INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES

SPECIAL EDITION

March, 2023

DRUMSPEAK

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA

DRUMSPEAK

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
PROF. SAMUEL AWUAH-NYAMEKYE (PHD)

SPECIAL EDITION **MARCH 2023**

A JOURNAL OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS,
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA

ISSN:2821-8981, ONLINE

Published by
Faculty of Arts
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast, Ghana, West Africa.

DRUMSPEAK

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

Scholarly articles are invited from scholars in the Humanities on any subject that is adequately researched publication. All articles are subjected to rigorous assessment before being accepted for publication or otherwise. Contributors should adopt the APA or MLA documentation style. Manuscript should be typed, using Times New Roman, Font size 12, and double spaced. The length of each paper should be minimum of ten pages and a maximum of twenty-five pages. Each paper should contain an abstract of not more than one hundred and fifty words accompanied by five key words. Manuscripts should have a cover page indicating the title of the papers, author's name, address (postal, email, and telephone) and biographical information as well as institutional affiliation. The title of the abstract should appear on another page, and the main essay should start on the third page.

Each contributor shall submit two hard copies to the mailing address below:

The Editor-in-Chief
DRUMSPEAK
FACULTY OF Arts
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast, Ghana

One soft copy should be sent by e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word 2010 or 2013 or a latest version and a PDF format to the Editor-in-Chief at awuah.nyamekye@ucc.edu.gh or artsjournals@ucc.edu.gh The Journal shall be published twice annually.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Drumspeak - Special Edition (March 2023)
https://doi.org/10.47963/drumspeak.v6i2.1243

EDITORIAL

INTRODUCTION

Rogers Asempasah
Guest Editor.

This special issue of *Drumspeak* brings together five papers that shed novel theoretical and interpretive insights on Amma Darko's novel *Beyond the Horizon.* Written in the fin de siècle of the long twentieth century, *Beyond the Horizon* is a sobering meditation on the migration of Africans to the West. It is an important text in the subgenre of African literature that focuses on migration, dislocation, prostitution, and the crisis of expectations that confront African migrants in the West. The novel is, therefore, central to what Iheka and Taylor (2018, p. 18) call "the migration turn in African cultural productions." Since its publication, *Beyond the Horizon* has generated a significant corpus of literature that attests to the amplitude of Darko's craft and vision.

This special issue emerged from the desire to provide students, in particular, and the scholarly community, in general, with alternative theoretical and thematic perspectives on Amma Darko's novel. Our expectation is that the papers will go a long way toward enriching the existing literature on *Beyond the Horizon.* It is significant to point out that the authors of the papers in this special issue have taught Darko's novel at the undergraduate and graduate levels for several years. Therefore, the authors are not only abreast of the existing scholarship on *Beyond the Horizon*, but they also come to this project with a deep grasp of the text. In other words, the authors are not just readers; they are also teachers of literature.

The first paper, "In Pursuit of dreams: Migration and toxic masculinity in *Beyond the Horizon*" by Theresah Patrine Ennin, explores the relationship between masculinity and migration with an emphasis on the complex process of sustaining manhood in a different

environment. Ennin argues that "the fraught nature of the migrant experience contributes to the creation of toxic masculinities and the perpetuation of gender-based exploitation of women." Consequently, Ennin shows that the "misogynistic attitude of male characters towards the women in the novel can be understood within the context of their migratory experience" (p. 5). The paper thus offers an alternative theoretical framework, masculinity, for understanding the gender-based violence and exploitation in *Beyond the Horizon.* More importantly, the paper hints at the importance of setting for character development.

For writers like Amma Darko, literature is not only a tool for analyzing the unbearable conditions that women face; it is also a means of articulating a feminist vision based on women becoming conscious. In "Becoming conscious of the self: spatial dynamics, character pairs, and the feminist vision in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*," Christabel Aba Sam examines Darko's feminist vision in *Beyond the Horizon* by focusing on the relationship between spatial dynamics and character pairs. According to Sam, setting is "the principal determining factor in Darko's emancipatory framework" (p. 2). Aba Sam demonstrates this by identifying and analyzing four specific character pairs in particular locales in Darko's novel:

- First Pair - Undoing patriarchal conspriacies: Mara and her nameless mother in rural Naka.
- Second Pair - Beseeching feminine integrity: Mara and Mama Kiosk in urban Ghana.
- Third Pair - Negating the fetish of Europe through character: Mara and Gitte in urban Germany.
- Fourth Pair - Owning the body is a We-for-She affair: Mara and Kaye in the German Brothel.

By focusing on the relationship between spatial dynamics and character pairs, Sam shows that Darko foregrounds the efficacy of sisterhood, solidarity, education, financial freedom, and bodily integrity as the routes to the total emancipation of the African woman" (p. 1).

In "Reversing the imperial gaze, affirming the possibility: Conrad and Fanon in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*," Rogers Asempasah examines Darko's subtle inscription of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in her novel *Beyond the Horizon.*

Drawing on Bakhtin's notion of the dialogism of the word, Asempasah discusses the word "horror," as used by Mara, and the novel's title as double-voiced discourses or dialogical sites of contestation and affirmation, respectively. Asempasah argues that while the Conradian subtext is framed around Darko's reversal of Marlow's imperial gaze in *Heart of Darkness*, the Fanonian subtext revolves around Darko's politics of "beyond the horizon" which is contingent on decentering Europe as the location of hope for postcolonial people. By focusing on Darko's subtle dialogue with Conrad and Fanon, Asempasah shows that Darko strategically frames Mara's encounter with Europe as a journey into the "heart of darkness" and foregrounds de-linking from the West as an emancipatory ethic for postcolonial transformation. Although the first three papers draw on different theoretical perspectives, taken together, they offer valuable insights on setting as integral to the meaning-making process in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*.

Hannah Amissah-Arthur's paper, "Clandestine, circumscribed, and coded: sexuality in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*," looks at sexuality in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*. Drawing on Foucault's argument that the history of sexual experience involves the correlation between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture, Amissah-Arthur examines the libidinous practices of characters in *Beyond the Horizon* and *Woman at Point Zero*. The crucial insight in this paper is that although the African tradition regards sexuality as a suppressed discourse, *Beyond the Horizon* and *Woman at Point Zero* present Mara and Firdaus as subjects of concupiscence, i.e., "individuals who realized themselves as subjects of sexual desire" (p. 1). According to Amissah-Arthur, "the acts of concupiscence by Mara and Firdaus defy the established, circumscribed discourse on sexuality in Africa" (p. 5).

The final paper, " 'I am his pawn, his slave, and his property': A stylistic analysis of the abuse of women in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon"*, by Daniel Oppong-Adjei and Dora Essah-Ntiful, investigates Darko's use of parallelisms and deviations in *Beyond the Horizon.* Employing a stylistic framework of analysis, Oppong-Adjei and Essah-Ntiful show how the abuse of women by men is conveyed through patterned repetitions of words and sentences,

deviations, etc. The paper makes a significant contribution to the literature on *Beyond the Horizon* as the analysis draws attention to how parallelisms and deviations contribute to the development of the theme of gender-based violence and exploitation.

I wish to express my profound gratitude to all the reviewers, authors, and the Editorial Board of *Drumspeak* for their patience and support throughout the process. It has been a long, tedious, but rewarding journey.

References

Iheka, C. and Taylor, J. (2018). Introduction: The migration turn in African cultural production. In Iheka C. and Taylor, J. (Eds.), *African migration narratives: Politics, race, and space.* (pp. 1-18). USA: University of Rochester Press.

Drumspeak - Special Edition (March 2023)
https://doi.org/10.47963/drumspeak.v6i2.1266

IN PURSUIT OF DREAMS: MIGRATION AND TOXIC MASCULINITY IN *BEYOND THE HORIZON*

Theresah Patrine Ennin[1]
Department of English
College of Humanities and Legal Studies
University of Cape Coast

Abstract

This paper explores masculinity and migration, analyzing the complex processes of sustaining manhood in a different environment in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. The paper argues that the fraught nature of the migrant experience contributes to the creation of toxic masculinities and the perpetuation of gender-based exploitation of the female. Migration then creates new opportunities for male exploitative behaviour which is detrimental to the male himself.

Keywords: *Beyond the Horizon*, exploitation, masculinity, migration, mobility, toxic masculinity.

Introduction

The intersection of gender and mobility is not new (Blumen and Kellerman 1970; Crane 2007; Deakin 2002; Elias, Newmark and Shiftan 2008; Hanson 2010), though it previously focused on the disadvantages and challenges faced by migrant women. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, the focus has shifted to include male migrants (Wojnicka and Pustułka 2019). This is crucial in that, for many years, masculinity as an important factor influencing

[1] Theresah Patrine Ennin is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of English, College of Humanities and Legal Studies at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, where she teaches and engages in research in African literature, Literary theory, Masculinities, and Literary and artistic constructions of gender and sex. Her PhD is in African Languages and Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA. She has published in journals such as *the West Africa Review*, *Spectrum: A Journal on Black Men*, *Research in African Literatures* and *the African Studies Quarterly*. Dr Ennin is the author of the book, *Men Across Time: Contesting Masculinities in Ghanaian Fiction and Film* (2022), published by NISC. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9448-9446

migration has been neglected. Researchers Katarzyna Wojnicka and Paula Pustułka define migration as a process that influences the changes in defining, negotiating and performing masculinities. They indicate that migration as a gendered and gendering process has conspicuous consequences for men, women and societies, with the notion of migrants' sex preconditioning our reception of migratory flows (Wojnicka and Pustułka 2019: 91).

Migration has become a very important phenomenon in the wake of current political upheavals all over the world. Gendered studies in migration have turned to men and masculinities and their experience of migration. From multiple angles, scholars examine migrant men in the context of labour markets, family transformations, as well as social problems such as domestic and sexual violence, youth criminality or culturally-specific crimes (Kanaiaupuni 2000; Manuh 2005; Griffiths 2015; Vlase 2018;). Wojnicka and Pustułka identify one of the milestones within this process as the publication of the edited volume by Donaldson et al. (2009) in which the editors not only brought together research on men and migration using approaches from critical men and masculinities studies, but also introduced an intersectional approach by covering issues such as class, race, ethnicity and citizenship. Helen Wray's and Katharine Charsley's special issue of *Men and Masculinities* (2015) entitled *Migrant Men* is another important document on men and the migration experience. The 2017 *NORMA* Special Issue on *Men and Migration* consisted of several articles, dealing with issues such as hybrid masculinity among third culture children; narratives of dangerous foreign masculinity; relations between nature, space and masculinity of migrant men in the United States; the multiplicity of masculinities among Polish migrants in different parts of Europe, as well as analyses of transnational fatherhood. The majority of the articles demonstrated that migrant men cannot be treated as a homogeneous group as seen in the varied terms that are used to elucidate masculinities. The main thrust behind this is the intersectional matrix of social class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, family situation, and many aspects that generate contradictory positionalities and outcomes of migrating men.

Masculinity is defined in various ways. Gender scholars generally agree that it is an identity marker that is constructed by historical circumstances and social discourses and not primarily by biology (Berger et al. 1995). An important characteristic of masculinity is that it is constructed and not innate. Roy McCloughry (1992, 20) describes masculinity as being about

the values, expectations and interpretations which men have attached to the idea of being a man. Therefore, he argues that it is possible for men to behave differently if they understand that these ideas can be challenged and changed. Todd Reeser (2010) argues that a person's conception and understanding of masculinity is bound to change when he moves from one place to another. This is because the values and interpretations of masculinity are not universal. Each culture has its own definitions and expectations of masculinity which may sometimes be very different from some other culture. Masculinity is also historically specific. In the same culture, behaviour that was seen as "masculine" in the 19th century may not be seen as such in the 21st century. As a result of these differences in time and space, masculinity is studied not as a single definition but as variable and complex, giving rise to the more current expression, "masculinities." Critics then argue that because masculinity is a culturally specific and socially functional "gender identity," we should be cognizant of its peculiar and often negative consequences for men. Reeser makes this claim in the light of the fact that gender identities as presently defined obscure social possibilities for men themselves.

Thesis Statement

In the light of the above, this paper examines the portrayal of toxic masculinity exemplified in the male characters in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, arguing that the men's propensity to exploit the women in their lives is exacerbated by the harsh reality of migrant life in Germany. According to Michael Kimmel and Tristan Bridges (2011), masculinity refers to the behaviours, social roles, and relations of men within a given society as well as the meanings attributed to them. The term masculinity stresses gender, unlike male, which stresses biological sex. Masculinity is socially constructed and contains many variations. These variations are seen in four ways. First, masculinity varies *historically*. Second, masculinity varies *cross-culturally*—conceptualizations of masculinity are culturally specific, each culture determines what it means to be a man. Third, masculinity varies *intra-psychically*—what it means to be a man changes over the course of one's life. Finally, masculinity varies *contextually*—even within a given society and time, masculinity can mean different things to different people. Therefore, "being a man" means different things across different historical periods, to men in different societies and

even within the same society. This explanation is important in the context of this paper as it will account for the changing masculinity of the male characters to be discussed.

Masculine behaviours, according to social scientists such as Terry Kupers, may be healthy or unhealthy. Unhealthy masculine behaviour is any behaviour that has a detrimental effect on others and/the performer. Unhealthy masculine behaviour is normally referred to as toxic. Toxic masculinity thus refers to the dominant form of masculinity wherein men use dominance, violence, and control to assert their power and superiority. According to Kupers (2005), toxic masculinity can be defined as the need to aggressively compete with and dominate others and encompasses the most problematic proclivities in men. The impacts of toxic masculinity are far-reaching. One example is that it can lead to more violence against women, as men may feel entitled or validated in their abusive behaviour. Unhealthy masculinity is also incredibly detrimental to men. Research has shown that men who display traits of toxic masculinity are more likely to experience isolation, poor health, and unhappiness. In *Beyond the Horizon*, toxic masculinity is seen in the ways that Akobi exploits Mara as chattel for financial gain. It is also manifest in his misogynist attitude towards Mara, beating her up at the least provocation, sexually molesting her and disregarding her feelings as a human being.

Author and Text

Amma Darko was born in Tamale in 1956. From Northern Ghana, she moved years later to the Ashanti Region. She studied at the University of Science and Technology at Kumasi, where she received her diploma in 1980. Afterwards, she worked for the Technology Consultancy Centre. Then, in 1981 she travelled to Germany and upon her return, went to live in Accra where she is a tax inspector. Amma Darko serves as one of the new voices writing in contemporary Ghana, coming after writers like Ama Ata Aidoo and Ayikwei Armah. Her novels straddle the divide between what is termed as 'serious' literature and popular fiction. On one hand, her novels could be placed among the novels of disillusionment such as Ayikwei Armah's *The Beautyful Ones are not yet Born*, Ama Ata Aidoo's *No Sweetness Here* and Kofi Awoonor's *This Earth my Brother*. On the other hand, her fiction also fits into the vibrant tradition of Ghanaian popular writing in her treatment of popular plots, character types, gendered struggles and coping strategies. Critics assert that she generally dispenses with the romantic plot but:

> consistently respond[s] to 'hot' issues such as marriage, the illusion of the successful 'burger' and the phenomenon of street children, and the sensational manner in which she handles her subjects, coupled with the in-text moral judgments (verbalized or implied) and commentaries that accompany it, which demonstrate her leanings towards the didacticism of writers of Ghanaian popular fiction such as J. Benibengor Blay, K. Bediako (Angsotinge et al. 2007: 84).

Darko's first novel, *Beyond the Horizon*, launched her onto the literary scene in Ghana and Africa in general. First published in German in 1991, and then translated into English in 1995, *Beyond the Horizon,* tells the story of a young man who sells his wife into prostitution in Germany in his desire to become a 'big man' in his community. The time setting is around the late 1970s and early 1980s and the story takes place in Ghana and Munich, Germany. Akobi refuses to be a farmer after his middle school education and convinces his father of the importance of living in the city. In the city, he finds work as a messenger clerk at the office of a government ministry but soon realizes that life in the city is too expensive for his meager salary. He cannot afford to live in the best part of town and rather finds a place in the ghetto. However, Akobi is not content to live as a poor man in the city. In his bid to live the life of the rich and important, he hatches an ambitious plan of going to Europe but as he cannot afford to save all the money he needs on his salary, he decides to get a wife from the village to help him acquire it. When he eventually goes to Europe, he finds out that it is even harder to make ends meet as an undocumented alien. Subsequently, he brings over his wife, Mara, and blackmails her into prostitution whilst pocketing the money she makes from the trade. When Mara realizes Akobi's deception and his exploitation of her, she orchestrates his arrest. However, she is unable to return home to Ghana because of the stigma and shame associated with her practice of prostitution and remains in Germany, hooked on drugs and continuing to work as a prostitute to look after her sons and family back in Ghana.

Amma Darko's novel has received a lot of critical attention, bringing it to the notice of academia as well as the general public. Generally, it has been discussed as an indictment of the treatment of women in Ghanaian society (Angsotinge et al. 2007; Adjei 2009), the exposure of

domestic and international violence against women (O'Connell and Odamtten 2007), and a commentary upon prostitution and the female body (Jonet 2007). Angsotinge et al (2007: 83) affirm that Amma Darko's novels "deal with the present, and the metaphorical stench from rotten entrails seeps into everything." These critics see *Beyond the Horizon* as a critique of consumerism manifested in Akobi's desire for wealth and material possessions such as televisions, cars, refrigerators, etc. – a consumerism that is also evident in Mara when in the end, she compensates her family with a car, houses and other material possessions in lieu of her presence. Consumerism may be the outward manifestation of these characters' status as people of means, but I argue that the lack of upward mobility and access to employment opportunities propel these migrants out of their home countries. Angsotinge et al also aver that the male characters in Darko's novels are not explored beyond their asocial and absolutely amoral characters; in essence, they have been written out of the narratives (2007: 90); I interpret this as a deliberate silencing of the male characters by the writer in order to enhance the exploitation of the female, who is given enough space in the narrative to tell her story. All the male characters are striving for power and recognition in their community, and they take whatever avenues are available to achieve this**.** Mawuli Adjei (2009: 47) contributes to the discussion of Darko's male characters by indicating that men in Darko's works are the perpetrators of rape, battery, betrayal, abandonment, economic exploitation and obnoxious cultural practices. This perpetrator-victim relationship, subsequently, leaves the women consigned to fear, trauma, suffering and death. He asserts that rhetorical violence and narrative subjectivity are ways of confronting and demolishing male dominance and exploitation. I read this proliferation of perpetrator-victim images in Darko's work, however, as an attempt by the author to demonize the system of domination inherent in hegemonic masculinity to highlight the exigency of favorable masculine expressions.

Mary Ellen Higgins (2006) discusses Darko's book as exploring the failed solidarity between men and women, between women of different nationalities, and between parents and daughters because of the unhealthy masculine behaviours at play in the novel. In her analysis of Mara, she finds it problematic that after Mara's arrival in the home Akobi shares with Gitte in Germany, Akobi forces her to assume control of all the household chores, thus reinforcing and entrenching her exploited position in the eyes of her husband. Akobi tells Gitte, "Our African

women work even harder than us men" (106). Akobi also marginalizes her position in his life by reducing her status from a wife to that of a sister in the home he lives in with Gitte, his German wife. Forced to share her husband with Gitte, Mara lives on the fringes of their home. In the novel, Higgins (2006: 313) states that, "Darko expose[s] the fictionality of multiple postcolonial promises - the promise of just governments after independence, of women's equal rights, and the lingering, empty promises of upward development through close ties with Europe." She points to the issues of domestic abuse, domestic rape and the international trafficking of women.

Critics who have examined migration in Darko's book such as Silue (2017), have focused on how Germany is represented as a place of immorality where African immigrants are turned into beasts without conscience. Others like Gbaguidi (2014) discuss the disillusionment young African migrants face in Europe. Gbaguidi categorically states that migration is not a better option for the African migrant who is better off staying at home, whilst others like Tomi Adeaga (2021) focus on migration and its attendant sexual exploitation of women. As can be deduced from the review, the novel is predominantly looked at as a critique of the marginalized and oppressive treatment of women by men. Whilst others like Adeaga have focused on migration and its attendant sexual exploitation of women, the link between migration and unhealthy masculine behavior is yet to be explored. This paper begins this discussion by examining how migration may be seen as a possible cause of toxicity in male characters in the text.

Making Monsters

In making her confession, Mara begins by narrating her childhood; specifically, she describes a father whose only interest in his daughters was the money he would make from giving them away in marriage. Mara says that her father instead of looking for a good man for his daughters, "had a different formula for choosing or accepting husbands for his daughters, which took more into consideration the number of cows coming in as the bride price than the character of the man" (4). Mara tells the reader that she was given away to the man who, "*paid* two white cows, four healthy goats, four lengths of cloths, beads, gold jewelry and two bottles of London Dry Gin to her family and took her away (3, *italics provided*). The transactional language used in

the description underlines the exchange that takes place when the woman is getting married. Instead of partners choosing each other, the marriage is reduced to an exchange system where a woman is exchanged for goods. Mara continues to use these expressions of trade throughout the narrative, "[her father] had proclaimed that he would gladly have given me away even for one goat" (7); "Three weeks later [Akobi] came straight from work … and left for the city … with me as his wife … and property!" (7).

Her father's callous attitude towards his daughters and wife betrays a fundamental societal perception of women as chattel, and disposable. The women are thus portrayed as goods that can be exchanged for other goods, as well as objects that can be passed on from one man to another, thus Mara is passed on from her father's house to Akobi's. This inherent idea of woman as disposable property permeates the entire narrative and shows in the way Akobi treats Mara in the city. The practice of treating women as disposable assets contributes to discriminatory and misogynistic attitudes towards women by men in society and leads to subsequent abuse of women.

