African texts seem to be written based on the default reading that is characterized by a set of fairly concrete heteronormative features. Such default readings touch on crucial aspects of our identities as human beings in a communal environment. Based on this assumption, queering becomes a tool of literary analysis for considering the more fluid spectrum of gender attitudes in a text such as Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees*.

Following the works of Chris Dunton, Judith Butler, Eve K. Sedgwick, Rania A. Salem and Taiwo A. Osinubi, studies on queer sexualities have elicited considerable attention. The concern of this study is to draw on the broader queer concept in interrogating the literary merits and some pressing concerns of queer sexual identities in Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees*. Perhaps, the situation of individuals in queer sexualities is best understood by the following remark by Louis Gooren (who quotes Kertbeny) that: "In addition to the normal sexual urge in men and women, nature in her sovereign mood has endowed at birth certain male and female individuals with the homosexual urge, thus placing them in a sexual bondage…" (637). The present study becomes necessary as it specifically underscores the protagonist's battle with a queer sexual identity in a heteronormative society.

Under the Udala Trees introduces to us what could be termed an unconventional perspective of queer sexuality in Africa. Ijeoma, the protagonist of *Under the Udala Trees*, identifies herself within the queer circle of humanity. She discovers her sexual orientation at an early age to be opposed to what is accepted by society as right and normal. In effect, Ijeoma battles with herself and society in an attempt to fall in line with the stipulated norm. The protagonist's life story is set in Nigeria, at the beginning of the Civil War in the 1960s. Because her father (or Papa) is killed in a bomb raid and consequently, her mother (or Mama) is unable to afford the responsibilities of single parenting, Ijeoma is left in the care of a "grammar school teacher" and his wife

in another town. Here, "under the udala trees", she meets and falls in love with an orphaned Hausa girl named Amina.

As it is commonly accepted, her first bonding in life is with her mother, another female who raises her right from conception through infancy to the period when they are temporarily separated. This falls in line with Adrienne Rich's contention that whereas men have only one innate sexual orientation that draws them to women, their counterparts on the other hand have two intrinsic orientations: the first erotic bond toward a woman; the second, toward men. It follows then that the natural sexual bond for these two sexes is toward women. Following the Freudian theory, the new born girl is more likely to be sexually neutral. And so, in Ijeoma's case, prenatal and postnatal factors play major roles in determining her sexual identity. She draws her sexual orientation from her childhood experiences and nurtures it on a tabula rasa. With the absence of her father during the peak of her developmental stage, her closest social interactions are largely with the few women (ranging from her mother through Amina, back to her mother and then to Ndidi) who play significant roles in her entire life.

Largely speaking, Mahrukh Khan and Kamal Haider agree with Sigmund Freud on the concept that the daughter is created to divert her sexual cravings towards the father and "along these lines, she advanced towards a heterosexual womanliness that finished in bearing a child who replaced the inattentive penis" (2). Nonetheless, Ijeoma's father establishes at an early stage of her life that she is not carved out to tow this heterosexual order. He in turn further lacks any such emotions for her. This is realized in the part of the narration when the protagonist remarks about her father: "He let go of my hand and nudged me to go on *to explore my ordained sexuality* without him" (9, emphasis in italics is ours). So sudden was the decision taken simultaneously with the action to the extent that, the import is only realized later in the text when the protagonist battles with being in a heterosexual marriage. The main analysis is captured in the following sub-headings:

Breaking boundaries for queer companionship

The theme of the desire for a queer companionship looms largely in *Under the Udala Trees* since the protagonist makes it one of her main quests. It is possible to say that the companionship a character seeks may be informed by the kind of identity the character subscribes to. The description of Ijeoma's first encounter with Amina, who is just about her age, is symptomatic of the two girls' transgression with the patriarchal rules. Ijeoma looks at Amina the way a heterosexual man will normally admire a woman. According to Ijeoma:

> She had a skin as light as mine. Yellow, like a ripe pawpaw. She wore a tattered green pinafore that was bare at the sides. Her hair hung in long clumps around her face, like those images of Mami Wata, hair writhing like serpents. But there were no serpents on her. She looked too dazed or disoriented, or simply too exhausted, to speak (104).

By employing rich simile and colourful visual imagery in these particular expressions, Ijeoma communicates her admiration of and concern for Amina, as a (heterosexual) man would admire a woman. Similarly, it is worthy to note that by alluding to one's object of adoration, like Ijeoma does in the mind, helps to formulate one's sexual identity. It could therefore be argued that through the process of formulating such entities, the reality may be constructed. This sinks in with Sara Heinämaa's assertion that:

> This notion is intuitive, and it neatly fits our common-sense conception of human affairs… We tend to love things and persons that we consider good and beautiful (or superb, terrific, cool, etc.), and we tend to value and appreciate the things and persons that we happen to love (1).

And so, in this same instance, Ijeoma draws a circle around the situated sexual identity to which both girls belong. She further *illegitimizes* the notion that there exists the man and woman gender binary constructions that assign specific roles to individuals, right from birth. Therefore, the understanding is created to the effect that, it is not always the case that because there is a man, there should be a woman; or since there is a woman, there should evidently be a man in all amorous relationships. On this, Friedrich Nietzsche argues that: "there is no being behind doing, effecting, becoming; the doer is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything" (as cited in Butler 34). Obviously in this fragment, the action of admiration is what matters and not the admirer or the admired. Ijeoma's narration seems to establish the argument that, both the male and the female bodies are categories produced by the performances that define gender.

Notwithstanding the epistemic paradoxes that bound the main perceptions of identity, the body as a conceptual entity as well as the body as a performative could be seen as emerging from a formulative approach. It follows then that an ideological appraisal of identity may not necessarily generate its validity. Hence, the paradoxes rather seem to examine a body's conceptual effectiveness. These include a person's scope of reproducing or contending the dominant norms; as well as the magnitude to which it

legitimizes marginalized individuals by the status quo (Rahal 36). Ijeoma's conceptualization of her nonconforming identity as performative, challenges the dichotomization of her gender while empowering her against the absolute traditional gender norms of her society. This constructed reality becomes the true identity of both Ijeoma and her partner, Amina, and later on, Ndidi, another queer character. However, emphasis is particularly laid on Ijeoma because as will later be spelt out in this piece, her body emotionally rejects anything that has to do with the opposite sex.

Alternatively, this admiration episode is further interpreted as Ijeoma's practical efforts in helping both her and Amina to reconstruct their sexual reality which subverts the heteronormative standards of their society. The two girls' transgression is further evident in the way they stare at each other. Besides, Ijeoma admits an intimate attraction towards this new girl as she confesses: "The moment our eyes locked, I knew I would not be leaving without her" (105). Notably, starring admiringly at a fellow female in a heterosexual environment remains arguably a prerogative of the masculine gender. As a matter of fact, this action of the two girls deviates from the stipulated heterosexual order in their social setting. By deviating from this designated norm of the authoritarian heterosexuality, the two girls further hamper the moral economy of socially delineated sexual expressions. On this, Cedric Courtois in his study agrees with John Berger when the latter remarks that:

> *men act* and *women appear*. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. […] The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus, she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight (Berger 47, as cited in Courtois 126).

The two girls' subconscious minds work in unison while forming special opinions about each other without realizing it. Something in the way each of them looks and acts at that particular time triggers their emotions, causing an amorous attraction. This meeting of these girls is therefore skillfully weaved into the plot of the story to foreshadow the beginning of the *abominable* act that the two characters are yet to commit in their heteronormative setting.

Strategically, the narration of the queer love between these two girls commences under an udala tree, making it necessary to take a consideration of the symbolic representation of this tree in the Nigerian context. The udala, also known as udara (*Chrysophylum albidum*), according to Okechuku C. Agukoronye, is a popular fruit tree which is mostly found in the community square. It is: "a kind of native apple tree, which for the Igbo symbolizes

fertility and the spirit of children" (Agukoronye 95). Metaphorically, the two girls sitting under an udala tree can be read as appropriately providing strategies to conceive a justifiable space for their queer sexual desires. As may be observed, the activities performed under this tree by the Igbo community express companionship, love, as well as sharing and caring. Coincidentally, the protagonist in this novel is an Igbo girl whose belief in the significance of the tree as a deity is foregrounded by the fact that, she compares her object of love to a water goddess. In line with this, Sabine Jell-Bahlsen intimates that: "The concept of the 'mother water' goddess, *Mammy Water*, is more than of a divinity. She also embodies and manifests important aspects of womanhood in pre-colonial Igbo culture and society" (30, emphasis in italics is ours). The double description and emphasis laid on the divinity in this fragment indicates a divinely ordained encounter between this pair.

Besides the above, Okwuosa et. al. opine that the Igbo mother water goddess controls both the entry and the exit of every member of the community into and from the physical world. She is recognized as the goddess of the crossroads and so, she sits at a vantage point to control the membership of this world. This goddess is responsible for challenging the pact of destiny between one's body and soul which may be endorsed by the Supreme Being. The goddess is also believed to endorse the destinies of her true worshippers. With these explanations, the understanding that could be established is as follows: *Under the Udala Trees* subtly broaches upon the theme of queer sexualities as a seemingly inherent trait. Also, Ijeoma sitting under the tree and acknowledging the fair skins of both Amina and herself, as well as the long flowing hair of Amina, is symbolic of her veneration to this deity. Consequently, the tree becomes one of the literary strategies for normalizing queer sexual desires in Okparanta's *Under the Udala Trees*. It is under the atmosphere of this tree that the two girls first awaken their queer sexualities. Also, under the shade of this tree, Ijeoma shares her time, love and body with Amina. Perhaps, it is under this tree where the girls sit and stare at each other that the reader begins to assume that Ijeoma's queer sexual identity is one of the character traits with which she was born.

The narration demonstrates that the queer bond between the protagonist and Amina is not solely based on the sexual exploits the two girls undertake. It is birthed from a series of companionship that the two derive from nowhere else other than from each other. Ijeoma is half orphaned whereas Amina is the only surviving member of her immediate family. The two lack any form of parental love since the grammar school teacher and his wife only regard them as "more help" (106) to the household chores. This further helps them to develop stronger queer ties. In a flashback, Ijeoma recounts: "That evening, Amina and I peeled the yams together, rinsed them

together, our fingers brushing against each other's in the bowl… At the end of it all, I carried my lantern and led Amina into my hovel, where I offered half of my mattress to her" (106 –107).

Metaphorically, half of her life becomes Amina's, with the crickets singing their night song which serves as a stimulus that gradually turns the spark into fire. This fire symbolizes the physical erotic encounter that occurs between the two girls right after their usual night bath. The protagonist lets us in on this aspect of her life to prove the possibility of a queer erotic encounter between same sex partners. It is actually something that starts off as a spark which explodes into a pleasurable desire for both of them. This is evident in the following:

> I ran my hands up and down Amina's braids some more, up and down her arms. And Amina did the same to me… In the near darkness, our hands moved across our bodies. We took in with our fingers the curves of our flesh, the grooves. Our hands, rather than our voices, seemed to do the speaking. Our breaths mingled with the night sounds. Eventually our lips met. This was the beginning, our bodies being touched by the fire that was each other's flesh (117).

The progressive and erotic encounter in this episode is one of the affectionate manifestations of the love they had earlier and silently developed for each other. The protagonist contrasts this intimate experience she shares with Amina to the kiss she shares with Chibundu, her husband, when they were still little kids. Describing it, she cleverly chooses her diction to denote her total resentment for any heterosexual encounters. In the manner now being indicated, Ijeoma calls the kiss she and Chibundu share "a clumsy kiss" (233) which she equates to "taking a spoonful of chloroquine when you had malaria" (46). Consequently, she adds that: "There was hardly another option, so you just did it. The first spoonful and then the next, and then the next. If not, things would only get worse" (46). With this, she proves that the kiss was just to relief Chibundu from an awkward situation created by the pair. Although this was a platonic kiss, Ijeoma grows up to still resent the mere thought of it. The opportunities provided for heterosexual intimacies between Ijeoma and Chibundu attest to the belief which may be held by some persons that her body was not made to accommodate heterosexual intimacies. In contrast to the longing she has for Amina, Ijeoma detests the mere touch of her husband, Chibundu. All her encounters with Chibundu are narrated as unendingly exhausting journeys. In contrast, the second encounter Ijeoma has

with Amina also depicts a longing that is narrated with passionate attachment. This is discovered and Ijeoma is sent to Aba to live with her mother.

