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# Editor's Note.

This is the first issue of Kiabara under the current Editorial board. We welcome you to the rebranded, peer-reviewed journal of the Humanities. We apologize for the unusually long delay which was caused principally by lack of funds. We also had to grapple with the rather slow response from many of our assessors. Again owing to a printer's error, our Call for papers was without a deadline. Consequently we had a bumper harvest of more than 80 contributions. Getting all these assessed at the same time proved to be an uphill task. However we will continue to select from this large pool for the next 2 or 3 issues. We therefore plead with our contributors to bear with us while we assess their papers for subsequent issues. Indeed there may be no further Cfp until we have harvested the best publishable papers from the current stock. Happy reading as we prepare for the next issue.

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# 'Palmwine is as good as St-Rémy': Leke Ogunfeyimi's example in *Weaker Sex*

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## Abstract

In this paper, I examine the tension between traditional African value-system on marriage and gender relations and Western perception and its interrogation often described as feminism. Since the contact with the European world due to colonialism, African societies and their cultural values have been subjected to scrutiny and change by Western ideologies which question the continued veneration of cultural precept and beliefs, and exposing their weakness while getting exposed in return. One of such ideologies is feminism that challenges male dominance and cultural/religious mechanisms perceived to undermine the freedom of the female gender. Leke Ogunfeyimi's *Weaker Sex* dramatizes this kind of tension through its protagonist, Bomane Sosu whose radical feminist approach to her gender, femininity, and marriage, underlined by her traditional consciousness, specifically of the Yoruba, highlights the argument about the contradictions of contemporary feminist inclination including its implications in our society.

**Keywords:** culture, feminism, gender, marriage, social reality.

### Introduction

**Bomane:** I love male children. They are the passages through which every family line is easily traced.

**Kemi:** Why then did you not have one for daddy?

**Bomane:** I think it's daddy who did not have one for me.

**All:** What!?

**Bomane:** Y-e-s! *Would the mango tree bring forth the fruit of an orange?* Your father did not have male semen in him. I think I was created stronger than he...I gave him strong sex to produce my type. He was a weaker sex. *Or don't our people say, when a woman gives birth to a female child, it means she has felled her husband?* I felled your father five times. He is a weaker sex... To justify his weakness, he ran away from home. He did not know how to bring out something from nothing. (9; emphasis added)

One of the challenges facing colonized nations today remains the influence of Western ideologies on the people's outlook and social perception, including the sweeping challenge of time-tested traditional precepts and value-systems by same. The effect of the collision of these ideologies with existing cultural values, Supriya Nair writes, is a twist in the psyche of the colonized, "split in [the colonized] epistemological and ontological habitation"; a "divide within the self, indeed, a series of traumatic cleavages" (130), which sometimes results in "double consciousness" to use W.E.B Du Bois's term for "the sense of looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (351), or what Ngugi wa Thiong'o also describes as the "vacillating mentality...evasive self-contemplation, the existential anguished human condition, or the man-torn-between-two-worlds-facedness" (22). According to Ngugi:

Colonial alienation takes two interlinked forms: an active (or passive) distancing of oneself from the reality around; *and an active (or passive) identification with that which is most external to one's environment.* It starts with a deliberate disassociation of the language of conceptualization, of thinking, of formal education, of mental development, from the language of daily interaction in the home and in the community. *It is like separating the mind from the body so that they are occupying two unrelated linguistic spheres in the same person. On a larger social*

*scale it is like producing a society of bodiless heads and headless bodies. (28; emphasis added)*

Ngugi contends that colonial (often psychological) violence produces individuals torn between two worlds---a world of mental dilemma involving men and women who have such a “split in epistemological and ontological reality,” and that of women whose response to social issues suggests “double consciousness” in the way that they challenge what is perceived as male domination and oppression, even as they hold tenaciously to the traditional value-system and precepts that they originally sought to undermine.

While a number of religious and cultural precepts in most colonized nations do function as mechanisms of women oppression (and the oppression of men in some cases even though this hardly gets the desired attention), oppression of women [and children] is not entirely a third world/colonized nations, specifically African, problem. As Niyi Osundare points out, while some aspects of traditional way of life and culture are clearly “oppressive and reactionary [with their] rigid oligarchic and feudalistic political structure dominated by kings and queens and emirs and chiefs”; systems supported by “gods and goddesses; high priests and low priests, all feeding upon the sweat and spirit of the common man and woman” (9) even as they frustrate youthful change and/or genuine social development; on the other hand, people in the colonial/developed world [are equally] faced with the “virulent atomisation of modern capitalist society and the philistinisation of values, rigid division of labour and the deification of consumerism” (19) producing in turn, the marginalisation and “commodification” of women as sex-objects.

Often times, while this contradictory aspect of contemporary, developed society is overlooked and/or even celebrated, traditional systems are in turn classified as backward, obsolete and redundant. But, in contemporary African societies, these ideologies – feminism in this specific case and the consciousness of traditional value-systems – often collide wherein a significant shift in social outlook necessarily becomes apparent, one that glorifies Western ideal and the other that tenaciously holds onto the time-hallowed precepts, even if unconsciously, so long as it serves the individual involved its intended purpose of negotiating female power; in the end, while traditional values are disparaged, they are also utilized and given agency to combat social anomaly which undermine female freedom. In this paper, I examine such a conflicting but, at the same time, illuminating example of the notion of “oppression” and

“marginalization” of women including a radical reaction to such oppressive mechanism that is in turn used to justify the position of oppression. Leke Ogunfeyimi’s play, *Weaker Sex*, dramatizes this sort of conflicting feminist ideology in the face of cultural values, as represented by its central character, Bomane Sosu whose radical feminist posture is inadvertently subsumed in her traditional consciousness, specifically of the Yoruba. Using the play’s context, the paper highlights the contradictions of feminism as an ideology that challenges (perceived) women oppression, including its implications in our own society.

### **Leke Ogunfeyimi’s cultural/feminist ‘theory’**

Essayist, poet, actor and social crusader, Leke Ogunfeyimi is an award-winning playwright and theatre director, whose drama generally deals with traditional issues, royalty, sacrifice and heroism, as evidenced in some of his previous plays, *Sacrifice the King* (Honorary Mention, 2004 ANA/NDDC Drama Award) and *Oba Olugbodomokun*, in which he celebrates Yoruba tradition, heroism and selfless sacrifice. Likely to be considered Ogunfeyimi’s foray into “contemporary” social politics, *Weaker Sex* straddles the point between a traditional Yoruba sensibility and contemporary outlook about gender politics: traditional in the sense of a deeply-conscious Yoruba perception of the symbolism, discursive and practical reality of gender and femininity, including the notion of power that accompanies such; and contemporary in terms of the expression of the idea of modern femaleness, specifically, feminism.

Feminism, we are reminded by Linda Gordon, is “an analysis of women’s subordination for the purpose of figuring out how to change it” (170). In the introduction to her work, *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writing*, Miriam Schneir articulates the central thesis of feminism in a way that highlights the kind of tension that Ogunfeyimi draws our attention to, and particularly what *Weaker Sex* dramatizes. According to Schneir, feminism is one of “the basic movements for human liberty”; to view it any less is “to ridicule present-day feminisms as the passing fancy of a handful of malcontents, to display a shocking ignorance of the history of one half of the human race” (xi). While citing Charles Francis Adams’s depression about the waning vigour of feminism in the preface to his 1876 work that “the heroism of the females of the Revolution has gone from memory with the generation that witnessed it, and nothing, absolutely nothing, remains upon the ear of the young of the present

day but the faint echo of an expiring general tradition" (qtd in Schneir xii), Schneir acknowledges that much has changed since the Revolution that Adams wrote about. Yet, a lot more has changed since she also wrote her book, a collection that brings together essays written by authoritative feminist voices including Abigail Adams, Sojourner Truth, John Stuart Mill, Friedrich Engel, Virginia Woolf, to name a few; however, Ogunfeyimi adds a dimension that requires attention even if it does underscore both Adams and Schneir's assumptions about the changing trend in women's and society's perception about femininity. This new perception necessarily calls for an overview of feminism as both a movement for women's right and as an ideology of mental and psychological awareness about selfhood, in order to put the issue that *Weaker Sex* dramatizes in the right perspective.

Although one could begin the history of feminism from the prehistoric times and focus on its many forms: goddess religions and matriarchy in Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean regions, the famous *hetaerae* of Athens, the mystical rhetoric of holy women in European Middle Ages, the tradition of the learned during the Renaissance, the *beaux esprits* of the Enlightenment or the struggles of the European bourgeois women for education and civil rights in the aftermath of the French Revolution and many others, the central argument of feminism has remained that women are oppressed, marginalized, and/or brutalized by the male-dominated, male-centred social systems across the globe. Scholarship on feminism categorized its growth into what has come to be identified as "waves." Emerging in the context of industrial society and liberal politics, the First-wave feminism was nonetheless identified with the liberal women's rights movement and early socialist feminism of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the United State and Europe, its main interest being equal opportunities for women as men. Second-wave of feminism, developed sometime in the 1960s and 1970s, gained mostly from radical groups that championed women's empowerment and rights---groups such as Redstockings which I discuss later on. Although marked by divergences from mostly women of colour and third-world women who insisted that their own experience differs from those of White/Western feminists, the growth and influence of the second-wave feminism extended through the 1980s to the 1990s, into the emergence of the postcolonial "feminism" that was marked by neoliberal global politics. Third-wave feminism is marked by its "multiplicity in transversal theory and politics" and ambiguity (Krolokke and Sorensen1-23). Ogunfeyimi's concern in



*Weaker Sex*, appears to be centred on the second-wave feminism, including its emphasis on cultural dictates that are considered inimical to the freedom of the female gender. Elizabeth Janeway and Kate Millet are among the array of feminist scholars identified with the second wave of feminism in the 1970s who sought to “change” those situations and socio-cultural mechanisms often generally grouped under patriarchy which, they argue, are instrumental to female oppression, and the central concern of feminism as a movement.

Substituting “patriarchy” for “social mythology,” Janeway insists that the “subordination of woman to man” is done through a persistent and obsolete socio-cultural system that emphasizes “woman’s place is in the home” (51). She contends that, by entrenching such an illusion and a set of beliefs about sexual roles, women are stereotyped by the male-dominated society and forced to exchange “private power in return for public submission. That is the regular, orthodox bargain by which men rule the world and allow women to rule their own place” (56). As such, the power that women exert over their children at home and in the domestic sphere is only a compensation for those exerted by men in the public sphere.

On her own part, Millet focuses specifically on the sexual relations between men and women. In defining her notion of “sexual politics,” Millet contends that men’s control over women often takes place in the sexual act itself; thus, “sexual conquest” of women by men, shows a relationship of domination and oppression in the Hegelian sense (qtd in Eisenstein 11-2). The influence of both Janeway and Millet is strongly noticeable in the writings of Anne Koedt, especially in her famous essay, “Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm” which, building on Janeway and Millet’s, formed part of the so-called sexual revolution of the 1970s, even as the work also broke societal barriers regarding what was considered acceptable to discuss regarding the issues of sex(uality) and the male/female anatomy.

However, for us to understand the relevance of Koedt’s to the context of this paper, it should be read alongside Judith Clavir’s (following Robin Morgan) notion of “metaphysical feminism” and Shulamith Firestone’s “sex class” theory. According to Clavir:

One woman’s experience is all women’s experience, because all women have a bond which is eternal, biological, and historical. Women’s culture with its rituals, poetry, and magic is an expression of their very body chemistry; and it is this chemistry with its limitless energy that patriarchs of all

classes, nations, and eras of history try to dominate and control. This biology and this oppression bonds [sic] together all women who have ever lived. (404-5)

While Clavir projects a universalist notion of the oppression of women that does not take into account cultural differences, Firestone's "a materialist view of history based on sex itself" (5), stresses the inequality between men and women not only through the physical differences of their biological components but also the functions of those differences:

Unlike economic class, sex class sprang directly from a biological reality: men and women were created different, and not equally privileged...this difference of itself did not necessitate the development of a class system---the domination of one group by another---the reproductive *functions* of these differences did. The biological family is an inherently unequal power distribution. (8; emphasis in the original)

Consequently, Firestone demands a revolution to uproot all forms of female oppression and male domination:

[Un]less revolution uproots the basic social organization, the biological family---the vinculum through which the psychology of power can be smuggled---the tapeworm of exploitation can never be annihilated. We shall need a sexual revolution much larger than---inclusive of---a socialist one to truly eradicate all class systems. (12)

Whereas Juliet Mitchell is of a contrary opinion, instead she calls for caution in sweeping condemnation of the family system, the attempt to "demonize" the male gender as it were, and the glorification of the perceived problem that the female gender also contributes significantly to. According to Mitchell:

To say sex dualism was the first oppression and that it underlies all oppression may be true, but it is a general, non-specific truth, it is simplistic materialism, no more. After all we can say there has always been a master and a servant class, but it does matter *how* these function...; there have always been classes, as there have always been sexes, how do these operate within any given, specific society? Without such knowledge (historical materialism) we have not the means of overcoming them. (90; emphasis in the original)

Primarily, Mitchell stresses, that “women’s position in society is in the home---and outside it, in production” (173). Whereas Mitchell’s “admonition” is a fine refinement of vexed notions championed by an array of feminists of various persuasion, Anne Koedt’s concern lies elsewhere, as clearly expressed in her essay, “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm.”

Koedt, an American radical feminist and founding member of the group, New York Radical Feminists, challenged the previously-held notion about female sexuality and the way it was presented, especially by none other than Sigmund Freud. According to Koedt, “Women have been defined sexually in terms of what pleases men; our own biology has not been properly analyzed. Instead, we are fed the myth of the liberated woman and her vaginal orgasm—an orgasm which in fact does not exist” (187). Writing further, Koedt contends that, “It was Freud’s feelings about women’s secondary and inferior relationship to men that formed the basis for his theories on female sexuality. Once having laid down the law about the nature of our sexuality, Freud not so strangely discovered a tremendous problem of frigidity in women. His recommended cure for a woman who was frigid was psychiatric care. She was suffering from failure to mentally adjust to her ‘natural’ role as a woman” (198-9). In the words of Hester Eisenstein, Koedt challenges the myth of sexuality that Freud and others perpetuated which was that, for women to achieve “true” orgasm they must experience penetration by a penis. While Koedt’s demonstration of how men controlled women by means of their control over the sexual act is a very strong statement, as Eisenstein argues, it draw its strength from the works of feminists such as Elizabeth Janeway’s “social mythology” and Kate Millet’s notion of “sexual politics” (Eisenstein 9-12), and many others, who have explored the same idea of women oppression as a result of male-chauvinism and patriarchy, through the ideology known as feminism which has also undergone tremendous change in recent time.

As Schneir observes of Adams’ as her own writings, many things have since changed even in the writings of Koedt and her predecessors. However, in spite of the apparent acknowledged change, what is still certain to paraphrase Schneir, is the way feminists see themselves and how feminism is also projected: while what has become pervasive is the theme of “selfhood” for, and by, women who insist that they are oppressed by a male society which inhibits their intelligence and talent, even as the same forces them to assume standards of appearance and personality that only corresponds with masculine idea. As we

shall see in *Weaker Sex* however, Ogunfeyimi thinks this position is contestable, especially in light of the kind of society in which we live in, and the one in which the feminist inclination of the type that *Weaker Sex* dramatizes thrives. Hence, as it will be clear in my analysis, Ogunfeyimi draws extensively from the social reality of his time--- and using diverse language that ranges from everyday conversation, proverbs and aphorisms from Yoruba stock of expression and the Bible---to tell the story of a single-mother, Bomane Sosu, who, abandoned by her husband because she fails to produce a male child but five girls, struggles to raise the girls and train them even as she encourages them to assert different perception of what it means to be a girl and/or woman in a changed society, while she also holds tenaciously onto her native intelligence though unconsciously.

Seen from this perspective, while Ogunfeyimi's gender is not at issue, his intentions (expressed through Bomane) are. Echoing Tuzyline Jita Allan in this play as it were, Ogunfeyimi addresses some concerns and issues affecting women today, notably, infidelity and patriarchy, and seems to propose that there is the need "for African women to break the chain of gender oppression, while simultaneous calling on African societies to dismantle all apparatus with which they oppress and stigmatize women, and both groups to re-examine their positions on postcolonial class struggles" (197). As Tuzyline Jita Allan also writes, this call for "critical transformation," deals with bringing back to centre stage the often-quoted mantra of male superiority at the detriment of women and the "seductive tyranny of patriarchy" (198), that women must resist at all cost. Molara Ogundipe-Leslie puts this argument clearly in how she perceives the male-dominated society's reaction to gender equality. She contends that African men "seem to be often riled by the idea of equality between men and women. They are not opposed to equal opportunity, equal pay for equal work, or equal education, but with equality between men and women, they are uncomfortable" (209). Consequently, she incites women to action, "[M]arried women are afraid to shake the status quo; they are afraid and want security through men; they are harsher on other women than men are; they cling to the vanishing respectability of being married" (211), a call to duty for which Ogunfeyimi seems to have recruited the protagonist of *Weaker Sex*, Bomane Sosu.

Moreover, the focus of *Weaker Sex* recalls Pierre Bourdieu's contention that "the producer of a work of art is not the artist but the field of production as

a universe of belief which produces the value of the work of art as a fetish” (229). Similarly, writing about his experience in Cameroon, Richard Bjornson makes a number of observations which are as true of other Africans as they are of the context of *Weaker Sex*. Bjornson contends that a recurrent theme in African literature is an individual’s quest for freedom to develop a satisfying identity and sense of self in spite of traditional practices that are regarded as stumbling blocks to such quest. This so-called identity, often a conflation of an European (modern) and traditional models, has its own challenges, for although there is “...an identity concept associated with a single level of the hierarchy, but most felt an allegiance to the other levels of identity as well. The consequence---a broad range of hybrid self-concepts that included elements of European and traditional African identity schemas in varying combinations” (9), which recalls Ngugi’s “vacillating mentality” that I earlier mentioned. Bjornson further argues that, while these “acculturated” Africans are motivated by the desire for “freedom” from the restrictions of their traditional precepts and long for a sense of identity wholly influenced by the contexts and aspirations of the modernization process, these are often in conflict with the need for social good (10-11). It is this kind of tension that Ogunfeyimi, using *Weaker Sex*, dramatizes through Bomane’s radical intentions. While Ogunfeyimi attempts to do many things in the play: presents an argument for female superiority, feminist radicalism, contemporary perception of sex and sexuality among others, he also draws from the Yoruba epistemology and philosophy that what is seen is a representation of the unseen, a cultural sensibility which underscores the gender dynamics that rests on the definition and use of power (Olajubu 85) ; it is also from this specific perspective that I examine the play and its social implication.

### **‘Facing East and West’: The Contraindication of *Weaker Sex***

*Weaker Sex* dramatizes Bomane’s expression of a radical feminist attitude similar to Koedtian feminist ideology, of “sexual freedom [and] the political significance of sexual pleasure,” as well as the destruction of “the psychological roots of male domination and female subordination” (Gerhard 449), by not only questioning some of the long-held belief about the roles of men and women in her society, but also encouraging her daughters to do so. However, in asserting such a radical stand, Bomane also draws legitimacy from traditional belief, part

of which her notion of feminism challenges. It is this kind of tension that Ogunfeyimi creates in the play, *Weaker Sex*, as we shall come to see.

By the time the play starts, Bomane and her five children have been abandoned by her husband, Badmus Badamosi Sosu, who uses his wife's consistent delivery of girls as an excuse to cover his own infidelity and irresponsibility. Although Ogunfeyimi does not tell us whether Badmus remarried or not, it is suggested at some point in the play. However, although we are already in the middle of her life's struggle by the time the play starts, Bomane does not seem perturbed as the stage direction informs us:

Light reveals Bomane – a woman in her late forties – wearing a short jeans knickers and a spaghetti house-wear revealing her shining, light and spotless complexion. She is sitting legs-crossed on an arm chair facing the audience in a parlour furnished to the taste of a middle-class African woman with a bar of assorted drinks. Beside her on a stool is a bottle of Big Guinness stout beer and a half-filled glass cup from which she sips at intervals.” (4)

In this scene, set against the background of music about women together with the huge frame on the wall that reads, “Weaker Sex Influence,” we are brought into the world of a woman who exudes self-confidence and does not condone any nonsense from her daughters whom she does not hesitate to stretch on the floor and trash to her contentment whenever they misbehave, as she claims. Yet, there is no doubt that she loves them all as it is clear in her interactions with them, even as she asserts herself as “an African woman [whose] home must survive its turbulent time” (8). Clearly disappointed by her “run-away” husband's infidelity and abandonment, we are thus aware of the “turbulent time” that she and her daughters are going through but which she is determined not to be consumed by. Consequently, Bomane develops a radical posture towards sexuality and marriage---a stand that she does not hide or pretend about.

While a bottle of beer and her body language suggest confidence in this first appearance, the bold poster on the wall completes the mental ambience that Ogunfeyimi creates as he does not waste time in raising the issue that Bomane and children will engage throughout the play. However, in spite of Bomane's seeming “control” of situation as she aims to present to the audience by, for example a “bottle of Big Guinness stout beer and a half-filled glass cup from which she sips at intervals” (4), and her statement “I sacrificed all I had to give you [her

daughters] western education even at my own uttermost inconvenience" (8) which she does not hesitate to remind them all the time, it is obvious things are unstable, falling apart so to speak. This point becomes apparent when Bomane tells her children, "No matter what an African woman has, if she does not have a peaceful marriage, she has got nothing" by which she openly admits her disappointment with her husband's action and both the emotional and psychological pressure that his abandonment of the home constitute for her. Although we are not informed how long Badmus has abandoned his family, her statement may be true of how marriage is considered in a traditional society. But, she complicates that notion and what she will later insist upon when she adds, "An African woman is not an *oyinbo* woman. If everything does not distinguish us, marriage does. An *oyinbo* woman fights for her own freedom in the house. The African woman fights for the freedom of that home" (8). As we shall see, while her own kind of "freedom" that she fights for is by being both "*oyibo*" and an "African" woman at one and the same time, her statement here, reaction and response to issues of love and marriage later on in the play, show conflict in her feminist ideology, as it also recalls the kind of radical feminism that Redstockings represents.

Founded by Ellen Willis and Shulamith Firestone in 1969, Redstockings' sees resistance to female subordination as a fight against "male malfeasance." This is apparent considering the group's temperament in the early years of its formation, seen in its motto: "*all men have oppressed [all] women.*" Drawing from Marxist methodology to construct a theory of women's oppression, the founders envisioned a "very militant, very public group" that was committed to action and raising consciousness about women oppression. The group sought to synthesize two existing socio-political traditions one of which was "the militant political tradition of radicals—the red of the revolution" (qtd in Echols 139). Starting from militancy against political reforms and laws which repelled abortion, the group eventually sought to abolish marriage altogether. While feminists like Pat Mainardi argues that male supremacy and sex roles within marriage were the problem and not marriage as an institution, Willis and Firestone insist that the opposite is the case. According to one of its founding members, Kathie Sarachild, "When male supremacy is completely eliminated, marriage, like the state, will disappear" (Echols 46). Hence, rather than marriage being an institution that profits both men and women, Redstockings viewed it

as a site to oppress women; although, in Bomane's case and mind, something else takes control as we shall see.

As the example of the conversation I quoted at the beginning of this essay shows while Bomane champions a feminist approach to challenge her world that she perceives to be male-dominated and hence traumatizes her, she also draws inspiration from Yoruba cultural precept to validate her standpoint. She is thus torn between two worlds: a radical feminist mentality that instigates a dialogue between biologically-determined and culturally-constructed behaviour that define gender roles, unfortunately, in the manner of Du Bois' "double consciousness" and Ngugi's "vacillating mentality"; and a cultural/Yoruba "feminist" ideology which, although recognizes that there are fundamental differences between the male and female gender, also stresses the unique qualities of the female gender, as that aspect of the male gender required for both cosmological and social balance.

Bomane seeks to redefine her position towards the female gender. She believes that the expression, "Women are weaker sex" is "a patriarchal dialect of prejudice and subjugation" (9), only meant "to veil men's weakness" (14), and nurtured by the apparatus of culture and religion. Instead, she insists that her daughters should control their sexuality and stand by their choices when it comes to dating and marriage, that they should beware of men like their father who do "not have the winning spirit... the spirit that brings out something from nothing... the spirit that turns water into wine... the spirit that sees what is greater than manhood in female children" (8). While this is not entirely wrong, it is possible to interpret it as Bomane's unconscious advocacy for a certain freedom due to her own sense of being "wildly unmothered" to use Adrienne Rich's term (225), or what Rich also calls the "essential female tragedy" brought about by the "loss of the daughter to the mother, the mother to the daughter" (237). As Rich explains, this feeling of apprehension is often borne out of the deprivation of mother's love and acceptance due to the limits placed on such mothers by the society, and the fear of transferring that failure to one's children,

Many daughters live in rage at their mothers for having accepted, too readily and passively, "whatever comes." A mother's victimization does not merely humiliate her, it mutilates the daughter who watches her for clues as to what it means to be a woman...The mother's self-hatred and low expectations are the binding rags for the psyche of the daughter. (243)



After the failure of her own marriage to a man who represents other African men Bomane's disposition towards female sexuality is that, "the major problem most African men cannot overcome even as strong as they claim to be, is managing and raising female children to excellence" (8), a notion that is possibly borne out of such a feeling of failure that Rich explains, not leaving out her own acquiescence that she admits. As she tells her daughters, "I passed through tortures: the pains of your father's abandonment dominated my soul yet [I was] unable to subdue my love for him" (24). While she struggles to overcome her grief and her "very large craving for sex" (24), she wants her daughters to learn from her own mistakes.

Bomane's daughters appear simple and innocent, yet complex, as are the issues raised in the play: the eldest, Adenike, a lawyer, demonstrates a sense of "shared trauma" with her mother hence is unable to fall in love with any man; Adenike's sense of morality regarding relationship and sex is in contrast with her mother's. She has no qualms about dating Jude, her mother's boyfriend and would not hesitate to accept his proposal of marriage; Tomi questions her mother's "ploy" to find husbands for her daughters; the youngest, Tayo "*Banturere buttocks*" (heavy and rounded backside) and Kemi "*Gan 'di oro*" (flat buttocks) are as eager to learn about modern ways and explore their femininity as their grown-up sisters.

In order to accomplish her task of re-educating her daughters without overlooking their apparent differing psychological and social disposition, Bomane starts with the kitchen. She reinterprets the concept of "kitchen" as the place that best fits the woman. Instead of the kitchen being a tool to "define our boundary" as she argues, Bomane gives it agency as "the source of life, where food which gives life comes from and woman as the kitchen, the giver of life" (15); she also insists that women are strong-willed creatures in the hands of whom the strongest gladiators in the world are mere tools (16). She condemns what she terms "I need a man to instruct me" (24) posture of some women, a position that encourages some men to feel that women depend on them to survive. She believes that that feeling of dependence, the "dependency complex" so to speak, is often propelled by an imagination that is stimulated by sexual desire, a certain imagination that "drives your fingers to dialogue with your clitoris" (24), hence, her admonition of her daughters to objectify themselves in order to express their femininity. Echoing Helen Cixous' "Your

body is yours, take it!" she charges her daughters to "get what [they] want with what [they] have" (10), and to assert their freedom from male domination.

While projecting this radical feminist aspiration, Bomane also draws from Yoruba cultural sensibility whenever she deems fit to buttress her point and validate her claims as the above conversation also underlines. Hence, in her home, Yoruba traditional precepts and radical feminism collide at will. For example, she disregards propriety towards sex and subjects dealing with sexuality by Yoruba tradition with regards to open discussion of sex among younger generations below puberty—a cultural norm that is meant to guard against social misdemeanour. Bomane openly discusses sex with her daughters and insists that they wear waist beads because "they fertilize hips and buttocks" (22). She wants to know when the girls lose their virginity, and tells them how often she has had sex after their father left (once in spite of her large craving for sex!). She wants them to control imagination because they need it in order to control men who "extend their appetites beyond the requirement of survival" especially because they are easily weakened by "the sight of breasts, laps, or even the shape of a woman" (25). In a conversation that is mainly about sex that she has with her boyfriend, Jude, whom she invites to her house and flirts with while her daughters peep through the curtain---a conversation which recalls Koedt's concern with "vaginal orgasm"---Bomane mentions that "the heart of a man is always weakened by the breasts of a woman" and that "when a woman wears a trouser she should ensure it does not bring out the shape of her vagina [because] most men's eyes go straight to see how the vagina hops out in the trouser" (16). Bomane also tells her daughters that their father "did not have male semen in him" hence he "could not make his own semen produce male children [and] I gave him strong sex to produce my type" (9), while he failed to produce his to complement her own. Ironically, the propriety towards sex is a point well-articulated by Adenike who tells her sister, Adenite, "Beauty attracts kisses but morality repels them" to which the latter, who is obviously more disposed to their mother's counsel, replies "I think your ardent value for morality, overstretched, makes you this weak and blurs your view of existing and changing realities. Wake up, sister!" (21). Adenite's concept of "reality" is obviously Bomane's and the disregard for such cultural value that Adenike seems to venerate here.

In the rest of this essay, I will concentrate on this last set of conversations to show the contradiction in Bomane's feminist posture. Oyeronke Olajubu

argues that “contemporary” women without the cultural sensibility that guides their perception and their cultures are strange bedfellows: while these women ignore traditional cultural values and prescriptions which they condemn and describe as archaic, they also seek fulfilment within the parameters of the same cultural system (Olajubu 40). While Boname’s emphasis on the male child comes from the anguish of patriarchy in a society where the male child is supposedly more valued than the female as she claims, she also resorts to Yoruba cultural belief about mutual relations and success that comes from gender balance when explaining how conception works. This fact is explained in the Yoruba proverbs: “*Òtún we òsì, òsì we òtún, l’owó fí nmó*” (Hands only become clean when they wash together); “*Àjèjé owó kan ò gbérù d’óri, esè kan ò ró gírìgírì lonà*” (To lift a load to the head, one needs both hand; the ground is stamped only with both feet); and “*Ohun tó bá bá ojú, á bá ‘mú*” (When the eyes shed tears, the nose also runs) which all underscore the epistemological imperative of the male/female principle and how it operates in the Yoruba society.

Assuming that Bomane has the right to condemn her own marriage due to her husband’s action, her insistence that her daughters should “be in control” of their marriage is clearly untenable, and constitutes another aspect of the contradiction in her new-found feminist philosophy. This is because contrary to Yoruba tradition which she recalls and utilizes when she deems necessary to do so, a woman is never required to take charge of her marriage but act as a supportive partner to her husband. According to Sheba, the mutual consensus that is stipulated in marriage in a Yoruba traditional setting is expressed in the proverb, “*À nf’òtún téní, à nf’òsì tú òkòtò, obìnrin ní a ò bá òun gbó t’omo*” that is, the right hand is used to prepare the bed, and the left hand is busy loosening the trouser; yet one’s wife complains of one’s unconcern with her barrenness (6). In a more elaborate way, Yoruba cultural attitude to sex/sexuality that negates Bomane’s conception of the clitoris and the way she wants her daughters to use it in controlling their marriage is highlighted in *odù Ìwòrì-wónrín* which reads:

*M ba j’obinrin, ara kan ni mba da/* Were I a woman, I would  
perform one feat  
*M ba to ‘leke titi lo de bebere idi/* I would display waist beads  
most alluringly  
*Ma fi gbogbo ara hu irun titi lo de po-n-polo itan/* I would display  
fluffy skin hair right down onto my thighs

*M ba b'aju w'abe wo, ma fe 'rin si/* I would behold my  
 capitulating vagina with a smile  
*Ma ni iku dede n be l'abe aso/* And express ominous adoration  
 for this unmistakable death under my clothing  
*Orisa ti kii je k'omo Okunrin o lee t'ojo/* That goddess that spells  
 premature death for many a young man  
*D'ifa fun Gbogan-Iroko, tii se oloboo yerepe eyi ti nrele oko/* This  
 was divined for Gbogan-Iroko, the excessively sexy  
 woman/Who was getting set for her betrothal  
*Nje Gbogan-Iroko, a ri e r'ewa na o je ka ri e r'omo tuntun!/* Now,  
 Gbogan-Iroko, we know you are beautiful, but what about  
 your fortune to rear babies! (qtd in Akintola 119-20).

Beyond the ethico-cultural value of procreation attached to sex other than as a weapon of control as the above Ifá verse underlines, key aspects of femininity/femaleness among the Yoruba which the above verse also draws attention to, are the danger in the misuse of the female genitalia and the ritual sensibility of the female genitalia through which people (a couple) forge a bond and share the belief that they are connected by something more concrete than the pleasure associated with copulation. It goes without saying that numerous sexually transmitted diseases are some of the examples of the need to apply restraint in the (ab)use of the sexual organs. Although Bomane seems to be aware of the essentiality of marriage among the Yoruba considering her regret over the collapse of her own marriage to Badmus, by asking her daughters to “control” their marriages she clearly negates the value of the same marriage in an African cultural context; hence, the question remains: is controlling the marriage an assurance of “freedom” as she conceives it?

