Africanizing Knowledge

African Studies Across the Disciplines

Toyin Falola and Christian Jennings

editors

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For
Professor Adiele Afigbo of Nigeria
and
Professor Karin Barber of the
Center for West African Studies, Birmingham

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Introduction

This book is intended to encourage scholars to consider ways by which African studies might become "more African." The proposition itself is hardly new. As E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo points out in this volume, Terence Ranger questioned, nearly four decades ago, to what extent African history was actually African, and whether methods and concerns taken from western historiography were sufficient tools for researching and narrating African history. During the past few decades, such introspective questions have faded into the background as Africanist scholarship has blossomed and branched out in every direction. The old questions still haunt us, no doubt. For example, scholars of Africa often lament the fact that the most prestigious sites of production for African studies remain outside Africa itself. The best solution to this problem, naturally, would be the flowering of institutions of higher learning within Africa, drawing back to the continent not only the best Africanist scholars, but also the financial resources to fund research, to publish books and journals, and to sponsor institutes and conferences. But given the circumstances of unequal wealth and political influence between African nations and their western counterparts, we must concede that this development will be a long time in coming. In the meantime, we suggest that the challenge to make Africanist scholarship more African should be taken up once again, and that there are any number of opportunities for Africanists to critically modify the ways in which they "do" scholarship. There are a multitude of disconnected points at which African experiences and contexts might inform our practice as scholars. At any point in the process of academic research, scholars might pause to contextualize aspects of their work. For example, they might consider their selection of sources, their use of particular methods of research, their style of writing, or their own roles within the academic community and in relation to the local African social settings in which they carry out their work. Each of these components of academic practice is linked to its own set of assumptions, traditions, expectations, and preferences. We suggest that it is by investigating these links that Africanists might take advantage of the opportunity to make their scholarship "more African."

This process cannot be one of simply privileging an African point of view at the expense of critical analysis and comparative research. In a recent essay, David Cohen has commented on the growing preference for "the African voice" in diverse areas of scholarship, and in national and international forums. This newfound respect for African points of view is of course a welcome development, and is the result of decades of struggle to overcome the silencing effects of colonialism and racism. Scholars of Africa have played no small part in winning an audience for African voices, for example through their efforts to establish oral tradition as a valid historical source. But at the same time, as Cohen notes, the emergence of "the African voice" presents scholars with a new responsibility: to be mindful of the ways in which African voices both "achieve authority and fail to, to recognize the power of wrong and incomplete accounts, and to comprehend the tensions among different processes of the production of knowledge."[1] On the one hand, then, we should be proud of the achievements of Africanist scholarship, which, as Daniel Mengara has noted, have "resulted in a process of historical and cultural palimpsesting that has sought to rewrite . . . things African from an African(ist) perspective." But on the other hand, in keeping with Cohen's call for responsibility, we should be cautious when Africanists then stretch this point, as Mengara does, to claim that Africanist scholarship reveals "the true essence of the African world."[2] For if any of us are to claim that we present a more authentic portrayal of Africa in our research and publications, then scholarly accountability requires that we must also make space for skeptical criticism of our claims. Oyekan Owomoyela makes precisely this plea in his essay for this volume, questioning the revered status accorded to some African writers and their representations of the "true essence" of Africa. "We cannot afford to be indifferent to the unrestrained exercise of poetic license," Owomoyela writes, lest these fictional portrayals of Africa "become authenticated by default." Likewise, scholars of Africa must not let their single-minded quest to restore the image of Africa lead them to insulate their studies from developments throughout the rest of the world. African studies can only be enhanced by comparative research, for as David Henige reminds us in this volume, "little occurred anywhere that had no analog elsewhere."

The essays in this volume, taken as a whole, suggest that being receptive to new possibilites in research and writing requires both a critical mindset, in order to maintain academic standards, and, at the same time, a willingness to rethink those standards when African experiences and contexts suggest that they might be inadequate or inappropriate for African studies. To put it another way, we need not advocate an uncritical acceptance of all things African in our work, but we should at the very least

make a commitment to (re)consider our study of all things African *within African contexts*, and to be aware of the ways in which our own subjective backgrounds might blind us to those contexts. Many Africanist scholars are already deeply engaged with these issues, as the essays in this volume readily attest. While the focus here is on historical knowledge, in the broadest sense of the term, the effort to make African scholarship "more African" is fundamentally interdisciplinary. Going against the trend of academic specialization, this approach reminds us of the common ground shared by all Africanists, and highlights some of the complementary perspectives that different disciplines might offer when dealing with identical research subjects. The papers collected here employ several innovative methods in the struggle to study Africa on its own terms. The first section, "Africanizing African History," offers several diverse methods for bringing distinctly African modes of historical discourse to the foreground in academic historical research. E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo begins the section with a thorough review of African historiography, casting an eye towards broad issues in the philosophy of history. Odhiambo reviews the development of African historiography as it followed several lines of investigation, the emergence of history departments at African universities, and the increasing multivocality of historical narratives. The essay then turns to a consideration of the philosophy of history. Despite the current trend of specialization across African studies, African historians as recently as the 1970s thought in broad terms about unifying themes and problems, and set themselves to the task of formulating an autonomous African history. This broad-minded optimism faded over the years, although contemporary scholars remain troubled by the unanswered questions it raised. Odhiambo concludes by asking the reader to consider whether a self-contained African philosophy of history is possible.

The following papers in the first section could each be seen as an attempt to present versions of such an autonomous history. Peter Sutherland's discussion of the Whydah Vodun festival in Benin provides insight into a distinctly African construction of the history and meaning of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. The organizers of the festival regard transported slaves as symbolic ancestors who pioneered the spread of Vodun in the Americas, creating the western branch of an international community of Vodun practitioners with Benin as its center. Sutherland asserts that the discourse created by the festival's organizers presents history not "as an *absence* waiting for discovery by the academy, but rather as a spiritual presence demanding urgent public response." Gregory Maddox's account of his discovery of the autobiography of Musa Kongola, an early convert to Christianity in East Africa, offers a comparative instance of a distinctly African construction of history. Kongola's presentation of his own story

explicitly engages issues of historical reconstruction; certain facts have been conveniently omitted, while the autobiography as a whole attempts to sum up its author's view of Christianity as a modernizing force within Africa. Meshack Owino considers a boastful saying he heard repeatedly while conducting research among the Jo-Ugenya of western Kenya. At first, the author thought this boastful saying was merely a rallying cry for contemporary politics, referring to the introduction of multiparty politics in 1992. However, when Owino pressed his informants to explain the saying, he came to see that it contained and alluded to a great deal of information about 1882–1890 war between the Jo-Ugenya of western Kenya and the Arab/Swahili. Owino's examination of the war emphasizes the importance of oral tradition, and in this case, sayings, as historical sources, not merely proverbs or vague "words of wisdom." Fallou Ngom's paper on Wolof loanwords from French, Arabic, English, and Spanish, shows that the types of words incorporated indicate the nature of the historical contact and the relationship between societies. Thus, French loanwords mainly deal with politics, culture, and education; Arabic loanwords focus on Islamic religion; and Spanish and English loanwords are centered in youth culture, fashion, and popular music. Ngom points out that loanwords are appropriated by specific social groups within society for specific purposes, not at random. Futher, the loans are indicative of a top-down process where words are appropriated or accepted because of the power or prestige associated with them. And Alusine Jalloh, in his overview of the sub-field of African business history, reminds us that the search for an autonomous African history must not rely solely on "traditional" Africa for inspiration.

The second section, "African Creative Expression in Context," presents case studies of African art, literature, music, and poetry, and attempts to strip away the exotic or primitivist aura they often accumulate when presented in a foreign setting, in order to illuminate the social, historical, and aesthetic contexts in which these works of art were originally produced. Christopher Adejumo's essay offers a vivid introduction to modern African visual arts, describing works based in traditional forms, popular art that reflects the urban African context, and "international" art that usually requires formal academic training. Adejumo stresses that African art is constantly evolving, and that seemingly disparate forms are deeply interrelated: for example, western-trained international artists often infuse their works with an interest in traditional forms, while popular urban artists often find themselves returning to local forms and media. Maurice Amutabi's essay posits that African works of art, in this case traditional music, instruments, and poetry, are not only diverse and innovative in an aesthetic sense, but are also overlooked sources for historical research. In the Abaluyia region of Kenya, traditional songs and poetry indicate

historical change through the mention of plants and animals from other areas of East Africa, and through descriptions of foods and crops no longer grown in Abaluyia country. The next three papers in this section present striking examples of the ways in which our views of African artistic expression can be altered simply by putting the works of art into a more thorough social and historical context. Ian Eagleson, for example, convincingly demonstrates that the Kenyan song "Malaika," viewed as the product of a rural, exotic setting by western performers and audiences in the 1960s, was actually written within a rapidly developing, urban milieu. The Kiswahili lyrics to the song, far from praising a simple, "natural" Africa, actually deal with the pressures of the new cash-based economy in Africa's cities, even alluding to the flight of an airplane overhead. Okeyan Owomoyela's paper makes the provocative assertion that literary criticism should hold African writers accountable for their interpretations of African history and culture. In reviewing the critical reception of works by writers such as Amos Tutuola, Owomoyela argues that turning a blind eye to their creative mythologizing actually invites the kind of negative stereotyping that western observers have engaged in. Edgard Sankara examines two representations of African involvement in World War I: Jean-Jacques Annaud's film comedy *La Victoire en chantant*, which freely takes liberties with historical accuracy; and Amadou Bâ's memoir, *Amkoullel, l'Enfant peul*, which presents itself as an historically truthful narrative. Yet upon closer examination, Sankara finds that Annaud's film is actually more accurate in many respects, especially in its portrayal of forced conscription of Africans. Sankara argues that this difference in historical reliability between the two works can be attributed to the differences in context and intended audience.

The third section, "Writing Colonial Africa," demonstrates that the study of imperialism in Africa remains a springboard for innovative work that, like the papers in the preceding section, takes familiar ideas about Africa and reconsiders them within new contexts. Barbara Harlow opens the section with a discussion of "the best diamond stories" from the colonial era to the present day, in which diamonds can refer to the real items, but can also serve as symbols for Africa's many other valuable resources. In the course of her paper, Harlow explicitly links adventure stories with colonialism, and then proceeds to show how today's "diamond stories," including those written by Africans, are indicative of the equally extractive aims of modern multinational corporations. Eve Dunbar continues with an examination of "creative imperialism" in literature, focusing on Haggard's adventure novel, *King Solomon's Mines*. Dunbar shows that the much-debated "native problem" in colonial southern Africa had its mirror in fictional representations of Africa, and points out that Haggard used the

novel to propose his own creative solution in counterpoint to Cecil Rhodes' practical proposals: namely, to eliminate the source of African reproduction. Complementing Dunbar's presentation of colonialists' views of African women, Jennifer Williams' paper considers an African view of colonized women, as found in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*. Drawing on Frantz Fanon's analysis of colonized peoples, Williams argues that Dangarembga sees the female body as a site of both colonialism and indigenous patriarchy, as well as a potential site of decolonization. These conflicts erupt in vivid scenes within the novel, as women use "the performance of trauma" to articulate their resistance. Similarly, Hal Wylie's study of the theme of child abuse in African and Afro-Caribbean fiction, focusing specifically on the writings of Maryse Condé, finds that colonized women are a crucial concern. Wylie notes that despite Condé's feminist orientation, her fictional portrayals of mothers often cast them in a less than positive light, and suggests that Condé is actually "demystifying the politics of mothering" by presenting characters who struggle to face the responsibilities of motherhood. Wylie believes that Condé's analysis of motherhood has been refined over the course of her literary career, culminating in her autobiography with her depiction of her own mother. In much of Condé's fiction, these "bad" mothers are faced with the extra burden of being colonized women; Condé empathizes with both the mother and the abused child as they struggle within the colonial situation to deal with what Fanon referred to as the "black skin white mask" complex. Adding an interesting counterpoint to scholars' assumptions about the colonial era, Nina Berman, in her study of flying ace Ernst Udet's travels in East Africa in 1930–31, suggests that by this time colonial attitudes had begun to give way to ideas of modern development. Udet's photos of landscapes, architecture, and people suggest an Africa in which "natives" and supervising Europeans could work together productively and efficiently to modernize the continent through technological innovation. Far from the exoticizing imagery of British and French colonial observers, Udet's views shared much in common with the films of Leni Riefenstahl, and perhaps more tellingly, with today's movement for globalization. Finally, Saheed Adejumobi examines the meanings of globalization, looking back to the colonial experience of the Yoruba for insight.

The final section, "Scholars and Their Work," steps back and critically examines the process of African studies itself, including the roles of scholars in the production of knowledge about Africa. Leading off the section, James Denbow criticizes the tendency of scholars to see the ancient African past as an allegorical blend of "ecological and evolutionary mysticism," using an outdated system of tribalized ethnic categories in which hunter-gatherers were, and still remain, primordial forest or desert

inhabitants. In fact, the past twenty years of archaeological research have shown that the prehistory of the Kalahari was much more complex than previously assumed; ethnic and economic identities have been in a process of dynamic transformation for millennia. As a result of these findings, archaeological practice itself has been forced to become more self-reflexive and more critical of the way findings are appropriated and applied to present-day conditions. Jan Jansen and Clemens Zobel, writing under their Mande patronymics Diabate and Kouyate, contribute a revealing essay on the ways in which taking these patronymics affects the course of a scholar's research. Anyone who intends to enter into social relationships in Mande must take a *jamu* (an ascribed Mande patronymic) by which they will be known and introduced, and which automatically makes them part of a Mande family. The *jamu* inevitably shapes reactions to a scholar's presence in a particular community. Diabate placed great emphasis on his *jamu*, showed off his ability to play the kora, and used kola nuts as gifts for his informants. Kouyate, in contrast, admitted from the start the artificiality of his *jamu*, and relied on his Mande assistant for mediation in new social settings. Interestingly, the two authors found that oral interviews often could be more straightforward and productive with the latter approach, which admits up front the researcher's outsider status. Jansen and Zobel call for further study of the ways in which the *jamu* affects researchers and their scholarly practice. Olatunji Ojo also reflects on his outsider status while conducting research, in this case the result of his "trespassing" as a male in the field of women's history. Ojo's research on the contributions of Yoruba female farmers between 1920 and 1960 demonstrates that scholars who lack either the money for, or the access to, female informants to conduct oral interviews, can still produce significant research in women's history by using archival sources in creative ways.

The final two chapters in the section take an even broader view of scholars' roles in the world, one by tracing the often unacknowledged link between the academy and the economy, and the other by challenging scholars to engage with the continuing struggle for social justice in Africa. David Henige steps back to look at the marketplace of scholarly production, a setting in which scholars, whether they realize it or not, are continually calculating the market potential of their research and writing. Every step in the process of scholarly production, from the selection of a topic to the way the scholar's words look on the printed page, can be seen as an effort to succeed in the marketplace. Henige asks us to be conscious of this fact, and to shape our research and writing for posterity, rather than to fit the trends of the day. Finally, Peyi Soyinka-Airewele concludes the volume with an energetic call for scholarship combined with activism. Soyinka-Airewele's study of collective memory and its influence on present politics finds that

for marginalized communities in African countries, the popular "forgive and forget" style of pragmatic politics does not allow for the communal catharsis needed for recovery from past injustices. Memory, unlike history, is a palpable "present experience," and the selective memory espoused by governments and international organizations can often result in an absence of accountability for past actions, as is often the case with the international community's legitimation of dictators such as Mobutu Sese Seko. Soyinka-Airewele, critical of African societies that have elected to "contend for the future without seeking resolution of the past," advocates confrontation with the past as a means of opening dialogue and encouraging accountability and social justice.

This last essay, challenging scholars to take an active role in the societies they study, brings us back to the premise of the volume, which was to explore ways by which Africanist scholarship might become "more African." Clearly, the need for critical self-reflection should not incapacitate the scholar from doing work, and many of the papers here are striking examples of the extraordinary possibilities inherent in African studies, but at the same time, the essays in this volume reveal in unsettling detail that Africanist scholarship is rife with hidden assumptions and debatable practices. We would like to suggest that, rather than running ourselves in circles as we chase the elusive dream of authenticity in our research into, and portrayals of, Africa, we would do better to simply approach our profession, our research subjects, and our writing, with a healthy dose of open-minded skepticism, a concerned commitment to the present and future of the continent, and maybe even a trace of humility. When we consider the epic scale of the problems and possibilities unfolding in Africa today, it seems foolish to do otherwise.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

1. David William Cohen, "African Historians and African Voices," in *African Historians and African Voices*, ed. E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo (Basel, Switzerland: P. Schlettwein Publishing, 2001).
2. Daniel M. Mengara, "White Eyes, Dark Reflections," in *Images of Africa: Stereotypes and Realities*, ed. Daniel M. Mengara (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2001).

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Africanizing African History

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From African Historiographies to an African Philosophy of History

E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo

Introduction

Recent thinking on the philosophy of history has delineated its basic concerns as being, firstly, the nature of historiographical knowledge, and secondly, the metaphysical assumptions of historiography (Tucker 2001). The seemingly weak status of the sub-discipline (Stanford 1998, 5–8) belies the interdisciplinary diffusion of articles and books across the disciplines of history, philosophy, law, political science, and sociology. This diffusion is particularly marked in the field of African studies (Karp and Bird 1987, Mudimbe and Jewsiewicki 1993, Odera Oruka 1990, Karp and Masolo 2000), and may indeed beguile the scholar into the false recognition of the absence of an African philosophy of history. And yet a proper reading of the Africanist founders of African historiography should soon disabuse us of this erroneous posture, given their early concerns with ancient Egypt as the plenum of all history and the foundation of all black civilization (Cheikh Anta Diop 1954); with ancient Egyptian labels written in hieroglyphic signs as being the world's earliest examples of phonetic writing (Dreyer 1992, 293–99); with the pharaoh Akhenaten as being "the first individual in human history" (Breasted 1905 as cited in Montserrat 2000, 3); with

methodology and assumptions of African historiography (Ranger 1968, ix-x); with an antecedent historical consciousness (Ogot 1978); with an African world order or an African vision of reality that informs the political, historical, philosophical, value-ethical, and epistemological fields of concern (Ogot 1961, 1972); with the attainment of wisdom that comes with age (Lonsdale 2000, 5); and with the relationship of African historiography to African realities (Ranger 1976, 17–23). Can African historians recapture this historical space and reintroduce an African philosophy of history that emphasizes African autonomy?

During the recent post-structuralist and postmodernist era it has become fashionable to think of continents, communities, identities, belonging, tradition, heritage, and home as imagined, invented, or created entities. The idea of Africa has been tantalizing to the West since Homer imagined the flight of the Greek gods from Mount Olympus to Africa, there to feast with the blemishless Ethiopians. In the fifteenth century, a Papal Bull imagined Africa as a *terra nullius* and proceeded to divide it between Christian Spain and Portugal. The English poet Jonathan Swift imagined a "yon Afrique" where geographers were wont to fill the blank spaces with elephants for want of towns. The partition of Africa at the Berlin West Africa Conference in 1884–1885 carved up Africa between the European powers ostensibly because the continent had an ignoble history of slave trade and slavery which could be stamped out only through European colonization. Thus the former citizens and subjects of African kingdoms and of stateless communities were dubbed peoples without history. Instead it was asserted that there was only the history of Europeans in Africa. European authorship from Hegel down to H. R. Trevor-Roper asserted that Africa constituted a blank darkness, and "darkness was not a suitable subject for history" (Trevor-Roper 1966, 9). The colonial period was a time of distortion through power: "[P]ower was used to force Africans into distorting identities; power relations distorted colonial social science, rendering it incapable of doing more than reflecting colonial constructions" (Ranger 1996, 273). One of these distortions was that of thinking of Africans as people without history.

The other Africa, the actually existing Africa of the Africans, did not participate in this discourse. The fact that history is a record of man's past, and that the philosophy of history consists of second order reflections on the thoughts of historians about the historical process, engaged the oral historian Mamadou Kouyate of the empire of Mali as much as it did the Moslem scholar Ibn Khaldun of the same empire at the same time. This tradition of production and engagement with the memory of their own histories continued through the ages into the twentieth century, the age of Africa's peasant intellectuals (Feierman 1990). Here, tradition means:

> the socially consolidated versions of the past, and particularly accounts of origins of institutions, which served to define communities and underwrite authority in them. Memory refers to those traces of past experience present in the consciousness of every human being, which provided the essential but problematic basis for the sense of personal identity, as well as the constraining or enabling basis for future action. Tradition was social and hierarchical, memory was individual and open-access. (Peel 1998, 77)

Overview of African Historiography

Precolonial historiographies of Africa consisted of oral histories as well as written accounts. The oral histories included myths, legends, epics, poetry, parable, and narrative. They varied from dynastic accounts and kinglists that were a record of the royal courts and the state elites to the clan histories of the stateless societies. Because of their selective valorization and silences they constituted historiographies in themselves. These oral renditions were the resources that the first Christian African elites drew on to write their histories in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Apolo Kagwa in Buganda, John Nyakatura and Kabalega Winyi in Bunyoro, Samuel Johnson among the Yoruba, Akiga Sai among the Tiv, and J. Egbarehva in Benin. Similarly among the stateless peoples the clan histories were to become the resources for writing the wider histories of the Luo by Paul Mbuya (Ogot 1997).

The written sources of African history belong to three different historiographical traditions. First was the enormous corpus of Muslim sources from the eighth to the fifteenth centuries C.E. Written by Islamic missionaries, travelers and scholars to Sudanic and the eastern coast of Africa these included the works of Al Masudi, Al Bakri, Al Idrisi, Ibn Batuta, Ibn Khaldun, and al Wazzan (Leo Africanus). These sources consisted of direct and reported observations of local societies. The sources were biased in favor of Muslim rulers and said little positive about the non-believers. After the sixteenth century African Islamic scholarship emerged that incorporated the local oral traditions in its renditions. This scholarship took center stage with the emergence of the *Tarikh al Sudan* by Al Sadi of Timbuktu in 1665, *Tarikh al Fattash* (1664), and *Tarikh Mai Idris* by Imam Ahmad Ibn Fartuwa. Swahili Islamic scholarship emerged also, beginning in the eighteenth century, embodied in city-state histories like the Pate Chronicle or in the nineteenth-century resistance poetry from Mombasa, Muyaka. The same happened in the Hausa states, giving rise to the Kano Chronicle as a generic format. These documents focused on state power rather than the wider social processes. In the nineteenth century vigorous Islamic scholarship flourished in the Sokoto Caliphate as well, represented

by the extensive writings of the founding Caliph Shehu, Usuman Dan Fodio, and those of his successors.

The second corpus of written sources consisted of European traders and travelers' accounts dating from the fifteenth century. They imparted the image of the exotic as well as a primitive Africa often at war with itself, particularly in the nineteenth century. The third strand of scholarship came from the Africans in the Diaspora in the Americas, beginning with Olaudah Equiano in 1791 and continuing on to Edward Wilmot Blyden in the nineteenth century and W.E.B. Dubois and Leo Hansberry in the twentieth century. This trend marked the opposite of the European endeavor: it sought to glorify the African past. In Africa, Cheikh Anta Diop endeavored to prove that the foundation of ancient Egyptian civilization was Black and African. This tendency has been seized upon by the school of Afrocentricity in the United States, led by Molefi K. Asante.

Colonial historiography produced its own knowledge of Africa, based on the premise of European superiority and the civilizing nature of its mission. Colonial historiography presented the Europeans as the main actors in any significant transformation of the African continent since its "discovery," exploration, and conquest. Elspeth Huxley's *White Man's Country: Lord Delamere and the Making of Modern Kenya* (1935) was typical of this genre. The Africans were seen by the administrators, missionaries, historians and anthropologists alike as being static and primitive, the passive recipients of European progress. Africa's self-evident artistic achievements, its historic monuments, its political kingdoms that resembled any other western-type bureaucracy, and its complex religious institutions were attributed to foreigners, the Hamitic conquerors from the northeast. The "Hamitic hypothesis" (Sanders 1969) was predicated on the doctrine of *ex oriente lux* (out of the east, light). It served as "a convenient explanation for complex historical events, an explanation that filled a historical vacuum and served as a rationale for colonial rule" (Fagan 1997, 52). It was ubiquitous, being used to explain eastern coastal urbanization as well as the Yoruba myths of origin. The external factor in the twentieth century was European colonialism, seen as a civilizing mission among inferior peoples. History served as an ideological legitimation of Europe in Africa. In the eyes of at least one African historian this was "bastard historiography" (Afigbo 1993, 46).

The nationalist movement was in part a challenge to this notion of Africans as peoples without history. With the attainment of independence in the 1960s emerged a postcolonial historiography centered within the continent but with significant external liberal support as well. Liberal historiography in the 1960s sought to help Africans recover and reclaim their own histories in consonance with the attainment of political

independence, to distinguish the history of Europeans in Africa from the history of African peoples, and to write history from "the African point of view." Conceptually the liberals worked within an interdisciplinary framework alongside archaeologists, political scientists, and economic historians. Methodologically, they developed the field of oral history, and appropriated and extended the range of questions to be asked concerning social change by social anthropologists. The favorite theme of the period was African resistance and its opposite, African oppression. The dyad of resistance and oppression (Cooper 1994) inspired magisterial research on Samori Toure by Yves Person, on the Maji Maji war in Tanganyika led by John Iliffe and Gilbert Gwassa, on the Chimurenga war in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) by T. O. Ranger, and on the Herero/Nama revolt in Namibia by Helmut Bley. "The people in African resistance" became a mantra for the period. An early opposing view suggested that within African communities there obtained a paradox of collaboration and resistance; that within the textures of African societies the resisters of today would be the collaborators of tomorrow, thus creating "the paradox of collaboration" (Steinhart 1972; Atieno-Odhiambo 1974). The dyad still held sway in African historiography in the 1980s.

In the 1960s Dar es Salaam University became most associated with this enthusiasm for the recovery of African initiative. The Dar es Salaam school of history was created under T. O. Ranger. It sought to explicate the explanatory value of African history as a discipline, to give Tanzania its national history, and to engage in debates relating to the building of Ujamaa socialism in Tanzania. The short-lived (1965–1974) nationalist thrust of this historiography began to be challenged in the early 1970s for its failure to engage with the imperial and global contexts in which actions and agencies were undertaken, and for its tendency to narrow complex strategies of multi-sized engagements with forces inside and outside the community into a single framework to emphasize African activity, African adaptation, African choice, and African initiative.

This radical response to the paradigm was prompted by the emergence of Marxist historians, anthropologists, and political scientists in the 1970s. It emphasized class analysis at the global and local levels (Rodney 1974). Economic history became the first locus of the liberal/radical debates. One school called for substantive analysis focused on culture as the operative force in African economic history, and applied western market analysis to African economic activity. The liberal approach privileged individual action, while the radical approach saw political power and economic constraints as the principal operative features of the historical process (Newbury 1998, 304). The radicals traced the history of African poverty in the context of global capitalism.

The Recovery of Initiative

The setting up of western-type universities in Africa on the eve of independence marked a significant milestone in what African scholars came to regard as the recovery of African initiative. The new departments of history established the teaching of African rather than European history at the core of the curriculum, with a full commitment to the Africanization of learning through an African faculty, trained in Europe and the United States by individuals with backgrounds in imperial or mission history. In turn they assumed the leadership in African universities created at Ibadan (Nigeria), Legon (Ghana), Nairobi (Kenya), and Dar es Salam (Tanzania). Their biggest challenge was methodological: history as understood in the West was based on written documents. The greatest break came with the acceptance and refinement of the methodology of oral traditions as a means for recapturing the African voices from the past. Jan Vansina's *De la tradition orale* (1959), translated into English as *Oral Tradition* (1965), wielded enormous influence.

The traditions were treated as narratives, and later scholarship has defined them as comparable to primary written documents and also as representations of secondary interpretations with kernels of original texts. The establishment of relative chronologies was another major innovation as calendric dating of events based on lists of rulers in African states and solar and lunar eclipses were correlated with written sources. Ancillary disciplines, particularly archaeology and historical linguistics extended the time scale of the deep past as the C14 technique provided archaeologists with dates going back four millennia (Thornton 1997). As well, glottochronology and more complex comparative methodologies enabled historical linguists to provide dates going back two millennia in places like eastern Africa. Thus the origins of ancient civilizations, the spread of iron working, Bantu migrations and settlements—key issues in the historical discourses of the period—found resonance in the allied disciplines (Ehret 1998).

The acceptance of oral traditions facilitated tremendous expansion in graduate programs at African Universities as the first generation of African scholars undertook the supervision of students who sought to give histories to the many ethnic groups that hitherto had no history. In addition the requirement that undergraduate history majors complete a research dissertation enabled thousands of students to undertake oral and archival research, leading to an engagement with local histories as students spent two to three months interviewing oral experts in the field. This input brought academic history in contact with the wider society and helped to

build links between the academy and the public over a period of twenty years before funds for the African universities dried up. The existence of well over six thousand of these dissertations is a marker of the recovery of the initiative sought by the pioneers and to the institutionalization of history within Africa. As well, the effort resulted in some quality essay publications (McIntosh 1969; Mutahaba 1969; Webster 1974; Atieno-Odhiambo 1975).