Before that, everything seemed to be going on well with both girls until an adult character intrudes. The feeling of companionship and the chastity of children which is characterized by the udala are snatched from these queer partners the moment the "grammar school teacher" walks in on them. This particular encounter signifies the conception of Ijeoma's subsequent traumatic experiences. The appearance of the teacher in this episode unsettles all three characters like a blow, leaving them all in a surprised mood. And so, the actions that follow are in quick successions. The teacher draws a link between their sexual exploits and what the Bible has to say about it: "An abomination!" (125). He inflicts both physical and mental pain on the girls by first pulling them off the mattress and slapping each on the cheek. At that instance, the mental agony the girls experience is marked by an allusion to Adam and Eve who are infamously credited with the primary cause of the sinful nature of humanity: "We were naked, and we felt our nakedness as Adam and Eve must have felt in the garden, at the time of that evening breeze. Our eyes had become open, and we too sought to hide ourselves" (125).

Like the biblical Adam and Eve, this also marks the first instance in Ijeoma's life where she is told by a superior person she has sinned. This feeling of guilt is conditioned into them by the cultural context within which they find themselves. Nonetheless, Ijeoma still expresses the innocence of their love by declaring before the small tribunal that comprises the grammar school teacher, his wife and Ijeoma's mother that: "Amina and I, we didn't think anything of it" (128).

The girls' innocence is reinforced by the fact that these same adults who are condemning the act now are the very people who indirectly and arguably orchestrated the act. In the first instance, Mama's depression resulting from Papa's death, as well as some difficulty she encounters in catering for herself and her daughter compels her to send Ijeoma off to live with family friends who she believes may look after her better. Secondly, if the grammar school teacher had not allowed Amina to share a living quarter with Ijeoma, the possibility of any sexual intimacies would have been slim. This situation justifies the debate by some individuals that queer sexuality is birthed from natural circumstances surrounding us. Comparatively, the adult interference of young queer love is paralleled in Monica Arac de Nyeko's *Jambula Tree*. Symbolically, there is the development of lesbian love under a fruit tree which signifies growth and life. And in both instances, the girls are separated by the adults in a bid to correct their erroneous acts. It could be argued that the queer character's goal in *Under the Udala Trees* is overpowered by the African moral

conscience, mostly expressed in Mama's curative approach which is explained in the subsequent section.

"God who created you must have known what he did"

In *Under the Udala Trees*, Mama is informed of her daughter's transgression and she comes back for her with the hope of normalizing her. Mama who strongly believes that her daughter is being possessed by a demonic spirit is determined to "straighten [Ijeoma] out" (129). Her attempt is to use the Bible and prayer sessions as tools to alter Ijeoma's sexuality. In so doing, Adaora, her mother, identifies some verses in the Bible that demonize queer sexuality. Mama's curative approach creates space for Ijeoma to draw a link between her sexual preference and her Christian background. Unfortunately, Ijeoma considers the Bible to be a narrow reflection of the heteronormative cultural belief and her mother's interpretations to be pigeonholed.

Mama's "*straightening"* method begins from Genesis with the creation story. She is of the view that, this story will help Ijeoma realize God's master plan for the organization of the gendered humanity where a man becomes one flesh with a woman. In this fragment, meaning is therefore generated that woman and woman, or the alternative man and man amorous relationships are each considered unique individuals who can never be joined together as one flesh. Attempting to do so breaches the Biblical laws, thereby orchestrating the cosmic disorder.

Notwithstanding, Ijeoma reflectively questions this interpretation and the subsequent understandings of the biblical stories provided by Mama. In so doing, she provides alternative interpretations to the stories. To her, the story does not necessarily mean a definite existence of binary relationships. Her probing indicates the existence of alternative possibilities that are each feasible:

> But *so what* if it was only the story of Adam and Eve that we got in the Bible? Why did *that* have to exclude the possibility of a certain Adam and Adam or a certain Eve and Eve? Just because the story happened to focus on a certain Adam and Eve did not mean that all other possibilities were forbidden. (pp. 82-83).

Her choice of the word *possibilities* and use of the *if* conditional clause is indicative of the existence of alternative sexual preferences that are not explicitly stated in the creation story. She gives a detailed interpretation to this assumption by adding that the Adam and Eve creation story could have only meant that the bond between this pair was possible because of the strong companionship they shared and not necessarily because they were a man and a

woman. With this, she emphasizes that, such a bond can exist between same sex partners. As noted by Amber Frateur, "The stress on companionship corresponds with the interpretations of the theological concept of *Imago Dei* (Image of God) described by van Klinken and Phiri" (p. 45). Ijeoma further considers the biblical stories as the use of mere allegories to correct her. She even wonders who Cain might have married if the only people in existence then were Adam, Eve, Cain himself and his brother, Abel. If he had married any of his relations, then it should also be queer because incest in most African settings is prohibited, particularly one between direct siblings. Additionally, Ijeoma's consistent use of the *if* clause demonstrates that the actions in each case can only be fulfilled, provided a certain condition is met.

In a similar vein, Ijeoma does not hesitate to question Mama's understanding of the Sodom and Gomorrah story in the *Bible*. This story remains one of the passages used in support of, or to contest against queer sexuality. The story is centered on God's destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah as a result of the queer sexual practices of the people living there. Ijeoma tries to convince her mother that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is as a result of inhospitality and not necessarily queer sexuality. Thus, she may be perceived as drawing on the ideas shared by scholars such as Bartlett and also Phyllis to argue that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah were punished not because of their sexual perversions but mainly because of their lack of hospitality to strangers who happened to be guests of the two cities. The protagonist is rather surprised by the decision of Lot to compromise the interest of his family for the safety of some visitors. She connects this interpretation of hers to the subsequent biblical story about the Levite and the 'damsel'. Instead of seeing how it relates to her as intended by Mama, Ijeoma rather broods over "the terrible image of the rape, of the poor damsel lying unconscious at the doorstep, and then being flung over the donkey by the Levite. The terrible image of the Levite cutting her body into pieces" (80). Ijeoma believes that the men offering up the woman to be raped is an indication of cowardice on the part of the men.

This draws in the cases of queer sexually identified persons the grammar school teacher had heard of, where the victims were stoned all the way to the river and drowned. This story represents some of the inhumane homophobic attacks experienced by queer people. At the point that this story is being told to her and Amina, both girls think about the prospective damages that will be inflicted on their bodies and the fear of the possible river drowning should anybody get wind of it. Consequently, they begin to cry. The cry is not primarily because they are remorseful, but because of the fear planted in them by the grammar school teacher. Later in Aba, Ijeoma listens to a narration of homophobic attacks concerning the horrific killing of two homosexuals who

were caught in the act, and she shudders. This foreshadows a similar encounter that awaits them at their queer hideout in Aba.

Ijeoma and Amina reunite in a boarding school. Notably, Amina tries to act different at different times. Her alternation between queer and heterosexuality is supported by the notion of sexual fluidity. On this, it could be argued that the understanding of gender and sexuality as free-floating seems to augment the probability of recreating sexual identity. This is premised on the post-structuralist perception of non-essentialized identities that may be seen as sites in becoming; both culturally constructed and contextually determined, while evolving through space and time (Tilsen and Nylund 8). That notwithstanding, Amina's fear of the moral inappropriateness of being queer finally breaks the bond she shares with Ijeoma. The novel being read in light of the construction of a queer self indicates that, this action of Amina further slows down the creation of an absolute queer identity by the protagonist.

Ijeoma establishes a stronger relationship with Ndidi who works as a teacher in Aba. It is after a mob raid of a group of queer individuals that the two halt their relationship. Ijeoma's Mama coerces her to get married to a young man named Chibundu, who had been Ijeoma's childhood friend. Ijeoma gives in out of fear and frustration and, only after Ndidi convinces her to try being with a man.

So, her identity construction process continues to drag along in its snail pace. The couple move to Port Harcourt where Ijeoma endures an unhappy marriage since she is not romantically and sexually attracted to her husband. Like Amina, Ijeoma agrees to sample a heterosexual relationship. However, she is still mindful of the notion that heterosexuality remains an unnatural identity for her. She comes to regard Chibundu as a domineering husband who wishes to have his conjugal rights at all cost. This domineering attitude of Chibundu can be traced to Oko, the husband of Esi in Aidoo's *Changes: A love Story* and Akobi, Mara's husband in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. Tamara Shefer et al. explain that the sexual prowess of such domineering African men is one major way of articulating their masculinities in society. Although Chibundu is fully aware his wife identifies as queer, he hides this knowledge from her with the hope of correcting Ijeoma's sexuality. The critic, Thabo Msibi (2011) argues: "…that increased expressions of homophobia in Africa are not only reactions to the 'personified' and visible homosexual identity, but also a tool for sexism, an attempt to solidify men's position in society" (pp. 70-71). Ijeoma, knowing she has no other option, gives in and the couple has a daughter whom they name Chibdinma. It is after Ijeoma loses their second child that she eventually decides to leave, taking her daughter along with her. She goes back to her mother who finally comes to terms with her daughter's

sexuality. Here, Mama is portrayed as an empathic character as she comes to acknowledge that: "God who created you must have known what he did. Enough is enough" (p. 323). In effect, Ijeoma feels at ease and resumes her queer relationship with Ndidi who imagines a utopia that promises hope for queer sexualities in their Nigerian setting. This utopian moment of imagination stimulates the likelihood of conviction for a future social order that embraces all forms of love. Thus, Okparanta's novel could be seen as staging a platform for possible future queer couplings.

Conclusion

The novel provides a prophetic space for interrogating queer sexual identities in the Nigerian setting, and Africa at large. This prophetic space is created in the utopian imaginations of Ndidi who foresees a future Nigeria where all forms of sexual orientations are acceptable. The protagonist's sexual preference is largely developed from some mundane activities she takes with her first queer partner. The novel describes queer intimate relationships as fluid and so unpredictable, just as Ijeoma's relationship with Amina proves to be. The protagonist, Ijeoma, clears the way for a new way of understanding certain normative concepts. She characterizes her queer sexuality as a defensive detachment from one little hurt child who yearns for true companionship. More importantly, the setting categorizes this novel as a daring exploration of queer sexualities since Nigerian laws criminalize all forms of queer articulations. *Under the Udala Trees* does not stand in isolation; rather, it stands in unison with both the wider Nigerian tradition (as earlier stated), and other scholarly works such as Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy,* Dibia's *Walking with Shadows* and Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams.*

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Evidences of our inhumanity: Representations of evil and the quest for postcolonial healing in Tadjo's The Shadows of Imana: *Travels in the Heart of Rwanda*

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"We must acknowledge the existence of evil. We must exorcise it through justice, through an attempt at true justice"
Veronique Tadjo (*The Shadows of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda*).

Abstract

In spite of Tadjo's evident references to the concept of evil and its ramifications in post-genocide Rwanda, it still remains peripheral in the literature. This gap distorts our understanding of traumatogenic experiences and the diagnostics that is required. Drawing on Immanuel Kant's conceptions of evil and postcolonial literary theory, this paper explores the literary representations of evil in relation to the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda while simultaneously looking at therapeutic strategies in healing the wounds of the past as depicted in Veronique Tadjo's *The Shadows of Imana: Travels in the heart of Rwanda*. Such a reading, as the paper argues, creates new conversations for understanding travel writings and historical violence.

Keywords: Evil; Healing; Kant; Rwanda; Tadjo; Trauma.

Introduction

The story of black primitivity has usually been conceived from the angle of the colonial account – tabling the prevalent dangers in Africa; where the African continent had become an epitome of distressing realities. Tadjo's *The Shadows of Imama: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda*, though not written to cast yet another destructive glance at Africa, promotes an appreciation of rethinking historical violence and the need for redemption. Her motivation, which was born out of the desire to exorcise Rwanda stimulates discussions about Rwanda's healing after the genocide and the liberation of Africa. Critical commentary on Tadjo's novel has focused on women's testimonial literature -how Rwandan women genocide survivors respond to and communicate such traumatic experiences and the necessity of developing alternative ways of dealing with the diversity of Rwandan women experiences (Gilbert, 2013; Magnarella, 2001). Others have also looked at contemporary representations of memories, collective memories, violence and genocide in transnational literatures (Nanar, 2018; Ayala, 2018; Karin, 2010), political crisis in Africa, war, homo religiousus and literary representations of trauma (Glover, 2011; Benon & Sewpaul,2007; Traore & Segtub, 2016; Muvuti, 2018) and the relationship between genocide, biopolitics and futurity (West-Pavlov, 2014). While these readings are particularly useful in terms of the ways in which the 1994 genocide in Rwanda becomes cardinal in framing discourses on historical violence and its aftermath, these critical readings surprisingly ignore the centrality of evil as the locus for rethinking Rwanda. Such a reading is crucial as it provides an understanding of the place of evil in the Rwandan genocide and how a careful assessment of its operations provokes a sensitive desire for postcolonial healing. Thus, our purpose in this paper is to examine the literary representations of evil and the therapeutic strategies of healing the wounds of the past in Tadjo's novel. Tadjo's travelogue recreates the horrors of the massacre through her interaction with some of the survivors of this tragedy. The divide between the two main ethnic groups – the Hutus and the Tutsis – who co-existed peacefully before their colonial masters' mastermind the tension that led to the genocide. Her journalistic perspective signals the quest for ethnic cleansing and the desire for a new state of affairs.

