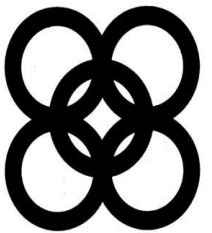
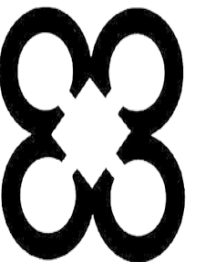
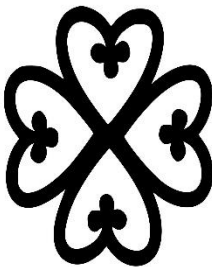


EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

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The creation and publication of a journal is a remarkable scholarly event. Most importantly, the inaugural issue marks the actualisation of an original idea and vision that evolved out of the identification of a scholarly niche in the production and dissemination of knowledge. This is why we are proud to introduce the inaugural issue of *KENTE: Cape Coast Journal of Literature and the Arts*. *Kente* is a peer-reviewed online journal founded and based in the Department of English, University of Cape Coast, Ghana. The core objectives of the journal are: to provide an open-access scholarly platform for the publication and dissemination of original papers that make significant contributions to specific authors, genres, thematic and theoretical issues within the areas of literature and the arts; to publish interviews and creative works especially poetry; to publish reviews on scholarly and creative books that fall within the broad scope of the journal.

The arts and the humanities have been confronted with declining funding and interest as a result of the increasing marketisation and commodification of research, knowledge production and dissemination. As several scholars have asserted, the arts and the humanities are in crisis: a crisis of survival and relevance. This crisis, however, is also an opportunity to rethink theories, practices, methodologies and relevance of the arts and the humanities (Epstein 2017; 2012; Di Leo 2013; Russo 2012; Gottschall 2008). It is within this context that opportunities for sharing knowledge and research findings become acutely pertinent. For scholars operating from the Global South the geopolitics of knowledge production and circulation is an ever present challenge. Beyond the crisis in the arts and the humanities generally, scholars and researchers from the Global South are confronted with the unenviable crisis that revolves around the near absence of authoritative journals in their fields of research that are not necessarily based in Europe and America. As editors we see *Kente: Cape Coast Journal of Literature and the Arts* as feeling this gap by providing a credible research-focused outlet for scholars, academics and creative artists to engender and participate in a critical dialogue whose impact will ultimately enrich our field of study.

Names have identity, symbolic and rhetorical significance. Our choice of name for the journal has been motivated by our desire to honour an indigenous creative product of immense semiotic value and the historical city of Cape Coast. *Kente* is a colorful Ashanti fabric whose origins are shrouded in myth, legend and history.

But kente is more than a cloth worn on special occasions as a marker of difference, royalty and privilege. It encapsulates the sublime imaginative and communicative or rhetorical artistry of the Ashantis of Ghana. For the Ashanti Kente represents product, process and plenitude. Each of the many kente patterns is a communicative act or narrative proverb that simultaneously articulates a culturally situated and existential experience, ethos and sociality. Kente thus symbolises artistic or imaginative excellence and traditional rhetorical virtuosity (see Opoku-Agyemang's "A Paean to *Kente*, The Remix").

Cape Coast represents the paradox of colonial Enlightenment: the arrogant salvific mission to elevate the Other at the margins of Europe from a state of "immaturity" (Kant) was closely associated with the institution of a dehumanising and agonising apparatus of subjection and otherness. Today the physical landscape of Cape Coast is scarred with historical sites and ruins that perennially remind us of the shameful trade in human bodies. But the history of Cape Coast is not a tale of unending woe. Cape Coast's encounter with Europe led to the introduction of formal education in the Gold Coast, even if the original aim was the production of compliant bodies and the denigration and destruction of indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. As a result of the establishment of colonial and mission schools, Cape Coast became the centre of a counter-discourse that manifested itself in works of nationalists, intellectuals and creative writers such as Kobina Sekyi, J. E. Casely-Hayford, John Mensah Sarbah etc. *Kente: Cape Coast Journal of Literature and the Arts* is founded on these inimitable traditions of excellence in Ghana.

This inaugural issue is a collection of five original papers that make significant contributions to the existing literature on specific texts and thematic issues. In "Replacing Whole Limbs with Borrowed Ones': Whiteness, Decolonization and Early Nationalists Identification," Raquel Baker argues that Kobina Sekyi's play *The Blinkards* stages how whiteness structures self-making practices within a colonial context, "positioning whiteness itself as a key ground of transnational subject positions that develop in modernity." Central to Baker's argument is the assertion that Kobina Sekyi's emphasis on postcolonial modes of identification and cultural nationalism are grounded in transnational modes of modernity. Baker uncovers the use of visual theatrics, oppositional identification and the fraught figure of whiteness as among strategies Sekyi deploys to counter whiteness as a symbol of opposition to Africanness. Baker's paper thus allows us to pay attention to the various instantiations of anticolonial ethos in *The Blinkards*.

In the last few years, masculinity has emerged as a dominant theoretical and analytical framework for discussions in African literature. This has brought a new breath of air into an area that had hitherto focused overwhelmingly on issues of feminism. Addai-Mununkum's "The Failed Masculinist State: A Rejection of the Phallic Man" falls within this emergent fascinating discourse on African literature. Focusing on *A Man of the People*, *Anthills of the Savannah* and *Xala* Addai-Mununkum deploys the "metaphor of failed masculinity" to characterise the failed political state in Africa. This provides a refreshing departure from the charge of feminization of the nation in African literature.

In "For Popularity, Pleasure, or Other Reasons? The Treatment of Sex in the Novels of Ayi Kwei Armah" Oppong Adjei deploys the literary stylistics concepts of 'linguistic foregrounding' and 'paradigmatic associations' to examine the literary and thematic significance of sex and sexual acts in Ayi Kwei Armah novels.

On the basis of his findings Oppong Adjei concludes that “Armah’s treatment of sex in largely explicit terms is not gratuitous, but fundamental to the appreciation of his literary works.”

Drawing on the concept of futurity and Fanon, Christabel Aba Sam argues in “The Making of the New Man in Contemporary African Fiction: A Reading of J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*” that Coetzee locates the possibility of a genuine post-apartheid South Africa in the emergence of a new man. This is, however, contingent on spatial re-configuration and a redefinition of masculinity. Addai-Mununkum’s and Aba Sam’s papers provide crucial insights into ways in which masculinity is a useful analytical apparatus for engaging with issues about nation formation and redemption. Unlike Addai-Mununkum’s paper, however, Aba Sam’s reading of *Disgrace* shows that Coetzee’s possible future revolves around a “correlation between forms of community and forms of masculinity” as “the basis for re-configuring social cohesion in post-apartheid South Africa.”

In the last paper “An Ecocritical Reading of Selected African Poems: the Environment as the Contact Zone” Moussa Traoré explores the ecocritical dimensions of selected by Kofi Awoonor, Kofi Anyidoho, David Diop and Birago Diop. Specifically, the author focuses on ecocritical symbolism and its ramifications. His reading of the selected poems highlights the intersection of environmental integrity or wholeness and community survival. The paper thus sheds new light on poems that are at the heart of the African poetic cannon.

On behalf of the editorial team, I wish to express our profound gratitude to the authors whose papers have made this inaugural issue possible. As with any new project, it has been a challenging learning experience. When the history of this journal comes to be written in the future, our authors will be regarded as having dared to believe in a vision and in the process blazed the trail for intellectual inquiry and excellence.

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