Thematic Variations

From the beginning of the 1970s, African history branched into various specializations. Studies of the Atlantic slave trade, first inspired by P. D. Curtin's work (1969), flowered into debates about the numbers; the nature of domestic slavery in Africa before and after the Atlantic phase; the impact of the Atlantic slave trade on African economies, demographics, and development; comparative slavery in the East African coast and in the new world; and the slow death of slavery in twentieth-century Africa. Its most significant recent dimension has seen the expansion of the analytical framework into Atlantic history (Miller 1988), and the enrichment of the field of comparative studies. As a result:

> One can now see how villages deep in equatorial Africa came together with plantations in remote parts of Brazil, the Caribbean Islands, and up-country South Carolina. It is not simply that studies, like Joseph Miller's superb book on the Portuguese slave trade, have followed out every link in the great chain that joined Africa and America. More than that: slavery in the entire Atlantic basin—that huge pan-oceanic oval which included large parts of two continents—has been viewed comprehensively as a single 'system,' fundamental to the whole Atlantic commerce. (Bailyn 1996)

The historical study of African religions, Christian missionaries, independent African Christians, and African traditional religions, attracted T. O. Ranger, Isaria Kimambo, and B. A. Ogot. A. G. Hopkin's *Economic History of West Africa* (1973) applied the substantivist analysis to African economic behavior. David Henige's journal, *History in Africa*, emerged as the premier journal of method, critiquing the uncritical usage of both European and African traditions. *Ecology, Control and Economic Development in East Africa* by Helge Kjeshus (1976) was the founding text on environmental history in East African historiography. Intent on restoring the people as agents of African initiatives, the author sketched how precolonial societies controlled their environment and were victors in the ecological struggle to the end of the nineteenth century, when rinderpest and smallpox devastated both human and livestock populations. This

breakdown was exacerbated by the violent conquest by the Germans; forced recruitment into the first World War; and the British policies of forced settlements, labor recruitment, wildlife conservation, and economic exploitation. The resulting population declines gave "nature" the advantage, and tsetse fly infestation, sleeping sickness, and decline in agricultural production set in. In the ensuing two decades this historiography has become more complex as both archival and oral histories have been used to illuminate the complex relations between environment, people, history, culture, and political and economic structures. In *Custodians of the Land* (Maddox and Gilbin 1996) colonized Africans are portrayed as pushing on in spite of colonial adversity, learning not only to survive, but to thrive under new sets of challenges. The work enriches the analysis of the relationship between population changes and political economy. In the opinion of a reviewer it marks a state-of-the-art research into the relations between ecology and history, suggesting that the present ecological condition is a product of a complex and contested interaction between the environment, local initiative, and imperial drive over the past century (Maddox and Giblin 1996). African demographic, medical, and labor histories emerged, the latter driven by the Marxist structural interests in class struggles and the emergence of working-class consciousness (Cooper 1995). Peasant studies emerged with Colin Bundy's *Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (1979) and commanded sustained elaboration in Central and Eastern Africa. This field has flourished as agricultural history (Vail and White 1980; Mandala 1990). As a theme in postcolonial historiography it emerged initially because of the recognition of the general absence of peasants from colonial literature, and flowered in the wake of the development of methodologies that allowed rural subjects to be included in historical inquiry. A marked aspect of this development was that the historical methods to study peasants in Africa developed through the use of qualitative data—testimony—rather than quantitative data—statistics (Newbury and Newbury 2000, 834).

The global agenda on women inspired the first histories of women in Africa relating to women's roles in economic development, and African women and the law. These were enriched by the multi-disciplinarity facilitated by feminist, gender, and literary studies, resulting in a historiography that is distinct from the more orthodox specializations in its familiarity with conversations from other continents (Oyewumi 1997, 1998). The first wave of studies of women in the 1970s focused primarily on the economically productive activities and social agency of African women. This work treated women in development, especially agrarian change, land tenure, urbanization, and their roles in formal and informal economies. The second wave focused on the colonial period, and studied

questions relating to colonial domesticity, customary law, motherhood, reproduction, sexuality, and the body. Luise White's study of prostitution, *The Comforts of Home* (1990), is representative. The most recent cultural wave has covered gender and masculinity, social and institutional identities, and generational, homosocial struggles (Hunt 1996). The lexicon of cultural history has covered gender meanings, modernity, coloniality, postcoloniality, consumption, and public culture. Thus there has been a paradigm shift from women's history to gender history, foregrounding gender as a set of social and symbolic relations (Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo 1992; Robertson 1997).

The historiography of Christian religious history has moved from missiology to the inculcation of Christianity by the Africans as Christian communities felt able to move from the margins of society closer to its center and to appropriate something of the values of a past that was once seen as being inimical to it (Spear 1999). This later movement has led to the study of the appropriation and adaptation of traditions in order to place Christianity within African history. Earlier work on missiology included Roland Oliver's *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (1962). The study of independent churches since B. Sundkler's *Bantu Prophets* (1948) has been preoccupied with the perceived and real discrimination within the mission churches. They have stressed African autonomy, continuity with elements of past African cultures, instrumental focus and use of faith healing, and the search for "community." The spiritual communities of independent churches offer a place of belonging, *A Place to Feel at Home* (Welbourn and Ogot 1967).

A powerful trend in the historiography of Christianity emerged in the 1980s, one that depicted religion as an indivisible aspect of general change and even of specifically economic, political, and social change (Fields 1986). This contrasts with the work of African theologians who continue to maintain a focus on religion as a specific autonomous realm whose central text is the Bible as translated into cultures (Sanneh 1990), a mix of translatability and radical cultural pluralism—the ability of Christianity to transcend cultural boundaries (Spear 1999, 10). In the 1990s scholarship has focused on intellectual history, exploring the missionary contribution to the ideas of ethnicity, environment, and gender (Hoehler-Fatton 1996). Debates on the social history of Christianity seek to bring a dialogical and dialectical understanding to the history of colonial evangelism. The works by Jean and John Comaroff (1991, 1997) married the social sources and ideologies of the missionaries and ethnography of the Tswana. The innovative range of evidence they researched included cultural, economic, and political encounters, and lent weight to the symbolic. They employed the notions of hybridity and bricolage to demonstrate how both the missionaries and the

Tswana made and remade themselves. Current historiographies seek to move the discourse on vernacular Christianity from the mission station to the village, thus foregrounding the roles of youth, women, and migrant elites. In emphasizing the social significance of religion, these studies explore the theme of inculturation from below: a process through which Africans appropriated the symbols, rituals, and ideas of Christianity and made them their own. The salience of the local is made manifest (Landau 1995). And Africa's religious encounter with the west has now assumed a global form of discourse (Sanneh 1993).

To summarize: from the vantage point of the end of the century, African historiography has moved from the institutional to the economic, then the social, and now cultural history. The rubric of social history captures much of the more recent historiography. Its strength has been its multidisciplinarity and its multivocality. The insights of history, political economy, historical anthropology, literary studies, and other forms of social science have been combined to illuminate the following parameters of understanding: landscapes of memory and imagination, the construction of identity, the colonization of consciousness, colonial texts and transcripts as social practices, the consumption of leisure, the production and risks of knowledge, the occult and imaginary (White 2000), and the rituals of power. The anatomy of "experience, identity and self-expression which link the glories of past independence, the miseries of domination and poverty, and the hopes of a fully autonomous future" (Austen 1993, 213) are very much at the core of this endeavor, at *ReInventing Africa*, to borrow Andre Brink's apt title. Indeed it might be correctly asserted that we have, at the end of the twentieth century, achieved the goal that Cheikh Anta Diop set for us in 1954, that is, the establishment of "foundational history" (Feierman 1999) for the whole continent, as is evidenced by the conclusion of the UNESCO General History of Africa and the Cambridge History of Africa projects.

Institutional Impact

In terms of institutional distinction, the "Ibadan school of history" had its origins in the 1950s when K. O. Dike and Saburi Biobaku took up academic appointments at the university. Dike's work, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* (1956), paved the way for the study of African initiatives and struggles at the moment of contact with European imperialism in the nineteenth century. Those scholars associated with Ibadan came to dominate Nigerian scholarship for three decades: Dike, Biobaku, J. F. Ade Ajayi, E. A. Afigbo, E. A. Ayandele, J. E. Alagoa, and Obaro Ikime. In turn they trained generations of younger scholars who have emerged in their

own right since the 1970s. The Ibadan school has been characterized by its concentration on trade and politics, the missionary impact, the Islamic revolutions, and the emergence of the Nigerian State. The initial concern was to establish a chronology and reconstruct political and military events. Archival materials were supplemented with oral traditions, and a framework of political history for Nigeria was laid. Schematically the Ibadan school dealt with trade and politics; the new African elites created around mission stations; the struggle over the control over modern institutions such as churches, professions, and government posts; and finally the tracing of a geneaology of nationalism. With the expansion of universities in Nigeria in the 1960s and 1970s, the Ibadan influence was extended to the new campuses. The major challenge to this trend came from Islamic legitimists based at Ahmadu Bello University led by Abdullahi Smith, who called for a return to "time-honoured ideals and traditions of scholarship which had formed the basis of intellectual endeavour in the Islamic world for centuries: traditions and ideals which the ancient universities in the Islamic world had been founded to preserve" (Lovejoy 1986, 202). As Nigerian politics have grown increasingly polarized, the Ibadan school has continued to hold sway in the southern Nigerian universities while Islamic legitimists have held forth in the north.

Senegalese historiography is university-based and privileges the past five hundred years of contact and exchange with Europe and the Atlantic world. The Senegambia region lends itself to a unified field of study beyond the confines of the nation-state, and has been treated as such by generations of scholars. The historiography reflects the predominance of French traditions of scholarship and prioritization, as well as Anglophone North American prominence in research endowments. Local scholarship based at Dakar has been overwhelmed by these metropolitan influences, and has been stifled through the long period of gestation required for the French doctorat d'état, plus the basic sub-imperialism of the French Africanists (Gondola 1997; Cahen 1997; Chretien 1997). Thus the "Dakar school" of history—history produced by the Senegambians themselves—has been a junior partner in this tricontinental endeavor. Nevertheless it does have an impressive pedigree. The first, pioneering generation was led by Cheikh Anta Diop, Abdoulaye Ly, and Joseph Ki-Zerbo in the 1950s; they were followed by the generation of Djibril Tamsir Niane in the 1960s. The concern then was with nationalist political history stressing the African resistance paradigm and emphasizing the protonationalists like the Lat Dior Lator Diop, Bai Bureh, and Ahmadu Bamba. In the 1970s the generation of Cissene Moody Cissoko, Boubacar Barry, Abdoulaye Bathily, Mamadou Diouf, and Rukhaya Fall embraced the methods of the social sciences for the understanding of the crises of underdevelopment and dependence in the

modern period, and sought to reinterpret the last five hundred years as a period of continuing decline in the fortunes of the region. This perspective informs the yearning for the dissolution of the colonial state boundaries and a return to the historical unity of Greater Senegambia (Barry 1998).

The East African region, home to numerous stateless communities, realized most gains from acceptance of oral tradition as a legitimate method of history. The founding historian B. A. Ogot had successfully argued that this method could validly be used for non-state societies. His *History of the Southern Luo* (1967) inspired research and publications at Nairobi and Makerere Universities, and later in Malawi and Western Nigeria through the influence of J. B. Webster. The construction of ethnic identities and history took central place initially, giving scores of "tribes" a history of their own (see, for example, Ochieng' 1974). Oral interviews became the accepted fieldwork methodology for colonial history as well, especially since the ordinary Africans were hardly represented in the official archival record as makers of their own history. Thus the recovery of the histories of African resistance, peasants, migrant labor, squatters, regional trade, religious history, agrarian struggles, women's histories, intellectual history, rural discourse, and issues of moral equity were all achieved by undergraduate students and by foreign and local historians over two decades. The relatively benign research atmosphere in Kenya until the end of the 1970s enabled the buildup of a solid historiography in the wake of the Ogot initiatives.

An important aspect of the professionalization of the discipline was the founding of national Historical Associations, most prominently in Nigeria, Kenya, and Tanzania, complete with their own journals like the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* and the *Kenya Historical Review*. The associations served as bridges bringing together high school teachers and university academics at regular annual conferences. A major by-product of these efforts was the publication of suitable textbooks for use by teachers and pupils in high schools, most notably Jacob Ajayi and Ian Espie's *A Thousand Years of West African History* (1960) and B. A. Ogot and J. Kieran's *Zamani* (1969). Also, the Historical Association of Tanzania produced a series of authoritative pamphlets on important topics by historians of the Dar Es Salaam faculty such as: *Early Trade in East Africa* by J.E.G. Sutton, Edward Alpers' *The East African Slave Trade*, and *The West African Slave Trade* by Walter Rodney. The early destruction of Makerere University by Idi Amin led to the death of the Makerere Hisorical Papers series of pamphlets soon after the publication of M. Kiwanuka's *The Kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara: Myth or Reality?* and John Rowe's *Lugard in Kampala*. Of note as well was the Pan-African journal *Tarikh*, also a product of the Historical Association of Nigeria, whose

essays were much used by the undergraduate students. A lasting legacy of the African economic and political crises has been the demise of all these professional outlets since the early 1980s. Much hope is therefore invested in the emergence of the South African Historical Association under Arnold Temu in 1999.

Nationalist History: Eastern Africa

> The faithful phantom of Africanism can be represented in the two sides of a coin: with the state on one side and the nation on the other. Whether one tries to ignore it, work within it, or adore it, history, whether written or publicly recited, does not escape the state. (Jewsiewicki 1986, 14)

The meta-narrative of the nationalist historiography begins with Thomas Hodgkin's *Nationalism in Tropical Africa* (1956), a populist text which sought to equate nationalism with any protest phenomenon generally. With the attainment of political independence a nationalist historiography emerged. It sought to study the origins and course of African nationalism through the lens of modernization theory, and emphasized the emergence of the African elites and the launching of western-style political parties. A strand of the genre sought to lay bare the connections between the primary resisters to colonial conquest, the modernizing elites of the interwar years, and the later territorial nationalists of the 1950s that saw the goal of nationalism as being the attainment of political independence. This facilitated the writing of the history of the new states as the history of the "African voice," and of this voice as the voice of these elites (Ranger 1970). These elites were conscious of the aspirations of the masses and were able to attract a broad following and to articulate popular concerns, speaking on behalf of "those who had not spoken." Radical rural movements were thus linked through the local notables like the Samkange family in Southern Rhodesia to the wider canvas of nationalist discourses (Ranger 1996). Thus in the case of Tanganyika, the political elites like Julius Nyerere found common cause with local organizations challenging everything from unjust marketing regulations to restrictive crop controls, and from cattle dipping to further European land alienation. In the context of an imperial Britain that was ambivalent about its need to keep Tanganyika and anxious to stem the spread of Mau Mau-like activities there, Julius Nyerere and his allies in TANU galvanized the grassroots demand for independence (Illiffe 1979). The most recent historiography has criticized this narrative for its male-centeredness by arguing for the centrality of women in Tanzania's nationalist movement, emphasizing their role in rural and urban political party politics. Thus a more inclusive version that integrates the political,

cultural, and symbolic work of women into the past and present of nationalism has emerged (Geiger 1997).

Power over History

There is a marked contrast between Tanganyika, where the idea of a nation was a possibility, and Kenya, where the state has failed to establish its "regime of truth" on the nationalist narrative. Kenya was a conquest state from the beginning, whose early historiography was anchored on the European settlers to whom it was a White Man's Country. Thus British policy towards its colonial African subjects attracted scholarly attention (Dilley 1937) and also generated historiographical debate as tensions developed between Africans and the settlers (Huxley 1944). The actual making of this colonial order engaged historians in the 1960s as they sought to understand the origins of the state (Mungeam 1966), of European settlement as part of the frontier thesis (Sorrenson 1967), and of the European stake in decolonization (Wasserman 1974). Critical Marxist perspectives emerged in the 1970s as the role of colonialism in the underdevelopment of Kenya gained high profile (Zwanenberg 1975; Brett 1973; Leys 1974), and the overall picture of domination and control was explicated (Berman 1990).

The local antithesis of this British conquest narrative was anti-colonialism, variously understood as African nationalism (Rosberg and Nottingham 1966), a peasants' revolt (Maloba 1994), African resistance against colonialism, (Ochieng' and Ogot 1995), or as the historiography of the Mau Mau rebellion as a specifically central Kenyan phenomenon (Lonsdale 1992). The historiography of the revolt has increasingly moved from the nationalist narrative to the local levels, with significant focus on the squatters (Kanogo 1987), the Rift Valley (Furedi 1989), the Muranga district (Throup 1987), and the southern Kiambu district (Kershaw 1997). The participation of Kikuyu women in Mau Mau both as mobilizers and as combatants in south Kiambu has been made explicit (Presley 1992). The very power of the "thick descriptions" of the local has thus created space for the development of the intellectual history of central Kenya as a vital component of Kenya's historiography (Berman and Lonsdale, forthcoming). The power of Mau Mau as a historical event with deep cultural and symbolic meanings for the Kikuyu themselves has been captured by John Lonsdale's work on the moral economy of Mau Mau, a work that gives it ethnic and historical specificity, and totally overthrows the possibility of re-inventing a Kenyan nationalist narrative (Berman and Lonsdale 1992). The Mau Mau narrative has other power manifested through the many public debates in the public arenas; it has been a trope for critiques of the

postcolonial state from below (Atieno-Odhiambo 1992). These concerns with the internal problematics do not consider nationalism to be a prerequisite ideology for the construction of a future nation-state (Atieno-Odhiambo 1999).

Beyond Kenya, fascination with Mau Mau has led to concerns with peasant consciousness in the later liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, to debates on the meaning of peasant consciousness, and to an engagement with the wider question of war and society in Zimbabwe (Ranger 1985; Kriger 1992; Ranger and Bhebe 1996). A narrative of the Zimbabwean society as a narrative of struggle has emerged, but so also has an undercurrent critique that points to an unholy alliance of the ruling elites and the guerrillas at the expense of the rest of society in the postcolonial dispensation (Ranger 1999; Kriger, work in progress).

The production of a history in Malawi was stunted due to the overarching idiosyncracy of President Kamuzu Banda. For thirty years the Banda one-man state sought to control research, writing, teaching, museum exhibitions, and discussions of historical topics over the radio and in the print media. Academic study of history at the university followed his lead, initially teaching from a colonial archive canon established by Sir Harry Johnston. This archive was to form the basis of professional historical research for much of the 1960s and 1970s. These developments took place against a background that increasingly transformed the nationalist narrative into personal Odyssey, and that turned precolonial history into the triumph of the Chewa ethnic group against others (Kalinga 1998). By the end of the 1960s the triumphalist narrative of nationalism was virtually dead everywhere except in Tanzania (Iliffe 1979).

The disappointments with the results of political independence from the mid-1960s led to radical pessimism captured by the title of Oginga Odinga's book *Not Yet Uhuru* (1967), and to critiques of the nation-building projects that were inspired by Marxism, underdevelopment theories and by the writings of Frantz Fanon and Kwame Nkrumah. Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1974) was a salient statement of the underdevelopment thesis. This literature was significant for the radicalism that it injected into academic and popular discourses; its impact on actual researches on the ground was more limited. One unintended consequence of it was to raise the question of the possibility of African history at all, given the fact that Africa's autonomous development had been subverted for five hundred years according to the thesis. An orthodox variant of this radical pessimism was marked by the shift in focus from the African elites to the study of peasants and workers as the real wagers of the anti-colonialist struggles. Historians read the works of anthropologists and political scientists as well as conducting oral histories; the result was a major thrust

in peasant studies (Bundy 1979; Klein 1980; Vail and White 1980; Mandala 1990) as well as in studies of rural struggles of squatters and sharecroppers (Kanogo 1987; Onselen 1996).

Bifurcated Historiography: South Africa

South Africa's dominant historiography is orthodox, because it has been constructed by white scholars trained in and adhering to the western canon. It is also contemporaneous to the routine outlines of the development of the historical discipline since the nineteenth century in Europe in assuming the history of the nation as the paradigm of analysis (Lorenz 1999). The dominating historian of the nineteenth century was G. M. Theal, whose canonical work in the emergent universities in South Africa provided a defense of colonization of the Africans. Theal's treatise was a justification for white colonization, for his Africans were depicted as being recent immigrants into the country almost contemporaneous with the white populations of the seventeenth century. He suggested that the Africans had a lust for cattle and had been continually fighting among themselves, and were therefore ripe for European "pacification." In any case the African population was sparse, and so the Afrikaner Voortrekkers of the 1830s had moved into a largely empty territory. The author accepted the segregationist policies pursued by the British against Africans throughout the century on the basis of white racial superiority and African inferiority. In a word, Britain was entitled to South Africa because white power had triumphed over African peoples.

The second stage in this historiography was associated with the liberal tradition of William Miller Macmillan, whose scholarship in the 1920s argued against the segregationist policies then being put into place. Macmillan argued for a holistic view of South African history that included the role of the Africans in the making of South Africa's history. He was the first South African historian to plead for the study of "the everyday life of the people, how they lived, what they thought, and what they worked at, when they did think and work, what they produced and what and where they marketed, and the whole of their social organization" (Saunders 1987, 139). Macmillan, who was not interested in African history except as antiquarianism, accepted that the Africans were less than civilized but denied that racial differences were inherent and permanent, arguing for the study of a complex whole that aimed for the creation of South Africa as a single society, cemented by an economy that linked white landlords, landless white tenants, and African helots.

C. W. de Kiewet accepted this economic framework with a synthesis of South African history in the context of British imperial policy in the 1880s.

Like Macmillan he was less interested in giving Africans their history than in explaining British policy towards Africans. J. S. Marais, who was Macmillan's student, followed in this tradition with empirical studies premised on the assumption of a single, if heterogeneous, South African society. Both de Kiewet and H. M. Robertson in the 1930s regarded the frontier as the place of continuous black/white interaction, a site of co-operation where new social and economic bonds were forged. Eric Walker, influenced by Frederick Jackson Turner, developed the frontier thesis into a major plank of South African historiography explaining South African development (Saunders 1987). All the authors were united in their rejection of racism and segregation as the final ends of government because it could only mean continued white domination.

After World War II there was a renewed interest in the idea of the British Empire and of white South Africa's relationships to it in light of the Afrikaner capture of state power in 1948. The period from the Jameson raid in 1895 to the Act of Union in 1910 was revisited as the great historical turning point between Boer and Briton, leading to the disjuncture between Afrikaner and English historiographies. Leonard Thompson emerged as the imperial historian of this time. A major historiographical landmark came with the publication of the *Oxford History of South Africa* at the end of the sixties. For the first time the history of the Africans was included in the scope of South African history. This gesture was beholden to Africanist scholarship that had emerged in independent Black African universities as well as to the emergence of African history in the United States and Europe. The early chapters outlined precolonial African structures and institutions. Its South African birthmark was evident in its concern with the theme of interaction as an agenda for a plural society. With its emphasis on writing a history of all South Africa's peoples, the *Oxford History* was seen as being "true to liberal humanism, an important milestone in South Africa's historiography" (Butler and Schreuder 1987, 163). It nevertheless did not address itself to the problem of the relation between structure and power.

This hiatus was to provide the next departure in South African historiography. The revisionist historiography that emerged in the 1970s was influenced by new trends in historical scholarship in the European west to which the new generation of South African white historians had gravitated. Their graduate training was informed by Africanist historiography as well as by the large structures of world history (Barrington Moore III, Eric Wolf, Immanuel Wallerstein); American writings on race; British and European Marxist traditions (Poulantzas, Althusser, Gramsci and Habermas); Latin American underdevelopment debates (Andre Gundar Frank); the Annales school; and by the History Workshop movement (Marks 1986). The revisionist historians—Shula

Marks, Stan Trapido, Martin Legassick, Dan O'Meara, Charles van Onselen, Colin Bundy, F. A. Johnstone, H. Wolpe—introduced new conversations. Marxist historiography infused political economy in all fields, positing the modes of production paradigm as de rigeur. The work by these South Africans on precapitalist social formations led to studies of a differentiated African past successively penetrated by merchant capital and slavery, followed by conquests by imperial armies in the nineteenth century, and transformed by industrialization. The emergence of African women's history also coincided with the emphasis on Marxist and Marxist-feminist modes of analysis. The latter writings centered on the relationship between production and reproduction. They conceptualized pre-capitalist African women as being dominated: control over women and their general subordination in society provided the conceptual basis of analysis. It was the "beasts of burden" thesis arrayed in structuralist garb (Berger 1994).

The wider phalanx of the revisionists shared these concerns with a materialist analysis of class and race, and with the nature of the South African state and its relationship to capital accumulation. A key marker was their identification of state intervention as being crucial to South Africa's successful industrialization by simultaneously structuring the destruction of the African peasantry and creating a racial hierarchical division of labor. The studies of the state also underlined the crucial power of international capital and settler agencies in shaping the destinies of black Africans. Thus, there was a demand for a materialist analysis of class and race (Magubane 1979). The revisionists therefore accepted the centrality of the political economy of South Africa; the connections between capitalism and the apartheid state, the centrality of the goldmines in the South African industrialization process; the complex dialectics of migrant labor and segregation policies in the native reserves; and the blurred boundaries between African peasants, sharecroppers, and rural Afrikaners. Typical of this historiography was *Industrialization and Social Change in South Africa* (1982), edited by Shula Marks and Richard Rathbone. The volume distilled much of what had been achieved in the past decade in the field of social history. The authors went beyond the concerns of the Marxist historiography of the early 1970s—land labor and capital; race and class—to narrate the lived experiences of the African workers, sharecroppers, women and the family, the arts, music, and sports.

This revisionist scholarship moved beyond the original Liberal and Marxist precepts in several ways. Whereas the Marxists had limited their studies to the structures of oppression the new history foregrounded the struggles of the oppressed. It was concerned with groups that had been "hidden from history" and with their cultures of survival, opposition, resistance, rural popular consciousness, and revolution. It thus sought to

provide an alternative conception of history to the liberal and positivist tradition of the 1950s and 1960s. In the subsequent mid-1980s to mid-1990s decade this initiative has matured with the publication of cutting edge monographs, of which Charles van Onselen's *The Seed Is Mine,* a biography of the sharecropper Kas Maine, and Keletso Atkins' *The Moon Is Dead: Give Us Our Money,* a study of urban workers in Durban, are typical of the mastery of the meaning of the industrial revolution for the people who experienced it at the bottom. The pity, however, is that there are no black Africans trained by this team in South African universities to bring the African voice to bear on the making of their own histories.

The radical or Marxist historiography was overtaken from the 1980s by the History Workshop movement based at the University of the Witwatersrand. Its defining characteristics were its commitment to popular history—to the recovery of "ordinary" men and women—its concern to make these communicable and accessible to a wider audience, and its interdisciplinary composition (Bonner 1999). The movement was inspired variously by the emergence of radical pessimism in black Africa as a consequence of the failure of national elites to emancipate their citizens (Gutkind and Waterman 1977); the activism of some members of the movement in trade unionism which led to a quest for a usable trade-union past on the shop floor; the Ruskin College, Oxford history workshop model, whose preoccupation was with people's culture, people's experience, and popular consciousness; and by the presence of an activist multidisciplinary team at Wits. The workshop's format consisted of a series of triennial conferences resulting in intermittent popular publications as well as individual monographs. The latter include C. Van Onselen's *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwaterstrand, 1886–1914,* 2 volumes (Johannesburg 1982); T. Couzens, *The New African: A Study of The Life of H.I.E Dhlomo* (Johannesburg 1985); E. Webster, *Cast in a Racial Mould* (Johannesburg 1985); B. Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1983* (Johannesburg 1991); D. Posel, *The Making of Apartheid, 1948–1961* (Oxford 1991); I. Hofmeyr, *We Spend Our Years As a Tale That Is Told; Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chiefdom* (Johannesburg 1994); P. Delius, *A Lion among the Cattle: Reconstruction and Resistance in the Northern Transvaal* (Johannesburg 1996).

The growing politicization of history pushed the Workshop in new directions. Such was the thirst for popular history that the Workshop redoubled its efforts at popularization. Since 1978 the History Workshop has been responsible for three illustrated histories written by Luli Callinicos, the second of which won the Noma award for publishing in Africa; three booklets on historical themes; a series of twenty-nine

historical articles written by members of the History Workshop for the weekly newspaper *New Nation*, subsequently published as *New Nation, New History*; a manual by Leslie Witz called *Write Your Own History*; a series of five teachers' conferences on new issues in South African history; a number of slide and tape shows; and a six-part television documentary titled "Soweto: A History." All these enterprises have also made extensive use of oral testimony. Callinico's *Working Lives* is organized around the lives of five men and women workers; "Soweto: A History" is driven by video testimonies framed by a minimum of commentary. In the 1984 conference two full days were devoted to papers and presentations on popularization in which over 100 participants took part. "Festivals of popular culture which concluded the conference proceedings from 1981 onwards also became steadily larger and richer drawing audiences of up to 5000 at their peak" (Bonner 1999, 11).

What of the future? In 1987 Richard Elphick predicted that a new post-apartheid African government would put a high premium on education, and that historians might soon encounter "a massive thirst for history, particularly among young blacks and Afrikaners" (Elphick 1987, 166). He was singularly wrong in this anticipation. Currently history is very much on the back burner in South Africa. The government has subsumed it under the nebulous umbrella of social studies, and high school graduating students are drifting towards the technical fields. The populace is wary of the actual historical import and significance of such historical conjunctures as the hearings before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Practicing historians report that the nation would rather forget the pain of the recent apartheid past (Bonner, pers. comm. 21 May 1999), while young Afrikaner students distance themselves from the sins of their fathers by declaring to President Thabo Mbeki that the past is another country.

Ordinary Lives

This is a biography of a man who, if one went by the official record alone, never was. It is the story of a family who have no documentary existence, of farming folk who lived out their lives in a part of South Africa few people loved, in a century that the country will always want to forget. The State Archives, supposedly the mainspring of the Union's memory, has but one line referring to Kas Maine. The Register of the Periodic Criminal Court at Makwassie records that on September 8 1931, a thirty-four-year-old 'labourer' from Kareepoort named 'Kas Tau' appeared before the magistrate for contravening Section Two, Paragraph One of Act 23 of 1907. A heavy bound volume reveals that 'Tau', resident of Police District

No. 41, was fined five shillings for being unable to produce a dog licence. Other than that, we know nothing of the man. (Onselen 1996, 1)

So begins Charles van Onselen's epic biography of Kas Maine, a South African sharecropper on the northwestern Transvaal. In so doing Onselen follows a tradition founded in the same region eight decades earlier by Sol Plaatje, whose writings captured the historical moment of African dispossession of their land in 1913 (Plaatje 1916). Kas Maine belongs to rural Africa, to "the peoples without history," whose agency is all but invisible in the colonial archives much valorized by western scholarship. Historians of Kenya faced the challenge of this absence right from the early sixties as they sought to rewrite the Mau Mau into the narrative of the emergent nation. This effort continues to be controversial. A more accommodating approach came with the almost simultaneous appropriation of peasant studies from anthropologists by historians of Southern Rhodesia, Kenya, and South Africa (Arrighi 1967; Atieno-Odhiambo 1972; Bundy 1979). In the last two decades historians of rural South Africa have sought to recapture their worlds via oral interviews (Marks and Rathbone 1982; Marks and Trapido 1985). This has yielded details regarding the part played by Africans in the unfolding historical events, the dialectics of their own history and culturally reflexive accounts of their own experiences. Kas Maine's biography is the epitome of this restoration.