The qualitative approach is adopted in this paper. This paper is literary and it involves a re-reading of Tadjo's travelogue with library search support. The analysis in this paper is informed by the postcolonial literary theories and Kant's conception of evil. The content of this paper is divided into five parts. We set the tone of our discussion by looking at the climate of political crisis in Africa and how the idea of Rwanda reiterates the hegemony of colonialism. The second part of this paper examines Immanuel Kant's

conceptualization of evil with the intention of understanding Tadjo's account of factors leading to the genocide. The third and fourth sections are dedicated to discussing the literary representations of evil in Tadjo's *The Shadows of Imana: Travels in the Heart of Rwanda* and how these representations provide a therapy for the survivors of the genocide. Finally, the paper concludes with a brief summary of the main arguments of the paper.

Political Crisis and the Idea of Rwanda

Africa in the 21st century has become synonymous with political crisis. Part of this misfortune is as a result of the disillusionment that has come to characterize the foundations of independence and freedom. Africa's response to the inhumane colonial project has become a laughable enterprise since it has only degenerated into a second epoch of colonialism. The focus for the struggle for independence: to de-affirm the hegemonic connotations of governance; to empower marginalized groups and to emphasize and validate the unique cultural experiences of the Africa has suffered grave despair (Pham, 2006). Indeed, in the last two decades, the political terrain in Africa has been polarized with the enduring dialectics of political change-overs and the persistence to weaken the vestiges of colonialism. While there is hope in terms of reconstructing the Africa's political vision, Alemazung (2010) in *Post-Colonial Colonialism: An Analysis of International Factors and Actors Marring African Socio-Economic and Political Development,* argues that Africa's failure is greatly compounded by international factors – the indirect impacts the West has on the political, social, economic and cultural life of ex-colonial societies and the legacy of ethnic rivalry. According to Shillington (1989, p. 356) as cited in Alemazung (2010): "the colonial masters emphasized the distinctions between the different ethnic groups, thereby strengthening tribal differences and rivalries between these groups and preventing them from forming a united opposition against the colonizers." (p. 65).

Although colonialism cannot be solely responsible for ethnic divisions, there is no doubt that ethnic division is an antecedent to countless politically unstable states – Ghana's Kokumbas and Nanumba strife in the 1990's and the conflict between the southern Igbo and the northern Hausa in the Biafra War cannot ignore our attention. One of the worst examples of colonial founded ethnic rivalry and consequential conflicts is the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda which was characterized by the real killing of the Tutsi and moderate Hutu races in the country. Alemazung observes that:

> the Belgians created differences between Tutsis and Hutus which did not exist before their arrival. These differences went

> as far as creating identity cards for Tutsi minorities illustrating their superiority over Hutus and giving them the leadership positions in the country. The result was hatred and the nurturing of feelings of revenge by the Hutu's, which ended in the 1994 genocide which saw the slaughtering of over 800,000 Rwandans within a period of four months. (p. 66)

Thus, the genocide occurred within the context of a plotted conflict with the deliberate intention of inflicting pain to a group of people - a crime that is aimed at causing serious physical and mental injury to members of this group. Tadjo corroborates this assertion in her account when she records that: "But the massacres were without a shadow of doubt the result of the political maneuverings of the elite, who, in order to retain power, created a climate of hatred and division by urging the ethnic majority against the minority." (p. 33) Tadjo adds that:

> By mobilizing fear and hatred against the Tutsis, the organizers hoped to forge a kind of solidarity among the Hutus. But beyond that, they intended to build a collective responsibility for the genocide. People were encouraged to involve themselves in group killing, like soldiers in a firing squad who all receive the order to fire at the same instant, so that no individual can be held separately accountable or solely responsible for the execution. No person killed another person single-handed, declared one of those who participated. (p. 84)

The burden of the genocide becomes an organized crime. A crime that was pre-conceived in ways that makes both the colonized and the colonizer culpable despite the imbalance in teamwork. The comparison between the encouraged group killings and soldiers receiving orders to shoot in a firing squad strengthens the notion of collaboration as far as the genocide is concerned. Thus, the idea of Rwanda divulges issues of fear, hatred, transgression and the psychological burden of revenge – a place of radical harm. Tadjo's account of the Rwandan experience – drawing attention to the intrinsic cruelties of the massacre and the devastating effects - is carefully represented through the complex paradigms of good and evil. Drawing on Mark's gospel chapter seven verses 21, she admits that:

> For from within out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts.
> Evil has always existed at the heart's core. It is the fire of moral decay burning dully like eternally glowing embers. It is the

> moral decay of a human being devouring his own kind, devouring his own flesh.
> But Good has not disappeared, has not been buried in the mass graves (pp. 115-116)

For Tadjo, the genocide is a signification of the moral decay that has engrossed Africa. That at the heart of evil, is man's inability to rescind any desire that has the potential of wrecking the bonds of community; the accumulation of violence, the inability to decline the obligation of instigating terror and the desire to ignore another's legitimacy of being. Although Tadjo does not appear to discount the possibility of goodness – the hope of restoration in Rwanda, she acknowledges the strategic nature of evil in maneuvering peace and stability. While she calls for caution in terms of arresting and dealing with the triggers of violence, she recognizes the enigma that defines its origins. Thus, the idea of Rwanda comes close to reinforcing the colonial image of Africa as a danger zone demonstrated through the massacre. This idea also brings back the thought of the kind of political culture that has resulted from colonialism and its successors: neo-colonialism and globalization.

Kant and the anatomy of evil

The term evil is typically used as the basic opposite of good. Evil can also be thought of as the reverse of good or the absence of good. Thus, often than not, evil becomes the antithesis of good. Though these suppositions appear generalized, we can entertain the complexities of wrongdoings as primary to our understanding of the concept of evil. While the topic of evil in itself dissuades a sustained intellectual debate, some scholars have attempted an interpretation of what it is from psychotherapeutic perspectives to the religious domain.

In *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Kant has a discussion of the radical evil in human nature. He claims that:

> By propensity (propensio) I understand the subjective ground of the possibility of an inclination (habitual desire, concupiscentia), insofar as this possibility is contingent for humanity in general. It is distinguished from a predisposition in that a propensity can indeed be innate yet may be represented as not being as such: it can rather be thought of (if it is good) as acquired, or (if evil) as brought by the human being upon himself. – Here, however, we are only talking of a propensity to

> genuine evil, i.e. moral evil, which, since it is only possible as the determination of a free power of choice … must reside in the subjective ground of the possibility of the deviation of the maxims from the moral law… [T]he will's capacity or incapacity arising from this natural propensity to adopt or not adopt the moral law in its maxims can be called the good or evil heart. (Rel, 6: 29)

For Kant, evil resides in a voluntary act of wrongdoings. It does not erupt out of external coercion and consequently, that it holds a revolutionary potential in negatively re-organizing spaces. Characteristically, Kant's conception of evil rests on three assumptions: that evil constitutes the underlying disposition of the human will; that evil is motivated by the preeminence of the principle of self-love; and finally, that all human beings are inclined to evil, even the best. What Kant tries to suggest is that, evil cannot thrive without endorsement and that it is nurtured as a matter of choice. This election by the individual to voluntarily behave in contravention to an established order is driven by a self-centered desire that refuses to recognize ethical restrictions. Thus, evil may be conceptualized within the context of egocentrism and the fallacy of reasoning. Singer (2004) however contends that Kant's conceptions of evil in human nature as the will or disposition or propensity to act on maxims contrary to the moral law is neither universal nor necessary. This is because according to Singer, not all maxims that are wrong—may be contrary to the moral law and therefore may not be evil, nor is the will to act on such a maxim necessarily an evil will. In his conceptions of evil, he postulates that:

> And the concept, in my conception of it, applies primarily to persons and organizations, secondarily to conduct and practices. Evil deeds must flow from evil motives, the volition to do something evil, by which I mean something horrendously bad. (p. 190)

While the two appear to disagree on the basis of judgmental inferences, they both agree that evil will develop if exposed to the right triggers. Thus, evil takes up the nature of something beyond the ordinary bad. Stein (2005) also makes a distinction between self-deception and self-love as advocated by Kant and he argues that evil thrives as a result of the upsurge of violent impulse which is usually borne out of sadistic tendencies. Although Stein's work is not a direct criticism on Kant, they both draw attention to the role of the self in initiating evil. In *Can Kant's Theory of Radical Evil be Saved?* Goldberg (2017)

assesses three contemporary criticisms levelled at Kant's theory in order to make an argument in his favour. He identifies three schools of thought: the first school claim that Kant's theory cannot adequately account for morally worse acts since he simply conflates evil with mundane acts of wrongdoings. The second group are also of the view that Kant ignores the polymorphic quality of evil by emphasizing self-love over moral law as the cause of evil and finally, that Kant fails to pay attention to the conditions of the victims by simply defining evil only in terms of 'perpetrator's quality of will'. Arguing in favour of Kant, Goldberg contends that Kant's theory of evil has the conceptual tools that sufficiently accounts for these criticisms. Particularly, Goldberg argues that self-love is the root of all non-moral incentives and therefore has implications for the worse kind of moral acts. Drawing on Kant, despite the intellectual debate about his conceptions of radical evil and in unison with Goldberg, we operationalize the term evil to include acts or actions that are cruelly intended to cause terror and pain. By evil, we mean mundane acts and actions that lead to disorientation, disintegration and disorganization of whose aggregate is traumatic to the *other*.

Representations of evil in Tadjo's Travelogue

Hatred is evil

Reading Tadjo's novel, we find that evil has a polymorphic character and it is irreducible to a single form. Drawing on the Genesis account of the creation story, Tadjo draws attention to the age living existence of evil:

> The concept of Evil existed even before the first sparks of sunlight, before the earth and the sky came together, and before the waters gave birth to the enormous womb of the oceans. 'Evil existed long before the breath of life, long before the presence of gods on earth (p. 116).

Tadjo calls attention to the fact that Rwanda was not without evil before the massacre. According to her travelogue, Rwanda was covered with darkness just like the earth was formless and empty with darkness covering its surface at the beginning of creation (Gen. 1:3). This darkness as she notes is embodied in the mechanisms of hatred, the deeds that put seal on treason (p. 118) and the ethnic rivalry that defined the relationship between the Hutus and Tutsis. In other words, for Tadjo, Rwanda was already living in a climate of danger on whose foundations Belgium took advantage. As she observes: "Hatred lies dormant in us all. What most torments us is that unpredictable feeling in our hearts which can awaken and tip us into a parallel universe." (p. 116)

The nature of hatred, as Tadjo describes it, is the motivation for violence. It is not of the intolerance and the indifference that had framed the ethnic rivalry in Rwanda. While she recognizes the chameleon quality of hatred, Tadjo contends that hatred produces a self-other binary similar to the divide and rule tactics of the colonial governments – something that leads to tribalism and racial discrimination.

The Other /Othering as Evil

The concept of the Other as put forward by postcolonial critics signifies that which is fundamentally different. The Other is usually treated as "mere object" and this objectification depicts the inability or refusal of the 'accepted/dominant' group to consider the other as a "subject" or as part of one's community. The other is considered passive and receptive and lacks agency (Fanon, 1961). These perceptions influence the dominant group to deny the other's actual existence. The Other is consequently treated in a way that is detached from the actual and the real and thus highlighting the distinction between the other and the dominant group. Othering is therefore a conscious process of discriminating and devaluing the worth of a minority group. In Tadjo's travelogue, there are two dimensions of othering - the first dimension involves power dynamics and the second looks at constructing the 'other' as 'pathological and morally inferior'. Tadjo's travelogue reveals the cracks brought about by the division and imbalance of power. The Hutu majority and Tutsi minority had lived in peaceful coexistence in precolonial Rwanda but this unity was disturbed when, after colonial rule, the colonial administration had failed to lay down succession plans. When the Hutu occupied the high positions in government, the Tutsis were relegated to the background and this power dynamics, according to Jensen, is the first dimension in the othering process. The ethnic other as a result is discarded as inferior and pathological. The Tutsis were slurred and the term 'cockroaches' became a discourse of abuse. In no time, what started as a feud between two ethnic groups escalated quickly into a genocide with lots of death and painful scars.