Moreover, the statement that I have used as introduction above also brings up at least two conceptual frame of reference which are central to my argument in this paper. On the one hand, the statement shows that Bomane recognizes her own “failure” or refusal to conform to the societal “unwritten” code wherein child-bearing becomes a tool to oppress women because they have given birth to only female children. Hence, she uses that knowledge, the same tool that “oppresses her” to overcome her disadvantaged position. In a Yoruba traditional setting as she explains quite correctly, “when a woman gives birth to a female child, it means she has fell her husband” (9); “fell” here, being a metaphor for the man’s failure to produce a male child and the wife’s supposed “victory” having given birth to her own gender type. While this is not

actually understood as a “lack” on the part of the male gender from a Yoruba cultural context, die-hard feminists would interpret even *only* the expression not to mention its social application, as an evidence of patriarchy that perpetuates the devaluation of the female gender. Yet, we should also know that “fell” in this case is not so much of a notion to express even the joy of giving birth in the first instance, than it is about the value of the baby irrespective of her gender. In this case however, Bomane uses the sense of the cultural attitude towards male children in relation to the female, but twists the logic to advance the argument that, instead of being held responsible for producing only female children, her husband should be considered a failure for not producing the male sperm that was required to fertilize her own “garden” so that she could produce his own gender type.

From this perspective, we can say that Bomane returns to the source in a Yoruba context: that both male and female energy is required for procreation, irrespective of the gender type that is produced. In Bourdieu’s terms, the “return to the source is the strategy per excellence [...], the basis for all heretical subversion..., because it enables the insurgent to turn against the establishment the arms which they have used to justify their damnation” (84). By drawing strength from the same traditional values that she claims “frustrate us by defining our boundary and restricting our frontier” (15), Bomane also shows the contradiction in her radical feminist posture which seeks to legitimize itself through a cultural system that it seeks to dismantle. What Bomane does in that conversation, as Janet McCabe would explain it, is tantamount to a reproduction of modern gendered power relations in which female agency involves a continual but ambivalent struggle in resisting and reproducing entrenched patriarchal culture that, while oppressive, is necessary for personal success (McCabe 154), irrespective of the temporal and/or spatial difference in their struggles.

On the other hand, at another level of perception underlined by a cosmic/spiritual interpretation, Bomane’s statement above translates to the “manifestation of *aje*” that derives from a woman’s recognition of certain features she possesses and which are exclusive to her gender, one of which is the menstrual flow. As Teresa Washington explains, women use the menstrual flow, called “*Asee*” by the Yoruba, as a potent force to control both birth and death even as it functions as a significant aspect of motherhood that initiates men into fatherhood, “Awon Iya waa control reproductive organs and are

bonded through the power of menstrual blood and the lives it promises” (Washington 217). The mystical function of the menstrual flow also links itself to other feminine features such as the womb, “our mothers’ wombs are literal doorways to existence (15), including the kinesic communicative body-parts like the breast and kneeling posture usually depicted in Yoruba visual arts.<sup>1</sup>

Unwittingly, Bomane draws attention to these aspects of Yoruba epistemological imperative in her anguish and effort to justify that she has been oppressed by her husband, if not by the male-centred society which fails to punish him for infidelity (and irresponsibility) to say the least. While she faces one side, she projects her thought in another direction, as such, she is unable to grasp the import of Adenike’s appeal to her “Mummy, you mean you can’t see the drift of events!? You mean you can’t read between lines!? Life seems to have its own meaning order than what we give to it” (32). Although Adenike makes this statement in the context of her own reality, her inability to love contrary to her mother’s perception about marriage even though she (Bomane) also claims that she is unable to love any man again after her husband’s infidelity, it does say a lot about Bomane’s contradictory feminist postulation. Yet, in the words of Clifford Geertz, “culture is best seen not as complexes of concrete behaviour patterns, but as a set of control mechanisms for the governing of behaviour” (98); as Okonda Okolo also argues, “the cultural (historical) memory is ceaselessly renewed retroactively by new discoveries. Our past, by continually modifying itself through our discoveries invites us to new appropriations, which lead us towards a better grasp of our identity” (qtd in Ajikobi 22). While marriage becomes a vexed issue and weapon of ideological persuasion for Bomane, her contradictory statements highlight the epistemic philosophy that underlines the concept of gender and womanhood from a strictly feminist perspective but buried in Yoruba metaphysics. In a broader context, her conversations with her daughters as I have quoted also draw attention to the crisis of modernity and traditional values in most homes in Africa, where women make a recourse to feminism as a haven against perceived and actual acts which undermine their freedom and, at the same time, draw from the same system that they claim oppress them, in order to legitimise their own actions and positions in the same home and in the larger society.

Moreover, we might add that the proliferation of Western notion of freedom about sexuality as well as the exploration of same has given rise to a

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the cultural value of the menstruation, see, Balogun “Ele Supremacy”

kind of culture, clearly noticeable in young girls and adults' mode of dressing. Young girls are today socialized into a culture that places little value on the female body, hence its exposure through the kind of dresses that they wear. While this represents one of the most glaring effects of fashion (as a residual effect of feminist ideology that insist that women should/do have total control over their bodies) on the society, it also speaks volume about the collapse of the family in contemporary society; albeit, families where virtue takes second place after the emphasis on gender equality and sexual freedom. Many marriages have collapsed today not so much because men are generally unfaithful to their wives although that is also intrinsic to the issue as Badmus's example in *Weaker Sex* shows, as it is because some women acting on the impulses of self-assertion and gender equality, have failed to grasp the essence of being partners to their husbands' instead of controlling them. And, in situations where such men resist, their actions are misinterpreted as authoritarianism or, more specifically, male domination/oppression.

Besides, in times past, it was a shameful thing for women to return to their natal homes due to the collapse of their marriage, hence, the concerted effort on both their part and the part of the two families to ensure that conflicts in marriage are amicably resolved except in extreme cases such as threat to life; but, single-motherhood is now a very "fashionable" practice, so is "Baby-Mama" a commonly celebrated practice where a woman feels no qualms about marriage so long she is identified as the mother to a particular (often popular and wealthy) man whose social status seems to serve as enough compensation for motherhood. This practice, as well as that of a woman who returns to her natal home due to her marriage's collapse, falls under the category that the Yoruba refer to as *ilémoşú* or *dálémoşú*. It must be said that while these are not solely caused by feminist inclinations, they are not entirely unrelated.

While cultural precepts are put in place by traditional societies in order to check the proliferation of such social occurrences, modern society's abandonment of such practices apparently shows how society has to deal with the consequences. While these hallowed traditions are disparaged and treated as obsolete, if not, backward practices, it is expected that their replacement should refine what they are lacking in knowledge—an expectation which has remained disappointingly unmet. Consequently, uncritical embrace of foreign ideologies and social outlook makes it imperative to draw attention to the Yoruba saying "*Òrìşà bó ò le gbè mí, se mí bo'se bámi*" that is, if a god/deity cannot

enhance my/or lot/station in life, it should rather let me/us be. In a society where morality and personal dignity seem to be lost, where women's body and sexuality is consciously and constantly being "traded" on the altar of modernity/civilization, the future generation needs to be properly educated. When the Yoruba also say, "T'ómo bá dára, òyá à ní kẹ̀ bẹ̀rẹ̀ lówó ẹ̀" (When a child exhibits desirable conducts in the society, the credit goes to the mother and vice-versa), it is a testimony of the philosophical and epistemological role that women play in the home and the society at large: that is, feminism was never the apparatus required to enshrine the female gender's significant position and defined roles in the society, since these have already been clearly established by their norms and tradition. Leke Ogunfeyimi's play, *Weaker Sex's* dramatization of the psychological conflict and social implication of contemporary feminist inclination in relation to cultural precepts about gender and marriage as well as the burden of reconciling these two differing perceptions, is a reminder about the need to re-define contemporary society's priorities regarding foreign ideologies in relation to traditions that we are quick to abandon due to inadequate knowledge, or critical understanding, of their social relevance.

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# Exploring the dynamics of concept maps in ESL phonetics and phonology: The Nigerian case

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## Abstract

The traditional teaching strategies adopted by many phonology teachers in Nigeria are teacher-centric; students in this mode scarcely get the main idea, rarely interact with the supporting ideas, and seldom grasp the general message of the lesson. Consequently, the average Nigerian student studying English is scared of phonetics and phonology, such that it appears he or she necessarily has to divide his or her attention between the content of the lecture and interest cultivation. Thus, he or she finds it difficult to flow with the lesson as understanding is often sacrificed. It is for this reason that attention must be shifted to searching innovative approaches to creating and sustaining learners' interest in phonology. This paper, therefore aims to foreground the use of concept maps as alternative phonology teaching strategies. Based on reflective practice, the paper experiments with six concept maps, namely: the big question map, Venn diagram, web and details, equation block, segmented hierarchy, and sequence flow chart; with each tested against a specific phonetic and phonology

topic as a way of illustration. The paper concludes that concept maps are capable of stimulating students' desire to learn phonetics and phonology.

**Keywords:** concept maps; reflective teaching; ESL; phonetics and phonology

## 1. Introduction

'If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we *rob our children* of tomorrow' (Dewey, 1916, emphasis added). This statement is apt now as it was a century ago. Phonology students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria (and other ESL contexts, perhaps) lack the required skills for 'higher-order' thinking that can enable them independently navigate through concepts within and outside phonology classrooms. This is partly attributed to the insipidly routinized method of lecture delivery instructors develop over time. Consequently, learners see phonology and phonetics as an academic journey into the abstract: they hate the subject with a passion. Therefore, one huge challenge teachers of phonetics and phonology in Nigeria have is how to cultivate and sustain their students' interest to learning. To achieve this, phonology teachers should move from the top-down, mechanistic, teacher-based and externally-imposed (Kennedy and Edwards, 1998) technique to bottom-up, interactive, classroom-based and organic approach to teaching phonology. Put another way, in order to achieve optimal learning in phonology classrooms, instructors must elicit learners' interests with a reinforcing activity that makes every learner to be successful (Sam D and Rajan, 2013: 156), at least, through taking charge of the learning process.

Whereas a teacher's style of delivering lecture is his or her prerogative way of handling the variegated challenges of teaching; sticking to routinized methods does not often yield the desired responses from the learners. A good teacher must diversify his or her approaches to teaching. Often, the nature of instructional decisions made by teachers, at whatever level of learning, determines how interesting a particular lesson will be. One way of doing this, is by employing the use of concept maps (CMs henceforth).

Teachers of phonetics and phonology in any tertiary institution in Nigeria may be aware of this scenario: a teacher tells students that a phoneme is a distinctive sound in a language, the combination of which builds a syllable or a word. As simplistic as this concrete view of phoneme is, students find it difficult to interpret. Ask them to say what a phoneme is and they will quickly recite the

definition, but when asked to bring out the phonemes in a word like *arrow*; different responses emerge, ranging from three or four, to five phonemes. This kind of response is expected when teaching is routinized and learning takes place mechanically. Furthermore, it is a clear testimony that they have not internalised the concept *phoneme*, for instance; although they have been taught. On the other hand, when a lesson is made interesting to the learner, he or she participates actively in the learning process and the learning outcome becomes functional. Students take charge when a lesson is interactively organic. Therefore, this paper introduces the use of CMs in phonology classroom as an alternative approach to teaching and learning phonetics and phonology. Again, if understanding the structure and organisation of texts is very vital to the learning process (Trabasso and Bouchard, 2002), then, teachers at whatever level of learning should strive to introduce techniques that will enhance the understanding of the texts. One such technique is the use of CMs. No doubt, there should be a pedagogical stimulus in phonology classroom (as in other classrooms) to help create spatio-visual image of concept in the mind of the learner. Thus, for effective learning to take place in phonology classrooms, instructors should endeavour to support content stimuli with maximum visual representation of the concept. This visual representation can be done with the help the CMs.

### **1.1 Meaning of Concept Maps**

Also known as graphic organiser or cognitive map, a CM 'is a visual and graphic display that depicts the relationship between facts, terms, or ideas within a learning task' (Pullupaxi, 2012, p. 10). To Hall and Strangman (2008), a CM is 'visual and spatial display designed to facilitate the teaching and learning of textual material.' Similarly, to Bromley, DeVitis and Modlo (1999), CMs are visual representation of knowledge that structure information by arranging important aspects of a concept into a pattern using labels. In CM, ideas and concepts are put in diagram revealing a process or showing a sequence or structure of concepts or elements of a topic.

Interestingly, Waters and English (1995) argue that both visual and spatial reasoning are equally essential to students when analysing ideas or concepts. Clarke (1991) recounts that visual aids in the form of CMs, 'affect patterns of thinking about contents knowledge; they allow teachers to focus student attention on higher order thinking skills without shifting attention from subject

area content.' (p. 526). In sum, according to Losher (2003), the use of CMs is important because:

- 1) Information presented in CMs is easier to understand than paragraphs;
- 2) They can be deployed at the beginning of a lesson to get students prepared;
- 3) They help learners structure and visualise information to improve understanding;
- 4) They help summarise large chunks of information in an interesting and innovative way.

CMs help learners identify textual relations (Claggett, 1992) which, in turn, will assist them to understand the idea before them.

For effective application of CMs, it is important that instructors master different CMs, explain to their students what they are, illustrate their use to them, constantly review students' work (Uba et al., 2016, p. 113), endeavour to familiarise themselves with the nature of the concept to be presented, and clearly map out the objectives of the chosen topic and structure the CMs towards achieving them.

CMs are viable educational instruments designed to help students develop critical thinking skills (Bromley, DeVitis and Modlo, 1995; Bromley, Irwin-DeVitis, & Modlo, 1995), understand relationships among concepts (Vygotsky, 1962), and organise information for independent reasoning (Ausubel, 1968; Dunston, 1992). However, the type of CM to be configured for use is usually determined by the information structure and the objectives of the target lesson, the composition of the class, and the instructor's previous experience(s). This means that a particular CM that is meant for a specific class may not be considered good for another class.

Commenting on the universality of CMs as viable educational instruments, Masterminds (2001) argues that they 'can be used to improve learning and performance of a wide array of students, ranging from those who may be intellectually gifted to those with mild learning problems...' and they can be used to enhance learning not only in literacy circle, but also in content areas like phonology.

## **2. The place of concept maps in reflective practice, teaching and learning**

The triad – reflective practice, reflective teaching, and reflective learning – has a common modifier: reflective. The term reflection means different thing to

different people; however, in education, it is associated with retro-analysis that aims at improving teaching and learning process. Thus, according to Jenny Moon, reflection is:

... a form of mental processing that we use to fulfil a purpose or to achieve some anticipated outcome. It is applied to gain a better understanding of relatively complicated or unstructured ideas and is largely based on the reprocessing of knowledge, understanding and, possibly, emotions that we already possess. (Moon, 2005, p. 1)

Incidentally, the *anticipated outcome* referred to in the above quote is simply the betterment of teaching and learning.

Reflective practice became an important educational instrument following Schon's (1983) work titled *the reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action*. The author proposes two types of reflection: reflection on action and reflection in action. Whereas the latter emphasises thinking while doing something, the former focuses on thinking after doing something -- what Finlay (2008, p. 3) terms 'after-the-event thinking'. What these two processes signify is that instructors should be able to draw experience during a teaching process and also synthesise their knowledge after classroom experience(s). However, a third reflection is needed to complete the process. Grushka, Hinde-McLeod and Reynolds (2005) provide the missing reflection: reflection for action. They argue that in reflection for action an instructor considers his/her selection and application of the resources, the reason for the lesson and the practicality of the relevant resources. This simply centres on thinking before engaging in the act of teaching. For the learners, it implies thinking before engaging in the learning process.

On the other hand, Smith (2016) sees reflective teaching as 'a process whereby teachers critically think about and analyse the way they teach and the effects this has on their students' learning, and how this might be improved or changed for better classroom outcomes. Similarly, according to Richards (1990), reflective teaching is a metacognition of how teaching takes place, which involves both the teacher and learner in the process of observing, assessing teaching for the benefit of both. To Gatumu (n.d.), reflective teaching means 'looking at what you do (as a teacher) in the classroom and giving it a meaning by attaching the *why* question to what you go through' (p. 14, parenthesis added). The author adds that in doing so 'you also empower your students to

ask these *why* questions to their classroom experiences. You start by recognising that you and your students are key persons in learning environment. Your being in the classroom must make sense to you and your students.'

The concept of reflective teaching is indeed complex in nature because it is an integration of the teacher, the learner, the learning environment and the society or community. Each of these levels of integration is laden with peculiarities. Every teaching and learning system is characterised by some form of complexities; therefore, any approach to deflate tension and apprehension is very important and should be encouraged. One basic requirement in reflective teaching is to look for specific aid to instruction such as 'work sheets, note-taking, web quests, PowerPoint, or graphic map' Gatumu (n.d.). According to Mastermind (2001), CMs make contents easier to understand and learn and enable students become more strategic learners. Thus, with CMs, students become analytical, critical and creative in thinking. This is the explicit connection between CMs and reflective teaching.

An essential aspect of reflective teaching and learning that is of interest in the current study is the action research. According to Gregory (1988), action research is instructor-controlled examination that enhances teacher's awareness of the teaching and learning situation in the classroom. However, unlike the five stages (planning, action, observation and reflection, replanning, and implementation) of action research proposed by Richards (1990) and Richards & Lockhart (1996), with graphics/concept maps, three phases are involved, these are:

**Planning:** (selecting the concept to present to the learner and mapping out the procedures to choosing the appropriate concept map to use);

**Action:** (arranging the concepts and corresponding details in a specific concept map and presenting it to the learners at appropriate time);

**Observation and Reflection:** (examining the presentation and analysing its effects on learners) (slightly adapted from Richards and Lockhart, 1996 & Smith, 2016).

It is in line with the dictates of reflective practice and teaching that a teacher should look inward to reflect on the approaches used so far in teaching and see how they can be improved upon for the benefit of the learner. The essence of every teaching experience is the desired change in the learner's behaviours.



### 3. Concept maps in understanding phonetics and phonology

Available literature on CM indicates that they are usually designed and used to enhance reading-related activities (e.g. Uba, Oteiku and Eniayekan, 2016, Witherell, & Mc Mackin, 2009; Scraper & Scraper, 2006; Simmons, Griffin, & Kameenui, 1988; Doyle, 1999; Jiang, & Grabe, 2007; Jiang, 2012; Manoli, and Papadopoulou, 2012; Pullupaxi, 2012; Sam D, and Rajan, 2013); literature on the use of CMs to improve teaching and learning of phonology is arguably scarce. Interestingly, CMs have been deployed to improve reading in mathematics (Braselton and Decker, 1994), and Alshatti (2012) investigates how relevant CMs are in family and consumer science education in Kuwait. The fact that CMs have been propagated as viable educational tools for cognitive and schematic analysis of information (Dye, 2000), and facilitation of critical thinking skills by both students and teachers (Bellanca, 2007) indicates that they can be used in any teaching and learning experience. It is therefore important to see how CMs can be relevant in phonetics and phonology teaching, especially in relation to promoting information processing. If the claim by researchers such as Alshatti, 2012 and Sam and Rajan 2013 that CMs are proficient reading pedagogy, then, deploying them to teaching phonetics and phonology will be a beneficial instructional tool. This is so because comprehending textual concepts is paramount in phonetics and phonology as literature-base course.

CMs can enhance teaching and learning of phonology in many ways. Some of these include:

- a) CMs equip teachers of phonology with a cocktail of activities to use in classrooms that are capable of enhancing students' spatio-visual capability;
- b) With their ability to bring out the differences and/or similarities among concepts, CMs are a veritable tool to use to easily establish relationships between different phonological concepts and ideas within and beyond classrooms activities;
- c) If properly structured and constructed, CMs enable learners to quickly spot the structure of a phonological or phonetic concept or idea by understanding the atomic parts alongside the whole;
- d) Phonetics and phonology, being a course (or courses) with disparate components, CMs will help facilitate learners' ability to

negotiate for meaningful patterns in order to categorise the concepts for understanding; and

- e) In like manner as phonology has many components and topics, CMs have various shapes to match specific information needed to be communicated to the learners.

The remaining part of this section examines different CMs and how they can be used to facilitate the desired student-oriented knowledge that is the essence of active, constructive, intentional, authentic, and cooperative (Jonassen, Howland, Moore, and Marra, 2003) learning process. This study experiments with six types of CMs, namely: the big question map, the segmented pyramid, the web and details, the Venn diagram, the equation block, and the sequence flow chart, with each tested for its use in teaching different phonological topics.

### 3.1 The Equation Block (EB)

As the name implies, this kind of CM is in the form of a mathematical equation, i.e. expressions containing terms and/or variables. The equation block assists students grasp the possible situation involving two or more variables. It is used to illustrate the relationship between the terms in expression. As in other mathematical expressions, equation block concept map helps to hone the analytical prowess of learners, as they are expected to first identify the coefficient(s), variables and the constant(s), and, then, work out the relationship binding them together. It is the form indicated in Figure 1.

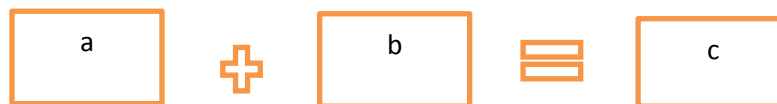


Figure 1: Sample Equation Block

What this is simply saying is that when term *a* is combined with term *b*, term *c* is realised. To use this kind of CM, the instructor should create mathematical expressions that are apt and precise using phonological concepts. Teachers should not be unaware of students' aversion to quantitative reasoning. However, learners are usually attracted to novel ideas; this form of mathematicity is capable of making them want to know what it is doing in a phonology class. The whole essence is to harness their interest. Therefore, a good equation block should be mathematical enough to elicit critical reasoning

from students and simple enough to sustain their interest. Thus, the terms of the expressions should be discussed and properly explained. A good example of phonological concept to illustrate with an EB is phonological rules/processes. This is exemplified in Figure 2 below.

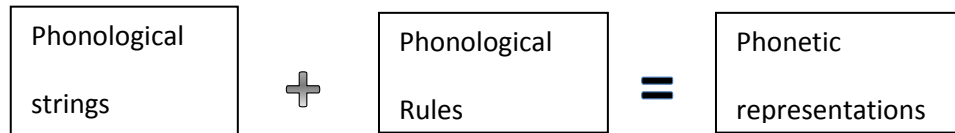


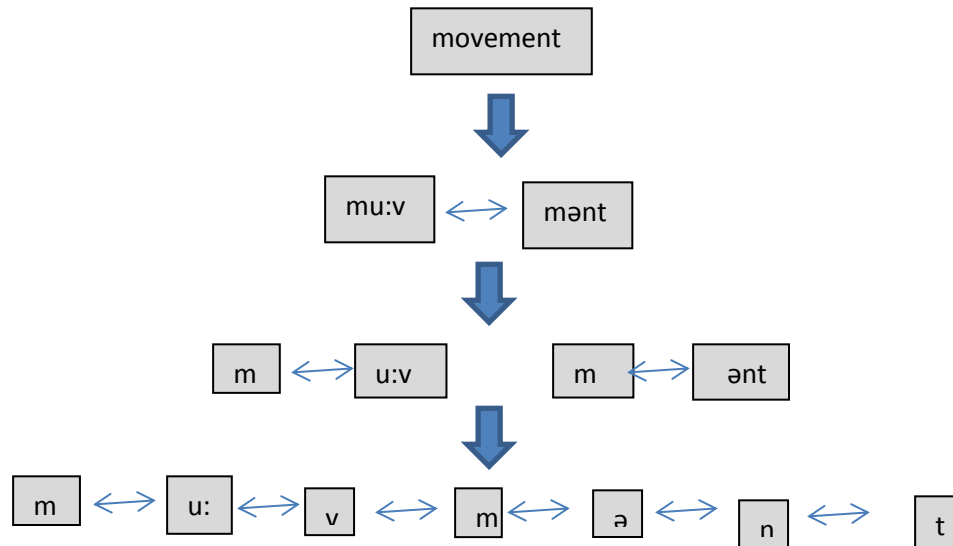
Figure 2: Equation Bank

For example, this equation could be used to explain the aspiration rule in English, where phonological strings represent consonants, phonological rule represents puff of air after voiceless consonants at the beginning of a syllable, and phonetic representation represents aspirated utterance. Other assimilation rules or processes can also be explained using EBs. Empty EBs, like the one in Fig. 1, can be presented to learners to fill in the appropriate terms.

### 3.2 Segmented Pyramid (SP)

This is the presentation of information in a hierarchical order. The shape of SP concept map could be pyramidal or rectangular, showing relationships among different levels of ideas. SP allows learners to see and establish the subordinate, coordinate, and superordinate relationships within and between concepts, while at the same time, enabling them to categorise ideas within a concept into different relational levels. To successfully use SP, therefore, teachers should ensure that the topic or concept to be taught must be such that there exists some kind of ranked relationship among disparate but related units. A good example of a phonology topic that can be illustrated with SH is the demonstration of the tiered relationship among phoneme, mora, syllable, and p-word. A good SH should be able to illustrate both the horizontal and vertical connection of the concepts, as indicated in Figure 4 below.

It is important to explain to learners what the different arrows represent in the chart. For example, in Fig. 4, the downward pointing arrows show the vertical relationship between the concepts: phonological word, syllable, mora, and phoneme; while the double-headed arrows indicate the horizontal relationship within each of the concepts.



**Figure 4:** Segmented pyramid

In order to carry the students along, they can be asked to work out the units in the categories or levels left out. Another way of making students active with SP is to involve them in the construction from the beginning. After lecturing, the teacher may ask learners to graphically represent what has been said in the class in a pyramid form.

### 3.3 Venn diagram (VD)

This is the structuring of phonological information in intersecting circles called the Venn diagram. Each set represents an entity with peculiar features; whereas the intersection (i.e. the overlapping point) represents commonness or similarity. This is a vital teaching and learning tool because it enables learners to see the key concepts and their characteristics. It encourages students to compare and contrast ideas. It further trains them to see the differences and similarities in the patterns of information presented to them. Venn diagram can be used to visualise the convergence and divergence between two or more theories or concepts in phonology. For example, it can be deployed to explain the concepts *phonetics* and *phonology*, as shown in Figure 5 below.

A Venn diagram is very easy to construct provided the similarities and differences between ideas are explicable. Beside circles, other shapes such as rectangles and triangles can be used to construct VDs.

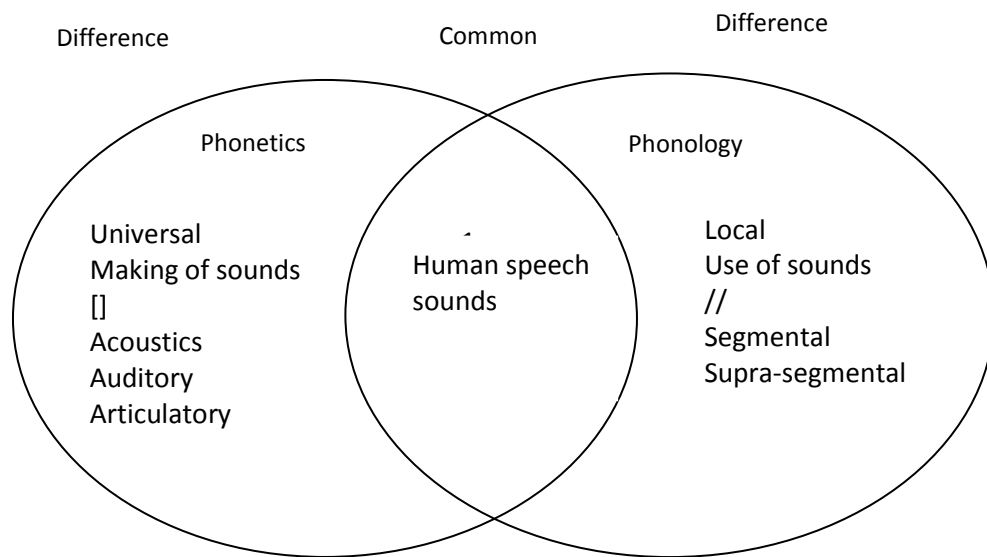


Figure 5: Venn diagram

### 3.4 Sequence Flow Chart (SFC)

This chart depicts continuous flow of events or ideas from one point to the next, with each point representing a structured concept that has detailed phonological or phonetic features. The activities at one point determine what happens in the next point. Sequence shapes (e.g. rectangles, squares, triangles, etc.) are used to present the relationship of ideas that occur in progressive order. SFC enables learners recognise the main idea in the array of interconnected topics. It can be used for instance to illustrate the sound production process in phonetics (see Figure 6).

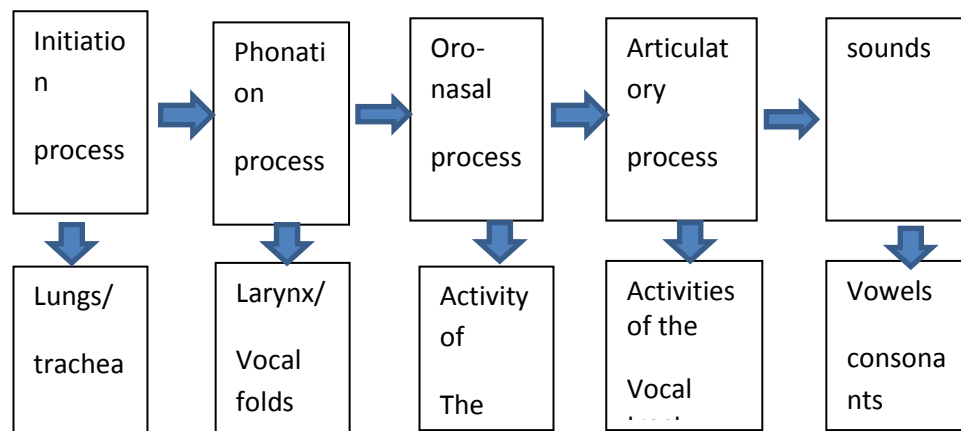


Figure 6: Sequence flow chart

The movement of the arrows indicate the progressional relationship between the concepts. Following the chart, it will be easier for students to discuss among themselves how each phoneme is produced, for example. They can also easily see graphically the nature of the activity that takes place at every point in a sound production without instructor's explanation.

### 3.5 The Big Question Map (BQM)

This CM makes learners to reason independently (Uba et al., 2016) by engaging their ability through guided questions to which they are expected to respond. In order to get the best out of this CM, it is important that instructors avoid the yes-no question patterns; rather, the wh-question format should be adopted. Therefore, the guided questions should begin with any of: what, when, where, why, who, and how.

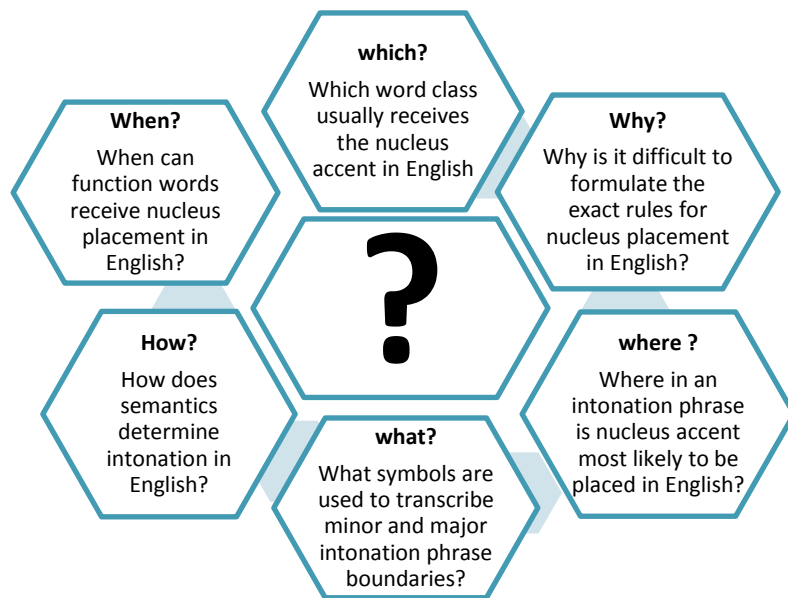


Figure 6: The big question

This type of CM is usually good for any phonological topic that aims at enhancing the cognitive understanding of learners. That is, depending on the lesson's objective, BQM can be configured to fit in any topic. Figure 7 below illustrates how the CM can be used in teaching intonation in English.

It is vital to note that the response(s) to the questions should not go beyond a few words or a sentence, and they should be written in the boxes of the concept map. BQMs can be used by teachers to measure both the previous and end-of-lesson knowledge of the learners. They can also be used in groups, where each group takes a question and discusses.