Onselen succeeds in restoring Kas Maine to the mainstream of colonial history by excavating the landscapes of memory retained by the thousands of contacts, transactions, exchanges, fights, and hatreds that the inhabitants of this region retained about their own personhood and agency in the making of their long century from the 1870s to 1985, when his protagonist died. In the process he constructs a historical figure who was never far from comprehending his own sense of worth, and of the "worth of ordinariness," emphasizing moral equity even in the ravines of race and class, calling on the common humanity of all (Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo 1989, 119–20).

Scholars of folklore studies have significantly explored this terrain as well, by emphasizing performance in context in their interpretation and understanding of oral texts. This approach has proven useful both for the gendered household and family histories in Southern Africa as well as for the male politics of status and rank associated with the oral poetry of chieftaincy. Cumulatively we have had the re-introduction of the South African black Africans through emphasizing their own perceptions of the unfolding events. The contrasting perspectives of the South African problem by the nationalist Nelson Mandela and the sharecropper Kas Maine are mutually reinforcing in this regard (Mandela 1994).

Indigenous Historiographies

Beyond the historian's guild, the twentieth century has witnessed the production of popular historical literature in Africa, produced locally, often in non-western languages by individuals and collectivities believing in their past, giving themselves their own histories which tell of those pasts, and which have meaning, authority, and significance for the local populations. The recognition of this popular genre compels a movement from narrow understandings about the nature of history, historical evidence, and what should constitute other peoples' histories (Cohen 1994). One is led to multiple sites of historical telling: for example, the song, praise poetry, the allegory in the folktale, the silences in the memory of the past. There has been a continuous production of the oral histories of Africa, captured in the rendition that "we live our lives as a tale that is told" (Hofmeyr 1994). At the same time, the advent of literacy has led to the proliferation of the realm of the written world. Vernacular authors have sought to give their peoples a history. The first generation of Africa's modern men in the twentieth century appropriated the knowledge of the organic intellectuals of the previous century by bridging the gap between orality and literacy through publication. The foundations for this genre were laid early in the century by Apolo Kagwa in East Africa and Samuel Johnson in West Africa (Kiwanuka 1970; Ajayi 1998). They collected the oral traditions of their clans and kingdoms and, in so doing, created a master narrative for the Baganda and the Yoruba. In terms of method they occupied a fairly modern terrain. They interviewed knowledgeable informants, custodians of shrines, court historians, and keepers of clan lore. Fifty years later the academy—Jan Vansina in the 1950s and B. A. Ogot in the 1960s—traveled along the same path, interviewing individual encyclopaedic informants, holding formal sessions with court historians and clan elders, as well as reading the missionary and colonial archives to arrive at a history of the Kuba or the Luo that accommodated every major lineage, or left enough room for the malleable accommodation of more recent incorporations into the putative genealogy of all Kuba or all Luo (Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo 1987). Johnson's work has spawned a century of Yoruba historiography (Falola 1991), as has the work of Carl Reindorf (Akyeampong 1998; Peel 1998; Jones 1998; Quayson 1998). Kagwa's work has influenced western scholarship in the fields of history, anthropology, and religion in the region for a century, and spawned a specific Ganda historiography that continues to thrive (Reid 1997). Critiques of these canons have emerged with revisionist interpretations. In the Great Lakes areas historiography has moved from the original diffusionist conquest model—the Hamitic

myth—into a concern with ecological change, and the contextualization of struggles over authority and wealth (Schoenbrun 1999; Willis 1999).

Transnational Themes

A significant byproduct of this accommodationist stance has been the production of regional, as contrasted with state histories in both western and eastern Africa, as exemplified by case studies of the Mande and Luo worlds. The wider Mande canvas covers a period of seven centuries, from the rise of the Mali Empire under Sundiata Keita in the fourteenth century down to the destruction of the state of Samory Toure by the French in late nineteenth century. During this period the cultural landscape remained recognizable as a Mande world, the locus moving southward away from the Sahel to the Atlantic coast as a result of the slave trade (Barry 1998). Likewise, the Luo chronology has its epicenter in the cradleland of the central Sudan sometime around 1000 C.E. Successive milestones in Luo historiography, from J. P. Crazzolara in the 1950s, Ogot in the 1960s, Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo in the 1980s, and Ron Atkinson in the 1990s, all assume the constancy of the Luo world. Both Mande and Luo histories traverse several ethnicities, states, and polities over the centuries without being confined to any single one of them. Acholi ethnicity evolved during the eighteenth century (Atkinson 1994). There were Mande and Luo nations and cultural spheres well before the incursion of the colonial state in the twentieth century. Their sense of multiple belongings to the various postcolonial states in the regions suggests an alternative paradigm for writing regional rather than state histories, an alternative that is closer to peoples' experiences with history in the *longue duree* than the western historical practice and which throws up challenges for the student of comparative history (Lorenz 1999).

The Production of Locality

In the recent past the productions of local histories has flourished in the Niger delta as villages, neighborhoods, and administrative districts have laid a claim to the authority on their pasts. Local community histories comprise an autonomous corpus outside the academy. They consist of published books describing the history and culture of towns, villages, clans, or geographical areas. Authored by amateurs, they build on issues of identity and locate individual citizens within the local developmental discourses and environment. This literature belongs to the genre of "production of locality" from within the community outside the reach of the State. The production and intended consumption of this material remains local. The choice of the

English language suggests that community histories are very much a product of modernity (Harneit-Sievers 1997). The authors consider that they are writing history, inscribing the essence of the existing society through history, culture, and symbols of modernity. The format of these many books is often a narrative of the origins of the village, the arrival of the western missionaries, schools and hospitals, the emergence of the local notables, and the latest developmental trends. It is the story of progress as lived and witnessed and lived. It is also a site of contestation. Guild historians, commissioned by the local communities to write them a history, are as often contested over their authority over the mastery of local history and on the veracity of the produced texts (Alagoa 1997).

Scopic Representations

One version of vernacular history that constitutes a challenge to academic historiography has been the genre paintings that emerged in the Belgian Congo from the 1920s. Its first stage marked African inventions of scopic regimes of modernity (Jay 1989)—the invention of the West in the African imagination via painting. The intellectual and artistic reading of the colonizing West on paper and on canvas began with Albert Lubaki and Tshyela Ntendu in the 1920s and 1930s. "These painters tried to understand what colonial modernity meant, seeking to put the colonialists, their objects and their people on a meaningful framework—using the plastered walls of houses as well as paper to figure in paint their understanding of the Western perception of themselves and their universe" (Jewsiewicki 1991, 139). The paintings depicted the goods and postures of modernity: the missionary, man on a bicycle, family portraits, the colonial army, the telephone, typewriter, train, car, and steamer. A later generation of the 1940s and 1950s, represented by Mwenze Kibwanga and Pilipili, were literate teachers of art in schools. The genre of urban painting was "invented" by and for the literate petit bourgeoisie of the cities in the 1960s. They were characterized by the recollections of the violence of colonial conquest and domination as well as by memories of the political violence after independence.

A new generation rose in the 1970s that was dominated by worries of social justice, political arbitrariness, and new gender and generational conflicts. Its leading artists included Cheri Samba, Moke, Sim Simaro, and Vuza Ntuko. Their creations are both chronicles of social and political life as well as materializations of the imagination and social memory. Cheri Samba is primarily a moralist and teacher. Bogumil Jewsiewicki reminds us that these are members of the urban petit bourgeoisie with bourgeois aspirations. One must therefore be careful when referring to these artists as "popular" painters, for their hopes and tastes are bourgeois (Jewsiewicki

1991, 146). Each painting refers to a story and emits a narrative. Tshibumba Kanda Matulu's conceptualization of his work is that by painting he is doing history. "I don't write but I bring ideas, I show how a certain event happened. In a way I am producing a monument" (Fabian 1996, 14). The social significance of his painting emerges from his contention that he is a historian of his country and an educator of his people. Tshibumba's *History of Zaire* is a narrative of over one hundred paintings that the painter regards as a book, part of Zaire's colonial and postcolonial historiography. "As an interpreter of the history of his country Tshibumba competes with journalistic reporting and academic historiography over chronology and dating, and over contexts and interpretations of certain events. He regards his works as fixions with a message: to make his audience think" (Fabian 1996). For the historian the challenge lies in integrating these representations of history into our scopic canvas.

Towards an African Philosophy of History

The quest for an African philosophy of history has continued to concern three generations of African historians. As early as 1965, T. O. Ranger wrote that there was the need "to examine whether African history was sufficiently African; whether it had developed the methods and models appropriate to its own needs or had depended upon making use of methods and models developed elsewhere; whether its main themes of discourse had arisen out of the dynamics of African development or had been imposed because of their over-riding significance in the historiography of other continents" (Ranger 1968, x). In the late 1970s Allan Ogot revisited the same terrain:

> In conclusion it is pertinent to say a few words about the need to develop a philosophy of history in Africa. . . . What we need is a vision to show us what the exercise is all about. We have struggled hard to reject a conceptual framework which is Western both in its origins as well as its orientations. But we have not yet succeeded in evolving an autonomous body of theoretical thinking. Herein lies the root of our cultural dependence. It is also the biggest challenge facing African thinkers and Universities. For although it is the function of a University to transmit knowledge and values from generation to generation as well as to discover new knowledge through research, we have to ask ourselves whose values? (Ogot 1978, 33)

These questions were raised, but not answered in the subsequent decades. By the beginning of the 1990s they were obviously becoming an

embarrassment even to the founders of Africanist historiography. Jan Vansina pointedly drew attention to the fact that African history was largely written for an academic audience outside Africa rather than for the Africans living in the continent. African historiography was dominated by outsiders some four decades after independence. He lamented:

> This is a continuing anomaly. In all other major parts of the world, and that includes the major parts of so-called Third World areas, the writing of history, academic books included, has primarily been conducted in the area itself, in the languages of the area. But in tropical Africa the writing of the academic history was organized by 'outsiders', and ever since, the epicentres of this activity have remained outside Africa, despite all efforts to alter the situation. It is a crucial anomaly.

Vansina continues:

> Outsiders initiated African history here. They created the university departments within which African historians later worked, and they 'trained' them how to write academic history. The Pioneers wrote for an outside audience which shared their world views and social practice, not for an audience in Africa itself, except for African historians of Africa and a few others who had absorbed Euro- American academic culture. When African scholars began to take their destinies in their own hands, they unwittingly continued to write their major works to a large extent for the same academic audience rather than for their own natural populations. . . . While these authors attacked imperial history and promoted national history, they continued to write in English or French, thus limiting access of their local audiences. Implicitly they still looked for approval of their works in Europe or North America as a guarantee of its high technical standard. (Vansina 1990, 240)

One could not agree more. Indeed the tyranny of the French doctorat d'état until recently, and the German Rehabilitation requirements have done much to leave African scholars exhausted at middle age before facing up to the challenges of African scholarship. But to return to Vansina again: "However difficult to achieve, authors, insiders and outsiders alike, must strive to reach 'natural' audiences and thus end this anomaly in African historiography" (Vansina 1990, 242).

But the "outsider" issue refers to only part of the question Ogot had raised. The other part has to do with the epistemology deployed by African historians on their own. Africa is, after all, their continent and home, and they should spearhead any future directions in the shaping of the discipline.

Nearly a decade ago the question was well articulated by John Fage, himself an "outsider" pioneer in these terms:

> In the last analysis, it does need to be asked whether European concepts of history are suitable for the understanding of African history. It is possible, indeed, to believe that the idea of history as we have come to know it in modern Europe was not one applicable to precolonial African history. . . . For the moment we have very little African history written by Africans who are untainted by European conceptions and significances of their own past. (Fage 1993, 25)

At the last gathering of the Association of African Historians, sponsored by CODESRIA, in Bamako in 1994, I articulated this response to the above comment by Professor Fage:

> Has the time come to question the unitary acceptance of the hegemonic episteme which posits that the discipline of history uniquely belongs to Western civilization? Alternatively can Africans articulate an African gnosis that stands independently of these western traditions in our study of African history? Need African epistemes be intelligible to the West? Need the study and practice of history be tied to the guild of historical study at the university academies? Is there still the lingering possibility that any one of us working within the western mode can have the arterial bypass surgery that may still be the viaduct upstream to the African reservoir of history? (Atieno-Odhiambo 1996, 31)

I end, as Ogot recently did, by asking, "In short, is autonomy of African history possible?" (Ogot 1999, 219).

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2

Ancestral Slaves and Diasporic Tourists: Retelling History by Reversing Movement in a Counternationalist Vodun Festival from Benin

Peter Sutherland

Commemoration silences the contrary interpretations of the past.
Middleton and Edwards,
Collective Remembering

Introduction

Describing subaltern resistance in South Africa, John and Jean Comaroff have claimed that historical consciousness[1] is "not found in explicit statements of common predicament on the part of a social group, but in the implicit language of symbolic activity" (1987, 192–93). Subsequent studies of the "work of memory" (Cole 1998)[2] have introduced considerations of temporal representation in attempting to understand the political formation of collective consciousness, the crux of which the Comaroffs located in the "unanalyzed relationship between conventional meaning and the processes of thought and action through which history is made" (Ibid., 193). Joining this ongoing discussion of postcolonial representations of time, I examine the spatial construction of temporal relations in an African retelling of transatlantic history articulated in a Vodun festival from Benin, which

celebrates the memory of the slaves transported from the port of Whydah to the Americas. Following Nancy Munn's conception of "temporalization" (1992), I propose that, to understand how culture and history are mediated by memory in politicized conceptions of time, we must pay close attention to the bodily idiom of movement by means of which meaningful temporal relations are located in the landscape, grounded in place, and incorporated in subjective experience.

What interests me in the public speeches and prayers I recorded at the 1997 Whydah festival is the political significance of the transatlantic geography of past-present-future relations they evoked in a Vodun discourse of ancestral movement—one might almost say a subaltern geopolitics of historical consciousness. In this discourse, it is not so much African history that we see in the making—if by that we mean the reconstruction of the past—but the reuse[3] of African diasporic history to produce a diasporic future for Africa. In my analysis of the festival, I argue that current debate about religion and the state in Benin is being influenced by the counternationalist agenda of the Council of Kings, a traditionalist faction of Vodun priests and former kings, that is seeking to redefine its public image at home by construing the diaspora in the Americas as its constituency abroad. In particular, I examine the transhistorical construction of ancestral temporality deployed in the festival to re-evaluate collective memory of slavery in present discussions of modern identity and its national future.

Writing against the historian's retrospective view of time,[4] I revisit Arjun Appadurai's (1981) discussion of "the past as a scarce resource" for present debate[5] in offering an ethnographer's prospective view of memory as a pathway to the future. In order to include the case of national debate about diasporic history, as in this case from Whydah, it is necessary to revise Appadurai's formulation by including spatial, as well as temporal, distance as another kind of scarce resource in re-inventing the past and pre-inventing the future. I return to this topic at the end of the chapter.

Focusing on my informants' understandings of the past that elide the distinction between history and myth, and confirming Sally Falk Moore's proposal that memory can be "future-oriented" (Werbner 1998, 11), I describe a religious version of historical consciousness[6] that views the past not so much as an absence waiting for discovery by the academy, but rather as a spiritual presence demanding urgent public response. Giving an African twist to Karen McCarthy Brown's view that historical consciousness in Haitian Vodou involves an "enlivening" of the ancestors (1999, 153), this paper describes how the past is made present for future use in one such public response from Benin—not in western textual form by historiography,

nor in this case by spirit-possession, but by the t(r)opological performance of ancestral time.

By "t(r)opology" I denote a spatial and discursive understanding of the ancestor as trope: a cultural resource for making and remaking the topology of temporal relations, which locates the signs of tradition, memory, continuity, and change in the landscape to constitute a meaningful collective timescape. As such the ancestral figure answers Rijk van Dijk's call for a "conceptual tool" to enable anthropologists "to analyze how social memories relate to 'social futures'" (1998, 177). Ancestors produce socio-temporal relations, I propose, by their ability to move back and forth between the parallel domains that constitute the cosmos of the Fon-speaking people of Dahomey (and their Yoruba neighbors), to wit: the virtual world of gods (*vodun*) and ancestors (*togbo*), on the one hand, and the material world of human society, on the other. Ancestors conventionally represent the intangible power of social origins, tradition, and the dead, but they also practically present themselves among the living to "open the way" for future action through such tangible forms as divination, sacrifice, and spirit-possession. Given the association of ancestors with the dead, we might be tempted to conceptualize these dual fields of ancestral agency in western diachronic terms as representative of, or homologous to, the abstract temporal concepts of past and present, and thus to think of ancestral movement between them as time-travel. To do so, however, would entirely misconstrue the transhistorical temporality of ancestral power that links the two worlds in synchronous, and sometimes anachronous, relations by focusing present attention on the past and its prognosis for the future. In his cyberpunk novel *Count Zero*, author William Gibson (1986) nicely grasped the intersection of such parallel worlds in his postmodern vision of the Haitian Vodou spirit, Legba, at large in the Matrix—the virtual world of digital communication. At the Whydah festival, you might say, the virtuality of the ancestral world serves to simulate alternative pasts and possible futures for the social world.

In the Vodun cosmos as in the Matrix, location in one or another domain is existentially determined by embodiment (or its absence). In the Vodun case, I extend the literal sense of embodiment as spirit-possession to include any spatio-temporal mediation of otherwise unfocused power by such varied cultural media as language, melody, material form, rhythm, dance, or imagery (in thought or dream). In what follows, then, I view the ancestor as a multi-media form of deictic shifter—a sign, that is, that gives direction, in this case to temporal consciousness, by placement and movement. Ancestors do so not only by transporting attention into the past, or thrusting the past unexpectedly into the present, but also by projecting that which must not be forgotten into the future for its own and the peoples' protection.

There was something shocking in the Whydah festival agenda, however, in its bid to memorialize Vodun tradition as Benin's national heritage (*patrimoine* in colonial French) at the expense of African diasporic history in the Americas by forgetting the horrors of the Middle Passage (see Sutherland 1999, 207). Is this comparable to Holocaust denial? And if so, to what extent should looser postcolonial criteria for historical consciousness obviate the need for ethical critique of historical distortion as seen in current global terms of human rights? I return to this issue in my conclusion.

In the Whydah festival, I shall argue, the imagined transatlantic movement of ancestors and their transformation into diasporic tourists is used to revise the meaning of slave history in a version of memory not confined to the past. In his introduction to *Memory and the Postcolony*, Richard Werbner (1998) points to the volume's theoretical focus on "politicized memory" in "the study of postcolonial political subjectivities in the making" (Ibid., 15) in Africa. In essays on the relationship between "memory, counter-movements, power and political change" in several postcolonial states, a view of memory emerges which is limited neither to "retrospection about the past" nor "reflection on the present," but which also extends to "future-orientation" in the political work of "rupture with the past" (Ibid., 11). Tracking the discourse of oppositional politics and temporal rupture beyond the national spacetime of the African postcolony, this essay examines the transnational geography of diasporic identification defined in current public debate about the place of indigenous Vodun tradition in modern national identity in Benin. Training a magnifying glass on the politics and poetics of reversal and return articulated in the Whydah festival, I show how direction is used to reconfigure temporal relations of transatlantic identity in proposing a self-serving, West African, counternationalist view of slavery and the African diaspora in the Americas.

Reinscribing Progress in Ancestral Terms

The idea of Africa as a "people without history" is now widely acknowledged as one example of what Johannes Fabian (1983) called "allochrony."[7] By that, he referred to a dominant western discourse of temporal distancing that placed exotic others in ranked relation to European selves according to a racialist cosmology of progress (see also Young 1990). What made, and continues to make, this worldview so powerful, in addition to its military-industrial base, was its progressive conception of past-present-future relations as history—a view of time in which commercial and political ideologies of freedom were linked with materialist

science and technologies of control in a global plan for mastery by modernization. Seen in these Eurocentric terms, the absence of such an historical conception of time in the thought of non-western people in the colonies was explained by reference to the dominance of traditional forms of religious knowledge and their regressive temporality of origins and ancestors. Challenging this modernist dogma, the Whydah festival presents a progressive conception of ancestral temporality that uses traditional religious rhetoric as a discourse of change imaginatively to reverse the historical flow of Africans to the Americas during the slave-trade and, by so doing, re-envisage transatlantic commerce in African terms of development through diasporic tourism.

Combining magic, myth, and memory with modernization, this localist revision of history from Benin complicates the Africanization of African history surveyed by Atieno-Odhiambo in chapter 1, extending the scope of indigenous knowledge production to hemispheric proportions comparable in scale to Paul Gilroy's (1993) view of the Black Atlantic. Since the nineteenth century, innovative African forms of historical consciousness and expression, sometimes born outside the western-influenced "guild of historians," have challenged the hegemony of western historiography. One important non-academic genre was the town or community history (see Falola 1999). Atieno-Odhiambho argues that its production by amateurs "outside the reach of the state" (in either its colonial or postcolonial form) facilitated the telling of plural pasts from anti-colonialist and/or counter-nationalist standpoints. "Built on issues of identity," such texts "locate individual citizens within the local developmental discourse and environment." While it shares some of these features, the Whydah retelling of transatlantic slavery is not a town history. It uses town history of commercial involvement with the Americas as a political resource for present debate about national identity.

Atieno-Odhiambo also refers to the emergence of "multiple sites of telling" which have challenged the dominance of western historiographic methods by using such indigenous verbal media as "the song, praise poetry, the allegory in the folktale, [even] silences in the memory of the past" as well as the "scopic regime" of historical genre painting from the Belgian Congo (see Fabian 1996). In this essay, I extend his list to include the multi-media performative genres of festival and ritual as vehicles for producing popular forms of African historical consciousness and political memory.

Given the need to take account of mobility, travel, flow, direction, and speed in conceptualizing contemporary local-global relations, the magical reversal of transatlantic movement described in the following account of the Whydah festival underlines the imperative to complement the recent

"reinscription of space" (Gupta 1992) in social/cultural studies by a corresponding spatial re-theorizing of time. In its broadest terms, such a project would involve rethinking the totalizing temporality of European history in pluralist geographical terms. Arguing that "European colonialism . . . played an important role in the spatial totalization of Western modernity, which resulted in modernity providing the standpoint for historical totalization," Mike Featherstone suggests that "decolonization has ushered in a process of the relativization of the modern world. . . . The modern world was revealed to be the Western world and to be only [one] world among many worlds" (1997, 268–69). Naoki Sakai (quoted by Featherstone) makes the geographical point more strongly that there are many "coexisting temporalities" to be taken into account: "What this simple but undeniable recognition pointed to was that history was not only temporal or chronological but also spatial and relational. . . . Whereas [western] monistic history . . . thought itself autonomous and total, 'world' history conceived of itself as the spatial relations of histories" (1989, 106).

Serving as a vivid example of coexisting temporalities in the making, the Whydah retelling of transatlantic history highlights some of the theoretical and ethical issues that a spatial retheorizing of time must confront.

The Whydah Festival of the 10th January

In 1997, I attended the fifth performance of the Festival of the 10th January held on Whydah beach "in memory of the slaves," who once were shipped from there to "the land of the whites" (*yovotomen*), as one festival organizer put it. In examining what past was memorialized on that occasion, this essay describes a traditionalist, if not to say tendentious, West African construction of Whydah's involvement in the history of slavery. Its viewpoint differs from western academic histories by shifting attention from the reconstruction of Whydah's past to the production of Whydah's future, on the one hand, and by its blurring of past-present-future distinctions, on the other. Thus, my topic is not so much historiography—if by that we mean describing how and why the past is written—but rather the ethno-geography of time, by which I mean describing how and why contested timescapes are produced in political discourse and practice, in this case, by Vodun festival performance.

Situated on that notorious part of West Africa which European maps once referred to as "The Slave Coast," Whydah is inscribed in western history as the principal slave-port of the former Danhomè kingdom. Dov Ronen (1971, 12) refers to the infamous period during the eighteenth century, when the purchase of captured Africans by Europeans at Whydah

was regulated on behalf of the Danhomè king, Guezo, by the Portuguese trader, Francisco de Souza, whom the king appointed "chief of the whites" (*yovogan*). While its kings undoubtedly prospered from the slave-trade, as several authors (Herskovits 1938; Polyani 1966; Akinjogbin 1967) have argued, Danhomè should not be classified as a slave-trading state. From one point of view, cautioning against Eurocentric ways of thinking, Ronen (1971, 6–7) argues that the Africans sold to Europeans by the Danhomè kings were not initially captured to serve as commodities for trade, but rather as sacrificial victims offered by the Danhomè kings in the Annual Customs to "water the graves" of their ancestors (Dalzel quoted in Polk 1995, 333). From another point of view, eschewing a reductive view of Danhomè's economy in the eighteenth century, Patrick Manning (1982, 43) insists that while "the state . . . regulated Atlantic commerce," it "was only *one of many* participants in that commerce . . . [and] did not monopolize it" [my emphasis]. Significantly, no mention was made in the Whydah festival I attended of the historical involvement of Africans in the procurement of slaves for whites, and "historical apology" (Trouillot 2000) was conspicuous by its absence at either local or national level.[8]

I have argued elsewhere (Sutherland 1999) that the Festival of the 10th January reconstrues Whydah's infamous history in tendentious politico-religious terms, by remembering the long-departed slaves as ancestors, and magically evoking their diasporic presence as the primary referent in a traditionalist critique of modern nationalist culture in Benin. In so collapsing the varied ethnicities of the slaves transported from Whydah in a common African diasporic black identity, the festival organizers sought to resist the white foreign western values currently promoted by the postcolonial secular state and North America Protestant missions. In the discourse of both, African religious traditions are consistently opposed to modern Western materialism as unconducive to economic development and therefore to modern national culture. This view was countered in public speeches at the festival by emphasizing the transnational importance of the country's indigenous religious tradition, Vodun,[9] diffused throughout the African diaspora in the Americas along the historical vectors of the slave-trade.

The political significance of the Whydah festival has emerged in less than a decade as a public site of cultural/political contestation, where local, national, and transnational forms of historical consciousness intersect and interact through media coverage. The festival takes place beside a recently constructed global memorial called the "Door of No-Return" (Porte de Non-Retour), which was funded by UNESCO to mark Whydah's otherwise invisible history of slavery as a "World Heritage Site." Taking its name from two other pre-existing doors of no-return in the slave-forts of Elmina

Castle, Ghana, and Gorée Island, Senegal, the monument marks the end of the road along which captive Africans were formerly led from Whydah town to Whydah beach, where the merchant ships awaited them, anchored just offshore. The Whydah festival begins with a motorcade which retraces this route from Daagbo Hounon's palace to the Door of No-Return.

First performed on completion of the Door of No-Return, the festival in memory of the slaves was originally developed for the "Whydah 1992" celebrations, which were part of an international "Reunion of Vodun Cultures" in Benin organized by the country's then recently elected President Soglo. Due to numerous organizational delays, "Whydah 1992" in fact took place in 1993.[10] One of three official guests invited from the Americas, anthropologist Karen McCarthy Brown (1999, 148) described the highly charged political atmosphere that attended the Reunion and her own first visit to Whydah with Brooklyn Vodou priestess Mama Lola, as follows:

> Nicéphore Soglo's presidency followed on the tail of a long repressive socialist regime in the Republic of Benin. The former government [under Marxist-Maoist President Kérékou] had been hard on traditional religious leaders. Priests had been killed, shrines had been destroyed, ancient sacred groves had been cut down. According to traditional priests in Benin (where spirits are called by the generic term vodun), Soglo became seriously ill just before taking office. Medical doctors were no help; finally, it was a traditional healer who saved his life. . . . As a gesture to the Vodun community for his healing, or perhaps as a canny political move designed to firm up grassroots support, Soglo promised the people of Benin in his inaugural address that he would host a reunion of all the Vodou populations scattered around the globe.[11]

When I attended the festival four years later in 1997, memories of Kérékou's oppression of Vodun practitioners had been freshly revived by his surprising return to office in the 1996 presidential elections, a feat accomplished by executing a deft political U-turn that involved espousing free-market capitalism. Just before his ouster, President Soglo had proclaimed the 10th January, the day on which the Whydah festival is performed, a national Vodun holiday. That year, I was told, public attendance at the Whydah festival was massive. Given their release from work, people came from all over the country. In 1997, however, fears were mounting among members of the Vodun priestly faction that Kérékou would reverse that decision and reinstate his former repressive policies. As things turned out, their fears were partly born out, when President Kérékou refused to renew the status of the 10th January as a national holiday,

postponing the decision until the following year. And so, in 1997, turn-out at the Whydah festival was disappointingly low.

According to my main informant, a Vodun priest from Benin's capital city, Cotonou, the idea for the Whydah festival was first conceived by the Supreme Chief of Vodun, Daagbo Hounon—a title which in Fon means "Grandfather, Ruler of the Sea." Its timing on the 10th January apparently refers to the date on which families in the former Dahomey traditionally performed rites at home in honor of their ancestors. The Whydah festival I witnessed reinvented this traditional domestic rite as a modern national media spectacle that now unites local Vodun groups from all over Benin in annually honoring the spirits of the diasporic slaves as objects of a transnational ancestor cult.

In extended interviews with Daagbo Hounon, the King of Allada, and three other members of Benin's traditionalist faction, the Council of Kings, I learned of their campaign to win President Kérékou's support for the Festival of the 10th January as a national Vodun holiday. By gaining government recognition for the country's majority religion, they hoped to integrate the country's Vodun traditions in the development of an indigenous form of modern national identity for Benin by demonstrating Vodun's transnational cultural value. By redefining Whydah as the "root of Vodun" for the African diaspora, members of the traditionalist faction also sought to reclaim something of their former political prestige, now eclipsed by democratization, by positioning themselves at the center of a diasporic constituency of "Vodun branches" in the Americas. Accordingly, following a Papal visit to Africa in 1993, Daagbo Hounon is currently restyling his traditional title, "controller of the sea," in global terms as "Pope of Vodun."[12]

Globalizing Local Maritime Mythology

In claiming this augmented authority, Daagbo Hounon is also making use of the Whydah festival to legitimate a correspondingly expanded diasporic jurisdiction by reterritorializing his local lineage origin myth in transatlantic terms. The lineage of Hounons traces its power to the sea and its genealogy to 1452, as depicted in a mural inside the palace reception-hall in Whydah. According to this myth, the first Hounon ancestor emerged from the sea as an enormous fish, transformed into human form, then finally returned to the sea at death. An ancestral list describes him as "retourné en mer" (returned to the sea). In one brief account I learned, the lineage myth is embedded in a creation myth in honor of the sea-goddess, Hou. After the birth of the first Hounon, I was told, all the Vodun deities emerged from the

sea. From this cosmogonic priority, members of the Hounon lineage derive not only their title Hou-non, "controller of the sea," but also their superior authority over all the Voduns of Dahomey, whose combined power the Supreme Chief apparently embodies once a year in possession.