> "Nyamata Church. Site of genocide. Plus, or minus 35,000 dead.
> A woman bound hand and foot. Mukandori. Aged twenty five.
> Exhumed in 1997. Home: the town of Nyamata. Married.
> Any children?" (p.11).

The hatred and marginalization of the 'other' had grown so much that there were no hiding places for the ethnic other (Tutsis). As seen in the excerpt above, people were hunted and killed mercilessly. Those who were survivors were victims of rape (like Nelly). Sympathizers of the ethnic other also found themselves to be at risk of the persecution and killing; even churches became killing grounds. Tadjo appears to suggest that such deliberate marginalization constitute the precipitant for the ethnic tensions in Rwanda and consequently the genocide. She observes that:

> I am afraid when, in my country, I hear people talk of who belongs there and who doesn't. creating division. Creating foreigners. Inventing the idea of rejection. How is ethnic identity learned? Where does this fear of the Other comes from, bringing violence in its wake? (p. 37)

The idea of the Other is thus inimical and an apparent potential of eroding the valued communal life of the African. It is also important to note that the Ten Commandments is a strong statement that entrenches the otherness of the Tutsis. Indeed, the differentiation between the Tutsis and Hutus is an open acknowledgement of the wrongs and hostilities that edged the genocide. The attempt by the Habyarimana regime to establish a Hutu-dominated front was simply a move to create a political climate that will be detrimental to the Tutsis and therefore heightening ethnic polarization. Othering becomes the genesis of and Rwanda's evil. Part of Tadjo's commitment in this travel narrative is to draw attention to the need for cultural integration, creating right relationships and rectifying the wrongs of Othering.

Genocide is evil

Another important face of evil that Tadjo identifies is the evil of the Genocide.

> Genocide is Evil incarnate. Its reality exceeds any fiction. (…) Emotions can help us to understand what the genocide actually was. Silence is the worst thing of all. We must destroy indifference. We must understand the real meaning of the genocide, the accumulation of violence over the years. (pp. 26-27)

By conferring a bodily form unto the genocide, Tadjo acknowledges the genocide as an obvious touchable crime and a personified chief villain. Calling attention to the accumulation of violence and the silences of the marginalized

as the pioneers of this evil, she draws attention to the dangers of othering; warning against a continued suppression of the freedom of minority groups and alerting us of the possible traumatic productions that may arise. Thus, Tadjo calls for an ethical responsibility to ensure the politics of recognition and upholding the realities of individual and collective experiences. In Singer's words: " It is evil to torture someone for pleasure'; 'The Holocaust was evil'; 'Genocide is evil'; 'Slavery is evil'; 'Racism is evil'; Hitler was evil'. These statements all make sense, and they are all true." (p. 190).

What is significant from Singer's observation is the parallel between the present and the past. He tries to suggest that genocide like slavery and racism is pervasive, that they are new forms of colonial warfare that continue to shape present day experiences. This tendency of violence-chain is what Tadjo cautions against - that new forms of inequalities potentially recovers the memory of the wounds of the past and re-create an enigma of otherness.

Akin to the role played by political and ethnic polarization as the defining factors leading to the genocide, Tadjo observes that the real meaning of the genocide is a burning willingness to vent at the slightest provocation – a desire that is borne out of a hurtful frustration of endemic discrimination, an expression of pain and an outpouring of resentments.

Remembrance triggers evil

While Tadjo pays attention to the fracturing of self as a traumatic experience, she appears to conflate remembrance with evil:

> He talks, knowing that our imagination will never be able to get anywhere close to the reality. Deep down, he does not understand why we are coming to stir up Evil {Emphasis is mine}. Perhaps in the end all this will turn against him as he guards the evidence of our inhumanity. He cannot understand what we have come here to seek, what is concealed in our hearts. What hidden motive drives us to gaze wide-eyed at death distorted by hatred? (p.15)

In *Remembering War: The Great War Between Historical Memory and History in the Twentieth Century*, Winter (2006) asserts that the act of 'remembrance is always defined by its specificity – who, why and where – a symbolic exchange between those who remain and those who suffered or died'. In other words, by remembrance there is a retrieval of past knowledge which succeeds in drawing a distinction between humanity and viciousness. The victim in the above interaction finds the process of recollection as reviving experiences of bereavement – an act that complicate the state of endangerment and

vulnerability of survivors. Thus, by his seeming hesitation, the victim refuses to trigger horrific memories and the frailties of humanity. The 100 days of torture, man's slaughter, mortal losses, particularly of children and infants, the silences and anguish of mothers and the invisible suffering of the raped can only be consciously buried in the archives with little success. The story of the Zairean woman who looked like a Tutsi – a woman who had to look on as her baby was slaughtered like a fowl and the woman who suffered not just the brutish scolding of the penis but was horrendously violated by a pickaxe cannot stand the recovery of such experiences from the genocide archives. This presumes that inherent in remembrance is witnessing to the failed humanitarian agency that is required in prefiguring the future terrain in Rwanda. Tadjo's attempt at fluxing remembrance to evil is justified since it leads to a disorientation of an already unstable groups. The aftermath of the genocide as Dupont & Scheibe (nd) captures as:

> One of the worst in the history of humankind. Within a period of less than three months. at least 500,000 people were killed: thousands and thousands were maimed, raped and both physically and psychologically afflicted for life; two million fled to neighboring countries: and one million became internally displaced (p. 52).

The physical and psychological affliction of the genocide has left behind a perpetual climate of fear and terror that complicate the dialectics of remembrance. Despite the obvious complications she acknowledges, Tadjo also recognizes the therapeutic function of remembrance. She appears to suggest that although remembrance is a tribute to evil, it relieves the pain of memory by neutralizing the desire for revenge:

> To disarm our urges for death, we must recognize within ourselves the fears that drive us. We must draw the sting from the wounds of the past, our own wounds and those that others have inflicted upon us, those we have inherited from our parents and those we might pass on to our children. The wounds buried deep in our hearts. (p. 116)

The Quest for Postcolonial Healing

One of the key commitments of the postcolonial critic is not simply to comment on the effects of the imperial process of colonialism. Rather, the postcolonial critic is much interested in assessing the possibility of healing and

alternative ways of deconstructing oppressive paradigms. Tadjo's need to exorcise Rwanda is quite crucial in terms of the ways in which it intends to proffer options, probing into the necessity of healing and helping to reveal the deep-seated ethnic polarization between the Tutsis and the Hutus. She identifies the essence of recognizing the necessity of difference, strong institutions, justice and national reconciliation as key to the healing and recovery of Rwanda: "How can we ensure that this never happens again? What is needed are strong institutions, justice and national reconciliation (…). What we have to understand is the absolute necessity of difference. The necessity of difference (pp. 23 & 26)." The genesis of the genocide gives credence to the call for recognizing the necessity of difference. Tadjo appears to contend that the physical fear of the Other is contagious. It is an obvious bane to Africa's communal vision and that a careful assessment of the Rwandan crisis must lead to a conscious political re-awakening of colonial subjects to embrace cohesive structures that will hasten the journey into the future. Drawing attention to the cruelty in the persecution of the Tutsis, Tadjo appears to suggest that Africa may continue to be handicapped should there be an internal scramble for identity. She further stresses this need through a careful juxtaposition of the post-apartheid conditions in South Africa to the climate of betrayal in Rwanda in order to show the dangers of marginalization.

While she condemns the practice of discrimination as the birth of the hatred that led to the genocide, Tadjo seems to acknowledge the complicity of state institutions in the Rwandan crisis. One of the key institutions that cannot escape our interrogation is the role played by the media. The suspicion that characterized the reportage on the genocide clearly indicates the role of external influences in the massacre. Again, the church as the site of the genocide remains a historical proof of the ambivalences that shaped the colonial project and the dynamics of slavery. Muvuti (2018) affirms the fact that:

> The advent of Christianity and Islam on the back of conquest and mission brought about more than a simple superimposition of the colonial religion over the African, it effectively led to the systematic scrambling, confusion and re-writing of homo religious in the African context. It destabilized the very foundations of the African interpretation and representation of meaning and existence (p. 36).

Indeed, the crux of Africa's crisis cannot be disconnected from the failures of religion which is why the possibility of forgiveness appears unlikely. What is yet to be resolved as Tadjo assesses is to pay attention to the

relationship between forgiveness and remembrance; how historical anger can be dealt with amidst the recurrence of injustices? In *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Tutu (1999) asserts that:

> Now we don't have to be too smart to think what horrors would have befallen our land had Madiba advocated revenge instead of forgiveness, retribution instead of reconciliation, peace instead of continued hostility and the armed struggle- there would have been no future. Our land would have lain in dust and ashes.

Although Tutu's observation is premised on South Africa's circumstance, it affirms Tadjo's convictions of reclaiming Rwanda as a site of horror. The binary oppositions of revenge and forgiveness; of retribution and reconciliation; of peace and hostilities clearly show the implications of the choices available to Rwanda. Thus, Rwanda's redemption is carefully located within the utility of forgiveness. So that, Rwanda can be weaned from the pessimism of hope that has engulfed their men and women. The birth of a new future, as Tadjo envisions, is dependent on the attempts to guard against the desire for vengeance and the perpetual cycle of violence and reprisals (p. 47).

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to demonstrate that key to understanding Tadjo's commitment in her travelogue is a sustained engagement with her evident references to the concept of evil. We have shown that an understanding of what constitute evil is in itself a diagnostic to the traumatogenic experience in Rwanda. We have successfully outlined the representations of evil - paying attention to how Kant becomes a useful resource in understanding the symbolic constitution of evil - and how evil frames the failures of humanity. While at this, the content of this paper has also shown that Rwanda's recovery is dependent on letting go of any rights to retaliation, avoiding collateral acts of violence and utilizing forgiveness as an essential for a new beginning. Further studies may be required to pay attention to how other African writers re-conceptualize evil to reflect the unique experiences of postcolonial subjects.

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Lundaa as speech surrogate of Dagbamba

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Abstract

The paper examines surrogate language in Dagbani, a Mabia language spoken in Northern Region of Ghana. The objectives of the paper are in two folds: it pays attention to its functions and its transformation from traditional to the contemporary sociocultural issues. Premised on participant-observation, the paper supports the multi-toned language represented on a pressure drum capable of many pitches. It attests that the *lundaa* 'pressure drum' is a speech surrogate used among Dagbani speakers. The *lundaa* has a wide distribution of functions but this paper is focused on the core functions of drum language that include *molo* 'announcement', *salima* 'Panegyric', *gɪŋgaani* 'invocation' and *ŋaha* 'proverbs' as examples of drum literature and transformation. The paper suggests that the communication potential of the *lundaa* rhythms and its interpretation leads to an understanding of the sociocultural life of the people.

Keywords: Dagbani, lundaa, lunsi, drum, surrogate language.

Introduction

The paper examines speech surrogate in Dagbani, a Mabia language spoken in Northern Region of Ghana. It focuses on the *lundaa* [1] 'hourglass shaped drum" as a surrogate instrument that imitates the tonal patterns of spoken language in Dagbani (Asangba 2021; Salifu & Gurindow 2014; Suad 2011; Albert 2010; Salifu 2008, 2007; Locke 1990). Among the Dagbamba, Mamprusi and

[1] Abbreviations used in this paper include: 1, 2, and 3 = first, second and third person respectively, anim. = animate, conj. = conjunction, emph = emphatic, foc. = focus, rel. = relative, imperf = imperfective, inanim. = inanimate, loc. = locative, neg. = negative morpheme, perf = perfective, pl. = plural, sg. = singular, par t= particle

Nanumba of Northern Ghana, instruments such as *timpana* 'talking drum', *luŋa* 'hourglass shaped drum', *daligu* 'ancient framed drum', *goonje* 'bowed lute', *chichaɣ'sa* 'gourd rattle', *dawule* 'double bell', and *kikaa* 'trumpet', are commonly used as surrogate instruments. The primary drum of Dagbamgba in the past was *daligu,* which was the original talking drum, but it is now practically extinct as observed by Kinney (1970). It is very common to hear the stream of sounds, *luɣ'mi tiba wum a ba yili yɛlli* 'open your ears and listen to matters pertaining to your paternity,' played to alert a patron or a chief. The *lundaa* among the drums in Dagbani is the only talking drum that is used to communicate this kind of alert. The traditional instrument chosen for this paper is the *lundaa,* which has the capabilities of imitating speech text or the speaking voice and simultaneously serves as a musical instrument in a performance.