Akobi is portrayed as a young man who is obsessed with making a good impression on people. In Ghana, he takes care to dress in the best European clothes he can afford, "pencil-striped, grey trousers, a stiffly starched and ironed white shirt, a thin black tie, and impeccably polished black Beatles boots" (6), the outfit that Mara says was "his pride" (10). Secondly, he refuses to work as a farmer because he believes it will lower his standing and esteem in the eyes of the people in his village; after all, he is the first man in the village to have obtained a middle school leaving certificate which is equivalent to a high school diploma. In the city of Accra, he keeps a wide berth between himself and Mara so that his colleagues at work will not know that she is his wife. In a description of the scene at the lorry station, Mara shows the extent to which Akobi goes to maintain this impression:

> Next morning, I left later with him, he, smart in his pencil-striped grey trousers, snow-white shirt, thin black tie and sharply pointed Beatles boots, with me beside him in my old faded clothes, my crude thick-soled rubber-tyre slippers and on my head, my sieve container full of cooked eggs. I don't think that all this while that we had been living together Akobi had really bothered to take a closer look at me in my shabby clothes … But that

> morning he did. And … he didn't like what he saw … at the station he left a respectable space between us. …. And when he saw [his bus] coming he would very quickly and hastily move even farther from me as if suddenly I was a stink-bomb scheduled to go off soon.

Even though he is ashamed of Mara because she is not as sophisticated or well dressed as the women at his workplace, Akobi makes no efforts to help her acquire the sophistication or better clothes he admires on other women, and he even forbids her to sew any of the cloths that were part of her dowry. His behaviour may be understood in the light of the fact that in the city where he lives and works among people who are better off than him, Mara's shabbiness validates his image as a better person than her.

Poverty and lack of good job prospects because of his level of education cause Akobi to live in a slum in the city of Accra. G. K. Nukunya (2003: 149) asserts that in the early to late 1980s in Ghana, a great rise in urbanization, as a result of the drifts of people from the villages to the towns in search of greener pastures, had led to the creation of ghettos and slums in many of the towns and cities, and the gap between the rich and the poor had grown wider. He indicates that the social institutions of kinship and marriage were greatly affected by all these changes and traditional sanctions that were used to sustain accepted kinship and marital behaviors had been weakened or lost.

It can be argued, that although Akobi lacks the wherewithal to live in a better part of the city, he dresses well to maintain the façade of his life as a well-to-do young man living in the city. As such he is able to conceal the truth of his impoverishment from his family and the community. Mara, who finds out his financial situation, also helps to perpetuate the myth by not telling her family the true state of affairs. His extreme obsession with winning the approval of others and his driving desire to be accepted into the society of the wealthy and important, serve as the driving force that control his life and behaviour. Thus, in Germany, he Europeanized his name to "Cobby" to gain the approval of his German acquaintances.

It becomes clear that Akobi has low self-esteem that propels him to pretend to belong to the elite class in his society. This low self-esteem and his desire to achieve some authority at all cost may be responsible in influencing him to subjugate Mara so that he can be in a position of

control and power. Thus, the exhibition of toxicity, seen in the physical abuse and anti-social behaviour in his relationship with Mara may be interpreted as a bid for authority.

This obsession reflects Akobi's desire to achieve the status of a "big man." However, his lack of a good education prevents him from getting a job that will help him acquire such a status. Similarly, his contempt for life in the village causes him to reject working as a farmer to make more money. Consequently, he looks to Europe as a place that will ensure him the status he needs. However, the journey to Europe involves money he does not have, and therein comes Mara. Akobi marries Mara mainly to acquire her monetized labour. Mary Higgins equates Akobi to the European colonizers and neo-colonizers because he fails to grant Mara rights due her in their traditional setting; he takes back the cloths and jewelry that were given to her during their marriage ceremony, he refuses to share his earnings with her, and divests her of her earnings at the market to finance his dream of going to live in Europe and becoming rich. Akobi's anxieties about achieving his dream in Germany fuel his misogynistic attitude towards Mara both in Ghana and in Germany. Interested only in the profit he can reap from her labour, he sees her as a commodity, beats her at the slightest sign of insolence (in his opinion) and crushes her moves to be free from him. All these indicate an unhealthy conception of his masculinity.

Emasculated by his menial job and poverty, Akobi relies on the subservient attitude of Mara to gain some semblance of power and control. By exploiting and dominating Mara, Akobi gains some measure of control as a man in his own eyes; therefore, he thrives on the fear Mara has for him. When he migrates to Germany and realizes that he is still unable to achieve the status of a "big man" he hoped to achieve, he relies on Mara to bolster his ego as a man. Immigration then presents a whole new set of problems for the illegal immigrant. Akobi must ensure his stay in Germany, and he does this by feigning love for a German woman Gitte, marrying her and pretending to build a home back in Ghana and take her there. He must also learn new gender roles that are completely in contrast to all he knows. In Germany, he washes, cleans and cooks: - chores that he would have looked down on with disdain in Ghana. Mara shows her astonishment at this transformation when she describes the scene that takes place when she arrives in Gitte and Akobi's home in Germany and Gitte asks her if she's hungry:

> My mouth fell open. I was shocked. Akobi to cook for me? … So Akobi, this my own dear husband Akobi who back home used to reproach me if I was a minute late with his food; who many a time landed me knocks on my forehead with his knuckles if I fetched him too little or too much water in the bowl for him to wash his hands before and after eating; this my very own Akobi it was who, upon his white wife's commands, trotted into the kitchen. Seconds later, the clattering of pans and spoons told me that he had commenced his assigned task … Akobi had turned into a really good cook (97; 103).

Thus, illegal immigration forces the enactment of different masculine models in the new land. In Ghana, Akobi's hypermasculine behavior of master of his household is not tenable in Germany with his German wife who has a different concept of who a man is. Neither Gitte, his German wife, nor Comfort, his sophisticated girlfriend, is ready to treat him as a king and pander to his every wish, he must learn how to be a new kind of man for Gitte and Comfort, and thus, his masculinity becomes a subordinated masculinity that must learn to accept the woman as an equal partner in their relationship.

Only Mara does not demand a change from him and inadvertently continues the vicious cycle of abuse even in Germany. Thus, in the absence of Gitte, Akobi orders Mara around to do as he wishes; she becomes his personal maid, and eventually, he blackmails her into prostitution. Akobi wants to attain the status of a "big man" man by any means possible so that he can also live up to the demands of his girlfriend, Comfort. Comfort, unlike Mara, does not want to engage in any servile work in Germany; she wants to live as a woman of means just as she had done back in Ghana, therefore, Akobi must get extra money to support her lifestyle as well as keep up his part of the bills in the home he shares with Gitte. Consequently, when he forces Mara into prostitution and controls her earnings, he uses the money to take care of Comfort in the luxury she demands.

It appears that Akobi is not the only man who exhibits such toxic masculinity as an immigrant. Osey, a friend of Akobi, is another young Ghanaian man who has migrated to Germany with his wife, Vivian. He takes over the care of Mara at the airport from the agent

who brings Mara to Germany. His actions and behaviour towards Mara at the airport and in transit indicates a man who has no respect for women whatsoever.

Whilst waiting for the train at the station, Osey takes Mara to watch a pornographic movie at the station and then makes lewd comments to her, telling her the film was his welcome treat to her, she says in a horrified tone, "action film à la Osey, was raw obscenity. When I told him just that, thinking it would embarrass him, he turned the tables on me, belittling me and reproaching me to leave my primitiveness back home and to start living in civilization" (62). Not satisfied with this, he also makes a move on Mara in the train, claiming that it is part of the payment for his job in bringing her to Akobi (66).

Apart from his sexual objectification and demeaning of women, he also shows a lack of respect for African women. He does not help Mara with her luggage throughout the journey, content to watch her carry the heavy luggage all the way. He berates women and sees them as useful only for sex (68). This attitude is extended even to his wife who he beats at the slightest provocation (73) and forces to work as a prostitute, whilst he keeps her earnings, making her completely dependent on him. Osey's loss of all inhibitions and traditional Ghanaian values becomes very prominent when he has sex with his wife in the full glare of Akobi and Mara in the same room, showing not an iota of respect for his wife (84). His brand of toxic masculinity shows the harmful effects of this unhealthy masculine behaviour on the performer. He becomes an obnoxious individual who has no self-respect and is aggressive and prone to violent acts.

The misogynistic attitude of the male characters towards the women in the novel can be attributed to their migration experience. The difficult financial challenges coupled with their status as undocumented aliens are conditions in the host country that cause them to subject their women to dehumanizing experiences and sex slavery. In their bid to survive in the host country, they lose their sense of decency and moral values and degenerate into monsters. Like Akobi who does not consider Mara as an equal partner in their marriage, Kanye's unnamed boyfriend who tells her he is studying engineering in Germany, convinces her to come to Germany only to turn her into a prostitute whilst he lives off her earnings (116). Osey in the same vein uses Vivian as an article of labour; she works as a prostitute whilst he controls and keeps her earnings.

Apart from the difficulty of making a living as an illegal immigrant in Germany, where Ghanaian men and women as shown in the novel resort to all forms of dubious means to earn a living, the drive for hegemony in these men also contributes to the creation of exploitative men. Kanye's boyfriend takes her earnings and buys expensive sets of musical instruments which he ships home and hires out to musicians all over Africa, whilst spending most of his time driving a Porsche and having dinner with beautiful white women whose feet he would lick if they commanded him to. (117). From being on the fringes of life back home, these men suddenly have access to money and power, and they would do anything to maintain the power they have found as men with money to drive expensive cars and financially support their relatives back home; even if they must denigrate their wives and exploit them for money.

Akobi exploits Mara's sexuality by appropriating earnings she makes as an object of sexual desire for men in Germany, for his own profit and social advancement. O'Connell and Odamtten (2007: 52) in their book on Amma Darko's works assert that illegal alien women in the West are converted into sexual objects, and the employment opportunities available to these illegal immigrants are generally only those that dehumanize the individual. Therefore, when Akobi invites Mara to Germany, the legal opportunities for her to work are nonexistent as she is an undocumented alien. When she finds work as a house help in a German household "under the table", an expression that indicates that because she is an illegal resident, she cannot receive her remuneration through the formal means, and thus will be paid with cash at the end of the month by the employer; it is not long before she is sacked because the law enforcement agencies put pressure on Germans not to hire undocumented aliens. Akobi then forces her into prostitution. Nonetheless, it may be argued that Mara is as complicit as Akobi and the wider society in their belief in the myth that Europe promises wealth and status for the colonized. Her decision to join Akobi in Germany is driven in part by her internalization of the "been-to" myth (Higgins 2006: 315). It begs credibility that she would believe that Akobi has her interests at heart in inviting her to Germany, judging by how he has ill-treated her in the past. This is a further exposition of her naivety in the novel. Operating under the assumption that those who have been to Europe and North America are deserving of all respect and admiration, she buys into Akobi's dream of acquiring imported goods like cars, televisions and fridges from abroad,

and is subsequently duped by him. In the end, this quest for "big man-ship" that the two engage in leads to their downfall.

This novel presents a sustained image of women being treated as less than human, as people without rights and privileges. It portrays women as chattel to be passed on from one man to another. Thus, Mara is transferred from her father to Akobi, then to her first pimp, Peepy and then to Oves. Consequently, all these men are seen as traders in human flesh as property, supervising its circulation and reproduction within a local and global network of exploitative relations all in a bid to acquire and maintain the status of "big men" in their societies as indicated by Odamtten. And this is made clearer in a geopolitical setting where the rights of the undocumented immigrant are practically nonexistent.

O'Connell and Odamtten further assert that Akobi is driven by licit desires, to live a western lifestyle and to acquire wealth, "however, the privilege afforded by his gender, coupled with his lack of understanding of how such desires might unfold in the neocolonial context of the world in which they live, make his actions all the more disastrous" (2007: 50). As I have already indicated, shortcomings in the areas of education and upward social mobility are some of the catalysts that propel Akobi towards Europe and encourage his misogynistic behaviour. Odamtten sees Akobi as the architect and victim of his own lust propelled by the "come hither" charms of a capitalist system of which he is only partially conscious (2007:106). In the end, it becomes a clear case of poetic justice that Akobi's dreams of acquiring wealth and living the life of the influential and prosperous are destroyed by Mara.

The society plays a big role in perpetrating this system of exploitation of women like Mara. This condition pertains to a society where a woman's worth is equated to that of property which can be expended in an environment where the education of both genders is not given equal attention, and the female is socialized to accept her place as subordinate to the male. This coupled with the challenges of illegal migration contribute in propelling Akobi and the other men into becoming the monsters they are in the novel. By despising all other legitimate avenues of labour and choosing one (prostitution) which involves the destruction of his fellow human being, Akobi shows a warped personality. In presenting such a demonized character, Darko may be suggesting that the cost of illegal migration may be too high, not only to the victims who are used as means to an end, but also to the men who embark on this quest.

The cost to Mara is not a jail sentence like Akobi, nor drug addiction like Vivian. Hers is a loss of identity as an honorable daughter, mother and wife, and a life of permanent exile from her homeland. Ashamed of her own life as a prostitute, she prefers exile to facing the complete annihilation of her being, should the truth about her be made known to her family. On her decision to avoid exposure, Catherine Jonet (2007) declares:

> Mara's reference to 'black Africa' seems to signal a desire for her condition in 'white Europe' to remain concealed, bifurcated from her life in West Africa. Mara separates her identity in West Africa from her identity in Europe. She leads a 'double life' where her sexual exploitation as a prostitute is closeted in order to conceal its existence from her family, friends, and home in West Africa (204-205).

Jonet's point above is pertinent in understanding the trauma that these women go through. The loss of dignity and respect, as well as self-hood that dodge their steps every day; the inability to go back home and meet their loved ones and the sense of shame that dwells in their hearts all the time, are reflections of the trauma they live with.

Although critics discuss Amma Darko's novel for the depiction of the harsh life the illegal African migrant woman experiences in Europe, the focus tends to skip the portrayal of masculinities that emerge from the migration experience and the impact on the male characters. This paper has attempted a re-reading of migration in the novel and submits that more attention should be placed on the presentation of male characters and the toxic masculinity that may be birthed because of the migration experience.

References

Adeaga, Tomi. (2021). "Sexuality, Resilience and Mobility in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Chika Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*". In *African Women Writing Diaspora: Transnational Perspectives in the Twenty-first Century*, edited by Rose Sackeyfio, Lexington Books.

Adjei, Mawuli. (2009). "Male-bashing and Narrative Subjectivity in Amma Darko's First Three Novels." *SKASE: Journal of Literary Studies* 1 (1): 47–61.

Angsotinge, Gervase et al. (2007). "Exploitation, Negligence and Violence: Gendered Interrelationships in Amma Darko's Novels." In *Broadening the Horizon: Critical Introductions to Amma Darko*, edited by Vincent O. Odamtten. Banbury: Ayebia Clarke Publishing Limited.

Berger, Maurice, Brian Wallis, and Simon Watson. eds. (1995) *Constructing Masculinities*. NY: Routledge.

Blumen, O. and Kellerman, A. (1990). "Gender differences in Commuting Distance, Residence, and Employment location: Metropolitan Haifa, 1972–1983". *The Professional Geographer*, 42: 54–71.

Crane, R. (2007). "Is there a Quiet Revolution in Women's Travel? Revisiting the gender gap in commuting". *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 73(3): 298–316.

Darko, Amma. (1995). *Beyond the Horizon*. Cambridge: Heinemann.

Deakin E. (2002). "Sustainable Transportation U.S. Dilemmas and European Experiences'. *Transportation Research Record*. 1792(1):1-11.

Donaldson, M., Hibbins, R., Howson, R., and Pease, B. eds. (2009). *Migrant men: Critical studies of Masculinities and the Migration experience.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Elias, W., Newmark, G. and Shiftan, Y. (2008). "Gender and Travel Behaviour in two Arab Communities in Israel". *Transportation Research Record*, 75–83.

Gbaguidi, Celestin. (2014). "African Illegal Immigrants' Disillusionment in Europe: A study of Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*." *Litterature, Langues et Linguistique* 2(2).

Griffiths, M. (2015). "Here, man is Nothing!" *Men and Masculinities* 18 (4): 468-488.

Hanson, Susan (2010). "Gender and mobility: New approaches for informing Sustainability". *Gender, Place and Culture, A Journal of Feminist Geography.* 17:1, 5-23.

Higgins, Mary Ellen. (2006). "Transnational, Transcultural Feminisms? Amma Darko's Response in *Beyond the Horizon*." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 25(2): 307–322.

Jonet, Catherine. (2007). "She Doesn't Know the Truth about Me: [T]he Shaping Presence of the Closet in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*." In *Gender and Sexuality in African Literature and Film*, edited by Ada Uzoamaka Azodo and Maureen Ngozi Eke, 199-211. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Kanaiaupuni, Shawn Malia. (2000). "Reframing the Migration Question: An Analysis of Men, Women, and Gender in Mexico." *Social Forces*, 78, 4:1311–1347.

Kupers, Terry A. (2005) "Toxic Masculinity as a Barrier to Mental Health Treatment in Prison." *Journal of clinical psychology.* 61(6), 713–724.

Manuh, T. (Ed.). (2005). *At Home in The World? International Migration and Development in Contemporary Ghana and West Africa.* Accra: Sub-Saharan Africa Press.

McCloughry, Roy. (1992). *Men and Masculinity: From Power to Love*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Nukunya, G. K. 2003. *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology*. 2nd ed. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.

O'Connell, Sean P. and Vincent O. Odamtten. (2007). "Licit Desires, Alien Bodies and the Economics of Invisibility in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Stephen Frear's *Dirty Pretty Things*." In *Broadening the Horizon: Critical Introductions to Amma Darko*, edited by Vincent O. Odamtten, 48-57. Banbury: Ayebia Clarke Publishing Limited.

Reeser, Todd. (2010). *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell.

Silue, Lefara. (2017). "Fictionalized Representation of Space in Amma Darko's Beyond the Horizon." *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*. 4 (2): 217-228.

Vlase, I. (2018). Men's Migration, Adulthood, and the Performance of Masculinities. In: Vlase, I., Voicu, B. (eds) *Gender, Family, and Adaptation of Migrants in Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Wojnicka, Katarzyna and Paula Pustułka (2019.) "Research on Men, Masculinities and Migration: Past, Present and Future." *NORMA* 14 (2):91-95.

Drumspeak - Special Edition (March 2023)
https://doi.org/10.47963/drumspeak.v6i2.1267

BECOMING CONSCIOUS OF THE SELF: SPATIAL DYNAMICS, CHARACTER PAIRS AND THE FEMINIST VISION IN AMMA DARKO'S BEYOND THE HORIZON

Christabel Aba Sam[1]
Department of English
University of Cape Coast
christabel.sam@ucc.edu.gh

Abstract

The relationship between spatial dynamics, character pairs and how this is constitutive of the feminist vision in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* has rarely been explored, despite the growing critical reception. The paper explores how Darko's women become awakened by the redemptive roles of their fellow women through the narrative's climatic journeys. Drawing on theories of spatiality and African feminisms, this paper argues that Darko's attempt at associating specific characters within particular geographical contexts helps us to rethink controversial and conventional discourses on the African woman – sisterhood solidarity, education, financial freedom and bodily integrity as routes to the total emancipation of the African woman. Thus, the study suggests a shift from the rather clichéd argument that the text is male-targeted.

Keywords: Amma Darko, *Beyond the Horizon*, character pairs, feminist vision, self-consciousness.

[1] Christabel Aba Sam (PhD) is a lecturer in the Department of English, University of Cape Coast, Ghana and a Fellow of the African Multiple Cluster of Excellence, Lagos African Cluster Centre (F '22) and the Bayreuth Academy (F' 23). Her research interests include Men and Masculinities in Africa and Postcolonial futurity.
ORCID ID: Christabel Aba Sam https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7926-0395

Introduction

African feminist literature over the last two decades has undergone several changes. Currently, discourses on African feminisms suggest the need for contextual responses to the everyday experiences of woman in the African sub-region due to the plurality of the African experience. While this is important, African women writers continue to promote African women's emancipatory agenda by re-focusing subversive strategies for the efficient and effective mobilization of women's freedom. The commitment of Amma Darko's writings cannot be underestimated, despite their supposed indictment on the African society (Anyidoho, 2003; Adjei, 2010; Nutsukpo, 2019). A cursory look at the burgeoning critical commentary on Darko's debut, *Beyond the Horizon* indicates a tilted focus on transnational bodies and migratory subjectivities (Chasen, 2010; Asempasah & Sam, 2016; Ladele, 2016), sex, pornography, profanity and prostitution (Abeka, Marfo & Bonku, 2014; Frais, 2002), female battery, the danger of objectification, the social ills in contemporary Africa (Awitor, 2013; Oseghale & Ohwiwerei, 2019; Sam, 2021) and a careful attempt at subverting patriarchal narratives of the female character (Blay, 2014; Ugwanyi, 2017; Ngwaba, 2019; Sam, 2021).

Studies on Darko's presentation of character and how it divulges her feminist vision allude to the retaliatory and radical nature of her feminism and the fact that her women are unending victims of systemic oppressions (Adjei, 2001; Awitor, 2013). While the discourse of a painful and nightmarish female experience cannot be overlooked, Darko's feminist vision, as this paper argues, cannot be fully understood outside of her careful attempt at character pairing in specific locales. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to explore how Darko's women become awakened by the redemptive roles of their fellow women through the narrative's climatic journeys as well as how her character-pairing technique of woman-to-woman, beyond the discourse of sisterhood solidarity, communicates her feminist vision in *Beyond the Horizon*. The paper is structured into three parts; the first part looks at the plot summary of the text, methods, and the theoretical fulcrum of the paper. In part two of this paper, I pay attention to Darko's characterization technique of character pairing within particular geographies and how the nature of her feminism can be derived thereof. Finally, the third section will summarize the major arguments in the paper and make recommendations for further research.