In another more detailed version of the narrative, subsequently sent to me by the Director of the Whydah Museum, Martine de Souza, a more socially focused explanation of Daagbo Hounon's religious authority still privileges the originary significance of the sea.

> In the night of time, all animals used to transform themselves into humans. They would come to the city and do everything like a normal human, then go back to their animal form when they want[ed] to. So the ancestor of Daagbo was a big fish in the sea. He used to come on land, take human form, go to market, do whatever he wanted, then go back to the sea. One day, he decided not to go back to the sea. He remained human [and became] a big man. He built his house by the sea, was married to a woman, and had lots of children. He told his children about all the deities in the sea and taught them the way to worship them. From that, people know about what is in the sea. That is why Daagbo Hounon is always chosen from the same family.

The narrative ends by giving a twofold geo-political twist to mythic temporality as local ancestral origins are linked with the transatlantic history of slavery, on the one hand, and contemporary funeral practices with ancestral disappearance, on the other.

> All the slaves were obliged to pass by that house before they left [for the ships]. [That is where] that ceremony [was performed] to make the slaves happy and to give everything they worship to Hounon, who will take care of them [sic]. The first Hounon, who came from the sea, did not die; he disappeared at one [particular] place. That place is called Adomey. It is the holy place of Vodun today, where Vodun people do their burial ceremonies.[13]

I have yet to learn the significance of these cryptic last remarks. Does the "ceremony to make the slaves happy" refer to the ritual at the so-called Tree of Forgetting, which departing slaves were required to circumambulate to erase their memories of home before leaving Africa forever? On the basis of what Daagbo Hounon told me of his role as the guardian of "ancestral Vodun" (*vodunhuendo*), I suspect that the other ceremony of "giving everything they worship to Hounon" involved the entrusting of indigenous traditions of worship to Daagbo Hounon by departing Africans of different

ethnicities and from different localities. "When they had to go by ship, they wanted to leave behind their ancestral Vodun for me, Daagbo Hounon." Given the centrality of the sea in this local lineage myth, it is hardly surprising that Daagbo Hounon is currently constructing his projected diasporic role by developing an expanded maritime mythology for his lineage deity, the sea-goddess Hou—one that uses transhistorical ancestral temporality to establish transatlantic political relations.

The Poetics of Return and No-Return

> [A]lthough religious memory attempts to isolate itself from temporal society, it obeys the same laws as every collective memory: it does not preserve the past but reconstructs it with the aid of the material traces, rites, texts, and traditions left behind by that past, and with the aid moreover of recent psychological and social data, that is to say, with the present (Halbwachs 1992:119)

This emergent African view of the diaspora in the Americas was magically articulated in the 1997 Whydah festival by a consistent poetics of doubling and reversal. Conceived in complementary terms of "return" and "no-return," transported humans and transported gods, ancestral slaves and diasporic tourists, the dichotomous rhetoric chosen by public speakers at the festival recalls the use of contrast to understand change in the rhetoric of Tshidi historical consciousness under apartheid in South Africa (Comaroffs 1987:194). Unlike the Tshidi case, however, in which tradition and return served certain elders as a strategy of resignation for disengagement from modernity, Vodun conceptions of tradition and return were optimistically deployed by speakers at Whydah to engage modernity on African terms.

On the one hand, magically redefining Whydah as the center of diffusion of African-Atlantic religions, Daagbo Hounon's prayers reimagined the history of slavery in one-way terms of no-return as a "double deportation of African persons and African gods across the Atlantic from Whydah to the Americas." Thus slavery was remembered with a mixture of sadness and pride, because it took not only captive Africans, but also African religions to the Americas. As the King of Allada put it in his inaugural speech at the 1997 festival in retrospective terms of counter-cultural imperialism: "We are happy because our brothers who left here sadly for the Americas reproduced there our ancestral Vodun from Dahomey."

On the other hand, notwithstanding the nominal symbolism of the "Door of No-Return," the magical work performed in the public speeches under its shadow emphasized just the opposite, by evoking the triumphant return not

only of ancestral spirits but also of their diasporic descendants to Whydah from the Americas. Again the King of Allada: "This is the place from which our brothers left by boats for the Americas in chains. It was with sadness that they came here. But now, everyone is happy because they have returned in joy." The denial of intervening diasporic history conveyed by this coordinated compression of time and reversal of direction is also expressed in the design of the Door of No-Return. While its bas-reliefs depict the departure of the slaves in chains, its architectural conception as an "Arc de Triomphe" simultaneously signifies their triumphant return. What is left unmarked in both these cases is four hundred years of diasporic suffering and resistance in the Americas, which forms no part of West African collective memory or general knowledge as it does for members of the African diaspora.

According to my video recording of his prayers at the festival, Daagbo Hounon magically manipulated transatlantic spacetime to redefine Whydah as the sacred center for the diaspora in the Americas. He did so in three ways: 1) by representing the slaves in religious terms as "ancestors" (*togbo*) or "gods" (*vodun*); 2) by redefining the Atlantic ocean in mythic terms as a divine agent of revelation for the present; and 3) by reimagining the history of the Middle Passage journey in reverse terms of ancestral return and diasporic tourism. In what follows, I examine the spatio-temporal discourse of memory-work his performance deployed to link Whydah and the diaspora in the Americas by ancestral rhetoric, a mythic tree-stump, and a sculpture called the *dexoten*.

Ancestral rhetoric

In the prayers Daagbo Hounon offers at the festival, the rhetoric of ancestors magically dissolves the spacetime separating African diaspora roots and branches in the intimate unity of genealogy. Transhistorical relations of fictive kinship are projected into transatlantic space as diasporic identification. Daagbo triumphantly summons the slaves to return to Whydah in spirit form as vodun gods "to see what good (new) things he has developed in the festival," then calls on their contemporary descendants as "brothers" to return to "their village Whydah" in human form to "register their identity" in some form of economic philanthropy. Using kinship and transatlantic space as his axes of reference, Daagbo Hounon rhetorically manipulates relations of identity and time in the resultant field of imagined transhistorical movement. In making the simple genealogical shift from ancestral to fraternal relations, he simultaneously accomplishes the more complex temporal shift from spirits in the past to tourists in the future by

changing the direction of transatlantic travel and its modality from deportation to tourism. But in keeping the focus on the diasporic figures of ancestral slaves and contemporary brothers in the Americas, he astutely deflects attention away from the African past and its part in determining the diasporic present. In so doing, the festival avoided the tricky issue of acknowledging, and atoning for, the historical involvement of Dahomey people in the decidedly unfraternal relations of procuring other Africans for sale to the whites. It also avoided the equally sensitive issue of current American-American critiques of West African exploitation of the history of slavery and its places of memory as convenient sites for the commercial development of international roots tourism (Bruner 1996; Sutherland 1999, 2000).

The Tree Stump

Before the festival, Daagbo Hounon told me how the Vodun powers of nature had given a sign that validated his maritime conception of the festival. Recently a powerful storm had washed away the sand on the beach at Whydah revealing a "stump" (*atin*), that Daagbo identified as the remains of the tree to which the slavers used to tie their cutters (*pirogues*). Through such natural signs, he explained, "Vodun shows us what kinds of thing Vodun is." Daagbo described the tree-stump as the sacred center of a "revalorized" Vodun for Benin and the diaspora. "The site in Whydah must be respected by the whole country," he insisted, "as the root of Vodun culture," the place from which the diaspora religions in the Americas were derived. After invoking the Vodun gods, the ancestors, and the spirits of the slaves, Daagbo concentrated their collective power in the sacred tree-stump and poured a libation. Linking the arboreal trope of the family-tree with the historical memory of departing slaves in fashioning a new religious sense of place, the tree-stump may be seen as "ontologically recentering"[14] the African-Atlantic world in Whydah. Daagbo Hounon described the stump as the new Vodun of the contemporary era, whose power he intends to establish as the presiding divinity of his tenure as Supreme Chief. Clearly this new transatlantic Fon mythology contests existing hegemonic claims of the mythic Yoruba capital, Ile-Ife, as place of origin and sacred center for the African diaspora in the Americas. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that Daagbo Hounon is not unrivaled for the title of Supreme Chief of Vodun in Benin. But the full story of this on-going postcolonial African battle for mythic possession of the Atlantic world must await further ethnographic research.

The Dexoten

During the festival the stump was hidden from view by numerous ritual objects and a swelling crowd of worshippers, tourists, journalists, and TV crews—one of them from Germany. Its presence, however, was visibly marked by a ritual sculpture called the *dexoten*, which Daagbo used to evoke the tree, the departure of the slaves, and the return of their ancestral spirits and living diasporic brothers.

Daagbon Hounon told me that the *dexoten* enabled him to magically "work on the minds" of their living descendants, "our brothers in the Americas," to return to their African roots as benefactors and tourists. Made of bent galvanized sheet-metal, mounted on a circular base, and fixed in the ground by a wrought-iron spike, the *dexoten* depicts seven African slaves surrounding the larger figure of a European slaver standing in a pirogue in front of which is the image of a small pilotless plane.

At the climax of his public prayers at the festival, Daagbo Hounon invoked the sea-goddess Hou as he poured a libation on the *dexoten*, simultaneously explaining what it depicts and what he was doing for the benefit of his audience and the press as follows:

> I invoke the Vodun Hou. [He points to the *dexoten*, intoning a traditional incantation]. "One never sets foot to encircle the sea. One can never know where it ends." [He pours a libation on the *dexoten*]. Where I have just poured water, that's our ancestors who left here as slaves for the Americas by boat (pirogue). Here they are, leaving. The boat is called *kolofran* [the current term for a motor boat]. And off it speeds, going prrrrrraah! But nowadays, today, they [our brothers in the Americas] are taking the plane to return to Whydah and there it is! [pointing to the plane on the *dexoten*].

This anachronistic juxtaposition of slaves in the (motor)boat and brothers in the magic plane evoked a generalized unity of black identification, heedless of ethnic specificity, by collapsing the transatlantic spacetime of diasporic separation in a magical linkage of ancestral return and philanthropic tourism. Breaking all the rules of historical method, this magical reimagining of two-way transatlantic traffic—linking past and present, slaves and tourists, spirits and humans, ancestors and descendants—is clearly not conventional academic history. Nor is it nostalgia. It is Vodun *poesis*—the Greek term for "making"—whose temporal reconfigurations of the past to prefigure the future we can only understand by placing them in their present political context.

Conclusion

In examining how the history of slavery was memorialized at Whydah, my analysis has focused on the politics and poetics of prognostication. I have argued that the festival's tendentious view of transatlantic kinship served a double traditionalist political agenda: 1) to preserve Vodun heritage as a valid part of modern national culture in Benin by emphasizing its transnational importance in the Americas; and 2) to promote economic development by encouraging cultural tourism.

Despite the festival's stated goal, examination of the poetics of revision this involved has not drawn attention to the suffering of the slaves and its recollection. Instead, we have seen that consciousness of the past was refocused on the parallel diffusion of Vodun culture to the Americas and its exploitation as cultural and commercial capital to legitimate religious nationalism in Benin. Analysis has shown how memory of transatlantic history was manipulated in a magical t(r)opology of personal, directional, and technological transformation. On the one hand, in speeches and prayers by the king of Allada and Daagbo Hounon, the memorial figure of the slave is systematically reinscribed: first, as the mythic Vodun figure of the ancestor; next, following the genealogical precedent, as his contemporary descendant, the diasporic brother; and finally, in his hoped-for economic reincarnation, as the philanthropic tourist. On the other hand, the east-west direction of travel associated with the memory of Africa's subordination to Euro-American colonial capitalism is simultaneously reversed in a technological metaphor as the vehicle of travel is changed from pirogue to plane. What makes this subaltern trope so rhetorically appealing is its willful subversion of modernity's evolutionist dogma of magic's progressive displacement by science. At the same time, what makes it so ethically appalling is the simultaneous suppression of African-American suffering and Euro-American oppression that such a counter-modernist move requires. In the fast-forward revisionism of the Whydah festival's before-and-after narrative, history is not redeemed by "truth and reconciliation." It is simply made to go away.

By ignoring the history of their would-be diasporic allies abroad, attention is focused on the Council of King's utopian agenda at home. Given their apparent political goal of outreach from African roots to diasporic branches, however, the disregard for African-American sensibilities their narrative displays seems shortsighted and cynical, if not to say misguided. Such a strategy, I suggest, is only feasible given a general lack of knowledge about African-American history in Benin. And with this,

we are brought back to the two models of temporal distancing, with which we began: Arjun Appadurai's normative analysis of the past as a scarce resource and Johannes Fabian's historical critique of allochrony.

In legitimating its traditionalist vision of the future, the Whydah festival's retelling of transatlantic history complicates both these theories. It utilizes not only the temporal distance of slave history in the past, but also the spatial distance of that history's subjects, the peoples of the African diaspora in the Americas. With this example of the use of diasporic history in contemporary West African political discourse, the limits on the past's debatability are pushed beyond Appadurai's theoretical requirement of common cultural norms. In this case, Appadurai's point that the past is not "infinitely susceptible to contemporary invention" (1981:217) no longer applies to debate about someone else's past, because with no shared norms to regulate reinvention, distance is no longer scarce.

Those Africans who remained in Africa during the era of transatlantic slavery never experienced the Middle Passage and its aftermath, the erasure of African identities. So, for ordinary Africans in Benin, members of the African diaspora in the Americas are not only distant figures, they are also underdetermined signs. As such, they are open to the same kind of cultural invention in Africa that Fabian noted for European anthropological representations of non-western others in general. It is therefore not only the modernist western form of temporal discontinuity he calls allochrony that deprives exotic others of history. In the Whydah festival, a traditionalist African conception of temporal continuity achieves the same result with a postmodern twist. Instead of isolating distant others in previous stages of development according to a colonialist temporal logic of difference, the Whydah commemoration of slavery deprives the distant peoples of the African diaspora of their histories by reifying them as ancestors and descendants in a postcolonial temporal logic of identity.

With its sobering commentary on the danger of romantic excess in diasporic imaginings of homelands, this unsympathetic homeland imagining of diaspora from Whydah gives one small glimpse of the cultural geo-politics that an Africanization of transatlantic history would reveal. Balancing the Euro-American bias in Paul Gilroy's account of Black Atlantic "roots and routes," this West African view of routes and branches indicates the existence of a far more complex spatial history, yet to be told. Seen from many standpoints of local memory, such a multi-sited ethnography must form part of Sakai's world-historical project of charting coexisting temporalities. No doubt it will take some time in the telling.

Notes

1. The critique of western historiography on which this view is based was pioneered by oral historian Jan Vansina in Africa and has subsequently developed in an on-going postcolonial conversation between Marxist history, deconstructionist theories of power/representation, and post-structuralist anthropological critiques of modernity in the work of such authors as Michael Taussig (1980), Ranjit Guha (1983) and the Subaltern Studies Collective, Marshall Sahlins (1985), and John and Jean Comaroff (1991, 1992). For a more recent globalization of the Subaltern Studies paradigm see also John Beverley (1999).
2. See also Casey (1987), Connerton (1988), Middleton and Edwards (1990), Terdiman (1993), Antze and Lambek (1996), Fabian (1996) and Werbner (1998).
3. On the reuse of dominant formations by subaltern peoples as a means of articulating agency see de Certeau (1984).
4. I have in mind the title of the conference on which this volume is based, "Pathways to Africa's Past," organized by the Department of History, University of Texas, Austin.
5. In his presentation at the Austin conference, Toyin Falola offered a similar view of "history as a project in the service of present politics."
6. I have in mind the Comaroffs' rejection of the conventional Western opposition of "realism" and "rhetoric" as the proper measure for distinguishing the "factual" from the "interpretive," "history" from "poetry." "This distinction," they insist, "leads directly to the assumption that poetic modes of representation are less true, more ideological, than are realistic narratives of the past. Poetic forms belong, at the best, to the separate realm of aesthetics or mythology; at worst, to the dirty tricks of ideology. Either way, however, rhetoric is usually held to distort the collective imagination, breathing false life into sober social facts. In the final analysis, then, there can be no poetics of history" (1987:193).
7. The term "allochrony" was coined by Johannes Fabian (1983) to describe the "different times" in which western and non-western peoples were said to exist in 19th century European evolutionist and 20th century global development discourse.
8. I became aware of Michel-Rolph Trouillot's (2000) recent article on "historical apologies" as this essay was going to press.
9. My use of "tradition" in the singular is a simplification of Vodun heritage, which, of course, constitutes a complex field of local religious diversity.
10. Personal communication by Karen McCarthy Brown.

11. Karen McCarthy Brown has informed me in a personal communication that the next edition of Mama Lola: a Vodou Priestess in Brooklyn incorporates a new chapter describing their visit to the Global Vodun Reunion in Benin.
12. In 1996, I attended Daagbo Hounon's brief appearance in the Sanger Theater, New Orleans that formed part of his "papal" Diaspora Tour through parts of Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States of America.
13. My translation from the French original.
14. Writing of medieval Indian history, the idea of "ontological recentering" was coined by Ronald Inden (1990). It refers to the political use of religious architecture by Hindu monarchs in pre-Muslim times to mark their status as paramount rulers. They did so by building a triumphal capital-city and temple in order to mark their reterriorialization of the cosmic center after conquering "the four directions" that represent the world.

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3

Called to Hear the Word of God:
Musa Kongola's Autobiography[1]

Gregory H. Maddox

In September 2000 I traveled to Dodoma, Tanzania, to talk with Ernest Kongola, an active local historian who has produced at least six volumes of historical writings on the Gogo people of central Tanzania. We had first met in 1987 while I conducted research on environmental change in the region for my doctoral dissertation.[2] I sought him out when others indicated to me that he was perhaps the most knowledgeable man on local history in the region. He then shared with me his first volume of historical writings, a history of his clan and biography of his father, Musa Kongola, which he had written at the time of his father's death.[3] In the years after our one meeting in 1987, I began to write about the production of historical knowledge in Ugogo. I corresponded with him between 1988 and 1993 and met with him again in 1994. At that time, I helped pay for the duplication of another volume of his writings (which turned out to be the fourth one he had written). We stayed in contact after that. In September 2000, I traveled back to Dodoma to help him pay for the printing of his latest volumes and to discuss with him his methodology for gathering information.

In September, we sat again in his dark study in his house in the middle of Dodoma, surrounded by shelves containing books and manuscripts. I started by asking him how he collected information for his first volume. He told me about the ways that clan histories were performed at funerals by the principle heir to the deceased, about how the heir had to be coached,

especially if he or she was a young person, by elders who had more accurate accounts, how these clan histories in the past had been told repeatedly in the home, but that now only a few elders remembered them. I then asked how he had gathered the information for his father's biography. Had he sat down one day and asked his father to tell him about his life or had he just put together what he had known? He told me that in fact, he had asked his father to write his life history and that he still had his father's writings. Then he stood up and pulled two dog-eared notebooks out of his shelf and handed them to me, telling me to photocopy them.

My first thought was to ask him why he hadn't told me about these writings ten years earlier, but I choked the question down in my excitement. I had the autobiography of a man born in rural East Africa in 1880 (according to his son's calculations) and who died in 1986. He had lived through the entire colonial era in German East Africa and Tanzania. He was one of the first converts to Christianity in the region and one of the first local teachers. His descendants make up an important part of the local elite in the region and the nation. I raced to the copy shop down the street in Dodoma, and then stayed up almost all night reading the spiky handwritten Swahili script.

As I described my "find" to colleagues later, one of them asked a question that has much visited me as I've worked on the body of writings I've collected from Ugogo: "What did he [Musa Kongola] do that was important?" Musa's notebooks detail the history of social and cultural change in the region, yet my first response to that question was more prosaic—he lived. Joan Scott has argued that "history as experience" serves as a valid form of expression of historical knowledge.[4] Musa Kongola lived a long life, and towards the end of it he sat down and wrote out for his son what he believed important about that life. Such a source reveals in its subjectivity, in its silences as well as its statements, a topography of a life.

Of course the particularities of this document and of this life give it an importance beyond that attached to it by its author or its original intended audience. Musa Kongola lived roughly through the entire colonial era and well into the post-independence period of Tanzanian history. He was one of the earliest converts to Christianity in the region and one of the first local teachers for the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) in the region. The Germans imprisoned him as a potential British spy during World War I. He worked for the Native Authority administration under the British. He saw at least one of his sons become a key figure in the anti-colonial struggle in the 1950s. His descendants are among the most prominent local individuals in Dodoma and members of the national elite of modern Tanzania. His life

history functions as a critical and almost unique source for examining the social history of Ugogo and Tanzania over the twentieth century.

Musa Kongola's life history has an even more unique niche. Musa wrote these notes for his son. Over the decades, academic historians have used a number of means to try to capture the subjectivity of African experiences under colonial rule. In parts of Africa where literacy was relatively rare before the twentieth century (such as Ugogo), biographies and autobiographies have been correspondingly rare. The earliest writings by Africans in these contexts often tended to be either religious writings or part of a genre that has come to be called literate ethno-history.[5] Musa Kongola's life story is unique in that it is the written and self-conscious reflections of a person on his life. Rather than literate entho-history, it more closely resembles the life histories collected by professional scholars.[6] Yet because Kongola wrote himself, his subjectivity is unmediated in its presentation by the professional scholar's "as," as Fabian puts it. Scholarly works appropriate the words (or paintings) of others "as" evidence where "the 'as' takes on a rhetorical, contestary edge. It announces an argument."[7] These notebooks stand as Musa wanted his son Ernest to see it, not as an example of social change, or the impact of Christianity, or the creation of a nation, issues that I've sought to mine out of sources like this one.

Kongola's work might seem then a only a personal account; one potentially unmediated by the structuring of event to fit explanation common of popular expressions of historical knowledge.[8] Yet embedded within it are elements of a dialogue about the past that have entered collective memory. Musa Kongola records in these writings his "social personality," to use Elizabeth Tonkin's term, distinct from the popular memory of accepted accounts of the past.[9] But his narrative remains social—reflecting the dialogue about the past in the region—as well as personal—placing himself within history. Many of Kongola's descriptions of things such as the cruelty of the Germans use cliches I heard repeatedly in my own oral history interviews.[10] In using these terms, though, Kongola evokes agreed-upon explanations of past that have circulated in the region. Despite its literate form, Kongola's work still engages in a dialogue about the past with the community of which he was a part.[11]

Kongola's written form struck me even more as evidence of the orality of his work. His writing flows in a stream of consciousness. His paragraphs have no punctuation. He repeats a similar formula into almost every section, "Nitajitahidi kuandika kama niliyoelezwa na wazazi na mabibi niliowakuta bado hai zaidi shangazi wa baba dada ya baba yake mzazi wangu hata na maisha yangu mimi mwenyewe," (I will do my best to write that which I heard from my grandparents and grandmothers who I found especially the aunt of my father, my father's father's sister up through

my own life.) The sections repeat themselves, often containing more summary of what he just wrote than new information. In short, his autobiography reads rather like an oral history. Hofmeyr has suggested that oral formats often infiltrated written documents, even those produced by the South African state, in similar situations in South Africa.[12] Indeed the clan history he records is taken directly from the oral versions.[13]

During his last years, I believe Musa tried in these two notebooks to present a specific version of his life, which made him a person in the world of the church, colonial rule, and independence. The structure of his narrative concentrates on two major events, his conversion and training as a teacher, and his imprisonment by the Germans. He sums up his childhood:

> The subjects which we were taught by the ancestors are these: cultivation, herding, and weaving with different things like baobabs and inka. The baobab was carried into the corner so that it would dry during the day. When it was dry it was prepared so that it would separate beer by squeezing it through and it would be sold for the price of one for one chicken. It was the time before money was brought, when money was brought the price was 25 hellars which was equal to 50 cents. And the work of weaving sieves is in Cigogo now called kuhuziza ujimbi.
>
> And they who were taught this skill were Kongola and Manginido the children of Munyamgwila, Makwala and Boyi who were the children of Yobwa the brother of Manyangwila.[14]

His entire life between 1919 and 1980 is summed up in a couple paragraphs at the end of the volumes. He leaves out his work as a clerk for the Native Authority Court at Makutupora. In the later version of Musa's life prepared for Volume VI, Ernest notes that his father had a reputation for writing the judgments rendered by the court well. He also notes that Musa was eventually sentenced to six strokes by a British officer for seizing cattle from people late in paying tax. Ernest blamed the District Officer for not knowing the policies common to the region. Musa, he said, resigned on the spot.[15] Ernest joked that after being beaten by the Germans and then beaten by the British, he thought independence wasn't so bad. In his written account, though, Musa silences events like these, concentrating on what defined his adulthood.

Musa Kongola also omits from his account most of the intimate details of his life. These details are secondary to his definition of himself as a person, even though his son knew them. Despite his presentation of himself as a man of the word, for example, Musa took a second wife. In his first version of Musa's life prepared at his death, Musa's son Ernest records a

brief account of his father's second marriage in his annotated genealogy: "Mzee Musa married a second wife in 1941 for which he paid a bridewealth of 10 cows. His second wife was named Nyambwa. By good fortune Nyambwa bore two children. Now he has left Nyambwa and returned to his true wife."[16] In Volume VI of his history, Ernest goes into more detail, noting that Musa remained with Nyambwa from 1941 to 1969 and providing details of the lives of the four children of that marriage. Ernest then told me when we discussed the issue that the marriage had caused a rift in the family. His father had met Nyambwa in Dodoma town during his trips bringing tax collections from Makutupora. His father had paid bridewealth with cattle that theoretically could have been used for his sons' weddings or their inheritance. Ernest also said his father had violated Gogo custom by taking a new wife without consulting Talita, Ernest's mother. Ernest himself had brought his parents back together after a fight between Musa and Nyambwa. He writes: "In 1969 Musa Kongola returned to his heart and confessed he sinned against God by entering a polygamous marriage. He returned to his true wife and left Nyambwa who came to God and now is called Mariamu."[17] Musa omitted any discussion of both of his wives and of his children despite these being relatively well known socially, because in the context of a written account, his second family did not define the person he wished people to remember.

This defining of himself as a person begins in his clan history. While faithfully reporting the genealogy of his clan, Mbukwa Muhindi, from its origins in Uhehe to the south up to his own generation and listing the movements of the ancestors across the space of cental Tanzania, he also highlights the differences between their beliefs and practices and his. He writes:

> The lives of grandfathers and fathers and others depended on tradition, they did not have religion which came from foreigners. They worshiped at the graves of the dead of their lineage who helped them when they were attacked by disease and or any problem which came at their grandfather's or their father's graves where they performed rituals. Sometimes they carried a sheep and beer, they had faith that they would get help from the person who had died. But I and others have not found this the way of the modern world.[18]

He goes on to begin his account of his own life by stressing this difference: "The progress of we children was very different. Some of us got religion and others followed to the present that of the elders while others followed the religion of Christianity. First of those following the religion of

Christianity is myself. I write the story from the beginning which I have seen and others which I have heard."[19]

Musa then turns to his conversion experience and training as a teacher. Ernest believes his father was born about 1880. Musa's parents lived in Handali. Musa recounts what he thinks is the first visit of missionaries to the area:

> I was herding livestock, cattle and goats, in the camp in the bush when messengers[20] arrived to call people to go hear and when they went they heard the playing of a piano they listened to the sound only meaning the sound which was playing as it explained its meaning this is the first day of being called to hear the word of God.

> They heard the sound of a song in the language of Kigogo which said: "Cikawa kusoma ze mhonelo monga du ne litugwa likawa du lyoli kuciponya yo Yisa Masiya." [We learnt of only one salvation and the Word saved us in Jesus the Messiah.][21] So when I returned from herding, mother explained to me that she had heard and had seen these people. What kind of people? And these people identified themselves as English servants of God.

> Mother said they said they would be there for an hour in the evening but not at night so that at midday therefore you and I could go hear them and see them although it was at the time I was to bring the herd in for the evening, I would be permitted to go by my mother.