Luŋa 'hourglass shaped drum' is a double-headed hourglass shaped tension drum made up of a wooden frame that is carved from *taan-tia* 'shea nut tree' popularly known in Akan as *nkudua.* Each end of the shell is covered with an animal skinhead sewn onto a circular rim made of reed and grass. The two ends are connected by antelope skin tension cords from one end of the shell to the other end as described by Suad (2011). This is presented in Figure 1.

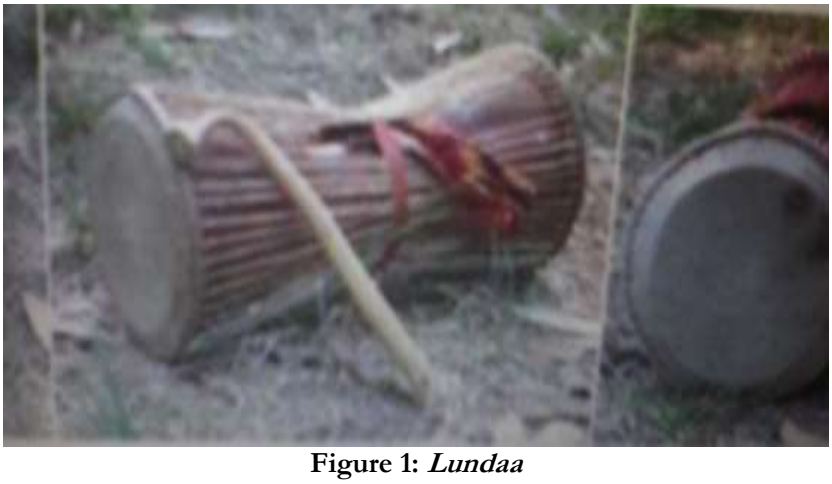

Figure 1: *Lundaa*

Lundaa is one of the *lunsi* ensembles, which consists of the *lundaa* 'lead drum', *luŋ-bila* 'support lead drum' and *gunŋ-goŋ* 'bass drum'. The *gunŋ-goŋ* is a double headed medium sized cylindrical bass drum with snares on each head as seen in Figure 2. It produces a rich bass tone when struck in the middle and has a wide array of high overtones and buzz when played.

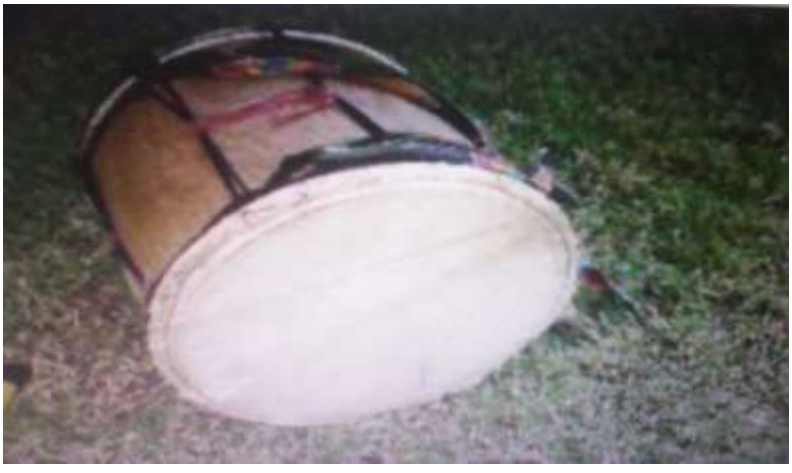

Figure 1: *guŋ-goŋ*

Lundaa is played with *lundɔli* 'curved wooden stick' held in the hand while it[*lundaa*] is suspended from the shoulder by a scarf or rope tied to the central cylinder shell that fitted snugly into the drummer's armpit as seen in Figure 3. The playing is accompanied by skillfully squeezing and pulling the tension cords to change the tension and thus the tone of the drum. The tonal language being played with a natural high (H) and low (L) patterns which is usually not predictable is transposed to the *lundaa* by the 'drummer' to imitate the spoken tones.

Figure 3: Lung Bako playing *lundaa* using *lundɔli*

This paper discusses speech surrogate in Dagbani speaking societies paying attention to its functions and transformation from traditional to the contemporary sociocultural issues as the main objectives. It also discusses the communication potential of the *lundaa* rhythms and how the interpretation of the rhythms leads to an understanding of the sociocultural life of Dagbamba.

The paper is structured as follows: section 1 presents literature review and data used in this paper. Section 2 describes the content showing *lundaa* as speech surrogate in Dagbani. Section 3 concludes the paper.

Literature Review and data

Agyekum (2013) states that oral form of literature may be carried out in a non-verbal form in symbols or in a surrogate language like a drum, horn or whistle language and notes that drum language refers to the representation of the spoken language with strokes played on it. Arhin (2009) notes that among the Akan, Ewe and the Ga of Ghana, instruments such as the *atumpan* 'talking drums', double bell, slit gong, and *ntahera or aseseben* 'talking trumpets' are commonly used as surrogate instruments. In Congo, *sése* 'bowed lute' serves also as talking instruments while the hourglass drum is used most frequently among the Yoruba and areas of Dagbani ancestry. Arhin (2009) studies the *mmensoun* 'seven horns' as a speech surrogate used among the Fante of Ghana and explains that its ensemble basically consists of seven different horns; namely, *sɛsɛ-1, ɔfar-1, agyesoa -2, abɔso-2* and *out-1*.

Finnegan (2012) mentions that remarkable phenomenon in parts of West Africa is the literature played on drums and certain other musical instruments and notes that drum language is indeed a form of literature rather than music when the principles of drum language are understood. She describes that the expression of words through instruments of which drum is an example rests on the fact that the African languages are tonal. It is the tone patterns of the words that are directly transmitted, and the drum is constructed to provide at least two tones for the use in this way. The intelligibility of the message to the hearer is also sometimes increased by the rhythmic pattern directly representing the spoken utterance of the people. The tonal patterns that are heard as stream of rhythmic sounds from the drum usually provide a slight clue to the actual words being played.

A drum comprises at least one membrane, called drum head or drum skin, that is stretched over a shell and struck, either directly with the player's hand, or with a drumstick, to produce sound. It is a member of the percussion group of musical instruments, technically classified as the membranous (Arhin 2009). Suad (2011) explains that the use of drum as a speech surrogate for communicative purposes is in three rudimental rhythmic procedures:

communication, entertainment and both communication and entertainment. Among the three procedures, the interest of this paper is the communicative function of the drum. Salifu (2008) notes that the drum 'talks' when it imitates the tonal patterns of the people and specific drum beats are synonymous with certain signals.

Albert (2010) observes that *lundaa* 'lead drum' is placed underneath the arm and it is played with a curved stick (cf. figure 3) by imitating the sounds of spoken language through pitch variation. Locke (1990) acknowledges that Dagbani language played on the *lundaa,* an African drum, has a multi-tone while the Twi language played on the *atumpan* has a single tone. This explains the fact that the *lundaa* is therefore a bi-tonal surrogate instrument as noted by Salifu (2008) that when the *lundaa* 'talks', then it is imitating the tonal patterns of the people using some specific drum beats that are synonymous with certain intonations. Suad (2011) observes that the *lundaa* held under drummer's armpit is pressed and released to change the tension of the drum-head, thus changing its intoned pitches by setting implicit text melodies that closely resemble the sound of speech.

Finnegan (2012) notes that the type of drum communication known to occur widely in West Africa applies the same principle of representing tones of actual speech through stereotyped phrases and that it is also used for 'spoken' communication through other instruments such as horns, flutes, or gongs. Among the Dagbamba in Ghana, the drum language and literature are very highly developed (e.g. Asangba 2021) and in such cases, drumming tends to be a specialized and often hereditary activity, and expert drummers with a mastery of the accepted vocabulary of drum language and literature were often attached to a king's court.

The data for this study was based on the Nayahili dialect of Dagbani obtained from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected using focus key informant interviews and direct participant-observation. I observed some epic narrations during the eve of some festivals (e.g. Damba) and took part in some performances by some male groups in funerals. Some of the musical performances were also recorded during the epic narration at the chief's court and the durbar grounds. My main interest was on the *lundaa,* which was used apart from the oral singing in the form of narration. The data were recorded with the permission of the chief drummer who also helped to explained most of the sounds played on the *lundaa.* The performances were followed by focus interviews with both the performers and a cross-section of the audience to ascertain the meanings and interpretations of the rhythms. My personal intuitions have been used to complement the information I gathered from the unstructured interviews I had with Iddrisu *luŋa* 'drummer' from Yendi and *zaŋ-lun-naa* Sayibu 'zaŋ's chief drummer. The

secondary data were collected from Dagbani literature on drum language (Suad 2011; Salifu 2008), which is not Nayahili.

Speech Surrogate in Dabgani

Finnegan (2012:467) explains that "communication through drums can be divided into two types. The first is through a conventional code where pre-arranged signals represent a given message, in this type there is no direct linguistic basis for the communication." The second type is the one used for African drum literature where the instruments communicate through direct representation of the spoken language itself." The second type is the form to be considered in this paper. Finnegan believes that in drum language, there are obvious conventional occasions and types of communication for transmission on the drum, so the listener already has some idea of the range of meanings that are likely at any given time. There are significant stereotyped phrases used in drum communications and these are often longer than the straight-forward prose of everyday utterance, but the extra length of the drum stereotypes or holophrases lead to greater identifiability in rhythmic and tonal patterning (Finnegan 2012).

Illustrating this principle in drum language, I observed that in Dagbani surrogate language, single words such as *gbuɣin-li* 'lion', *nɔb-laa* 'bull elephant' which are used by drummers to catch the attention of their patrons have identical tonal and rhythmic patterns. The addition of other words (e.g. *bia* 'child') to produce a stereotyped drum phrases such as *gbuɣinli-bia* 'son of a lion', *nɔb-laa-bia* 'son of a bull elephant' results into complete tonal and rhythmic differentiation, which the meaning is transmitted without ambiguity. Verbs phrasing with nouns are similarly represented in long stereotyped phrases which have their own characteristic forms - marked by such attributes as the use of duplication and repetition, derogatory and diminutive terms, specific tonal contrasts and typical structures as in che_{v} $yuri_{N}$ $bari_{V}$ $kɔri_{N}$ 'leaves horses and rides roan antelopes'. Similarly, in Dagbani, there are stereotyped phrases such X-*dabuɣu-lana* 'inheritor of X'; Y *zuu* 'Y's first born son' that shows a complex structure and other phrases that are used as pet names of patrons as addressives, for example *gɔ mma shaara* for Naa Yakubu and *zanjina mankaana* for Naa Mohammadu. Salifu (2008) observes that the phrase sound the drum makes is not the same as the meaning, but they get associated to each other because the people have over the years decided to equate the sound to a specific meaning. The drum for example, makes the sound *pam pam-li,* which has no independent meaning of its own, but has been used as a sign by the drummers to refer to the King of the Dagombas, the Yaa Naa, and cannot be drummed for any other.

Lundaa as explained earlier is an instrument that communicates through direct representation of the spoken language itself, simulating the tone and rhythm of actual speech. The instruments itself is regarded as speaking and its messages consist of phrases through conventional signals which are intended as a linguistic one. The relevance of the *lundaa* for oral literature is not confined to utilitarian messages with a marginally literary flavour. As will emerge clearly from some further examples, this type of medium can also be used for specific literary forms, for proverbs, panegyrics, historical poems, dirges, and culturally, for any kind of poetry.

A key strength of *Dagbamba* surrogate language is that it is orally transmitted through the *lundaa* by *Namɔɣu* 'chief master drummer' across generations, and various genres that exist among the people. Apart from the aesthetic functions of the *lundaa*, it also serves as a storehouse of knowledge and history of the Dagbani speakers. It is also a belief that the *lundaa* is very vital to the survival of Dagbaŋ's culture and it is primarily considered as a tool for entertainment. However, the artistic function is important, not as an end in itself but as a means to achieving a higher end, which is the transmission of historical and cultural information (Salifu & Gurindow 2014; Salifu 2007, 2008).