Plot Summary, Theory and Methods

The narrative in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* traces the development of naïve Mara from Ghana to Germany - chronicling the painful transitions of her debased life from daughter to wife and to mother and how the social system in Africa supports such subordinations. The novel also illuminates the abuses of the self and the African identity through a careful negation of third world fetish for Europe. The paper is rooted in the feminist qualitative research paradigm with the hope of elucidating the emancipatory vision in Darko's debut. The paper focusses on character and characterization and spatial dynamics. It provides a character analysis of four pairs of characters: Mara and her nameless mother in rural Ghana (Naka); Mara and Mama Kiosk in urban Ghana; Mara and Gitte in urban Germany; and Mara and Kaye in a German brothel. My aim in this analysis is to show how specific feminist commentary derives from the relationship between characterization and spatial forms. The analysis is guided by the African feminist framework and the concept of spatiality.

'African feminism(s)' is a cover term that serves as the domesticated version of the ideology of feminism. It emerged as a response to White feminism which ignored the liberation of women of colour. Thus, African feminisms pay attention to the historical realities of the African woman and how the plurality of experiences in the sub-region demand contextual responses as opposed to the universalized front spearheaded by the western framework. In other words, although African feminist activism cannot be seen as entirely separate from the larger context of oppression and exploitation of women, their feminism is primarily aimed at challenging personal, social and sexist conditions that dehumanize women in the African context. Thus, African feminists strive to reverse perceived injustices instituted against women (Amaefula, 2020) and advance the view of complementarity between men and women by stressing the male-female principle in a creative order (Fogg-Davies, 2005).

A major justification for drawing on African feminisms in this paper is that African feminists prioritize vulnerable groups by interrogating the patriarchal nature of socio-religious and cultural- political institutions with the view of stressing an equalist agenda without extreme radicalist tendencies (Stiftung, 2021).

The paper also relies on the role of spatialization in literary criticism. Spatial forms have become central to modern literary criticism. This is because spaces are treated as domains for

character development. This belief follows from the central argument within spatial theorizations that spaces are essential quality of being. (Lefebvre, 1974; Soja, 1989; 1996, Foucault, 1986, Tally, 2014). In other words, key to our understanding of characters as ideological signifiers is the function of setting /space as marked influential domains. Foucault's analysis of heterotopia in particular gives an indication of the fact that spaces/setting are not independent of social and political markers. Thus, spaces/setting have socio-functional properties and goals that are symbolic. In this paper, I use space/setting as a construct. It consists of place, the activities going on in the place, and the roles and identities of the people in that given place. I am interested in how spaces redefine a character's social orientation as well as how key thematic issues derive from the relationship between spatial dynamics and character pairs.

Analysis

This section analyzes the relationship between setting, character, and theme. It will highlight Darko's feminist vision through an analysis of character foiling and the function of setting. In *Dualism in Amma Darko's Beyond the Horizon*, Quayson (2015) makes a modest observation when he claims that the function of setting in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* operates on a metaphorical level of ambition and progression. Although Quayson (2015) argues that Mara's and Akobi's realities become reflexive of the African migrant dream my argument in this paper is that beyond the metaphorical function of setting, what Amma Darko tries to do, as her character technique would show, is to locate her feminist vision within the conjunction of setting and character. In other words, setting is not simply denotative in *Beyond the Horizon,* as Quayson (2015) invites us to consider. It is a principal determining factor in Darko's emancipatory framework if we pay attention to discourses that derive from specific character pairs in particular locales.

First Pair - Undoing Patriarchal Conspiracies: Mara and Her Nameless Mother in Rural Naka

Life in rural Naka was hegemonic. It was a place where women had no chance of independence. Indeed, patriarchal power in Naka had become immortalized to an extent that

female subjugation and subordination are considered natural and acceptable. So right from the choice of a husband to the contraction of her marriage, Mara had no part to play since it was even rude to know the identity of her chosen husband before an official declaration from her father.

> I remember the day clearly. I returned from the village well with my fourth bucket of water of the day when mother excitedly beckoned to me in all my wet ness and muddiness, dragged me into her hut breathlessly told me the 'good news'. "Your father has found a husband for you" {…}
> "a good man"
> "Who is he? I asked mother, "father's choice for me?
> "Oh, my dear child." Mother said, "you know your father would consider it rude if I disclosed him to you before he did." (3-4).

Obviously, Naka was ruled by the opinions of the men. Decision-making was a male preserve with no opposition, and this possibly explains Mara's obstinacy in matters affecting her own welfare. The bond between Mara and her mother had produced toxic narratives about the realities of womanhood – placing women into an uncomfortable category of subservience and docility. Such prejudices of cultural orientation are carefully overthrown by Darko through character naming and the precarity in essentialism. The treachery of essentialism is revealed through Mara's constant presupposition that to be a woman is to be naturally inferior. She consciously admits that:

> **It was natural** that after I had woken up first at dawn, and made the fire to warm up water for Akobi, and carried a bucket full of it with his sponge bag to the bathhouse for him and returned to wake him up to tell him his bath was ready.
> **It was natural** that I also had to stand outside while he bathed just in case some soap suds should go into his eyes and her should need me
> **It was natural**, too, that when he demanded it, I slept on the concrete floor on just my thin mat while he slept all alone on the large grass mattress (12-13) {Emboldened for my emphasis}

The semantics of natural lead us to re-open the discussions on histories of abuse of black women and how conventional oppressive hierarchies constrain the realities of femininity. What Darko tries to suggest through the narrator's emphasis on natural is to reject the idea that womanhood is a homogenous and tokenist framework. She stresses the fact that gender relations should be transformed in a manner that promotes equity and is rooted in the diversity and potential of life. It is important to recognize that the latter choices Mara makes as a self-decided prostitute in no way defeat Darko's vision. Rather, she appears to align with what Spivak calls 'strategic essentialism' as a temporary political strategy aimed at female emancipation. Darko appears to call attention to the necessity of unlearning such imperial categorization of the sexes and advocating that women transcend their designated places in society and she does so through Mara's nameless mother. Unlike Armah's nameless protagonist, The Man, who is undefined because his behaviour is unfamiliar to his immediate surroundings, Mara's nameless mother is Darko's style of rejecting and discontinuing black women's inferiority. Mara's mother is undefined because she is an archetype of false historical consciousness of being a woman. Darko's feminist vision, therefore, is to suggest that central to woman emancipation is the re-inscription of voice, agency, integrity and an overt acknowledgement of dynamism and plurality of feminine experiences particularly within the African geopolitical space. Hence, the signification of Mara's nameless mother is Darko's way of suggesting that Mara's mother's views are positional ambiguities that are informed by patriarchal conspiracies to silence the African woman. Thus, Darko's attempt at correcting this propaganda is by re-representing the ideal mother figure through the perspectives of Mama Kiosk.

Second Pair-Beseeching Feminine Integrity: Mara and Mama Kiosk in Urban Ghana

Darko's attempt at pairing Mara and Mama Kiosk in urban Ghana reveals three key concerns in her feminist agenda: that the African woman's total emancipation is intricately connected to economic independence; that education is central to female emancipation; and that emancipation begins and thrives on positive gender conditioning. These three parameters are profoundly emphasized in the corridors of the cityscape.

Coming to the city, Mara had no value for wifehood beyond self-denial, self-imprisonment, and essentialist assumptions of womanhood. Her socialization in Naka had stifled any possibility of benefits in any marital relationship, especially when her mother had been her only reference for modelling. Her encounter with Mama Kiosk was the beginning of a tough, 'rough journey towards self-awakening and a re-orientation of positive gender relations. Mara admits that:

> But all these things that I considered to be normal, Mama Kiosk did not find it normal. 'Your husband is one of those men who have no respect for village people,' she said once. 'Tradition demands that the wife respects, obey and worship her husband but it demands, in return, care, good care of the wife. Your husband neglects you and yet demands respect and complete worship from you. 'That is not normal'. And the closer our relationship became, the more effort she made to let me see and understand that my husband was not treating me right. But I saw none of it, or maybe I simply lacked the ability to understand it enough to see. (13)

Mama Kiosk had cleverly noticed, as the extract reveals, that Akobi had no respect for Mara because of her rural childhood; 'you come from the village? Jonnie-just-come? Villager-in-town?' (10) and, therefore, realized that a re-education of gender dichotomies was a promising start to Mara's self-consciousness via the prospects of the city as a place of enlightenment. Mama Kiosk's approach is key for two reasons. First, she does not attempt to dismiss what Mara believes to be the constitution of womanhood. Second, she allows Mara an opportunity to assess privately and independently what she (Mama Kiosk) considers the unwritten code of womanhood. The calculation in this approach is the relief Mara derives from not feeling any burden of disobedience of the status quo. The approach also helps to debunk the fact that Darko's advocacy is radicalist or separatist (Adjei, 2010). What Darko tries to do is to gradually release her women from the confines of cultural and historical stereotypes and to raise awareness of what is normal.

Mama Kiosk's approach also makes it difficult for Mara to ignore the necessity to unlearn her 'greenhorn' tendencies and blind values and to embrace the qualities of feminine pride. Mara lacks understanding of what Mama Kiosk refers to as the 'law':

> Mama Kiosk snapped, 'Men buy for themselves, Mara. There's no law that says they shouldn't. But they buy for their women too, Mara. And there is a law that says they must. (14)

The law that says they (men) must take care of their women, as the extract reveals, is premised on how practical female emancipation derives from an understanding of gender harmonies. Another important awareness that stems from the relationship between Mara and Mama Kiosk is encapsulated in the metaphor of economic independence that is located within the name, Mama Kiosk:

> Mama Kiosk was what people called her because she owned a kiosk at the main lorry station in which she retailed cigarettes, sweets and water. Her home was not Alhaji's but her own. It wasn't all corrugated sheets but part blocks. (10)

Embedded in this charactonymn is the argument that patriarchy intertwined with current economic models are conditions that contribute to and increase female vulnerability, and therefore qualitative emancipation of the African woman, as Darko tries to suggest, is incumbent on the improved economic conditions of women – particularly women in impoverished communities. Thus, African feminists consider economic independence as pivotal in the politics of liberation.

Juxtaposing Naka and the city, we would immediately realize that the topography of Naka, as a farming community, makes available to women no alternatives of livelihood beyond depending on the benevolence of the men. Hence, Mara could not see the capital in rubbish collection.

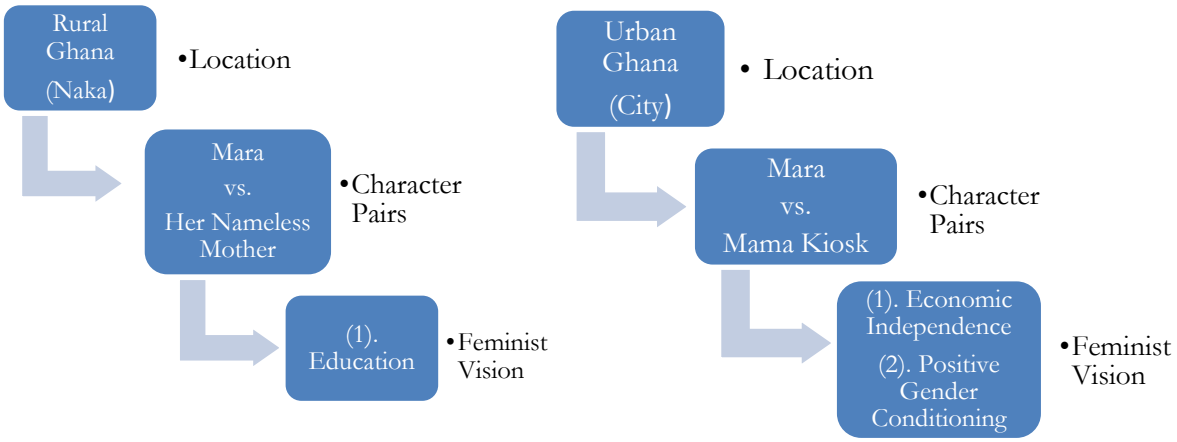
> Are you going to the rubbish dump?
>
> Yes, I replied. {…}
>
> {…} Hey, she called surprised, 'You are truly a greenhorn', you know.

> I stood staring at her.
> Hey, do you work for free in the village? She asked derisively.
> Bt I still could not get what she was hinting at and continued to stare at her.
> You are in the city, she said emphatically, and in the city nothing is for free,
> you get me? (10)

The announcement that "this is the city" is a call to economic intelligence and perseverance in order that Mara may assume some level of financial responsibility that will help reduce the traditional stereotypes of men being breadwinners. The city, therefore, presents Mara with an opportunity of re-education, re-definition, and re-awakening.

Below is a pictorial description of Amma Darko's Feminist Vision through Character Pairs and Setting (The Case of Ghana)

Figure 1: Character Pairs and the Consequent Feminist Vision (The Case of Ghana**)**



Third Pair - Negating the Fetish of Europe through Character: Mara and Gitte in Urban Germany

Life in Germany begins with shock and pretenses as Mara finds herself playing sister-in-law to her co-wife, Gitte. Coming to Germany, Mara is greeted with huge dissappointments particularly with the fetish of Europe as a place of promise and the realites of African migrants. Darko's production of a counter discourse is seen through the relationship between Mara and

Gitte and through Akobi's marriage to Gitte. One of the key strategies Darko adopts in rethinking what is assumed to be an African complex is through careful substitutions and strategic reversals of what constitute white female superirority; thus, stressing the intersectional nature of female opprssion.

To begin with, Darko tries to break the idea of white female superiror self by placing Gitte in vulnerable acts and pushing her to the limits of a degraded position, beginning with her defamatory characterization of Gitte:

> {…} And there she was: Gitte. And what a picture! Shoulder-length aubum hair and a short stubby fat body concealed in a grey woollen skirt, a dark green sweat shirt and black cowboy boots. So this was Gitte. Somehow I had always had inmy mind the idea that all white women were tall, slim, long-legged and blonde with sparkling blue eyes {…} But this my husband Akobi's Gitte she was anything but this image. (95)

Gitte's characterization is an initial presupposition that there is no unusual aura of difference or peculiarity as regards the nature of White women. She is simply depicted as ordinary - a strategy that makes non-existent powerful female hierarchies, drawing attention to the politics of sameness of essence. In other words, the local and the global are not mutually exclusive. Koumagnon (2018) corroborates this asssertion when he posits that 'Gitte's depiction correspond to a metaphoric transposition of the West's devouring of Africa's material resources. Right from start, Amma Darko uses deflamatory characteriation to destroy the self-esteem or confidence of the female character (324).

It is also important to recognize how Darko exposes the contradictions in White feminist politics through a strategic negation of Gitte's inteligence in a bigamous union. Gitte is predisposed to familiar effects of patrirachal advances and subordinations that is geared towards identity reduction. In other words, Gitte's desperation to find love in the arms of a Negro may be read as a critique on White anxiety to possess and control African pride. This ideological communication is aptly reflected in Osey's admission:

> These women, he began, still in our language, these women, they aree very difficult people. And that is why many times, it is better not to tell them the

> truth. They don't understand us. {…} they have heir own imagess of us, very rude, rough, very low. We don't fight with them about these. We use that to our advantage. (98/102)

Darko tries to reduce the intensity of the vicious and offensive misrepresentations of the African by the West through the symbolic reparation Gitte makes with her failed love affair. Altnough Darko does not in any way justifiy the brutish greed and delusive masculine profile of Osey and Akobi, she tries to advance the complications in global sisterhood. Mara and Gitte's relationship thus reifies the problematics of the sameness/difference relation as intrinsically contextual, as Higgins (2006) rightly observes that "Darko's narrative suggests that the worlds of European and African women are indeed intertwined, yet white Northern women must first contemplate their priviledges in order to build a transnational or transcultural sisterhood" (318).

Despite the foregoing, Darko tries to suggest the possibility of reconciliation of historical pain through Mara's constant hesitation to let Gitte in on the realities of their relationship. The painful emotion she experiences because of the compulsion to endure her co-wife and the fact that the thoughts of having to violate the African moral ethics of marriage in no way quickens in her the desire for retribution. Rather, Mara keeps denying any desire for getting back at her foreign co-work as she submits:

> I took the ring and thanked Gitte with *a low bow*. But she unexpectedly grasped me by by the shoulders and kissed me in a sisterly way on both cheeks. That moved me and *filled me with guilt*. How long could I go on cheating on her as her sister-in-law if she continued being so sisterly towards me? (97)
>
> I smiled *guiltily*. How could Akobi tell such big lies.

Mara's feeling of guilt is a complex signification of both desolation and agency. Whiles she develops a yearning for power and political redemption, she simultaneously shows minimal acceptability of her hostile circumstances, which is why she continues to hesitate in the face of options. This attitude can also be interpreted as Darko's way of suggesting the possiblity of global female solidarity regardless of issues of speaking traumatic histories.

Thus, contrary to the stereotype that women are their own enemies, the relationship between Mara and Gitte suggests that female complicity in systemic subordination are characteristically unusual. Comfort lacks self-love and integrity, despite her apparent sophistication. She is the perfect traitor figure required by patriarchy to perpetuate its agenda**,** which is an affirmation of what Koumagnon (2018) observes. In other words, Comfort can best be described as the metaphorical representation of the insider dipping in a common sauce bowl with the colonizer.

Although Koumagnon (2018) again claims that Comfort's deportation is significant in terms of the presumed discontinuity of such betrayal, he surprisingly postulates that "Amma Darko urges readers to believe that the resolution to expel Comfort in Nigeria and not Ghana is at the same level with Mara's loss of faith to return one day to Ghana" (154).

What Darko rather intends, as this paper argues, shaming and collaborative responsibility. In other words, while Mara's loss of faith in to return to Ghana one day is simply an acknowledgement of personal guilt and the fact that she hopes not to be celebrated as a prodigal daughter, Comfort's deportation should be understood as a retributive act of paying for her betrayal.

Fourth Pair - Owning the Body is a We-for-She Affair: Mara and Kaye in the German Brothel

The relationship between Mara and Kaye is key for two reasons: that there is the need to de-objectify the female body through a strategic essentialist framework to reclaim dignity and, the fact**,** that sisterhood solidarity is pivotal in the politics of African women's emancipation.

Frias (2002) posits, "Darko powerfully condemns and unpardonably speaks out for the lives of black women who are traumatically silenced and sexually exploited in the brothels of the Western world" (p. 8). She concludes that women victims often find a way to reclaim their minds and bodies as well as control over financial gain. Frais' (2002) argument, as I observe, constitutes Darko's attempt at enhancing the possibility of a new bodily life for Mara. As Chasen (2010) rightly notes Darko constructs Mara's body as a marker for the transnational flow of capital from Europe to Africa and the fact that the movement of female bodies;

particularly with Mara's experience, is an intentional move by Darko to engender alternative survival approaches for displaced female bodies (10).

Moving from Hamburg to Munich, Mara becomes a glorified pawn and a sex slave to her lords. She becomes bereft of dignity due to her extreme familiarity with abuse and abusers. This choice she makes, that Odamtten (2007) assumes to be borne out of illicit desires, is rather a decided move to subversively assume independence and salvage the remnants of her self-regard.

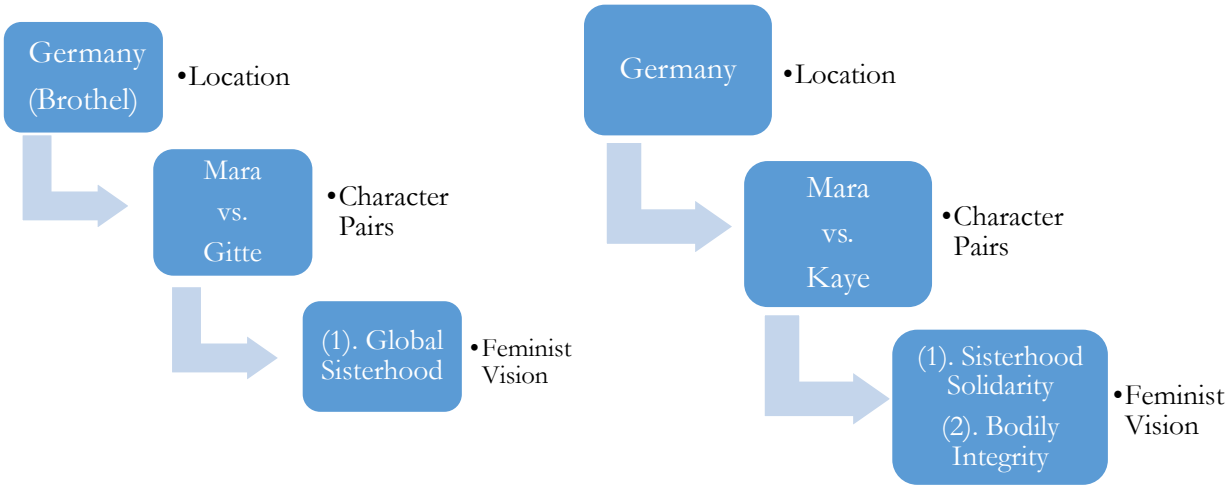
Mara's redemption from the bonds of dehumanization is influenced by her association with Kaye. Kaye's approach to Mara's plight was restorative. With her expertise as a brothel queen, Kaye cautiously walks with Mara through alternative routes to liberation. Her devotion to Mara is underscored by her belief in the necessity of change and practical freedom. She counsels Mara on the need to de-objectify herself from male-gaze by re-commercializing her body as a subversive step to liberation. Her insistence on the fact that Mara ought to take advantage of her already defiled body is a symbolic inauguration of the advent of power and independence. As Butler (2011) rightly contends, "to matter means at once to materialize and to mean" (47). In other words, to assume bodily integrity, there is the need to self-materialize. By self-materializing, Butler refers to recasting the body as capital for power. Thus, the point in Kaye's reasoning is to ensure that Mara's body is no longer controlled by external regulators – signalling the beginning of a licentious reputation.

It is important to acknowledge that Mara's later tactics at revenge and subsequently grabbing hold of her bodily freedom is the result of sisterhood solidarity:

> Down to the minutest detail, she said with a smile.
>
> And what is the cut of my income, I asked?
>
> Oves, Thirty
>
> And you?
>
> Sisterhood solidarity, she replied. (135)

This point of sisterhood solidarity possibly explains Darko's overall technique of character foiling. Like many African feminists, Darko is committed to debunking stereotypes and patriarchal premises that blur women's communal vision.