> When the time arrived to go my mother told me to go hear these foreigners preach the word of God. I arrived at the place where they would meet. I saw very many people, adults and children like me, and the foreigners were of a different color than us, we were told to sit quietly and listen so we sat quietly and they began, they began with their songs about which I had been told by my mother at home before I had arrived and I heard the music of the piano played by an English woman and they identified themselves as English and their home in England was the city of London, slowly they explained their reason for studying the language of Cigogo = Kigogo, it is not a national language like we have now, we started studying the language when we came in the country of Mvumi of Sultan Mazengo Chalula. We [my parents and I] were in the country of Handali = Nghwandali. They came to preach and to teach reading only for the period of a few days or even only one day. When they finished they would return to Mvumi. Then after several years they built a house so

> they could stay for one month so until then we continued with studies little by little.[22]

Such a presentation of the message is striking because it highlights the attractiveness of the spiritual call, not the conflicts identified by some writers[23] or the "instrumental" attractions of conversion.[24] Such accounts fill the published, colonial-era literature and indeed made up the testimony of public profession of faith. Musa's account may indeed be another written version of an oral genre. Musa goes on to describe his decision to heed the call:

> The most important event happened on Sunday when they asked if we wanted to learn the word of God. Those who lifted up their hands to the sky would be received as followers of the word of God. Those who were called were wanted and I raised my hand and I was written down as one who wanted. I was called by name to be a probationary for six months. Another class was accepted later but not like the first class of probationaries.
>
> So I wanted to be in the first class called to study and be taught the word of God. I made great efforts to attend so that every Thursday at 4 PM I would study the catechism, Ten Commandments, and the life of the Savior Jesus and if I passed I would be a man of God and would be known as one. I had to understand the meaning of faith so I continued to study until I understood a little. I was tested by questions, I conquered, the questions I was asked equaled the answers.
>
> So it was then that I was permitted by the church elders to be baptized in my name and that of others. It happened that we who succeeded were baptized by Pastor Kasisi. We were given a certain day. We should wait until the day of the birth of the Savior Jesus. That is when we were to be baptized and we waited until the day of the birth when we were baptized, myself and many others, old and young. There were many people because it was the first time the country of Handali had received the word of God in the name of Jesus Christ, son of God, Savior of the world. It was 1913 December when I was baptized and became a Christian.[25]

While Kongola uses a language common to the religious literature, he defines in these words his person, both individually and socially. He is to be henceforth a "man of God," of the first class in his village. He further becomes more, a teacher for God. He describes his training:

> The biggest development which happened at that time was when they
> brought a teacher, they built a teacher's house with stone walls and roofed
> with wood they mixed with mud for their roof. So there was where they
> brought a teacher named Paulo Chindinda bin Makali and his wife Rebeka
> Chililo by the name of her husband she was called Rebeka Chindinda,
> these are the ones who opened and developed studies of many subjects at
> this time and I succeeded in understanding the lessons. Each lesson was in
> the Kigogo language only.
>
> In these studies at first we were made to read lessons which were written
> on a long cloth each letter of the alphabet like those that follow a e i o u or
> capital letters A E I O U until the alphabet was spoken together like, b a,
> BA, and they continued slowly to teach the others and I. We continued to
> come every day when it was 2 PM. I went and we met and together we
> children, I and others, they taught us.
>
> I finished my studies on the first cloth and then there was a cloth with
> lessons which were written in the alphabet and numbers mixed. I finished
> quickly and began to be taught in the first book. I finished it. So I was
> seen as a youth with the ability to understand a lot. I began to be taught to
> read the New Testament itself in the language of Kigogo after not very
> long I could read and write very well and add small numbers together like
> three and four and likewise when the teacher had only a little knowledge
> he required me to teach the lesson on the first cloth.[26]

Included in the account of his training are the social cohort of which he
became a part. He repeats the names of the other early converts because
they become his network, supplementing if not entirely replacing those of
his family and clan.

At this point in his narrative, Musa digresses to give a political history of
the region. He discusses the dominance of the region by the Hehe state
under Mkwawa in the nineteenth century, and then describes the war
between Mkwawa's forces and the Germans. He makes a sharp distinction
between the Germans and the British missionaries who both arrived in the
region at the same time. He denounces the Germans for cruelty, noting:

> Ugogo received much abuse. Animals, intelligence like goats—people
> were called goats—Look at those goats—they were made to pay tax. In
> the beginning they were required to contribute a "vitungu"[27] of millet for
> each house, later to pay in money. Each person had to pay at first one
> rupee equal to two shillings and then two rupees equal to four shillings, a

> small mistake was fifteen strokes, a big one twenty-five strokes. Abuse
> moja kwa moja [straight ahead].

Yet, he also notes the changes brought by them:

> They built a few buildings, more work was the building of the railroad
> from Dar es Salaam to Kigoma—Ujiji. This work brought much
> appreciation for their help from travelers because before building the
> railroad it was very difficult to travel from Dar es Salaam to Kigoma. It
> was a journey of very many days but now is a few only, and they began
> classes for every adult and child by making a rule that everybody was
> required to bring their boy or girl to class if it was far to the place of the
> classes they would stay there, if it was nearby if they did not have a
> relative to stay with for each person would give food and "ujila" to use for
> a month. One female cow, not a bull and not a goat, was given to each.
> The Germans required that people know how to read and they told the
> missions to send people who knew how to read to go teach others how to
> read. And the missionaries did as they were asked with love filling them.
> The missionaries sent readers called teachers to the villages where they
> were from and there were many who did this, they brought vaccination for
> smallpox which was a very bad disease which brought death to many
> people, when they began to vaccinate for the disease it declined, often
> people were not allowed to enter without first showing their scars.[28]

Musa continually praises the missionaries throughout his narrative. He calls
them people who came to Ugogo "motivated only by love."
    Yet there is one event that Musa survived which becomes in his
narrative the as much the defining event of his life as a Christian and a
Gogo which subverts progressivism of his view of the changes that
colonialism brought. Musa was one of several employees of the C.M.S.
imprisoned during the East Africa Campaign of World War I on suspicion
of spying for the British forces. The Germans imprisoned nationals of
enemy powers, including all the British missionaries of the C.M.S., in
Tabora at the beginning of the war.[29] Musa tells of the imprisonment of
African employees as follows:

> Now I would like to give an account of the war its deeds of which I write
> were not told me because there are many which I saw myself. The
> prohibition preventing people from writing letters continued until 1916.
> Then in different missions there were two head teachers running the
> missions. The first was in the country of Mvumi, the name of this teacher
> was Andrea Lungwa. He wrote a letter to another teacher secretly. And

another teacher writing letters was named Danieli Mbogo at Buigiri. He asked for news of where the English were arriving. This was because Buigiri was near Kondoa therefore he was asked if he knew where the English Army had arrived since the English army had come to Kondoa.

He got a youth named Zebedayo Maganga to carry this letter to Buigiri for the teacher there. This youth passed near the station when he passed there with the news he was seen by the German soldiers, again returning from Buigiri on his way home to Mvumi he passed there and then the soldiers saw him again returning so they called him and asked him where he was from and where he was going. The answer came with blows one after another and then the letter fell down but the soldiers could not read it because they could not understand Kigogo, they found one who could read and interpret the words which were written by Andrea and the questions which they asked the one from Buigiri were to see if they had broken the order prohibiting letters so when they saw it written where the letter was from a cry went up to arrest the people who were known to read and especially to write.

The letter itself asked where the English were located. The answer now we heard was that they had arrived in the country of Kondoa. The word was distressing to the Wadachi[30] although the true turmoil was that any man or woman who could be seen to have written, was arrested and taken to Tabora to the camp for those detained and those who were arrested because of the letter were beaten with viboko twenty-five strokes, he said he did not have to count but by the love of God he escaped injury. . . .

At this time I was an assistant teacher as I explained in the beginning, the time arrived when I was arrested like I explained at the beginning about the war and the knowledge of reading and writing, especially writing.

May 1916 was when the arrest of people who knew how to read and write occurred. At first, three people were arrested, named:
1. Jonathani Mtandele Makali
2. Zakariya Mazengo Mbishai
3. Musa Kongola Mnyangwila

We were arrested by the clerk, Mzengatumbi Mbalino who took us east to the country of Idifu of Jumbe Hoya from our village of Miganga in the country of Handali.

So when we were brought there we were handcuffed behind the back, and they began to beat us with the viboko whip twenty-five strokes for each person without counting. Truly we were injured, what saved us was the love of God.

After us, they arrested our colleagues named:
1. Nathanieli Fundi Magana
2. Yohana Mulowezi Lukana
3. Daudi Kusupa Makunzo

Like us they were locked in the camp, likewise they were beaten twenty-five stokes for each person. Their wives were not beaten but they were forbidden to return to their homes from which they came. Then they received the word to go to Dodoma to meet with the District Officer. This District Officer mentioned the word that he had told these teachers. So all the women returned to their homes, each one went to her house.

We who were sent from the country of Idifu stayed there and then were sent and mixed with our colleagues, we were afraid that we would be like the people who had been burned by fire but this did not happen to us so it was only a threat.

When the wives were required to return then they returned each one going to her house, so we slept at Handali at the house of Jumbe Makala Mbogoni in our country of Handali.

The next morning we arrived at Kikombo station, that day we went from the one Jumbe who arrested us to the country of Chita, he was beaten likewise twenty-five strokes with the viboko again, when he arrived at the station he was beaten with the viboko fifteen strokes, the total of these twenty-five stokes together with the fifteen was forty strokes together with the victims and blows so he was defeated and when he arrived he died there at the station of Kikombo in front of the German white man himself, because at this time each stations was assigned a white man, each station together with the askari he was given.

The third day from Idifu was when we were carried [by train] to Dodoma. We arrived at night, we slept in the jail. In the morning we were loaded on the train and carried to Tabora. We arrived at night. When we were unloaded with effort we were carried to the detention camp. On arrival we meet many people from all the missions of Ugogo and Ukaguru, elders, youth and women. There from Ugogo we met one woman with her

daughter Mchanga. This woman's name was Loyi Mbogo from the mission of Buigiri, the wife of Danieli Mbogo who had left his wife at home so she was arrested for being the one to write the letter to Andrea. When they tried to arrest him, he fled to where he was not known until the end of the war.

The names of those arrested with the missionaries were:
1. Yohana Malecela of Ihumwa
2. Andereya Kanyanka of Dodoma
3. Loyi Mboga of Buigiri together with her daughter Mchanga
4. Andereya Mwaka of Mpwapwa
5. Haruni Mbegao of Mamboya, Ukaguru
6. Mikaeli Poga of Ukaguru
7. Lazaro Luhiso of Ukaguru
There were others which today I have forgotten and cannot write down.
8. Musa Kongola

And all these were teachers together with 9. Mika Mnyambwa Muloli of Mvumi Mission and he was a teacher. In all these names which are written all were Christians, we who had studied with the English who had brought the word of God the father the savior of the world for all people. And we were the ones to first receive it here in Ugogo and Ukaguru and because of knowing how to read and write letters we suffered twenty-five stokes and were made hostages. But with the help of God we were protected from dying, some, although, died from the suffering they endured. They did from disease only, not from beatings and the others later were alive.

So in the middle of 1916 the English who were fighting the Germans entered the country which was called Tanganyika from their home in England. And we who were locked in the Boma [fort] at Tabora by the Germans were many Christians. All of us were in one Boma enclosed by barbed wire on the roof. It was to stop a person if he wanted to escape, he could not get a place to pass the gate, there was one only and had a door with fierce guards with their guns ready for anything that came. You could enter only with their permission to do so.

The program of work here was that some would work helping around the camp, others would work cutting firewood and timber for building sleeping quarters, others would travel with the soldiers of the Germans, this work was heavy and truly we did not even have the luxury of a free evening, they made us travel until it was night and carrying things which

they wanted; so it was a great hardship until the English arrived, the English were the ones who reduced the hardships.[31]

This imprisonment becomes in the hands of Musa and his cohorts' progeny the defining story of what it means to be a follower of the Diocese of Central Tanganyika. The story is repeated often, in many contexts. Paul White recorded the Rev. Mika Muloli's version:

> In the "dress circle" were the Chief and the African Pastor. The latter remarked:
>
> "These Germans say we black men are animals and should be treated as such—and, believe me, they did!"
>
> "How do you mean?" I asked.
>
> "In 1915 they thrashed me and tried to force me to say that Bwana Briggs was signaling to the British troops. When I refused to tell lies, they tied me by hands to a donkey and dragged me to Dodoma."
>
> "What, Pastor, the whole thirty-five miles?"
>
> "Every yard of it, Bwana, and they blinded this eye the same day with a kiboko"—a hippo-hide whip.
>
> Everyone was silent, and the atmosphere was intensely serious, as the Chief said:
>
> "If they return, Bwana, I will take all my family and cattle and go to Portuguese East Africa."[32]

White's account, written in the early 1940s of an event that occurred during the 1930s when there was talk of returning Germany's pre-World War I colonies, is colored by his patriotic (even though an Australian) bent. For him, Mazengo and Muloli express anti-German sentiments. Yet Musa Kongola's account places the opposition amongst foreigners differently, between rulers and missionaries—those that come for power versus those that come out of love.

Musa, however, also notes the failings of the English missionaries. He writes that after being liberated, "the missionaries went straight back to their homes in England." Only one missionary, a man named Westcott, stayed "to cool the country at once and ensure we did not suffer again."[33] In

this flight for Musa, as for the bulk of the followers of the C.M.S. who remained in Ugogo, lies the claim to ownership of the church by the African faithful. The claim is both historical and current. This story, repeated in the official histories of the Diocese of Central Tanganyika, domesticates in a powerful way what began as an alien institution.

Musa concludes his account with a very short description of his career after the war. He notes that he married in 1917. He tells how he became a teacher for the C.M.S. at a salary of three rupees a month. When in the 1920s the colonial government forced the missions to close unregulated "bush schools," he was sent to Kongwa to receive a teacher's certificate so that he could continue to teach, but when the colonial government required teachers to have certificates in English as well as Swahili, he was forced out of his position. He then tried to open a school in Dodoma for the Native Authority there, but it failed to attract enough students. As noted above, he worked as a tax clerk in the 1930s. He then retired and became "merely a farmer," as he said.

Musa concludes his book using the formula he references throughout: "I myself have written things which I have seen myself or which I have be told by the leaders of my tribe from the beginning and through the progress of my life. The names for which I thank God are the children he gave me and all are Christians. Here I stop writing. I am unable to write anymore."[34]

Kongola's autobiography must be understood as part of a process of appropriation. The first generation of adherents to the mission through a creative process sought to capture the power, both spiritual and material, that the mission brought to their community in an initially chaotic and constantly changing landscape. Such an observation is in some ways commonplace; yet the cohort that included Yohana Malecela, Mika Muloli, and Musa Kongola created in their lives, their works, and their families, the basis for a transformed Ugogo.

Yet the process of reconfiguring power in the region was more than one of imposition and opposition. Men and women like Musa Kongola created a new milieu out of the dialogue with the mission and with *maneno*, "words," as Musa writes it. This view is somewhat different from that of scholars like the Comaroffs. For them, opposition and resistance are expressed outside the institutions of power, such as the mission origin churches, although that resistance, in this case in an independent church, is expressed through what Jean Comaroff identifies as a bricologe.[35] In Ugogo, Musa's life work lays the foundation for opposition within orthodoxy.

The success of such a position draws from the ability to translate and hence transform the elements of power embodied in the Christian message. In short, Musa lives the process of translation that Lamin Sanneh

describes.[36]   While Sanneh (like Musa and many of the other writers discussed here) proceeds from a position that accepts the word as revealed truth, Musa's analysis depicts more closely the process of what I have called elsewhere domestication[37] than alternative views that emphasize domination.[38]

Musa's life and writings embody the process of debate over the material realm and the spiritual realm described by Chatterjee.[39] In his life and in the way that he wrote about it, Musa worked out the debate Chatterjee identifies over the degree to which the intimate realm must change in the face of the assault on it by colonialism and modernity. For men and women like Musa, modernity came most intimately in the form of Christianity. This generation felt most sharply the divergent pull of Christianity and tradition, moreso than their children. Musa sums up this contradiction when he speaks of leaving the livestock in the field to go and hear the missionaries. Musa writes the external, even to his son who knows more details of his life that do not conform to some sort of Christian ideal. He expresses his engagement with the external world, though, in spiritual terms, in terms of being called to hear the word of God. As Jean Comaroff notes: "An overly rigid application . . . of the division between the symbolic and instrumental, and between thought and action can serve to blind us to the interdependence between domains which our ideology sets too definitively apart."[40]

To return to the question my colleague asked of this text: What did Musa Kongola do that was important? He had lived an eventful life. His son has told it as a morality tale, filled with sin and redemption. Ernest places his father in a chain that stretches back to the origins of their clan in the cold mountains of Uzungwa to the south and stretches forward to his progeny that have traveled the world. Musa did more than just live—he wrote his life as he wanted it to be remembered. In doing so, he collapsed the contradictions, the messiness of life, that outsiders might see into a narrative not progressive but eschatological. He had heard, and spoken, and finally written the word of God.

Notes

1.   I would like to thank Sheryl McCurdy, Tom Spear, Ingrid Yngstrom, and the participants of the conference for their comments on this paper.
2.   Gregory H. Maddox, "'Leave, Wagogo! You Have No Food!': Famine and Survival in Ugogo, Central Tanzania 1916–1961," (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1988).

3. Ernest Kongola, *Historia mfupi ya Mbeya ya "Wevunjiliza" toka 1688 mpaka 1986: "Mbukwa Muhindi wa Cimambi"* (Dodoma, Tanzania: n.p., 1986).
4. Joan Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 797.
5. George Simeon Mwase, *Strike a Blow and Die: A Narrative of Race Relations in Colonial Africa*, ed. Robert I. Rotberg (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967); Stephan Felix. Miescher, "Becoming a Man in Kwawu: Gender, Law, Personhood, and the Construction of Masculinities in Colonial Ghana, 1875–1957," Ph.D. diss. (Northwestern University, 1997).
6. Shula Marks, ed., *Not Either an Experimental Doll: The Separate Worlds of Three South African Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Susan Geiger, *TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955–1965* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1997); Margaret Stobel and Sarah Mirza, eds. and trans., *Three Swahili Women : Life Histories from Mombasa, Kenya* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989); Belinda Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983*, with the assistance of Mmantho Nkotsoe (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1991); and Charles van Onselen, *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper, 1894–1985* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996).
7. Johannes Fabian, *Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Zaire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 279–80.
8. For a discussion of popular memory and its relation to "lived experience," see Susan A. Crane, "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory," *American Historical Review* 102, 5 (1997): 1372–85, Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *American Historical Review* 102, 5 (1997): 1386-1403, and Daniel James, "Meatpackers, Peronists, and Collective Memory: A View from the South," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1404–12. Citing Maurice Halbwachs, Crane notes, "Lived experience and collective memory 'interpenetrate' each other through autobiography, the self-conscious memory of individual members of a group," p. 1377.
9. Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 44.
10. Transcripts of my interviews from 1986–1987 are found in Maddox, "Leave, Wagogo!" Appendix.
11. Or perhaps more accurately, Kongola's use of historical cliché shows how written historical sources are also dialogue once one gets past the fixedness of words on a page.
12. Isabel Hofmeyr, *"We Spend Our Years as a Tale That is Told": Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chiefdom* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1993), 14.

13. Such an interpretation of Musa Kongola's style is just that—an interpretation. When I discussed these elements of his father's writings with Ernest, he suggested that maybe it was just because his father was old.

14. M. Kongola, "Notebooks."

15. E. Kongola, *Historia Fmupi*, Vol. VI, 45.

16. E. Kongola, *Historia Fmupi*, Vol. I, 16.

17. E. Kongola, *Historia Fmupi*, Vol. VI, 45–46.

18. M. Kongola, "Notebooks."

19. Ibid.

20. Musa uses the term "watumshi" which can mean either messengers or servants. I cannot tell if he means the servants of his household or messengers for the missionaries.

21. My thanks to Dr. Lawrence Mbogoni for help with the translation.

22. Musa Kongola, "Notebooks."

23. Elisabeth Knox, *Signal on the Mountain: The Gospel in Africa's Uplands before the First World War* (Canberra: Acorn Press, 1991), 170–75.

24. Thomas Spear and Isaria N. Kimambo, eds., *Eastern African Expressions of Christianity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999).

25. M. Kongola, "Notebooks."

26. Ibid.

27. A basket that stands about waist high.

28. M. Kongola, "Notebooks."

29. Roland Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longman and Green, 1952), 198–200.

30. Here and in a few other places, Musa uses the more archaic "Wadachi" for Germans as opposed to the more current "Wajermani."

31. M. Kongola, "Notebooks."

32. Paul White, *Doctor of Tanganyika* (Sydney: George M. Dash, 1942), 78–79.

33. Musa uses a metaphor common in central Tanzania. See Katherine Ann Snyder, ""Like Water and Honey": Moral Ideology and the Construction of Community among the Iraqw of Northern Tanzania" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1993), 25–33.

34. M. Kongola, "Notebooks."

35. Jean Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 253.

36. Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1989), esp. 22–25.

37. Gregory H. Maddox, "African Christianity and the Search for the Universal," in *Eastern African Expressions of Christianity*, ed. Thomas Spear and I. N. Kimambo (Oxford: James Currey, 1999), 25–36.

38. Paul S. Landau, *The Realm of the Word: Language, Gender, and Christianity in a Southern African Kingdom* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1995).

39. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 74, 119–20.
40. Comaroff, *Body of Power*, 262.

4

"What Have We, Jo-Ugenya, Not Done? We Have Even Killed an Arab/Swahili Hermaphrodite": Constructing a History of the Jo-Ugenya–Arab/Swahili War by Means of a Saying

Meshack Owino

Although it is not uncommon to hear Jo-Ugenya boast about their bravery as a people, that during the precolonial period they were so powerful that they even killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite, the historical implications and significance of that saying are often not easy to discern. Short and succinct as most apothegms are, it is easy to listen to it and not decipher its meaning, to hear it uttered and not to fully comprehend its significance. While conducting research into the military history of the Jo-Ugenya,[1] an exercise that coincided with the penultimate run-up to the re-introduction of multi-party democracy in Kenya, this researcher often heard references to this boast, but initially associated it with the general mood of the multiparty struggle, to the Jo-Ugenya's intention (Jo-Ugenya were overwhelmingly in the pro-multiparty camp) to overcome their rivals in upcoming election, rather than to a specific event—to an actual war that the Jo-Ugenya fought with the Arab/Swahili.[2] The aphorism's political connotations were apparently more conspicous at the time than the real historical event it actually signified. Given the pervasive political rhetoric at the time of the research, it was infused with political connotations that may

have been relevant to the times, but which camouflaged its true, original meaning. It was only after several interview sessions, when, out of friendly curiosity, a tentative question posed to a group of informants actually unraveled the full import of the saying. A less obvious aspect of the Ugenya oral tradition, it turned out that this apparently innocuous traditional adage contained a whole range of exciting historical information not just on how the Jo-Ugenya perceived themselves vis-a-vis their neighbors, but also, specifically, on their war with the Arab/Swahili in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Little is known about the Jo-Ugenya–Arab/Swahili war, which, as will be demonstrated later, occurred as a part of the ongoing hostility between the Jo-Ugenya and the Wanga.[3] The active phase of the Arab/Swahili involvement in this conflict was roughly between 1882 and 1890, when they joined it on the Wanga side. Not only would the war mark the first time that the Jo-Ugenya would fight against foreigners coming from far afield, but also the first time in Ugenya military history that they would encounter enemies armed with guns. Employing new tactics and strategies, and armed with guns, the Arab/Swahili compelled Jo-Ugenya and other groups involved in the conflict to change certain aspects of their warfare. To counter the Arab/Swahili, these groups had no alternative but to adopt new weapons, tactics, and strategies of their own, thus taking local military know-how a notch farther than before. Yet, apart from disjointed allusions and hints to the war in a few historical works, virtually nothing has been written about the Jo-Ugenya–Arab/Swahili war. John Dealing's thesis, *Politics in Wanga, Kenya, ca. 1650–1914*, and Gideon Were's book, *A History of the Abaluyia, 1500–1930*, are relevant starting-points for information on the war.[4] The two scholars have also published their respective interview notes, which are extremely rich collections of oral traditions of their respective subjects of research.[5] Nevertheless, the subjects of these works are aspects of the socio-economic and political history of the Abaluyia rather than warfare. They are about the Jo-Ugenya's neighbors, not the Jo-Ugenya themselves. On the few occasions they mention the Jo-Ugenya–Arab/Swahili war, it is always from the perspective of their neighbors, who were also their main adversaries. The Jo-Ugenya's version of the events that preceded, and occurred during and after the war have until now largely remained in the realm of unwritten sources, the domain of oral tradition. By examining the saying about their presumed bravery and militancy, this paper seeks to reconstruct an hitherto obscure chapter in Jo-Ugenya military history—the Jo-Ugenya–Arab/Swahili war—and through it, confirm the importance of oral traditions, generally, and sayings, specifically, as sources of history. The oral narrative that emerged out of this saying is used almost overwhelmingly as the main source of

information in this paper. Written texts such as the ones already mentioned above are no doubt important, especially when it comes to comparing and verifying the Jo-Ugenya version of events, but, in the main, they are supplemental to the oral tradition.

The Meaning of Sayings

The Oxford Dictionary of Current English defines sayings as "remark[s] commonly made; well-known phrase[s], proverb[s], etc." But this apparently simple definition masks subtle, complex, multi-faceted meanings one often finds in sayings. The Ugenya adage about their bravery and how they killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite elicits many interesting questions, which can be answered in many ways, depending on the performers, time, and circumstances. Why, for example, is the saying rendered in masculine innuendos? What is the significance of the hermaphrodite, a male or female with partial genitalia of the opposite sex? Can the saying be taken literally or metaphorically? Did the Jo-Ugenya really kill a hermaphrodite in their war with the Arab/Swahili?

In its everyday usage, this proverb, like all others, serves an important function in the whole process of socialization and enculturization of members of the community. Growing up and listening to sayings, narratives, tales, songs, and poems extolling Jo-Ugenya's bravery, an Ugenya child immediately learns that courage is a virtue, that it is a value that must be upheld. In a world where ethnic cleavages and conflicts have existed for a long time, and have continued to rise, especially since the end of the Cold War, this saying cannot just be seen as a "mere" or "common" boast, but as part of the community's survival repertoire. It is not just a projection into the past, but an attempt to use that past—their history—to secure socio-economic and political realities of the present. It is an injunction to others not to take the Jo-Ugenya for granted. Beware of Jo-Ugenya, it appears to warn, lest they do to you what they did to the Arab/Swahili.

Nevertheless, there is a gender dimension in this saying that is quite difficult to understand within the context of past Ugenya warfare. Can the saying be seen figuratively or literally, as the rendition of an actual fact? Did Jo-Ugenya really kill a hermaphrodite in the war? If they did not—if the saying is not a true reflection of what really happened, but an attempt by Jo-Ugenya to disparage the Arab/Swahili method of warfare—why, then, is this the only war in the entire history of the Jo-Ugenya that is remembered in such masculine overtones? Since this seems to be the only war in Ugenya where the sex of one the casualties is invoked, it seems highly possible that the saying is not metaphorical, but a reflection of a true event. The aphorism

can be understood in different ways under other circumstances, but it appears that its primary meaning is literal: Ugenya warriors did actually kill an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite. Jo-Ugenya are themselves adamant that they killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite in the war. This saying should not be seen to suggest that the Jo-Ugenya defeated the Arab/Swahili because the latter fought like "women," like "a weaker sex," but as a true statement about an actual event that transpired in their war with the Arab/Swahili. Were that not the case, there would be ample examples of proverbs depicting previous Ugenya wars in a similar way. In reality, therefore, this saying appears to have two functions. While enabling the community to socialize and imbue its members with the relevant military ethos, it also helps it preserve memories of its past, its gallant military character and tenacity in the face of the enemy—the Arab/Swahili.

During interviews conducted on the military history of the Jo-Ugenya, Jo-Ugenya regularly boasted that they used to be so strong and brave that they had even killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite. An interview session was almost incomplete without a teary-eyed Ugenya interviewee referring to the brave, old world with nostalgia, to those days they were the most dominant power in the region, when their neighbors would tremble at the mere mention of their name.[6] Whenever the interviewer sought out informants and requested them to talk about wars that the Jo-Ugenya fought in the past, they would give a knowing smile and grunt: "aah, we, Jo-Ugenya, we were so brave, we even killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite." That is what the seventy-year old Uduny Otieno said when he was approached to talk on the subject of Ugenya warfare.[7] Initially, this saying—this boast—was not taken seriously during interviews; indeed, it was only by accident that the monumental history behind it emerged. On this particular occasion, the researcher was interviewing a group of informants, who had chosen the elder Zebedi Omondi Ndaga as their spokesman.[8] When Zebedi Omondi Ndaga, a retired school teacher, repeated the oft-made saying, about how the Jo-Ugenya had killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite, the researcher decided this time to probe a little further. Without anticipating much, the researcher asked the group what the Jo-Ugenya meant by the claim that "they had killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite." Their response was surprising; the saying turned out to be a hidden treasure of a complex narrative of warfare between the Jo-Ugenya and the Arab/Swahili that until then only very few outside the community and its neighbors had ever heard of. The narrative talked of schemes and intrigues, of suspicions, compromises, and alliances, which often collapsed as soon as they were made, leading on many occasions to war between the Jo-Ugenya and the Arab/Swahili in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Behind that boast was a treasure trove of oral tradition that reflected a long, important historical and military experience of the Jo-Ugenya. It contained military information on why, where, how, and with whom the community waged war. It bespoke of military strategies and tactics. It revealed why and how the community forged alliances and made compromises or went to war. It referred to new weapons, which the Jo-Ugenya were forced to develop in their war with the Arab/Swahili. By identifying weapons that the Jo-Ugenya developed in this war, it, moreover, functioned as a window to the changing military technology of the community at just about the time that colonial powers were encroaching into their region. Crystallized into only a few lines, the bragging, "What have we, Jo-Ugenya, not done? We have even killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite" has significant implications for an understanding of pre-colonial African warfare. Derived from the specific incident of the killing of the Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite, the saying can be perceived as a hidden pathway toward an understanding of the Jo-Ugenya–Arab/Swahili war as a specific event in the history of the Jo-Ugenya.

Yet, curiously, there has been an unfortunate tendency among historians to overlook the potential inherent in sayings as a source of history. Although historians have been quick to explore ways that tales, commentaries, lists, songs, and poetry can inform their knowledge of the past, they have remained relatively complacent when it comes to sayings. While Jan Vansina has convincingly classified sayings as a source of information, many historians—as opposed to, say, literary scholars—apparently prefer to perceive sayings merely as being interchangeable in meaning with "proverbs," or, at best, as "storehouse[s] of ancient wisdom."[9] A cursory glance at various publications on African history demonstrates the historian's bias against sayings.[10] Beyond recommending them as sources worth exploring in the historical enterprise, very few historians have themselves actually gone beyond the talk, the popular perception of sayings as "words of wisdom," to mine them for what they might be worth—their often hidden historical meaning. Because of the relative paucity of sayings in historical works, it means, unfortunately, that many miles will have to be covered, and many prejudices overcome, before sayings are elevated to the level of other genres of oral tradition.

The Jo-Ugenya and the Arab/Swahili:
Identifying the Antagonists

The term "Jo-Ugenya" is used here to refer to the inhabitants or people of the territory Ugenya. The Jo-Ugenya are a sub-ethnic community of the

Luo, who live in Nyanza province, Kenya.[11] Administratively, they live in Busia, Kakamega, and Siaya districts, all in the western part of Kenya. According to the 1999 census, there are 218,074 Jo-Ugenya, the majority of whom live in the district of Siaya.[12] It is for this reason that the research on the Ugenya military history concentrated on the Jo-Ugenya in Siaya district.