### 3.6 The Web and Details (WAD)

This CM helps learners to refine phonological ideas by allowing them to knit together componential concepts to form a definition. It is often good for any topic that has numerous sub-topics, with each sub-topic having distinct characteristics. That is, this CM is good especially when the topic involves a chain of interlinked sub-topics. It develops in students the skills for establishing association and cognitive connection between ideas. This can be used to illustrate topics such as distinctive features as shown in Figure 7 below.

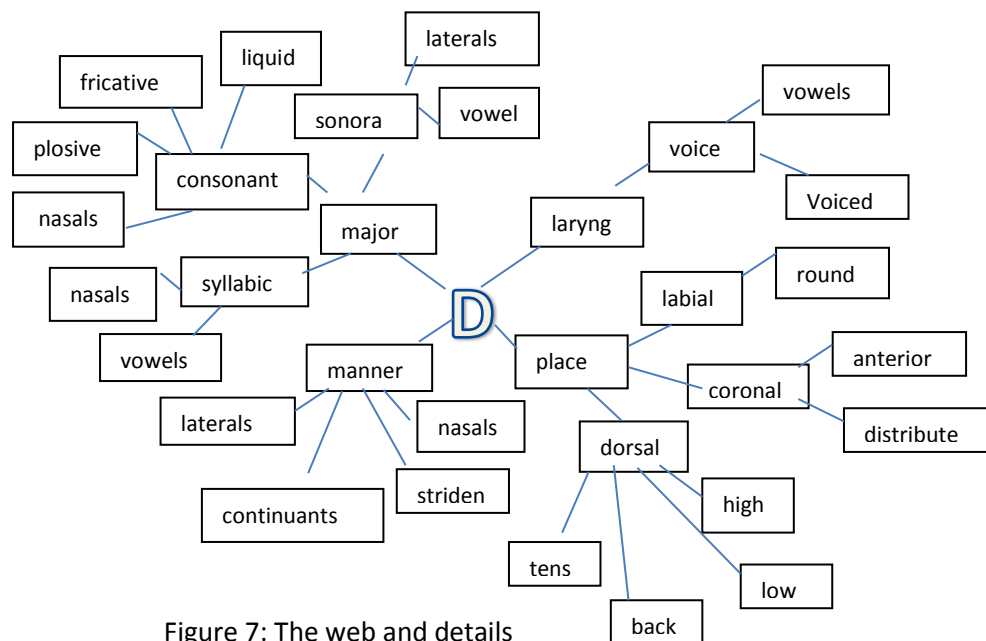


Figure 7: The web and details

Like any other concept map, WAD can be used by both the teacher and students, individually or as a group. However, the network structure of this CM (see Figure 7) may confuse even the smart learners. If properly constructed and handled, its complex nature will encourage analytical thinking among students.

There are many ways to use CMs in phonology classroom. Instructors may ask students to construct CM from a given phonological text, or present the CM and ask them to fill in the empty slots, or allow them to construct one

by themselves individually or in group. They can also be used to measure the entry behaviour of learners, to teach a topic, and to measure learning outcome. In whichever manner they are used, their spatio-visual properties usually attract the interest of learners; and this, in turn, encourages them to learn.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Before constructing or using CMs, students and teachers usually decide on what content or concept is considered vital and agree on the best way to structure the information; after the CMs, on the other hand, both teacher and learners are engaged in a much higher thinking session that involves critical assessment of both the contents and approach, thereby facilitating formative assessment (Second Level Support Service (SLSS), 2008). The powerful nature of these processes that occur before and after the use of CMs makes them a suitable tool for reflective practice, teaching, and learning. There is the need for something to stimulate as many senses as possible to create the kind of analytical thinking that is desired of ESL students. CMs are capable of addressing phonological contents and concepts at more sophisticated intensity because of their ability to regulate 'semantic information processing' (Masterminds, 2001) and their capability to engender problem solving skills to students. They, therefore, will help to present phonological information in smart ways that highlight the relationship of (and between) topics. The authors believe that there is the need to recognise that the commitment of the phonology teacher is to the textual composition he or she presents to the learner. This has to be discussed, bearing in mind the learners' (and, at the same time, teachers') experiences and personal needs.

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# Navigating the Imperilled: Academic Press Development and Challenges in the University of Port Harcourt (1975-2015)

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## **ABSTRACT**

This article focuses on the creation, development and sustenance of the University Press and scholarly publishing in Nigeria using the growth challenges and peculiarities of the University of Port Harcourt Press as a case study. Beginning from the founding objectives of the senate publications committee, through the amalgamation of its printing services unit with the publishing house, it traces the historical specificity of the various developmental stages that the Press has undergone in its forty years journey. Going forward, this article canvasses for proactive and innovative approaches to surmount the challenges of institutional funding for scholarly publishing in the University Presses in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Scholarly Publishing, Press Development, Publishing history, University of Port Harcourt.

*“Publishing is a critical step in a research process and no advancement in knowledge can be gained until research results are available to the general research community.” - S. O. Anozie, 5<sup>th</sup> May 1989*

It was at the Theatre Arts Auditorium, fondly called the CRAB, in Delta Park that the salient words above were delivered in a very subtle and almost innocuous tone. Sunday O. Anozie, one of the most outstanding scholars of the University of Port Harcourt (UniPort), who was at the time, the Chairman of the University Press chose to set the tone for the Scholarly Publishers Association of Nigeria (SPAN) conference with these words in his welcome address. The mood in the hall that morning during the presentation indicated the yearning of many participants, considering the rippling times that necessitated the hosting of its second formal meeting in the University in 1989. SPAN was formed to address the perennial challenges of academic publishing in Nigeria. In a condensed one-page welcome address, Anozie not only impressed on all invited dignitaries to see publishing as a critical step in a research process, but he also hinted at the core of maximising homegrown research for the scientific and intellectual enhancement of the nation.

Arising from the front-row influence of the UniPort representations in SPAN, this self-reflective address on the general role that the university presses play in the extension of memory and spread of usable knowledge hints at what appears a recurring issue to the attainment of a sustainable academic press. Being one of the founding scholars of the University of Port Harcourt, Anozie's words above appear to have echoed similar concerns voiced by Daniel Coit Gilman (1878) during the establishment of John Hopkins Press to the effect that; "... the noblest duties of a university is to advance knowledge and to diffuse it not merely among those who can attend the daily lectures — but far and wide."<sup>1</sup>

What becomes significant here in the coincidences of thought between Anozie and Gilman is the desire to transform research results for the overall benefit of the larger society by extending the frontiers of its accessibility through publications. This essay will engage in the general assessment of the development of Press infrastructure and its concomitant imperative and

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, America's Oldest University Press, founded 1878.  
[www.press.jhu.edu/about/history](http://www.press.jhu.edu/about/history).

realities for the strategic growth of knowledge and scholarship within the Niger Delta vis-à-vis its attendant offerings in today's world. For this purpose, this article shall be limited to the key question that seeks to determine the perennial challenges impeding the growth of the university presses in Nigeria. By studying the historical developments of the academic press at the University of Port Harcourt, the article seeks to advance options for the sustenance of a viable academic press tradition in Nigeria. What follows, therefore, is a discursive appraisal of how the Press as an integral component of the University has pursued these goals from inception particularly as it celebrates its fortieth anniversary.

### Early History

The desire to enrich the indigenous knowledge base through research has remained a constant concern to Africanist and third world scholars. According to Dodson and Dodson (1972), establishing a homegrown academic press "is an act of liberation, and therefore a necessity." It serves as the key to the emancipation of the African mind from the dominating influence of western literature.<sup>2</sup> Most Africanist publishing houses have been founded on this basic philosophy (Irele 1972). In Nigeria, the publishing infrastructure has remained basically with commercial publishing outfits beginning with the setting up of the Oxford University Press at Ibadan in 1949 principally with the objective of stocking the publications of its parent body and those of other British publishers. Other commercially driven multinational presses led by Evans, Longmans, Macmillan, and Thomas Nelson expanded this horizon by the mid-1960s (Darko-Ampem, 2003:114). The advent of indigenous commercial publishing outfits in the 1970s like the Onibonoje Publishers, Fourth Dimension, Ethiope, Northern Nigerian, among over 200 others facilitated the increase of publication output to about 1175 titles in 1978. This rise in output according to the 1980 Unesco Statistical Yearbook placed the nation second to Egypt in Africa<sup>3</sup>. As at today, Nigeria remains one of the largest commercial publishing destinations after South Africa. These credentials are however

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<sup>2</sup> Dodson, D. and Dodson, B. "Publishing Progress in Nigeria," *Scholarly Publishing* 4:62, Oct. 1972. See also, Smith, D. C., (1966). *A Guide to Book Publishing*. New York: Bowker, cited in Philip G. Altbach "Scholarly Publishing in the Third World" *Library Trends* Spring 1978 pp489-503

<sup>3</sup> See Enyia, cited in Darko-Ampem, 2003).

diminished if accessed from the scholarly publishing perspective which began with the establishment of the Ibadan University Press in 1952. Its publishing activities became fully integrated as an organic part of the university through the setting up of the University Senate Publications Committee to regulate its imprint in 1955. The wisdom to align the press with the Senate publications committee by the university was a pioneering step in Nigeria and answers to the challenge of publishing the results of teaching and research within its community. Other universities in Nigeria like Ahmadu Bello University, University of Jos, University of Lagos, University of Maiduguri, Obafemi Awolowo University, University of Nigeria, and University of Port Harcourt followed the Ibadan example to establish their own University Presses.

In spite of its comparatively young age, the University of Port Harcourt was propelled by the immediate need to commence the process for the development of a Publishing House for the publications of original research and creative works of staff and affiliates that were often considered unprofitable to commercial publishers. However, the basic infrastructure to support the founding of an elaborate Press was barely existent. What appeared lacking in physical equipment and infrastructure for the take-off of full in-house publishing seems generously made up for by the early but limited manpower of the University consisting mainly of people who exhibited rare polymath skills needed for the establishment of a scholarly Press.

Upon commencement of full academic activities at the old trade school in Choba, the idea of the Academic Press for the University crystallised with the setting up of the Library and Publications Committee in 1977. Early demands for space and infrastructure notwithstanding, it must have been just expedient for Donald Ekong – the first Vice-Chancellor of the new university, to follow the existing tradition at the University of Lagos since it started as its college in 1975. Ekong saw the Library as having the needed manpower to initiate the setting up of the publishing house for the university on behalf of Senate and proceeded to charge them with the responsibility. The Library was equally mandated to administer the publications fund, oversee publishing programs of the various schools in the university and liaise with university presses to enhance the publishing programmes of the University of Port Harcourt.<sup>4</sup> This

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<sup>4</sup> See terms of reference (d), (e) and (f) of the Library and Publications Committee, 1977 in G.B Affia, (1999) Library and Publications, in Alagoa, E. J. (ed.), *A History of*

charge by Ekong was not to be seen as a strange accessory considering the anticipated financial burden to the university in the face of dwindling support from the federal government. Rather, it sought to fulfil the high ideals of an integrated one-stop facility that has earned similar university presses respect and high acclaim. In fact, in the words of the former president of the University of Chicago, William Rainey Harper, a university press should not exist "as an incident, as an attachment, but as an organic part of the institution" (Goodspeed, 1973:137). In other words, it should be seen "as a natural component of a fully rounded community of scholars"<sup>5</sup>.

With a handful of senior level staff available to the University at the time, the initiative was aimed principally at maximising the available manpower from the core staff members who were not engaged in the staff development scheme of the university. Driven by the objectives set for itself, the six (6) new schools of the University namely, The School of Humanities, The School of Biological Sciences, The School of Chemical Sciences, The School of Social Sciences, and The School of Educational Studies were given the free hand to initiate research into their primary concerns and proceed independently to fund them with their votes. These arrangements necessitated varying levels of collaborations with local and international presses to showcase and share their contributions to the local and international communities.

The imperative to facilitate the documentation and spread of intellectual resource in tandem with the preliminary objectives of the terms of reference of the Library and Publications Committee became clearer when the pioneer students fully settled in for academic work in 1978. By the initial mandate, the Director of the Library Services, George B. Affia was charged not only with the onerous responsibility of setting up the publishing house for the university but also with the task of administering the publications fund of the University<sup>6</sup>. It was therefore not unexpected that as the University grew and developed its

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*the University of Port Harcourt 1977-1998*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.

<sup>5</sup> See full text in Day, C. (1991). The university press: an organic part of the institution, *Journal Scholarly Publishing* 23(1), 27–44, quoted in Ebewo, P. J. (2010) The university press and scholarly publishing in South Africa, in Ngobeni, S. (Ed.). *Scholarly publishing in Africa: opportunities & impediments*. African Books Collective.

<sup>6</sup> Affia, G.B. "Library and Publications" in Alagoa, E. J. (ed.), *A History of the University of Port Harcourt 1977-1998*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press, 1999



core objectives, the enormous weight of the specialised responsibilities for this conjoined committee will force it to unbundle for sustainable growth. This informed its split in 1982 into the Library Committee and the Publications Committee, thereby paving the way for the development of independent objectives for the two committees.

Soon after the split, the Publishing House was therefore quickly established in 1983 to publish short-run academic monographs, journals, lectures, other scholarly books and specialised titles originating from the academic community. With heavy dependence on funding from financial allocations to the Senate Publications Committee, this newfound independence was abruptly asphyxiated by the sudden economic downturn of the 1980s in Nigeria. Policies of austerity put in place by key Nigerian leaders of this era played a fundamental role in the calamitous state of scholarly publishing in Nigeria in general and the University of Port Harcourt in particular. The successive governments of Shehu Shagari, Buhari/Idiagbon and Babangida in the 1980s faced enormous financial challenges, occasioned by the steep drop in the value of the Naira. Having to depend on the federal government for its funding, it became virtually impossible for the barely ten years old institution to independently achieve its original aspirations of pushing the frontiers of academic excellence from its fledgeling in-house publishing facility without a full complement of personnel and press infrastructure.

However, it must be noted that the level of capitalization for the development of any University Press derives largely from the founding objectives of the parent institution and that of the University of Port Harcourt could not have been different. For clarity, a University Press according to the Association of American University Presses (AAUP), is a site for the acquisition, development, design, production and marketing of scholarly, intellectual or creative works “for a small audience of specialists” at barely non-commercial terms<sup>7</sup>. This distinguishing interest for specialist driven works especially scholarly research is clarified by Darko-Ampem, (2003:114) and sets it apart from the large commercial presses established for the production and marketing of books, magazines and journals solely for profit. To this effect, he quotes Hawes to posit that, scholarly publications are books, written by a

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<sup>7</sup> For detailed information on the definition of scholarly publishing, see AAUP website <http://www.aaupnet.org/about-aaup/about-university-presses/history-of-university-presses>

scholar to communicate information and ideas in his/her professional field. It conveys new knowledge or new interpretations, pre-eminently the results of his/her own research. Its audience includes anyone who needs to know what the scholar has discovered. But it will typically seem difficult to understand or unimportant to anyone without some background in the author's subject (cited in Darko-Ampem, 2003:2).

The frequent tendency to include the optional extension services of publishing sundry printed matter like textbooks for general and specialised university courses, brochures and yearbooks by some University Presses is therefore precluded from the core activities of the University Press and is often significantly flawed in the discourse of scholarly press operations. It may be safe to state here that the growing challenges of funds to augment the continually dwindling financial base may have been responsible for a variety of innovations by individual university presses to survive the inclement conditions of pure academic publishing and marketing in Nigeria.

Until recently, at the University of Port Harcourt, the printing and finishing components of most of its publications were outsourced to either commercial printers in the city of Port Harcourt or run under various unsustainable publishing collaborative experiments with other university presses with functional in-house printing/publishing facilities in Nigeria and abroad. Driven by this experience, it became necessary to look inwards to harness the available resources of the small reprographics unit of the university to cater for both the needs of the publishing house and sundry printed matter of the university community. But as Kerr (1969:126) puts it,

Publishing at its best is a professional activity, and external interference in the direct decisions of a publishing firm can only lower standards. Publishers must, however, be accountable not only to the scholarly public which will purchase their books but also to some extent to those who provide subsidies.

Whereas, this unequivocal responsibility for knowledge advancement by subsequent administrations in the University may have served as the needed spark for the young and budding scholars of the university to contribute their quota in developing the Press for the University, its propagation for an exclusive research community and a sprinkling of general readers has remained frustrating. Without adequate funding for the procurement of basic infrastructure and employment of dedicated personnel, publishable research

manuscripts from its stable have more likelihood of becoming obsolete than getting transformed into books and monographs. Most manuscripts have had to queue for the ever elusive publication subventions from the lean university budget to facilitate production obligations by the network of external publishing and printing firms.

### **The University of Port Harcourt *Printery***

The effective and timely circulation of low-volume internal documents like question papers and other academic policy documents necessitated the setting up of what was then called the “University *Printery*”. Developed essentially as a short-run reprographic centre in the early 1980s as an initiative of the Library services unit, this department was equipped with manual and electrically operated reprographic machines like toner-based photocopiers and ink-based duplicators of various capabilities, to mop up the increasing cost for sundry day-to-day printing needs in the university. Its affinity to the sundry services of the bindery unit in the technical services department of the Library made it a natural anchor for a university that had to develop from makeshift infrastructures until the unit was administratively transferred to the University Investments Limited later in the 1980s apparently to develop some commercial trait. The *Printery* was central to the success of the early administration in the production of short-run documents and sundry print materials.

Following the establishment of the Publishing House, Pius U. S. Nkwocha, a professional publisher, was appointed on a full-time basis to take charge of the Publishing House as the substantive Managing Editor. To strengthen the base of the publishing house, the University of Port Harcourt Investments Limited had to be reorganised to transfer the University *Printery* and its reprographic activities to the publishing house. This was to bring about a direct affinity of the print production process under the publishing house. An official announcement to foreclose this decision for reorganisation was part of the highlight of an address by the second Vice-Chancellor, Sylvanus J. S. Cookey to the University Congregation in December 1987. The Superintendent of the University *Printery*, Alex A. Ogbuihi and the accountant were naturally transferred to form the nucleus of staff of the printing unit of the Publishing house under the management of the new Managing Editor of the publishing house.

## The Publishing House

The “Publishing House,” accommodated in just one room on the right flank of the academic planning section of the temporary administrative building in Delta Park, of the University may have had its fair share of the scarce accommodation need of the early and mid-1980s but the allocation was far below what could pass for a small business liaison office. This demonstrates not just its unique position in the overall philosophy of the university but also stands to amply illustrate the makeshift challenges that the publishing needed to overcome to play its critical role in UniPort. Incidentally, the appointment of Nkwocha as the managing editor of the publishing house came long after the beginning of printing and publishing activities at the University of Port Harcourt. This, it must be reasoned, was to consolidate and advance on the gains already established by the pioneer scholars of the University. To commence academic publishing, a series of short-run scholarly monographs on African Studies known as the Delta Series was developed by two eminent scholars of the Faculty of Humanities, Kay Williamson and Ebiegberi J. Alagoa who were also their pioneer editors. Incidentally, its publication hardly went beyond No. 5 in the series because of a myriad of challenges that includes funding and marketing. Its flagship journal *Kiabara: A Journal of Humanities* edited by Ola Rotimi debuted as early as 1978 – barely a year after the commencement of academic activities. As a resident journal in the Faculty of Humanities, it was already fully developed and earning respect as a trailblazer in scholarly research publications in the University and beyond. There were other early journals in the University, *The Journal of Education in Developing Areas* (JEDA), published in 1982, *Biologia Africana*; *The International Journal of Biology in Africa*, published in 1984, *Pan-African Social Science Review*; 1984 and *Library Waves* in 1986.<sup>8</sup> These journals with their strict editorial policies continued to pursue the scholarly aspirations of the university.

With the integration of the few reprographic equipment of the old *Printery* and its technical staff to the Publishing House, the objective of a small one-stop press appeared complete. However, with lots of publishing demands in the queue, it soon became clear that the underdeveloped section for printing and finishing with only manual production process was grossly inadequate to

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<sup>8</sup> See also, Affia, G. B., “Library and Publications” in Alagoa, E. J. ed., *A History of the University of Port Harcourt 1977-1998*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press, 1999

fully meet the printing demands of the Publishing House let alone other publications and print commissions of the University community. This led to the return to the outsourcing of most scholarly works and sundry printing commissions to local commercial printers and their portfolio agents in Port Harcourt and its environs with the attendant challenges of high financial cost and cumbersome logistics to the University.

Even though the University had established the tradition of maximising available talents for key roles in developing the publishing culture, it could be argued that it was Nkwocha who began the professionalisation of publishing at the University of Port Harcourt. He came with new initiatives that saw the Publishing house involve more academic staff and other senior staff members of the University as “adjunct” workers or in-house consultants for the Publishing House. Nkwocha’s finicky editorial style went beyond textual contents. He equally placed a high premium on shelf appeal as well as page dressing to ensure that published books not only extended knowledge but had ample visual attributes to sell independently and profitably. He also had sufficient hands within the university community to achieve this.

As highlighted earlier, it is on record that the Publishing House of the University of Port Harcourt was part of the vanguard group of University Presses in the country to spearhead the founding of the Scholarly Publishers Association of Nigeria (SPAN) which became formally inaugurated in August 1988 in Lagos. This came as a precipitate resolve from the Ife Book Fair of November 1986 that midwived the formation of a like-minded association that could tackle holistically, the common problems facing academic publishing in Nigeria. Arising from the constraints of most universities depending solely on allocations from the Federal Government for their publication concerns, this new body was charged with the responsibility of encouraging collaborations among member universities for the publications of tertiary level manuscripts. The icing on these achievements by Nkwocha was the hosting of the SPAN national conference in 1989 which positioned the UniPort Press among equals in scholarly publishing in Nigeria. These initiatives served to strengthen earlier objectives for collaborative publishing with other University and commercial Presses in Nigeria and abroad between 1984 and 1989 that added new titles with the University of Port Harcourt Press publishing imprint. They include two seminal scholarly books *Fulfulde Syntax and Verbal Morphology* by Mary McIntosh (1984), and *The Nigerian Universities Dissertation Abstracts* (1989).

## **The University of Port Harcourt Press Limited**

Impressed by the significant strides achieved by the Nkwocha-led Publishing House, the University decided to formalise the existence of the University Press by giving it an extra-legal life through incorporation. Therefore, a decade after the commencement of full academic activities and sundry publishing, the University of Port Harcourt Press was incorporated to operate as a limited liability company in Nigeria on the 11th of February 1987 under the Federal Republic of Nigeria's Companies Act of 1968. This according to Anozie (1989) was to provide the legal bite needed to ensure access to loans and grants to enhance the publishing programme. By its incorporation, the press was no longer limited to function as an academic press but was loaded with an unwieldy set of 34 articles some of which ventured beyond the bounds of traditional press business.<sup>9</sup> With this incorporation, the university administration had cleared a significant hurdle for unfettered joint and co-publishing arrangements and marketing collaborations within and outside Nigeria.

Unfortunately, the times were not exactly as rosy as anticipated by the University management to pursue any significant expansion of the publishing and general printing opportunities that became available as a result of the incorporation. To compete favourably in the publishing industry and also absorb sundry printing commissions from the university and its captive market, the new University Press needed a complete overhaul of its obsolete pre-press, entry level duplicator press and post press equipment which neither the lean federal subvention nor the stringent loan terms of commercial banks at the time could accommodate. It was these attendant frustrations that Anozie (1989) captured when he noted that "the bug that stung the entire Nigeria economy also affected the finances of the university and as a result the company can hardly justify the hopes and aspirations of its founders." To start with, there was an inherited challenge of space which after several tinkering saw the allocation of the old lecture/reading room in Choba Park to the University Press. The lingering general disenchantment in the system coupled with growing labour strikes led to the resignation of staff of the University who were happily engaged by comparatively better paid private concerns within

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<sup>9</sup> See, Corporate Affairs Commission, University of Port Harcourt Press Limited, Memorandum of incorporation 1987.

and outside Nigeria. The reality of this mass brain drain became manifest in the fledgeling press when the managing editor, Pius U. S. Nkwocha resigned his appointment to join the Sunray Newspapers in 1992. The general disenchantment with the system led to the withdrawal of a significant number of manuscripts by authors.

Recovering from the gale of resignations, the University management in 1995, constituted a team of three coordinators to revamp the Publishing House with the sole aim of “turning beautiful ideas generated within the system into readable books.”<sup>10</sup> Ozo-Mekuri Ndimele, Marshall Enenajor, and Isaac Ohene Boi (all lecturers in the Faculty of Humanities) were appointed to respectively oversee the editorial, Press and computer units of the University Press. Ebiegbere J. Alagoa was appointed the Chairman of the Press Board in line with the subsisting tradition of appointing seasoned scholars to the University of Port Harcourt Press Board. The task ahead of these coordinators required the full-time personnel with specialised skills to fill the critical positions of the managing editor, Assistant Editor/Proofreader, Format Editor and a Marketing Manager. Lacking sufficient funds for the employment of these personnel for the second time, the publishing house returned to its, by now, all-too-familiar task of using personnel within its community on an adjunct basis to shepherd the activities of the press. The renewed enthusiasm by this team paid off. Reasonable success was recorded for manuscript acquisition and editorial preparation. Nonetheless, due to inadequate remuneration to the external peer review assessors, most manuscripts were delayed and often when all editorial services had been concluded it was difficult to go beyond the typesetting stage. This led in some cases to the withdrawal of manuscripts. The sharp transition and technological shifts to desktop publishing also contributed to the woes of the press as training and equipment were needed to keep pace with the new technological advancements in publishing. Notwithstanding the challenges encountered by this team, the managing editor of the University Press was able to reactivate and commence a sustained culture of adding new series of academic publications with the University Press imprint from time to time. Beginning with Ndimele’s tenure as the managing editor, these publication series have continued to increase as table 1 below shows.

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<sup>10</sup> See, Ndimele, O. M. Internal Memo, June 12, 1997, Minimum requirement for a functional Publishing House, University of Port Harcourt Press

S/N	Publication / Series	Description	Status
1	Inaugural Lecture Series	series accommodates all delivered inaugural lectures	ongoing
2	Valedictory Lecture Series	series accommodates all delivered valedictory lectures	ongoing
3	UniPort Beginners Series	Basic and general studies textbooks	ongoing
4	Journals for Faculties and Departments	All research Journals registered under the university press imprint	Limited sponsorship
5	Niger Delta Monograph Series	This multidisciplinary series accommodates all Senate Publications Committee sponsored monographs	Ongoing but limited sponsorship
6	The Graduate School lecture Series	Accommodates all graduate school sponsored lectures	Ongoing
7	The Convocation lecture Series	Special lectures from select dignitaries as part of the events of the convocation week	Ongoing / often outsourced sponsorship
8	The Founders' day Lecture Series	Special lectures from select dignitaries as part of the events of the founders' day	Ongoing
9	Working Papers for Faculties and Departments	All working papers from departments and faculties	Ongoing but limited sponsorship
10	Graduate school PhD dissertation seminar series	Published seminar abstracts of Graduate school PhD thesis defence	ongoing
11	Microfiche Series (for understanding PhD Dissertations)	Collation and publication of Abstracts of all Nigerian University dissertations and thesis	One volume published.
12	Faculty of Social Science Occasional Paper Series	Accepts papers from all Social Science disciplines including allied fields of history and African cultural studies	Ongoing but limited sponsorship

**Table 1. List of Academic Publishing Series in the University of Port Harcourt since 1975**

With no significant overhaul of the existing press equipment or purchase of new ones, from anticipated financial returns to the unit for self-sustenance, let alone its statutory yearly returns to the University occasioned by its status as a limited liability company, management became cautious with any new investment in the press. This lasted until a new support window opened to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Nimi Briggs in the form of a corporate donation of equipment to the press by the Public Relations Department of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC). The multinational firm has had a long



corporate relationship with the University of Port Harcourt, but the offer to donate computers and scanners for desk publishing, and a Heidelberg GTO 52 offset lithographic press came as the fillip for new thinking about the press. By 1997, George Affia was then appointed Director of the University Press to oversee the running of the press, while I. N. C. Aniebo was appointed the Managing Editor. With this new development, approval was subsequently granted for conversion of the classroom in Choba Park to solve the immediate space needs of the Publishing house.

During his 8 years as Managing Editor and Acting Director, Aniebo oversaw the significant expansion of the University Press through infrastructure development. To generate income for the funding of scholarly publishing, he embarked on capital campaigns for the procurement of press equipment and production of sundry printed matter for the University community. With military precision, tact and “can-do” spirit, the turn-of-the-millennium University publisher (as Aniebo can be fondly called), restored the hitherto lost confidence of the University Administration in the Press. He grew the Publishing house from the few entry-level start-up equipment donated by SPDC into a unit of comparative pride to the University. Aware of the challenges of depending largely on commercial presses for delivery of published books and sundry printed items for the University, Aniebo introduced more equipment and refurbished some abandoned equipment of the old “*printery*”. The significant increase in the volume of university sundry printing hitherto outsourced provided a major boost in revenue for the press. He started a new regime of employing Press staff and casuals to allow for the desired independence of the University of Port Harcourt Press as a corporate entity.

Aniebo’s experience as a renowned author and literary scholar attracted other celebrated authors and poets like Elechi Amadi and Gabriel Okara to secure publishing contracts with the press. The number of basic texts authored by scholars in various disciplines and published by the press in the university also increased substantially with the University management’s ban on the use of “handouts”<sup>11</sup> for teaching. Among the eminent titles published during the

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<sup>11</sup> The introduction of Handouts as supplementary lecture texts provided free to students to simplify or clarify complex or inaccessible text has been part of the culture in the university system in Nigeria, however with the dwindling resources in the universities from the early 1980s, this handout system became roundly abused in the university of Port Harcourt leading to its abolition in the University.

tenure of Aniebo, Gabriel Okara's collection of poems *The Dreamer, His Vision* was, in 2004, awarded the NLNG Prize (now rechristened the Nigerian Prize for Literature) which is currently the most prestigious and most lucrative literary prize in Nigeria. In spite of Aniebo's spartan approach to managing the resources of the new press to make it command respect in quality and service delivery, it was obvious that a conscious parent intervention was required for it to become a competitive enterprise.

The appointment of Don Baridam as new Vice-Chancellor provided a new aspiration for the press. This vision was in tandem with the university-wide capital campaign for a revolutionary infrastructural transformation which he initiated upon the assumption of duty as the 6th Vice-Chancellor of the University. In 2007, the governing council of the university appointed a Board of Directors and set a new vision for the University Press which in their aspiration was "...to be the best in Nigeria and among the top three in Africa, operating as an efficient and successful profit making company."<sup>12</sup> Without any equivocation, this vision was vivid, direct, inspirational and ambitious for a press operating from a makeshift old classroom block.

A committee chaired by Enuvie G. Akpokodje was quickly constituted by the Council to develop a blueprint for the new Press. It was made up of C. N. Barikor, I. N. C. Aniebo and Lawrence Deeyor as members and Amonia Eze as secretary. To leverage on the experience of other members of the university committee for this task, the committee co-opted four other members namely, Ozo-Mekuri Ndimele, Frank Ugiomoh, Williams Wodi and Etiido Inyang. However, the summary of findings and recommendations of the committee which were not different from earlier identified challenges of adequate capitalisation of the Press were adopted. To achieve a new vision for the press, a press manager, Adedayo Balogun, a seasoned press administrator, was immediately recruited, and some basic press equipment and a backup power generation plant were procured and installed from the capitalisation grant from the university council. With the wave of transformations in personnel and equipment under the management of the chairman of the Press Board and Director, Shirley Ifode, the UniPort Press was surely looking up. But with little

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This necessitated the boom in the production of recommended departmental and faculty wide textbooks by the academic staff.

<sup>12</sup> See for example, University of Port Harcourt council documents. Blueprint on the operations of the University of Port Harcourt Press Limited, 2007.

or no policy for a holistic patronage of the services of the press by the parent institution, the anticipated growth of UniPort Press and the attendant sustenance of its scholarly publications continued to remain elusive. This led eventually (for the second time in its history) to the resignation of its principal staff, the press manager, Adedayo Balogun.

After several considerations on the apparent decline in the fortunes of the University Press, it was the turn of 7th Vice-Chancellor, Joseph A. Ajienka to decide on the way forward for the Press. His position was drastic. While deeply supportive of the revamping process, he was clear that the press will no longer be pampered with grants. Reminiscent of the old mantra of “using what you have to get what you need,” the Press was charged to look inwards and devise ways to become productive. In line with his entrepreneurial philosophy for the University, the University Press was unbundled into two independent units – the University Press as the publishing company headed by Seiyifa Koroye as the managing editor and the University Printing Press led by Etiido Inyang as the acting manager/director. This development appeared as a return to the old order of an independent “Publishing House” and the “*Printery*” of the 1980s. By this new entrepreneurial mandate, it can be said that the initiative for developing an academic press had run its full cycle at the University of Port Harcourt. While this provided for unbounded creativity for the survival of the Press, the seeming lack of institutional policy for its patronage has been counterproductive for the attainment of its entrepreneurial goals.