Below is a pictorial description of Amma Darko's Feminist Vision through Character Pairing and Setting (The Case of Germany).



Conclusion

Amma Darko's criticism has journeyed a long way from the supposed antagonistic and male-bashing approach to advancing a new global feminist politics that seeks to re-unite women across borders. Although Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* has received widespread criticism on female subordination and the nature of her feminist postulations on the fast-degrading state of female bodies, my analysis has shown that Darko's feminist vision in her first novel is hugely linked to her technique of character foiling in specific geographical contexts. It is this unique technique that makes her vision for the African woman overt and touching. My analysis also recognizes the centrality of anthroponomy to the overall politics that pervades the novel. While the African feminist framework opens up debates on essence and diversity**,** as my analysis has shown, the paper concludes that a new politics that stresses the value of education, economic independence, and global sisterhood promises to be a mature output for women in Africa and the Diaspora. Further research can pay attention to male-male relationships. This engagement promises to strengthen the debates on the nature of her feminism, particularly in *Beyond the Horizon*.

References

Abeka, Philomena, Charles Marfo, and Lucy Bonku. "An Angle of Seeing: Pornography and Profanity as Pharmakon in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and *The Housemaid*." *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 5.2 (2014): 108-114.

Agboadannon, Djossou, and Koumagnon Alfred. *African Women's Empowerment: A Study In Amma Darko's Selected Novels*. Diss. Le Mans 2018.

Anyidoho, Kofi. "The back without which there is no front." *Africa Today* (2003): 3-18.

Armah, Ayi Kwei. *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Heinemann, 1988.

Asempasah, Rogers, and Christabel Sam. "Reconstituting the Self: of Names, Discourses and Agency in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*." *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies* (2016).

Awitor, Etsè "The Quest for Social Justice in Meja Mwangi's *The Cockroach Dance*. L" *Acta Iassyensia Comparationis* (2013).

Blay, R. A. *The image of African women in a patriarchal society a study of* Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* and Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. Diss. University of Education, Winneba, 2014.

Chasen, Laura E. *Dislocated subjects: Transnational forced prostitution, African Female Bodies and Corporeal Resistance*. Georgetown University, 2010.

Darko, Amma. *Beyond the horizon*. Heinemann International Incorporated, 1995.

Foucault, Mitchel, Of other spaces (2008), (L. De Cauter & M. Dehaene, Trans.). In M. Dehaene & L. De Cauter (Eds.), *Heterotopia and the city: Public space in a postcivil society* (pp. 13-29). Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Francis, Oseghale, and Mary Emohiomeu Ohiwerei. "Reflection of Social Ills in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*." *Sino-US English Teaching* 16.10 (2019): 432-438.

Frías, María. "Women on Top: Prostitution and Pornography in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*." *Wasafiri* 17.37 (2002): 8-13.

Ibeku, Ijeoma. Interrogating Objectivity in Amma Darko's Beyond the Horizon. (2020): 109-126.

Ladele, Omolola A. "Globalisation and African Women's Bodies: Some Fictional Representations." *International Journal of English and Literature* 7.8 (2016): 135-142.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space.* Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991.

Nkealah, Naomi. "(West) African feminisms and their challenges." *Journal of literary Studies* 32.2 (2016): 61-74..

Nutsukpo, Margaret Fafa. "The Exploitation of African Women: A Feminist Exploration of Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*." *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* 10.2 (2019): 136-142.

Ugwanyi, Dele Maxwell. "Subverting the patriarchal narrative of the female character in the African novel: A feminist reading of Amma Darko's novels." *Covenant Journal of Language Studies* 5.1 (2017).

Ngwaba, Ijeoma Ann. "Interrogating Objectivity in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*."

Odamtten, Vincent O., ed. *Broadening the horizon: Critical Introductions to Amma Darko*. Ayebia Clarke Pub Limited, 2007.

Quayson, Kwesi. "Dualism in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*." *Central Inquiry* 1.1 (2015).

Sam, Christabel Aba. "Villains, victims and victors: a character analysis of Amma Darko's women." *Drumspeak: International Journal of Research in the Humanities* 5.3. (2021)

Soja, Edward W. Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996.

Stiftung, Bertelsmann, ed. *CO2 zum Nulltarif?: Warum Treibhausgasemissionen einen Preis haben müssen*. Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2021.

Drumspeak - Special Edition (March 2023)
https://doi.org/10.47963/drumspeak.v6i2.1267

REVERSING THE IMPERIAL GAZE, AFFIRMING POSSIBILITY: CONRAD AND FANON IN AMMA DARKO'S *BEYOND THE HORIZON*.

Rogers Asempasah[1]
Department of English
University of Cape Coast.
rasempasah@ucc.edu.gh

Abstract

Drawing on Bakhtin's notion of the dialogism of the word, especially double-voiced discourse, this paper examines Darko's subtle inscription of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* in her novel *Beyond the Horizon* (1995). Specifically, the paper examines "horror" and the novel's title as double-voiced discourse or dialogical sites of contestation and affirmation, respectively. It argues that while the Conradian subtext can be understood in the context of Darko's reversal of Marlow's imperial gaze in *Heart of Darkness*, the Fanonian subtext revolves around Darko's politics of "beyond the horizon" which is contingent on decentering Europe as the location of hope for postcolonial people. By focusing on Darko's subtle dialogue with Conrad and Fanon, the paper shows that Darko strategically frames Mara's encounter with Europe as a journey into the "heart of darkness" and also foregrounds de-linking from the West as an emancipatory ethic and thought for postcolonial transformation.

Keywords: Amma Darko, *Beyond the Horizon*, dialogism, imperial gaze, postcolonial

Introduction

Political instability, poverty, the search for the good life, and the allure of the West are at the heart of the desperate dash to the West by many people from poor countries in the Global

[1] Rogers Asempasah is a senior lecturer in the Department of English, University of Cape Coast, Ghana, where he teaches literature in English.
ORCID: Rogers Asempasah http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1272-1211

South. However, many of those who brave the perilous obstacles and make it to their dream destinations realize to their shame that they cannot be masters of their fate as they had imagined. As a result, they are forced to accept their new status as tormented, disposable or petty beings who "peep about to find" themselves "dishonourable" jobs and graves.[2] Africa's literary response to this crisis of migration to the West is the "new African transatlantic novel" which foregrounds migration, dislocation, human and sex trafficking, or the objectification of postcolonial subaltern bodies in the West (Onyerionwu, 2016). Amma Darko's debut novel, *Beyond the Horizon* (1995; henceforth *BH*), is one of the defining texts in this subgenre. Focusing on the crisis of expectation that confronts African migrants in Europe, *BH* explores the tragic paradox that revolves around the West's power to interpellate and disavow postcolonial subalterns. Although rarely commented on, *BH* is also a subtle reversal of the imperial gaze and a meditation on the location of the horizon of hope for postcolonial people. To read *BH* from this perspective, however, requires that one grasps the subtle dialogism that frames its emancipatory thought.

The paper examines Darko's reversal of the imperial gaze through the subtle inscription of Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness* (henceforth *HoD*) and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth.* Drawing on Bakhtin's notion of dialogism of the word, it analyzes the title of Darko's novel and the word "horror" as used by Mara, the protagonist-narrator, as double-voiced discourse or dialogical sites of contestation and affirmation, respectively. It argues that while the Fanonian subtext can be understood within the context of Darko's reversal of Marlow's imperial gaze in *Heart of Darkness,* the Fanonian subtext revolves around Darko's conception of the "horizon" which is contingent on reversing Marlow's imperial gaze and demystifying Europe as the redemptive location for postcolonial people. By focussing on Darko's subtle inscription of Conrad and Fanon, the paper shows that Darko strategically frames Mara's encounter with Europe as a journey into the "heart of darkness" and also calls on postcolonial people to rethink the West as the place for postcolonial re-invention or self-fashioning. Above all, the paper shows that an awareness of double-voiced discourse in *BH* enriches our understanding of the full complexity of Darko's craft and thematic concerns. The paper begins in the next section with the literature on *BH.*

[2] See Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar,* Act One, Scene Two.

Critical Reception of *Beyond the horizon*

Since its publication, *BH* has received significant scholarly attention. To Odamtten (2007, p. 4), *BH* embodies "the need for new and different stories to be told" on the Ghanaian literary scene. According to Barberân (2014: 13), *BH* interrupts "hegemonic representations of sex trafficking disseminated by the mainstream media" that traditionally ignore the decisive role of "the neoliberal economic model of exclusion and inequality" in sex trafficking. Given the novel's focus on sex trafficking, prostitution, sexual violence, and Mara's quest for liberation, it is not surprising that most scholars have dwelt on the interconnecting issues of patriarchal violence and dehumanization, sex trafficking, prostitution, pornography, and the commodification of the subaltern woman's body (Abeka *et al.*, 2014; Awitor, 2013; Higgins 2006; Jonet, 2007; Kammampoal, 2017). Others have focused on alienation and reinvention, subversion, female resistance, shame and agency, and the quest for feminist solidarity and bodily integrity (Asempasah & Sam 2016; Angsotinge *et al*., 2002; Djossou, 2020; Umezurike, 2015). A few critics have made passing reference to the novel's dialogical orientation (Frías, 2002: 12; Asempasah & Sam 2016).

Two conclusions can be drawn from extant literature. First, there is curremtly no in-depth analysis of Darko's subtle inscription of Conrad and Fanon in *BH*. As a result, Darko's reversal of the imperial gaze and critique of the "horizon" has remained unexplored. Second, the literature suggests that *BH* affirms Bhabha's (2004, pp. 1-2) assertion that "the 'beyond' is neither a new horizon nor a living behind of the past". This is confirmed by Mara's realization that patriarchal domination and violence in Africa morph into a complex global economy of female bodily commodification and disempowerment in Europe. The Bhabhalian interpretation, however, does not consider the dialogical resonance of the novel's title and Mara's usage of the word "horror" which, upon critical analysis, yields an alternative meaning. As the analysis will show, *BH* is not so much about the impossibility of a new horizon *tout court.* Rather, *BH* is a critique of the "horizon" as a potent structure of thought and feeling in postcolonial contexts wherein the West is represented as the utopian place of transformation. It is precisely in this sense that I will argue that Darko's title is at once a call on postcolonial people to think beyond the allure of the West and to re-imagine Africa as a horizon of possibility.

The unstated problem *BH* grapples with, then, is how to think beyond the West as a model and structure of thought for postcolonial people, which is why Germany is presented as a traumatic and revelatory threshold rather than the terminus for the postcolonial subject's heroic re-invention. The threshold emerges from a fundamental encounter. By fundamental encounter, I mean an encounter that calls into question images of thought and opens the possibility of different ways of being and seeing.[3] In other words, a fundamental encounter is "a vigorously anti-systematic mode of understanding … a means of disrupting the centralizing impulse of any system" (Quayson, 2000, p. 136). As Ahmed (2002, p.8) argues in a different context, encounters "*reopen the prior histories of encounter that violate and fix others in regimes of difference"* (emphasis included). As the analysis will show, Darko uses Mara's encounter with Europe to reopen prior narratives of encounter, like Conrad's *HoD,* that fix Africa in regimes of difference. Europe, as a threshold, thus emerges in *BH* as a place of crisis and disclosure for the postcolonial subaltern. The crisis stems from the realization by Darko's protagonists Mara, Vivian, and Kaye that their perceptions of Europe are no more than comforting myths or illusions. I emphasize the notion of fundamental encounter because it is essential to understanding Darko's reversal of the imperial gaze and the decentering of the allure of the West. More importantly, it enables one to pose radically new questions that have hitherto not been sufficiently posed in the scholarship on *BH*. What image of thought does *BH* decenter? How is this demystification orchestrated? What are the implications of this demystification for postcolonial liberation and transformation? To answer these questions, it is crucial to focus on Darko's dialogic inscription of Conrad and Fanon. Before the analysis, however, it is essential to flesh out Bakhtin's concept of dialogism of the word.

Bakhtinian dialogism: Incorporating and contesting the Other

Dialogism forms part of Bakhtin's broader concept of polyphony, verbal discourse, or utterance as a social phenomenon. As Holquist (1990, p. 37) argues, dialogism is vital to Bakhtin's attempt at theorizing an alternative socio-political ontology that gives primacy to meaning as an agonistic struggle. Bakhtinian dialogism emphasizes otherness and hybridity as inherent to language or utterance. Central to Bakhtin's dialogism is the word as the minimal but complex

[3] On fundamental encounter, see Gilles Deleuze (1994).

point of stylistic analysis. Unlike traditional stylistics that viewed the word only within the confines of language, Bakhtin pluralizes the relation of the word to its object by emphasizing intention and directionality. For Bakhtin, every utterance or word is always already populated by other meanings:

> The word in language is half someone else's. It only becomes "one's own" when the speaker populates it with his own inflection and accent, when he appropriates it and adapts it to his own semantics and expression. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language ... but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 294).

This idea of dialogism has deep significance for literary analysis as it theorizes the process by which newness or otherness enters the universe of the text. Bakhtin shows that newness is a product of the intention and directionality of an utterance or word. Also, Bakhtinian dialogism enables us to see the literary work as a dynamic process of "productivity and operation" or a complex dialogue of reader, text, and context (Kristeva, 1980, p. 367).

One of Bakhtin's examples of dialogism is double-voiced discourse.[4] Double-voiced discourse refers to the dialogic force inherent in any utterance or word; it means that all utterances or words are traces or sedimentations of prior and multiple meanings. As Bakhtin puts it, double-voiced discourse is "directed both towards the referential object of speech as in ordinary discourse and toward another's discourse, towards someone else's speech" (1994, p. 105). Or as Kristeva (1980, p. 66) puts it, "each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read ... any text is a mosaic of quotations ... the absorption of and transformation of another." It is this idea of the doubleness or otherness of the word or utterance that is central to the analysis of the title of Darko's novel and "horror" as dialogical sites of contestation and affirmation. Such a reading emphasizes that *BH* does not exist in hermetic isolation; it contests, affirms, and reframes antecedent texts/voices. The next

[4] See Baxter (2014, pp. 23–41), on Bakhtin's theories of double–voiced discourse.

section focuses on how Darko decenters Europe by re-locating or reversing *the imperial gaze and* "horror" in Conrad's *HoD.*

Reversing the imperial gaze, relocating the horror of recognition

This section discusses Darko's subtle reversal of the imperial gaze. It argues that Darko's inscription of Conrad's *HoD* is framed around the horror of recognition and the reversing of Marlow's imperial gaze. The gaze designates a mode of perception that presumes power, domination, and othering.[5] As Marion (2002, p. 214) argues, gazing is about being able to keep the visible thus seen under the control of the seer…To gaze at the phenomenon is therefore equivalent to not seeing it, but indeed to transforming it into an object visible according to an equivalent to an always poor or common phenomenality—visible within the limits of concept." The gaze does not only objectify that which is observed, it also assumes the autonomy and authority of the one who gazes (Tate, 2022, p. 154). The imperial gaze refers to a mode of perception that objectifies the other and "refuses to acknowledge its own power and privilege" (Kaplan, 1997, p. 78). According to Kaplan, the imperial gaze "reflects the assumption that the white subject is central … one that refuses mutual gazing, mutual subject-to-subject recognition. It refuses … "looking relation" (p.78). To reverse the imperial gaze, therefore, means studying, analyzing or looking at the West through the eyes of the previously colonized. What I call the horror of recognition refers to an epiphany that challenges deeply held beliefs and ideas. In this paper, the reversal of the gaze and the horror of recognition refer to same perceptual and ideological process of countering that result from the encounter or confrontation with the real or reality.

Before analyzing the reversal of the imperial gaze and the horror of recognition, in *BH*, it is essential to begin with a synopsis of the novel. *BH* is Mara's story of betrayal, education, and liberation. Mara, the protagonist-narrator, is literarily sold by her father into marriage to Akobi in Naka, a village in Ghana. Not long after joining her husband in Accra, Akobi travels to Germany. Later, he lures Mara into Germany with the promise of transforming their fortunes.

[5] Often associated with Mulvey (1975), the concept of the gaze has emerged as a useful conceptual and analytical framework in understanding the subtle operations of power, domination, and resistance in as diverse fields as film studies, photography, feminist studies, postcolonial studies, literary studies etc. See Baer (2017); Gabay (2018); hooks (1996); Kaplan (1997); Lovatt (2013); McGowan (2003; 2007); Woodward (2008).

However, Mara finds to her shock that she has been trafficked into prostitution. Contrary to the image of Europe as paradise in the socio-cultural imaginary of Naka, Mara is confronted with a Europe where subaltern women are, to borrow from Butler (2009, p. 25), "differentially exposed to injury, violence, and death." Mara is reduced to a sex slave in an "isolated house on the outskirts of Munich" (*BH*, 3). After suffering sexual abuse and financial exploitation, Mara, with the help of her friend Kaye, an ex-prostitute, finally succeeds in legalizing her stay, getting Akobi jailed, his girlfriend Comfort deported to Ghana and freeing herself from her pimp. Consequently, she redirects her income into her account under a new "overseer and lord" (*BH*, 3). Fearing that her pornographic videos, which Akobi had secretly filmed to blackmail her, might find their way to Ghana, Mara decides to remain in Germany and plunges herself into prostitution as a profession (*BH*, 139). *BH* thus traces Mara's journey and transformation from a naïve conscript of patriarchal ideology and the allure of the West into a tormented but enlightened reader of the mechanisms of patriarchal violence, racial prejudice, dispossession, and the problematics of ethical empowerment in a Europe that blatantly glorifies the objectification and exploitation of female bodies.

At the heart *BH* is Mara's encounter with Europe. Echoing Conrad's *HoD*, *BH* is Mara's journey into the "heart of darkness." This is why what Mara learns as a result of her first encounter with Europe, a place she and the people of Naka imagined as "not [...] just Heaven but [...] Heaven itself" (*BH*, 34), is crucial to Darko's demystification of Europe and critique of the complicity of African men in the dehumanization of the African woman's body. Darko traces the allure of the West and its power to interpellate postcolonial subalterns to two powerful myths among postcolonial people. First, Europe as the location of readily available jobs; second, Europe as the place for the triumphant accumulation of material things. As Akobi tells Mara, "I will make so much money that I can buy us everything! Everything! Mara! Television, radio, fridge, carpet, even car! (*BH*, 34). In Naka, travelling to Europe is considered a potent accomplishment that elevates the community and "magically" raises the traveller's esteem in the family and society (*BH*, 54). Europe's magical hold on the people of Naka is presented in a flashback in which the now-enlightened Mara recalls a conversation between her and Akobi before her encounter with Europe. In the flashback, Akobi explains his decision to travel to Europe as the justification for selling Mara's jewellery, which she inherited from her

grandmother: "there is so plenty (sic) factory and construction work waiting to be done there in Europe, but with so little people to do them" (*BH*, 34).

The flashback is significant because, beyond highlighting Mara's emerging consciousness, it dramatizes the localized myths about Europe in particular and the West in general that circulated in sections of Ghanaian society in the 1970s and late 1980s, the historical setting of the novel.[6] Akobi articulates one of these myths; "Ho, do you know, for instance, that in Britain the people are so rich that they throw fridges away? And in Germany, they throw away cars?" (*BH* 35). Mara's initial unquestioning belief in Akobi's claims lends credence to Adjei's (2007, p. 54) assertion that Mara is too naïve for comfort. To Adjei, Mara's extreme naivety is central to Darko's strategy of male-bashing. However, Mara's initial uncritical belief in Akobi can also be read as suggestive of the power of the 'fictions' postcolonial subalterns have about the West. Thus, Akobi is not only a ventriloquist; he is also a victim of the fantastic socio-cultural fabulations about Europe. Akobi and Mara are victims of what Gbogi (2022, p. 297) calls an "antagonistic imagination" that frames Europe as the place of order and history while Africa represents disorder, chaos, and "a place of negations" (Achebe, 1975). Darko, therefore, highlights the power of fetishism and interpellation that the image of Europe has in postcolonial contexts. It is this utopian image that Darko dismantles by upending Mara's initial naïve image of Europe with her confrontation with the real Europe. Instead of utopia, most postcolonial subjects who travel to "Europe full of dreams" are shattered by the abject reality in Europe (*BH*, 116).

Mara's fate as a sex slave is not atypical; it is the fate of most undocumented women, ironically, and this is Darko's point, in "paradise" (i.e., Europe). As Mara says, "there are pretty women like myself, one in each room waiting to be used and abused by strange men" (*BH*, 1). At the cinema, Mara sees on the screen "black women, Africans" engaged in pornography without "a trace of shame" (*BH*, 61). The effect of these strange encounters is that Mara revises her image of Europe. Europe is no longer "paradise" but "a place hotter than hell" (*BH*, 139). Ironically, the challenge for migrants like Mara, Vivian, Kaye, Osey and Akobi is that they cannot communicate this catastrophic truth to their relatives back home as the reality contradicts the existing mythologies in Africa. As Marlow realizes in the Congo, one

[6] Unfortunately, this perception has not changed.

consequence of the confrontation with the "heart of darkness" is the revelation of "a 'truth' that turns out to be incommunicable, or even a lie" (Jervis, 1999, p. 69). Osey, the agent who facilitated Mara's illegal transit to Germany, puts the paradox in its proper socio-cultural context for Mara:

> Who will believe you at home if you return and tell them that there is no work and that German people too are themselves without job? (sic). You will be accused of being a born failure, or they will say you offended the gods and ancestors, and that you are trying to justify your shame by dissuading other people from going to Europe to try their luck. (*BH*, 77).

Confronted with the impossibility of communicating the "truth" about the real Europe, Mara and the other subalterns repeat Marlow's lie to Kurtz's Intended. Unlike Marlow, however, the postcolonial subaltern migrant's lie consists in shipping material things home so that relations will never suspect that these are, in fact, objects of shame. For Mara, it is this wilful collusion in the commodification of the African woman's body and the production of collective shame that constitutes "horror". Kaye captures the shameless complicity of Africans in exploitation of African women in Europe for Mara:

> My people back home now have everything they want, Mara. They don't know how I make the money to buy them very much. What matters to them is that I send them what they request. So I keep them satisfied that way and keep my peace here ... I just let them go on believing I'll return one day. The hope alone keeps them cheerful, so I won't destroy it for them…) Sometimes I think that my family suspects I'm in the trade [prostitution] but deliberately refrain from asking me because if they knew the truth and then took no action, not wanting to forfeit the luxuries they enjoy at my expense, they will indirectly become party to my sins. (*BH*, 117-118).