The district used to be part of the large district of Central Nyanza, which later came to be known as Kisumu district. In 1967 Kisumu district was split into two, one retaining the name Kisumu, and the other becoming Siaya. In 1998, a new district, Bondo, was curved out of Siaya. The creation of Siaya was the culmination of a series of smaller boundary changes which occurred during the colonial period as result of numerous petitions and demonstrations and political agitation against colonial rule by the Jo-Ugenya.[13] In particular, the Jo-Ugenya wanted the colonial administrative boundaries to be changed in such a way that they would be moved from north Nyanza to central Nyanza, to live among their culturo-linguistic kinsmen, the Luo. North Nyanza was predominantly a non-Luo district. The Jo-Ugenya defended their action by contending that, not only was it often difficult to find justice and compassion among the local administrative functionaries of North Nyanza—the senior chief, chiefs and their headmen, who were mostly non-Luos—but even more hurting and humiliating to their history and pride was the fact that the chiefs and their assistants were drawn from their traditional nemesis, the Wanga, whom they had fought with for much of the nineteenth century.[14] The campaign for boundary changes was an extension of the traditional feud between the Jo-Ugenya and their neighbors, especially the Wanga.

The Jo-Ugenya campaign for a district of their own continued even after independence, since previous boundary changes had not ameliorated the principal complaint that they had: that of being ruled by their traditional adversaries. Thus, when the new, independent government of Kenya divided Kisumu and demarcated Siaya as a new district in 1967, it was responding to a long-standing grievance that spanned much of the colonial period, and which had given the colonial government a great deal of headache. Although the new district of Siaya left out some Jo-Ugenya in Busia and Kakamega districts, it brought the majority of Jo-Ugenya to live together in one district where they expected to be in charge of their affairs. The district also comprised a substantial number of other Luo sub-groups: Jo-Alego, Jo-Seme, Jo-Asembo, Jo-Yimbo, Jo-Sakwa, and Jo-Uyoma, and since the creation of Bondo as a separate district, it now has Jo-Alego, Jo-Gem, and Jo-Ugenya. Within the district, Jo-Ugenya occupy the two administrative divisions of Ukwala and Ugunja.

The two administrative divisions are bordered on the west by the Akek, Odiado, and Odidi hills; to the south and the southeast by the Huludhi and

Wuoroya Rivers, respectively; to the north and the northwest by Busia and Kakamega districts; and to the east by the Jo-Gem, a sub-ethnic community of the Luo who are related to the Jo-Ugenya culturo-linguistically. Not surprisingly, therefore, most conflicts between Jo-Ugenya and their neighbors occurred in the north and northeast. The hills and rivers to the east and southeast provided a natural boundary and a much-needed defense against the Teso and Abasamia, and their Jo-Alego and Jo-Gem kinsmen provided a buffer to the south and southeast. The distinct natural features in the east and southeast and culturo-linguistic relations with the Jo-Gem and Jo-Alego minimized the conflict that would have otherwise arisen. Indeed, Ugenya traditions refer to the Abasamia who live to the east of Odiado and Odidi hills as friendly partners with whom Jo-Ugenya traded in iron weapons.[15]

As one moves to the north and northeast, one finds an open, green, undulating country, very vulnerable to incursions from neighbors. The area is virtually devoid of any formidable physical features that would either serve as a deterrence against incursions or provide natural boundaries between the Jo-Ugenya and the inhabitants of that area—namely, the Abamarachi, Abakhayo, Abawanga, and Abamarama. Except for the Sio River further northwest and the Lusimu and Nzoia Rivers (which pass through some parts of Ugenya and provide some defense), Jo-Ugenya found to their chagrin that their boundary with their northern and northeastern neighbors was open, making their relations extremely fluid and unpredictable. Blessed by an extremely fertile soil, ample rain, and criss-crossed by several rivers and streams, the northern and northeastern parts of Ugenya were attractive to many groups who wanted to settle. It was due to this that the Jo-Ugenya fought many wars with these groups, particularly with the Wanga. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, these conflicts took on a new dimension; the Arab/Swahili, traveling, trading, and raiding for slaves in much of eastern Africa, joined the fray on the Wanga side of the war against the Jo-Ugenya.

The Arab/Swahili who plied the western part of Kenya in the nineteenth century are not as easy to identify and define as Jo-Ugenya.[16] The terms Swahili and Arab have often been used interchangeably to refer to a whole gamut of people living at the coast of eastern Africa, some who are of Arabic origin, and others who are products of intermarriages between indigenous African inhabitants and migrant Arab populations who begun to visit the East African coast towards the end of the first millennium. The colonialists, for instance, used the terms "Swahili" and "Arabs" to refer, respectively, to the pre-Portuguese groups, and the descendants of the Omani successors to the Portuguese on the Eastern African Coast.[17] But in spite of the apparent differences implied in the way the terms Arabs and

Swahili have been privileged and used to refer to different groups, this paper perceives the Arabs and the Swahili who used to journey to western Kenya as one singular homogeneous group, because that is how they were recognized in Ugenya. The scholar Salim Idha Salim, himself from the coast, also contends that it is very difficult to distinguish between an Arab and a Mswahili as far as the history of the East African coast is concerned.[18] The differences between the two are insignificant compared to their similarities. They display a considerable degree of linguistic, cultural, and religious unity.[19] Indeed, in Ugenya, the Arabs and the Swahili were known collectively as *okoche* (singular: *okora*),[20] a Luo word that was apparently derived from the Kiswahili word: *mkora*. It conjures images of slyness, of cruelty and harshness, suggesting or alluding to the hostile nature of relations that existed between the Jo-Ugenya and the Arab/Swahili. Because of their apparent homogeneity and the way they were often identified in Ugenya, it would therefore be logical, even as one keeps in mind their diversity, to regard the Arabs and the Swahili, particularly those who ventured into Ugenya in the nineteenth century, as one group.

The Genesis of the Arab/Swahili War

It is not clear when exactly the Arab/Swahili influence began in the area that is presently occupied by the Jo-Ugenya. Before Joseph Thomson made his famous journey across Maasailand in 1883, the Arab/Swahili had apparently already established regular and well-known itineraries in the region, a fact which they hid from the "outside" world to protect their monopoly on its resources.[21] This the Arab/Swahili did by cunningly exploiting rumors and innuendoes, which scared Europeans away from the interior of Kenya. They urged everybody to keep away from the interior of Kenya ostensibly because the supposed fierceness and garrulousness of the Maasai who plied the whole area between the coast and western Kenya made it unstable and dangerous, but in reality because they did not want potential rivals—the Europeans, in particular—to interfere with their slave trading activities in the region. For many years even after the Arab/Swahili had left, the administration continued to perceive the interior between Mombasa and Busoga as a region of "wild tribes."[22] The Arab/Swahili therefore kept many of the dealings in the interior secret. This is why little is known about the actual starting-point of their influence in the interior.

Salim argues that the Arab/Swahili incursions into the interior started after 1840,[23] when Seyyid Said transferred his capital from Oman to Zanzibar. Seyyid Said took this action because he found Zanzibar agriculturally fertile, cheap, and with abundant slave labor; it was increasingly involved in the ivory and slave trades; and it was a loyal and

secure base for his operations. Eventually, Seyyid Said became so rich, powerful, and influential that most Arab/Swahili traders went to him for support to venture into the interior,[24] where they sold guns, ivory, exotic animal skins, ghee, honey, and other trade goods.[25] Taking advantage of Seyyid Said's wealth, patronage, and influence, the Arab/Swahili entrepreneurs increasingly traveled between the coast and the interior conducting business. Nangulu correctly notes that it was largely the event of Seyyid Said's move to Zanzibar in 1840 that spurred Arab/Swahili endeavors in the interior of East Africa.[26]

By most accounts, the Arab/Swahili commercial caravans entered the western area of Kenya and established a foothold in Mumias, then known as Kwa Shiundu, through the patronage of the Wanga ruler, Shiundu. The year, according to both Ogot and Shilaro, was probably 1857.[27] By 1868, their presence was most certain in the Wanga kingdom.[28] In 1867–68, Charles New drew a map based on the information he had collected that indicates a resting place for caravans called Kwa Sundu (Mumias) in western Kenya.[29] But their presence appears to have been temporary and their influence tenuous. Salim contends that it was not until 1870 that the Arab/Swahili routes through Masaailand became fully established.[30] Thereafter, their presence increased, and Kwa Sundu became a regular resting and refreshing point for caravans moving between the coast and the interior.

By 1878, Osogo and Were report, the Arab/Swahili were involved in intensive slave trading forays against neighbors of the Wanga.[31] After the death of Shiundu and the ascension of Mumia to the *nabongo*ship (kingship) of Wanga in 1882, the Arab/Swahili influence in the Wanga kingdom dramatically increased. According to Dealing, Mumia regularly drank with them and employed them as his butchers.[32] When Thomson and Martin passed through Wanga on their way to Uganda in 1883, they found that Islam had become the religion of the royal family of the Wanga.[33]

The Arab/Swahili presence in Wanga kingdom continued to intensify, and it was apparently dominated by their slave trading activities. Joseph Thomson noted in 1883 that when the Bukusu saw him, they ran away in terror, thinking that, like the Arab/Swahili, he had come with the intention of capturing them into slavery.[34] On their journeys across the Wanga kingdom, other European travelers such as Frederick Lugard[35] and Bishop James Hannington[36] also discerned a peculiar apprehension among African inhabitants of the area whenever they saw strangers, whom they often suspected of being slave traders. In the words of Bishop Hannington, the Arab/Swahili hunters "had carried fire and swords among the villagers."[37] By 1890, when Carl Peters arrived in the Wanga kingdom, he found that the Islamic demeanor had extended to the dress and language of the local

population.[38] Indeed, in the same year, Frederick Lugard met Mumia and found that he spoke "fairly good swahili."[39] G. S. Were writes that Mumia even used the Arab/Swahili in expeditions against his enemies.[40]

The Arab/Swahili were therefore in contact with the people of western Kenya, particularly the Wanga, from the second half of the nineteenth century. This contact intensified in the Wanga kingdom and then, mainly during the reign of Mumia began to diffuse into the neighboring areas such as Ugenya. By all accounts of the period, the Wanga and the Arab/Swahili needed one another for different reasons. The Wanga were under extreme military pressure from the Jo-Ugenya, and the Arab/Swahili needed Mumia's support to establish a base from which to hunt for game and slaves. On the one hand, the Arab/Swahili required an ally and a resting and supply base, and, on the other, Nabongo Mumia of Wanga kingdom needed the military assistance of the Arab/Swahili to ward off the intense pressure from his enemies. One such group against whom Mumia needed military assistance were the Jo-Ugenya. John Ainsworth, the Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza from 1902 to 1917, summarized the relationship between Mumia and the Arab/Swahili in the following words: "The Arabs and Swahili used to join forces with more powerful chiefs for purposes of looting and raiding weaker sections of their community. . . . Mumia joined their league to help him crush his powerful neighbors."[41] It was against this background that the Wanga and their Arab/Swahili allies began to make inroads from Wanga into Ugenya. As Ugenya traditions narrate (though not without some exaggeration), "it was Mumia who sent the *okoche* (the Arab/Swahili) into our land."[42] Patrick Otieno Odhiambo stated during the interview that "we were invaded by Mumia kwa Shiundu and the Okoche."[43]

The War between the Jo-Ugenya and the Arab/Swahili

Although the Jo-Ugenya had waged several wars with their neighbors, particularly the Wanga kingdom, it was not until a new change of guard took place in the Wanga kingdom in 1882, when Mumia took over power, that the involvement of the Arab/Swahili in these wars started directly and in earnest. Before Mumia's ascension to the throne in Wanga, the aging Nabongo Shiundu, Mumia's father, had succeeded in establishing some kind of uneasy peace with the Jo-Ugenya. In fact, Dealing contends that the Arab/Swahili exerted little influence in Wanga during the reign of Shiundu. According to Dealing, ". . . no guns and ammunitions were made available to Wanga, either directly through purchase or gift, or alliance."[44] Shiundu had made a peace agreement with the Jo-Ugenya and would not have seen any benefit in re-opening conflicts with an adversary who, by all accounts

(written as well as oral), had had the upper hand in previous altercations. In a conflict with the Jo-Ugenya over pasture, water resources, and land for settlement,[45]—which was sharpened by ambitions for hegemony in the region—Shiundu found his kingdom unable to muster a strong defense against his enemy. According to Petero Odimo Owuor, the Jo-Ugenya had already forced the Wanga to evacuate most of the areas around Lukongo, northern Bungas, and Tingare, and to settle in Bukaya and Musanda, which became their new southern boundary.[46] It is unlikely that an expansionist kingdom such as Wanga would have given up that land without the military pressure of the Jo-Ugenya. The Jo-Ugenya version of these events is, in fact, verified by Abamarama traditions which mention an instance when the Marama had to help the Wanga out of a Jo-Ugenya siege.[47]

But as the Wanga withdrew northwards to new territories, so did the Jo-Ugenya pursue them, perpetuating the conflict. A time came when the Wanga, having retreated to Musanda, Eshikangu, and Bukaya, could not tolerate moving again. A fierce battle then broke out in which the Jo-Ugenya received help from their Jo-Gem and Abakholo allies[48] against the Wanga, Marama, Abamuima, Wanga Mukulu, and the Maasai. The war went on for some time without either side achieving decisive victory. Abamarama traditions report that, in this war, the Abamarama helped the Wanga against the Jo-Ugenya; three times at Musanda and once at Eshikangu.[49] The Jo-Gem were involved in the war because of culturo-linguistic ties they shared and also in anticipation of reciprocal help from the Jo-Ugenya in their own conflict with Abamarama. Eventually, the Jo-Ugenya and their allies managed to conquer Bukaya and Musanda from the Wanga.

From here, the Jo-Ugenya and their allies attacked and occupied Shikalame before moving on Imanga. But, according to Ugenya traditions, Imanga escaped total conquest. Established on a big hill, Imanga posed tactical challenges for the Jo-Ugenya, who, coming from the plains in the south and unfamiliar with mountain warfare, found it difficult to occupy. Even so, its surrounding territories as far as the Lukoba and Abamuima settlements were occupied by the Jo-Ugenya.[50] The Jo-Ugenya forces then began to organize excursions into the environs of Lurego (Mumias) and Ekeru. In the face of this assault, the Wanga continued to retreat inland and, as Dealing confirms, in probably less than ten years—that is by the late 1870s—the Jo-Ugenya forces had occupied all the land to the south of the Lusimu River, including Ejinja.[51] All this happened during the last years of Shiundu's reign. Dealing sums up this situation as follows: "at the end of Shiundu's lifetime . . . all the Wanga territory up to Imanga and Lusimu River had fallen to the Luo."[52]

As a result of these expeditions, Shiundu—already incapacitated by old age and demoralized by unproductive military alliances—was forced to move his capital from Lurego (Mumias) to Mwilala. But the Jo-Ugenya did not reduce their attacks, and Shiundu finally had to sue for peace. According to Ugenya traditions, peace terms were agreed upon and the ritual of cutting a puppy (*ng'ado guok*) was held to seal the agreement. In addition, Shiundu gave up two of his daughters in marriage to his Ugenya opponents. One daughter called Wasamba married Opondo Ka Murembo of the Kager clan, while Ademba married Gero K'Okado of the Puny clan.[53] Thus, by the time Shiundu died and Mumia took over in Wanga, a peace agreement existed between the Wanga and the Jo-Ugenya. Although this agreement somehow succeeded in creating a truce among the antagonists, it did not assuage all the suspicion and ill will which continued to linger. When the change of guard took place in Wanga, the tenuous entente cordiale that had existed between the Wanga and the Jo-Ugenya during the last years of Shiundu's reign quickly vanished. War resumed. G. S. Were and Fazan, who was a colonial official in the area, correctly observe that it was Mumia who actively began to use the Arab/Swahili in wars against the enemies of Wanga,[54] observations which are also corroborated by Ugenya oral traditions.

Young, ambitious, and brimming with new ideas, *nabongo* Mumia, who no doubt interacted with the Arab/Swahili as they camped at his father's kingdom's capital, must have observed and considered the potential of the Arab/Swahili as military allies. Inheriting a kingdom, which, to quote Were's words, "had been diminished and considerably weakened by the Jo-Ugenya,"[55] Mumia resolved to change the fortunes of his kingdom once and for all.

Although it is known that Jo-Ugenya started fighting the Arab/Swahili after 1882 (that is, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century), there is still considerable confusion as to how this war actually began. Dealing argues that it began after the Arab/Swahili—on their own initiative and for their own reasons—had raided the Jo-Ugenya for slaves and cattle.[56] The Wanga were not involved in this raid, but it appears that the Arab/Swahili persisted with their raids on the Jo-Ugenya, who, observing that the raids were coming from Wanga, and by intruders who were camped at Mumia's capital, thought that they were sanctioned by the Wanga. Arguing that the Wanga had broken the truce established between the Wanga and the Jo-Ugenya during Mumia's father's reign, the Jo-Ugenya commenced retaliatory attacks of their own against the Wanga. A series of battles then ensued in which the Jo-Ugenya defeated the Arab/Swahili and besieged the Wanga. It was then, according to some scholars, that Mumia was forced to formally request the Arab/Swahili for military assistance. Indeed, G. S.

Were writes that it was the considerable pressure from the Jo-Ugenya that compelled Mumia to ask the Arab/Swahili for assistance.[57] Ugenya traditions, however, do not agree with this view in its entirety. They claim that there is no way that the Arab/Swahili could have traveled from the Wanga kingdom without the knowledge of the Wanga. They relate that, in fact, even when the Jo-Ugenya were first attacked by the Arab/Swahili, they did not strike back. Instead, they sent a delegation of elders led by the diviner Omoro K'Omolo and Opondo Ka'Murembo (who was Mumia's brother-in-law by virtue of his marriage to Ademba, Mumia's sister) to request the Arab/Swahili and the Wanga to halt their slave raids against them. But the Arab/Swahili did not heed the plea and it, was then, the traditions assert, that the Jo-Ugenya attacked the Arab/Swahili and the Wanga.[58]

Whichever version is true, it appears that as the Arab/Swahili presence in western Kenya increased, they began to raid the Jo-Ugenya and other communities neighboring the Wanga for slaves and cattle. The raids could as well have been perpetrated without the knowledge of the Wanga, but their net result was that they seriously damaged the peace agreement that the Jo-Ugenya had established with the Wanga during Shiundu's time. The Jo-Ugenya argued that the Wanga had allowed the Arab/Swahili to use their territory to attack them. So, when their plea for a truce went unheeded, they retaliated with raids on both the Arab/Swahili and the Wanga. Thereby, a pattern of raids developed in which the Arab/Swahili would attack the Jo-Ugenya and the latter would retaliate.

The raids and counter-raids went on without either side attaining significant results; but, over time, the Jo-Ugenya began to gain the upper hand. This was probably because constant warfare with neighbors had imbued them with greater military skills, experience, consistency, and discipline.[59] The resumption of battle, according to Dealing, gave the Jo-Ugenya success and the ability to occupy even more Wanga territory, including the whole of Musongo, which is beyond the Lusimu River and only one-and-a-half miles off Lurego (Mumias).[60] G. S. Were notes that the renewal of the war almost enabled the Jo-Ugenya to occupy the gate of Lurego.[61] Lonsdale, on his part, writes that the Luo (Jo-Ugenya) even reached the walls of Mumias.[62]

Dealing attributes Wanga's weakness during the conflict to internal factors: Mumia was young (only thirty-three according to one estimate)[63] and inexperienced, and had been unable to win the immediate allegiance of his people by performing the ceremony of the reburial of his father's bones in time. Moreover, there were internal factions against him, one of which was led by an elder of his fathers' generation named Wakhungu. It was at this critical juncture of imminent defeat that what Were calls a "brain-

wave" [i.e., brainstorm] occurred to Mumia. He decided to formally ask the Arab/Swahili for assistance. Were writes:

> Mumia confessed that at one time, he was so hard-pressed principally by the Kager that he made all arrangements to fly for refuge to Okwaro (Bukhayo). Then he had the brain-wave of buying guns from the Swahili and so re-established the Wanga [*sic*].[64]

Mumia did not just ask the Arab/Swahili for guns; as Dealing argues, he also requested their direct involvement.[65]

It was at this stage that direct, full-scale war broke out between the Jo-Ugenya and the Wanga and Arab/Swahili. Traditional Wanga allies such as the Maasai, Abakhayo, Abamarama, and Abawanga Mukulu were also involved.[66] The Wanga Mukulu had already assured Mumia of support when the latter thought of fleeing to Bukhayo.[67] Abamarama traditions recount the participation of the Abamarama in the war.[68] Ugenya traditions, on the other hand, mention the involvement of the Maasai and Ababakhayo on the Wanga side. The Jo-Ugenya were, on the other hand, aided mainly by the Jo-Gem.[69]

The battles that immediately followed the formation of the Wanga–Arab/Swahili alliance are not easy to chronicle. Due to the length of time that has passed since the formation of the alliance and war with the Jo-Ugenya, many informants have died, and memories about the course of the war have waned, leaving only fragments on momentous and exceptional confrontations that occurred during the war. One such confrontation occurred at Tingare, a battle that Ugenya traditions as well as Arab/Swahili narratives describe as "great," "big," and, as "a successful battle for Jo-Ugenya combatants."[70] How this came to happen is apparently lost in the mists of history, but since Tingare had been wrested and occupied by Jo-Ugenya during Shiundu's time as the *nabongo* of the Wanga, one can infer from a comparative analysis of oral accounts and geography of the area that the Wanga and the Arab/Swahili must have been successful in the initial engagements that followed the outbreak of the war against their Ugenya enemy, pushing them all the way back to Tingare. For this to occur, several campaigns must have been required, as the Jo-Ugenya had built many settlements between Lurego—which they had almost occupied at the commencement of the battles—and Tingare. This shows clearly how Wanga military power had been resuscitated by the alliance with the Arab/Swahili. According to Dealing's estimation, the battle of Tingare occurred in 1885. It was well known because it was here that, finally, the Jo-Ugenya successfully stood their ground, containing and repulsing the Wanga-Arab/Swahili attacks. Swahili narratives, which have been collected

by Dealing, describe Tingare battle as a "great battle in which many people . . . even Swahili died."[71]

The success of the Jo-Ugenya can be attributed to two factors. First, they seem to have finally managed to overcome their fear of guns that they had encountered for the first time in the battles. Secondly, Ugenya warriors discovered that their opponent's guns had a technical problem; they usually took a long time to be reloaded after firing. With this realization, the Jo-Ugenya changed their tactic and planned that, at the commencement of any engagement, they would crouch behind their shields in a protective posture and wait for the enemy to shoot at them first. Warriors who were not hit by the first hail of bullets would then rush and spear the enemy before they reloaded their guns.[72] These guns are pejoratively known in Luo parlance as "bunde aroka." Atieno-Odhiambo has correctly noted that the technological drawback of the Arab/Swahili guns in such situations was that "during this time a judicious warrior armed with a spear could fell the man with a gun."[73]

The adoption of this tactic enabled the Jo-Ugenya to expel the Arab/Swahili, Wanga, and their allies from Tingare. Oral traditions are again quiet on the subsequent battles, but they mention a major one at Musanda. G. S. Were writes that the Abamarama went to aid the Wanga in the battle of Musanda. It would appear that the Musanda incident is remembered vividly because it represented another turning point in the struggle. The Arab/Swahili and the Wanga successfully halted the Ugenya advance.[74] This means that the Ugenya tactic of kneeling behind the shields and then rushing the adversary may have begun to fail. Its main weakness was that the shields, made from cow and buffalo hides, were not strong enough to protect the warriors from the bullets.

Thus, the Arab/Swahili and Wanga and their allies turned the Jo-Ugenya southwards. This time, the latter were successfully expelled from Musanda, Tingare, and Uloma, and were pushed up to Sigomre. Ugenya traditions relate that, because of these defeats, the Jo-Ugenya began to flee into Alego, Gem, and north Ugenya.[75] But soon the course of these battles once again changed. This time the Jo-Ugenya managed to withstand the Arab/Swahili and Wanga at Sigomre. What helped the Jo-Ugenya at this stage of the war was the timely introduction of large and heavy wooden shields called *ngaya*. According to tradition, ngaya were first used in Ugenya by the Ugenya clan of Kapuny in their war with the Iteso in the first half of the nineteenth century.[76] A few of these shields apparently found their way into the Jo-Ugenya–Arab/Swahili-Wanga conflict through experimentation by innovative and resourceful Ugenya warriors, frustrated by the ineffectiveness of traditional shields in warding off bullets. It was soon realized that majority of those who used *ngaya* were relatively safer against

bullets than those who did not. The shields were adopted, and regulations required warriors to soak them in water overnight, in advance of battles, to make them heavy and thick, harder for bullets to penetrate.

This form of protection, coupled with the tactic of rushing the opponents before they had reloaded their guns, enabled the Jo-Ugenya to drive the Arab/Swahili and the Wanga out of Sigomre. So momentous was the battle that it is remembered by Jo-Ugenya not just as a major turning point in the war, but also as the scene where Ugenya warriors killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite. The presence of the hermaphrodite among the enemy casualties in such a significant war etched the battle in the memory of most Jo-Ugenya who remember it thus: "What have we, Jo-Ugenya, not done? We have even killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite."[77] The killing of the hermaphrodite became a rallying cry among Ugenya warriors as they halted the Arab/Swahili-Wanga onslaught, and drove them back northwards. Within a short time, according to oral tradition, the Ugenya warriors were on the doorstep of the Wanga kingdom. In reality, however, the course of subsequent engagements after the Sigomre epic, which led to the Jo-Ugenya "harassing the doorstep of Wanga," is obscure. Dealing quotes one Imperial British East Africa official, Ernest Gedge, who noted the outbreak of a cattle disease that killed Ugenya cattle at Ukaya.[78] The epidemic is estimated by Frederick Lugard to have occurred in 1890.[79] This suggests that, after the Sigomre battle, the Jo-Ugenya had again managed to occupy large areas of Wanga territory. Ernest Gedge even noted Ugenya attacks on the Wanga near the confluence of the Nzoia and Lusimu Rivers.[80]

The new situation must have appeared ominous to Mumia, although perhaps not as dangerous as at the time he was forced to enlist Arab/Swahili support. There is evidence that he tried to placate the Jo-Ugenya by marrying off one of his daughters to a leading Ugenya warrior named Obanda Ka' Nyanginja.[81] But this did not lessen Ugenya attacks on the Wanga, and Mumia was subsequently forced to request the Europeans, who were traveling through his country by then, for guns and other types of military assistance. For instance, Frederick Lugard noted in his diary that Mumia wanted to buy guns from him in exchange for ivory.[82] Ernest Gedge also observed that "Kwa Sundu (Mumia) wants us to join him in attacking Munyifwa (Jo-Ugenya) over the far side of the Nzoia River."[83] Carl Peters, who visited Mumias in 1890, had conferred on him "a most extravagant" welcome by nabongo Mumia. After that, the latter requested assistance against his enemies.[84]

All this meant that Mumia had either totally lost faith in the Arab/Swahili military capacity or that he perceived in the Europeans a potential ally who would be far more formidable than the Arab/Swahili. Both suppositions appear credible: in the former case, by reason of

subsequent capture of more Wanga territory by the Jo-Ugenya; and, in the latter, because it was at least an alternative that could not be any worse. In fact, there is no more evidence of major battles involving the Jo-Ugenya against the Wanga and the Arab/Swahili after the Jo-Ugenya had occupied Ukaya in 1890. The Arab/Swahili's military stature which, compared to the British, was going down in the eyes of the Wanga, appear to have then lost the drive for war. There were, however, intermittent skirmishes that may be said to be a normal phenomenon in relations between uneasy neighbors. These small-scale clashes did not have as much effect as the pre-1890 wars, but they did sustain the tension that eventually culminated in the Jo-Ugenya–British war of 1896–97.

It can therefore be reasonably concluded on the basis of the Jo-Ugenya's military accomplishments against the Arab/Swahili, that their saying, "What have we, Jo-Ugenya, not done? We have even killed an Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite," was not an empty boast. Known by most Jo-Ugenya, the saying symbolizes the military tenacity, triumphs, and achievements of Jo-Ugenya against their traditional enemies and, more specifically, the Arab/Swahili. Armed with guns, the Arab/Swahili offered probably the most formidable military challenge the Jo-Ugenya had ever faced in battle. And when Jo-Ugenya overcame that challenge and adopted the killing of the Arab/Swahili hermaphrodite as their war cry, it seemed well deserved. Previously unknown outside Ugenya and its closest neighbors, the events signified by this saying vindicate historians' beliefs in sayings as a source of history. More analysis of African sayings ought to be done to help unravel their secrets and enrich further the history of Africa.

Notes

1. This paper is based on a research I conducted in 1991 for my masters thesis entitled "A History of the Military Tradition of the Jo-Ugenya, ca. 1700–1920" (Kenyatta University, 1993).
2. See the outcome of the general election in the Ugenya constituency in 1992, following the re-introduction of multiparty based politics in, for example: David Throup and Charles Hornsby, *Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998), 470.
3. For perhaps the only written material on the war, see chapter 4 in Meshack Owino, "A History of the Military Tradition of the Jo-Ugenya, c.1700–1920."
4. John R. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga, Kenya, c. 1650-1974, vol. I," (Ph.D.diss., Northwestern University, 1974); Gideon S. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia, 1500–1930* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967).