However, one key successful publication of the University Press has been the academic lecture series. Between 2010 and 2017, the University of Port Harcourt experienced a boost in the number of monographs from inaugural, valedictory, convocation and public lectures. Funded wholly by their hosting units, these short-run lectures have significantly energised the academic culture of the University through the integration of diverse issues. Statistics available show that in spite of the glaring challenges that have rocked the growth of academic press in Nigeria, UniPort Press has managed to add more than 400 titles to its stable. These titles are largely comprised of inaugural lectures, self-sponsored academic monographs and books, departmental journals, faculty journals and textbooks for general university courses.

## Summary and Conclusion.

The preceding analysis of academic press development in the University of Port Harcourt amply illustrates the fundamental challenges faced by most universities in the establishment and sustenance of Scholarly Publishing in Nigeria. The 2007 vision of the University of Port Harcourt management for its Press to be “the best in Nigeria and top three in Africa” will continue to remain elusive and farfetched if fundamental steps are not taken to genuinely capitalize the Press and open up options for sustainability through sundry printing activities. This aspiration equally applies to any University Press that operates in fits and starts – a condition that most Scholarly Press facility managers and directors find themselves in Nigeria. It, therefore, stands to reason that beyond the well-articulated blueprints and visions, the press in any university requires the collective support of the entire university community to function maximally for the result, productivity and profit.

The easily canvassed position against the directive of the NUC that University presses should be commercialised can no longer be sustained. The volume of demand for non-scholarly printing and sundry print products in the University of Port Harcourt community alone provides, a large captive market that can sustain a viable in-house Press business. A reasonable percentage of proceeds generated from these sundry printing services can be recycled for disseminating research results and discoveries without waiting for the ever elusive government handouts and subventions. By so doing, an effective managerial system would have been created to provide hourly based part-time jobs and internships for its teeming student population. This can effectively stem the wanton haemorrhaging of the university’s scarce finances to commercial printing houses and “portfolio” printers which in some ways may have effectively stood against the development of a robust Press over the years in the University of Port Harcourt.

The aspiration of the University to create new knowledge comes with an added responsibility for disseminating it. Without a coordinated and robust marketing system beyond its small community in Choba, the sales and marketing section of the Press appears to be the weakest link in the chain of book publishing in the University of Port Harcourt. Since the standard production volume of scholarly books and journals are targeted for small markets, the margin of profit and loss is often dependent on an unrealistic sale of all produced copies. Due to this apparent lack of a robust marketing unit

within the Press through its forty years of existence, there has been a general difficulty in distribution and sale of new publications from the University Press. Consequently, huge investments in publishing at the University of Port Harcourt over the years are trapped in the piles of unsold copies in its store. For this reason, the concept of on-demand printing, using digital or print-on-demand technology available today can significantly reduce the cost for the production and distribution of scholarly materials. Once packaged in electronic format it can be hosted on the dedicated site linked to the parent university website where standard e-publishing best practices shall apply. This in effect is a green publishing approach which may also become a means of significantly minimising the attendant environmental impact of traditional publishing.

It is also noteworthy to mention that procuring equipment for the development of the critical infrastructure for publishing is very capital intensive. To stay competitive, university publishing companies must be run as a profitable business capable of sustaining itself. A phased process of acquisition can be explored through banks and other finance agencies at reasonable rates but with the unpredictable university calendar in Nigeria securing such agreements must be fashioned to accommodate business prospects outside its immediate community through collaborations with private tertiary institutions. On the other hand, the current goodwill enjoyed by the university through the efforts of successive Vice-Chancellors can be tapped for the supply of the state-of-the-art machinery by extending requests to corporate donors and the numerous friends of the University. What has become fundamental today in scholarly publishing in the University of Port Harcourt is the effort to enrich such practices through the anchorage of endowments that will instigate the flow of publications arising from an enriched research culture.

The imperative of outside support for the publishing of scholarly materials cannot be over emphasised here. With the current unpredictable federal funding for universities, outside support becomes the critical piece of the scholarly publishing financial puzzle. Support from the PTDF and TETFUND, amidst other unexplored funding sources within the Niger Delta and beyond, is therefore required to address this gap amidst the paucity of funds for such venture. A subvention program in this mould is likely to ensure that original research manuscripts in various disciplines which are developed in the various fields having passed through selection and rigorous screening

by experts can be speedily published and distributed for maximal utilisation by the interested community of researchers. This paper strongly believes that even though there are significant challenges hampering the growth of scholarly publishing in Nigeria, a combination of the stated suggestions above along with other managerial innovations can help rejuvenate this ailing sector. In doing this, it is hoped that the “tonnes” of usable knowledge from the research of the 40 year old institution can be maximally utilised to serve as a model for other universities in Nigeria and other developing countries.

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# An Ethical Appraisal of Neil Manson's Formulation of the Precautionary Principle

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## ABSTRACT

Harm to human life and the environment has been identified as a recurrent concomitance of many developmental projects in human society. Hence, to safeguard human life and the environment from development-induced harm, the United Nations declared that precaution is one of the principles of sustainable development. But since its initial promulgation there have emerged varying and divergent interpretations and versions of the precautionary principle owing to the challenges encountered by various groups and governments in its implementation. The resultant effect is that there is endless debate on which version or definition of the principle should be a guide to environmental decision-making. Neil Manson has taken a mediatory or reconciliatory task to discover some unifying factors or what he calls 'generic elements' in any valid version of the precautionary principle, namely: activity, effect, and remedy. These elements spell out a tripartite structure, viz: the damage condition which specifies the characteristic of an effect for which precautionary measures should be considered; the knowledge condition which specifies the status of knowledge regarding the causal connections between the

activity and the effect; and the remedy need which specifies the remedy that decision makers should take in response to the activity. Manson further prescribed conceptual clarity and strong awareness of the badness of the effect as criteria for validity of a precautionary approach. This paper makes a critical appraisal of Manson's thesis amidst other contending opinions of environmental philosophers, and concludes that he has considerably advanced the knowledge and appreciation of the precautionary principle. We have noted particularly that the precautionary principle is a moral principle that underscores the normative character of environmental risk. The consideration of right and wrong not cost and benefit should form the basis for reevaluating environmental risk.

**Keyword:** Precaution, principle, environment, moral, sustainable development.

## INTRODUCTION

Human interaction with the environment is mainly hinged on anthropocentric motives which focus on the exploitation of the resources of the environment for man's use. Interestingly, the tremendous development witnessed by humanity especially in science and technology over the centuries is attributed to the environmental resource exploitation. But since the last three centuries (19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> century) humanity, aided by science has gained increased awareness that human activities (resource exploitation and use) in the environment constitutes a double-edged sword. This is because the seemingly good or good-willed actions have also been discovered to be the causes of some terrible deleterious effects in the environment such as ozone layer depletion, global warming, species extinction, resource depletion, etc. Therefore, developmental activities are not simply developmental as they appear.

Thus, ethical reflections have been brought to bear on human activities in the environment. The rightness or wrongness of any activity on the environment is therefore judged on a scale of its immediate or remote good or bad effect on the environment. For one thing, environmentalists and environmental ethicists have become critical of many human activities on the environment. The resulting environmental debate has divided proponents of environmental ethics along different theories and schools of thought such as anthropocentrism, biocentrism, ecocentrism, environmental holism, etc. In all, their reflections indicate the moral significance of our activities in the environment. On a global scale, the various conventions and protocols such as



held under the auspices of the United Nations have produced a number of regulatory guidelines aimed at fostering wholesome environmental decision-making. One of such regulatory guidelines is the Precautionary Principle.

The precautionary Principle is a principle that invokes precautionary approaches in combating environmental degradation to ensure sustainable development. As a principle in its own right, it was said to have emerged during the early 1970s from the German notion of “Vorsorge” (Raffensberger Ticknar 1999). “Vorsorge” means foresight or “taking care,” the “Vorsorgeprinzip” is the “foresight principle.” This principle was conceived early in Germany with the belief that society should try to forestall environmental damage by careful forward-looking planning, blocking the flow of potentially harmful activities (Gardiner 2006). Emerging from this background, the precautionary principle has come to be adopted *mutatis mutandis*, in various world treaties on the global environmental protection such as UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992), the Third North Sea Conference (1990), and the Ozone Layer Protocol (1987). Precautionary approaches are also endorsed by major institutions such as the UN Environment Programme (1989), EU environment policy (1994), and the US President Council on Sustainable Development (Wingspread Document 1998).

The traditional version of the precautionary principle simply states: “When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically”.

Since its initial formulation, numerous versions and interpretations of the precautionary principle have emerged, and as such its implementation as a guide to action has remained largely controversial (Manson, 2002). Against this background, some environmental philosophers and environmental ethicists have tried to remedy the divergence of the precautionary principle to present it as a unified guide to environmental decision-making. In that vein, Neil Manson proposes a reformulation of the principle with some generic ingredients such that it becomes a framework for any version of the precautionary principle that can be used as a guide to action. A critical appraisal of Manson’s thesis in this regard forms the subject of this research.

The precautionary principle has since given rise to many different versions. And even though there is one considered as the traditional version, none of the whole can be said to be an authoritative guide to action in

environmental policy-making. This is said to be as a result of wrong formulations that create loopholes for controversial and divergent interpretations that lead to non-compliance (Gardiner 2006).

Thus, Jordan and O’Riordan (1992) observe that the precautionary principle ‘still has neither a commonly accepted definition nor a set of criteria to guide its implementation. They see a paradox in it, for according to them, “while it is applauded as a ‘good thing’, no one is quite sure about what it really means or how it might be implemented”. In the face of this confusion about the precautionary principle, some philosophers have tried to proffer solutions. The major problem of this study, therefore, is the contribution of Neil Manson and how it helps to resolve the dilemma.

The aim of this study is to appraise the strengths and weaknesses of Manson’s solution to the precautionary principle. To achieve this, we will pursue the following objectives: to determine what really constitutes the main problem of the precautionary principle, what is Manson’s constructive contribution, the strengths of his solution against some other positions, the weaknesses of his solution against some other positions, and the ethical implications of Manson’s view.

## CONTEMPORARY DEBATE

A number of scholars have made important contribution on issues regarding the propriety of the precautionary principle as a tool for environmental decision making and the rightness or wrongness of its various versions. The proponents of the precautionary principle see it as a sure way of preventing harm to humans and non-human environment in the presence of risk posed by some activities in the environment. For Schutz and Wiedemann (2005), the precautionary principle formulates a sensible maxim for coping with uncertainty, but they are skeptical that it does not provide a feasible solution. Their scepticism is based on two problems namely, that the application of the principle might have “unintended and unwelcome effects”, and that the precautionary principle has extreme variability in interpretation due to the problem of evidence. What type of evidence should be considered, and what amount of it is sufficient and necessary to invoke a precautionary measure? Schutz and Wiedemann (2005) conclude that the problem of evidence and advance knowledge of the effectiveness and safety of a precautionary measure

have not been resolved. For them, until that is done any application of the precautionary principle remains arbitrary.

Ignoring the problem of variability or evidence, Barry (1999) highlights the normative dimension of the precautionary principle. He insists that the precautionary principle acknowledges the normative characters of environmental risks – that is, they are moral questions about right and wrong and not simply about costs and benefits or technical problems and solutions.” Barry (1999) further introduces an intergenerational aspect to the issue as he suggests that the normative character of the precautionary principle could be more appreciated if environmental risk is “viewed in the context of avoiding unnecessary harm to future generations and nonhuman world.

Reflecting seriously on the question of variations in the formulations of the precautionary principle in policy documents, Peel (2005) deduced that the principle is context-specific, pointing out that the slight variations reflect the differences in the types of uncertainty to which decision makers need to respond. Peel (2005) insists that textual or terminological debate should not blur the fact that the principle grew out of the declining faith in science and at its heart is a critical approach to science and scientific methods. For her, the concept of precaution is the control issue. Therefore precautionary decision-making processes need to enable critical examination of science and uncertainty, be transparent in assessing threats of damage, and incorporate a range of views, including public participation.

Dana (2003) reacts against what he calls the indeterminacy critique which claims that the precautionary principle is indeterminate, and therefore meaningless. Dana refutes this position by stating that if indeterminacy rendered a principle meaningless, then most core principles like democracy and rule of law would be meaningless because they are general principles that allow implementation in various contexts. Rather, principles, according to Dana (2003), “can express and reinforce value commitments and procedurally structure decision-making without dictating a single set of specific, substantive outcome, principles may help out certain extreme options off the table, provide a boost to the advocacy of some in the political community, and force others in that community to marshal more evidence on behalf of their positions.

Another critique Dana (2003) tried to refute is what he called the ‘bad choice’ critique which holds that the precautionary principle leads to policy choices that cause more harm to health than good because the principle blinds

decision makers to the potentially negative effects of precautionary regulatory action. Against this, Dana (2003) points out that the critics confuse advocacy with result, insisting that the precautionary principle achieve the ultimate aim of introducing modest defensible regulation rather than no regulation at all.

Contrary to the view of some critics that the precautionary principle builds on cognitive bias, Dana (2003) insists that most environmental policies are framed as a choice between avoidance of a relatively sure, immediate, or very near-term loss of money (ie cost of taking regulatory action) and avoidance of a relatively unsure, non-immediate loss in human or ecological health and welfare. The tendency, as Dana (2003) observes, has always been to choose to avoid sure economic losses rather than unsure health and environmental losses. Therefore, since the precautionary principle favours regulation of activity even in the face of scientific uncertainty, it acts as a counter against cognitive bias.

Gardiner (2006) x-rays the main criticisms opponents present against the precautionary principle. He identified two broadly opposite criticisms on grounds of extremism and looseness. The first claims that the principle is ultra-conservative in its prohibition of action, while the second claims that it is ultra-minimal in its promotion of action. Against these positions, Gardiner (2006) insists that "there may be some generic sense in which the precautionary principle is appealing, and that "what is needed are characterizations of what constitute relevant threats, of the kinds of uncertainty to which the principle responds and of the kinds of responses it envisages". He insists that in most cases what appear as objections to the precautionary principle are issues of interpretation, not about the principle itself.

In what could be called his main contribution, Gardiner (2006) defends the precautionary principle based on John Rawls's version of maximin principle which brings out three general criteria as sufficient conditions for the application of the precautionary principle, namely: (a) That decision-makers lack, or have reasons to discount information about the probabilities of the possible outcomes of their action; (b) that decision-makers care relatively little for potential gains that might be made above the minimum guaranteed by the maximum principle; (c) the decision-makers face risky and unacceptable alternatives.

Based on the foregoing, Gardiner (2006) maintains that although the Rawlsian criteria do not exhaust all the conditions for core cases of precaution, they bring out sufficient conditions for the precautionary approach thereby

making it defensible to the standard objections even in what are considered paradigm cases such as climate change and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Gardiner sees the Rawlsian criteria as supporting what he called Core Precautionary Principle, since according to him they pick out certain instance where it seems clear that the precautionary principle applies and that the precautionary approach might not coincide with other kinds of maximin thinking outside of the domain constituted by the Rawlsian criteria.

After considering all objections Gardiner (2006) concludes that the Rawlsian Core Precautionary, RCPP, even though not a perfect solution, is a great advance on the precautionary principle. For him since the role of a principle might be to bring out the salient features of our reasoning in a particular case, then the role of the RCPP is to identify some considerations relevant to our judgment in certain core cases. Gardiner continues:

Hence it need not claim to be either (a) a comprehensive guide to judgment in all cases nor (b) completely transparent to those unwilling to make judgments nor even (c) absolutely determine in advance of detailed consideration of any given case and its context.

Such principle, according to Gardiner, can capture and explain our reasons to others by making them salient, and they can be useful when considering new cases by testing for salience. He thinks that it provides a promising setting in which to discuss the future of precaution in environmental policy.

## **MANSON'S THESIS ON THE PRECAUTIONARY PRINCIPLE**

The Precautionary Principle includes a set of principles or rules formulated to guard against the degradation of the environment in the course of exploitation and utilization of the resources of the environment. It counsels precaution even in the face of lack of full scientific certainty in the use of measures to prevent environmental degradation. Citing the version of the precautionary principle used at the Rio Declaration in 1992, which states that:

In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by states according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation,

Manson (2002) notes that the above statement is supposed to run counter to standard decision-making procedures where possible but unproven caused connections do not count.

Observing that there are various formulations of the principle which have elicited much debate and conflicting or divergent interpretations, Manson sets himself the task of identifying the generic elements that bestow common logical structure to the competing formulations. This, according to Manson would help both proponents and critics of particular version of the precautionary principle to see more clearly what the commitments of those who endorse that particular version are.

In undertaking this task, Manson suggests tags for the generic environmental elements for activity, effect, and remedy as e-activities, e-effects, and e-remedies respectively, where 'e' means environmental. He thus identifies a tripartite structure as characterizing every version of the precautionary principle. The first part is the damage condition which specifies the characteristic of an e-effect in virtue of which precautionary measures should be considered. The second is the knowledge condition which specifies the status of knowledge regarding the causal connections between the e-activity and the e-effect. The third part is the (remedy need) part which specifies the e-remedy that decision makers should take in response the e-activity.

Manson conceives the tripartite structure of the principle in the following conditional statement: *If the e-activity meets the damage condition and if the link between the e-activity and the e-effect meets the knowledge condition, then decision makers ought to enact the specified e-remedy.* This core structure, according to Manson, allows considerable room for variation. For him, these generic elements and logical structure of the precautionary principle have been identified in light of actual usage and suggested applications.

The benefits of this framework according to Manson, is that it serves to highlight the distinct particulars that can be substituted for the generic elements of the skeleton precautionary principle. He gives example with the terms irreversibility and irreplaceability, stating that they are not the same, nor are they interchangeable. Irreversibility is a property of processes, while irreplaceability is a property of concrete items. Manson notes that this framework calls attention to such distinctions is a further benefit of it.

Then to the extent that any of the concepts (like irreversibility and irreplaceability) is clearer than the other, a version specifying the clearer

concept in a damage condition will be a better guide to action than a version specifying the unclear concept. Manson therefore proposes that assuming that ability to guide action is one desideratum of formulating the precautionary principle, then we will have a criterion (clarity of concept) for evaluating competing versions of the precautionary principle for saying one version is better than another.

To elucidate the need for conceptual clarification, Manson distinguishes between the use of the concept irreversibility in environmental decision making and its use in physics. He said that against its use in environmental debate, in physics it is designed for application in statistical mechanics, in connection with the definition of entropy and the attempt to solve the problem of the arrow of time. He points out that some have criticized the precautionary principle on the assumption that irreversibility is to be understood in the physicist's sense. Even if irreversibility, for instance, is clearly established in environmental debate, Manson further points out that another task before the environmental philosopher is to establish a strong connection between irreversibility and badness as a reason to adopt the precautionary approach.

On the knowledge condition as well, Manson agree that the question of burden of proof and of precaution are highly relevant within a legal and political framework. He observes that there is variation or diversity on the knowledge condition. Some versions of the precautionary principle require that the potential polluter or those who would engage in an e-activity must show with certainty, or beyond a shadow of a doubt, or beyond a shadow of a reasonable doubt, that the e-activity does not cause the e-effect. Some other version put the burden of proof on the opponents of a proposed e-activity. However all they need to do regarding the claim of e-effect, is establish its bare possibility, or have a hunch that it is true, or point to a precedent for thinking that it is true, or have reasonable grounds for concern that it is true. They need not prove it with full scientific certainty, or prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt, or have any scientific evidence for it at all.

In this regard, Manson concludes that whichever precautionary principle version is favoured in a particular situation, whether high burden of proof on the potential polluter, or low burden of proof on the opponent of the e-activity, depends on the particular political or legal context in which the formulation is to be employed.

On the last component of the precautionary principle which is the e-remedy, Manson notes that most versions of the precautionary principle simply require the prohibition of the e-activity as the e-remedy, plus, sometimes, other ancillary activities like research for alternatives to the e-activity, effort to reduce uncertainty about the causal link between the e-activity and the e-effect, and searching for other ways of mitigating the negative consequences of the e-effect. Manson suggests that these follow-up actions should form an important and necessary ingredient in the formulation of the precautionary principle, otherwise the precautionary principle risks imposing an obligation that proponents of an e-activity can never discharge. Manson insists that the tripartite framework or structure will make any version of the precautionary principle effectively absolute or unconditional.

Manson further criticizes a version of the precautionary principle he calls the Catastrophe Principle, which holds that if we can identify an e-activity and an e-effect such that the e-effect is catastrophic and it is merely possible that the e-activity causes the e-effect, then the imposition of the e-remedy is justified regardless of the probability that the e-activity causes the e-effect.

The problem with this version, according to Manson, is that it bases the argument on mere possibility, and mere possibilities are easy to construct. Therefore justifying an e-remedy just because of mere possibilities is misleading. Moreover, the principle is self-defeating because it is possible that the e-remedy can also be catastrophic. This, according to Manson, is because the principle fails to exclude any catastrophic possibilities from its realm of application, and as such its reasoning can be used to demand a contradictory course of action. Manson therefore concludes that the catastrophe principle is useless as a guide to action. He says that even if it is modified to read: *"if an e-effect is catastrophic, if it is possible that a given e-activity causes that effect, and if it is not possible that imposing the given e-remedy will cause some other catastrophic effect, then the e-remedy should be imposed,"* the modification would render it ineffectual as a tool for action, because it would be practically impossible to show that there do not exist catastrophic outcome that might possibly come about as a result of imposing the e-remedy.

This does not show, according to Manson, that other versions of the precautionary principle are not plausible or workable. But their plausibility and workability have to be determined on a case-by-case basis. However for Manson, a broader lesson to be learnt from the catastrophe principle is that if



the precautionary principle is assumed to apply to any activity whatsoever that might harm the environment, then surely it is arbitrary and unreasonable to exempt e-remedies themselves from scrutiny.

Finally, Manson prescribes five specifications that should qualify any formulation of the precautionary principle viz:

1. The concept must be clear
2. The damage conditions must impose disvalue to any state possessing them
3. The knowledge condition must be legal/political system-specific
4. The e-remedy must contain a pledge for continuation of research
5. The e-remedy must not violate the formulation

## EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Manson's identification of the tripartite structure that characterizes every valid version of the precautionary principle, and his prescription of clarity of concepts and the establishment of a causal link between the activity and an effect as the criteria for proper formulation of the precautionary principle, are quite plausible. However, it is difficult to show how conceptual clarity cannot be relativized by contending parties.

Again, on the knowledge condition, that is, in a situation of uncertainty, Manson says that that burden of proof, either of the safety of the action, by the proponents or of its harmfulness, by the opponents, depends on the particular legal or political context in which the principle is to be employed. This does not solve the problem of uniformity. Truly, the general principle should be something that is adaptable in different places and situations. This is in consonance with the view of Peel (2005) who said that the variations indicate the difference in the types of uncertainty to which decision makers need to respond. Hence the precautionary principle from its particular legal or political systems should approximate in dealing with varying types of uncertainties. However, the fact that its application is made contingent on particular legal or political context still lends credence to the claim made by Schutz and Wiedemann (2005) that the precautionary principle is susceptible to extreme variability.

Manson's insistence that any formulation of the precautionary principle must necessarily include, in addition to prohibition of activity, follow-up actions like search for alternatives, effort to reduce uncertainty, and mitigation

efforts, and his inclusion of remedies for scrutiny is intended to encourage applicability and remove any semblance of arbitrariness from the principle.

Manson's criteria of conceptual clarity and establishment of disvalue are points that must make the principle a real guide to action, because if concepts are not clear and values are not established, actions might be mistaken. This should be differentiated from the demand for scientific evidence which critics see as the main problem against the precautionary principle.

Current environmental policies usually favour the avoidance of sure economic losses (i.e. cost of regulatory action) rather than unsure environmental and health losses. This is cognitive bias based on the claim of uncertainty and lack of scientific evidence and with this bias critics reject the precautionary principle, which even in the face of scientific uncertainty favours regulation of activity as Dana (2003) rightly posited. Manson merely glossed over this by referring the problem of proof to the operating legal or political system. That the precautionary principle advocates precaution in favour of the environment and human safety indicates a pure moral concern. Therefore the violation of the principle on utilitarian grounds creates a grave moral problem. Moreover, as Barry (1999) says, the precautionary principle underscores the normative character of environmental risk. The consideration of right and wrong not cost and benefit should form the basis for revaluating environmental risk.

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# Analyzing the Problem of Electoral Violence in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The paper analyzes the trend and nature of electoral violence in Nigeria. It places electoral violence in the context of Merton's strain theory, Vold's conflict theory and Hirschi's social control theory in order to determine the reasons that motivate actors in electoral violence in the country. Finally, the paper concludes that the cycle of electoral violence in the country can be broken if the actors involved in the violence are brought to justice. To buttress this point, the paper appeals to utilitarian-deterrence theory.

**Key Words:** Election, Violence, Merton's strain theory, Vold's conflict theory, Hirschi's social control theory.

## Introduction

Electoral violence has become almost a regular phenomenon in the electoral process of most African states. In Nigeria, violence has become part of the electoral culture right from the First Republic. In the 2011 general election in the country, it was estimated that thousands of people were killed with business

premises and places of worship set ablaze. In 2007-2008 in Kenya, there was widespread killing, maiming and vandalism of private and public properties after Mr Mwai Kibaki was declared the President-elect. In Cote d' Voire, after 2010 presidential election, electoral violence that followed nearly resulted in civil war. At the micro-level, electoral processes at the states and local government levels in Nigeria are often marred with calculated violence of systemic scale. For example, during the run up to the governorship in Akwa Ibom State in 2011, the two dominant political parties in the State clash in Ikot Ekpene and Uyo LGAs which led to wanton destruction of private and public property as well as killings of residents (Nigerians Abroad, 2011). Generally speaking, electoral violence has become a regular phenomenon in most electoral processes in Africa.

Electoral violence had different interpretations in the last century. Hence it was not seen as a "serious" criminal offence in the context of the community where it was perpetrated. Perhaps due to the fact that political process in Africa was seen in revolutionary terms in which the means was justified by the ultimate end. However, in recent times, beginning from the first decade of this century, electoral violence has now been interpreted in criminological terms. For example, after the 2008 post-electoral violence in Kenya the International Criminal Court at The Hague invited leaders in the mayhem to face criminal charges which border on crime against humanity (ICRP, 2013). In Cote d'voire the incumbent administration has subjected actors in the 2010 electoral violence to criminal prosecution (Genocide Watch, 2013). In Nigeria, the committee which was set up to investigate the post-election violence in northern Nigeria recommended the key actors in the violence for criminal prosecution (Ndujihe & Idonor, 2011).

Generally, electoral violence in recent times in Africa has begun to attract serious criminological meanings and philosophical interpretations. In the light of this, therefore, this paper aims to undertake systematic criminological and philosophical examinations of the phenomenon of electoral violence in the context of Nigeria, with the intention to determine the extent of its prevalence, causes and possible mitigatory approaches.

## **The Prevalence of Electoral Violence**

Electoral violence is a malignant phenomenon which is prevalent in many democratic countries of the world. In Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and Latin and Central America electoral violence seems to greet every election cycle of most countries. In Africa, handing over of political authorities to the indigenous people by the colonialists marked the birth of electoral violence. In the first ever self-conducted elections in many of the new states, the process was marred with violence which threatened the foundations of the society. In Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Congo, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda, Angola and many other countries there were widespread electoral violence which often led to military take-over of political power. In Nigeria, the history of electoral violence began from the first post-independence elections in 1963; and by 1966 it had assumed a frightening dimension which led to break down of public order especially in the South-West Nigeria. The consequences of that electoral violence led to military coup d'état and subsequently the civil war in 1967.

In the Second Republic which lasted from October 1979 to December 1983, electoral processes were once again greeted with violence which resulted in wanton destruction of lives and property, and ultimately in military intervention in 1983. In the aborted third republic, the phenomenon of electoral violence repeated itself. The aborted political process usually referred to as "June 12" triggered endemic violence in many parts of the country which lasted for five dark years. Property worth billions of Naira and hundreds of lives were lost in the process. With the return of political authority to civilians in 1999 there was high expectation for widespread electoral violence in the country as it were in the past republics. However, the Carter Center and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs observed that the election was generally conducted without systematic violence (Onwudiwe & Bernard-Dart, 2013). In the 2003 elections which followed four years later, there was a sudden leap in political and electoral violence before, during and after the elections. Onwudiwe and Bernard-Dart (2013) observe that:

Violence during the 2003 election cycle was more blatant and widespread. Intraparty clashes, political assassinations, and community unrest in already volatile areas such as Nigeria's oil-producing Niger Delta, characterized these elections. This cycle also marked the unchecked proliferation of worrisome development: the hiring and arming of militias to serve narrow political ends... Politicians and party bosses found a

ready supply of unemployed men, frequently youths, willing to perpetrate violence in exchange for pay and firepower.

In 2007, the violence which greeted 2003 elections repeated itself with higher levels of intensity. In a report released in 2010, Action Aid Nigeria reported that the 2007 election was characterized by civil strife, social tension and sporadic use of violence – a low level armed conflict (Onwudiwe & Bernard-Dart, 2013). In 2011, the dynamic of electoral violence changed to extremely dangerous dimension. The pre-election, election and post-election periods were heavily characterized with intensified violence, acts of terrorism and killings with genocidal dimensions. In some parts of the country, merely declaring oneself as aspirant was enough to put one's life in great danger. For example, in Edo State a political contender was gunned down in August 2010 after declaring his intention to vie for a seat in the House of Representatives (Onwudiwe & Bernard-Dart, 2013). Also, in Akwa Ibom State, Dr Joseph Akpan Akpanakpudo was assassinated after declaring his intention to contest for a seat in the House of Assembly (*The Pioneer*, 2011).

In addition to that, during the campaigns the two main political parties in Akwa Ibom State clash which led to loss of many lives and properties valued at several billions of Naira. Moreover, after the 2011 Presidential election in the country, a wave of electoral violence swept across the North East and North West regions of the country. A committee set up by the government reported that over 1000 lives were lost and property valued at several billions of Naira were vandalized (Ndujihe & Idonor, 2011). Analysts have argued that the Boko Haram phenomenon is an extension of the aftermath of 2011 Presidential election (Alozieuwa, 2010). International Crisis Group (ICG) reported in September 2011 that between 22 and 25 March 2011, reckless and indiscriminate violence rocked a third of the 36 States including Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Bayelsa, Benue, Delta, Edo, Ekiti, Kwara, Niger, Oyo, Plateau and Taraba.

The worst violence followed announcement on 18 April [2011] of the results of Presidential election and caught the security and intelligence communities by surprise. It ravaged fourteen Northern States and was reportedly most serious in Adamawa, Kano, Kaduna, Nasarawa, Bauchi and parts of Niger States. Businesses, Churches and houses were torched, looted or destroyed. Over 1,000 people were killed, ...some female NYSC members were raped or otherwise molested

and assaulted..., about 74,000 people were displaced (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

### **Electoral Violence: Defined**

Electoral violence is any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, blackmail, assassination, vandalism, or kidnapping (Aniekwe & Kushie, 2011). Igbuzor (2010) defines electoral violence as:

Any act of violence perpetrated in the course of political activities, including pre, during and post-election periods, and may include any of the following acts: thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral process.

Violence, however, involves the use of force or weapons to intimidate, assault or decimate a population in order to cause tension, chaos and crisis, and instil fear in the community. Electoral violence therefore involves using criminal means to draw attention to an electoral problem or imposing the opinion of a powerful few on the electorate by instilling fear in the heart of the electorate through indiscriminate decimation and mass destruction of property.

Electoral violence is a resort to or threat of violence by an individual or group in pursuit of political goals. The ultimate goal in a resort to electoral violence is to obtain political concession forcefully. It is also to disenfranchise potential voters by using force or threat to intimidate and scare them away. Electoral violence involve use of criminal means to obtain or attempt to obtain power – such means may include illegal use of weapons, stealing of ballot boxes, kidnapping of candidates, mass killing, assassination, arson, blackmail, physical assault, sexual assault or threat of rape, harassment and seditious statements.

From the analysis above, we can see that electoral violence is a violent crime. It involves use of terroristic means in the electoral process. Most of the means involved in electoral violence either violate criminal code or penal code. It is for this reason elections have been described as “organized crime”. It is also in the light of this that I describe electoral violence as electoral terrorism.



Electoral violence generally involves political parties, political aspirants, voters, security agents, electoral officers, and includes physical, material and psychological assault or harm. The victims of electoral violence can be people, ecologies, places, things or data. Aniekwe and Kushive (2011) observed that electoral violence can cut across all different stages of election beginning from pre-registration period to post-voting period. Some of the dimensions of electoral violence are intraparty feuding, interparty clashes, gangs' skirmishes, State repression, religious extremism, and social blockade, community conflict and regional neglect.