The novel's ethical imperative, then, is to reveal the disastrous effect of the allure of the West on subjects from poor countries seeking greener pastures in the West.

At this point, it is essential to focus on the more crucial and practical question: how does Darko revise Marlow's imperial gaze? Or how does *HoD* constitute a significant dialogical voice in *BH*? To answer this question, it is important to focus on the first few hours of Mara's arrival in Hamburg, Germany. In those moments, Mara is transformed into a postcolonial flâneur and reader of the socio-cultural scripts and images of Germany and by extension Europe. The encounters, as the analysis will show, constitute Darko's strategy of reversing the imperial gaze and the horror of recognition.[7] The importance of Conrad's *HoD* lies in the complexity with which it explores Europe's encounter with Africa. Framed around notions of civilization and barbarism, *HoD* is an intricate staging of two forms of encounter: Marlow's encounter with Kurtz, that enigmatic character who emerges finally as the debasement of European civility and Marlow's encounter with Africa. However, part of the rhetorical baggage of *HoD* is that Marlow's encounter with Kurtz is eclipsed by his encounter with Africa.[8] This is because Marlow's imperial gaze unrelentingly codes Africa as the demonical or incomprehensible Other and, impliedly, a threat to European sanity (Achebe, 1977).

Unsurprisingly, some African writers have overtly or subtly reversed Marlow's imperial gaze by rewriting Conrad's trope of encounter in a manner that positions the African as a reader of European social and cultural scripts. Examples of these include Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966); Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy (1977),* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013).[9] These texts, in their different ways, stage fundamental encounters with the West by reversing the imperial gaze and confronting the African with the real West. *BH,* like these texts, may be read as unpacking colonial constructions of European exceptionalism, representations, and processes of Othering. Through the reversal of the gaze, the African writer opens up spaces to think outside colonial and neo-colonial regimes of power and representation. Unlike cross-cultural encounters in colonial discourse "in which Otherness is assigned a particular quality of impoverishment and evolutionary backwardness as its indelible signatures" (Quayson, 2000, p.15), postcolonial African literary representations of cross-cultural encounter position the African gaze in the West as a site of agency and critique.

[7] The trope of encounter was a powerful discursive strategy in colonial discourse and functioned as a pseudo-realistic apparatus for the representation and production of knowledge, cultures, and exotic geographies. Such knowledge and representations constituted the basis for the differential labelling and treatment of others as peripheral to European civility (Mbembe, 2001, pp 1-23; Mignolo, 2003; Pratt, 1992, pp. 1-11; Said, 1979, pp. 19-24).

[8] See Rino Zhuwarara, *"Heart of Darkness Revisited:* The African Response" (2004).

[9] See Krishnan 1996.

In this way, the West's construction of what Adichie calls "a single story" is destabilized and alternative viewpoints are disseminated.[10] This is the context in which Darko's novel becomes profoundly pertinent as a dialogical contestation of Conrad's *HoD.*

The first example of Darko's reversal of the imperial gaze is Mara's usage of the word "horror" to describe her encounter with Germany. A few hours after her arrival in East and West Germany, Mara is confronted with situations and scenes that call into question her previous image of Europe. She describes these experiences as "horrors" (*BH*, 61, 67). For lack of space, the analysis focuses on the first and second encounters. While waiting to catch a train to Hamburg, Osey decided to give Mara a welcome treat by taking her to the cinema to see "film full of action" (*BH*, 61). To her surprise, the action film turned out to be a pornographic film. As a result, Mara is thrown into a state of semantic upheaval as "action film" means something different in Ghana. She is, therefore, forced to find the appropriate vocabulary to negotiate her new experience.

> This action that I saw horrified me and left me sitting in my seat heated up with my mouth wide open. The people on the screen, there were … that is to say, they were several men and women all together, about fifteen or so; among them black women, Africans; they were doing it there … there on the screen! They were actually doing the thing plain plain (sic) there on the screen before everybody. And there was no trace of shame or whatever on their faces. Not one bit! (*BH*, 61).

This encounter with a socio-cultural space of "raw obscenity" and shamelessness represents Mara's initiation into "a completely new society where the values were different from those at home" (*BH*, 62). Interestingly, the "action film" was Osey's way of initiating Mara from "primitiveness" into "living in civilization" (BH, 62). For Mara, however, the entire event "was a shock for me, my first shock, and *my first horror"* (*BH* 61; emphasis mine). It is precisely at this point, this choice of the word "horror," that I will argue that Conrad's *HoD* is subtly invoked in *BH*.

[10] On the dangers of a single story, see Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's "The danger of a single story." TED Talk. https//www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Ihs241zeg. Retrieved 9th May, 2022

To grasp the dialogic meaning of "horror," it is important to read it as a double-voiced discourse. In other words, "horror" is populated by two utterances and two semantic and axiological belief systems. As Bakhtin (1981: 305) argues, "even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect," thereby generating two contradictory meanings. Following Bakhtin, therefore, I argue that lurking behind Mara's story is another story, the author's story. Double-voiced discourse serves two speakers at the same time and expresses two different intentions simultaneously: the direct intention of the character who is speaking and the refracted intention of the author (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 314). As indicated in the previous section, Darko's decentering of Europe is an authorial function rather than the protagonist-narrator of the story. "Horror" therefore encapsulates two discourses or voices. In Mara's usage of "horror," the competent reader is called upon to hear the voice of the author, Darko, who is subtly referencing the literary archive, especially Marlow's discovery of "horror" in Africa. This authorial voice thus frames Mara's encounter with Germany/Europe as a journey into "the heart of darkness." By summoning *HoD*, Darko also hints at the reversal of the imperial gaze and the relocation of the horror of recognition to Europe, as will be demonstrated below.

The Bakhtinian reading of "horror" proposed here complicates the general reading of Mara in the existing literature on *BH*. Mara's encounter with Europe rewrites Marlow's encounter with Kurtz's mysterious African woman in the Congo. Marlow's representation of the African woman suggests a contrast between her and Kurtz's "Intended", who is portrayed as a naïve European woman who must be protected from the hollow imperial rhetoric of civility and enlightenment. Marlow's encounter with Kurtz's nameless African mistress crystalizes Marlow's feminization of Africa as not just passive and mute but as a mysterious and menacing succubus. Her passivity and speechlessness recalls Hegel's infamous description of Africa as "the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit," lacking the potential to actively participate in World History (Hegel; cited in Stahl, 2014, p. 5). To appreciate the force of this argument, one needs to pause and reflect on what it would mean if the "daughters" of Kurtz's mysterious and speechless African mistress fictionally reciprocated Marlow's adventure of discovery by journeying to Europe. To entertain this possibility is to foreground the questions "who sees"?

and "can the subaltern speak?" This is the dialogical essence of Mara's usage of "horror" from the author's ideological point of view.

The clearest illustration of Darko's reversal of the imperial gaze can be seen in Mara's encounter with the poster white woman. On arrival in Hamburg, Osey hails a taxi to take him and Mara to Akobi's home. However, as they drive through the city, Mara is suddenly

> confronted by a large poster of a ravishingly beautiful white woman, a perfect blond, in a slip, sitting on a stool with legs wide apart, eyes cunningly slanted, tongue calculatingly out and the tip upturned between snow-white teeth, just touching the upper scarlet lip seductively. Further down, the right forefinger just grazed her genitals. (*BH*, 68).

This encounter, which foregrounds the objectification and commodification of women and the postcolonial subject's gaze in Europe, is crucial to understanding the dialogism at work in *BH* and how it reverses the imperial gaze. Mara's encounter with the white woman on the poster rewrites Marlow's encounter with the mysterious African woman in the Congo. In *BH*, Marlow's spectacle of a "gorgeous apparition of a woman" is rewritten as "a ravishingly beautiful white woman." To place Mara's gaze as captured in the above extract in its proper dialogical context, it is vital to recall Marlow's description of his encounter with Kurtz's nameless African mistress:

> And from right to left along the lighted shore moved a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman. She walked with measured steps, draped in striped and fringed cloths, treading the earth proudly with a slight jingle and flash of barbarous ornaments… She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent … And in the hush that had fallen suddenly upon the whole sorrowful land, the immense wilderness, the colossal body of the fecund and mysterious life seemed to look at her, pensive, as though it had been looking at the image of its own tenebrous and passionate soul. (*HoD*, 126).

Both extracts illustrate the objectivizing function of the gaze. As Marion argues, "the gaze keeps objects in an objected state for the *I*…the gaze sees, but more originally, it possesses and

conserves" (214). The differences between the two extracts are also obvious. While Conrad's woman is African, Darko's poster woman is European. Also, while Conrad's mute African mistress is presented as the embodiment of "African wilderness or primitive splendour" (Jervis, 1999, p. 68), Darko's mute European woman is the ultimate sign of objectification of women and the embodiment of Europe's investment in shame or what Mara calls "raw obscenity". Like Conrad's African woman, who is presented as a dangerous temptress, Darko's European woman is presented, from Mara's gaze, as a temptress in whom the will to transgress is packaged in the seductive poster that normalizes shame and the disgusting. Mara's "ravishingly beautiful white woman" is presented as the embodiment of European capitalist decadence or profanation. This can be seen in Mara's reaction: "I turned my eyes away, so disgusted, so scared and so unsure" (*BH*, 68). Darko displaces Marlow's horror of recognition from Africa to Europe. In both extracts, the female body is the object of the gaze and Otherness.

What is it that constitutes "horror" for Mara in this cross-cultural encounter? Horror, for Mara, refers to the blasphemous proximity between the eroticization and objectification of the female body and Saint Paul's Cathedral. The scandal for Mara is that Saint Paul's Cathedral is located in "an area filled with wild posters of naked, crimson-lipped women" (*BH*, 69). It is evident then that "horror" or "the heart of darkness" in Europe, from Mara's gaze, represents practices that not only undermine the postcolonial subject's naïve image of Europe as "paradise" but also are antithetical to the socio-cultural values back home in Africa. This is contrary to the impression one gets from Conrad's novella, wherein Africa is presented as an ontologically mysterious and threatening continent, and therefore "the ultimate horror is to go native" (Jervis, 1999, p.66).

Ironically, there is a sense in which Mara's encounter with the white woman on the poster is framed as an invitation or interpellation to go native. To go "native" in Europe, as Darko's subtle rewriting of *HoD* within the context of iniquitous forms of global mobility and her decentering of Europe suggests, is to be co-opted into the biopolitical machinery of corporeal objectification and, therefore, the impossibility of returning home. Unlike some postcolonial texts that reject "the sovereignty of the nation-state [by] embracing hybridity" (Ashcroft, 2020, p. 45), *BH* explores a form of death that revolves around the capitulation of the postcolonial subaltern woman to prostitution as an apparatus of dehumanization and shame. As

Penttinen (2007, p.7) argues, most migrant women are victims of a "shadow globalization that operates as forms of subjectivating power, producing and requiring certain kinds of subjectivities" through activities such as human trafficking, sex trafficking, and prostitution. From this perspective, Mara's refusal, at the end of the novel, to return home is a tragedy and constitutes a critique of the postcolonial image of Europe as the horizon.

It is clear that attending to "horror" as a double-voiced discourse enables a re-reading of *BH* as a subtle dialogue with *HoD.* This sheds a new perspective on Mara's representation of Europe as a place of sexual exploitation and violence, homosexuality, lurid pornographic advertisements, and stage shows. Rather than reading *BH* solely in terms of Mara's tribulations, a dialogical reading with specific reference to Conrad's novella reveals a complex narrative architecture that foregrounds Darko's reversal of the imperial gaze and postcolonial representations of the West. By representing Europe as a place of shame, horror, raw obscenity, and commodification of female bodies from the global peripheries, Darko subtly subverts Europe as the horizon of hope for people from the Global South. Through Mara's dehumanization and the disillusionment of characters like Vivian and Kaye in Europe, Darko shows that the West is not necessarily the promissory note imagined by postcolonial subjects. It is from this vantage point that *BH* emerges as a radical narrative of thinking otherwise, an intervention in the postcolonial subject's valorization of Europe and the discourse of Afro-pessimism. As Odamtten (2007) has noted, the decade preceding the publication of *BH* was characterized by political instability and economic collapse in Ghana and several other African countries. In the 1980s, the IMF and the World Bank introduced crippling structural adjustment programmes to save African countries from economic collapse. For many Ghanaians and Africans at the time, Europe, especially Germany, became the salvific location.[11] Darko's characters' initial fascination with Europe is thus informed by the economic reality and failure of the postcolonial nation-state, especially in the 1980s and early 1990s. It is within this context that Europe emerged as the 'horizon' of possibility. For writers like Darko who have travelled to Germany and witnessed the disappointment and precarious condition of Europe's

[11] Many Ghanaians migrated to Germany, especially Hamburg and Frankfurt. Musically, this led to the emergence of a genre of highlife called "Burger-Highlife" whose architects were based mainly in Hamburg. See Carl 2014.

postcolonial subalterns, the crucial issue is whether an alternative horizon of expectation exists. The next section analyses Darko's response.

Affirming possibility, re-articulating Fanon for postcolonial transformation

The preceding section examined "horror" as a double-voiced discourse or dialogical site of contestation in *BH*. Specifically, it focused on Darko's subtle rewriting of the imperial gaze. The analysis revealed that Mara's and the authorial discourse work together to decenter Europe as the "horizon" for postcolonial subjects. This raises the following critical questions: If the West is not the "paradise" that Mara and other postcolonial subalterns imagined but a place "hotter than hell," what alternative horizon is available for postcolonial people? If the desire for the West is founded on fantasies and localized mythologies, and the reality itself is disorienting and traumatic because the West is the place where the subaltern woman's body is "used and misused," where "the rot goes too deep" and therefore the subaltern can't return home…if the West is the place where the postcolonial subaltern woman "has nothing dignified and decent" to offer those at home other than "material things" (*BH* 118, 131, 140), is the postcolonial subaltern's predicament then one of hopelessness? What kind of emancipatory thought or action is essential for envisioning Africa as a horizon of hope? This section of the paper argues that a reading of the title of Darko's novel as a double-voiced discourse or dialogical site of affirmation provides the clearest insight into Darko's exploration of the above questions. Unlike "horror," which functions as a dialogical site of contestation and reversal of Marlow's imperial gaze, this section shows that *BH* is a subtle affirmation of Fanon's emancipatory ethic of de-linking.

The Fanonian subtext is located in the title of Darko's novel. At the literal level, the novel's title is a transliteration of the Akan word *Abrokyire*. As Odamtten (2007) argues, the title describes a specific socio-cultural imaginary of heroism and re-invention encapsulated in the Akan concept of *abrokyire*. Central to the idea of *Abrokyire* is the journey motif, wherein the traveler to the west is conceived as an adventurer who returns home as the bringer of material boon. As Armah shows in *Fragments* (1974), however, *Abrokyire* is informed primarily by a "cargo mentality". The archetypal figure of the *Abrokyire* ethos is the "been-to," who is socio-culturally celebrated in Ghana as a hero. Armah's *Fragments* explores this

notion of *Abrokyire* as a structure of thought that is antithetical to postcolonial nation formation and national consciousness. Brempong is presented by Armah as the ultimate example of the 'been-to' and the *Abrokyire* discourse of materialism. As Brempong tells Baako, Armah's antihero who returns from the West with nothing, "it is no use going back [home] with nothing" (Armah, 1974, p. 76). So, although Mara cannot return home, she fulfils the socio-cultural obligation by sending material things home. While it is true that *BH* is framed by this indigenous discourse of transnational mobility, transformation, and re-invention at the subjective level, it is equally true, as the analysis in the preceding section has demonstrated, that Darko's focus is also national and continental. It is this continental perspective that makes *BH* an intervention in the discourse of Afro-pessimism that dominated the 1980s. In other words, Darko's title articulates a radical emancipatory thought and ethic for genuine postcolonial transformation.

To unravel the dialogical import of the novel's title, one must turn to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth.* In the "Conclusion" to that book, Fanon (1963) bemoans the "nauseating mimicry" or "imitation" of Europe by the newly independent nation-states of the Third World (Fanon, 1963, pp. 251, 252). By "mimicry," Fanon was referring to the situation where the Third World countries simply looked up to and imitated Europe as the model for socio-political transformation. Unlike Bhabha (1984) who views mimicry as a subversive tool, Fanon saw mimicry as a betrayal of decolonization. For Fanon, genuine decolonization implies a new set of relations and the invention of concepts rather than the consolidation of colonial practices of domination. In other words, if decolonization is to attain its evental status as the "liquidation of all untruths implanted in the [native] by oppression [...], as the existence of men and women who are truly liberated [...] who are truly masters of all the material means which make possible the radical transformation of society," then the postcolonial nation-states must abandon Europe as a model (Fanon, p. 250). This is imperative because has Europe has also turned out to be "a negation of man" (Fanon, p. 252). It is within this Fanonian discourse of reconstituting postcolonial action that Darko's title must be situated. Like Fanon, the title of Darko's novel and Mara's beleaguered fate in Europe suggest that the path to genuine postcolonial transformation or modernity does not lead to Europe or the West; it resides in a radical re-orientation of thought and action. This implies not only the decolonization of

concepts like "horizon" or the West but also the conscious development of political, economic, and social paradigms that derive from the historical experiences of colonial domination and expropriation. The necessity for this re-orientation emanates from the consciousness that genuine decolonization is the inauguration of "a new history of Man" or "the calling into question the colonial situation" (Fanon, p. 28). This new history is radically different from imperial history and governmentality (Fanon, p. 252). It is this Fanonian discourse that the title of Darko's novel subtly affirms. Specifically, the novel's title, *Beyond the Horizon,* dialogically summons Fanon's emphatic claim that, "If we wish to live up to our peoples' expectations, we must seek the response elsewhere than in Europe" (p. 254). Put differently, if Europe in particular and the West, in general, have traditionally functioned as the utopian model and horizon for postcolonial people, genuine decolonization is a radical call to look "beyond" Europe and see Africa as the place of hope and transformation. The novel's title, from this Fanonian context, can be read as an imperative or authoritative call on postcolonial people to look elsewhere or beyond the West as the horizon. That elsewhere is Africa.

This dialogical reading of the novel's title sheds new insight on Darko's ethical and political vision. From the authorial perspective, Mara's experiences and fate in Germany confirm Fanon's insight that the West is not necessarily the *locus amoenus* ("pleasant place"). Like "horror," the novel's title is populated by two voices, two perspectives, and two axiological systems. The first is the Akan *Abrokyire,* which the novel exposes as founded on illusions and materialism; the second is the Fanonian liberatory ethic of de-linking from imperial history and circuits of exploitation and domination. It is important to stress that the Fanonian ethic of de-linking rearticulated by Darko is not antithetical to the spirit of global interconnectedness. Both Fanon and Darko are keenly conscious of the merits of global interconnectedness and flows as long as this does not constitute new forms of imperial subjection. Based on this awareness, Fanon maintains that international consciousness lives and thrives on national consciousness (Fanon, p. 199).

By summoning Fanon in her title, Darko suggests that epistemic de-linking from the West is the strategic path to postcolonial transformation, modernity, or flourishing. Further, Darko's call on postcolonial states to look beyond the "horizon" (the West) can be understood in terms of de Sousa Santos' (2018, p. 295) "epistemological interruption" or Mignolo's (2007,

p. 453) "de-colonial epistemic shift" that "denounces the pretended universality of a particular ethnicity" located in Europe. Darko suggests that the desperate dash to the West by postcolonial subalterns can be curtailed by decentering of the myth of the West as the horizon of hope, promoting the political and socio-economic transformation of Africa, and the de-linking of Africa's from the West. The Fanonian reading proposed here shows that Frías' has been too quick in describing Mara's decision to go into prostitution as an act of "vengeance, defiance, and self-assertion" (2002, p.12). The Fanonian reading reveals that Mara's choice of prostitution is a tragic capitulation to global forces of capitalist exploitation. By deciding to make prostitution her profession, Mara has tragically gone "native" and has ironically been interpellated by the white woman on the poster; she has become part of the new wretched of the earth at the margins of the West. If there is any heroism or redeeming quality that can be associated with Mara, it is that, like Kurtz, she "did try to confront the fundamentals of self and meaning" (Jervis, p. 69). As Jervis notes regarding Kurtz, "a confrontation with the 'heart of darkness' is necessary, unavoidable, for only thus could the truth of the self [and the West] be revealed, if this 'truth' turns out to be incommunicable, or even a lie" (p. 69).

Conclusion

Beyond the Horizon is a subtle meditation on the horizon of hope for postcolonial people. At the core of this meditation is a dialogical engagement with Conrad's *HoD* and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth.* The paper has demonstrated that "horror" and the novel's title constitute double-voiced discourses or dialogical sites of contestation and affirmation that demystify the West as the place for postcolonial subaltern re-invention. By paying attention to the Conradian and Fanonian intertexts, the paper has shown that Darko subtly frames Mara's encounter with Europe as a journey into the "heart of darkness," reverses Marlow's imperial gaze, and re-affirms Fanon's ethic of de-linking from the West as a strategic act of abandoning a culture of dependency. It is from this perspective that *BH* may be described as a radical narrative of thinking otherwise. Today, the dehumanizing and tragic conditions of sub-Saharan Africans on the North African coast and in the Italian city of Lampedusa call for concrete improvements in the social, economic and political realities in Africa in order to stem the tide of flight to the West. Africa needs the support of the West and, lately, China, to be able to tap into its potential

for greatness. However, Africa must not substitute this support for dependency. More importantly, the possibility of reversing the imperial gaze or looking beyond the West requires a radical deconstruction of imposed myths and what de Sousa Santos calls "the cognitive Empire" that position the West as the utopian place of hope and transformation for postcolonial subalterns and Africa as place of flight. *BH a*mply demonstrates a key insight: novels think, and one of the ways they think is through the dialogism of the word or double-voiced discourse.