5.   Dealing's dissertation is in three volumes. While volume 1 is the actual dissertation, volumes 2 and 3contain a collection of his interview notes and of oral traditions of the Wanga. Gideon S. Were published Abaluyia oral traditions in his *Western Kenya Historical Texts*, to accompany the book *A History of the Abaluyia, 1500–1930*. These works are, as such, extremely useful in comparing, analyzing, and validating Ugenya oral narratives.
6.   Bernard Gombe Opondo, Oral Interview (hereinafter abbreviated as "O.I."), March 5, 1991; Dalmas Owamb, O.I., March 6, 1991.
7.   Uduny Otieno, O.I., April 22, 1991.
8.   Zebedi Omondi Ndaga, O.I., April 16, 1991; Ibrahim Nathan Yamo K'Omoro, O.I., April 16 and May 1, 1991; Ahingo Opany, O.I., April 16 and 18, 1991.
9.   This definition comes from Jan Vansina's book *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1965), 146. Vansina classifies sayings together with proverbs, riddles, and epigrams, and which he defines as "the store house of ancient wisdom." Written by one of most important pioneers of African history, *Oral Tradition* has "greatly influenced subsequent scholarship" (see: Atieno Odhiambo, "Humanities" in *Encyclopaedia of Africa South of the Sahara*, vol. 3, ed. John Middleton, et al. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1998), 575. Apart from this book, other standard works on Oral Tradition in Africa are Jan Vansina's other immensely popular *Oral Tradition as History* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, reprint 1992), and Joseph Miller, ed., *The African Past Speaks: Essays on Oral Tradition and History* (Hamden, Conn.: Achon, 1980).
10. There are many examples that can validate this assertion. From journals to textbooks, one cannot escape the fact that very few sayings have been used as a source of information on a specific historical event. While the much acclaimed journal *History of Africa* has tried to address the situation, it also suffers from a paucity of sayings-based articles. Its 1998 edition has only one historical article based on sayings, that is, Kathleen Sheldon, "Rats Fell from the Ceiling and Pestered Me," *History in Africa*, (1998): 341–60, while the 1999 edition has none.
11. For more details about the relationship between the Jo-Ugenya and the Luo, see, for example, B. A. Ogot, *History of the Southern Luo*, vol. 1 (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1967); S. Malo, *Dhoudi Moko Mag Luo* (Kisumu: Oluoch Publishing House, 1981); and Haggai O. Nundu, *Nyuolruok Dhoudi Mag Ugenya* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1982).
12. Siaya District Development Plan, 1997–2001 (Government of Kenya).
13. DC/NN. 1/4, 1923, KNA; J. C. Akong'a, "The History of the People and Settlement Patterns," in *Siaya District Socio-Cultural Profile: Draft Report*, ed. G. S. Were (Nairobi: Republic of Kenya, Institute of African Studies, 1987).

14. DC/KMG/1/1/105, which deals with the objectives and activities of the Luo People's Congress of North Nyanza, provides highlights on the agitation by the Jo-Ugenya to be moved to Central Nyanza or be given a district of their own.

15. Shem Odipo, O.I., March 4, 1991.

16. For a detailed discourse on this issue, see Ali A. Mazrui and Alamin M. Mazrui, *Swahili State and Society: The Political Economy of an African Language* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995); Derek Nurse and Thomas Spear, *The Swahili: Reconstructing the History and Language of an African Society, 800–1500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).

17. A. I. Salim, *Swahili-Speaking Peoples of Kenya's Coast, 1895–1965* (East African Educational Publishers, 1973), 10.

18. Ibid., 9

19. A. I. Salim, "'Native or Non-Native?' The Problem of Identity and Social Stratification of the Arab-Swahili of Kenya," in *Hadith VI: History and Social Change in East Africa*, ed. B. A. Ogot (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1976), 65

20. Charles Aloo Onyach, O.I., March 3, 1991.

21. The full saga of Joseph Thomson's journey from the coast, across Maasailand to the interior of East Africa, can be found in his book, *Through Maasailand* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, Searle and Rivington, 1962).

22. B. A. Ogot, "British Administration in the Central Nyanza District of Kenya, 1900–1960," *Journal of African History*, vol. 4, 2, (1963): 249–73.

23. Salim, *Swahili-Speaking Peoples*, 15; A. I. Salim, "The East African Coast and Hinterland, 1800–45," in J. F. Ade Ajayi, ed., *General History of Africa*, vol. 6; *Africa in the Nineteenth Century until the 1880s* (London: Heinemann International, 1989), 220.

24. Salim, *Swahili-Speaking Peoples*, 16.

25. H. B.U. Manyasi, "A History of Bunyala Navakholo to 1900" (B. A. diss., University of Nairobi, 1972), 36; U. A. C. Nangulu, "Resistance to the Imposition of Colonial Rule in Bungoma District: A Case Study of the Lumboka-Chetambe War of 1894–1896" (B. A. diss., University of Nairobi, 1986), 31.

26. Nangulu, *Resistance to the Imposition of Colonial Rule*, 30.

27. Ogot, *History of the Southern Luo*, 231; P. M. Shilaro, "Kabras Culture under Colonial Rule: A Study of the Impact of Christianity and Western Education" (M. A. thesis, Kenyatta University, 1991), 89.

28. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 229, 240; Nangulu, "Resistance to the Imposition of Colonial Rule," 30.

29. Charles New, *Life, Wanderings and Labors in East Africa* (London: Frank Cass and Company Ltd., 1971).

30. Salim, *Swahili-Speaking Peoples*, 32.

31. J. Osogo, *A History of the Baluyia* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1966), 31; Were, *A History of Abaluyia*, 144.
32. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 291–92.
33. J. M. Lonsdale, "A Political History of Nyanza, 1883–1945" (Ph.D. thesis, Trinity College, Cambridge University, 1964), 180–81; Nangulu, "Resistance to the Imposition of Colonial Rule," 31.
34. Thomson, *Through Maasailand*, 278.
35. Margery Perham, ed., *The Diaries of Lord Lugard*, vol. 1: *East Africa, November, 1889–December, 1890* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1959), 394.
36. E. C. Dawson, *James Hannington: First Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa; A History of His Life and Work* (New York: Negro Universities Press; reprint 1972), 414.
37. Ibid., 414.
38. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 280.
39. Perham, ed., *The Diaries of Lord Lugard*, 1:397; John Osogo, *Nabongo Mumia* (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1975), 9
40. Were, *A History of Abaluyia*, 125.
41. PC/NZA. 1/1/4, 1908–9, KNA.
42. Michael Olalo Gero, O.I, April 27, 91.
43. Patrick Otieno Odhiambo, O.I., April 23, 1991.
44. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 241.
45. Zebedi Omondi Ndaga, O.I., April 16, 1991.
46. Petero Odimo Owuor, O.I., April 18, 1991.
47. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia*, 153.
48. Ibid.; Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 196.
49. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia*, 153.
50. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 202.
51. Ibid., 202.
52. Ibid., 198–99.
53. Michael Olalo Gero, O.I., April 27, 1991.
54. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia*, 125; see Fazan's report in: DC/CN. 3/4, 1918–1923.
55. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia*, 127.
56. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 278.
57. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia*, 128.
58. Zebedi Omondi Ndaga, O.I., April 16, 1991.
59. DC/CN.3/4, 1913–1923; Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 200.
60. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 267.
61. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia*, 127.
62. Lonsdale, "A Political History of Nyanza," 78.
63. Osogo, Nabongo Mumia, 75.

64. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia*, 128.
65. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 266, 273
66. Ibid., 260.
67. Ibid., 267; Were, *A History of the Abaluyia*, 128.
68. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia*, 153.
69. Owino Orego, O.I., May 8, 1991.
70. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 273.
71. Ibid., 273.
72. Crispin Omondi Oduor, O.I., April 19, 1991.
73. Atieno-Odhiambo, "The Movement of Ideas: A Case Study of Intellectual Response to Colonialism among the Liganua Peasants," in *Hadith VI: History and Social Change in East Africa*, ed. B. A. Ogot (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1976), 176.
74. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 282.
75. Isidor Nyawango Ndong', O.I., September 9, 1991.
76. Thomas Alfred Oluoch, O.I., March 6, 1991.
77. Owino Orego, O.I., May 8, 1991.
78. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 283.
79. See Perham, ed., *The Diaries of Lord Lugard*, 1:387.
80. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 281.
81. Marikus Okumu, O.I., May 9, 1991.
82. See Perham, ed., *The Diaries of Lord Lugard*, 1:402.
83. Dealing, "Politics in Wanga," 281.
84. Ibid., 303.

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5

Lexical Borrowings as Pathways to Senegal's Past and Present

Fallou Ngom

Introduction

Language always carries along the social, cultural, and political history of its speakers. Deroy (1956, 316) pointed out that loanwords are evidence of the major historical events of a society. In other words, by analyzing lexical borrowings between languages, one can see the social, political, ideological, or cultural forces that have once shaped or still influence a given community. In this respect, lexical borrowings constitute a reservoir of crystallized verbal forms used to refer to past or current foreign beliefs, practices, or way of life that have influenced a given community.

This study uses loanwords as a means of understanding how the linguistic and socio-historical systems cooperate in a multilingual and multicultural society such as Senegal (both in the past and in present times). The study demonstrates that lexical borrowing does not occur randomly, but is the product of social, cultural, political, or ideological interventions. First, the study intends to decode the social, political, cultural, and ideological history of Senegal encoded in French, Arabic, English, and Spanish lexical loanwords in Wolof. Second, the paper analyzes the linguistic nature of loanwords and their current sociolinguistic implications in Senegal today.

Research has shown that languages borrow words for two main reasons: 1) for practical needs (to fill a lexical gap) and for prestigious reasons

(Deroy 1956). In other words, speakers might borrow a word to express a concept or thought that is not available in their own language, or they may borrow words simply because such linguistic units are associated with prestige, even though there may be equivalents in the borrowing language. It is also argued that lexical borrowing, similar to the differentiation between languages and dialects, standard and nonstandard dialects, is generally socially, culturally, or politically triggered (Bourdieu 1982; Collins 1999; Calvet 1974, etc.). As such, lexical borrowing reflects the social stratification: the power and prestige relations between individuals, social classes, or social groups, and the cultural and ideological forces that shape human interactions in a given society. Consequently, the study of loanwords in Wolof (whether fully integrated, semi-integrated, or newly introduced in Wolof) gives a good window for understanding the major historical, social, cultural, political, and ideological forces that have molded and still impact the lives of Wolof speakers in Senegal. Thus, this study focuses on loanwords from French, Arabic, English, and Spanish in Wolof (the major lingua franca spoken by over seventy percent of the Senegalese population, as either a first language or second language).

Historical Background

Senegal is a multilingual West African French-speaking country. Over eighty percent of its population is Muslim. The country has officially recognized beside French (the official language) the following six national languages: Wolof, Pulaar, Seereer, Joola, Soninke, and Mandinka. Lexical borrowing from French, Arabic, English, and Spanish into Wolof is common in the Senegalese speech community. Lexical borrowings from French are due to the fact that Senegal occupied a central place in the colonization of West Africa, since the capital of A.O.F (Afrique Occidentale Française, West-African French colonies) was established in Saint-Louis in 1895. The country came in contact with France in the early seventeenth century, when French commercial companies started trading at the mouth of the river Senegal, first entered by Europeans in 1445 (Crowder 1962, 7).

Although some lexical units were coined in Wolof to cover new concepts brought by the French into the country, many lexical items were borrowed from French to account for constructs that came along with the advent of French culture, political system, and religion in Senegal, or for purely prestigious reasons. As for the Arabic influence in Senegal, it dates back to the islamization of West Africa between the eleventh and the sixteenth centuries (Dème 1994). By the fourteenth century, various Koranic schools (Islamic schools) were established in Senegal (Diop 1989).

The English influence results from three major factors. First, despite the paucity of written documents, it is known that Senegal and the Gambia came under British domination around the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Various researchers have argued that when the British first arrived in Senegal and the Gambia around the seventeenth and eighteenth century, their goals were to evangelize, explore, and trade (Lewis and Foy 1971; Keke and Mbokolo 1988). The British first settled in the Senegambian area to sell gadgets to the natives, then built castles in the Gambia (St-James) and in Gorée Island, and later began the slave trade (Diop 1995). In order to enlarge this new kind of trade, they created and imposed the union of the Gambia and Senegal. Consequently, many Senegalese families moved to the Gambia to take jobs in British infrastructures (Diop 1995). Second, the presence of American troops in Dakar-Senegal during World War II also constitutes a factor that may have led to the borrowing of English words into Wolof, as the American soldiers interacted and mixed with locals (Diop 1995). Third, the most recent English influence results from the Senegalese education system (in which English is a mandatory subject of study); the influence of reggae music; the global impact of the United States on the world conveyed through youth culture, the media, television, the American movie industry, etc. This influence has made Senegalese youth admire the American way of life and fashion, and to be fond of American English.

As for the Spanish influence in Senegal, it dates back to the 1960s and 1970s when the Dominican musician Johnny Pacheco was making Latin American music popular in the world. Johnny Pacheco became an internationally renowned star in the 1960s, when he introduced a new dance called *pachanga*. In the 1970s he formed, with the elite of Latin American musicians, the orchestra *Fania All-Stars*, which exploded all over the salsa scene, thus starting a musical era for Latin music that has continued to influence the world.

Socio-historical Implications of Loanwords in Senegal

Contrary to the commonly used colonial and neocolonial argument that African languages are incapable of expressing modern thoughts and therefore need to borrow words from French, loanwords do not signal inherent difficulties of African languages, but indicate the state of domination that resulted from French *glottophasia,* a planned agenda for the destruction of African languages and cultures (Calvet 1974, 210).

The French, like most Europeans who came to Africa in colonial times, denied the humanity and cultures of the dominated people and used both cultural, religious, and political means to achieve the economic-based

mission salvatrice ("salvation mission" to civilize the uncivilized). The French used colonization to implement a direct assimilation rule in Senegal. The policy was based on the belief that in order to change the "uncivilized people," they had to "enter into their minds." Consequently, they started building schools and churches to achieve their assimilation objectives, that is, to annihilate the culture, beliefs, and languages of the local people, to make them accept willingly an inferiority complex vis-à-vis French colonialists (Ngom 1999, 132). The assimilation process was mainly implemented through the introduction of French as the sole language of education. Ultimately, the process was designed to make local people use only French as their major means of communication and, at the same time, feel grateful to have the "favor" of speaking the "super-language" of the "civilized masters."

Thus, French started to be used as the official language of the colonial French government based in Saint-Louis, Senegal. The French general Faidherbe created a number of schools for assimilation purposes. The program was called *l'école des fils de chefs*, "the school of the children of chiefs." The French government launched this program as a means of assimilating the local chiefs and their entourage. In addition, for assimilation purposes, the French colonial administration required Muslim judges to be trained in a special French language program. Dubois, et al. (2000) refer to this assimilation as a top-down process. Consequently, French became the language of the government from independence onward and pervades the whole educational system. As noted by Bokamba (1984, 6), the French education for the colonials was not an end in itself, but rather a means through which acculturation and servitude were achieved.

Although new Wolof words were coined to cover new constructs brought into the country by the French culture, political system, and religion, many words were borrowed from French to account for things that came with French in the country. The coining of new words and the borrowing and incorporation of French words into the Wolof linguistic system represent two strategies that Wolof speakers used to deal with new concepts and items that the French brought to Senegal. The coining of new words is evidence of Wolof speakers' resistance against foreign linguistic, cultural, or political domination. Following are sample words that illustrate these strategies.

TABLE 5.1
Examples of Coined Wolof Words for French

1. [Saxar] → 'train' from Wolof 'smoke'
2. [Mag-doom] → 'gun powder rifle' from Wolof 'swallow-ash'
3. [Takkatu-der] → 'law enforcement officer' from Wolof 'tier-of-leather'
4. [Atte-kat] → 'judge' from Wolof 'to judge'
5. [Doomu-garab] → 'Medicine pills' from Wolof 'baby-of-remedy'
6. [ɟangu] → 'church' from Wolof 'study'
7. [xonq-nopp] → 'white person' from 'red-ear'

In contrast, French words that are totally incorporated into the Wolof language constitute evidence of the "surrendering," or, to speak more reverently, the acceptance of the French culture and language in the Wolof speech community. Thus, it can be hypothesized that while coining was the first strategy used to resist foreign domination, borrowing and incorporation of loans into the Wolof system was the final strategy utilized to accept and integrate the French culture and language into Wolof speakers' way of life and cosmogony. In this respect, lexical borrowings and their incorporation into Wolof can be considered to be the last resort used when coining of new Wolof words was not effective enough to stop the French influence. Following are some examples of fully naturalized French loans in Wolof.

TABLE 5.2
Examples of French Loanwords in Wolof

1.   [petorol] → 'oil lamp' from French 'petrol' → oil
2.   [gornoma] → 'government' from French 'gouvernement' → government
3.   [lopitaan] → 'hospital' from French 'l'hopital' → the hospital
4.   [abijo] → 'plane' from French 'avion' → airplane
5.   [feebar] → 'fever' from French 'fièvre' → fever
6.   [peresida] → 'president' from French ' president' → president
7.   [karawat] → '(a) tie' from French 'Cravate' → '(a) tie'

Most French lexical units that are borrowed and used by all social groups in the Wolof speech community are fully integrated in the Wolof linguistic system to such a degree that they become undistinguishable from actual Wolof words to monolingual Wolof speakers. Thus, these fully naturalized French loans become part of monolingual Wolof speakers' linguistic competence (Benthahila and Davis 1982), as monolingual Wolof speakers do not know that such words are from French. This borrowing and

incorporation process of French words into Wolof minimizes the differences between the two languages.

As for the Arabic linguistic influence in Senegal, as mentioned before, it dates back to the Islamization of West Africa. By the fourteenth century, koranic schools were established in Senegal, and most Senegalese Muslims were already able to use classical Arabic to write their own languages by the first half of the twentieth century (Diop 1989). Wolof speakers borrowed the entire Arabic script, and altered it to fit the linguistic system of their language. Some changes were made in the Arabic phonemic system to transcribe Wolof sounds that did not have correspondences in Arabic. The writing system that resulted from these changes is known as *Wolofal* *(Wolof:* Wolofization). Following is the list of the changes that were made on the Arabic alphabet in order to write the Wolof language.

Wolof Sounds	Arabic Alphabet	Wolofal
[g]	[ﻙ] = [k]	[ﻚ] = [g]
[p]	[ﺏ] = [b]	[ﭖ] = [p]
[ñ]	[ﺡ] = [j]	[ﭺ] = [ñ]
[e]	non-existent	[__] = [e]

Unlike French, which was imposed on Senegalese people, the conscious appropriation of the Arabic script is evidence of Wolof speakers' efforts to accept the Arabic language and religion and their willingness to accept the Arabic culture and language. This writing system is still used today in Senegal. Wolof speakers who are illiterate in French but have studied the Koran to the extent that they have internalized the Arabic writing system also use it. Although Wolof is codified today and has its own alphabet based upon the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet), Wolofal still remains to be standardized. In fact, although this writing system was the first in the country prior to the arrival of the French, there has been almost no research conducted on it. This is partly due to the lack of government incentives and funding for the development of Arabic-based writing system in Senegal, which is against the French assimilation agenda.

Nevertheless, although Wolof speakers ultimately borrowed the entire Arabic script, there were initially some forms of resistance against Arabic assimilation, as evidenced by the coining of new words for Arabic concepts and artifacts found in the Wolof speech community. However, compared with French, Wolof coinings for Arabic constructs were not based on salient differences or key characteristics of the Arabic language, culture, or religion. In fact, Wolof speakers coined totally new words that did not rely on any key aspect of the Arabs, as shown in the following examples.

TABLE 5.3
Examples of Coined Wolof Words for Arabic

1. [ɟulli] –> 'prayer' from Wolof 'pray' (Innovation)
2. [jonent] –> 'prophet' from Wolof 'messenger'(Innovation)
3. [weeru-kor] –> 'fasting month' from Wolof 'month of fasting' (Innovation)
4. [gamo] –>'celebration of prophet Mohamed's birth' from Wolof (Innovation)
5. [aseer] –> 'Saturday' from Wolof (Innovation)
6. [dibeer] –> 'Sunday' from Wolof (Innovation)

In addition, while Wolof borrowings from Arabic are almost exclusively limited to the religious register, French loans in Wolof encompass the political, cultural, and educational domains. This is partly due to the fact that, although there is some evidence of Arabic influence in the commercial domain (Dème 1994), the contact between Wolof and Arabic was primarily in the religious register, where classical Arabic prevails. Following are some examples of totally Arabic incorporated loans in Wolof found in the religious register in the Wolof speech community.

TABLE 5.4
Examples of Arabic Loans in Wolof

1. [aɟɟuma] –> 'Friday' from Arabic 'alʒumˤa' –> 'Friday'
2. [jalla] –> 'God' from Arabic 'yaa allah' –> ˈoh God!'
3. [malaaka] –> 'angel ' from Arabic 'malaaʔika' –> 'angel'
4. [saraxe] –> 'charity' from Arabic 'sadaqa' –> 'charity'
5. [aduna] –> 'the world' from Arabic 'aldunya' –> 'the world'
6. [aɟɟana] –> 'heaven' from Arabic 'alʒanna' –> 'the heaven'
7. [alaaɟi] –> 'pilgrim' from Arabic 'alhaʒʒi' –> 'the pilgrimage'

These words have been fully naturalized in Wolof as the result of their long presence in Wolof speakers' discourse. Thus, similar to French incorporated loans, these loans are part of monolingual Wolof speakers' linguistic competence (Benthahila and Davis 1982), as most speakers are not aware of the Arabic origin of such incorporated loanwords.

While both French and Arabic have heavily influenced Senegalese history and culture, as shown through coined words and lexical borrowings, the influence of English and Spanish is limited in Wolof speakers' discourse. Today, there is a limited number of English loans incorporated

into Wolof speakers' lexical repertoire. For both English and Spanish, no coined Wolof words are attested. This may be due to two factors: First, compared with French and Arabic, English and Spanish have not coexisted with Wolof long enough. Second, the present influence of the two languages is mainly limited to the speech of the trendy urban youth. Consequently, Wolof speakers did not coin words for these languages, because they did not feel a "real threat" of possible assimilation from English and Spanish. Following is a sample of some commonly found incorporated English words in Wolof.

TABLE 5.5
Example of English Words in Wolof

1. [ʝingeer] –> 'ginger'	from English 'ginger'
2.[ʝuuti] –> 'tax'	from English 'duty'
3.[maaʝ] –> 'march'	from English 'march'
4. [ruum] –> 'the center of the room'	from English 'room'
5. [pantare] –> 'small room'	from English 'pantry'
6. [raab] –> 'wrap'	from English 'wrap'
7. [yaar] –> 'yard'	from English 'yard'

These fully incorporated English loans are attested in the speech of all Wolof speakers, regardless of their social group or class. Given the incorporation of these words in Wolof speakers' linguistic competence, it can be argued that these loans were introduced in Wolof when English was the language of a dominant group, that is, when Senegal was under British domination (around the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries).

Due to the total incorporation of these lexical borrowings into Wolof, no social prestige is associated with these words today, as they have become a full part of the Wolof lexical repertoire. These incorporated English lexical borrowings contrast starkly with the newly introduced English loans which represent markers of "trendiness" among urban youth.

While most English incorporated loans in Wolof came from the period of the British domination, Spanish incorporated loans came exclusively from Latin American music of the 1960s and 1970s. Following are examples of the most commonly used Spanish lexical borrowings in the Wolof speech community.

TABLE 5.6
Examples of Spanish Loans in Wolof

1. [ombre] –> 'a first name'	from Spanish 'hombre'–> 'man'
2.[padre] –> 'father'	from Spanish 'padre' –> 'father'
3.[madre] –> 'mother'	from Spanish 'madre' –> 'mother'
4.[pachanga] –> 'a type of dance'	from Spanish 'pachanga'–>'type of dance'
5.[matacobra] –> ' platform shoes'	from Spanish 'mata cobra' –> 'kill cobra'
6.[paco] –> 'a first name'	from Spanish 'paco' –> 'a first name'
7.[ngeros] –> 'a type of dance'	from 'pachangeros' –> 'pachanga dancers'

Although the use of these words was associated with some social status in the 1960s and 1970s, today their status has tremendously decreased due to the rise of English loanwords as the marker of prestige and "trendiness" among urban youth.

In sum, it is clear that the contact and the nature of the relationship between Wolof speakers, the French, the Arabs, the English, and the Spanish are evidenced through linguistic borrowing. Thus, while the French influence is found in political, cultural, and educational domains; the Arabic influence is primarily observed in the religious setting. English and Spanish both have mainly influenced the youth in two different generations (Spanish in the 1960s and 1970s and English from the 1980s onward), especially in the domain of fashion, music, and youth culture. This shows that lexical borrowing does not result from a vacuum, but is triggered by the nature of the contact, power, and prestige relationships that exists between social groups or communities. The following section explores this issue in detail.

Lexical Borrowing As Evidence of the Unequal Distribution of Power and Prestige

The unequal distribution of power and prestige in human societies is generally reflected through the rate of loans that one language gives to the other. In former French colonies of West Africa such as Senegal, the high number of loanwords from French into Wolof represents the surface trace of the French linguistic, cultural, political, and ideological superstructure imposed in the Wolof speech community as the result of French glottophasia (Calvet 1974, 92).

In contrast, the relative equilibrium of borrowing between local languages (Wolof, Pulaar, Seereer, Joola, Mandinka, and Soninke) shows that these languages (and therefore their speakers) are in competition, but no group has total domination over the other. While it is common that African

languages borrow many words from French, the rate of borrowing between local languages in Senegal is limited. Thus, the fact that Senegalese national languages (especially Wolof) borrow extensively from French, whereas French does not borrow almost anything from these languages, is evidence of the domination of local communities by France as well noted by Calvet (1974, 91). This is partly due to the fact that colonization did not introduce French in Senegal so that colonized people speak French, but rather to create a minority French-speaking group to govern and impose the law on the non-francophone majority (Calvet, 1974, 118). This role of French as an instrument of domination, power, and assimilation has been promoted in Senegal by the French educational system from the colonization period onwards.

Figure 5.1, based upon 242 loanwords collected from the Senegalese audiovisual website <www.homeviewsenegal.com>, illustrates this unequal distribution of power and prestige expressed through lexical borrowing, as it clearly shows that French, Arabic, English, and Spanish lend more words to Wolof than they borrow from it.
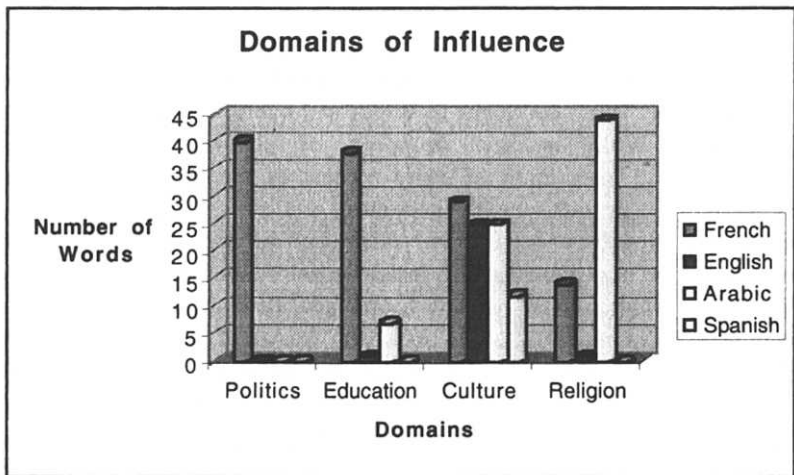
FIGURE 5.1

Words Borrowed into and from Wolof
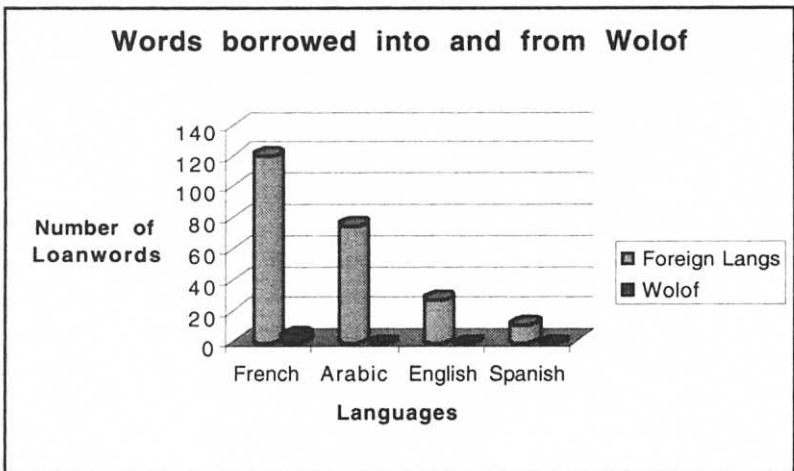
In the same manner that the statistical comparison of borrowings between languages reveals the nature of the past or present relationships between communities, the examination of the semantic fields of loanwords shows the domains of contact and influence between communities. For

instance, French loanwords in Wolof generally fall in the fields of politics, media, education, and culture, while those from Arabic are mostly found in religious settings both in formal and informal settings. This is due to the place that koranic schools have always held in the Islamic education of Senegalese Muslims. In fact, over eighty percent of Senegalese Muslims have studied the Koran for at least three years. The English influence (which is almost exclusively limited to urban youth) is found in cultural contexts. This is due to the fact that the urban youth is the social group exposed to the American movie industry, American fashion, and rap and reggae music.

For these reasons, English loans used in this section were found exclusively among the urban youth. Although English has been introduced in the educational system since the colonial period, its influence in the country is still minor (compared to French and Arabic), since it only affects one social group, that is, the urban youth. Similarly, the Spanish influence today is very limited, due to the fact that Latin American music has largely been replaced by that of English-speaking musicians such as Jamaicans and Americans. The following figure (based upon the data collected from the Senegalese audiovisual website) shows the major domains of influence of French, Arabic, English, and Spanish in the Wolof speech community.

FIGURE 5.2

Domains of Influence of Loanwords in Wolof

This figure shows that political, educational, cultural, and religious institutions and daily social practices reproduce lexical borrowings in Senegal, especially in domains of influence of the prestigious and dominant groups. This view is consonant with Blommaert's (1999, 365) point that dominant ideas about language get spread throughout levels of society in processes of normalization such as institutional or semi-institutional practices like education, media, administration, etc. This results in the creation and maintenance of (a) prestigious social group(s) or class(es) and dominated group(s).

Following this line of thought, it can be argued that Spanish loans had the same stigma that English has today in Senegal, and that this social stigma gradually decreased as Latin American music became less popular while reggae and rap gain popularity in Senegal. This shows that loans do not happen at random, and that they spread across all social groups and classes. In fact, loanwords are triggered and constrained by the social, historical, political, cultural, and generational changes that occur in specific social groups or classes in a given society. Thus, loanwords may spread across all social groups or fade away in time, depending on the social status associated with them. As such, loans are linguistic evidences of major events that occur in a given speech community. In this respect, loanwords in Wolof are "carriers" of the cultural, political, historical, and religious history of the Senegalese speech community.