The *Namɔɣu* is traditionally recognized by the society as the master of surrogation, so everyone including the Yaa-Naa (literally means 'King of Power') respects his role in the society. The belief in surrogate language is part of the tradition among Dagbamba. As part of understanding tradition, it is good for one to learn and understand drum language as form of communication competence in a society. Traditionally, every member of the society is one way or the other is required to understand the drum language especially those from the royal families. *Namɔɣu* is traditionally described as the 'wife' of the Yaa-Naa. Salifu (2008) describes the chief drummer as the beloved of the ruler (Yaa-naa), and each addresses the other in terms of endearment, the chief being the husband and the drummer his wife. There is a hierarchy of prestigious titles within the drummer caste, which makes them chiefs in their own right, so the *Namɔɣu* well known as *Namo-naa* is said to be the paramount chief of all the master drummers in *Dagbaŋ*. By hierarchy, *Sanpahi-naa* is the next in command among the master drummers.

Namɔɣu according to the *Dagbaŋ* tradition once belonged to the royal hierarchy but got eliminated into the commoner class as contests for ascendancy to the *Yani skin* grew keener with more eligible princes being born to the Kings. He belongs to the *lunsi* 'drummer's guild' family and he was one of the sons of *Naa-Gbewaa* whose mother was not leaving in the palace. The origin of *lunsi* 'drummer's guild' is traced to the story of *Biziŋ* 'an outcast' who played empty tins to praise his brothers for food. Suad (2011) notes that all

lunsi trace their descent from *Biziŋ* who gave up the chance to be a chief in favour of becoming a master drummer. He was then charged to organize drum guild purposely to tell the political history of the *Dagbamba,* and since then *luŋa* is played by members of a hereditary lineage called *lunsi* who have become a social family whose members are proud of their social status in Dagbaŋ. Salifu (2008) mentions that historically, the great ancestor of all drummers, *Biziŋ*, son of *Naa Nyaɣ'si*, was apprenticed to *luŋ' ʒaɣu* to be schooled in the art of drumming and praise singing when the young motherless player's music attracted his attention upon hearing his son [Biziŋ] aptitude for music and with time he became the stellar drummer. The people of *Dagbaŋ*, therefore, have the notion that *lunsi* are one of the cultural families in the northern part of Ghana with a very sophisticated oral culture woven around the *luŋa* and other surrogate instruments. So the history of the people until quite recently has been based on oral tradition with the drummers as professional historians who serve as verbal artists, royal counselors, cultural experts, and entertainers.

Namɔɣu is strategically placed in the midst of this political environment, and everyone has need for his services since he is the most important of the principal communicative officials of the chief. There cannot be a royal house where there is no drummer. Salifu (2007:99) notes "by and large, communicating with the chief involves a process of surrogating either through a musical instrument (drum, fiddle or flute) or an elder ... [and] some messages can only be passed on to the Yaa-Naa by way of drumming."

Drum language and literature are very highly developed as drumming tends to be a specialised and often hereditary activity, and expert drummers with a mastery of the accepted vocabulary of drum language and literature are often attached to a king's court. The drum type of expression is a highly skilled and artistic one and it adds to the verbal resources of the language (Finnegan 2012). In order to acquire this skill, training of a *luŋ* 'person who plays drum' starts in early childhood as one becomes a *luŋa* 'drummer' by virtue of being born into the drummer's caste, and starts receiving instructions immediately. It is a general practice by Dagbamba to give out a biological son to a colleague drummer to teach the art of drumming since it is a life-long profession and thus needs to be taken very seriously. The young drummer practices his lessons on market days by drumming the stock phrase *dakɔli n nyɛ bia* "the bachelor is inferior" at the market. By way of encouragement, he is given monetary presents by traders who would also occasionally ask him to eulogize their forebears (see Salifu 2008). The people have the notion that any money they get from an outing to the palace or market is brought home for the chief drummer to distribute it among all the drummers including the women who belong to the family since it is ominous to hide such money from the group.

The instructional content of the *lundaa* is esoteric and considered sacred, so magical charms and potions are sought to enhance the learner's prowess and retentive memory, and also ward off the evil-eye of rivals and envious people. The *lunsi* essentially stand to demonstrate the duty as a tool used by the ethnic group to delineate who they are, and every individual must recognize and must respect them as the tradition bearers. They do not beg for money or attention and every *Dagbaŋ bilichina* 'conscientious Dagomba citizen' ought to see it as his/her duty to see to the drummers' upkeep just as they (the drummers) have sacrificed over centuries to keep the oral tradition alive by reminding the people of their individual and collective histories.

Functions

This section provides response to the first objective that seeks to examine the functions of *lundaa* as speech surrogate. Drum language fulfills many of the functions of writing, in a form, better suited to tonal languages like Dagbani. The relevance of a drum language for oral literature is a type of medium that can be used for specific literary forms such as proverbs, panegyrics, historical poems, and dirges. Nketia (1974) cited in Agyekum (2013:152) identifies four different forms of drum language based on its core functions and these are: Information and Announcement, Panegyric, Invocation and Proverbs.

The lundaa as a speech surrogate can be used to perform all the four core functions of a drum language identified by Nketia (1974) from traditional to the contemporary social cultural issues. The *lundaa* has a number of possible pitch inflections and based on this characteristic, its primary functions are to describe the lineage of the people and to send linguistic messages. It later found its use in religious chants or poetry, local festivities and dancing. It functions by transposing the spoken language into polyrhythmic framework, which imitates the spoken language, in music. When the strings that hold the heads running the length of the *lundaa* are squeezed under the arm, it builds up pressure within the drum to regulate the resultant pitch sounds; when the drum is squeezed, the pitch is high but when the pressure is released, the pitch lowers (Albert 2010). In everyday drumming, drum music employs a call as in (1a) and response (1b) format, where the *lundaa* 'lead drum' sets the pace and the ensemble responds to its calls in order to create unity of sounds, and it[*lundaa*] again improvises as well as decides when to change tunes.

1. a. ***lundaa* calls**

to zam buɣili dapala	'Son of Naa Zangina'
mani mini ŋun kpuɣ-ra	'I know he is the one who takes'
mani mini ni buɣili noo	'I know it is the gods fowl.'

b. **repose by *lunsi* ensemble**

mani mini o-kpuɣi	'I know he will take it'.
hoi	hey!
buɣili noo ka o kpuɣi	'It is the god's fowl he took'
zaŋ ti kpim-ba la	'Take give the ancestors.' (Locke 2002:1)

Traditionally, the role the drummer plays in relation to the chief is essentially one of mutual dependence. The drummer depends upon the ceremonies and other obligations of the chief in order to fulfill his function as an artist and to gain recognition for himself. The chief, in turn, depends upon the reliability of the drummer to maintain the dignity for both himself and his subjects and the relevance of the traditions. Before the arrival of western formal education in Dagbaŋ, the drummers, keepers of the oral tradition, were both instructors in etiquette and practitioners of performative arts. Salifu (2008) observes that each text played on the *lundaa* is surrounded by a lot of history, which needs to be combined in order to get a holistic theatrical experience and the meaning of a text is negotiated between the drummer and the listeners' shared history.

Communication

Traditionally, sound was one of the possible ways of communicating in the past. The usefulness of drum language among *Dagbamba* to communicate through sound is undeniable. The *lundaa* as a surrogate instrument for communication is used for formalized announcements in *Dagbaŋ* since the reign of *Naa Nyaɣisi* (1416-1432), grandson of *Naa Gbewaa*. The *lundaa* is used to give messages about, for instance, arrival, royal births, marriages, deaths, communal labour and forthcoming hunts as its communicative functions.

Arrival

The sub-chiefs and the elders of the villages in the north usually visit the chief's palace every Mondays and Fridays to pay homage to the chief. When any of the visitors is arriving at the palace, it is a traditional norm to use the *lundaa* apart from the usual *timpana* 'talking drums' to announce to the chief about the arrival of the chief or the elder and other guests who also visit the royal palace. The *lundaa* is played by the master drummer to communicate to the chief by announcing the arrival of the visiting elders or guests. The *lundaa*

which is the lead drum actually plays a verse that names the visitor and where the person comes from. The following illustrates how the *lundaa* is used to announce to the chief about chiefs who arrive at the palace as visitors:

2a *kumbuŋu naa paarina nayili*
Kumbuŋu chief arriving palace
'Kumbuŋu chief is arriving at the place.'

2b. *kandi nima dabari zaani kuro*
Kandi people deserted-compounds institutor old
'The old annihilator of Kandi people.'

2c. *yɛlizoli naa paarina nayili*
yɛlizoli chief arriving palace
'Yɛlizoli's chief is arriving at the palace'

2d. *dini m beni shɛli n kani*
what be-there something be-there
'What's there to fear? There's nothing to be afraid of.'

The examples in (2) announce the arrival of Kumbun-naa Zakali and Yɛlizoli-lana Yidantɔɣima to the palace of the Yaa-naa. It also gives the public update of the praise names of the chiefs as in (2b) and (2d) who come to visit the chief. It announces the presents of the people who also accompany him and how long it has been since the last visit to the palace, if time is permitted, it tells the family's history of the visitor. This is significant to the chief because he gets to know who has come to his palace and how to prepare himself spiritually before stepping out. He may also decide not to come out if he senses danger and in this case he will send his elders to meet the fellow. When the chief delays in coming out to see the visitor, the example below is played to persuade him to come out early:

3. *n duma wuntaŋa biira*
my lord sun rising
'My lord, the sun is rising.'

Once the chief receives this message as in (3), then he reacts to it by sending one of his subjects to tell the visitors to wait for him while he prepares or he comes out immediately.

Royal births

Among *Dagbamba,* birth is pubilicised on the *lundaa* by a special alert signal through the words beaten out in drum language. A message on births through

the drum is only done in *Dagbaŋ* when a child is born to the *Namɔɣu* royal family. Any other child born in the society is not announced through the drum. The *lundaa* is played to inform the society that a new baby is born to the *lunsi* family. It first gives thanks to God as in example (4a); the ancestors as in example (4b) and finally the name of the family member who has been reincarnated in (5a) and (5b). Reincarnation is a specific belief or doctrine about the idea of a rebirth; it is a strong belief of the people of Dagbaŋ. These are the words beaten out in the drum language:

4a. *ti paɣi kpiɛŋ-lana naawuni*
we thank Almighty God
'We give thanks to the Almighty God.'

4b. *ti zaŋ jilima tiri kpiimba*
we take respect give ancestors
'We give respect to our ancestors.'

5a. *jɛrigu bi mi ni yɛla biɛra*
fool neg know that problems pain
'A fool does not know that problems are painful.'

5b. *zuɣusuŋ lana yɛli gubra ku nyaŋ ninvuɣu yino*
head-good owner problem together neg defeat person.sg one
'A good person's problem is fought together by many'

The data in (4a) is played to give thanks to the almighty God for giving them a child while (4b) is played to give respect to the ancestors and gods and to inform the people about the ancestor who has returned as a newly born baby in (5a). The praise name of the ancestor who has returned is presented in examples (5a) and (5b) which also inform the people about the sex of the baby if the praise name refers to a man or woman. The name of the ancestor whose name is played in examples (5a) and (5b) was called *Namɔ-Naa* Issahaku who died in 1999 in Yendi. Mentioning his praise name signifies that he has been reincarnated and his name will be given to the baby. The *lunsi* by tradition attend the naming ceremonies of every child born in the society.

Deaths

Among Dagbamba, it is mostly the chief or the *Namɔɣu* whose death are publicized on the *lundaa* by a special alert signal beaten by the master drummer to formerly announce his death to the people though verbal messages will have been sent to the elders and the sub-chiefs.The formal announcement is done when the elders and the sub-chiefs are all gathered at the palace. The words beaten out in the drum language are in the form below:

6a. *a che ti zali sochira zuɣu ka fo surum surum*
you left us stand cross-road head and be quiet silent silent
'You left us on a crossroad and kept silent.'
b. *chandi bɔ ka a chaŋ-ŋɔ naawuni ni kulisi*
going what and you gone God will send
'What kind of journey have you embarked on? God will send you home.'

The examples in (6a) and (6b) are mostly played to communicate with the dead person by asking him why he left without a word and the kind of journey he has embarked as well as wishing him to rest in peace in the hand of God. This is then followed with the formal announcement of the death in a drum language as in examples (7) and (8).

7. *kom bɔriya kom bɔri-ya*
water muddying water maddying
'The water has become muddy.' (to mean the chief is dead)
8. *naa bɔ niŋ ka a fo surum surum*
chief what do and you be quiet silent silent
'Chief, what happened to you and you are silent, silent?'

The words in (7) are played to formerly announce the death of the chief and once it is played, everyone within the traditional area understands that the chief is dead. In example (8), it communicates to the dead by asking him why he is silent by way of lamentations. Just as the chief's death is announced, his praise name is played to remind the people about the departed soul and this is what the *lundaa* says:

9. *buɣili kalo ban damda ni wum viri*
shrine plate those shaking will hear noise
'Those who shake the plate of the shrine will hear the noise'

The example in (9) literally means that the chief is like a shrine's plate and cannot be touched; it explains that the enemies who dare him will face it. For instance, when Naa Mahama Bila died, the praise name in example (10) was played to prove that he was the one who died.