### **Youth Gangs and Electoral Violence**

An important dimension in this study is "youth gang". Youth gang is a very important element in electoral violence. There is balance of opinion among scholars that the use of "youth wing" to intimidate political opponents in early stage of our political history laid the ground-work for electoral violence in Africa (Wepundi, 2012; Luqman, 2010; Anderson, 2002). Youth involvement in political process raises the stakes of electoral violence in Africa.

Youth is widely acknowledged as the engine room of development of any society. This is due to their capacity of dynamism and innovation coupled with high energy at their disposal. As a social group, the youth is a very powerful but vulnerable force which can be moulded into any active element with considerable success. Yet, the youth most often times express themselves in and through social group. Such a group may be a mere peer group or gang depending on the dynamics of personal interest and structure of the society. It is usually the later – gang – politicians explore to perpetrate electoral violence. Gang is therefore a significant factor in this study.

What is youth gang? Thrasher (cited in Bartollas, 2003) defines a gang as "an intersocial group originally formed spontaneously and then integrated through conflict". Esbensen (cited in Bartollas, 2003) argues that a gang must be a group which comprises people between 12 and 24 years old, and must have functional identity and be involved in some form of illegal activity. When these two definitions are combined a more robust picture of youth gang emerges. Within the context of these definitions we can locate NURTW in Motor parks, OPC in South West, Base Boys in Calabar, even Jama'atu Ahlus-Sunnah Lidda'Awati Wal Jihad (popularly known as Boko Haram) which started as an Islamic youth gang in Maiduguri. We also have campus gangs and cultural

gangs. These groups are usually moulded into militia, by desperate politicians, for the purpose of perpetuating electoral violence in the polity.

Wepundi (2012) notes that in Kenya there was a proliferation of state-sponsored vigilantes (in Swahili, referred to as 'majeshi ya wazee', meaning 'armies of the elders') who appears to have been instructed to disrupt rallies held by opposition groups. In response, opposition parties recruited their own youth to counter government-sponsored attacks. Hence, this led to increasing lethal clashes between government-sponsored and opposition-supported gangs.

In Nigeria, Luqman (2010) reports that "in Gombe State the People Democratic Party, PDP, who controlled the government, was alleged to have deployed the 'kalare' gangs for all sorts of electoral fraud and violence. In Katsina State, the PDP government... was alleged to have a thousand of PDP youth thugs under government payroll". Human Right Watch also reported that in many states across the nation youth gangs were armed and financed to perpetrate act of violence, during and after elections. In Oyo, Kwara, Akwa Ibom and Rivers States political godfathers and State governors raised and funded militia, "empowered" youth gangs and used them to perpetrate violence against opponents (2010).

### **Causes of Electoral Violence: Theoretical Analysis**

Many explanatory models have been advanced in the course of the various studies of the phenomenon of electoral violence. Such causal factors have been identified to include mass unemployment, high illiteracy rate, religious bigotry and ethnicity as well as manifest juvenile propensity towards "high energy discharge" which ultimately leads to violence. Aniekwe and Kushie (2011) argue that to understand the phenomenon of electoral violence we must have a prior understanding of the nature, extent and persistence of a certain mode of political behaviour, and social and economic ramifications of the society. In the light of this fact, this study takes theoretical approach to the understanding of the nature and cause of electoral violence in the society. The theories adopted to study this phenomenon are Strain, Conflict and Social Bond.

The Robert Merton's strain theory argues that anomie condition result in the society when there is "lack of structured and legitimate means for most people in society to attain what was indiscriminately held out to all as the ultimate goal – material wealth" (Jones, 2009). Anomie is a French word

adopted from the works of Emile Durkheim by Robert Merton which means “normless” and “lawless”. Jones (2009) notes that “for Merton, anomie is: ‘conceived as a breakdown in the cultural structure occurring particularly when there is an acute disjunction between cultural norms and goals and the social structured capacities of the group to act in accord with them’.” Merton argues that in American society, like in Nigerian society, there is an emphatic goal of material success; an unequal permissible means to attain that goal; and the consequent recourse to alternative deviant means with regard to the goal. He believed that people can react in five different ways to challenges of such a goal. The five modes of reaction were identified as follows: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion.

The conformist do not involve in deviance rather he continue the pursuit of wealth, success and happiness through middle-class legitimate means even when they are not likely to succeed. The innovative individual accepts the ultimate goal but rejects the means of attaining it. As a consequence he devises fraudulent means in order to achieve the goal. The ritualist, on his part, loses sight of the goal even though he concentrates on the means. He has abandoned the actual goal hence his failure to achieve it does not matter to him. The retreatist, such as the addict and vagabond, is the individual who rejects both the goal and the means of attaining it. He is not striving for any meaningful goal; rather he resigns to deviant acts such as drug abuse probably for self-preservation. The rebel, finally, is the individual who rejects both the ultimate goal and the prescribed means of its attainment but he substitutes it with a new goal and new means. Merton notes that the ‘adaptations’ are not descriptions of personality types, and do not necessarily involve criminality but it accounts for people reaction under the strain of anomie – yet the reactions are not mutually exclusive (Jones, 2009).

In the context of this study, electoral violence belongs to the second reaction category which is that of innovation. In the Nigerian society, political power is ideated as the ultimate material success. A kind of characteristics of success is associated with it: material wealth, influence, pleasure and comfort. There are prescribed means of attaining political power in the Nigerian society. Such means are stated in the country’s Electoral Act and the Constitution. Despite the emphatic goal of political power, there is no equal permissible means to attain that goal. Hence, they innovative politicians resort to violence as a means of attaining political power.

Another theory which can be used to explain the phenomenon of electoral violence is the conflict theory as adumbrated by George Vold. This theory was pioneered by Thorsten Sellin. Vold's theory centres on a conflict of interests. Vold argues that society comprises of a series of groups with opposing interests which still manage to strike a balance. And individuals in the society are psychologically, rather than rationally, attached to particular groups, which they are prepared to devote a great deal of effort in loyalty. These groups often come into conflict with one another due to differing interests. Jones (2009) argues that "the conflict between these groups, with each struggling constantly to maintain or improve its position in the hierarchy, is essential in the normal running of society".

Vold argues that many criminal acts are committed by groups. Individual acts of crime and deviance are carried out for the ultimate benefits of the group. Such individuals do not see themselves as criminals because they view their actions as their contributions in support of the rightful claims of their group. The individuals therefore come together in solidarity, and to protect themselves against the opposition group. As Jones observes, most political conflicts involve what we can ordinarily pass as criminal offences.

By application, this theory helps us understand the "group dimension" of electoral violence. Electoral processes are engaged in by groups which are also known as political parties or political associations. Much of the electoral violence is prosecuted by these groups. For example, the electoral violence perpetrated in Akwa Ibom State in March 2011 was prosecuted by members of the People Democratic Party (PDP) and Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) who perceived that the interest of the group was threatened by the activities of the other. The members of the political groups are psychologically rather than rationally attached to the group. And their preparedness to devote their resources to is revealed by their violent and irrational acts.

The 2011 presidential election held in Nigeria saw the emergence of Dr Goodluck Jonathan as President. The youth wing of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) went on rampage in the northern region which resulted in loss of thousands of lives and property. Some have argued that the violence was a reaction to the emergence of new power equilibrium in the country which seems to put the opposition group at disadvantage position (Alozieuwa, 2010). Boko Haram terrorist group, which was one of the youth gangs actively involved in the political process, saw the emergent government in power as a

symbol of the opposite or competing group. In other words, Boko Haram terrorist group saw then incumbent President Jonathan as a representative of the Niger Delta militant. Of course, the Niger Delta militant often issue solidarity statements in support of the government of the day, whom they said was headed by their son; and which agonizes the Boko Haram and its supporters. Thus, the Niger Delta militant group seems to emerge as the 'winning' group that now enjoy government patronage.

Another theoretical approach in this study is the social-bond theory. It is a social control theory that was postulated by Travis Hirschi in his 1969's book *Causes of Delinquency*. Hirschi argues that through successful socialization a bond is formed between the individual and society; but when the bond is weakened or broken deviance and crime result (Schmallegger, 1999). He identifies four components of social bond, namely: attachment, commitment, involvement and belief.

"Attachment" refers to feelings we have towards others. If we have close ties with others, we are more likely to care about what they think about our behaviour. Hirschi notes that the process of alienation from others involves active interpersonal conflict. The other component is "commitment" which refers to individual investment in meaningful activities such as getting education or building up a business. According to Hirschi, people are more likely to conform to societal rules rather than lose their investment because they believe their interests would be endangered if they engage in criminal acts. Another component is "involvement" which refers to "engrossment in conventional activities". Hirschi uses the saying "idle hands are the devil's workshop" to explain how idleness and joblessness can contribute to crime and deviance. He argues that since we are time constraints, if an individual engage in legitimate pursuits, he would have little opportunity for crime and deviance. Finally, Hirschi used the concept of "belief" to explain society's moral rudderless. He argues that people violate societal rules even when they believe they exist and believe the rules. He attributes this to the fact that people do not care about rules and their attendant moral meanings.

When we apply this theory to political process, we discover how loosen social control mechanism has contributed to electoral violence in the Nigerian society. For example, the perennial religious stand-off between Christianity and Islam had resulted in interpersonal conflicts between the Christians and Muslims. This conflict therefore alienates them thereby increasing likelihood of

isolation and care withdrawal – which in turn boost each group's 'tribal' morale during political tension and electoral aggression. Apart from that, high rate of unemployment and illiteracy in the country reveals the absence of the second and third components thereby contributing to increasing "electoral deviance" in the country. A clear example of the applicability of the theory is the fact that most of the recruits and actors in electoral violence were the jobless and the illiterate. This therefore suggests that by engaging the populace in meaningful venture such as education and entrepreneurship and employment, the individual is less likely to involve in deviance and criminal activities such as electoral violence.

### **Utilitarianism, Deterrence Theory and Election Violence Mitigations**

There are many mitigatory models and policy recommendations regarding electoral violence. In law, economics, political science, sociology and philosophy – scholars have designed policies and models which could serve as possible mitigatory approach to the problem. The objective of this paper is to provide a criminological perspective regarding the problem and to recommend philosophical solutions. To this end, I have identified a theoretical perspective as a possible option that can be adopted effectively to deal with the problem. This theory is the penological theory of deterrence. The deterrence theory is further founded in the philosophical concept of utilitarianism.

The classical school of criminology, represented by Jeremy Bentham and Cesare Beccaria had argued that criminal and deviant acts, such as electoral violence, are freely willed by the individual – who weights the consequences of his actions before deciding on it. Bentham argues that an individual conducts himself in accordance with certain utilitarian calculus of pleasure and pains; should he foresee that a pain would be the consequence of an act which pleases him, he would refrain from it and the act would not occur (Dambazau, 2007). Human behaviour is purposive and hedonistic: Human actions are directed at pleasure and avoidance of pain for oneself.

People commit deviant and criminal acts because of the satisfaction (pleasure) they derive from such acts. Feeling of satisfaction or pleasure can come from act of vengeance. For example, people involving in electoral violence can see their actions as expression of vengeance against oppressor or taking their "pound of the flesh" from the oppressor, either by destroying properties belonging to it or killing its members: This violent act of "vengeance" can

precipitate feeling of pleasure or satisfaction. In the light of this, therefore, Beccaria argues that “punishment should be assigned to each crime in degree that results in more pain than pleasure for those who commit the forbidden acts” (Reid, 2003). Apart from the fact that people commit deviant and criminal acts because of the satisfaction it bring to them, Ndubuisi and Nathaniel (2002) aver that people are likely to commit deviant and criminal act when they are certain they can get away with it. In Nigeria, it is apparent that the cycle of violence becomes a regular and predictable phenomenon in the country’s political and electoral history because the perpetrators of the act always get away with it.

Deterrence theory is a punishment philosophy which I propose as a mitigatory approach to forestalling electoral violence in Nigeria, for example. Dambazau (2007) rightly notes that “in deterrence, what is of supreme importance is that punishment prevents crimes”. Bentham posits that punishment may prevent the occurrence of crime either by making it impossible for an offender to breach the law again or by preventing the potential offender from perpetrating criminal act (Dambazau, 2007). He argues that punishment closes the “path of crime” for the delinquent, and serves as a source of security for all. Siegel and Sienna (2008) maintain that deterrence is categorized into two broad dimensions: general and specific deterrence. For general deterrence, “by severely punishing those people convicted of crime, others who are merely contemplating criminality will be deterred or dissuaded from their planned actions.” For specific deterrence, on the other hand, by severely punishing an offender, it will make him not to desire a repeat of their criminal activity. This means punishment according to deterrence theory, holds immediate and future benefits. Punishment, therefore in this light, is a social control mechanism.

How does this apply to breaking the cycle of electoral violence in the country? I have argued that people perpetrate electoral violence because the benefits (that is, satisfaction) they derive from it outweigh the liabilities that they incur. I also noted that people engage in electoral violence because they believe they can get away with it. My argument is that if the actors in electoral violence are punished, the actual offenders and potential offenders shall be deterred from perpetrating it again, hence breaking the cycle of electoral violence. For example, if the perpetrators of electoral violence in the First Republic were brought to book, the later offenders in the second, third and fourth republics would not have participated in the mayhem. As Dambazau

(2007) notes, punishments are imposed on offenders so as to prevent the offenders from repeating the crime and/or to prevent potential offenders from going ahead with the plan. This means that if punishment was imposed on the violent actors in the 2011 general elections in Nigeria, it could have deterred potential perpetrators of the act in the 2015 elections. A clear example is the last Kenyan Presidential election. After the 2007 presidential elections in Kenya, there was a sudden outbreak violence in which many people were killed and property worth millions of dollars destroyed. Some of the key elements in the violent act were invited to the International Criminal Court at The Hague, which instilled fear in the potential offenders. Hence, in the 2013 presidential elections, electoral violence was almost not recorded. This is owed to the deterrence effect The Hague indictment had on the delinquent elements in Kenya's politics. The deterrence theory therefore presents a possible approach to solving the issue of electoral violence in Nigeria and beyond.

### **Conclusion**

This paper argues that the phenomenon of violence in the electoral cycle of Nigeria in particular, and Africa in general, results from a combination of many factors. The paper traces electoral violence to the illegal involvement of youth gangs in political processes. It argues that there is linkage between criminal impunity and electoral violence in the country. In the light of this, the paper argues that actors in electoral violence should be made to face criminal prosecution and sanctions in order to prevent outbreak of violence in future electoral processes. To buttress this point, I have cited the just concluded 2013 presidential election in Kenya, in which the 2008 post-election violence was not repeated. The fact is that criminal indictment of the key actors in the 2008 electoral violence in Kenya had deterrent effect on the violent elements in the 2013 elections in that country. I recommend strongly that by prosecuting and sanctioning the actors in electoral violence, future occurrence of electoral violence and its attendant criminal activities will be prevented.

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# Littérature et réalité sociale : Une lecture de *En attendant le vôte des bêtes sauvages* et *Quand on refuse on dit non*

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## Résumé (Abstract)

*En attendant le vôte des bêtes sauvages* et *Quand on refuse on dit non* d'Ahmadou Kourouma sont en fait deux perspectives différentes à partir desquelles des narrateurs racontent l'histoire contemporaine de l'Afrique et surtout celle de la Côte d'Ivoire. La première perspective est métaphorique, voire mystificatrice : les noms des personnages et des lieux sont purement fictifs (Tiékoroni, la Côte des Ebènes, etc.), le ton est épique, les hommes sont associés aux animaux et leurs faits et gestes sont rocambolesques; la seconde est claire et directe : les personnages et les lieux portent des noms qui existent dans la réalité (Houphouët-Boigny, la Côte d'Ivoire, etc.). Quoi qu'il en soit, il est évident que ces deux ouvrages littéraires n'ont de signification que par rapport à l'histoire africaine et ivoirienne ou à l'univers social qui les a fondés et qu'ils peignent chacun à sa manière. Nous soutenons donc dans cet article qu'il existe un lien nécessaire et dynamique entre l'œuvre littéraire et la société qui l'a produite. Aussi, cet article a-t-il pour objectif de montrer qu'au-delà d'une simple expression de la subjectivité ou de l'inspiration de

l'auteur, l'œuvre littéraire, à l'instar de ces deux romans de Kourouma, tient son fondement dans la réalité sociale qui aurait troublé la conscience de l'auteur au point de l'engager à vouloir recréer cette société par le verbe - l'alchimie du verbe.

**Mots ou expressions clés :** Ouvrages/œuvres littéraires, réalité sociale, univers social, lien nécessaire et dynamique, fondement.

### **Introduction :**

Nous envisageons de mettre en évidence dans le cadre de cet article, la place importante qu'occupe la réalité sociale – c'est-à-dire la vie réelle des hommes, les petits et grands événements qui marquent la vie des individus ou des nations – dans la fiction romanesque et notamment dans les deux romans choisis d'Ahamadou Kourouma que nous résumons brièvement ci-dessous pour le besoin de cette étude.

Le premier ouvrage, *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* est un roman allégorique composé de six veillées ou chapitres au cours desquelles, Bingo, le sora ou griot de Koyaga (le chasseur et président-dictateur de la République du Golfe), accompagné par Tiécoura (un répondeur), raconte les faits et gestes des dictateurs africains Tiékoroni, Bossouma, l'homme au totem léopard, etc., (sans rien omettre de leurs crimes) et surtout ceux de Koyaga qui s'empare du pouvoir dans la République du Golfe, aidé par la sorcellerie de sa mère Nadjouma, les sacrifices de son marabout Bocano et la brutalité des assassinats perpétrés par ses tirailleurs paléos.

Le second ouvrage, *Quand on refuse on dit non*, est un roman en trois chapitres qui est centré sur la Côte d'Ivoire. L'un des narrateurs et personnage principal est le petit Birahima qui est rentré chez son cousin médecin Mamadou Doumbia à Daloa, en Côte d'Ivoire, après avoir survécu aux guerres du Libéria et de Sierra Leone où il était enfant-soldat. Mais voilà que la guerre civile éclate aussi en Côte d'Ivoire, surtout entre les Dioulas du Nord et les Bétés du sud. Fanta, l'autre narratrice et protagoniste, demande à Birahima de l'accompagner à Bouaké dans la zone rébelle du Nord. Armé d'un vieux fusil Kalachnikov Birahima s'enfuit avec la belle Fanta vers le nord. Fanta qui avait son baccalauréat, profite de cette fuite pour raconter à Birahima, l'histoire de la Côte d'Ivoire, de

ses origines à nos jours, et les raisons de la guerre civile qui la déchire, à savoir la corruption des régimes du président Félix Houphouët-Boigny et de son successeur Henri Konan Bédié, l'ivoirité, la marginalisation des Nordistes et le blocage politique provoqué par la disqualification du candidat nordiste Alassane Ouattara.

### **1.1. l'œuvre littéraire en tant que miroir de la société :**

Dans ses deux romans, *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* et *Quand on refuse on dit non*, Ahmadou Kourouma peint d'une manière à la fois poignante et sarcastique, la dictature et la corruption qui ont gangrené l'Afrique et notamment son pays pendant plus de trois décennies pour, finalement, le plonger dans la crise la plus grave depuis son indépendance en 1960. Le second a été dicté par le chaos politique et la guerre tribale qui, après le Libéria et la Sierra Leone, s'étaient abattus sur la Côte d'Ivoire et que Kourouma désespérait de voir juguler. Gilles Carpentier relève fort bien cela dans sa " Note sur la présente édition" de *Quand on refuse on dit non*, quand il écrit :

En écrivant ce livre dans l'urgence (huit mois de travail ininterrompu), lui-même contraint à un exil dont il ne voulait pas admettre la fatalité, Ahmadou Kourouma savait qu'il ne faisait pas seulement œuvre littéraire. Plus encore que ses autres livres, celui-ci s'inscrivait dans une perspective politique et civique. Il lui fallait être à la fois précis et pressé.<sup>1</sup>

On comprend dès lors pourquoi Kourouma soutient que le témoignage qu'il porte sur son pays à travers son oeuvre est vrai et basé sur des faits historiques véridiques. Dans le second chapitre de son étude critique intitulée "*Des Hommes ou des Bêtes ? Lecture de En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*, d'Ahmadou Kourouma ", Madeleine Borgomano

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<sup>1</sup> Carpentier, Gilles. Note sur la présente édition, *Quand on refuse on dit non*, (Paris : Editions du Seuil, 2004), p. 145.

souligne ce fait : “ Ahmadou Kourouma le répète sans cesse, tout ce qu’il raconte dans ce roman est « vrai »”.<sup>2</sup>

Le génie de Kourouma est de faire relater par la bouche de personnages fictifs à savoir le Sora dans *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* et le petit Birahima, personnage principal de *Quand on refuse on dit non* (qu’on a déjà connu comme enfant soldat dans *Allah n’est pas obligé*), ainsi que la belle Fanta, (l’autre protagoniste de l’ouvrage et dont Birahima est amoureux), l’histoire véridique de la Côte d’Ivoire. Et tout comme le déclare Birahima :

Elle a commencé par m’annoncer quelque chose demerveilleux Pendant notre voyage, elle allait me faire tout le programme de géographie et d’histoire de la medersa. J’apprendrais le programme d’histoire et de géographie du C.E.P., du brevet, du bac. Je serais instruit comme un bachelier. Je connaîtrais la Côte d’Ivoire comme l’intérieur de la case de ma mère.

Je comprendrais **les raisons et les origines du conflit tribal** qui crée des charniers partout en Côte d’Ivoire...<sup>3</sup>

Ainsi l’histoire sert ici à expliciter le pourquoi et le quand des choses. D’où la minutie avec laquelle Kourouma retrace, dans ce roman paru à titre posthume, toute l’histoire de la Côte d’Ivoire, de ces antécédents pré-coloniaux à sa colonisation, de sa lutte pour l’émancipation à son indépendance en 1960, de son miracle économique des années 70 et 80 à son “mirage” des années 90, et finalement au chaos de la rébellion nordiste et de la guerre tribale. Martin Bestman résume la portée historique de l’oeuvre littéraire africaine contemporaine, de la manière suivante:

In the main, our writers who are informed by an acute consciousness of the dialectics of history conceive literature as a depiction of the truth of life, as a preserver of history, as a potentially subversive force,

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<sup>2</sup> Borgomano, Madeleine. Des hommes ou des bêtes? Lecture de *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*, d’Ahmadou Kourouma (Paris : L’Harmattan, 2000), p. 39.

<sup>3</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *Quand on refuse on dit non* (Paris : Editions du Seuil, 2004) p. 41. (C’est nous qui soulignons.)

as a “miraculous weapon” of self-affirmation. For them the text is no longer ornamental, it is no longer a mere arena of dazzling permutation of words. But rather, because born of history, it confronts history and serves as a battlefield for the explosion of accumulated tensions, as a vehicle for the resolution of the burden of history. Consequently, obsessions with socio-political preoccupations, a pervading polemical tone and a combative spirit are central to contemporary black writing, giving it a flavour that is so distinctive since its emergence. From its budding seasons to its explosion into full blossom, our literature has been a long “walk in the night”. That is, an exploration into landscapes of plunder, pain, violence and confiscated history.<sup>4</sup>

L’oeuvre littéraire va donc au delà de la simple narration ou histoire (“story”, en anglais) pour se faire oeuvre d’histoire (“history”, en anglais), en se fixant pour objectifs d’une part, l’enregistrement des événements ou faits historiques pour la postérité et, de l’autre, l’intervention dynamique dans le processus historique pour en déterminer le devenir. Dans sa forme passive qui est la chronique, elle vise à préserver la vérité historique. Dans sa forme dynamique, elle est taxée de subversive parce qu’elle bouscule le statu quo et les idées reçues afin d’instaurer une autre “vérité historique” ou une réalité meilleure.

On retrouve cette dimension de vérité historique dans *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*. Madeleine Borgomano écrit à ce propos dans son oeuvre critique, *Des hommes ou des bêtes*, Lecture de *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*, d’Ahmadou Kourouma :

En racontant la vie du dictateur Koyaga, le roman raconte l’histoire de on pays et plus largement, celle d’une bonne part de l’Afrique de l’Ouest et du centre...<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Bestman, Martin T. *The Semiotic Triangle*, (Inaugural Lecture Series, 106) Ile-Ife, Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Borgomano, Madeleine. *Des hommes ou des bêtes? ...*, p. 40.

En effet, dans ce roman aussi le récit commence dans l'époque pré-coloniale, au partage de l'Afrique, lors de la conférence de Berlin en 1884-85 et s'achève aux luttes politiques et tentatives de démocratisation en Afrique qui ont suivi la fin de la guerre froide en 1989. Cela nous amène à parler de la valeur sociologique du roman qui, tout en étant une œuvre de fiction, n'en est pas moins une source authentique de témoignage sur la réalité sociale qu'il re-présente. Sunday O. Anozie a très bien cerné cette dimension réelle du romancier en l'opposant au poète. C'est ainsi qu'il a écrit:

Quand le poète-politicien ouest-africain s'efforce d'impressionner son lecteur par l'expression de ses rêves, le romancier nous donne, lui, un reportage, grâce à une recreation fiévreuse et soutenue de la vie des autres; quand le poète-homme d'État ouest-africain prend souvent des attitudes doctrinaires, puisqu'ils'agit d'une expérience individuelle du poète, le romancier au contraire se soucie de la réalité sociale vue essentiellement comme une expérience collective. <sup>6</sup>

Il y a, comme le souligne Anozie, un rapport étroit entre la fiction romanesque et le vécu. Le professeur Bestman corrobore ce point de vue lorsqu'il écrit:

Au moment des luttes anticolonialistes, le peuple, gonflé d'espoir, rêvait d'un avenir meilleur; or, l'affligeante réalité de l'époque post-indépendance dément cette aspiration. Car, après les brutalités organisées par les anciens oppresseurs, les Africains exercent sur eux-mêmes toute leur agressivité inhibée (...). Et les écrivains qui font de la volonté didactique le principe dynamique de leurs univers littéraires inquiétants, ne cessent d'exprimer, par le truchement de

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<sup>6</sup> Anozie, Sunday O. *Sociologie du roman africain* (Paris : Editions Aubier-Montaigne, 1970), p. 16.

leurs personnages, leur indignation à l'égard des fléaux qui frappent les indépendances.<sup>7</sup>

Il y a, pour ainsi dire, un lien nécessaire entre le milieu naturel et l'oeuvre d'art, une dialectique qui fait que le roman réfracte toujours la "réalité sociale vécue", même si pour des raisons de censure ou autre, l'auteur préfère ne pas en parler ouvertement et choisit pour la réalisation de son oeuvre, un univers purement fictif comme dans *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*. Le choix même des titres *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* et *Quand on refuse on dit non* n'est point gratuit. Madeleine Borgomano rapporte l'anecdote suivante, racontée par Kourouma lui-même, sur l'origine du premier titre:

(Le titre du roman) m'a été inspiré par mon boy, quand j'habitais à Lomé. Il est togolais et soutient le président en place. Il m'a dit: "Si d'aventure les gens ne votaient pas pour Eyadema, les bêtes sauvages sortiraient de la forêt et voteraient pour lui." Les gens croient qu'Eyadema est capable, par la magie, d'amener les animaux à voter pour lui. C'est, certes, difficile à faire admettre à un Occidental.<sup>8</sup>

Quand au second titre, il provient d'une réplique de Fanta à Birahima, à la fin du premier chapitre: " Et quand on refuse, on dit non, a affirmé Samory."<sup>9</sup> ; Cette réplique elle-même nous rappelle la citation du roi Djigui que Kourouma a mise en exergue de son oeuvre et dans laquelle le roi, courroucé, menaçait d'entrer vivant à Toukoro pour abdiquer le trône et déshériter toute la dynastie Keita et surtout Béma, son fils rebelle:

Aux courtisans ébahis dont aucun ne croyait que la menace serait mise à exécution, Djigui lança la fameuse parole samorienne : « Quand un homme refuse. Il dit non », et joignant l'acte à la parole sans attendre que le commissionnaire se fût éloigné, il

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<sup>7</sup> Bestman, Martin T. *Le jeu des masques : essais sur le roman africain* (Montréal : Editions Nouvelle Optique, 1980), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Borgomano, Madeleine. *Des hommes ou des bêtes? ...*, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *Quand on refuse...*, p. 36.



commanda qu'on lui harnachât incontinent son coursier.<sup>10</sup>

Mais si, comme le disait Djigui, Samory refusait "l'irréligion" et la tutelle "nazaréenne" ou française, que représenterait au juste le refus de Fanta sinon le refus des gens du Nord d'être marginalisés, frappés d'ostracisme, exploités, bafoués et massacrés pour un rien ? Bref! le refus d'être des citoyens de seconde classe dans leur propre pays. Il symboliserait alors, la rébellion nordiste ivoirienne contre l'oppression et le déni de justice sudiste.

## **1.2. Le style de Kourouma: satire et oralité.**

Pour exprimer la réalité socio-politique africaine ou encore, la crise et la guerre tribale ivoiriennes, Kourouma emploie à bon escient la satire, violente quelques fois mais souvent pleine d'humour et d'ironie. Faisons remarquer aussi ici que l'écriture de Kourouma épouse parfaitement le genre oratoire épique malinké, avec ses personnages de griots, de bouffons, de maîtres et de héros, avec ses accompagnements musicaux et ses proverbes, avec ses us et coutumes, et surtout avec sa recherche du merveilleux. Kourouma recrée ou transpose dans ses œuvres, notamment dans *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*, l'ambiance des contes et légendes africains, marquée par des échanges ponctuelles entre le narrateur (ou griot) et l'audience. Le cadre du roman est lui-même primordial car il détermine aussi le style de l'auteur. En effet, Koyaga convoque sept des plus prestigieux maîtres de sa confrérie de chasseurs et son ministre de l'orientation, Maclédio, sous l'apathie de sa résidence pour une cérémonie purificatoire. Là, au cours de six veillées, Bingo, le *sora* ou griot de Koyaga, accompagné par un répondeur, un apprenti, genre bouffon du nom de Tiécoura, va raconter avec force détails et vérité les hauts faits du dictateur et maître chasseur, Koyaga, dont la ressemblance avec Gnassingbé Eyadema du Togo (mentionné dans l'anecdote de Kourouma sur le titre du livre) est on ne peut plus

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<sup>10</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*, (Paris : Editions du Seuil, 1998), pages 266-267.

frappante et à qui il rappelle son apprentissage auprès des dictateurs africains d'après les indépendances tels Tiékoroni, Bossouma et l'homme au totem léopard, derrière lesquels on devine aisément les présidents Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Jean-Bedel Bokassa et Mobutu Sesse Seko. Kourouma prend le soin d'expliquer que le récit dont il s'agit ici n'est pas un simple récit mais un donsomana ou, pour reprendre ses propres termes, un récit purificateur malinké lors duquel le bouffon s'exprime en toute liberté :

Nous voilà donc tous sous l'apatame du jardin de votre résidence. Tout est donc prêt, tout le monde est en place.

Je dirai le récit purificateur de votre vie de maître chasseur et de dictateur. Le récit purificateur est appelé en malinké un donsomana. C'est une geste. Il est dit par un sora accompagné par un répondeur cordoua. Un cordoua est un initié en phase purificateur, en phase cathartique.

Tiécoura est un cordoua et comme tout cordoua, il fait le bouffon, le pitre, le fou. Il se permet tout et il n'y a rien qu'on ne lui pardonne pas.<sup>11</sup>

Il serait pertinent d'ailleurs de faire un rapprochement entre l'outrecuidance du cordoua dans *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* comme par exemple lorsque, parlant des cérémonies d'accueil et d'au revoir organisées à l'honneur de Koyaga, il lui dit : « des idioties qui célébraient la fraternité entre vous, l'homme au totem faucon, et le dictateur au totem caïman. »<sup>12</sup> et celui de Birahima dans *Quand on refuse, on dit non* lorsqu'il apprend l'arrivée de la guerre tribale en Côte d'Ivoire. En effet Birahima va au maquis pour "se défouler" (ce qui veut dire, selon lui, "se libérer des contraintes, des tensions") en consommant de l'alcool et de la drogue tant et si bien que, de retour à la maison, il crie à tout le monde et surtout à l'intention de Sita, la femme de son cousin : « je m'en fous, la guerre tribale est là ».<sup>13</sup> Ensuite, il joue à l'agent provocateur en louant le président Gbagbo comme un type bien et

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<sup>11</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *En attendant...*, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *En attendant...*, p. 207

<sup>13</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *Quand on refuse...*, p. 12.

comme le seul à avoir eu du courage pour s'opposer à Houphouët-Boigny. Le résultat est une scène drôle que Birahima raconte de la manière suivante :

Ces déclarations ont rendu folle Sita. Elle m'a infligé une bonne gifle et des coups de poing bien appuyés. A chaque coup de poing, je répondais:

« Gbagbo le président est un type bien! »

Pan!

« c'est un Bété mais un type bien! »

Pan!