References

Achebe, C. (1977). An image of Africa: Racism in *Heart of Darkness*. *Massachusetts Review*.

Adjei, M. (2009). Male bashing and narrative subjectivity in Amma Darko's first three novels. *SKASE: Journal of Literary Studies, 1*(1), 47–61.

Asad, T. (1973). *Anthropology and the colonial encounter*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Ashcroft, B. (2020). Postcolonial futures: Literature, transformation, globalization. In R. D. Murru (Ed), *Postcoloniality in transition: Essays on cosmopolitanism, transnationalism and globalization* (pp. 29-48). Chennai, India: Notion Press.

Awitor, E. (2013). Violence and violation of women's rights in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon. Alizés: Revue angliciste de La Réunion, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences humaines, Women's Right, Human Rights*, 175-184.

Baer, E. R. (2017). *The genocidal gaze: From German Southwest Africa to the Third Reich.* Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Bhabha, H. (1984). Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse. *October,* 28. *Discipleship: A Special Issue on Psychoanalysis,* 125-133.

Barberân, R. L. (2015). *Sex trafficking in postcolonial literature: Transnational narratives from Joyce to Bolaño.* London: Routledge.

Baxter, J. (2014). *Double–voicing at work: Gender, power, and linguistic expertise.* UK: Palgrave Macmillan,

Butler, J. (2009). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* London: Verso Books.

Carl, F. (2014). From burger highlife to gospel highlife music: Migration, and the Ghanaian diaspora. In S. Krüger & R. Trandafoiu (Eds.), Globalization of musics in transit: Music migration and tourism (pp. 251-271). London: Routledge. Conrad, J. (2011). *Heart of darkness.* Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc.

Darko, A. (1995). *Beyond the horizon.* Oxford: Heinemann.

Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and repetition*. Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press

de Sousa Santos, B. (2018). *The end of the cognitive empire: The coming of age of epistemologies of the South.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Djossou, K. A. (2020). Alienation and reinvention in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. *Indiana Journal of Arts & Literature*, *1*(1), 20-29.

Frias, M. (2002). Women on top: Prostitution and pornography in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon. Wasafiri 17*(37), 8-13.

Gabay, C. (2018). *Imagining Africa: Whiteness and the Western gaze*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gbogi, T. (2022). Place and the postcolonial poetry of Nigeria. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing 58*(3), 293-307.

Higgins, M. E. (2006). Transnational, transcultural feminisms? Amma Darko's response in *Beyond the Horizon*. *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature, 25*(2), 307–20.

Holquist, M. M. (1990). *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world.* (2nd Edition). London: Routledge.

Iheka, C. and Taylor, J. (2018). Introduction: The migration turn in African cultural production. In Iheka C. and Taylor, J. (Eds.), *African migration narratives: Politics, race, and space.* (pp. 1-18). USA: University of Rochester Press.

hooks, b. (1996). The oppositional gaze: Black female spectators. *Reel to Real: Race, Class and Sex at the Movies,* 153-175.

Jervis, J. (1999). *Transgressing the modern: Explorations in the Western experience of otherness.* New Jersey: Blackwell Publishers.

Jonet, M. C. (2007). 'She doesn't know the truth about me': [T]he shaping presence of the closet in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. In A. U. Azodo & M. N. Eke (Eds.), *Gender & sexuality in African literature and film* (pp. 1999-211). Lawrenceville, New Jersey: Africa World Press.

Kaplan, E. A. (1997). *Looking for the other: Feminism, film and the imperial gaze*. London: Routledge.

Kammampoal, B. (2018). Womanist discourse from margin to center: A critical analysis of Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon. The Achievers Journal Volume 3*(4), 1-20.

Krishnan, R. S. (1996). Reinscribing Conrad: Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. *International Fiction Review, 23*(1), 7–15.

Kristeva, J. (1980). Word, dialogue and novel. In L. Roudiez (Ed.), *Desire in language: A semiotic approach to literature and art* (pp. 64-91). New York: Columbia University Press.

Lovatt, H. (2013). *The epic gaze: Vision, gender and narrative in ancient epic.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marion, J. (2002). *Being Given: Toward a phenomenology of givenness,* trans. Jeffrey Kosky. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Mbembe, A. (2001). *On the postcolony.* Oakland, California: University of California Press.

McGowan, T. (2007). *The real gaze: Film theory after Lacan*. New York: State University of New York Press.

McGowan, T. (2003). Looking for the gaze: Lacanian film theory and its vicissitudes. *Cinema Journal*, *42*, 27–47.

Mignolo, W. D. (2003). *The darker side of the renaissance: Literacy, territoriality & colonization.* Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

Mignolo, W. D. (2007). Delinking. *Cultural Studies*, *21*(2), 449 - 514

Mudimbe, V. Y. (1988). *The invention of Africa: Gnosis, philosophy and the order of things.* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Mulvey, L. (1975). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. In C. Penley (Ed.), *Feminism and Film Theory* (pp. 57-68). New York: Sage.

Onyerionwu, E. (2016). New Nigerian 'Transatlantic' novel and sex trade narrative in Bisi Ojediran's *A Daughter for Sale* Part 1, *The Guardian*, n.pn.

Penttinen, E. (2007). *Globalization, prostitution and sex-trafficking: Corporeal politics.* London & New York: Routledge.

Pratt, L. M. (1992). *Imperial eyes: Travel writing and transculturation.* London: Routledge

Quayson, A. (2021). *Tragedy and postcolonial literature.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stahl, A. B. (2014). Africa in the world: (Re)centering African history through Archaeology. *Journal of Anthropological Research, 70*(1), 5-33.

Tate, W. (2022). Converting the gaze: From gazing to seeing in Richard Wilbur's "The Eye". *Christian Scholar's Review,* 51(2), 153-170.

Umezurike, U. P. (2015). Resistance in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. *Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies*. *4*(2), 28-43.

Woodward, W. (2008). The animal gaze: Animal subjectivities in Southern African narratives. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Zhuwarara, R. (2004). *Heart of darkness revisited:* The African response. In G. M. Moore (Ed), *Joseph Conrad's Heart of darkness: A casebook* (pp. 219-242). New York: Oxford University Press.

Drumspeak - Special Edition (March 2023)
https://doi.org/10.47963/drumspeak.v6i2.1268

CLANDESTINE, CIRCUMSCRIBED AND CODED: SEXUALITY IN DARKO'S *BEYOND THE HORIZON* AND SAADAWI'S *WOMAN AT POINT ZERO*

Hannah Woode Amissah-Arthur[1]
University of Cape Coast

Abstract

This paper explores sexuality in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* (1991) and Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* (1975). The African tradition regards issues of sexuality as a suppressed discourse which is integrated into a discreet, symbolic language. The portrayal of sexuality and its modes in which individuals realise themselves as subjects of sexual desire have been widely studied but works in which these characters have been presented as subjects of concupiscence have received very little attention. Adopting Michel Foucault's notion that the history of sexual experience involves the correlation between fields of knowledge, types of normativity and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture, this paper examines the libidinous practices of characters. The paper concludes, among other things, that: firstly, Darko and Saadawi's writings represent the African notion which considers sexuality to be a silent discourse; secondly, both novels manifest various forms of psychosexual attitude by the characters and the quest for sexual freedom and power.

Keywords: African sexuality, clandestine, circumscribed, taboo, sexual freedom

[1] Hannah W. Amissah-Arthur (PhD) is a lecturer at the Department of English, University of Cape Coast. She teaches a variety of courses in Literature at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Her research interests include African American literature, African literature, slave studies.
ORCID: Hannah Woode Amissah-Arthur https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3747-781X

Introduction

The concept of sexuality has been covertly described over the years in early African texts like Casely Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound*, Ngugi wa Thiongo's *Minutes of Glory: And other stories*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, Ama Ata Aidoo's *Changes*, Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter*, amongst many others. Most of these writers refrained from the explicit portrayals of sexuality because it is presented as a forbidden discourse. Over the years however, the concept of sexuality which been defined by Goettsch (1989) as "the individual capacity to respond to physical experiences which are capable of producing body-centred gential excitation… independent of bringing physical experiences" (p. 250) has been embraced by African writers, particularly women writers like Nawal El Saadawi, Amma Darko, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, and Bessie Head.

Amma Darko and Nawal El Saadawi in their novels, *Beyond the Horizon* (1991) and *Woman at Point Zero* (2007) respectively, portray the observation, as purported by Foucault that, sex not being 'repressed' is not a totally new idea (p.81). There appears to be a contested idea that the concept of sexuality in the African context is usually limited to the males. In arguing this assertion, it is important to note that sexuality and the subject of sex in the African culture and context, though not necessarily limited to the males, is however a repressed discourse for the females. According to Uko (2011), female sexuality was despised and condemned. A woman who showed interest in her sexuality was therefore symbolically posing an affront to manhood, which was redeemable by both men and women. However, female writers like Darko and Saadawi defy the normative ideology of repressing the need to voice issues of sexuality in their works. Scholars like Frias (2002) are of the view that the literary discourse on sexual politics and the writing of the female body by African female writers are quite intriguing, bearing in mind the cultural background. This cultural background, which is African, is what I have already referenced as "circumscribed" and "clandestine". This African perspective marginalizes the domain of sexualized complexities and brings to the fore various contestations over what should be accepted and what should not be accepted. Gohar (2016), for instance, argues, "El Saadawi invades taboo territories in Arab culture. She intentionally exonerates male brutalities against women in a society, which viciously suppresses female

sexuality under a religious veil." (p.175). It should be noted that though Saadawi is of indigenous African descent, she is of Arab ancestry and as such, Arab culture. She seeks to project and empower women from her part of the world from male subjectivities. Amma Darko has, on the other hand, been described by Adjei (2009): "Darko fits into this frame of female writing which concentrates on men as enemies" (p.48). He makes this assertion on the premise that Darko's first three novels present and contest the culture of patriarchy. Scholars like Gohar (2016) and Adjei (2009) therefore, believe that these women writers vociferously depict gender stereotyping as well as sexual vulnerability and exploitation of women in their novels. Saliba (1995) is also of the view that Sadaawi, in giving voice to Firdaus, the protagonist in her novel, may be classified as a response to the tradition of Arab literature which fails to give women a voice other than that which is dislocated in patriarchal discourse. To her, *Woman at Point Zero* should be read with a political/historical context in mind.

Though scholars like Gohar (2016) and Adjei (2009) issue condemnatory assertions which describe the writings of these women writers as biased and dehumanizing males, it is essential to argue that these women highlight issues of patriarchy, gender stereotyping, female exploitation, amongst many others. Some of these issues are characterized by the indispensable focus on sexuality, which is sometimes considered a circumscribed form of discourse in the African setting.

In examining the portrayal of sexuality in the two novels, this paper takes a two-pronged dimension in its discussion. Firstly, the paper argues that Darko and Saadawi present female characters who, though abused and violated sexually, are concupiscent and yield to the art of sexual involvement with less regret but with greater chances of improving their lives and their lot. These women oscillate between offering sexual satisfaction and wielding power due to their bodies and sexual prowess. Secondly, Darko and Sadaawi in presenting these female characters, overtly portray and present sexuality in their novels. The paper therefore analyses the female protagonists in both texts: *Beyond the Horizon* and *Woman at Point Zero* using the concept of sexuality by women who break the norm of society in distinguishing themselves as prominent sexuality writers. Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* centers on the protagonist Mara, who is married to Akobi in Ghana and endures all forms of abuse and ill treatment from her husband. As immigrants in Germany, Akobi exploits Mara as a sexual commodity through prostitution. It is

through enlightenment that Mara is able to empower herself and break away from the power Akobi has over her.

Similarly, Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* which is set in Egypt depicts Firdaus, the protagonist, as a very intelligent woman who is deprived of the opportunity of furthering her education due to poverty. She is taken to the city by her uncle and circumstances lead her into prostitution. Later, she becomes empowered and kills her pimp.

Employing these two texts in my analysis, I bring to the fore, the portrayal of the psychosexual attitudes of the two protagonists, Mara in *Beyond the Horizon* and Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero*. I draw on Foucault's concept of sexuality and argue, "power is essentially what dictates its law to sex. Which means first of all that sex is placed by power in a binary system: licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden" (p.83). I reiterate that the discourse on sexuality by Darko and Saadawi in their novels is an attempt at projecting and revealing the coded and circumscribed form of sexuality through the characters, Mara and Firdaus. This revelation becomes a means of not only displaying the characteristics of these protagonists as being concupiscent, but also as wielding power in the discourse of sexuality in patriarchal society.

Body and power in *Beyond the Horizon* and *Woman at Point Zero*

Both novels portray an important role that enlightenment plays in the lives of the two main characters, Mara and Firdaus. It should be noted that this form of enlightenment becomes a channel for their sexual perversions though the enlightenment sometimes differs from character to character. In *Beyond the Horizon*, Mara's enlightenment is introduced as a culture shock. Finding herself in a different country and in a different environment, she recounts, "What a film! I know films…This action that I saw horrified me and left me sitting in my seat heated up with my mouth wide open" (p.61). Arguably, though this movie is quite "strange" to Mara because of the exposure to sexual scenes which were not typical of Naka, the village where she had her upbringing, it nevertheless rekindles her sexual desire, which I posit, cannot be concealed even in her shock. The phrase 'heated up' implies a kind of innate sexual desire which though not obvious to people around, arouses her libidinal tendencies in such a 'strange' setting. This 'heated up' may be related to the fact that her husband Akobi has been absent for a

long period hence being 'starved' sexually for some time and craving for some attention and sexual contact. Similarly, Firdaus in her outing with her uncle remarks:

> …and that night took me to the cinema. I saw a woman dancing. Her thighs were naked. And I saw a man hugging a woman. Then he kissed her on the lips…I hid my face behind my hand and did not dare to look at my uncle…Later he told me that dancing was a sin, and that kissing a man, too, was a sin, but now I could no longer look into his eyes. (p.21)

This movie unveils the libidinal tendency which has been hidden and unexplored in her. Though she has been quite intimate with the same uncle since childhood, the movie becomes an initiation to her psychosexual attitude. Her refusal to look straight into her uncle's face cannot be interpreted as a sign of shyness but rather an indication of the strong sexual attraction she has for the uncle. Accepting that something strange is happening to her body as she fantasizes about her uncle after the movie gives the impression that she is embracing her personality as one craving for sexual satisfaction.

Just like Firdaus, Mara secretly admits her crave for sexual encounter and satisfaction when she thinks, "For who said a lorry-station boiled-eggs hawker like me didn't know romance? Not only did I know it; I craved and expected it" (p.60). You are assuming that romance and sex are the same thing. Mara says she craves romance. This is not the same as her just craving any old person to have any kind of sex with. Though her sexual craving makes her human, it should be noted that her open admission of this same craving will depict her as a deviant in the society. Her repressed voice which precludes her from declaring her expectation of romance is, therefore, significant. Its significance lies in the fact that though the gendered psychosexual attitude of the African woman is to be muted and suppressed, Mara's muteness becomes a voiced identity which marks her as concupiscent. Djoussou (2020), who defines a colonized body as one which "symbolizes a site of violent and libidinal experiences to the limit that it can sustain" (p.24), avers that the colonized woman's sexuality is in endless want of fulfillment; thereby affecting her life as well as her environment. In Mara's case, her environment, coupled with her want of sexual fulfilment affects her in harnessing her libidinal desires which, she feels, are coded and tabooistic. The patriarchal environment she finds herself

in is fraught with expectations of women who are expected to repress and suppress their sexual urges.

In discussing the psychosexuality of the characters, it is of essence to note that Mara narrates events that lead her into having a disfigured left finger. She attributes this disability to one of her clients who makes her play pretend so he can enact the revenge meant for his wife on her. She confesses bearing all the pain because of her job. Scholars like Aiyetoro and Owhorodu (2018) are of the view that the frequent abuse of her body leading to sore cracked lips, hideous traces of bites and scratches, several bruises and scars… is interpreted as the display of male power, since male pleasure, as we find in the text, seems to be inextricably tied to victimizing, hurting and exploiting. In addition, I assert that the disfigured hand of Mara, for example, is a symbol of perverse sexuality. Darko's effort in bringing out this form of fetish sex is a way of representing the different kinds of psychosexual attitudes that exist and are performed to obtain certain sexual satisfactions. It can be claimed that Darko not only writes about sexuality in her novel but goes further in exploring extreme forms of perverse sexualities which include sadism on the part of Mara's customer.

It is obvious that inasmuch as Mara keeps voicing her unhappiness in having multiple sex partners or being a prostitute, her frequent episodes of sexual activities stem from the fact that she will be enriched and able to cater for her family back home. To this, she says:

> …Every day, apart from Sundays, I took on at least three men…If I was sleeping with men and charging them for it, it was me giving myself to them. The body being used and misused belonged to me…Once a prostitute, always a prostitute. The stamp would never leave me… (pp.118-119).

Firdaus makes a similar comment when she remarks, "For after all, I was only a successful prostitute… (p.9).

In both quotations, it is noted that the acceptance of their bodies as sexual vessels which satisfy men from all walks of life becomes the ideal agency to their financial breakthroughs amounting to their ability to cater for their families. It gives them a sense of power, control, and confidence. Awitor (2013) is of the view that Darko's selection of Mara as the protagonist-

narrator is a means to the voiceless victims voicing their plight. This assertion contrasts Frias' (2002) explanation:

> African women who were trapped into European prostitution pay a very high price for their one-way ticket to glorious Europe, but in return they often obtain an agency that somehow allows them to master their own bodies and minds, while appropriating control of their own financial gains (p.8).

Therefore, Firdaus' assertion marks a form of enlightenment for these female characters. She acknowledges the import of her profession and the wealth she has made from it over a period.

Mara's consistent use of her body is portrayed by Darko as a very convenient way to amass as much wealth as possible for herself and her family back in her village. Her body therefore represents an escape from poverty. Due to this representation, prostitution becomes a very profitable business for her. She confesses, "Taking on seven men a day was crucifying but I was aiming for a certain amount of money, plenty money, and the sooner I raised it the better, since the longer the time, the greater the danger…" (p.120).

Firdaus similarly comments:

> I never used to leave the house. In fact, I never even left the bedroom. Day and night I lay on the bed, crucified, and every hour a man would come in. There were so many of them…For they were all married, all educated, all carrying swollen leather bags, and swollen leather wallets in their inner pockets (p.61).

It is essential to note that Darko and Sadaawi, in portraying Mara and Firdaus respectively in the African context, challenges Foucault's (1990) view that sexual irregularity was annexed to mental illness. Though this assertion by Foucault was not made based on African orientation or perception, it is observed that attributing these sexual irregularities in both Mara and Firdaus's lives are not only equated to their professions, but also symbolise the pleasure they experience in executing their roles as prostitutes. In the African context therefore, their 'mental illness', also psychological, cannot be treated as an ailment. Rather, it is a psychological issue

underlined in their quest for money which motivates them to become 'irregular' in their sex lives. This irregularity is observed in the frequency they have sex with their customers. Irregularity, therefore, becomes an antithesis of morality as well as an urge to better themselves in all aspects of their lives. Firdaus' ability and potential in manipulating the roles she is cast in by the more powerful is evident in her embracing of prostitution as a means of liberation. (Saliba 1995).

It is essential to note that the pride associated with being a sex worker is revealed after some period of denial in the prostitution business. The inevitable negative identity associated with sex workers in Africa as cheap, immoral, dirty, and deviant at the initial stages begins to wear off when the characters finally embrace their bodies and accept themselves as people beyond assistance. Mara breaks all the rules and principles taught her to make enough money. According to her, "…as for the morals of my life my mother brought me up by, I have cemented them with coal tar in my conscience" (p.131). This statement implies the revelation of truth that has been concealed in Mara's conscience over a period. This truth in its reality, I argue, is what keeps Mara on her feet as a sex worker. Her ability to hide her morals becomes a form of arousal and adventure in her job. By cementing these morals, Mara is open to all forms of 'immorality' which she has been nurtured and oriented against. Her orientation now falls in line with Foucault's (1990) view that pleasure is not equated to any law on permission and forbidden (p.57). The forbidden aspect in Mara's case is the immorality her mother never taught her. Firdaus similarly remarks, "It's not that I value my honour and my reputation more than the other girls, but my price is much higher than theirs" (p.82). Her acceptance of her worth as a sex worker is highly priced and her awareness of her reputation as a very expensive prostitute becomes her trademark in the industry. Her experience coupled with her fame can only be attributed to the fact that she has no iota of morality in her lifestyle or as will be assumed by others, in her nurturance.

Mara and Firdaus both project themselves as wielding enough power to determine the men they wish to have sexual encounters with. When Mara tells the reader, "I wished he would be a little more informal. I wouldn't have minded at all giving him my services for free" (p.136). The idea of giving him her body as a free token of appreciation depicts the oxymoronic mentality of an individual who previously complains:

> When I wasn't sleeping with a man, I was crouching over a bucket of steaming hot water diluted with camphor and alum. Sometimes the treatment left me with a numb vagina, so that I even felt nothing when the men were sleeping with me, but it was better than the pain. On top of it all, I was swallowing scores of pain killers and tranquilisers every day and taking drugs to keep me going. Only when I had my period did I get some rest. (p.120).