10. *ʒiri laɣim kɔbiga, yɛlimaŋli ko n gari.*
lies sum hundred true alone he pass
'When lies sum-up to a hundred, only one truth surpasses all.'

The example in (10) can also mean one single truth is better than a hundred falsehoods. The *lundaa* on this occasion is also used to announce to the dead chief about the other chiefs who arrive at the palace for his burial, it does this by first announcing his praise name as Salifu (2008) notes that at social functions such as funerals, drummers' function by publicizing whoever is present. They 'introduce' each person to others in much the same way as a third-party mutually known to two strangers needs to introduce them to each other in western society. This is illustrated in (10) above and an example of announcing arrival in example (11) below:

11a. *Vogu naa kanna*
vogu chief coming
'Vogu's chief is coming'

11b. *n-duuma-naawuni chɛli kpaliga ka banli paai du*
my-lord-God leave oak-tree and lizard reach climb.
'God should protect the oak tree for the lizard to climb and praise God.

The example in (11a) announces the arrival of a chief and also gives the public update of the praise name of the chief who has come to see the burial in (11b). The activities of the burial are also announced through the *lundaa.* Salifu (2008) observes that at the burial ceremonies of chiefs, drumming the praises of the departed will make the deceased rest in peace. It is believed the soul of the departed will not leave this upper world if it is not given the require drum-dirge accompanied by its praises. So the chief is then told as presented in (12).

12. *don-mi balim ka tiŋ maai*
lie down calm and ground cool
'Lie perfectly down (rest in peace) for calm to prevail'

Among the people, for instance, births, ordinary deaths, and marriages are not normally publicized as it is done for the chiefs.

2.1.1.4 Forthcoming Hunts

Piɛli 'bush hunting' is an annual mandatory hunting by the youth in every Dagbani speaking society. The main purpose is to hunt the bush animals in order to reduce them or chase them to a far place so that there will be little destruction by these animals' activities to farms during the farming season.Other reasons include past-time, hobby, form of exercise and income generation. *Piɛgɔriba*.pl (piɛgɔra.sg) are groups of young men who do annual

hunting in every part of the area but they are different from the traditional hunters. This is mostly done during the pre-farming seasons.

A hunter is called *tɔha* in Dagbani but the annual hunt is called *piɛli*. The *lundaa* is normally used to announce this event to the public and invites them for the hunting in Yendi but Tamale the *guŋgoŋ* is used instead. The *lundaa* is used to announce to the people about a forthcoming hunt mostly in the evening before the hunting day or very early in the morning of the hunting day; this is done by providing the name of the place where they will go for the hunt. The location of the hunting is announced by using the *lundaa* by playing the praise name of the chief of the community where they will be going for the hunt as illustrated below:

13. *bɛ bɔli ma tiŋ-ŋmara tinsa ala ka n ŋma*
they call me town-breaker towns how and I break
'They call me a village destroyer, how many of villages have I destroyed?'

Once the praise name is announced as in (13), those who understand the drum language get the meaning right away and understand the location but those who do not understand drum language will have to stop the drummer and then ask him for the location. When it is time for them to go for the hunting, the following is played to prompt them:

14. *piɛgɔriba piɛgɔriba ti chamya wuntaŋ biira*
hunters hunters let go sun rising
'Hunters, let us go for the sun is rising'

The example in (14) is played to invite the people to come out and go for the hunting. Then as they are in the bush hunting the animals; the drummer keeps playing to direct them and keeps updating them about the locations in the bush and the dangers in some places in the bush. But most importantly, the drummer also reminds the hunting group of his reward as presented in (15).

15. *ŋun ku ŋun ŋmai ti ma*
who kill should cut give me
'Who ever kills should cut my portion for me'

The *lundaa* will again announce to the group when it is time for them to go home after a whole day's hunting for animals in the bush, this is illustrated in example (16) below:

16. *Piɛgɔriba pegɔriba ŋmalgimya wuntaŋ lura*
Hunters hunters turn sun setting
'Hunters, let us go home for the sun is setting'

The example in (16) is played to end the day's hunting by announcing to the people and they respond by gathering where the day's hunting started. Those who get missing in the bush follow the drum signal to find their way home as the drummer keeps playing.

Panegyric

Panegyric is a praise poetry of which drum poetry is a genre to which public and ceremonial performance in drum language are particularly suited whether the actual medium happens to be in fact *drums*, *gongs*, or wind instruments (Finnegan 2012). In *Dagbaŋ* societies, panegyrics drums such as *lundaa* and *timpana* are used to drum praise songs for honouring kings and chiefs both the past and the present. The drum, which is used by the master drummers, tells the history of the past and the present. As stated earlier, the *lundaa* has a multiple tone and can communicate different genres including lengthy histories and genealogies. In most contexts, the material spoken by drums consists of short proverbs that are used as an appellation or a praise name for a particular chief. Like the *lunsi*, the *timpana*, which was borrowed from the Asantes *atumpan*, is also played by a family of master drummers called *akarima* whose lineage is traced to the Asantes. The interesting thing is that the person who plays it may not understand Twi but he is able to play the praise songs in the Twi language of the Asantes and sometimes in Dagbani as well. Though most of the listeners do not speak Twi, they are also able to decode the message of the talking drum. The examples below illustrate praise names using the *timpana* in both Dagbani in (17a) and Twi in (17b):

17a. *samban gira gira duu surum*
outside noisy noisy room silent
'Outside is noisy but the room is silent.'

The example in (17a) is played when a person dies; it is used to announce that there are many people outside the house doing more consultations while the dead is silently in the room.

17b. *onipa boni chɛri moko*
person bad forbid pepper
'A bad person is more dangerous than pepper.'

The example in (17b) is the praise name of Kar'naa Ziblim which tells his inner character since some appellations start with a person's behavior. Kar'naa Ziblim was a kind of person who would always want to revenge for any crime that was committed against him by someone.

The *lundaa* on the other hand recalls the origin, the parentage and the noble deeds of the chief who is praised. The following is an extract of *Diari-lana* Bukali's appellation; he was a very strong warrior of Naa Zanjina and the key warrior among Naa Andani Siɣili's warriors during the battle with *Kumpatia* (the war between Dagombas and Gonjas). The *lundaa* usually plays the rhythm *Sulugu* 'hawk' to address him before it calls his praise name as illustrated below:

18. *to zam buɣili dapal suligu*
sound examine god son hawk
'Suligu, the son of Naa Zangina'

The example in (18) introduces *Diari-lana* 'chief of *Diari*' as the loyal son of *Naa Zanjina* who had *zam buɣili* as one of his praise names. He was not *Naa Zanjina's* biological son but a loyal warrior to him. *Diari-lana* Bukali in (18) is addressed as the hawk because it was known that he would kill many people, any place he would passed. The example in (19) is the praise name of *Naa Zanjina*.

19. *zaŋ ba yili diri nam ka zaŋ ma yili puhiri jiŋli*
take father house eating trone and take mother house greeting mosque
'Inherited father's royalty and used that of the mother's humane.'

The example in (19) is the praise name of Naa Zanjina who in history is said to might have brought civilization to Dagbaŋ. The extract in (19) recalls the parentage and the origin of Naa Zanjina who by character inherited his father's royalty and used that of his mother's kindness and compassion. Examples in (20-23) are the extract of *Diari-lana* Bukali's appellations that recalls his deeds in the past. The *lundaa* begins with the example in (18) above as a form of introduction just to identify him followed by the examples below:

20. *kayaa buni kayaa buni*
weak person property weak person property
'The property of a weak person'
21. *mani mi ŋuni kpuɣira*
me know who take
'I know who takes.'
22. *mani mi ŋuni kpuɣi buɣili noo*
me know who take god fowl

'I know the one who took the god's fowl.'

23. *bi yɛri ma jɔɣi-jɔɣi ku kari-matiŋ ni ka m-biɛni*
they talk me anyhow not sack-me town loc and I-stay
'People talking about me will not sack me from a village but will I stay.'

The example in (20) recalls the *Diari-lana* Bukali's praise name, refers to him as a chief who takes the property of the weak or the land gods, and gives it to the ancestors. (21) recalls the drummer saying he knows him to be taking the property and provides example of his deeds in (22) indicating that he took the gods fowl and gave it to the ancestors. The example in (23) concludes the appellations by describing him as the one people usually gossip about his deeds but that cannot stop him.

Salifu (2008) observes that many of the praise names draw on a chooser's ability to coin a proverbial line or text that passes on some wit or advice. For instance the praise epithet of the chief of Tibuŋ Naa-Adama is played as:

24. *Suhu-ni kpamli gari paliginli*
heart-inside age better grayness
'What is in the heart is better than the external features'

While noting the premium placed on the wisdom of the aged, this epithet tells its audience that mere grey hair does not make a wise person. Wisdom is a thing of the heart, and we thus have to look into people's substance and respect them for what they are worth. Another example is the epithets of Tolin-naa Suleman Bila which is played as:

25. *ŋun nya biɛla baŋ malibu, di ni niŋ pam*
who get little know keep it will do plenty
'One who gets little should keep it well for it will multiply.'

This obviously advises its audience to manage their resources well. They should not be wasteful.

The *lundaa* is also used to give an account of the history of the past and present kings of *Dagbaŋ* by drumming praises. This is mostly done in different forms: first, during the palace ritual sessions that symbolically wake the chief up to pray on Mondays and Fridays. It is traditionally called *biɛɣu naayo* 'day break'. According to Salifu and M-minibo (2014), the palace is like a shrine where the chief's subjects go on every Mondays and Fridays to greet and pay allegiance to him. Some of the praise verses played to wake the chief up include the illustration below:

26. *balim n-duma biɛɣu neeya ka wuntaŋ biira*
gentle my-lord day break and sun rising
'The day has broken and the sun is rising my lord, gently, gently.'

The verse in (25) is played to wake the chief up in the morning and urged him to come out by such appellations as 'The sun is rising My lord.' The principal players in the praise-game at the palace are the master drummers. The second form is invocation, which has two names in Dagbani depending on the occasion: *gingaani* 'appellations sung when some specific chiefs like *Gushe Naa*, *Kasul-lana* sit in public', and *sanban-luŋ or luŋ-sarigu* 'praises sung before a festival.

Luŋ-sarigu is a mandatory traditional norm for every Dagbaŋ chief to invite *Namɔɣu* to sing panegyric that gives the history of the people through appellations offering everyone the opportunity to learn the history of *Dagbamba* including researchers. Traditionally, the choice of master drummer depends on the day; *namɔ-naa* 'chief drummer' sings if the day falls on Wednesday, Thursday or Friday, but if it is on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday, the *sanpahi-naa* 'next in command' is invited. The *lundaa* is used to do much of the talking by way of introduction that comprises praises in the form of invocation which are drummed to the chief. The performance starts with a preliminary stage known as *ʒiɛri tɔbu* ''sorting out the recipe'

At this stage, the *lundaa* is played to lead the ensemble in an invocation (see section 2.1.3) and moves on to a second stage where they seek permission from the chief to engage in their enterprise refer to as *nam balimbu* as in (27) and finally delve into the third and final stage, the main story called *mɔni*. This is a metaphor of preparing a meal for a spouse; an important tool for defining the roles of drummer and patron (Salifu 2008). Usually, it begins with *ʒiɛri tɔbu* 'sorting out the recipe' to prepare for the session; it starts with invocations such as *dakɔli n-nyɛ bia* 'a bachelor is inferior to the married man' to praise God, their ancestors and the past chiefs.

26. I beseech you!
I ask for permission!! [stylistic element]
Slowly, carefully, owner of the earth, your mercies, please.
The one who owns all, tread softly for calmness on earth.
King of the rear and the fore, tread softly for calm on earth
Earthly intercessor (c.f. Salifu 2008:128)

The episode foregrounds the importance of the drummer as one who persuades the powerful, to balance their power with mercy. When the king

takes his seat, they move to the third stage and play the epic. Lines (27-28) illustrate how the history is presented particularly using the drum, it mostly begin with the praise name to identify whose history is to be told:

27. *Gbewaa zuu gbuɣinli*
Gbewaa first-son lion
'The son of naa Gbewaa, the lion'
28. *ban malilaamba ba ni ban ka laamba ba*
those have owners father and those not owners father
'You are the father of all'
29. *cham balim balim ka tiŋ maai*
walk gentle gentle and ground cool
'Walk gently for the ground to be at peace.'