« Un type bien! »

Et ainsi de suite. Les coups de Sita et mes répliques ont duré près de cinq minutes.<sup>14</sup>

Cette scène humoristique mise au début du son roman sert à faire mieux ressortir l'antagonisme viscéral qui existe entre ceux qui, au dire de Birahima, « étaient RDR dioulas (musulmans nordistes) et opposants »<sup>15</sup> et le président Gbagbo et sa tribu bété adhérents du Front Patriotique Ivoirien (FPI). En effet, quelques jours plus tard, la guerre arrive réellement et des Dioulas sont massacrés par les Bétés. Citons à propos le témoignage de Birahima sur l'un de ces massacres :

Les Dioulas valides et les imams ont creusé un grand trou profond et béant. Au bord du trou profond et béant, les loyalistes ont fait aligner les Dioulas valides et tous les arrêtés. Ils les ont mitraillés sans pitié comme des bêtes sauvages.

Ils ont fait de leurs cadavres d'immenses charniers. Les charniers pourrissent, deviennent de l'humus, l'humus devient du terreau. Le terreau de l'humus des charniers est toujours recommandé, bon pour le sol ivoirien. C'est le terreau de l'humus des charniers qui enrichit la terre ivoirienne.

La terre ivoirienne qui produit le meilleur chocolat du monde. Walahé (au nom d'Allah, l'Omniprésent)!<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *Quand on refuse...*, p. 13.

<sup>15</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *Quand on refuse...*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *Quand on refuse...*, p. 25

L'humour du petit Birahima nous rappelle la déclaration suivante d'André Breton, citée dans le Petit Robert : « L'humour (dit Freud) a non seulement quelque chose de libérateur... mais encore quelque chose de sublime et d'élévé » <sup>17</sup>. Nous pouvons donc comprendre la réaction burlesque de Birahima devant la réalité qu'est l'horreur de la guerre tribale.

En fait, les *donsomana* dans *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* ne sont qu'une satire amère des dictateurs africains et des travers de leurs peuples. Retenons surtout le *donsomana* accordé à Tiékoroni dans la veillée IV où le narrateur ridiculise et fustige les abus du vieux despote qu'il appelle aussi le bélier de Fasso. Voici, en effet, comment Bingo raconte la générosité légendaire de Tiékoroni envers ses totems, les sauriens:

Dans le souci de combler de manuficences les animaux de son terroir natal, il s'est montré - comme il se doit pour des totems - particulièrement généreux pour des caïmans. Il a fait pêcher, dans toutes les rivières environnantes de toute la région, tous les sauriens. Il leur a construit un lac de marbre. Dans le lac, ils bénéficient des trois repas quotidiens que beaucoup de citoyens de sa République ne connaîtrons jamais au cours du prochain siècle. <sup>18</sup>

Soulignons la répétition du quantitatif tout - toutes, toute, tous - s'appliquant à la totalité des sauriens du terroir et le contraste entre le bien-être de ces animaux fortunés et l'indigence des citoyens et compatriotes de Tiékoroni pour faire mieux ressortir le ridicule et l'inhumain dans le comportement de cet homme d'Etat. Kourouma manie l'humour et l'ironie avec une aisance et une habileté peu commune: on ne peut s'empêcher de rire (souvent même en se tenant les cottes) en lisant ces deux oeuvres pourtant si graves et si réfléchies dans leurs témoignages sur l'exercice du pouvoir en Afrique et particulièrement en Côte d'Ivoire. Citons à titre d'exemple la scène où

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<sup>17</sup> Paul Robert, *Le Petit robert 1*, (Paris : Dictionnaires Le Robert, 1984).

<sup>18</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *En attendant...*, pp. 187-188.

Koyaga, à l'instar du roi Salomon, demande la science de la bonne gouvernance et voit sa prière exaucée :

Dans les montagnes du pays paléo vous étiez dans le sanctuaire. Dans le sanctuaire avec votre maman la magicienne, Bokano le marabout et le conseiller Maclédio. Vous étiez tous quatre en conciliabule, accroupis face à l'autel sur lequel de généreux sacrifices de gratitude immolés aux âmes des ancêtres fumaient. Vous disiez de profondes prières, de pressantes implorations par lesquelles vous demandiez aux âmes des ancêtres de mieux vous inspirer, de vous aider, de vous protéger, de guider vos pas dans la meilleure voie de la bonne administration des hommes et du pays. Vos prières furent exaucées, vos sacrifices acceptés.<sup>19</sup>

L'ironie vient ici du fait que Koyaga, au lendemain de l'assassinat et de l'émasculatation de ses adversaires politiques par des soldats de sa garde présidentielle, appelés à juste titre les "lycaons", implore contre toute attente aux âmes de ses ancêtres, par d'abondants sacrifices et des prières ferventes, la science de la "bonne administration des hommes et du pays". Cette quête de Koyaga, c'est-à-dire la "bonne administration des hommes et du pays", est d'autant plus ironique qu'elle est contraire à sa nature. En effet, cette quête montre un désir, chez ce dictateur brutal et sanguinaire, de souscrire à un Etat de droit; comme si le bien pouvait découler du mal. En outre, Bingo raconte que les prières offertes aux dieux par Koyaga ont été exaucées et ses sacrifices acceptés. Donc, en toute logique, Koyaga ayant reçu des dieux l'art de la "bonne administration des hommes et du pays", aurait dû s'illustrer comme un grand homme politique ou un honorable chef d'Etat de la République du Golfe. Or, tant s'en faut. Car c'est plutôt dans la voie de la dictature que Koyaga va s'engager, guidé par l'interprétation que Bokano, le marabout, donne au songe d'une vieille sorcière; songe dans lequel des animaux sauvages redoutables ont enseigné tour à tour à Koyaga, " la

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<sup>19</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *En attendant...*, p. 182.

ruse et le lieu de surprendre et de piéger le gibier”<sup>20</sup>. Écoutons les conseils politiques pernecieux et révélateurs que Bokano prodigue à Koyaga:

Vous ne devez, Koyaga, poser aucun acte de chef d’Etat sans un voyage initiatique, sans vous enquérir de l’art de la périlleuse science de la dictature auprès des maîtres de l’autocratie. Il vous faut au préalable voyager. Rencontrer et écouter les maîtres de l’absolutisme et du parti unique, les plus prestigieux des chefs d’Etat des quatre points cardinaux de l’Afrique liberticide.<sup>21</sup>

Voilà donc le chemin que va emprunter Koyaga : se mettre à l’école des grands dictateurs africains de son époque comme Tiékoroni, Bossouma l’homme au totem léopard et bien d’autres. Ceux-là mêmes qui se sont faits une renommée en se maintenant au pouvoir par la force et la violence. Il convient de souligner ici que les voyages initiatiques du jeune Koyaga auprès de ses illustres prédécesseurs africains sont un véritable “éloge sarcastique du mal ”<sup>22</sup> : par exemple, lorsqu’il arrive chez Tiékoroni, les choses qu’il voit (le lac aux caïmans, la prison privée de Saoubas, etc...) et les anecdotes, les points de vue et les conseils qu’il entend, semblent tellement surréels qu’il en reste ébahi :

- Vous voulez sûrement savoir ce que représente cet enclos au milieu de ce parc. Eh bien! c’est la prison de Saoubas, la prison où sont détenus mes amis, mes parents et proches, annonça-t-il. Vous êtes resté ébaubi, vous n’arriviez pas à comprendre. Vous avez cru qu’il plaisantait.

- Non, je ne plaisante pas. Je dis bien la prison de mes vrais amis et de mes vrais proches parents.

Je le dis avec le sérieux de celui qui creuse la tombe de sa belle-mère, précisa-t-il. (...)

Les adversaires politiques sont des ennemis. (...)

On leur applique le traitement qu’ils méritent.

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<sup>20</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *En attendant...*, p. 183.

<sup>21</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *En attendant...*, p.183.

<sup>22</sup> Hachette, *Le Dictionnaire Couleurs* (Paris : Hachette, 1991).

On les torture, les bannit, les assassine. Mais comment se comporter avec les amis sincères ou les proches parents? <sup>23</sup>

Combien nous sommes loin de la prière de Koyaga pour bien gouverner son peuple! Cette prière qui, selon le marabout de Koyaga, a été exaucée, s'oppose à l'enseignement diabolique que Tiékoroni prodigue à Koyaga. Ce contraste inattendu qui sous-tend l'ironie du narrateur, lui sert de tremplin pour exposer Tiékoroni comme étant un monstre sans cœur qui torture, bannit et, pareil à son totem caïman, tue sans remord et sans égard. Notons que ces graves accusations de crimes contre l'humanité portées à l'encontre de Tiékoroni sont reprises par Fanta dans *Quand on refuse, on dit non*, contre le président Félix Houphouët-Boigny. Nous pouvons même dire que les maîtres à penser du mal que furent Machiavel, le marquis de Sade et Lautréamont font piètre figure face à Houphouët-Boigny, tel que nous l'ont révélé Bingo et Fanta. Ceci dit, nous ne pouvons-nous empêcher d'observer qu'il manquera toujours à la fiction le recul objectif et la rigueur méthodologique propres à l'histoire qui fondent la véracité du reportage des faits historiques.

### **1.3. Fiction et réalité sociale dans *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* et *Quand on refuse on dit non* :**

A ce niveau, nous pouvons dire que le rapport d'analogie entre le monde social réel ivoirien et l'univers quoi que surréel de *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages* se perçoit effectivement dans l'identité de certains personnages aux noms évocatifs tels que Tiékoroni et Philipio Yaco qui font allusion respectivement à Félix Houphouët-Boigny (le premier président de la république) et à Phillip Yacé (le premier président de l'assemblée nationale de Côte d'Ivoire). La preuve en est que Tiékoroni signifie "vieillard" ou "le vieux" en malinké; ce qui était une façon populaire parmi les jeunes en Côte d'Ivoire, de s'adresser à leur père ou de dire "le père" d'untel ou "le père" de la nation. En outre, Kourouma

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<sup>23</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *En attendant...*, pp 200-201.

mentionne les titres de Tiékoroni qui reviennent de droit et de fait au président Félix Houphouët-Boigny : président-fondateur du parti unique, l'homme au chapeau mou, l'homme au totem caïman, le bélier de Fasso et le Sage de l'Afrique. En effet, Houphouët-Boigny a été le président-fondateur du parti unique de Côte d'Ivoire, le Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire ou PDCI; il avait aussi l'habitude de porter un chapeau mou communément appelé chapeau melon; son totem officiel était le caïman et son titre traditionnel. Notons également que Fasso en Malinké, signifie "le village de paternel". Nous voyons ainsi, la relation entre « le bélier de Fasso » et "Nana Boigny, le Bélier de Yamoussoukro", Yamoussoukro étant, bien entendu, son village natal qu'il a transformé en ville moderne et nouvelle capitale de la Côte d'Ivoire. En ce qui concerne le titre de Sage de l'Afrique attribué à Tiékoroni, nous pouvons dire que c'était aussi l'un des titres du président Houphouët-Boigny. Fanta confirme cela dans *Quand on refuse, on dit non* lorsqu'elle dit : « Quelques années après, il vint à Houphouët-Boigny l'idée de passer pour le sage de l'Afrique, pour celui qui n'avait jamais versé la moindre goutte de sang humain et qui, par conséquent, méritait le prix Nobel de la paix. »<sup>24</sup>

Pour ce qui est de l'autre personnage, "le secrétaire général du parti unique, le député Philipio Yaco"<sup>25</sup>, son nom et son statut social nous font certainement penser à Philip Yacé qui a été le premier secrétaire général du parti unique, le PDCI, et aussi député de Jacques-ville et premier président de l'Assemblée nationale de la Côte d'Ivoire.

Nous pouvons donc affirmer que si dans *En attendant le vote des bêtes sauvages*, Kourouma met en scène des personnages mythiques ayant des noms fictifs, bref ! des ombres chinoises plutôt que des hommes réels placés dans l'histoire et faisant l'histoire, par contre dans *Quand on refuse on dit non*, il lève toute équivoque et nomme ouvertement les acteurs individuels et collectifs de la crise ivoirienne à savoir Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Henry Konan Bédié, Robert Guéi, Laurent Gbagbo, Alassane

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<sup>24</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *Quand on refuse...*, p. 87.

<sup>25</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *En attendant...*, p.202.



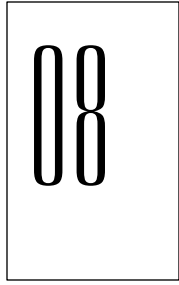
Ouattara etc., ainsi que les Gouro, Bété, Baoulé, Sénoufo, Malinké ou Dioula, Burkinabé, etc. Il y nomme aussi ceux qui tels l'Almamy Samory Touré et les tribus Gouro, Baoulé, Attié, etc. ont opposé une résistance farouche à la colonisation française. La particularité de *Quand on refuse on dit non*, c'est que Kourouma a écrit ici un roman qui déborde la fiction par son projet historique et par son engagement politique qui est de révéler les enjeux réels du conflit tribal ivoirien. D'où le fait qu'il présente Fanta en train d'enseigner avec minutie l'histoire et la géographie (le milieu naturel, la population et l'économie) de la Côte d'Ivoire à Birahima qui avoue être « ignorant comme la queue d'un âne »<sup>26</sup>.

### **Conclusion :**

Ahmadou Kourouma a bien su transposer la réalité sociale tragique de l'Afrique et en particulier de la Côte d'Ivoire dans ses deux romans, *En attendant le vôte des bêtes sauvages* et *Quand on refuse on dit non*, en usant d'un ton satirique et en adoptant une écriture qui tient à la fois de l'oralité (pour les interventions des griots Bingo et Tiécoura, mais aussi pour celles de Birahima) et du style soutenu (pour les interventions de Fanta). Mais il va sans dire que son désir de témoigner afin de préserver la mémoire des événements tragiques qui ont marqué l'Afrique et son pays, la Côte d'Ivoire, prime dans ces deux œuvres dont la seconde fait figure de testament politique. En effet, l'on ne saurait comprendre ces romans sans se référer à l'histoire des pays Africains d'après les indépendances. Nous pouvons dire donc que ces deux ouvrages de Kourouma illustrent fort bien le lien nécessaire et dynamique qui existe entre la littérature (ou la fiction romanesque) et le vécu ou la réalité sociale sur laquelle est bâtie l'œuvre littéraire. Ce lien est d'autant plus dynamique que l'auteur s'engage à fond dans son œuvre et lui assigne une intention de transformation sociale. Mais jusqu'où reste-t-il impartial dans son engagement? Cette question ne saurait être cernée dans le cadre de cet article et ouvre la voie à d'autres débats sur le parti pris de Kourouma dans ces œuvres.

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<sup>26</sup> Kourouma, Ahmadou. *Quand on refuse...*, p. 42



# A Feminist Film Reading of Julie Okoh's *Who is Afraid of Job Interview?*

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## Abstract

The emergence of feminist filmmaking in the Nigerian Video Film Industry collaborates with feminist literature to champion the cause of women in Nigeria. The focus of this paper is to examine how women are presented and represented in Nollywood films. This study uses *Who's Afraid of Job Interview?* by Julie Okoh to appraise the narrative styles in Nollywood's feminist films. The methodology employed for this study is that of critical analysis whereby *Who's Afraid of Job Interview?* is screened and evaluated by means of principles underlying narrative theories. Among the findings of this study is the fact that most Nollywood female filmmakers devalue women, deny them equal rights and portray them in bad light in their narratives. It is therefore apropos that stakeholders in the industry properly delineate the slim difference between the prevailing patriarchal gender representation and the image of women and the

overall development of womanhood. It is hoped that this study would guide filmmakers and scholars on how not to create female characters and how best to level the playing field for both sexes.

**Keywords:** Feminist, Film, Reading, Narrative, Style.

### **Introduction**

Feminism, which is also understood as the fight for rights and self-affirmation by women, is a long standing struggle by women. According to Chukwuma (1998, p.150), the practice itself preceded the nomenclature in Nigeria. Though Tasie (2013, p.279) observes that “all over Africa, women often are seen but not heard,” Chukwuma believes “Nigerian women in this century have variously fought for their rights in a show of power and resilience.” Shaka and Uchendu corroborate Chukwuma when they observe that feminism has millennial roots going back to mythical figures like Liliath, to the legendary fighting Amazons of Greece and ancient *Dahomey*, and to classical plays like Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata* (Shaka and Uchendu, 2012, p.1). Barry, (as cited in Shaka and Uchendu) observes that the Women’s Movement of the 1960s was not the beginning of feminism, though the feminist critical theory of today might be a product of the 1960s women’s movement that swept through Europe and America before finally getting to Africa. And that what this simply implies is that the struggle for gender equality is a long standing struggle which women are not prepaid to give up.

The African woman’s quest for identity takes a centre stage in the creative vision of many contemporary African writers, both male and female (Iboroma, 2012, p.173). In Nigeria, feminism started as activism with a political orientation when in 1927, the colonialists established taxation in southern Nigeria. Chukwuma observes that the men so taxed accepted it in the light of the supremacist tendencies already manifested by the colonialists to which they had no resistance. But even with male taxation, the women shared part of the economic burden especially during the periods of scarcity. Nina Mba (1992, p.78) in Chukwuma (p.150) recorded that “many women were having to pay for their sons and male relations.” The burden was big enough, however, with the news of women taxation in 1929, the women reacted in an unprecedented solidarity and sisterhood across linguistic boundaries. Of course, the reaction was spontaneous, and women from Aba, Abak and Opobo, moved in protest against the White Administration on two counts; women taxation and abolition of warrant chiefs. Fifty-five women paid the ultimate price for this, but the women got their demands (Chukwuma, p.150). Usen is quick to observe that,

the Abak women's protest took place in Etim Ekpo (in Abak division) and that the protest claimed more lives than as reported by Chukwuma. Abak protest which took place on 16<sup>th</sup> December 1929 witnessed in the midst of the protest, able-bodied men dressed in women's attires with artificial breasts, breaking and looting the Whiteman's supermarket at Utu Etim Ekpo. Few days later, on a pretext to settle the dispute, the Whiteman summoned chiefs and men in the locality to Utu Etim Ekpo. As they gathered, he positioned a machine gun and asked them to come closer for a photograph for the Queen of England as a sign of settlement. As the people went close mistaking the machine gun for a camera on tripod, the Whiteman opened fire and killed over hundred people in that single attack (Usen, 2014, p.95). Twenty years later in 1949, the Abeokuta Women's Union led by Chief (Mrs.) Ransome-Kuti (1900-1978) successfully carried out a three-year campaign for the abolition of the female flat rate tax, the removal of Ademola as Alake, the abolition of the S.N.A (Sole Native Authority) system and the representation and participation of women in the reformed system of administration (Mba, 1992, p.141).

Obioma Nnaemeka (1993, p.7) argues that unlike in the West, where men are seen by feminists as enemies and call for the separation of the sexes, African feminism is family-centred, does not see men, society and women as enemies. Men are accommodated in African feminism but not as overbearing lords and slave masters. Its strength is on sisterhood, and its objective is empowering women and complementarity of the sexes. And that African feminist resists the exclusion of men from women issues. According to Nnaemeka:

African feminists also resist universalization of western notion of sexual harassment because ours is a culture that permits human contact and touch. Therefore, what constitutes sexual harassment in an office in Washington DC, may not be regarded as such in a farm in an African village (cited in Shaka, 2014, p.44).

Unfortunately, after the first and second generations of these African crusaders, with all the international and national buffers, Nigerian women are rallying rather slowly. Some feminist writers even distance themselves from the movement. As Chukwuma puts it:

Still on attitude, so much is public critical onslaught on feminism that feminist writers deny any identification with feminism. Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta and their Ghanaian counterpart, Ama Ata Aidoo, say they are not

feminists. Nwapa preferred the term “womanist” as her reference (Chukwuma 1998, p.158).

Charles Nnolim submits that “women are not their own best friends.” According to him, the creation of unhappy women in Nigeria literature has not been a sin committed by male authors alone. Women authors equally are guilty of the same offence as they equally depict women in bad light. He explains further that: “if Elechi Amadi shackles Ihuoma (*The Concubine*) with the myth of the sea king who prevents her from achieving conjugal felicity, Flora Nwapa equally yokes Efuru with the myth of Uhamiri which denies her the joys of motherhood” (Nnolim, 1998, p.167). Indeed, women subjugation is a crime committed by both sexes in our society. Bature-Uzor informs that “the issue of women subjugation in our society has been a recurring problem. This subjugation manifests in several ways and is carried out by both sexes who are members of the same society” (2014, p.33).

In the field of cinema, the achievement of the Women’s Movement has been considerable, though most present-day feminists would insist that there is still much to be accomplished in the battle against patriarchal values. Louis Giannetti (2002, pp. 437-443) has argued that during the heyday of the big Hollywood studios - and especially the 1930s through the 1950s - that the status of women within the industry was dismal. There were no women in the upper echelons of management. Out of the thousands of movies produced by the studios, only a handful was directed by women, and virtually none were produced by them. According to him, the unions also discriminated against females, allowing very few of them to enter their ranks. It is true, there were some women in the areas of screenwriting, editing, and costuming, but only in the field of acting did women enjoy a degree of prominence because it was simply not economically feasible to exclude women from in front of the camera.

In some film industries, females usually have shorter careers because they are thought to be too old for leading roles once they are past forty. In Nollywood, male stars like Pete Edochie, Olu Jacobs, Justus Esiri, Enebeli Elebuwa and others still play leads in their sixties. Most times, they are often paired with women twenty or thirty years younger than themselves. A pattern rarely permitted for those few females stars who somehow manage to hold on past forty. For example, in Hollywood, actresses like Joan Crawford and Bette Davis spent the final twenty years of their long careers playing mostly grotesque caricatures. It was the only work they could get (Giannetti, p.438). In Nollywood, these aged women play grotesques, witches, wicked mothers-in-

law, wicked grand-mothers or step-mothers among others. According to Giannetti, feminist critic, Annette Kuhn, has pointed out that within the movies themselves, women were usually socially constructed as “the other” or “the outsider” in a male-dominated world. Women didn’t get to tell their own stories because the images were controlled by men. Generally, women are treated as sex objects - valued primarily for their good looks and sex appeal. Their main function is to support their men, seldom to lead a fulfilling life of their own. “They believe mainly in marriage as one of the highways to self-realization and self-fulfillment. Even though most of them view the institution of marriage as a prison house, they are so child-hungry that they submit to all kinds of inconvenient arrangements with men in order to have children as another avenue to self-fulfillment and the “love-trap” keeps enmeshing African women, with their eyes wide open, into all kinds of relationship with those the feminists among them call their enemy - men” (Nnolim, 1998, p.165). Nnolim concludes that African women are the architects of their own misfortune, but Julie Okoh has a contrary opinion by blaming the men folk and the society for the women’s undoing. Comparing African society with the Western society Okoh opines:

I could sense gender discrimination in the world of my childhood. When reading the story about Helen of Troy, I wondered how a mere woman could cause war between two powerful nations. How could Queen Cleopatra of Egypt provoke a battle between Mark Anthony and Augustus Caesar? I kept on pondering over the nature of their society. Imagine a woman becoming a queen when my mother couldn’t become a chief. Which Uromi or Ubiaja man would want to fight over a mere woman, no matter her beauty? Wait, let me show you the picture of one eccentric Uromi man. Mr. Okoedo had twelve wives at home and many concubines outside marriage. Each wife was called by her number, inscribed on her hands with the tip of a hot metal object: Mrs. Okoedo No. 1,2,3, - 12. When a wife died, she was replaced with another woman to balance up the 12 numbers (Okoh, 2012, p.3).

### **A Critical Analysis of *Who’s Afraid of Job Interview?***

First version. 2010. Stanbow. Scripted and directed by Julie Okoh. Photographed by Ime Usen. Edited by Blaqhype M&E. Music by T.Y. Bello. With Balogun Shola, Damilare Dawodu, Matilda Alagoa, Alfred Fadar, Amadi Clinton, Chukwuemeka Maduka, Ego Ahanonu, Porbeni Ogbotubo.

Julie Okoh has long insisted that she wrote and directed plays for “Feminist Theatre” based on the principles of feminism, a theatre that will help propagate feminism in Nigeria (Okoh, 2012, P.5). Like most satirical plays, *Who’s Afraid of Job Interview?* has a complex plot, involving two major lines of action. In one line Daniel (played by Damilare Dawodu), an applicant of two years, after repeated failure at job interviews is now tutored by Moses (played by Balogun Shola) on the do’s and don’ts before, during and after job interview. The second line of action involve a group of applicants (Alfred Fadar, Amadi Clinton and Matilda Alagoa) preparing and attending a job interview, showing their individual approach to job interviews. The film has three long scenes. Scene 1 comprises (a) Daniel at his residence contemplating on what to do to excel in job interviews after repeated failures; (b) Daniel in a cab to Moses’s office; (c) our introduction to Balogun Oil and Gas Group of Companies; (d) the first conversation between Daniel and Moses; (e) Moses taking Daniel on a long job interview lecture; (f) Moses and Daniel watching a playback of the company’s recorded job interview; and (g) Daniel leaving for a job interview.

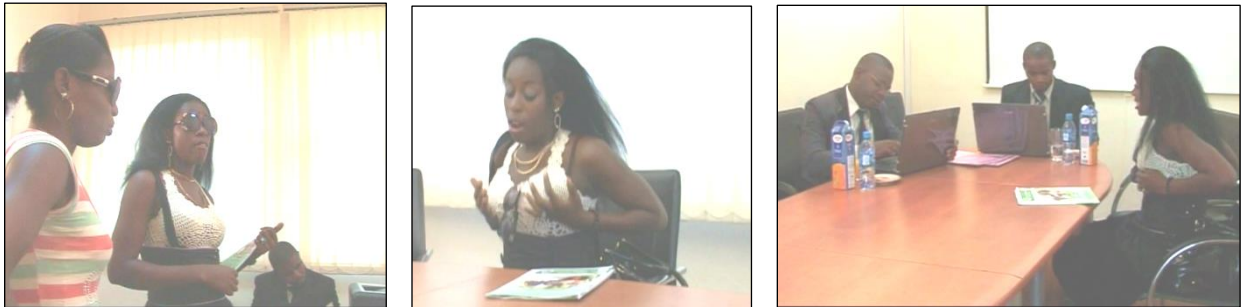


**Figure 1a. (left)**, Moses congratulates Daniel after a successful interview. **Figure 1b. (middle)**, Clinton Amadi answering questions field by the interviewers. **Figure 1c. (right)**, Alfred Fadar making a point during the interview.

Scene 2 comprise (a) the introduction of all the applicants, one after the other coming into the company’s reception and waiting for the interview to start; (b) the applicants and the various ways of their preparations for the interview; and (c) applicants in the boardroom and the interview proper. Scene 3 comprise (a) Daniel in Moses office for a report on how the interview went; (b) Moses and Daniel planning interview follow-up strategy; and (c) ending part of the movie.

Unlike most feminist films, *Who’s Afraid of Job Interview?* has eight major characters out of which five are males and only three are females. All five men dress in suits and play prominent roles. While Moses is the CEO of Balogun Oil and Gas Group of Companies, Fadar is the best applicant for the interview. He dresses in a black fitted suit with well-polished black shoes to match, intelligent,

speaks logically, has self-confidence and demonstrates knowledge of the job he is vying for. Balogun's Secretary (Ogbotubo Porbeni) dresses in a simple gown. Female Candidate (Matilda Alagoa) dresses like a full-time prostitute to attend a job interview: a short skirt, high heels, dark glasses, dangling earrings, a breasts-exposing sleeveless see-through blouse, double necklaces; above all, she is chewing gum. Her sister, Mabel (Ego Ahanonu) fared no better. After pretending to accompany Matilda to the interview, she dresses in a most horrible manner: a lap-exposing short gown, high heels, sunshades, an attention-attracting handbag; above all, another gum chewer.



**Figure 2a. (left)**, Matilda and Mabel entering into company's reception. **Figure 2b. (middle)**, Matilda caresses her breasts during the interview **Figure 2c. (right)**, Matilda trying to lure panel members during the interview

The image of women in the film has been frighteningly debased. Matilda is dangerously beautiful but academically indolent. She cannot answer any of the questions in the interview but rather she exhibits signs of fatigue and memory loss. She tries all she can to lure members of the panel of interview through exhibitionism. Every now and then she will caress her breasts and announce to the interviewers how she bought what she is wearing specifically for the interview. The strong perfume Matilda wears forces one of the interviewers to complain of being choke. Worrisome in the extreme is the way Matilda is chewing gum during interview, until one of the interviewers ask her to stop it. Left alone, Matilda and her sister-in-sin, Mabel, will destroy society.

### **The Task Ahead**

Although not all women filmmakers are feminists (and not all feminists are women) but like most African female writers, Nollywood female filmmakers distance themselves from feminist film productions. In the countries of the West, feminist filmmakers - both male and female - are attempting to overcome prejudice through their movies by providing fresh perspectives. According to Louis Giannetti, Freud once asked in exasperation "What do women want?" Film critic Molly Haskell has answered succinctly: "We want nothing less, on



or off the screen than the wide variety and dazzling diversity of male options.” Nigerian female filmmakers like Amaka Igwe, Helen Ukpabio, Emem Isong, Oby Kechere and Julie Okoh, among others, were expected to make the difference. Rather, they make films that promote patriarchy in the country. In most of their films, female characters are marginalized and seldom at the centre of the action. The heroine’s function is to cheer from the sidelines, to wait passively until the hero claims her for his reward. Certain characteristics are regarded as intrinsically “masculine”: intellects, ambition, sexual confidence, independence, and career - all of those traits are generally presented as inappropriate and unseemly in women. As feminist writers use their pens favourably, Nigerian feminist filmmakers should be able to use their cameras effectively to counter the social construct occasioned by patriarchal arrangements. Since language is gendered (another form of socialization) they should be mindful enough in their use of language to avoid shooting themselves in the foot. As Helen Cixious has advised:

Women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck or destroy partitions, classics, rhetorics, regulations and codes. They must submerge, cut-through, get beyond the ultimate reserve-discourse, including the one that laughs at the very idea of pronouncing the word ‘silence’. Such is the strength of women that sweeping away syntax, breaking the famous thread which acts for men as surrogate umbilical chords (as cited in Barry p.128).

To harken to Cixious’ humble advice, Nigeria female filmmakers should use their cameras in like manner. They should see men and male filmmakers not as enemies but as partners in problem-solving and social change. The big task ahead is how to encourage most Nollywood filmmakers, especially the female filmmakers, to reverse their thinking from making films that continue to undermine women, to making films that will glorify womanhood because films like *Rattle Snake 1 and II* (1995) and *Adama* (1995) by Amaka Igwe portrayed women as diabolical and demonic. Beginning with ritual genre, epic genre, and to romantic genre, Ekwuazi (2007), Okome (1997), and Shaka (2007) complain that most of these films portray women in bad light. According to Shaka and Uchendu, in all these feminist video films, whether the ritual genre or the epic genre, the images of women were predominantly negative (p.11). It is either they are portrayed as prostitutes as in *Glamour Girls* (1994), *Italian Connections* (1995) or *Who’s Afraid of Job Interview?* (2010) or as wicked beings trying to undo

their men to take over their wealth as in *True Confession* (1995). As Shaka explains “video films like *Living in Bondage* 1 & II, *Circle of Doom* I & II, *Glamour Girls* I & II, *Taboo* I & II, *Jezebel* I & II, *Evil Passion* I & II, *Nneka: The Pretty Serpent* I & II, *Rattle Snake* I & II, *Fatal Desire*, and many others, treat the issue of transgressive sex and violence” (2011, p.244).

With the introduction of romance genre, film critics thought things will change for good for the women. But it is noticed that even in the romance genre women have not been appropriately represented. As Shaka and Uchendu observe:

We have witnessed the introduction of romantic love with such video films as *Tears in Marriage*, (Michael Jaja, 2000), *Sweet pains* (Osita Okoli, 2006), *Rock my World* (Nonso Ekene Okonkwo, 2009), *Last Kiss* (Dickson Iroegbu, 2006), *Married to the Enemy* (Willies Ajenge, 2007) among others. Not even in the romantic love genre have women been appropriately represented. They are either portrayed as too jealous and scheming to feel any serious romantic emotions; or too spineless and emotional, crying needlessly at a man’s promiscuity and betrayal. (Shaka and Uchendu, 2012, p.11).