These two different instances portray the appropriation of Mara's sexual fantasies and her acceptance of her body as a source of power over men which she can offer whenever she desires. It should be noted that at this stage, all that matter is how she feels and this feeling tends to reflect in her unspoken stance. Her realization of power over her own body opens a magnitude of opportunities she believes she has access to. Firdaus displays the power her body has over men in her bargain with the prince who approached her:

> Come with me.
> I held back and said, No.
> I will pay whatever you ask for.
> No, I repeated.
> Believe me, I will pay you anything you want.
> You cannot pay my price, it's very high.
> I can pay any price. I'm an Arab prince.
> And I am a princess.
> I'll pay a thousand.
> No.
> Two thousand, then…
> Three thousand, I said.
> I accept. (p.106)

Firdaus' power over the Arab prince is not based on wealth or fame. It is based on her body which becomes a bargaining tool for her. Her reference to herself as a princess connotes her

acceptance as royalty and as a powerful person. This status she creates for herself oxymoronises her identity as a princess on one hand, and a prostitute on the other and makes her a unique individual. According to Saliba (1995), "Firdaus whose name means 'paradise' in Arabic is both a martyr and mystic, both prostitute and holy woman, both heaven and hell, as the language of the novel suggests". This binary description given to Firdaus in addition to her description as a princess and a prostitute buttresses the argument of oxymoronic individuality attributed to her (p.136). The power she has over her body dictates her preferences. Foucault sums this relationship between power and sex when he opines that "power is essentially what dictates its law to sex. Which means first of all that sex is placed by power in a binary system: licit and illicit, permitted and forbidden." This understanding of power also explains the power of discourse between the two, that is, Firdaus and the prince. It is obvious that Firdaus has an upper hand in the conversation between her and the prince. Her powerful nature is evident in how she addresses and bargains with the prince. Mara and Firdaus both wield enough power through their sexual prowess. Their sexual lifestyle may be categorized under any of the binary system labelled by Foucault, yet theirs is strictly for survival. Irrespective of the perspective one decides to analyse the lifestyle of these characters, their actions are based on a different logic: survival.

It should be noted that later, both characters question their lifestyles and their future. These self-assessments and questionings urge them to take total control over their own lives. Mara in her contemplation remarks:

> I resigned myself but at the same time I began to wonder. Why couldn't I take control of my own life since after all, I was virtually husbandless and, anyway, what did my husband care about a woman's virtue? If I was sleeping with men and charging them for it, it was me giving myself to them. The body being used and misused belonged to me. (p.118)

Firdaus, makes a similar remark when she says:

> How many were the years of my life that went by before my body, and myself became really mine, to do with them as I wished? How many were the years of my life that were lost before I tore my body and myself

> away from the people who held me in their grasp since the very first day? (p.74).

The reality of exploitation and denigration of their bodies without any benefit become a source of power and inspiration for Mara and Firdaus. They question themselves on the essence of their roles and commitments as sex workers for people who do not care about them. In the case of Mara, it is the husband, whereas to Firdaus, it is her pimp. These people in question are only after the money after exploiting the women. In fact, the realization of being exploited becomes preliminary in the later actions of Mara and Firdaus. Though it can be argued that they longed for total control over their own bodies, finally getting the control does not deter them from continually abusing these same bodies they longed to own.

Conclusion

Darko and Saadawi as African female writers employ contrasting pictures of sexuality in their novels. These pictures portray the female characters as either victims or initiators. Though arguable that their authorial intent is to bring to the fore the various sexual exploitations of the female in patriarchal societies, the quest to foreground these sexual acts and scenes as well as the different forms of sexuality empowers them to use vivid descriptions and sexual discourse, which are considered taboos in the African discourse, especially from the perspective of the African woman. These writings agree with Foucault (1990) who opines that speaking about sexuality from a rarefied and neutral viewpoint is in itself significant. The significance, therefore, lies in the contribution of these women writers in their writings to portray sexual oppression in a subversive manner.

Finally, the acts of concupiscence by Mara and Firdaus, are attempts to defy the established coded and circumscribed discourse on sexuality as recognized in Africa. These female writers, Darko and Saadawi have thus broken the code of silence on female sexuality in Africa.

References

Adjei, M. (2009). Male-bashing and narrative subjectivity in Amma Darko's first three novels. *SKASE Journal of Literary Studies* 1(1), 47-61.

Aiyetoro, M. & Owhorodu, V.C. (2018). Causes, effects, and feminist antidotes to trafficking in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* in Osisanwo, A., Adebiyi-Adelabu, K., and Mosobalaje, A. (Eds.), *Literary and Linguistic Perspectives on Orality, Literacy and Gender Studies: A Festschrift for Oluwatoyin Bimpe Jegede* (pp. 185 – 196). Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.

Awitor, E. (2013). Violence and Violation of Women's Rights in Amma Darko's Beyond the Horizon. *Alizés: Revue angliciste de La Réunion, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines* (Université de La Réunion), 175-184.

Darko, A. (1991). *Beyond the Horizon*. England: Heinemann.

Djoussou, A.K. (2020). Alienation and Reinvention in Amma Darko's Beyond the Horizon. *Indiana Journal of Arts and Literature*: (1)1, 20-28.

Frías, M. (2002). Women on Top: Prostitution and pornography in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*, *Wasafiri* (17)37, 8-13. DOI: 10.1080/02690050208589799

Foucault, M. (1990). *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*. Vol 1. New York: Vintage books.

Foucault, M. (1984). *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality*. Vol 2. England: Penguin Books.

Goettsch, S.L. (1989) "Clarifying basic concepts: Conceptualizing sexuality." *The Journal of Sex Research*: 26(2), 249-255. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/3813019

Gohar, S. (2016). Empowering the Subaltern in *Woman at Point Zero*. *Journal of International Women's Studies*:17(4), 174-189. Available at: http://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol17/iss4/13

Sadaawi, N.E. (2007). *Woman at Point Zero*. London: Zed Books.

Saliba, T. (1995). On the Bodies of Third World Women: Cultural Impurity, Prostitution, and Other Nervous Conditions. *Third World Women's Inscriptions* (22) 1, 131-146. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/25112169

Unoko, I. (2011). Female sexuality in contemporary African literature: From Achebe's *Things fall apart* to Aidoo's *Changes*. *LWATI: A Journal of Contemporary Research*: 8(3), 112-121.

Drumspeak - Special Edition (March 2023)
https://doi.org/10.47963/drumspeak.v6i2.1270

"I AM HIS PAWN, HIS SLAVE AND HIS PROPERTY": A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ABUSE OF WOMEN IN AMMA DARKO'S *BEYOND THE HORIZON*

Daniel Oppong-Adjei[1]
Department of English
University of Cape Coast, Ghana
Email: daniel.oppong-adjei@ucc.edu.gh.

&
Dora Essah-Ntiful[2]
Department of Languages
Kibi Presbyterian College of Education
Kibi, Eastern Region, Ghana.
Email: dorabrime@gmail.com

Abstract

In *Beyond the horizon*, Amma Darko uses words in unique ways to bring the subject of gender representations and the abuse of women to the fore. Employing a stylistics framework of analysis, this study investigates the text's parallelisms and deviations, and interprets and uncovers the implied and underlying meanings of issues related to the abuse of women in the novel. The analysis reveals how through patterned repetitions of words and sentences, as well as some language deviations in the text, men abuse women physically, emotionally, sexually and economically. The paper shows that through the use of patterned repetition of words and sentences, and deviations such as metaphor and simile, Darko reveals the struggles of and unequal relationships between the "pawn", "slave" and "property" (largely represented by Mara) on one hand, and the "master", "lord" and "pimp" (represented by Akobi, Oves and Osey) on the other hand.

Keywords: Amma Darko, *Beyond the Horizon*, stylistics, parallel structures, women abuse.

---

[1] Daniel Oppong-Adjei holds a Ph.D. in Literature-in-English and is a lecturer at the Department of English, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. His research interests include Sexuality Studies, Race Relations, Literary Stylistics, Studies in Shakespeare and African Literature. **ORCID:** Daniel Oppong-Adjei: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0342-5149

[2] Dora Essah-Ntiful is an MPhil (English language) candidate at the Department of English, University of Cape Coast, and an English tutor at Kibi Presbyterian College of Education, in the Eastern region of Ghana. Her research interests include Grammar of the English language, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Corpus Linguistics, Semantics and Stylistics. **ORCID:** Dora Essah-Ntiful: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1461-5589

Introduction

A closer look at Amma Darko's text, *Beyond the horizon*, reveals the abuse of women, represented by the protagonist, Mara, in a largely patriarchal society. Thus, in Ghana (and later, in Germany), Mara is abused by the traditional system of her society where she is presented as without voice. Within this same traditional setup, Mara's husband, Akobi is empowered to assume control over Mara and this gives him the tenacity to perpetuate the evils against Mara in *Beyond the Horizon*. The unequal relationships in the text are signalled by the words of Mara in: "He is my lord, my master and my pimp…. I am his pawn, his slave and his property" (p.3). These negative remarks capture the systemic abuse of women in the novel by men. Looking at the concept of abuse, Tracy (2021) notes that:

> *While the definition of abuse is simple, the meaning of abuse isn't so clear. Yes, abuse is when one person purposefully hurts another, but that is a common occurrence in life and most of us are guilty of engaging in that from time to time. But what abuse really means is control. When a truly abusive situation exists, it's because one party is seeking to control the other through abuse. And while this might be an explanation of abuse, it's certainly no excuse. One person has no right to exercise control over another through abuse"* (https://healthyplace.com.com/abuse/abuse-information/what-is-abuse-abuse-definition).

Evident in the definition are elements of hurt and control, where an abuser subjects the abused to hurt, and controls the abused in various ways. Abuse happens in homes, at the workplace, and in every facet of our lives. But whether home or workplace, or any other place, abuse takes many forms. For instance, Slabbert & Green (2013) discuss the abuse at home (domestic violence) and conclude that it "generally occurs in the form of the following types of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and economic" (p.237). It means the abused could undergo any of these four main forms of abuse. These four forms of abuse are further endorsed by a number of studies (Bassuk, Dawson and Huntington, 2005: Danis and Lee, 2003; and Riger, Bennet, Wasco, Schewe, Frohmann, Camacho and Campbell, 2002). This situation is further expanded by Bollen, Artz, Vetten & Louw (1999) when they note that "the range of abuses that women

may suffer is wide and can include physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse, as well as stalking, forced isolation in the home and other controlling behaviours" (p.7). Although everyone is prone to abuse, women and largely children suffer most abuses (Slabbert & Green, 2013; Bollen et.al., 1999).

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (hereafter referred to as WDHS) (2016) defines these four main forms of abuse as follows: "Physical abuse is an intentional act that results in pain, injury, or impairment" (p.1). Emotional or psychological abuse "is language or behavior intended to intimidate, humiliate, ridicule, threaten, frighten, harass, coerce, blame, or scapegoat, or otherwise cause emotional pain or distress" (WDHS, p.1). Sexual abuse, on the hand, is "nonconsensual sexual contact of any kind" (WDHS, p.2), and may take several forms such as rape, name-calling, withholding sex and/or affection, among others. Financial or economic abuse "is the illegal or improper use the funds, assets or property of an individual" (WDHS, p.2). The woman, who undergoes these forms of abuse may suffer one or all of these abuses at a time: "A number of women who are physically abused are also abused emotionally" (Slabbert & Green, 2013, p.241). As a woman, Mara in *Beyond the horizon* undergoes these four forms of abuse and this situation makes her think of herself as a "pawn", a "slave" and a "property". Thus, the conditioned society, where one is perceived as a pawn, a slave and a property and the other as a lord, a master and a pimp informs the abuses and imbalance of equal relationships in the novel. A study of these abuses with focus on how words are selected and given prominence in specific structures or utterances, as well as the sort of deviations these words may carry and signal the abuse of women, becomes the primary concern of this work.

Approach to the study

Stylistics involves "the analysis of the distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect" (Verdonk, 2002, p. 4). It examines the use of language to bring out issues and their literary effects. Language is crucial to stylisticians because various patterns of a text form the basis of analysis (Simpson, 2004). Rahmani and Pashazanoons (2017) explain further that stylistics studies the linguistic structures of works and employs the ways of language to underscore the aesthetics of literary work. Defining stylistics can be an arduous task because its scope can be wide (Zyngier, 2001). Does it belong to linguistics or to literary

criticism? Zyngier (2001) traces the history of stylistics and how some writers have condemned stylistics; but after many years, it has survived and continues to be a potent approach to analysis. Interacting with the language of texts and inferring meanings from texts are all part of the stylistic approach to analysis (Timucin, 2010). In *A Linguistic Guide to Poetry*, Leech (1969) reveals how stylistics may be simply regarded as an analysis of style in literary works. Surely, one cannot consider the style of any text without looking at the language and/or organization of the text. To appreciate language, words are crucial, as they form the main building blocks for the exposition and development of ideas in a text.

The use of a word in a specific context determines its meaning, as do the regularities that control our deployment of the sentences in which it appears. Horwich (1998) notes how the "meaning" of a word or group of words can be the concept it reveals, or the thing in the world to which it refers, or the propositional element that it expresses (given the context), or what the speaker (perhaps mistakenly) believes it to be about, or what the speaker wants his audience to infer from its use. Sometimes, patterned words, phrases, clauses or sentences – elements of parallelisms – of a text have meanings other than the literal meanings. Haugh (2012) notes that "inference" is the "cognitive process by which participants figure out meaning beyond what is said" (p. 1). In effect, he refers to the unexpressed ideas in a text which are encoded but decoded by the mind of the reader through the reader's interactions with a text. This is what is meant by reading between the lines. There are several utterances in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* which carry more than just one interpretation, encoded in deviations such as similes, metaphors, repetitions and others. Thus, beyond the words, phrases, clauses and sentences which could be patterned to reflect the abuses of the woman, the similes, metaphors and repetitions, among others, are also textual patterns and deviations potently employed by Darko to convey the struggles and experiences of the protagonist, Mara. Before we delve into patterns and interpretations of language used by Darko to foreground the abuse of women in her narrative, let us briefly consider the synopsis of her work, *Beyond the Horizon* and some reviews it has received.

Synopsis and brief review of *Beyond the Horizon*

Beyond the Horizon recounts the story of Mara, a Ghanaian girl from the village of Naka, who is made to marry Akobi, a messenger clerk at the Ministries in the city, Accra. Mara moves from the village to join her husband in his one-bedroom corrugated-iron sheet shelter but he constantly abuses her through beatings and sadistic sexual demands. Brought up to respect men, Mara endures the physical, sexual, emotional and economic abuses of her husband (and others). Akobi finally travels to Europe but Mara still hopes for the best on his return. However, to her surprise, she receives a letter from Akobi in which he asks her to join him in Europe, Germany to be specific. This news raises Mara's hope of a better marriage. However, when she finally gets to Germany through the help of an agent, she has to endure all four forms of abuse in her dealings with Akobi and his cohorts.

The issues in *Beyond the Horizon* are captured in the literature. Scholars such as Kammampoal (2017), Zanou, Gbaguidi & Djossou (2017), and Nutsukpo (2019a) establish that male-controlled ideas and standards are pressing factors in Africa which govern many situations and aid in the subjugation of women in general. Issues of prostitution and pornography have also been considered Frias (2002) and Ladele (2016). Frias (2002), for instance, notes how Darko articulates the concerns of African women who are voiceless and abused sexually in foreign lands. She observes that Darko uses her protagonist, Mara, to represent an African woman who struggles through conventions and ideologies of the largely patriarchal setting she finds herself. It is in this setting that the African woman manages to reconstruct her own self and voice. As remarked by Nutsukpo (2019b), Ladele (2016) "argues that through forced prostitution, the bodies of these women are re-colonized by European imperialism supported by indigenous patriarchal systems" (p.118). Umezurike (2015a) attempts a comparative analysis of the theme of resistance in contemporary African fiction by examining Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* and Unigwe's *On Black Sisters' Street*. He points out how these writers confront patriarchal oppression and empower their female characters to "reconstitute their subjectivity from subaltern positions: positions of disadvantage and subjection" (p.153). Oseghale and Ohiwerei (2019), on their part, examine the various social ills in the narrative. Their work foregrounds the systematic exploitation of women by men in almost every part of the world, not just in Africa. Their work shows the levels of hardships that some women must

face in their various settings. These difficulties include physical and domestic abuses, rape and lack of financial opportunities, among others. Other scholars (Asempasah & Sam, 2016; Lefara, 2017; Joseph Peter, 2022) identify and discuss the structural logics that drive the narrative dynamics in the novel, *Beyond the Horizon*. Asempasah and Sam, for example, examine the demythologization of Europe as the privileged place of redemption and reconstituting the self. These two logics are not independent of each other but rather, the realization of the first brought about Mara's decision to reconstitute herself. By examining the semantics of names in the novel, the writers show how the name Mara is used purposefully to portray the protagonist's (Mara) awakening and transformation of her "self". This awakening and transformation of Mara from naivety to self-knowledge, as noted by Umezurike (2015b), does not really liberate her as it should have. This is because Mara continues to bemoan her current status as a woman when she is presented in the opening pages of the novel, sitting in front of an oval mirror. More recent works like Asempasah (2022) contribute to the relevance of Darko's work in the era of post Covid-19. Asempasah, therefore, argues (among other things) that Darko's exploration of the shame of being post-colonial and postcolonial liberation is necessary to thinking about a post-Covid-19 Africa and the need for Africa to systematically detach itself from western influence.

Clearly, scholars have looked at various issues and themes in Darko's novel with focus also on the structure of the novel. Considering the stylistic analysis of the text would underscore the importance of parallelisms and deviations in revealing the abuses of the protagonist, Mara, in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*. Thus, the parallel structures or parallelisms, placing primacy on the significance of words and sentences, and the various deviations of language use such as similes and metaphors, can be further decoded and analysed to show the ways in which women like Mara are voiceless, marginalized and abused by especially men in the patriarchal society women find themselves. These patterns could be repetitions of similar or dissimilar words or expressions, as well as sentences. The patterns could also be seen in the sounds of words (resulting in sound devices such as alliteration, consonance and assonance, among others). In this work, focus is placed on (repeated) words and expressions, even when these patterns occur in sentence structures. Also, consideration is given to sentence structures that have deviations (from the "normal" language code) such as metaphor and simile.

Analysis

Before one gets introduced to the actual sequence of events that take place in the story, one finds the female protagonist of the story, Mara, sitting before her mirror in her room and brooding over the situation she finds herself in. Bollen et al. (1999) note that "psychological abuse often more frequently and chronically than physical violence and the well-being of many women is affected negatively by psychological abuse" (p.7). This is the state Mara finds herself in. Her disturbed state of mind is reflected in the following language:

> *I am just in brief silky red underpants, so I'm virtually naked, but that is not why I feel cold because this coldness I feel does not grip my body so much as it does my soul. It's deep inside me that feels this chilliness…* (p.1).

Paying attention to the first and complex sentence of this instance, it is understandable that one may feel cold when virtually naked. But, as shown in the second and emphatic sentence, for coldness to grip one's "soul" is a totally chilling or perhaps extraordinary experience. Nakedness or exposure to cold air is what makes one feel cold; so, it can be deduced that Mara is indeed exposed or "naked" in the sense of the expression. Both outwardly and especially inwardly, Mara is cold, naked, exposed and vulnerable. Thus, in the above quotation, one notices that Mara is presented as uncovered, unprotected, divested, peeled, and stripped emotionally and this makes her feel the chilliness inside her "soul" more than what she feels on her "body". The tangible – Mara's "body" – becomes less relevant in this situation for Mara, while the intangible, her "soul", rather assumes prominence in order for her to express her innermost feeling. It is an experience that can, perhaps, only be imagined; and even when imagined, it does not still come close to how Mara herself feels. It is a "chilling" experience for Mara herself and the involving reader. No wonder Mara resorts to crying. As she cries, she compares the way her tears are dropping to "the beating of the devil's drums" (p. 2): "Tears are slowly rolling down my face in an agonizing rhythm like the beating of the devil's drums ta…ta…ta… dropping down one after the other, painfully slow, painfully gradual…" (p. 2).

From the excerpt, the modifier "agonizing", which portrays bitterness, cruelty, galling et cetera, is used to describe the way the tears are rolling down. Even in bitterness and pain, the

rolling down of the tears forms a rhythm which is compared to the beating of the devil's drum. The simile is apt since the devil is noted for evil, trouble and wickedness; therefore, the rhythm of the rolling of the tears cannot be anything pleasant too. This alone can set the reader thinking about what this woman might have gone through to harbour this kind of pain. She further describes herself as "garbage": "I sit…this bit of garbage that once used to be me and I cry" (p. 3). Whoever compares herself to garbage? The metaphor in the quotation presents her as something that is unwanted, trash, useless, chaff and waste. This is how she sees what is left of her and, again, the reader wonders what might have happened to the protagonist to unapologetically refer to herself as garbage. The effective combination of the appalling visual imagery in the opening scenes with instances of simile and metaphor helps to underscore the psychological abuse of the protagonist and the heavy dose of suspense as to what lies ahead in the text.

With this kind of entry into the story, it is not surprising when Mara describes the man she works for as: "He is my lord, my master and my pimp" (p.3). This is contrasted with how the man (Oves) perceives her: "And I … I am his pawn, his slave and his property" (p. 3). These two pregnant opposites suggest the physical and sexual abuse of Mara and they (the opposites) can be presented stylistically as follows:

1. He is my + { lord / master / pimp }

2. I am his + { pawn / slave / property }

These two instances are paradigmatic sets, with each describing a particular person (Mara) and her relationship with another person. Looking at the two sets on the surface, it is obvious that one is superior to the other, although both are undesirable in the life of Mara. The first set or patterning of noun phrases is how Mara, the protagonist sees Oves, the man she works for. From this first set, all the words are related in the sense that each item can be replaced by the other. They suggest domination in the text. Syntagmatically, all the words are related to "He is my" and they are also synonymously related as they can all be +human, and context-wise, +male. All the words again share a synonymous meaning of "having control", and potently

depict Mara's sense of helplessness. The second set, which describes how Oves perceives Mara, has words like "pawn", "slave" and "property" which also form a paradigm of similar meaning. Syntagmatically, they are all related to "I am his". Synonymously, these three words are related as they can all be +animate, that is +/- human. These words also share the synonymous meaning of "being controlled", and further depict the helplessness of Mara. While the sense of "being controlled" is evident, the more crucial semantic relationship has to do with ownership or possession which makes Mara a disposal commodity. It is clear that Oves – the boss – has control over the woman (Mara) who works for him, and this is why he prostitutes her for money. This is also why Mara finally declares: "He is… my pimp", to show her dependency on her master.