The examples in (27-28) are the invocation sung to praise only the Yaa-naa and once it is played everyone who understands the drum language knows it refers to him. Example (27) recalls the parentage of the chief, (28) addresses him as the father of everyone and (29) addresses him as a unifier who should walk majestically in peace. The drummer then follows with an epic for example, the story of a Dagomba king Naa Zanjina who is the most popular among the Kings because of the innovations and civilization brought to the people. His reign saw many innovations, thus making him the first choice for epic song (see Salifu 2008).

Invocations

Among the Dagbamba, drum poetry also appears in invocations to spirits of various kinds. Longer Dagbani poems sometimes open with stanzas calling on the spirits associated with the drum itself- the wood and its various components-or invoke certain deities or ancient and famous drummers. Important rituals are also commonly opened or accompanied by the suitable drum poems (Finnegan 2012). In Dagbaŋ, when a drummer first shoulders a drum, custom dictates that an invocation is played as illustrated below:

30. *namɔɣu mali kpieŋ pam*
chief-drummer have strong more
'The chief drummer is very strong.'

When the example in (30) is played by the *lundaa*, the rest of the *lunsi* ensemble will then respond *jɛmbu* 'worship'. Invocations align drummers with their history and with spiritual forces. Invocations are also a method of tuning

up and alerting other musicians that you are ready to play (Suad 2011). The invocations also draw the historical past close to the present as illustrated in example (31):

31. *lunsi kali yɛlmi ka m-bɔhim ŋmebu*
drummers custom speak and I-learn play
'Spirit of oratory, speak so that I may learn to play.'
32. *luŋ-tali nyɛla n kali*
oratory is my traditon
'Oratory is my birth right; I don't claim to be'
33. *ŋun mal-li ŋun dira nyaŋsim*
who have-it who eating sweetness
'The one who possesses it should enjoy it, sovereign one.'

The examples in (31-33) are the invocation played by a drummer at the start of every drumming section that is then flowed by the appellations of the society and the chief as illustrated below:

34. *miri ka ti-ʒini ka kulikpuni kom ʒonche ŋama*
cautious part sit and river water go-leave hippo
'Be cautious the *kulikpuni* river doesn't run and leave the hippos'

The example in (33) is the praise name of *kampakuya naa Abdulai Yakubu* 'the former regent of *Dagbaŋ* and current Yoo-Naa. It means that the regent is very powerful but he needs to exercise some restrain in his deeds for the ultimate is still ahead.

ʒiɛri tɔbu ''sorting out the recipe' is an invocation in which the *lundaa* is used to give an account of genealogies of the drummer's ancestors whose blessings and protection he seeks for a performance. It recounts the histories and reconstructs the family tree, showing the relationship between the kings and drummers, and also it invokes the spirits of these ancestors and the drum spirits (the instrument has a soul of its own) telling them the performance is for them. It challenges them to enable the performers have a "good performance", for failure is unbefitting of them. As it enumerates these ancestors it salutes them with their praise epithets as well.

35. *yɛtɔɣa yɛlimi ka n deei m-bɔhim yɛligu*
speech speak and I take-over I-learn speech
'Spirit of Oratory, speak so that I may learn to speak.'

Proverbs

Proverbs in Dagbani are popularly called *yaha* which are common sounds performed on the *lundaa*. Among the *Dagbamba*, almost every ordinary proverb can be reproduced on *lundaa* and in drum poetry in general. There is frequent use of proverbs to provide encouragement and incitements. But there are also extended proverbs specifically intended for performance on the drums. The *Lundaa* plays all kinds of proverbs in Dagbani since every chief or family head is characterized with names that are proverbs as illustrated below:

36. *naawuni bɔri maligu ka sali-nim a je maligu*
God want peace and humans not peace
'God wants peace but humans do not want it.'
37. *naa balimbu ku kɔŋ buni*
chief praising not forfeit something
'Singing praises to a chief yields some wealth'
38. *kul-noli din viɛla ku kɔŋ nyuri-ba*
river-mouth that nice not forfeit drinkers
'A source of water that is good will gather people'

The example in (36) is a proverb that addresses a Yaa-naa in the past, the one in (37) addresses *Namɔ-naa* and example (38) addresses another Yaa-naa in the past.

Besides the proverbs, drum language is also used for names. Among the Hausa, for instance, praise names and titles of rulers are poured forth on drums or horns on certain public occasions (Smith 1957: 29). This is one of the most common forms of drum expression, and it occurs even among the people who do not seem to have other more complicated drum poetry (Finnegan 2012). Praise names are part of musical events; they are names that once belong to ancestors and have now become part of the repertory songs played for dancing. Some drum names of the some chief and their forebears are presented in (39-43):

39. *kul-noli* 'A source of water'
40. *naɣ-biɛɣu* 'Awesome bull'
41. *jaŋkun-biɛɣu* 'Wicked cat'
42. *zambalan-tɔŋ* 'Wicked person's trap'
43. *naani-goo* 'trusted-thorn'

The examples in (39-43) are the praise names of individual chiefs and they are also names of dance moves which the chiefs and their forebears used to dance one-by-one to drumming that honours famous chiefs from the past. There is a strong association linking the music to the person who is the subject of the drum language. Often, the dancer is in the family lineage of the historical chief being saluted by the drummers (Suad 2011). In a dance performance, the *lundaa* calls the verses above while the rest of the ensemble respond. The praise names in (39-43) are mostly compound words or phrase forms by putting together two lexical morphemes which semantic realization are different from the compound word as in idioms. When the *lundaa* makes the call, for instance, in (39) and (42), the rest of the ensemble gives the respond below:

44. *kom ka ti nyu*
    water and we drink
    'Water, and we drink.'
45. *bari ka di ghaai o bia*
    set and it catch his child
    'Set, and it catches his child.'

The example in (44) is a response given to (39) in a sentence to mean that a clean heart will always win the love of people. Example (45) is a response given to (42) also in a sentence which means that the wickedness one does will be his/her recompense.

Transformation from Traditional to the Contemporary Social Cultural Issues

Agyekum (2013) explains that in the olden days, oral artists played various key roles in the society and they were categorized in accordance with their specific roles. They [oral artists] ranged from griots singers to master drummers at the chief's court and most of them were either professionals or amateurs who worked when the various socio-cultural situations demanded their services. Like the griots at the courts of the Asantes and the Yorubas, the *Namɔɣu* and his *lunbihi* 'followers' are also at the court of the *Yaa-Naa* and other chiefs in *Dagbaŋ*. *Namɔɣu* is the custodian of Dagbaŋ history and he is respected and rewarded in cash, meat, food and clothes for his functions. This function of the chief drummer in the chief's court as a traditional practice has been transformed to the contemporary social cultural context were the *lundaa* being primary surrogate instrument among the traditional people of *Dagbaŋ,* now provides both drum language and music for all social functions: naming

ceremonies, wedding, outdooring of newly enskinned chief, funerals, festivals etc. Ethnographical research (e.g. Kinney 1970) has shown that among the Dagbamba, there are other instruments that are assigned the talking attributes while the *lundaa* plays percussive roles in the socio-cultural context. The *lundaa,* which is used by the *Namɔɣu* 'master drummer' effectively communicates felt sentiments that are embraced in the sociocultural setup of the Dagbamba. Due to the important role it plays in society, it has survived many generations among the Dagbamba and has not been transformed very much. In this contemporary era, *lundaa* is still practiced in the chief's courts in the *Dagbaŋ* society. The greatest innovation is the fact that currently it has moved from the traditional courthouses and durbar grounds to institutions, theatre halls, state houses, churches and concert halls (Arhine 2009). Without the society, literature cannot thrive, and any change in the society calls for a change in the dimensions of literary work, which is based on the integrative system of society, cultural and literary works (Agyekum 2013). This section focuses on transformation which is the second aim of this paper seeks to discuss.

The *lundaa* which is formally played by the *lunsi* in the *Dagbaŋ* society is now been used by people who are not even *Dagbamba.* In modern time, the theater has put together *lundaa* and its ensemble*, lundɔɣu, lumbila and guŋ-gɔŋ,* to be learned and used to play traditional dances like *takai* by Ghanaian cultural groups. *Takai* is a popular war dance performed by Dagbamba using mental rods for the purpose of training warriors in the past. In playing *takai*, the first rhythm played is the traditional rhythm of Dagbamba, and the other rhythms are incorporated by the Arts council of Ghana since the 1960s (Suad 2011).

Contemporarily, the master drummer (*namɔɣu* and his *lum-bihi* 'followers') are recognized according to their functions. Most of them have become professional and some now live by their works. Some of them like *luŋ* Abukari bila, Banvim lun-naa, namɔ-naa Issahaku and others have put their works on drum language on cassettes and CDs. Some of the *lum-bihi* 'followers' are now freelance master drummers who move to places (markets, weddings, naming ceremonies) where their services are needed even with or without invitation. They use the drum language to sing praise songs for anyone who is present at the place provided they get a cue of one's tribe or family background. Example (46) illustrates the common praise name of Asantes when cited by a master drummer in public:

46. *kam-bɔn doo ŋmani o ba*
asante man resemble his father.sg
'Asante man resembles his father'

As the verse in (46) is called by the *lundaa* to praise an Asante man, the ensemble *lundɔɣu, luŋbila and guŋgoŋ)* will respond to the call as presented in example (47):

47. *mm zuɣu-tain o ŋmani o ba*
yes head-big he resemble his father
'Yes, big head, he resembles his father'

Modern African nations can adapt their oral traditions to current realities and utilize them as effective instruments of civic education, especially these days when the entire world has been transformed into a global village (Okafor 2004). The modern techniques of communication and information has transform traditional use of drum language to communicate in different forms into the use of electronic media that allows works to be accessed and assessed at various places by even unknown and unseen users. The proliferation of FM radios and TV has transform the drum language function in communication by sending messages to what is now called radio and TV announcements. But they offer the opportunity of learning other literary works (Agyekum 2013). It is common in *Dagbaŋ* to hear drum language been played on a radio that gives information (national, tradition or cultural) or announcements (festivals, funeral, marriage) to the people in or around the society. According to Paul and Seidu (1995), a full ensemble, which includes the *lundaa* and a singer, is necessary to perform at dance occasions. At the market, drummers may go individually or in a group of two to six men. An individual drummer keeps the rewards from the market women. However, drummers may choose to go in a group because each of them may recognize different potential patrons, thereby increasing the total base from which to draw profits that day. At the market, the proverbs can be drummed by the *lunsi* and members of an ensemble often related to each other. A praise singer will normally be present in all of these arrangements, that is, a solo drummer will also be a praise singer. When two or more drummers participate, one can play the *lundaa* while the others sing or play support drums.

Summary and Conclusion

The paper has reviewed surrogate language in Dagbani. It paid attention to the *lundaa* and attested that the core functions of the *lundaa* in Dagbamba societies include: giving information and announcement, panegyric, invocation and proverbs. It also examined the transformation of the use of the *lundaa* from traditional to the contemporary sociocultural issues. The role of the *Namɔɣu* signifies the use of the *lundaa* as a communication tool to express various

forms of social functions and as a musical instrument for ceremonial purposes and currently for recreation. The *lundaa* has a multiple tone and it is associated with the tradition and preserves the themes that reflect the historical origins, ancestors, wars, appellations, social vices, messages or signals, beliefs and eulogies of communicating in the past. The usefulness of drum language among *Dagbamba* to communicate through the *lundaa* as a surrogate instrument for communication is used for the purpose of formalized announcements, to give messages about, arrival, royal births, marriages, deaths, communal labour and forthcoming hunts as its communicative functions.

Contemporarily, most of the young drummers have become professional and some now live by their works by way of transformation. Some of them have kept their works on drum language CDs while others are now freelance drummers who go round to markets, weddings, naming ceremonies etc. even with or without invitation to make money. The paper revealed that Dagbamba accept *lundaa* sounds as direct representation of the words and sounds of the language. They are composed with deliberate goal in mind. For example, in the context of death of a chief, the *lundaa* sound is organized deliberately to announce his death. This explains why the *lundaa* sounds are powerful tools for the communication, panegyric, invocation and proverbs as presented in the data in this paper. The *lundaa* can therefore serve as a solid foundation for sociocultural studies in Dagbaŋ and appropriated in other civic educational contexts. I confirmed that the content and style of drum language communication is literature and not primarily as music, signal, and accompaniment to dancing or ceremonies all the time. I however call for the preservation and effective education of surrogate competence and performance with emphasis on the *lundaa* within Dagbaŋ and beyond.

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