## Conclusion

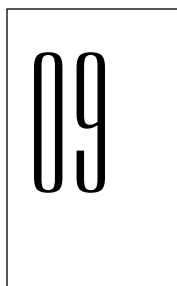
Although Nnolim (1998, p.167) and Usen (2009, p.46) see feminism as existing only in literature, Ezenwanebe (2006, p.17) articulates that feminism is a 20<sup>th</sup> century literary criticism that examines the place of women in art and life. The great movement is prominent in cinema though very minimal in Nollywood. The greatest of all Hollywood women directors, Lina Wertmuller, was criticized by some feminist film critics for featuring vulgar, garrulous female characters who look like Rubens and Titian nudes - put together. But according to Giannetti, however funny her women characters are, Wertmuller’s females are usually strong, with a surer sense of personal identity than the males. In her greatest film, she satirizes the macho “code of honour” by equating a bullying older brother with the institution of patriarchy, the Mafia and fascism itself (p.438). Perhaps Nollywood women directors should take a leaf from Wertmuller. They may not feature vulgar women characters, but beautiful ones. Feminists rarely object to portraying women as sexually attractive; they merely insist that other aspects of their humanity also be dramatized. Perhaps nothing angers them so much, as reduce women to sex objects or pleasure machines.

The recurrent and consistent negative portrayal of Nigerian women in Nollywood could be viewed as character assassination. As Shaka and Uchendu would have it, “film scholars and critics need to rise up and cry out against this trend to save the Nigerian women from further character assassination and misrepresentation locally and internationally.”

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# Neo-Gerontocracy and Western Democracy: An Analysis of the Impact of Tiv Culture on Western Democracy in Benue State

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## ABSTRACT

A century and a half ago, Western democracy was unknown in many parts of the world. Towards the end of colonialism this form of government began to emerge in the non-Western world. As time went by, this form of government became canonised and the West adjudged that it was a form of government suitable for the rest of mankind. This paper acknowledges that Western democracy is good, even for Third World nations. But can Africa adopt Western democracy without any form of alteration or adaptation? If Africa cannot practice Western Democracy without adaptation, what contemporary real-life factor or factors could be responsible for this? To contribute in providing answers to these questions, the paper explores the contemporary political history and current affairs of the Tiv of Benue State in order to examine aspects of real-life democratic practice in Tivland. To this end, the writer employed both

quantitative and qualitative methods of research. To obtain the data necessary for evaluating the role of clan elders in Benue politics questionnaires were used. Historical method was also used for gathering information. To obtain information from oral sources, the interviewees were deliberately selected and open-ended questions were used. Using the aforementioned methodologies, the paper claims that neo-gerontocracy (an aspect of Tiv traditional culture) has, to some extent, influenced the practice of Western democracy in Benue State. The paper looks in the direction of citizenship policy in Nigeria and the theory of cultural diffusion to explain why neo-gerontocracy is a factor in the current political calculations of Benue State. Drawing from the interface of neo-gerontocracy and Western democracy in Tivland and from the theory of cultural diffusion, the paper concludes that Western democracy can be adapted in non-Western cultures.

**Key Terms:** Neo-gerontocracy, Clan, Democracy, Elders, Tiv

## INTRODUCTION

This paper is not a study in the theories of democracy. The paper attempts to delineate the impact of Tiv culture, particularly the role of clan elders, on the practice of Western styled democracy in Benue State. It is this focus on the influence of clan elders in the political decision making of Tivland that informed the use of the word "gerontocracy" in the title of the paper. In pre-colonial times, gerontocracy held sway among the Tiv; but the colonial and missionary occupation of Tivland made gerontocracy to almost go underground. This paper claims that the re-introduction of democracy has given Tiv clan elders an important place in the politics of Benue State, hence "neo-gerontocracy."

This study centres on the contemporary political history and current affairs of the Tiv of Benue State. Therefore, the writer employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of research. To obtain the data necessary for evaluating the role of clan elders in Benue politics, a quantitative research method instrument was used. The research instrument was not administered to clan elders. Forty-one people between the ages of 20 and 70 years who could read and write were randomly selected in the headquarters of Gboko and Tarka Local Government Areas.<sup>1</sup> Of the forty-one people selected, 83% had tertiary education. The responses given to the various questions are expressed in percentage which is used to evaluate the impact of clan elders on democracy in

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<sup>1</sup> Twenty-four questionnaires were filled by respondents at Gboko while seventeen were filled at Wannune. Initially the writer planned to include Buruku LGA in the study. When he reached the field, he was advised not to go to Buruku in view of ongoing Fulani attacks.

Benue State. Historical method was also used for gathering information.<sup>2</sup> To obtain information from oral sources, the interviewees were deliberately selected and open-ended questions were used. The information gathered from these sources, was critically selected and compared for consistency with a view to excluding bias and erroneous information. This critical historical approach was useful for acquiring the needed accurate information for documentation.

## THE PAPER IN THE CONTEXT OF EXISTING LITERATURE

There is a plethora of literary works on democracy in Africa. The works that are available to the present writer, which are related to the concern of this paper, include those of John A. Wiseman, Christian Potholm, Walter Oyugi et al, Mvendaga Jibo and Akpenpuun Dzugba. In *Democracy in Black Africa: Survival and Revival*, Wiseman takes a survey of the fortune of democracy in some African countries and identifies "cultural heterogeneity" as one of the factors that could not let democracy thrive in post-colonial black Africa. By this he means that African people lack "the cultural glue to hold them together."<sup>3</sup> In this light, the writer sees culture as a destroyer rather than an aid to the practice of Western democracy in Africa. Potholm looks at trends in African politics and gives ten reasons why democracy was eroded in the post-colonial Africa of the 1970s. None of these ten reasons have any link to the theme of the power of culture (143-152).<sup>4</sup> *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa* sets out to identify why democracy was not doing well in Africa in the 1970s and 80s. To address this concern the contributors of the book look in all directions. One of the contributors, Afrifa Gitonga, barely points in the direction of culture.<sup>5</sup> Mvendaga Jibo's work, *Elite Politics in the Middle Belt of Nigeria 1993-2014*, revolves around how a privileged minority in North Central Nigeria, particularly in Tivland, manipulate power to their own advantage. Jibo could not dwell on the interface of culture and democracy in Tivland.<sup>6</sup> In *On the Tiv of*

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<sup>2</sup> Admittedly, a limitation of this study is the researcher's inability to lay hands on minutes of meetings of Tiv elders and political parties in Tivland; so there is an over-dependence on oral sources, although oral sources are universally considered valid in historical reconstruction. This is evident in referencing style texts.

<sup>3</sup> John A. Wiseman, *Democracy in Black Africa: Survival and Revival* (New York: P.H. Publishers), 1990. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Potholm, Christiana P. *The Theory and Practice of African Politics* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.), 1979. 143-152.

<sup>5</sup> Afrifa K. Gitonga, "The Meaning and Foundations of Democracy" in Oyugi, Walter O. and Others (ed), *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann), 1988. 4-23.

<sup>6</sup> Mvendaga Jibo, *Elite Politics in the Middle Belt of Nigeria 1993-2014* (Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited), 2014.

*Central Nigeria: A Cultural Perspective*, Akpenpuun Dzurgba explores the cultural history of the Tiv with the hope that students and teachers of plural cultures may have a credible material on the Tiv. In his section two, he discusses traditional politics and government. In consonance with the purpose for which the book was written, he could not focus on the role of clan elders in the domestication of Western styled democracy in Benue State.<sup>7</sup>

None of the available literature has brought to the fore the might of culture, particularly the influence of clan elders, in shaping and re-shaping intruding or imported foreign concepts and ideologies like Western democracy. It seems the role of clan elders in Benue politics during the fourth republic is an area that has not received the attention of scholars. Thus, this paper should perhaps be seen as a kind of introductory study.

## MAIN FEATURES OF TIV PRE-COLONIAL AND COLONIAL POLITICAL HISTORY

The Tiv people are the largest tribe in North Central Nigeria. They are the dominant ethnic group in Benue State with a sizable number in Taraba and Nasarawa States. They are also found in other neighbouring states and beyond.

In pre-colonial Tiv society, the Tiv knew of no king or central government as did some of their neighbours.<sup>8</sup> During this period, gerontocracy was the form of government among the people. In this form of quasi-democratic government, every senior elder was the leader of his household; and every community was led by a council of elders.<sup>9</sup> No one elder was sovereign; sovereignty rested on the collective decision of the elders of a clan or community. With the passage of time, their contact with the Hausa and Jukun led the Tiv to experiment with *Tor Agbände* (drum chief).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Akpenpuun Dzurgba, *On the Tiv of Central Nigeria: A Cultural Perspective* (Ibadan: J. Archers), 2007. 125-129.

<sup>8</sup> A.A. Luga and J.K. Tortema, *Tor Tiv: A Brief Background History of the Institution* (Makurdi: S.O. Press), nd. 18.

<sup>9</sup> This seems to resemble the Ibo pre-colonial traditional political arrangement. Justin Iyorbee Tseyayo seems to deny that gerontocracy was the form of government of Pre-colonial Tivland. In his own words: "The Tiv political structure was assumed, by the Colonial Administration, to be rooted in a system of 'gerontocracy'. Rather than viewing them as custodians, the colonial administration saw the Tiv elders as an embodiment of the supreme authorities of the various genealogical units" (23); but in a twist that betrays the coherence of his thoughts he admits that: "[...] it is not the leader or head of the family but paternal kinsmen who, as a corporate body, are sovereign [...] The head of a large family group who appears too weak in providing civil and religious leadership to his group may also be ignored" (32).

<sup>10</sup> Eugene Rubingh, *Sons of Tiv: A Study of the Rise of the Church Among the Tiv of Central Nigeria* (Michigan: Baker Book House), 1969. 141-145.



When the British occupied Tivland from the 1900s, they found that there were many *Tor Agbande* in parts of Tivland. In keeping with its indirect rule policy, the colonial office tried to use those who occupied the Tiv new-found chieftaincy stool as district heads. In the end, the *Tor Agbande* was not popular with the people; as a result, the British overlooked those who occupied the stool and constituted a council of elders in their bid to preserve Tiv gerontocracy.<sup>11</sup> Later, the colonial-instituted council of elders was discarded and eventually replaced with *Tor Tiv* after World War II.<sup>12</sup> In this way the influence of elders as a ruling class was dealt a heavy blow. Additionally, the phasing out of exchange marriage among the Tiv by the colonial administration and the weakening of the power of witchcraft by the Christian missionaries made the elders to lose grip on young people. Before this development, the youths were submissive to the elders in a society under the sway of gerontocracy in order to get wives and protection from the power of witchcraft.<sup>13</sup>

### WESTERN DEMOCRACY

This section sketches the general outline of Western democracy and an aspect of the debate surrounding its transmission to "Third World" nations. It seems there is no generally accepted definition of democracy. However, from the etymology of the word ("demo" - people; "cracy" - rule) it is that form of government the people give birth to; and is led by the people; for the welfare and prosperity of the people. Democracy basically hinges on the understanding that "The will of the people is sovereign"; and therefore they should produce their government through "open competition for leadership";<sup>14</sup> and they should lead their government for their own welfare and prosperity. It is believed that for democracy to work, there should be the liberty of every individual and adult universal franchise. At every stage, there should be fairness and justice. There should be rule of law; and there should also be check and balance through the separation of powers. The existence of an electoral umpire is also considered essential; and it is generally accepted that since many nations are made up of large human populations, representative democracy, a Western adaptation of

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Luga and Tortema, 22.

<sup>13</sup> Eugene Rubingh, 154-155.

<sup>14</sup> E. S. Atieno Odhiambo, "Democracy and the Ideology of Order in Kenya: 1986-1988" in Oyugi, Walter O. and Others (ed), *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa* (Portsmouth: Heinemann), 1988. 119.

Athenian direct democracy,<sup>15</sup> is the ideal. It seems these are the elements that constitute a complete Western democratic edifice.

The transplantation of this Western democratic edifice into other cultures faltered in many post-colonial African states. This seems to have led to the agitation to modify the Western form of democracy to suit the situation of the non-Western world; and it seems this agitation has led to two fundamental questions: What aspects of this Western democratic edifice are so sacrosanct that their absence will warrant the allegation "undemocratic"; and what aspects can be compromised without this allegation?<sup>16</sup> This paper attempts to paint a picture of how the principle of open competition for leadership, an aspect of Western democracy, is compromised at the grassroots in Tivland by the influence of clan elders. To this we now turn.

## WESTERN DEMOCRACY AND TIV CULTURE

### Tiv Elders and Politics before the Return of Democracy

Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Nil <sup>17</sup>	Total
19%	27%	5%	37%	7%	5%	100%

Table 1: Clan Elders in Politics before the Coming Back of Democracy

The table above shows the opinions of respondents to the statement, "Before the coming back of democracy clan elders did not have power in Benue politics." While 19% strongly agree that clan elders did not have power in politics before the coming back of democracy, a paltry 7% strongly disagree. In contrast, the column "Agree" and "Disagree" have a difference of 10% in favour of "Disagree." The responses suggest that even before the return of democracy during the fourth republic, clan elders in Tivland had power in Benue politics. This view is contested by Ronald Perkaa who posits that during military rule the power of elders in politics was not anywhere near what is obtainable in the present democratic dispensation because *tyo* (Tiv people/clan elders) was not always consulted before the sons and daughters of Tiv were given political appointments. Some Tiv sons who had connections outside the *tyo* got political

<sup>15</sup> Mark Cartwright, *Athenian Democracy*, [http://www.ancient.eu/Athenian\\_Democracy/](http://www.ancient.eu/Athenian_Democracy/), Date published 13 October 2014, Date accessed 5 April 2016. par. 1, 16, 18.

<sup>16</sup> Gitonga, 5-7.

<sup>17</sup> Nil means those who did not give their opinion on this question.

appointments without the help of Tiv elders.<sup>18</sup> Thus the responses are not in tune with historical reality.

### **Return of Democracy and the Challenge of Few Elective Positions**

When democracy returned during the fourth republic, it meant that there were elective posts that would need candidates to fill during each election season. For the Tiv, this was a welcome development; but one which also brought an obvious concomitant challenge: Tiv clans were many and the elective positions could not go round the clans during one election season. For the Tiv, it was necessary to look for a way out. The solution was found in "*ya na angban*" (eat and share with your brother), a philosophy that is popular among the Tiv. The philosophy of "*ya na angban*" has a history; it dates back to the past and had been the reason for the rotation of the Tor Tiv stool among the Ipusu and the Ichongo, the two main divisions of Tiv.<sup>19</sup> This philosophy was so strong that by 1964, elective positions in the NKST<sup>20</sup> church were shared by the Ipusu and the Ichongo. This practice of sharing church elective positions was banned by the NKST church in its synod of 1965.<sup>21</sup> In spite of the ban the practice of sharing church offices among clans did not completely die out in the church.<sup>22</sup>

With the re-introduction of Western-style representative democracy in Nigeria during the fourth republic, "*ya na angban*" was brought to bear on the electoral process. This philosophy means that since elective positions cannot go round the clans during a single election period, electoral opportunities are zoned and made to rotate among the different political zones, sub-zones, clans, and households. For example if the governor of Benue came from clan "p" this election season, it is required that during the next election season, the post should move to clan "q" or clan "r". In practical terms, there are three senatorial districts (or major political zones) in Benue State; these are zones "A", "B" and "C". The Tiv rotation system excludes zone "C", the Idoma, Iggede and Agatu

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<sup>18</sup> Ronald Perkaa, Interview, Gboko, 13th March 2016. This was corroborated by Abele Ngusha Simeon (Interview, Gboko, 13 March 2016).

<sup>19</sup> *Tsombor U Tiv* (Kwande: Dan Udende Printing and Publishers), 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Nongo u Kristu u i Ser u sha Tar (English name: Universal Reformed Christian Church).

<sup>21</sup> Benjamin Ityavkase Shii, *Christianity in Tivland: A History of NKST* (Makurdi: Oracle Business Ltd), 2011. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Group interview with Solomon Terhemen Igyor, Alexander Yakubu Waako and Isaiiah Tyoapine Mnengean. These men are members of the clergy in the NKST church. They are within the age range of 40 to 50. Solomon is a pastor of the NKST church in Jos. The others are from Benue State but are in Jos for postgraduate studies in the Theological College of Northern Nigeria, Bukuru.

political district.<sup>23</sup> Within zone "A" and "B"<sup>24</sup>, there are five Tiv political sub-zones, Minda, Sankera, Jemgbagh, Jeghchira and Kwande.<sup>25</sup> Each of these Tiv political sub-zones is made up of two or more Local Government Areas. Within these five Tiv political sub-zones, there are clans; and each clan consists of many families.<sup>26</sup>

### Elders in the Rotation System

Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
39%	37%	7%	7%	10%	100%

Table 2: The Relevance of Clan Elders in the Rotation System

In reply to the statement, "The rotation system where elective political positions are rotated among the clans has made clan elders relevant in Benue politics", the above responses were received. In both local government headquarters visited by the present writer, the responses of informants suggest that the rotation system in Tivland is more than a standard to which people aspire.<sup>27</sup> The responses on table 2 show a sum of 76% for both the "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" columns. This means that there is an overwhelming support for the position that the rotation system has made clan elders relevant in Benue politics. In the rotation scheme clan elders become important for two reasons. First, Nigerian democracy requires aspirants to go back to their constituencies; and

<sup>23</sup> There are Tiv in Zone "C" but they are in the minority so they do not count in the political calculation of the zone.

<sup>24</sup> There is a Jukun settlement at Abinse in Zone B. The Jukun King at Abinse is represented in the Tiv traditional council (Solomon Terhemem Igyor, Alexander Yakubu Waako and Isaiah Tyoapine Mnengean, Group Interview, 16 February 2016).

<sup>25</sup> Naadzenga Festus Terkar, Interview, Jos, 12th February 2016. Terkar is from Vandeikya. He is in Jos for studies. Solomon Terhemem Igyor noted that Tiv had two sons, Ichongo and Ipusu. Ipusu had four: Ukum, Shitire, Kparev and Tongov. It was Kparev that had Jemgbagh, Jeghchira and Kwande which are now claimed to be the sons of Ipusu; rather than his grand children. On account of this some Ichongo believe that the current Tiv sub-political zones is not fair (Interview, Jos, 5 April 2016).

<sup>26</sup> Clifford Gbasha, Interview, Jos, 9th February 2016. Gbasha is from the village of Vandeikya. Born and brought up in Gboko, he is an active participant of Benue politics as an elector. Gbasha is in Jos for postgraduate studies in the University of Jos.

<sup>27</sup> Garba Terfa, Interview, Gboko, 15 March 2016; Jonathan Shachia Tarka, Interview, Wannune, 14 March 2016. Jonathan Tarka said it was the rotation system, a result of the philosophy of "*ya na angban*", that gave him the office of Deputy Local Government Chairman on the ticket of the Tarka family.

the elders are the owners of Tiv primary constituencies (the clans). In this situation, a fresh political aspirant who had been away from his clan on government service or private business and who has no veritable political connections and naira power is most likely to, as a matter of necessity, depend wholly on the elders of his clan for recognition and acceptance. Second, the popularity of the saying "*Tahav ka tyo*" strengthened the position of elders in Tiv politics. This saying has roots in pre-colonial times. It means power belongs to the community; but ultimately, to the clan elders and the living ancestors.<sup>28</sup>

Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
63.4%	29%	5%	0%	2.4%	100%

Table 3: Popularity of "tahav ka tyo" (power belongs to the people, and ultimately to elders)

The table above shows the opinions of respondents to the statement, "'Tahav ka tyo' is a popular saying among the Tiv of Benue State." From the columns "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" on table 3, the popularity of "tahav ka tyo" (power belongs to the community and ultimately to the elders) is overwhelming. In contrast the responses under the columns "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" add up to only a paltry 2.4%. Nevertheless, in reply to the statement "'Tahav ka tyo' is seen in practice in the choice of political aspirants at the clan level in Benue politics", the above responses were received. Unlike the paltry figure we saw on table 3 for both "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" columns, the "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree" columns in table 4 add up to 19%.

Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
37%	37%	7%	12%	7%	100%

Table 4: Practical Application of 'tahav ka tyo' in the Choice of Aspirants at Clan Levels

This suggests that in practical terms "tahav ka tyo" is not brought to bear on the choice of political aspirants at the clan level in all places and at all times in Tivland. This seems to imply that the degree of the influence of neo-gerontocracy varies from place to place or from clan to clan in Tivland.

<sup>28</sup> Clifford Gbasha. This was corroborated by Ronald Perkaa in Gboko.

### Elders as Monitors of the Rotation System

The general recognition of the place of clan elders in Tiv means that tradition plays an important role in the selection of candidates for election. The elders keep track of the rotation system and decide which of the five political sub-zones or which of the clans within this sub-zones takes an elective position. The elders' decision is not taken arbitrarily. They keep record of the clans and families that took particular elective positions in the past and therefore they know which clan or family takes the next turn.<sup>29</sup>

However, powerful aspirants or party stalwarts can influence the "rotation monitors" at the clan level. There are times when a powerful politician would borrow the turn of other clans to be paid back in later years. For example, it is alleged that Senator George Akume from Mbakor clan of Tarka Local Government Area twice borrowed the turn of the Tombo Tiv people of Buruku Local Government Area. No matter how powerful the politician may be, he cannot buy the turn of another clan indefinitely; he can only borrow it in collaboration with the elders of the two clans to be paid back in later years.<sup>30</sup> The rotation or zoning system means that open competition for leadership at the grassroots is limited to only those political sub-zones, clans and families that are chosen by clan elders. In this sense, the elders become a form of grassroots electoral college.

It should be noted at this point that the rotation of elective political positions by clan and families under the monitoring of clan elders in Tivland seems to be a slight departure from what is obtainable in other parts of North Central Nigeria. In Tivland, clan elders are rotation monitors for all political parties. In other parts of North Central Nigeria such as Mangu Local Government Area of Plateau State, the rotation system is not unknown. Although the Mwaghavul people of Mangu have *kapuk* (elders' court) which is similar to the Tiv clan elders, the rotation system is monitored by political party or ward elders,<sup>31</sup> not clan elders as is found among the Tiv in Benue State. In this situation, the continuity of the rotation system is not always guaranteed; as the membership of party or ward elders keeps changing owing to party switching, new party elders may not respect an earlier rotation arrangement.

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<sup>29</sup> Clifford Gbasha.

<sup>30</sup> Clifford Gbasha. The theory is universally accepted, but whether or not practice will adhere to it remains to be seen.

<sup>31</sup> Dogo Pindem, Interview, Bungba, March 2016. Pindem is in his late sixties.

### Superiority of Elders as Grassroots "Electoral College"

Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Nil	Total
41.4%	19%	10%	22%	5%	2.4%	100%

Table 5: Clan Elders as Main Voice in the Choice of Political Aspirants at the Clan Level

The above responses were received in reply to the statement, "Among the Tiv, the clan elders are the main voice in the choice of political aspirants at the grassroots or clan level." It can be seen that the gap between Strongly agree/Agree and Disagree/Strongly disagree is 60.4% against 27%. This means that elders are generally the main voice in the choice of aspirants by their act of monitoring the rotation system.

Strongly Agree	Agree	I do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	TOTAL
27%	24%	12%	19%	17%	100%

Table 6: Clan Elders Superiority over Elderly Political Elites in the Choice of Aspirants

Similarly, in reply to the statement "At the grassroots or at the clan level the clan elders have more power than elderly political elites during the nomination of a political aspirant ", the above responses were received. The gap between Strongly Agree/Agree and Disagree/Strongly Disagree on the table above is 51% against 36%. This means that although elders are generally the main voice in the choice of aspirants by their act of monitoring the rotation system, their superiority to elderly political elites is questioned. Many informants who granted interviews such as Garba Terfa and Ronald Perkaa argued that it is quite difficult to draw a watertight demarcation between clan elders and elderly political elites in Tivland. By virtue of their age and "Tivness", some elderly political elites are also elders of their clans. In places where elderly political elites are not part of the elders of a clan, the clan elders have superior power in the choice of aspirants, by deciding which clan or family takes the position in a rotation system. In contrast, where the elderly political elites are also clan elders, by reason of their political connection and naira power, they can influence the other clan elders to favour their positions. In other words, because the clan elders monitor the rotation system, they have superior power in the selection of aspirants at the grassroots; except when influential politicians are

in their ranks.<sup>32</sup> An example may suffice here. At the beginning of George Akume's political career during the fourth republic, he was submissive to the *tyo*. As he welded political and Naira power, a campaign jingle that is linked to him in some quarters came up: "*Orgen kehe hembra tyo*" (there is one who is greater than the people/clan elders).<sup>33</sup> Although none of the other informants confirmed ever hearing this jingle,<sup>34</sup> they all concurred that by his "nepotism" which violated the philosophy of "*ya na angban*" (eat and give to a brother) and which undermined the place of clan elders in party politics, George Akume became greater than the "*tyo*".<sup>35</sup> This development agrees with the claim of Mvendaga Jibo who stresses that: "This marginalisation of Tiv elders in politics is the latest indication of Tiv value erosion."<sup>36</sup> The Akume story and Jibo's assertion seem to be pointers to an emerging downward trajectory of the power of clan elders in Benue politics.

### **The Ills and Promises of the Elders-Led Rotation System**

Western democracy is dialoguing with the Tiv culture with the resultant effect of the emergence of the zoning or rotation system.<sup>37</sup> It seems the zoning or rotation system which has clan elders as its monitors has fared well among the Tiv; although there seems to be a current downward trajectory. The system appears to have the disadvantage of not allowing for regular open competition for leadership at the grassroots. An aspirant, no matter how good and capable is not considered if it is not the turn of his clan or family to take up that elective post. The clan elders who are supposed to be rotation monitors for all political parties in Tivland are not always neutral in some quarters. Some of them often take sides with some aspirants, even when such aspirants do not belong to the clans or families that are due for consideration in the rotation system. However, the system appears to promote peaceful electioneering. In the words of Ronald Perkaa, "[At the grassroots] in Tivland you don't fight for position.

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<sup>32</sup> Garba Terfa, Interview, Gboko, 15 March 2016.

<sup>33</sup> This information came from a couple who were interviewed together in Gboko, on the 13th of March 2016, and who wish to remain anonymous. The husband is in his late forties.

<sup>34</sup> They stressed that Akume couldn't have sponsored such a jingle because it is sacrilegious in Tivland to make such a statement.

<sup>35</sup> Garba Terfa. Op. cit.

<sup>36</sup> Mvendaga Jibo, *Elite Politics in the Middle Belt of Nigeria 1993-2014* (Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited), 2014. 169.

<sup>37</sup> Tersur Aben, Unpremeditated Conversation, Bukuru, April 2015 (the exact day in April was not recorded). Aben is a Professor of Philosophical Theology. He is a Tiv who is aware of the political terrain of his people. It was on this occasion that trends in Benue Politics captured the attention of the present writer.



All political parties respect zoning arrangement."<sup>38</sup> In addition, the system ensures the participation of every Tiv clan in party politics; in this way no part of Tivland could claim that it has been marginalized. The system, in a sense, promotes the institution of the elders even in the face of a fast emerging global village.

## TIV CULTURE AND WESTERN DEMOCRACY IN THE LIGHT OF CULTURAL DIFFUSION THEORY

According to Ronald Perry,

In the cultural diffusion literature, scholars have enumerated assumptions, stated principles, and reviewed empirical work with the objective of identifying propositions tested repeatedly and not found to be false. Indeed, beginning with the work of early twentieth century anthropologists, one can identify at least five broadly accepted and empirically supported claims that form the core of what is called cultural diffusion theory. First, borrowed elements usually undergo some type of alteration or adaptation in the new host culture.<sup>39</sup>

An example may be useful here. The theory of cultural diffusion is ably demonstrated in the history of Christianity in world cultures. Right from the outset Christianity was made to travel.<sup>40</sup> As it moved round the globe it took different cultural colours.<sup>41</sup>

As Western-style democracy enters the Tiv setting, an aspect of it is undergoing alteration in keeping with the theory of cultural diffusion. The Tiv environment of collectivism gave birth to the philosophy of "ya na angban" (eat and share with your brother), which in turn needs elders as monitors of a tribal political rotation system in a democratic dispensation. In this situation a cardinal principle of Western democracy, "open competition for leadership", is

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<sup>38</sup> Ronald Perkaa Interview, Gboko, 13th March 2016. This position was corroborated by other informants.

<sup>39</sup> Ronald W. Perry, *Diffusion Theories*, <http://edu.learnsoc.org/Chapters/3%20theories%20of%20sociology/7%20diffusion%20theories.htm>. 13.2.2016.

<sup>40</sup> In Acts of the Apostles 1:8 the founder of Christianity commanded his followers to take his teachings to the outermost parts of the world.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (New York: Orbis Books), 1996.

compromised at the level of selection of aspirants with a version which seems to mean "semi-open competition for leadership."

## CONCLUSION

In pre-colonial Tivland, clan elders constituted the political class. But during the colonial period gerontocracy was undermined. The attempt at domesticating Western democracy has, in a sense, promoted gerontocracy, but in the weak, yet efficient, form which the present writer refers to as neo-gerontocracy. The interface of neo-gerontocracy and Western-style democracy in Tivland points to the fact that culture can influence a foreign ideology like democracy as people try to experiment with how best they can practise it for the common good. The trend in the domestication of democracy among the Tiv points to the possibility of adapting Western-style democracy to the myriads of African situations without destroying the democratic edifice. Although the elders-led rotation system compromises the Western democratic principle of "open competition for leadership", it generally holds promise for peaceful electioneering at the grassroots. If the West adapted Athenian democracy, why can't Africa adapt Western democracy, if the adaptation will help to check rancour and violence?

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# What was the Notion of 'The Other' in Antiquity? An Examination from the Perspective of the Ancient Greeks

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## Abstract

The idea of 'the other' and 'otherness' often relates to the state of a group being different from certain individuals, groups or peoples. Over and over again, a greater or superior group, using certain social distinctiveness, stereotypes, or identities that are often seen as natural and innate, conceives of the lesser group as constituting 'the other(s)', that need(s) refinement, enlightening, or acculturation. In many quarters, 'the other' is conceived as those who do not speak one's language. Going back to the remote Classical antiquity, where one might least expect a prevalence valence of social distinctiveness, identities or stereotypes conjured among definite groups, this paper examines the notion of 'the other' and 'otherness' as it relates to the ancient Greeks and their conception of other peoples. It identifies the term *barbarian* as the Greeks' equivalent of 'the other'. Etymologically, the barbarian refers to a foreigner, one whose language

and customs differ from the native speaker's; and within the Judaeo-Christian civilization, he is a gentile outside the circle of the Christian faith. Using the works of Greek historians such as Herodotus, Strabo, Diodorus and others to provide insight into the Greeks' general perception of these 'others', the paper submits that the word *barbarians* was used for all non-Greek-speaking peoples, including Egyptians, Ethiopians, Phoenicians, Assyrians, and Persians. The Greeks' thought set the tone for the everyday pejorative meaning given to the barbarian (barbaric, barbarism) as a rude, crude, wild, uncultured, uncivilized person, who has no sympathy with literary culture; he is just a little distinguished from savage or beast.

**Key Words:** Other, Otherness, Barbarian, Ancient Greek

### **Introduction: 'The Other' and the Barbarian**

Today, the idea of 'the other' and 'otherness' relates to the state of being different from certain individuals, groups or peoples. It focuses on how majority and minority identities or distinctiveness are construed; with how the politically, socially or economically greater group or people determine the control of common resources in a multi-ethnic or racial setting. Oftentimes, that greater or superior group conceives of the lesser group as constituting 'the other(s)'. Social distinctiveness or identities are many and are often seen as natural and innate stereotypes though this is sometimes conjured by the society<sup>1</sup>. These stereotypes are markers which show the way individuals and groups perceive established societal categories within their societies. The distinctiveness or identities could take the form of ethnic, cultural, gender, racial, class, religious, language or other strictures. These, then, determine ideas about who we are, who we think some people are, how we think they should be seen, treated or interacted with. Thus, certain distinctiveness or identities convey the notions of social exclusivity, belongingness, cultural or ethnic affiliation, racial membership, or other socially construed attachments<sup>2</sup>. As such, 'othering' can be seen as a form of discrimination of a people or group, different from one's own collective social norm or background, based on certain distinctiveness or identities. And since they are neither 'our' group nor part of 'us', they are thought of as deviants in need of refinement, finesse, acculturation, help, enhancement and education by the (our) group that is 'othering' them<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Miller J. 2008. 'Otherness' in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc., pp. 558-591.

<sup>2</sup> Bullock A. & Trombley S. 1999. 'Otherness' in *The New Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. UK: Harper Collins, p.620.

<sup>3</sup> Gallaher C. et al. 2009. 'The Other' in *Key Concepts in Political Geography*, SAGE Publications Inc. pp.328-338.