On the other hand, the noun phrases Mara uses to describe herself in the second paradigm show that she can be considered not just as human, but also as non-human since other things aside from humans can be "pawns" and "properties". This is the plight of the protagonist who is a woman and represents the oppressed African woman who can be likened to, for example, something that is not human (a pawn). The protagonist is also without any voice or will as human (a slave) and therefore can be treated like someone's asset (property). These attributes are further heightened when one traces the roots of Mara's abuse to her family setup in Naka.

Mara's abuse, or more specifically, exploitation starts from her own family. In the words of Nutsukpo (2019a), "Socio-cultural exploitation involves the social conditioning of women to accept patriarchal notions and values which devalue them, reinforce their supposed inferiority to men, and leave them open to manipulation and exploitation" (p.138). Denying Mara the needed education which could have given her self-awareness and raised her self-esteem was not enough; Mara's father marries her off with profit in mind rather than to ensure her welfare. Just as in Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* when kings and chiefs sell their kinsmen to slavery for a few pounds and shiny objects, Mara is also given to Akobi for "two white cows, four healthy goats, four lengths of cloth, beads, gold jewellery, and two bottles of London Dry Gin" (p. 3). Mara's father does not consider the suitor's character and Mara's happiness because of the aforementioned items he receives. The items signify the wealth of Akobi, and subsequently the need for Mara to "worship" Akobi. Mara is thus exchanged for

animate and inanimate objects which cannot be equated to her value as a human being, not just as a woman. Mara is further positioned to appreciate the need to unequivocally worship and adore the wealth giver, her husband, as "Tradition demands that the wife respect, obey and worship her husband…" (p.13). Yet, she is not told that in return the man must take "good care of the wife*"* (p.13) as Mama Kiosk, her voice of reason in the text, makes her aware. In other words, the same tradition that appears to socially position the man as superior to the woman also makes it imperative for the man to take "good care of the" woman. This situation still does not create room for both men and women to be treated as equals in various relationships.

It is indeed dehumanizing for a fully grown, newly married woman to be physically abused and asked by her husband to consider throwing people's rubbish away as her job. It becomes clear from the onset of their marriage that Mara is brought to the city to work for the husband, Akobi. Akobi sees the union as a business venture which must yield profits rather than losses. Consequently, he slaps Mara for not adding interest to the money he gives her as capital for her boiled eggs business. In Akobi's view, Mara is actually meant to add interest to the capital in order for him to benefit: "'What do you mean paying without interest?' he bellowed eventually" (p. 21). In the immediate question raised by Akobi, the word "interest" goes with "benefit". If Akobi demands interest for settling his own wife in business, then it makes it possible for the reader to deduce one of the reasons why Mara has been married: to add value or interest to their "business" – marriage. It is a clear case of economic abuse in marriage by a husband.

Clearly, the perception Akobi has of his wife Mara as somebody he has brought from the village to work for him makes him treat her anyhow. Like a slave working for the master, Mara is beaten whenever the master feels unhappy about her. The writer uses the following parallel structures to depict Mara's plight:

> *When I didn't bring him the bowl of water and soap in time for washing his hands before and after eating, I received a nasty kick in the knee.*
> *When I forgot the chewing stick for his teeth, which he always demanded be placed neatly beside his bowl of served food, I got a slap on the face.*
> *And when the napkin was not at hand when he howled for it, I received a knuckle knock on my forehead* (p. 19).

Parallel structures, also called parallelism, are the repetition of a chosen grammatical form within a construction so that each idea in the construction follows the same grammatical pattern. When writers use parallel structures, they are less prone to making common grammatical errors that may come with uncoordinated structures. Besides, writers may succeed in stylistically stating the monotonous and similar patterns of life using parallel structures. In the above instances, the writer succeeds in showing the symbiotic relationship between efforts and rewards or causes and effects. The effort or cause is signalled by the patterns: "When I didn't ....; When I forgot…; And when the napkin was not at hand…". These actions are all efforts Mara forgets sometimes when she serves her husband. These failed acts (causes) of hers become the reason for her to suffer the following physical abuses (effects): "I received a nasty kick in the knee…; I got a slap on the face…; I received a knuckle knock on my forehead." The choice of "received", "got" and "received" illustrates the rewards, although undesirable, that Mara had to endure from her husband. And the choice of "knee", "face", "forehead" also shows how her body was physically abused by the husband. Thus, from the three sentences, Darko uses parallel structures to show forgetfulness on Mara's part (cause) and its (forgetfulness') unhealthy consequences (effects). Mara's forgetfulness when she attended to her husband was equally met with specific abuses by the husband.

As a slave, a worker and a subordinate to her husband, Mara is not even supposed to get pregnant in their "business" – marriage. Childbearing is very important to most couples and every marriage ideally looks forward to this with much joy and anticipation. However, since it is Akobi's intention to exploit Mara economically, he becomes extremely angry and beats her for getting pregnant. It is obvious that caring for babies takes a lot of courage and time. For Akobi, the cost of caring for a baby in addition to looking after Mara was draining. He believes that if Mara has become pregnant, then she needs to start a proper job besides her menial job of throwing rubbish away for Mama Kiosk. This is established in the following utterance by Mara:

> *The third day he spoke with me. 'I have decided that you must start work to earn proper money, now that we are going to increase,' he began. 'You have been here for long enough now, and you can work. I can't cater for us when your child comes'…'and I have more important plans'* (p. 17).

While some husbands will ask their first-time pregnant wives not to work in order not to stress themselves and the unborn child, Akobi demands more work from his pregnant wife. In his self-declared business empire – the marriage, he sees everything as an opportunity to make maximum profit. In a dialogue with Mara, Akobi refers to the child as "*your child*" (p.17). The possessive pronoun "*your*" in the quotation shows Mara and not Akobi as the owner of the unborn child. As it is not mandatory to care for something that is not yours, the conclusion is that Mara needs to work to earn money. This is to enable Mara to cater for her child when he or she is born while Akobi saves his money for "more important plans" (p.17).

Furthermore, Akobi deliberately takes away from Mara anything that appears to bring any form of happiness or self-confidence into her life so that he can continue to manipulate her. He forbids her from singing while cooking or washing; he forbids her from being liberal in her approach to other tenants, like having a conversation with them; he forbids her from moving with Mama Kiosk who is mother figure to her; and forbids her from getting new cloths for herself. He takes away her high-quality gold jewelry under the pretext of safe keeping and sells it together with other properties of hers to facilitate his travelling to Europe. For Akobi, the following activities which Mara performs – singing, conversing with friends, making new friends, and owning property – depict Mara's gradual growth and sense of fulfilment. Akobi knows the danger in allowing Mara to enjoy these privileges or becoming independent of him. He therefore forbids Mara from engaging in these acts. The more naive and poor she is, the more dependent she will be on Akobi and the more prone she will be to all forms of abuse. This situation is summed up by Mara in the following extract:

> *He had observed that I had resumed singing when cooking or washing and he didn't like it. I had become more liberal in my approach to the other tenants and turned into more of a conversationalist who now had various things in common with them to talk about: trade, people, pregnancy, babies; and he did not like it* (pp. 23-24).
>
> *'Mara,' he called me one afternoon, 'from now on I don't want you to leave in the morning for the station together with Mama Kiosk'* (p. 24).

From the above, the parallel structures of "He had observed……and he didn't like it", "I had become….and he did not like it" echo definite observations made by Mara who had started doing things that would make her largely independent of Akobi. The repetition of "and he did not like it" affirms a strong opposition to what Mara had found as her sources of joy. Clearly, the following parallel structures forecast what Mara had "in common" with others, rather than with Akobi:

- trade
- people
- pregnancy
- babies

Akobi does not support her "trade", does not like her mixing with "people", is not happy about her "pregnancy", and has declared Mara's unborn child as hers, not his. All these noun phrases (trade, people, pregnancy) therefore form a paradigm of happiness and a worldview for Mara. Take these away from her and she is obviously devoid of happiness and more dependent on Akobi. The situation makes it easier for Akobi to continue to subject Mara to all forms of abuse as Mara is entirely dependent on him.

As the man of the house, Akobi sees the wife as a product purchased with the dowry of his father. When he eventually travels to Europe and realizes that things are not as he had expected and he could not make money as quickly as he had anticipated, he deceives Mara into joining him in Europe for him to continue manipulating her; this time, in a more degrading way than he did back in Ghana.

Mara's journey to Europe marks another milestone in her abuse. She arrives in Europe with the hope of reuniting with her husband in a very special way. After being handed over to Osey, Akobi's most trusted friend, to continue the journey, Osey deliberately tries to subconsciously prepare Mara for the task ahead of her. First, he buys her strange-looking sausages which Mara claims she has never seen before. Then he tells her Germany is a place of only six things which are: "knickerbockers, hunter's hut, sausages, brown bread, beer and Mercedes Benz cars" (p. 61). Perhaps, these items portray Germany as a land of pleasure, a

place where Mara should expect to be entertained. It is because of this entertainment and mental preparation of Mara that Osey takes Mara to watch a movie:

> *Osey said before we went into the cinema house that this was his welcome treat for me, a film full of action…What I saw was not the kind of action I expected. Osey obviously had a different opinion of what an action film was. This action that I saw horrified me and left me sitting in my seat heated up with my mouth wide open* (p. 61).

How one is welcomed by another tells a lot about what one should expect. A warm welcome gives a sense of care and makes one feel that one can trust another. But that is not what Mara gets. Osey's show of hospitality horrifies and shocks Mara, as she sees women and especially African women having sex on a television screen at the cinema house. Why will Osey welcome a naive woman from Africa this way? Why did they have to watch a pornographic movie that was full of African women just like Mara? It could be said to be an indirect way of informing Mara why she had been brought to Germany. She had been brought to be sexually exploited for monetary gains. Referring to her cinema experience, Mara says: "It was a shock for me, my first shock, my first horror. And yet, my first lesson too" (p. 61-62):

My first + { shock, horror, lesson }

All the three items are nouns, and they form a paradigm because they can be replaced by one another. Syntagmatically, they are all related to the repeated phrase, "My first". The patterned repetition of "my first" and the nouns in the paradigm emphasize the novelty in Mara's experience. Synonymously, "shock" and "horror" are related as horror comes because of shock, fear or dread. The watching of the movie, which is Mara's lesson, creates a mental disturbance (shock) that brings fear and shock (horror) to her. This mental and physical stress on Mara depicts her frailty in an environment where her immediate helpers are selfish and bent on using her to an end.

In *Beyond the Horizon*, one may consider two types of sexual exploitation: personal and consumer sexual exploitation (Nutsukpo, 2019a). Mara is not the only woman who experiences

these types of exploitation in the story. Vivian, Osey's wife and Kaye, Pompey's wife also fall victims. Surprisingly, all three women are engaged in prostitution which provides some form of income to their husbands. In fact, in the case of Mara, Akobi had always abused her sexually and treated her like filth, although she had accepted her lot as she thought tradition demanded she did so:

> *He was lying on the mattress, face up, looking thoughtfully at the ceiling when I entered. Cool, composed and authoritative, he indicated with a pat of his hand on the space beside him that I should lie down beside him. I did, more out of apprehension of starting another fight than anything else. Wordlessly, he stripped off my clothes, stripped off his trousers, turned my back to him and entered me. Then he ordered me off the mattress to go and lay out my mat because he wanted to sleep alone* (p. 22).

In this extract, the writer carefully selects words that depict non-verbal communication which highlights the message of sexual abuse and male supremacy. Words like "cool", "composed", "authoritative", "indicated", "wordlessly", "stripped", "entered" and "ordered" all illustrate the power Akobi has over Mara and how he uses this power to abuse her. Mara is not only beaten when she does not add interest to the capital given her to start business, she must also come home after work to an unremorseful husband, who only sleeps with her without any foreplay as if to reassure himself of still being in control. This same behaviour of Akobi towards Mara is shown when Mara goes to Germany. After being away for some time, Mara expects her husband to welcome her in his arms and sleep with her in a manner that will indicate how much he has missed her. But that too is just one of Mara's dreams of a better Akobi. He reluctantly sleeps with her after Osey asks him to do so, in a way that makes Mara feel like a "whore":

> *As for Akobi's reaction, I could as well have been a four-penny whore. Without a word he got up, picked the cassette player, switched it on loud and with just a slight nod of the head towards the bathroom, beckoned me to come and receive my welcome dose…Then, very rigidly and businesslike, ordered as loud as the loud music would allow, 'Remove it quick quick,' pointing to my trousers* (pp. 83-84).

Akobi's sudden, selfish and uninvolving acts leading to the sexual experience with Mara are acts which make Mara feel as if she were "a four-penny whore". The word "whore" itself is not pleasant for anyone to use for comparison. It can mean a promiscuous or immoral woman; it can also mean a venal or unscrupulous person. It shares semantic features of harlot, cocotte, bawd and call girl, et cetera. This is how Akobi's physical and sexual abuse of Mara makes her think of herself; she could easily pass for a whore, worth four pennies. In the two instances of lovemaking discussed above, the word "order" appears and this clearly tells the control Akobi has over Mara in their intimate relationship. The writer's use of the non-verbal mode of communication also goes a long way to portray the control that Akobi has over Mara which makes him abuse her in various ways. Akobi's body language in the above extract is selfish. He simply fails to regard the feelings of his partner, Mara. During their lovemaking, Mara describes the gory details in the following words:

> *He was brutal and over-fast with me, fast like he was reluctantly performing a duty, something he wouldn't have done if he had his way, which he must, because he must. And then he was up and I was still kneeling there, very much in pain because what he did to me was a clear case of domestic rape* (p. 84).

He was + [brutal / over-fast]

The two words in the paradigm are structurally related to the phrase "He was" and can have the attribute of "+ animate", which means these adjectives can also qualify things that are not human. These words may not necessarily share any common semantic feature, but the writer carefully selects them to show Akobi's selfish nature during lovemaking. The effect of the simile is strong in the following line: "… fast like he was reluctantly performing a duty". This shows the lack of interest in what Akobi was doing, and his lack of shame too. Akobi sleeps with his wife without recourse to her feelings, and this is what makes Mara describe the situation as "domestic rape". The visual imagery is one of shock at the level of pain or abuse Mara has to endure in lovemaking.

It must be added that, the verbal and non-verbal actions of Akobi toward Mara, especially in the presence of his friends, create the impression that others can take advantage of Mara. This is why Osey tries to seduce Mara in the train. Moreover, besides Mara, the situation of Vivian, Osey's wife, is not so different from Mara's. Osey could even sleep with Vivian in the presence of his friend Akobi and both men saw nothing wrong with it:

> *...I concluded that this wasn't the first time Akobi was seeing Osey's wife naked or the two of them having sex together; which, I concluded, explained the arrogance with which Osey tried to seduce me in the train* (p. 84).

If Akobi has seen Osey's wife naked before, then Osey simply could not wait to see Akobi's wife naked too.

It is of significance to mention here that Darko uses some simple sentences to effectively capture the entirety of the abuse of women in the novel. Ranging from socio-cultural to economic to sexual abuse, the writer uses simple sentence structures like SVO/ SVC/ SVA/ ASV et cetera (S= subject, V= verb, C= complement; A= adjunct) to foreground her message of abuse. Let us consider the following sampled examples:

1. *"Akobi took the money I earned"* (p. 106) (Akobi took the money Mara earned).
2. *"Gitte too put whatever money she earned into her and Akobi's account"* (p. 106).
3. *"He took all the money she made"* (p.117) (Kaye says this about her boyfriend).
4. *"So, for a whole year and half, Kaye worked for him"* (p. 117) (Kaye worked for her boyfriend).
5. *"I was there to work for him"* (p. 129) (Vivian says this about the husband, Osey).
6. *"Only a whore's income can finance that"* (p. 130) (Vivian says this about her new boyfriend, Marvin).

From the above instances, the simple sentences are straightforward and easy to understand. In the first three examples, the repetition of "money" and "earned" foregrounds the sweat of women like Mara, Gitte and Kaye in their work. Their sweat and pain are exploited by their own men who are supposed to protect their interests. The "money" these women earn spurs their men on to continue abusing them. The simple sentences sum up the lives of these women who have been reduced to dependents on their men. In the fourth and fifth sentences, the repetition of "work(ed)" depicts the toil of Kaye and Vivian while their men enjoy their earnings. These simple sentence structures are a summary of what the lives of these women had become. They had become "pawns", "slaves" and "properties" to "lords", "masters" and "pimps".

Stylistically, like simple sentences, all the women who are exploited in the above examples appear to be simple, naive, straightforward and honest. They are easily abused because of their naivety and simple nature. Comfort and other white women like Ingrid who appear sophisticated, could not be abused like the others. In fact, they appear to be in control of affairs even more than the men. It is possible to assume that the naivety of the women who are manipulated contributes to their abuse. The moment these women like Mara gain awareness, they start asserting themselves and taking charge of their own destinies, whether these destinies are desirable or not. Their voice and utterances then assume some sophistication, invariably depicting their supposed freedom and the need to be heard loudly and unambiguously.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine how women are abused in Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* using stylistics framework to interpret the abuses. It is clear from the analysis so far that women are indeed abused in the story in various ways by men and most of these abuses revolve around their love and work lives. Evidently, the study reveals that the physical, emotional, sexual and economic abuses of women are brought to the fore through the deviations of mainly simile and metaphor and various parallelisms in the text; patterns which have been referred to, decoded and analyzed in the narrative. In the end, Amma Darko succeeds in bringing out the abuse of women through patterned words and sentences, as well as deviations.

References

Asempasah, R. & Sam, C.A. (2016). Reconstituting the self: Of names, discourses and agency in Amma Darko's beyond the horizon. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, 2(4), 152-168.

Asempasah, R. (2022). Thinking a post-coronavirus Africa: Reading Amma Darko's beyond the horizon in the era of covid-19. *Kente: Cape Coast Journal of Literature and the Arts*, 3(1), 1-22. Doi: https://doi.org/10.47963/jla.v3i1.767

Bassuk, E., Dawson, R. & Huntington, N. (2005). Intimate partner violence in extremely poor women: Longitudinal patterns and risk markers. *Journal of Family Violence*, 21(6), 387-398.

Bollen, S., Artz, L.M., Vetten, L. & Louw, A. (1999). Violence against women in metropolitan South Africa: A study on impact and service delivery. ISS Monograph Series, 41

Danis, F.S. & Lee, J. (2003). The criminalization of domestic violence: What social workers need to know. *Social Work Journal of the National Association of Social Work*, 48(2), 145-288.

Darko, A. (1995). *Beyond the horizon*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Frais, M. (2002). Women on top: Prostitution and pornography in Darko's beyond the horizon. *Wasafiri*, 17(37), 8-13.

Haugh, M. (2012). *Inferences and implicature: The encyclopedia of applied linguistics.* https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0535.

Horwich, P. (1998). *Meaning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Joseph Peter, Y. (2022). The unsaid or empty speech: The act of being silenced: Language of silence of women and its implications in Amma Darko's beyond the horizon and Chinua Achebe's things fall apart. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 0(0), 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1177/01968599221102523

Kammampoal, B. (2017). Womanist discourse from margin to center: A critical analysis of Amma Darko's beyond the horizon. *TAJ: Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture*, 3 (4), 1-20.

Ladele, O. A. (2016). Globalization and African women's bodies: Some fictional representations. *International Journal of English and Literature*, 7(8), 135-142.

Lefara, S. (2017). Fictionalized representation of space in Amma Darko's beyond the horizon. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, 4(2), 17-129.

Leech, G. N. (1969). *A linguistic guide to poetry*. New York/London: Longman.

Nutsukpo, F. M. (2019a). The exploitation of African women: A feminist exploration of Darko's beyond the horizon. *Advances in Language and Literature*, 10(2), 136-142. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.10n.2p.136

Nutsukpo, F. M. (2019b). Human trafficking and the African woman: A critical study of Darko's beyond the horizon and Adimora-Ezeigbo's trafficked. *Journal of Gender and Power*, 12(2), 117-135. DOI: 10.14746/jgp.2019.12.007

Oseghale, F. & Ohiwerei, E. M. (2019). Reflection of social ills in Amma Darko's beyond the horizon. *Sino- US English Teaching*, 16(10), 432-438.

Rahmani, A., & Pashazanoons, A. (2017). Study the stylistics of "Ashba" sermon of "Nahjol

Balaqeh." *Journal of History Culture and Art Research*, 6(1), 566-585.

Riger, S., et.al. (2002). *Evaluating services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault*. London: Sage Publications.

Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics: A resource book for students.* London: Routledge.

Slabbert, I. & Green, S. (2013). Types of domestic violence experienced by women in abusive relationships. *Social Work/ Maatskaplike Werk*, 49(2), 234-247. http://dx.doi.org/ 10.15270/49-2-67

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Public Health (2016). *Abuse, neglect, and exploitation*. Retrieved on October 16, 2022, from https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/ publications/p.01550.pdf

Timucin, M. (2010). Exploring the language of poems: A stylistic study. *Novitas-ROYAL(Research on Youth and Language),*4(2), 129-140.

Tracy, N. (2021). *What is abuse? Abuse definition, healthyplace*. Retrieved on October 12, 2022 from https://www.healthyplace.com/abuse/abuse-information/what-is-abuse-abuse-definition

Umezurike, U.P. (2015a). Resistance in Amma Darko's beyond the horizon & Chika Unigwe's on black sisters' street. *An International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies*, 4(2), 152-163. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/laligens.v4i2.11

Umezurike, U.P. (2015b). Objectification in Amma Darko's beyond the horizon. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 8(2), 290-301.

Verdonk, P. (2002). *Stylisti*cs. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Zanou, L.C.C., Gbaguidi, C., & Djossou, K.A. (2017). Amma Darko's contribution in beyond the horizon to contemporary gender portrayals. *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 10(1), 111-139.

Zyngier, S. (2001). Towards a cultural approach to stylistics. *Cauce 24*, 365-380.