In antiquity, the Greek notion of ‘the other’ found parallel in the term *barbarian*, the peoples whom the Greeks considered as socially inferior and were so discriminated against using certain markers or identities. In everyday idiomatic or figurative expression, a barbarian refers to an individual who is deemed to be brutal, cruel, warlike and insensitive to the feelings of others or his environment<sup>4</sup>. It is generally held that a barbarian is an uncivilised and primitive person, who lacks refinement, learning, and artistic or literary culture, something akin to what the Yoruba of south-west Nigeria would call *Ará-oko*<sup>5</sup>. It is usually used today in a pejorative sense. A ‘barbaric’ act, therefore, is an act that is ‘cruel and brutal; excessively harsh or vicious’. It is an action or behavior that is ‘coarse and rude; uncivilized’<sup>6</sup>. Semantically, the word *barbarous* is summarized in the *OED*<sup>7</sup>:

The sense of its development in ancient times was (with the Greeks) ‘foreign, non-Hellenic’; later ‘outlandish, rude, brutal’; (with the Romans) ‘not Latin nor Greek,’ then ‘pertaining to those outside the Roman Empire’; hence ‘uncivilized, uncultured,’ and later ‘non-Christian,’ whence ‘Saracen, heathen’; and generally ‘savage, rude, savagely cruel, inhuman’.

‘Barbarian’ is from the word *barbaros*, (βάρβαρος or βάρβαροι, *barbaroi*, plural), which is first a Greek phenomenon that came into usage in the fifth century B.C. to mean those of ‘other’ cultures who were non-Greeks. The word was doubtless not in use in the early archaic history of Greece, for it was not used by Homer, the most extant and admired of all Greek poets. Rather, the word *barbarophonoi* (βαρβαρόφωνοι, of incomprehensible speech) in the *Iliad* was used to signify not only those who spoke a non-Greek language but also those (Greeks and non-Greeks) who spoke Greek badly<sup>8</sup>. And as can be inferred from Thucydides<sup>9</sup>, before the fifth century, the Greeks’ notion of barbarians as ‘the other’ - inferior and crude - was not known. Homer did not use any term

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<sup>4</sup> Webster’s *New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, 1972, pg. 149, Simon & Schuster Publishing

<sup>5</sup> In *A Dictionary of the Yorùbá Language*, Ibadan: U.P. Plc, (2008) the entry for *Ará-oko* is ‘boor, bushman, clodhopper’ reflecting the crudity of the one who is called a barbarian. The entry for *barbarian* itself is *alāigbédè* (a foreigner who does not native language); *alāimoyé* (the one without wisdom or learning); *èniakénìà* (worthless brute). For *Barbarism*, it is *aimò iwà hu* (lacking in proper behaviour); *iwà -aimoye* (foolish act, unwise behaviour); *iwà ára-oko* (rude, savage act or behaviour); *iwà ailājú* (uncivilized, uncultured act or behaviour).

<sup>6</sup> *Chambers 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dictionary*. 1999. p.103. Edinburgh: Chambers Harrap Publishers Ltd.

<sup>7</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2009. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>8</sup> *Iliad*, 2.867

<sup>9</sup> Thucydides. 1.3

denoting barbarian, because the Greeks of his time did not make any distinction between themselves and the barbarians. However, in the fifth century, the term was used by some Greeks to deride fellow Greek tribes and states in a pejorative and politically motivated manner, almost similar to the way it is used pejoratively today. The Athenians, for instance, derided other Greeks such as the Epirotes, Macedonians, Boeotians and Aeolic speakers including fellow Athenians<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, when Homer referred to the Carians, fighting for Troy during the Trojan War, as *barbarophonoi* (βαρβαρόφωνοι, people speaking in foreign language, incomprehensible speech), he did not mean that they were barbarians in the strict Greek sense of the word, meaning those outside the circle of Greek civilization, rather, he meant that they spoke an unintelligible language.

### **Greek Markers of the Other**

According to Strabo, Hecataeus, one of the earliest Ionian logographers of the sixth century B.C, was the first to make a distinction between the Greeks and 'the others', when he says: 'Before the Greeks, the inhabitants were Barbarians'<sup>11</sup>. In the early fifth century B.C., after their victory over the Persians and their large allies, the Greeks in earnest developed the feeling of superiority over non-Greek speaking peoples, particularly their enemies who were then regarded as *barbarians*. In the same century, Simonides (c 556-468 B.C.) of Ceos hinted that the Greeks of Sicily, with tyrants Gelon of Gela and Theron of Acragas as the leaders, defeated the Carthaginians and referred to them as the barbarian race. And so from this period onward, the Greeks began to consider themselves superior to all non-Greek speaking peoples of the ancient world and they reflected this in their early works of this period. For instance in the *Suppliant Maidens* of Aeschylus, the Greek king says to the Egyptian herald:

You herald, being a barbarian, should feel proud for having  
to deal with Greeks, for as a herald you reason very wrongly  
and will never hit at a point<sup>12</sup>.

Generally, markers such as race, nationality, sex, religion, occupation, family, age, marital status language and culture determine the distinctiveness or identities of people or group. From the ancient Greeks' perspective, one of the main markers of 'otherness' was language variation. For specificity, the markers of language and culture shall suffice here. Thus, in a dialogue between Agamemnon and Teucer in *Aias* (*Ajax* of Sophocles), the former told the latter to bring an interpreter, a freeborn man, to plead his case, because when Teucer speaks, he cannot understand him, because he (Agamemnon) does not

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<sup>10</sup> Baracchi, Claudia. 2014. *The Bloomsbury Companion to Aristotle*. Bloomsbury Academic Publishing. p. 292

<sup>11</sup> Strabo. 7. 321.

<sup>12</sup> Aeschylus. *Suppliant Maidens*, 914

understand a barbarian language<sup>13</sup>. Thucydides said that the Greeks admired those who spoke the Greek language and imitated Greek ways of life<sup>14</sup>. From Herodotus (484-420 B.C), we know that Egyptians also called those who did not speak their language barbarians. The Greeks did not just use the term 'barbarians' to mean non-Greeks of the East and those outside their immediate sphere of influence. They also applied it to the Romans and metaphorically to anything rude, crude or uncivilized. Accordingly, some Roman writers frowned at this for, in their opinion, the Greeks were not more civilized than the Romans. This resentment is evident in Pliny the Elder<sup>15</sup>: 'They call us, too, Barbarians (foreigners), and insult us more foully than others do, when they apply to us the term *Opici*' (stupid, coarse, uncultured). Similarly Cicero<sup>16</sup> also reacts against the Greeks:

'Was Romulus a king of Barbarians? If, as the Greeks say, everybody is either a Greek, or a barbarian, I fear he was a king of Barbarians. But if the name is to be applied to a mode of life and not merely to language, then the Greeks are no less barbarians, I think, than the Romans'.

In the New Testament Christian circle, language was also clearly used as a distinguishing factor for 'otherness'. In the *King James Authorized Version of the Holy Bible*, the writer of the Acts of Apostles used the term 'barbarian' to refer to the people on the island of Melita, who did not speak Greek. 'And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, no doubt this man is a murderer...'<sup>17</sup> In the same vein, apostle Paul himself says: 'I am a debtor to the Greeks and to the barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise'<sup>18</sup>. By barbarians here, he meant the gentiles who did not speak the Greek language. To emphasise the importance of language, he says<sup>19</sup>:

Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.

By voice, Paul meant 'language', for different voices (languages) are intelligible to those who speak them.

A barbarian was also perceived as inferior in terms culture, law and social being. By the cultural marker, the Greeks attached certain racist thoughts to the barbarians, who were seen as uncivilized by nature. This perception was facilitated by the growth of slavery as well established socio-political

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<sup>13</sup> Sophocles. *Ajax*, 1226ff

<sup>14</sup> Thucydides, 7.63.

<sup>15</sup> Pliny, *N.H.*, 29.1.7.

<sup>16</sup> Cic. *De Rep.* 1.58

<sup>17</sup> Acts, 28:4

<sup>18</sup> Rom. 1: 14

<sup>19</sup> I Corinth. 14, 11



institutions in many parts of Greek city-state, especially Athens. The institution of slavery was, indeed, a well-accepted feature of many societies in the ancient world. Huge concentrations of slaves, both skilled and unskilled, were drawn to Greece from all over the lands around the Mediterranean and Black Sea, such as Thrace and Taurica. Several also came from eastern Asia Minor and these were the Carians, Lydians, and Phrygians who worked under especially brutal conditions in silver mines like the one at Athens' Laurium. Since these slaves – certainly different from free citizens confined for debt bondage – were of foreign origin, they were regarded as barbarians. This led many Greeks, including the educated elite, to argue that non-Greek speaking peoples should be slaves by nature. For instance, Aristotle<sup>20</sup> submitted that 'barbarians are slaves by nature'.

The Greeks' notion of barbarians as slaves by nature can be seen in Haarhoff, who himself, cited the remark of Coleman Philipson<sup>21</sup>:

With the Greeks, all other peoples were looked upon as barbarians and were regarded as having been ordained and intended by nature to be the slaves of the Greeks. And he further remarked that the adoption of any method to carry out this intention be it of a forcible, or of a deceitful nature, was assumed justifiable in the eyes of the gods.

Thus, the discrimination and contemptuous feeling of a people, race or group over another could be said to have been deeply propagated by the Greeks right from the fifth century.

In antiquity, the use of the word 'barbarian' with contemptuous cultural coloration was apparently found in the early Judaea-Christian circle. Like the Greeks, it is known that the Hebrews also held the opinion that, apart from them, the rest of the world consists of the Gentiles, non-Jews, who were garbed with the a contemptuous labels of 'the barbarian', which St. Paul later tried to mitigate in the Acts of Apostles and other letters. For instance, in the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament, Gentiles (barbarians) could **not**:

- 1) Eat the Passover without being circumcised (Ex. 12:43, 45)
- 2) Eat holy things (Ex. 29:33; Lev. 22:10-13)
- 3) Be anointed with the holy oil (Ex. 30:33)
- 4) Take part in the tabernacle activities (Num. 1:51)
- 5) Have part in the priesthood (Num. 3:10)
- 6) Offer incense to God (Num. 16:40)
- 7) Come near the priests while in service (Num. 18:4, 7)
- 8) Be king over Israel (Deut. 17:15)
- 9) Be exempted from paying interest (Deut. 23:20)
- 10) Marry widows in Israel (Deut. 25:5)

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<sup>20</sup> Aristotle. *Politics*. 1.2-7; 3.14; cf. 54.8, 55.1

<sup>21</sup> Haarhoff, T.J. *The Stranger at the Gate*. p.218

The Judaea-Christians not only referred to the gentiles as barbarians, they also showed some elements of spiritual pride by equating gentiles with heretics and pagans<sup>22</sup>. Thus, it can be noted from history of the past that cultural or racial discrimination is not a phenomenon peculiar only to the modern world. Fortunate and advanced groups, since the ancient times, sometimes treat less privileged groups as 'lesser breeds without the law' by propagating pseudo-biological, physical and other cultural inequalities which are then imposed on the said inferiors. The 'barbarians' in the ancient world, then, can be compared to the modern day minority people in a society or the colonized African and Asian migrants in Europe and America, whose overlords the Greeks and the Romans fortuitously represented.

### **Ancient Greeks' General Perception of the Barbarians**

Many ancient writers have made varied remarks about the Greeks' feeling of superiority over the barbarians and their general thoughts of the non-Greek speaking peoples. A close study of the writers, however, reveals that some of them did not hold consistent views of status of the barbarians. Sometimes, one may find in a writer differing viewpoints, expressing both admiration and revulsion for the people. For instance, in Herodotus, both pro and anti-remarks were made about the barbarians. The same conflicting perspectives can be found in the works of Aristophanes (c.450-385 B.C) and Thucydides (c.455-400 B.C.). Both Greek writers divided mankind into Greeks and barbarians. Thucydides did not only recognise this division and the superiority of the Greeks over the barbarians, but also accepted it as a further stage in the development of Greek civilization<sup>23</sup>. However, he did not see it as a difference that had been fixed by nature. But behind the mind of the comedian, Aristophanes<sup>24</sup> and others, there was real die-hard contempt for the barbarians.

Generally, the Greeks attributed the barbarians' physical, ethical, cultural and intellectual distinctiveness to the variations of their climate and environments. Among the Greek writers who shared the Greek geographical theory was Herodotus. According to him, the river Nile and the Egyptian climate had a peculiar effect on character and institution of the Egyptians. Thus, environmental factors were responsible for the Egyptian reversal of several customs of mankind:

As the Egyptians have a climate peculiar to themselves, and their river is different in its nature from all other rivers, so have they made themselves customs and laws. Among them, the women buy and sell, the men abide at home, and weave;

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<sup>22</sup> cf. Rom. 3:1-2; 2:12-29; Eph. 2:12,19

<sup>23</sup> Thucydides. 1. 82

<sup>24</sup> Aristophanes. *The Clouds*. 100.

and whereas in weaving all others push the wool upwards, the Egyptians push it downwards. Men carry burdens on their heads, women on their shoulders. Women pass water standing up, men sitting. They relieve nature indoors, and eat out of doors in the street, giving the reason that, things unseemly but necessary should be done in secret, things not unseemly should be done openly. No woman holds priestly office, either in the service of goddess or god; only men are priests in both cases. Sons are not compelled against their will to support their parents, but daughters must do so though they be unwilling<sup>25</sup>.

Sophocles seemed to have shared the same opinion with Herodotus when he made Oedipus contract his daughters and sons, and referred to Egypt (a barbarian land) as 'a land where women toil to provide food for their sustenance'<sup>26</sup>.

The Greeks thought of the barbarians as a wicked and cruel lot, who engaged in various acts of savagery. Euripides, the fifth century Greek tragedian, among other writers, severally emphasized the cruelty of the barbarians in his plays, holding the opinion that they were viler than the Greeks<sup>27</sup>. Isocrates (436-338 B.C) commented that they were no less good than animals, stating that the difference between a Greek and a barbarian is no less different than what exists between a man and a beast. In other words, the barbarians were estimated as sub-human beings, hardly better than dumb animals<sup>28</sup>. Alexander the Great, according to Plutarch<sup>29</sup>, supposed that the good man was the real Greek, a well-civilized man, as opposed to the uncultured man, while the bad man was the real barbarian. As savages who lived like beasts, the Greeks believed that barbarians spent their days in open spaces devoid of shelter and cared less about decent food and clothing. According to Diodorus and Livy, the barbarians were a stock of peoples who lacked reasoning faculty and self-control<sup>30</sup>.

Like many of his contemporaries, Diodorus associated the temperament of the barbarian with that of a wild beast. As such, he used the savage Ethiopians to demonstrate the way barbarians lived like wild beasts:

As for their spirit, they are entirely savage and display the nature of a wild-beast, not so much, however, in their temper as in their ways of living; for they are squalid all over their

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<sup>25</sup> Herodotus. 2. 35.

<sup>26</sup> Sophocles. *Oedipus at Coloneus*. 337ff.

<sup>27</sup> Euripides, *Troades*, 764.

<sup>28</sup> Isocrates, *Antidosis*, 293.

<sup>29</sup> Plutarch, *Moralia*, 329.

<sup>30</sup> Diod. Sic. 3.49, Livy, 22.22

bodies, they keep their nails very long like the wild beasts, and are as far removed as possible from kindness to one another; and speaking as they do with a shrill voice and cultivating none of the practices of civilized life as these are found among the rest of mankind, they present a striking contrast when considered in the light of our own custom<sup>31</sup>.

Some barbarians were also represented as going practically naked, caring little about clothing. Ndubokwu, explaining the mind of Diodorus, noted that Ethiopian barbarians wore no clothes; instead, they used whatever they could lay their hands upon to protect themselves from the heat of the sun. Both the Hylophagi and Spermatophagi were barbarians who generally went about naked throughout their entire lives<sup>32</sup>.

A significant Greek perception of the barbarians relates to moral laxity. Strabo attributed some improvements in their moral laxity to the influence of Greek civilization. According to him, until the coming of the Greeks with their decent mannerisms, sexual habits and luxurious life styles, the barbarians lived as uncivilized and uncultured peoples, who displayed their primitiveness by sharing their wives and children in common. They were also conceived as peoples lacking good rulers. It is no surprise then that, even great Greek thinkers, such as Plato and Aristotle as shall be seen below, referred to the barbarians as slaves and propagated the common ideology of the superiority of the Greeks over other peoples. It is known that Pericles, the notable Athenian statesman, likewise promoted this Greek superior feeling in Imperial Athens when he says:

It is right and reasonable (*eikos*) that Greeks should rule over Barbarians and not Barbarians over Greeks, for these are slaves and those, free<sup>33</sup>.

For emphasis, the Greeks believed that barbarians were peoples who should naturally be slaves, for they were incapable of self-rule. The Greek orator, Demosthenes, remarked that it is right for barbarians to be ruled by Hellenes (Greeks). To be noted also is the statement credited to Jason in the *Medea* of Euripides, where the protagonist claimed 'that he has done Medea a service by bringing her from the land of the barbarians to Greece, where she could learn law and the meaning of justice'<sup>34</sup>. And in the *Andromache*<sup>35</sup>, also written by Euripides, a character is made to portray the inferiority of

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<sup>31</sup> Diod. Sic. 3.8.2ff

<sup>32</sup> See C.O.G. Ndubokwu, *Some Concepts of the African in Classical Literature*, Ph.D. Thesis (1979), University of Ibadan, p.243.

<sup>33</sup> Aristotle. *Politics*, 1252b.

<sup>34</sup> Euripides, *Medea*, 536.

<sup>35</sup> Euripides, *Andromache*, 243.

barbarians' law compared to the Greeks'. Diodorus observed that Egyptian monarchs of the last dynasties did not enjoy full powers. According to him, all their acts were regulated by laws and customs for they were usually tried after their deaths, and sometimes denied public burial, if found guilty<sup>36</sup>. Diodorus then added that Psammetichus I entrusted the sole administration of his empire into the hands of Greek mercenaries who were thought to have possessed better sense of administration.

The Greek writers also held that it was natural and just that a barbarian should obey a Greek just as a slave should obey a freeman. Sophocles buttresses this opinion in the play, *Ajax*, where Agamemnon tells Teucer that he had no right to argue with him because Teucer is a barbarian, and the son of a captive woman<sup>37</sup>. Although the Greeks recognised Ajax as a hero, they discriminated against him for committing suicide at the beginning of the days of Athenians' exclusiveness. He was regarded as a barbarian although his island of Salamis could be seen from Athens.

Again in terms of socio-cultural distinctiveness, the Greeks were also conscious of the superiority of their own education. According to one of its finest rhetoricians, Isocrates, the Greeks were sages and were more intellectually oriented and academically matured than the barbarians. He noted that this was so because, the Athenian Greeks, while other regions engaged in farming, were busy with the production of the most gifted men in arts and in the powers of rhetoric as well as valour and virtue<sup>38</sup>. In the same vein, Plato attributed the love of knowledge with the Athenians and love of money to the barbarians; he referred to the Phoenicians and Egyptians as tricksters rather than sages<sup>39</sup>. Egyptians were said to have had no love for truth for, while they showed talent in every direction, they were nonetheless bent towards material prosperity. Diodorus remarked that the best education someone could attain is that of the Greeks. Thus, he praised Ergamenes, the king of Meroe in ancient Nubia, who received good education in Greek philosophy. Because of this education, Ergamenes did not behave primitively like his cowardly predecessors; rather, he acted like a true Greek. And in the spirit of a true Greek, he abolished the obnoxious tradition and practice, which empowered priests to order the death of their kings whenever they so wished<sup>40</sup>.

As a group with unique distinctions, the Greeks did not believe in intermingling with the barbarians even though they acknowledged that they were a stock that needed acculturation, refinement and enlightening. It was their candid opinion that wars between two Greek states should be humane, while between barbarians (Persians) and the Greeks should be ruthless. It is

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<sup>36</sup> Diod. Sic. 1.64; 70; 71.

<sup>37</sup> Sophocles, *Ajax*, 122ffl.

<sup>38</sup> Isocrates, *Areopagiticus*, 74.

<sup>39</sup> Plato, *Republica*, 436a

<sup>40</sup> Diod. Sic. 3.6

therefore not surprising that the barrier between Greeks and barbarians was seen by Demosthenes as being fundamental and necessitated by nature<sup>41</sup>. Even Livy reflected this view in the following statement<sup>42</sup>:

Between all Greeks and those of other race, there is everlasting war and will be, for they are enemies by nature, which is eternal, and not by reason of changeable causes.

As hinted above, Aristotle, in *The Politics*, provided a strong argument for the theory of war and slavery by nature. According to him, by nature, a slave is like a beast, he is 'a living instrument'. A city-state, too, exists 'by nature'. War against the barbarians, therefore, was justified as also 'natural'. In continuation of his thesis, Aristotle explained that 'animals are made by nature for the service of man and may be hunted with impunity; similarly, 'war' – which has an element of hunting in it – may be used against men 'who do not wish to be ruled'. Such a war, according to him, is justified by nature – 'all are equally slaves, that is, animals and the barbarians'. Aristotle then concluded that the Greeks should not be subjected to enslavement, which is the natural lot of the barbarians<sup>43</sup>.

Among the undignified acts associated with the barbarians by the Greeks was deceit. This was shown by Spartan emissaries while they were dissuading the Athenians from accepting the 'favourable' terms of the Mardonius, the commander of Xerxes, who tried to detach Athens from the combined Greek alliance during the Persian War. They say:

Let no Alexander the Macedonian (the predecessor of Alexander the Great) win you with his smooth-tongued praise of Mardonius' counsel... for you understand that in Barbarians there is no faith or truth.<sup>44</sup>

The barbarians were also said to be lovers of money. This is shown in a statement credited to a young Persian noble, by name Tritantaechmes. On hearing that the prize of Olympic Games was an Olive Crown, this young man remarked that the prize was not commensurate to the efforts expended on the game. Usher, relying on Herodotus, records the Persian's resentment to this in the following address to Mardonius: 'what manner of men, he says, are these you have brought us to fight against, Mardonius, who compete not for money but for honour?'<sup>45</sup>

While the Persian War lasted, the barbarians were seen by the Greeks as greedy and over-ambitious. This was reflected in the remark of Spartan general,

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<sup>41</sup> Haarhoff. p.59

<sup>42</sup> Livy. 31.29.

<sup>43</sup> Aristotle. *Politics*, 1260a.

<sup>44</sup> See Haarhoff. *op.cit.*, p.53

<sup>45</sup> Stephen Usher. 1969. *The Historians of Greece and Rome*, London, p.11

Pausanias, after his defeat of the Persians at battle of Plataea in 479 B.C. In the camp of the fleeing Persians, Pausanias discovered great quantity of gold, silver and several other fineries. And so while he was having a feast with his army, Pausanias addressed them in the following manner:

Men of Greece, I have called you together for this reason, to show you the folly of the Persian general, who had such luxury, and yet came to deprive us of our meager fare<sup>46</sup>.

As regards social or nobility status, Aristotle held the opinion that the Greek nobility was universally recognised, while that of the barbarian was limited to his country. According to him, like his theory of natural slavery, the Greek nobility was, by nature, absolute and ordained while that of the barbarian was merely relative. So, in order to preserve their nobility from being adulterated by 'the other' influence or cultures which they thought were barbaric, certain measures were taken. Among such measures were the prohibitions of inter-marriages between Greeks and barbarians. To an average Hellene, marriage with the barbarian was more or less a disgraceful concubinage. The children of such marriage could not inherit their parents in any Greek state. Marriage with 'the other' was an act considered calamitous, dishonourable, shameful, and degrading; it was seen as an insult to the 'superior' Greeks. This conventional opinion was clearly shown in the *Medea* of Euripides when the playwright remarked that marriage with a barbarian woman is something dishonourable<sup>47</sup>. Thus, as stated above, Jason in the *Medea* noted 'that he has done Medea a service by bringing her from the land of the barbarians to Greece, where she could learn law and the meaning of justice'. In addition, Diodorus considered certain marital practices as awful and peculiar to the barbarians only. Using the Egyptians as evidence, he observed that the barbarian marriage custom was quite different from the one practiced by the Greeks. He stated that in Egypt, one could find that marriage between direct brother and sister was legally established. This, he perceived to be contrary to nature and to the general custom of mankind.

According to the ancient Greek tradition, the position of women in almost all their city-states was generally low except for the Spartan women. The Greek woman was confined to the home and her life was greatly restricted. This lowly status was considered a great honour if the remark of the Athenian statesman, Pericles, is anything to go by<sup>48</sup>: 'great is your glory if men do not speak about you either in praise or blame'. However, the barbarian women, most especially in Egypt, enjoyed great confidence and consideration. This was due to the custom of marriage which usually required the husbands, at the time of marriage, to give assurance to take care of their wives. It is said, on the

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<sup>46</sup> See Usher, *op. cit.* p.12

<sup>47</sup> Euripides. *Medea*. 591.

<sup>48</sup> Thucydides. 2.45.2

testimony of Diodorus, that at the time of the Egyptian marriage ceremony, the husbands used to make a promise of obedience to their wives and entered into agreement not to raise any objection to their commands. Diodorus also linked this system of marriage with a sort of matriarchal engagement that existed around that time in Meroitic Ethiopia. It is, however, important to note that Diodorus, on the overall, conceded a supreme position to Egyptian husband<sup>49</sup>.

Other socio-cultural discriminations leveled against the barbarians were drunkenness, sexual laxity, which had been briefly touched above, and stealing. The Greeks' notion of the average barbarian as a heavy wine-bibber is apparent in Herodotus. According to him, the Egyptian soldiers, especially those of high rank, were even provided with wine during their annual service<sup>50</sup>. Herodotus also referred to the drinking habits of the Egyptians during the feast of Bubastis. According to him, during the feast, people generally drank more wine than they did in the whole year<sup>51</sup>. In order to arouse their appetite to drink, Athenaeus wrote that the barbarians (Egyptians) introduced stimulants into their wine. He, however, stated that the people generally drank the amount of wine considered sufficient to promote 'happiness'<sup>52</sup>.

Like other writers, Herodotus expressed great shock at the high incidence of adultery among barbarian families. The barbarian moral laxity was shown in a story which Herodotus told about a blind Egyptian king, who was the son of Sesostrius. According to him, the gods promised this king that they would restore his sight if only he could wash his eyes with the urine of a woman who had never been unfaithful to her husband. To accomplish this, the king attempted to use his own wives, his concubines and the women of the town; but all was to no avail until he found solution in a gardener's wife, who might have been a non-Egyptian. It is said that the king later married this woman<sup>53</sup>. Herodotus also indicated that some barbarian men had sexual intercourse with a dead woman, who was despised and denounced by embalmers<sup>54</sup>. Yet again, Herodotus narrated the story of a barbarian Egyptian king, called Mycerinus, who fell madly in love with his own daughter, and forced her to have sex with him. It is said that this girl was so ashamed of her father's indecent act that she committed suicide. But in view of his other achievements, Herodotus still regarded Mycerinus as a good man, whose sole vice was his uncontrollable sexual indulgence<sup>55</sup>.

As in Greece, Herodotus indicated that prostitution was a socially acceptable and lucrative practice in barbarian lands. To illustrate this, he

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<sup>49</sup> Diod. Sic. 1.80

<sup>50</sup> Herodotus. 2.168

<sup>51</sup> Herodotus. 2. 30

<sup>52</sup> Athenaeus. *Deipposophistae*. 1.34.5, 191 ffl.

<sup>53</sup> Herodotus. 2.111

<sup>54</sup> Herodotus. 2. 89

<sup>55</sup> Herodotus. 2.131



referred to the case of an Egyptian king, Cheops, who even sent his daughter to a brothel in order to procure for him a certain amount of money which he needed. This daughter, after securing for her father the amount of money he needed, also collected precious stones from her lovers, which were used in building a special sepulcher as a monument to immortalize her name<sup>56</sup>. Herodotus also referred to an incidence of sexual intercourse between an Egyptian woman and a goat in the district of Mendes, where the goat was the local sacred animal. Although this practice seemed to be a part of the local religion, it attracted Herodotus' curiosity as a barbaric action<sup>57</sup>. The Roman poet, Pindar (518-438 B.C.) once referred to this act in one of his poems: 'Mendes, along the crag of the sea, furthestmost horn of the Nile, where the...he-goats have sexual intercourse with women'<sup>58</sup>.

The notion of the 'other' as a people prone to stealing could still be retraced to the Herodotus, who indicated that even barbarian nobles used to steal. Again, he relayed the story of an Egyptian king, called Amasis, who, before he came to the throne, not only spent all his time enjoying feasts and jokes, but also took joy in robbing people, especially when he could not get enough money for his accustomed feasting. Each time people laid charge of theft on him, they would drag him before the oracles; some of the oracles would convict him others would not. It is said that when Amasis eventually ascended the throne, he neglected the temples of the gods that had severally acquitted him of the charge of stealing, concluding that those gods were worthless and unreliable. On the other hand, he honoured the gods that had detected and decried his nefarious acts with adornments. He had faith in these latter deities which he considered as truthful<sup>59</sup>. Strabo also wrote about the nefarious acts of barbarians, when he indicated that Egyptian kings took delight in stealing and even gave necessary assistance to the Sicilian pirates. Theocritus was to later shed more light on the robbery activities among the Egyptian barbarians by relaying a story about certain notorious Egyptian street rogues, who generally harassed and threatened the lives of passers-by<sup>60</sup>.

In spite of the enormity and gravity of the barbarian inferiority painted above, the Greeks did not consider colour as a primary marker for denoting 'otherness'. Some Greeks demonstrated this not only by accepting the barbarians - especially the Blacks - in their midst, but also by intermarrying with them. According to Herodotus, the Cypriot Greeks traditionally believed that the Ethiopians were among those who composed the elements of their ancient population<sup>61</sup>. Although Euripides regarded intermarriage between a Greek and

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<sup>56</sup> Herodotus. 2.126

<sup>57</sup> Herodotus. 2.45

<sup>58</sup> Pindar, Fr. 201; cf. Strabo 7, 19.

<sup>59</sup> Herodotus. 2.173.

<sup>60</sup> Strabo. 14.5.2; Theocritus. 15.46ff.

<sup>61</sup> See C.O.G. Ndubokwu, *op.cit.* p.269, cf. Herodotus. 7. 90.

barbarian as a calamity, and something dishonourable,<sup>62</sup> yet there are classical references to formal and informal unions of Greek men with barbarian women, and vice versa<sup>63</sup>. Aristotle made a reference to certain a Greek woman in Elis, who committed adultery with an Ethiopian man. According to him, the daughter of the woman was not black - characteristic colour of the barbarian - but the son of the daughter was black<sup>64</sup>. By the first century B.C, inter-marriages between Graeco-Roman people and barbarians became common both in Egypt and Asia. By this time, not only did Greek soldiers and mercenaries contract marriages with oriental women, but also Graeco-Roman merchants intermarried with women from Africa and other parts of the classical world. The mixed population of Alexandria is said to have been a result of inter marriages between the natives and the Greeks and Romans. And so, by that period, the word 'Greek' no more possessed the racial purity and distinction it commanded in the fifth century B.C; rather, it signified only a mere cultural differentiation.

## CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have tried to examine how the notion of 'otherness' and 'the other' was conceived in classical antiquity. We have used the ancient Greeks as a template to view how 'superior' individuals, groups and peoples, use certain conjured stereotypes, identities or distinctiveness to construe their impression of and relationship with 'the inferior others'. We have presented briefly the Greeks' general impression of 'the others' who, for several reasons, were termed the *barbarians*. We know that at the very beginning, the early Greeks did not attach contemptuous feelings to the word *barbarians*; rather, they used it for those who could not simply speak Greek language. However, as from the fifth century after the Greeks' victory over the Persians and their barbarian allies, the word acquired more distinctly contemptuous denotation. From the foregoing, it is clear that the Greeks, using several socio-cultural markers, conceived of 'others' - the barbarians - as nothing more than beasts in human form.

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<sup>62</sup> Euripides. *Helena* 224, 295; *Medea* 591.

<sup>63</sup> Herodotus. 2.181

<sup>64</sup> Aristotle. *De Gen. Anim.* 722a.

As in the field of human geography, the Greeks believed that the geographical location and climatic condition of the land of some barbarians probably had adverse effect on them and their behaviours. The conditions made some barbarians, like the Egyptians cited above, to reverse the customs and practices of mankind. Some barbarians were portrayed as wicked, savage and cruel, living like wild beasts. It was also the opinion of the Greeks that many barbarians lacked civilization and education; as such, they all went about nakedly, neither caring about clothing nor decent housing. Likewise, the ancient Greeks thought of the barbarians as morally and sexually lax peoples, who went to the extent of sharing their own wives. It was also their belief that truth could not be found among the barbarians because they were full of deceit. Apart from their perception as slaves by nature and tools to be dragged about, the Greeks believed that barbarians lacked the capability of self-rule or good government. Thus, they usually behaved primitively. As the 'superior' group with certain socio-cultural distinctiveness and identities, the Greeks believed themselves to be sages, more intellectually inclined and more nobly recognized in the known world than the barbarians. As such, not only did they think little of 'the others,' but also regarded them as cultural 'inferiors', who lacked refinement, learning, and artistic or literary culture, something much more pejorative than what the Yoruba, as noted above, would call *ará-oko* (boor, bushman, clodhopper), *alāimoyé* (the one without wisdom or learning), or *èniakénià* (worthless brute).

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