Lexical Hybridization As Evidence of Cultural Hybridization

While the coining of new Wolof words may be seen as a form of linguistic resistance to foreign cultures (whether political, cultural, or religious), fully integrated loans in Wolof and hybrid lexical constructions also indicate Wolof speakers' dropping of such resistance, and their acceptance and integration of some aspects of the French and Arabic culture, religion, or views into their own way of life.

Thus, besides the unequal distribution of power and prestige expressed through lexical borrowing, hybrid lexical constructions are living proof of the level of integration of cultural, social, and ideological differences in a given speech community. In fact, speakers' change of fashion, idols, likes, and dislikes is always accompanied by a change in the lexical items they use to express those changes. Consequently, the degree of cultural hybridization of a speech community is always reflected in the degree of lexical mixture of the medium or media of communication of the community.

In this respect, based upon the mix lexical repertoire of Wolof speakers, Senegal can be regarded as a hybrid society (Swigart 1994), with Wolof,

French, and Arabic cultures. In fact, in Senegal the three cultures are neatly interwoven to form a hybrid society in which individuals alternate European, African, and Muslim clothes, and where people celebrate Muslim, Christian, and African holidays in harmony. This cultural syncretism is reflected in the social, cultural, and linguistic behaviors of the Senegalese people. This cultural mixture is overtly shown in the number of hybrid lexical constructions found in the discourse of Wolof speakers in general. The following are some examples of hybrid lexical units (each consisting of one borrowed morpheme and a Wolof morpheme).

TABLE 5.7
Wolof & French

1. [gaalu-motor] –> 'motorized canoe'	from Wolof: canoe-of + French: motor
2. [ganaaw-raj]–> 'behind the railway'	from Wolof: behind + French: railway
3. [saaku-ceeb] –> 'bag of rice'	from French: bag-of + Wolof: rice
4. [defarkatu-welo] –> 'bike fixer'	from Wolof: fixer + French: bike
5. [montoram] –> 'his/her watch'	from French: watch + Wolof: his/her

TABLE 5.8
Wolof & Arabic

1. [adunaam] –> 'his/her world'	from Arabic: world + Wolof: his/her
2. [doomu-aadama]–> 'human being'	from Wolof: son-of + Arabic: Adam
3. [ɟaamu-jalla] –> 'to worship God'	from Wolof: slave-of +Arabic: Oh! God
4. [aɟɟuma-bu-weesu]–>'last Friday'	from Arabic: Friday + Wolof: past/last
5. [boroom-barke] –> 'a blessed man'	from Wolof: owner + Arabic: blessing

TABLE 5.9
Wolof & English

1. [bul-wori] –> 'do not worry'	from Wolof: do not + English: worry
2. [sama-gajn] –> 'my friend'	from Wolof: my + English: man
3. [gelam] –> 'his girlfriend'	from English: girl + Wolof: her
4. [seen-bisnes] –> 'your (pl)/their business'	From Wolof: your (pl)/their + English: business
5. [moninu-ñepp]–> 'everybody's money'	from English: money + Wolof: of everybody

As the result of the long coexistence between Wolof, French, and Arabic, Wolof & French, and Wolof & Arabic hybrid constructions are very

common in Senegal, and are used by all Wolof speakers, regardless of the social class or social group of the speaker. This shows the extent to which French and Arabic (and therefore their respective cultures and way of life) have been incorporated into the lives of Wolof speakers. In contrast, English & Wolof hybrid constructions are exclusively found among the youth for two main reasons: 1) the influence of English is fairly recent (compared to French and Arabic), and 2) English affects only the urban youth. Thus, these English & Wolof constructions show ongoing changes among the urban youth, whose idols and models of reference today are from English-speaking countries, especially the United States.

As for Spanish, given that the social status it used to carry is now carried by English, hybrid constructions between Spanish & Wolof are uncommon, due to the fact that Spanish (similar to English today) influenced mostly the youth of the 1960s and 1970s, and its effect on the youth did not last long. However, although it is not very common to hear Spanish & Wolof hybrid lexical constructions today in Senegal, their use must have been common in the 1960s and 1970s, due to the social status of Spanish among the trendy urban youth of that time.

However, although the prestige of Spanish has greatly decreased, there is still some minor prestige left with Spanish loans, since some Spanish & Wolof hybrid constructions and loanwords are still found among the urban youth. Following are some examples of Spanish & Wolof hybrid constructions found at times in the urban youth.

TABLE 5.10
Spanish & Wolof

1. [Sama-madre] –> 'my mother', from Wolof: 'my' + Spanish: 'mother'
2. [Padreem] –> 'his/her father', from Spanish: 'father' + Wolof: 'his/her'
3. [fecckatu-salsa] –> 'salsa dancer', from Wolof: 'dancer-of' + Spanish: 'salsa'
4. [sama-rakku madre] –> 'my uncle' from Wolof: 'brother-of- my'
   + Spanish: 'mother'
5. [merengekat] –> 'meringue dancer', from Spanish: 'meringue'
   + Wolof agent morpheme

Based on hybrid linguistic constructions found in the Senegalese society, it is clear that educational, political and religious institutions are more efficient in maintaining and reproducing foreign influences from generation to generation than ephemeral generation-specific foreign influences such as music, as is the case with the English and Spanish influence in Senegal. In contrast, beside the generational influence of English-speaking artists on the

present urban youth, the political and global influence of the United States in the world constitutes factors that continue to maintain and spread the influence of English in the country.

Sociolinguistic Functions of Linguistic Patterns in Loanwords in Senegal

In terms of sociolinguistic implications, the use of incorporated loans starkly contrasts with the use of newly introduced loans in the Wolof speech community. For instance, the use of unassimilated French loans marks one as literate, hence part of the Senegalese elite. Similarly, the use of Arabic loans (especially unassimilated loans) marks one as part of the religious elite (Ngom 2000). In other words, the restitution of the phonological patterns of established lexical borrowings from Arabic or French constitutes sociolinguistic variables in Senegal, as it enables speakers to recover the social prestige of lexical units. This denaturalization of lexical borrowings through the restitution of the native phonological patterns enables some speakers to differentiate themselves from less prestigious groups. This is due to the fact that such a phonological restitution brings speakers closer to the native speakers of the prestigious variety, and thus sets them apart from other social groups.

Thus, the use of Arabic lexical units in Wolof with a standard Arabic pronunciation is as much a source of social prestige in informal and religious settings as it is a marker of religious erudition. In other words, such Arabic lexical borrowings mark speakers as endowed with the mystic and spiritual knowledge of Islam, the religion of the overwhelming majority of the country. The prestige associated with standard Arabic pronunciation results from two major factors: 1) Standard Arabic is regarded in Senegal as the symbol of Islam. 2) The Arabic variety taught as the second language in the Senegalese educational system is mainly standard Arabic.

Similar to the phonological restitution of Arabic sound units, the use of French words with a Parisian accent (the standard variety of French) marks one as part of the Senegalese elite—educated and modern. The denaturalized loans exemplify the fact that pronunciation (phonology) is pivotal in displaying, acquiring, or erasing the social prestige of a word. In this respect, the phonological rules of the denaturalization of established lexical units can be regarded as sociolinguistic variables (Labov 1978), since they enable speakers to acquire some form of social prestige in the Senegalese speech community.

In the same way that the phonological restitution of sound patterns of established loans indicates the social status of speakers, certain phonological patterns such as vowel copying, denasalization, and

lexicalization (the merger of several independent French lexical units to form one lexical unit) of French loans represent markers of a low social status in Senegal. Such linguistic patterns in one's Wolof indicate that the speaker is illiterate and lacks education. These phonological processes are triggered by the Wolof linguistic system. The vowel copying phenomena is triggered by the fact that Wolof does not allow clusters consisting of a stopped consonant followed by a liquid. In such cases, the vowel that follows the liquid is generally copied between the two segments of the cluster, as is shown in the following examples.

TABLE 5.11
Vowel Copying & Cluster Simplification

(a) [peresida]	←	[pʁezidã]	(president)
(b) [palas]	←	[plas]	(place)
(c) [karawat]	←	[kʁavat]	(tie)
(d) [perepare]	←	[pʁepare]	(prepare)
(e) [torop]	←	[tʁo]	(a lot)
(f) [montor]	←	[mõtʁ]	(watch)
(g) [kontor]	←	[kõtʁ]	(against)
(h) [gara]	←	[gʁã]	(big)
Rule: ø —>Vx / [+cons]____[+liquid] Vx			

Similarly, due to the fact that Wolof does not have nasal vowels, all French nasal vowels in lexical borrowings are denasalized (by illiterate speakers) as shown in the examples below.

TABLE 5.12
Denasalization

(i) [gara]	←	[gʁã]	(big)
(j) [depas]	←	[depãs]	(expense)
(k) [moje]	←	[mwajɛ]	(means)
(l) [silwisasijo]	←	[sivilizasjõ]	(civilization)
(m) [abiyo]	←	[avjõ]	(plane)
[-Cons, +Nasal]—>V/ ____			

Futhermore, lexicalization is also a key characteristic of the uneducated social group. The following examples illlustrate this phenomenon.

TABLE 5.13
Lexicalization

(n) lempo	←	l'impôt	(the tax)
(o) alaterete	←	à la retraite	(to the retirement)
(p) lekol	←	l'école	(the school)
(q) labe	←	l'abbé	(the bishop)
(r) lopitaan	←	l'hopital	(hospital)

These lexical borrowings and linguistic processes represent indexes of the social group of the illiterates. This is due to the fact that speakers who use such lexical borrowings and linguistic processes are those with minimal or no exposure to French. This group encompasses old people and young people of rural areas who have not been to the French schools, but who nevertheless interact with French literate and urban people.

Nasal Vowel Unpacking As a Means of Prestige Acquisition

Although Wolof has the velar nasal [ŋ], the prenasals [ŋg] and [ŋk] in its consonantal system, the occurrence of the phoneme [ŋ] at word final position is very limited in the language. In contrast, the velar nasal [ŋ] is commonly found at the end of words in French loanwords in Wolof as the result of the unpacking of French nasal vowels. The unpacking consists of the creation of two sound segments out of French nasal vowels: an oral vowel followed by the velar nasal [ŋ].

This unpacking of French nasal vowels is both linguistically and socially motivated. Given that Wolof does not have nasal vowels, and that nasality constitutes a key characteristic of standard French (the prestigious variety), uneducated people (in French) use the velar [ŋ] at the end of a word in an attempt to acquire the social prestige associated with standard French. Thus, this unpacking phenomenon of French nasal vowels can be regarded as a means of borrowing the social prestige of standard French (Labov 1978), used by speakers with low social status (those with minimal or no formal exposure to standard French). The following examples illustrate the unpacking phenomena of French nasal vowels in this social category.

TABLE 5.14
French Nasal Vowels

(a) [abiyoŋ]	←	[avjõ]	(plane)
(b) [baŋ]	←	[bã]	(bench)
(b) [garaŋ]	←	[gʁã]	(big)
(c) [gornomaŋ]	←	[guvɛʁnmã]	(government)
(d) [silwisasjoŋ]	←	[sivilizasjõ]	(civilization)
(e) [taŋ]	←	[tã]	(time)

Lexical Borrowings as Markers of Modernity and Fashion among the Urban Youth

The urban youth in Senegal have the most complex linguistic repertoire in the country. This is due to their exposure to French influence (through education), Arabic (through Koranic or Arabic language instruction) and English (through music, TV, and movies). As discussed earlier, as opposed to other social groups in the country, this social group is the only one that borrows words from English and Spanish (to a small degree).

This group is characterized by particular lexical borrowings (from French, Arabic, and English) and linguistic patterns that act as markers of group membership. In other words, the use of such lexical borrowings and linguistic patterns marks one as "trendy, modern, and in-fashion" and thus sets the speaker apart from the "hicks" (i.e.; the rural youngsters with little or no exposure to the urban youth culture, models, ideals, and way of life). The most common linguistic patterns of this group are the following: 1) syllable truncation (deletion) of French loans, 2) overuse of the French filler "quoi" at the end of syntactic units, 3) phonological hypercorrection, and 4) semantic shifts and specifications. The following examples illustrate these characteristics of this social group.

TABLE 5.15
Markers of "Trendiness" of the Urban Youth

French Loans
(a) [tons] from French [tõtõ] (uncle) → truncation
(b) [presi] from French [presidã] (president) → truncation
(c) [kwa] from French [kwa] called '*quoi* ponctuant' → a filler with no semantic meaning in French
(d) Biddiwudakar → calque from French 'l'étoile de Dakar' (the star of Dakar)
(e) Guerrier ('cool' guy) → from French 'guerrier' (warrior) → Semantic shift
(f) Artiste ('cool' guy) → from French 'artiste' (artist) → Semantic shift
English Loans
(g) [gajn] (guy) from English [gaj] (guy), {ø–>n} (Hypercorrection)
(h) [gel] (girlfriend) from English [gɛːl] {ɛ:–>e} (Wolof influence + Semantic specification)
(i) [cajn] (Chinese tea) from [cajn] (Hypercorrection + Semantic specification)→ English pronunciation of the French word 'Chine' (China)
(j) [trok] (car) from English [trʌk] (truck), {ʌ–>o} (Wolof influence + Semantic specification)
Arabic Loans
(k) [saaba] ('cool' guy) from Arabic [saħaːba] (Apostle),{ħ–>O} (Wolof influence + Semantic shift)
Spanish Loans
(l) [pacanga] from Spanish [pachanga] (a type of dance)
(m) [matacobra] from Spanish [mata-cobra] (kill-cobra) etc.

It is important to note that, the French words "guerrier" (warrior) and "artiste" (artist) and the Arabic lexical borrowing "saaba" are used interchangeably to refer to someone trendy and admirable in this social group. As can be seen, this social group has the most complex linguistic repertoire in Senegal (which involves Wolof, French, English, Arabic, and Spanish words). Using one of these loans or linguistic processes marks one as being part of the "cool urban, trendy, and in-fashion youth." In contrast, using "pure" Wolof words without such lexical units and linguistic processes excludes one from this social group, and consequently marks one as an "old-fashioned person or a hick."

Arabic Lexical Borrowings as Markers of Group Identity in the Murid Community

The resistance to western assimilation and influence (from the colonial period onward) is a key characteristic of the Murid religious brotherhood in Senegal. This is partly due to the fact that the teachings of Cheikh Ahmadou (the founder of Muridism, an Islamic Sufi religious denomination) were against the colonial assimilation agenda, as he strongly emphasized the need to preserve the African culture (subjected to the French colonial assimilation program), the belief in God as the sole being worthy of worship and fear, and the total rejection of secular powers (whether local or foreign). For these reasons, Touba (the holy city of the Murids) is the only city in Senegal where French is not prestigious at all. In fact, speaking French, code-switching, code-mixing, and borrowing words from French are undesirable, as they mark one as a supporter of the colonial or neocolonial assimilation agenda. In contrast, speaking Arabic, code-switching, code-mixing, and borrowing Arabic lexical units into Wolof is highly regarded, and marks one as an Islamic religious scholar. Moreover, unlike in other urban cities in Senegal, where "pure" Wolof may be an index of lack of modernity and "old-fashionedness," in Touba, speaking "pure" Wolof is highly regarded, as it marks one as a proud African and a resister against the growing influence of the west in Senegal. These anti-western assimilation attitudes are reflected in the Murids' use of language today. For instance, Murids are characterized by a particular use of lexical borrowing from Arabic. Although the Arabic influence is pervasive in Senegal, as discussed earlier, some Arabic lexical borrowings are specific to the Murid community (whether in Senegal or abroad). These lexical borrowings set Murids apart from other religious denominations and non-denominational speakers in the country. Thus, such lexical borrowings represent indexes of Murid identity and religious membership. Following are some lexical borrowings from Arabic used in the Murid community as markers of religious identity and membership.

TABLE 5.16
Lexical Borrowings from Arabic

(a) [saajir]	←	[ðaahir]	(visible world)
(b) [baatiin]	←	[baatiin]	(invisible world)
(c) [adija]	←	[hadij:a]	(gift)
(d) [xaadimurasul]	←	[xaadimur:asu:l]	(the servant of the prophet)
(e) [tuba]	←	[θawba]	(to redeem)
(f) [xasida]	←	[qasida]	(poem)
(g) [xasaajid]	←	[qasaaʕid]	(poems)
(h) [sikər]	←	[ðikr]	(glorification of God)
(i) [akasa]	←	[ħakaða]	(this (right) way)

This Arabic influence results from the Murids' constant recitation of Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba's spiritual poems (written in classical Arabic) as a way of glorifying God and seeking his help and protection. Most of these lexical borrowings have been fully incorporated in the Wolof linguistic system and are understood by all social groups. However, although these words are specifically used by all Murids (regardless of social class), the restitution of Arabic phonological patterns is used as a marker of high social status in the Murid speech community. In other words, when speakers pronounce these words with a standard Arabic accent, they acquire a higher social status in the Murid community, since such words indicate speakers' allegiance to Islam, their loyalty to the brotherhood, their resistance against western culture and religion, and above all their religious erudition.

Conclusion

Based upon this study, it is clear that while French and Arabic loanwords in Wolof are the product of the major social, political, ideological, cultural, or religious changes that have occurred in the Wolof speech community, English and Spanish loans in Wolof are evidence of more recent or ongoing changes in Senegal. Thus, while incorporated loans are evidence of the changes that have already taken place, newly introduced loans are proof of current changes in the Wolof speech community. For these reasons, this study of loans shows not only the domains of contact between different speech communities and the strategies used to resist or accommodate foreign influences, but more importantly, the nature and influences that some hegemonic groups have on others. Thus, the most common trigger of lexical borrowing is a top-down influence whereby a dominant group with prestige or power "controls" one crucial sphere or various aspects of the

speech community, as is the case with French, Arabic, English, and Spanish in Senegal. In this respect, lexical borrowings can be considered to be reliable "witnesses" of both the past and the present of any speech community.

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6

Reconstructing Modern African
Business History

Alusine Jalloh

Introduction

This paper examines the methods and sources of African business history or the history of African business activities on the continent, focusing on the post-colonial period. The essay is divided into two sections. In the first, following a brief introduction, I examine three methodological approaches in reconstructing modern African business history: biographies, sector approach, and company histories. In the second section I discuss primary and secondary sources for reconstructing African business history. The discussion includes oral interviews, business records, newspapers, and magazines. Also, information technology is discussed in regard to its importance in documenting and preserving African business data. This essay also suggest lines for further research in reconstructing modern Africa's business past.

Over the past three decades the study of African business history has made significant progress, as evidenced by the growing literature it has generated.[1] Today, business history is a recognized sub-speciality in African economic history, which is also a growing field and has its own journal, *African Economic History*.[2] Since A. G. Hopkins,[3] a noted historian of African business history, suggested several years ago that some of the leading history journals publish regular bulletins of information about

sources for business history in Africa, a group of African academics in the United States now publish a referreed journal devoted entirely to African business, the *Journal of African Business*. It provides a important forum for scholars from an interdisciplinary background, including economics, history, and political science, to publish their research findings on various aspects of African business.[4]

The study of African business history has led to a significant increase in empirical data and an understanding of some of the important research questions. These include the historical significance of African founder-entrepreneurs and their contributions to modern Africa; the spatial and temporal evolution of African business; its structure and organization; profitability; the political context of business activities; the wider social implications of entrepreneurial decisions; and the relationship between historical research and current development concerns.

Despite the growing academic literature on the history of African business, I argue that the modern African business past is still not yet fully explored. Also, there are weaknesses in the existing literature. For example, compared to studies of expatriate entrepreneurs in modern Africa, at present there are rarely book-length biographies of African entrepreneurs. Also, very few comprehensive histories of African firms exist. More studies, particularly those with an interdisciplinary focus, are needed to help us better understand the complex and varied African business past.

Methodologies

In this section I discuss three methodological approaches: biographies, sectoral studies, and company histories. Individually or collectively these methodological approaches can help us gain a deeper historical understanding of Africa's long business past. In discussing the use of these methods in the historical reconstruction of African business, it must be pointed out that there is a direct relationship between the choice of methods and the availability of sources. Given the present state of sources, particularly primary materials, some methodologies seem more feasible than others. For example, sectoral studies of post-colonial African business like banking are relatively easy to embark on because of the availability of source material. However, book-length biographies of African entrepreneurs are more difficult to undertake because of the limited written documentation on individual entrepreneurs.

Biographies

Over the past three decades African historiography has been enriched by far more political biographies than business biographies. This partly reflects the scholarly bias towards political history, which is a more established field, and the nascent development of business history as a sub-field of African economic history. There has been an impressive list of book-length biographies, and sometimes autobiographies, of several prominent African political leaders. Most of these leaders were anti-colonial nationalists who later became prime ministers and presidents in post-independence Africa. They include Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, Siaka Stevens of Sierra Leone, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Leopold Senghor of Senegal, and Nelson Mandela of South Africa. These works have deepened our understanding not only of the individual leaders, but also of Africa's diverse and complex political culture and societies.[5]

Unfortunately, there are no comparable biographies or autobiographies of major African business leaders over the past three decades. A striking case is that of the Dantata family in Nigeria, which is arguably the best known African business group in West Africa. This Muslim family based in northern Nigeria has a long pedigree in business extending back several generations to the pre-colonial period. Yet, there is not a single book-length biographical study of individual Dantata entrepreneurs or a collective biography of this very wealthy business family.

Tom Forrest has provided us with a biographical sketch of the Dantata family in his recent study, *The Advance of African Capital: The Growth of Nigerian Private Enterprise* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994). This book also contains several short biographical accounts of many of Nigeria's leading entrepreneurs. John Waterbury's study of the Moroccan merchant Hadj Brahim, titled *North for the Trade: The Life and Times of a Berber Merchant* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), is an example of the few full biographical studies of African entrepreneurs. Some full biographical studies of African leaders contain significant information on their business careers. For example, Norman Bennet's *Mirambo of Tanzania* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), although a political biography, provides valuable information about the commercial activities of Mirambo in eastern Africa in the nineteenth century.

A number of biographical studies of African entrepreneurs are book chapters and articles in history journals. These short biographical accounts

cover the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-independence periods. Also, they provide information on not only business but also on such issues as politics, religion, and culture. Such works include Alusine Jalloh's "Alhaji Momodu Allie: Muslim Fula Entrepreneur in Colonial Sierra Leone" in *Islam and Trade in Sierra Leone*, edited by Jalloh and David E. Skinner (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1997); Christopher Fyle, "Charles Heddle: An African Merchant Prince" in *Entreprises et entrepreneurs en Afrique (XIX et XX siecles)* vol. 1 (Paris, L'Harmattan, 1983); and Raymond E. Dumett, "John Sarbah the Elder and African Mercantile Entrepreneurship in the Gold Coast in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Journal of African History* 14 (1973).[6]

Over the past three decades collective biography or prosoprography has made significant contributions to historical understanding, particularly in the United States and Europe. In the past prosopography was mainly used in reconstructing political history in Europe and the United States. The focus was on the study of political groups, especially the elites, and their behavior, as well as social structure and mobility. By relating the findings about the composition of a group to that of the population at large, collective biography results in a better historical understanding of society. But it was not until the 1960s that significant numbers of historians began to use collective biography and that a steady stream of important findings began to be published. Despite differences over their subjects of study and assumptions, the two main schools of collective biography are similar in their interest in the group rather than the individual or the institution. Although invented as a tool of political history, prosopography has been increasingly used by social scientists in the United States and Europe. These scholars emphasize quantification and the use of social survey techniques.[7]

In African history, collective biography has yet to be significantly employed by business historians in studying African entrepreneurship. This important historical method has been used mainly in social history, which is concerned with groups rather than individuals, ideas, or institutions. Social history is one of the fastest growing fields in African studies. This is evidenced by the large and impressive list of publications by Heinemann, which has a social history of Africa series. Recent examples of collective biographical studies in social history include John Illife's *East African Doctors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Terence Ranger's *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920–64* (Westport, Conn.: Heinemann, 1995); Belinda Bozzoli's, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900–1983* (Westport, Conn.: Heinemann, 1991) and Myron Echenberg's, *Colonial Conscripts: The Tirailleurs Sénégalais in French West Africa, 1857–1960* (Westport, Conn.: Heinemann, 1990).

There is a mass of oral biographical information of post-independence African entrepreneurs waiting to be collected, analyzed, and collated to construct collective biographies and an intelligible picture of modern African society covering business, politics, and culture. By working through case studies and personal vignettes of elite African entrepreneurs, we can build up a picture of elite business behavior and affiliations, personal interests, and kinship ties.

Despite its potentialities, particularly its interpretive potency, collective biography has limitations in the study of Africa's business past. Biographical studies of a large number of African entrepreneurs are possible only for fairly well-documented groups. Many of Africa's mercantile groups are not well documented in key areas like financial statistics. Collective biography is therefore severely limited by the quality and quantity of data accumulated about the past. The collective biography method works best when it is applied to easily defined and fairly small groups over a limited period of not much more than one hundred years, when the data are drawn from a very wide variety of sources which complement and enrich each other, and when the study is directed to solving a specific problem.

Reconstructing book-length biographies of individual African entrepreneurs or collective biographies of African businesspeople presents several challenges. These concern primarily the quantity and quality of business data, particularly those on financial statistics. Despite research challenges, biographies of African entrepreneurs will greatly enhance our understanding of African business history. They will offer valuable insights into many questions, including the complex area of African business decision-making, particularly when the subjects of such biographies are interviewed for such works. To date, very little is still known about how African entrepreneurs make complex decisions about the trajectory of a business from start-up to growth and expansion.

Sector Method

African business activities can be grouped and studied sectorally. The sectors may include production in key areas like agriculture, mining, and fishing; domestic or overseas trade; and services like formal banking, informal parallel currency exchange, shipping, and insurance. This methodological approach can be used to produce detailed case studies of African entrepreneurship centering on such issues as capital accumulation, as well as business organization and management. Sectoral studies of African business activities can help provide the basis for careful and thorough comparative macro-studies of African entrepreneurship along

national or regional lines. Such comparative works can help us better understand a set of "why" questions, for example: Why do some African entrepreneurs or business groups succeed while others do not? Why do some African entrepreneurs succeed in certain sectors of an economy but fail in others? Why do some African entrepreneurs or mercantile groups choose to concentrate on certain sectors of an economy? Despite the advantages of the sectoral approach, it must be pointed out that this method is constrained by the difficulty in finding sufficient statistical information to measure business performance. Even when statistics are readily available, they are sometimes unreliable.

The recent study by Alusine Jalloh, *African Entrepreneurship: Muslim Fula Merchants in Sierra Leone* (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1999) demonstrates the analytic power of the sectoral method in reconstructing African business history. Drawing on a wide range of sources, including oral interviews, private business records, and government publications, the author reconstructs the business activities of Muslim Fula merchants in Sierra Leone by focusing on the livestock trade, the merchandise trade, motor transport, the diamond trade, and real estate in the period between 1961 and 1978. This book is the first book-length study to reconstruct the variety of commercial activities of Fula immigrants and their Sierra Leonean-born offspring in Sierra Leone. It is also the first to examine the social dimensions of Fula mercantile activities and to detail the connection between Fula merchants and national politics in Sierra Leone. This book departs from the prevailing scholarship on the business history of Africa by arguing that Fula mercantile concerns in Sierra Leone were independently owned private enterprises, not appendages of Western expatriate commerce.

Raymond E. Dumett's recent book, *El Dorado in West Africa: The Gold-Mining Frontier, African Labor, and Colonial Capitalism in the Gold Coast, 1875–1900* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998) further demonstrates the great potential of the sector methodology in the historical reconstruction of African business. Drawing on considerable data accumulated on precolonial African gold-mining techniques, Dumett provides a thorough and detailed account of late nineteenth-century gold mining in Ghana. In addition to his own fieldwork and secondary sources, Dumett uses a large number of sources, ranging from business records mining reports, and contemporary newspapers. The book examines the immediate impact, unintended effects, limitations, and long-term by-products of the development of western Ghana's gold-bearing regions with regard to labor recruitment, capitalization, technology, health, transportation, landownership, political authority of chiefs, and colonial policies. Dumett argues that the African farmer-miner produced the

majority of the Gold Coast's gold throughout the time period under study. He also deepens our understanding of the middle-class African partnerships that pioneered gold concessions. Dumett depicts Africans as entrepreneurs, prospectors, pioneers, innovators, manipulators, and developers in gold mining on the Gold Coast.

Company Histories

The study of African companies provide a lens through which one can observe much wider historical developments on the continent. It can shed light on the operations of both African mercantile and industrial companies, as well as the general economic development of Africa. Besides, very little is known yet about the relationship between African companies and politics, particularly the role of enterprises in funding the political careers of African entrepreneurs.

Despite the slow academic progress in the researching and writing of book-length histories of African companies, some progress has been made in presenting profiles of African companies. In particular, scholarly attention has focused on large-scale African enterprises, usually those employing more than fifty persons. The profiles of African companies are usually case studies in book chapters or journal articles. This methodological approach is illustrated in Forrest's book, *The Advance of African Capital*, in which he devotes five of nine chapters to shorter and longer profiles of Nigerian enterprises. The few existing full studies of African companies include E. L. Inanga, *History of Akintola Williams and Co., 1952–1992* (Lagos: West African Book Publishers, 1992).

A major challenge in the historical reconstruction of African companies is the lack of "hard" statistical data. It is very difficult to obtain accounts or published indicators for individual enterprises or groups of companies beyond turnover and employment figures. Thus accurate measurement of size, growth, and profitability of an enterprise, or assessment of an individual's wealth is precluded. Often African entrepreneurs are sensitive to a public discussion of their wealth and property. Fear of liability for taxes is also a major reason preventing disclosure.

Business historians may also encounter further problems of measuring the performance of African companies because of the porous nature of African economies. Unofficial flows of goods, services, currency, and labor across international boundaries are important and are becoming common in Africa. Thus the unofficial export of manufactured goods to neighboring counties is substantial and likely to exceed official exports by a wide margin.

Business historians may obtain some information about African companies that have gone public on the stock exchange because they are obliged to reveal business information. In Nigeria there is sometimes a ranking of African companies in the financial press, although there are large gaps in the coverage. Increasingly, the press has put pressure on companies to provide more business information. But stock ownership is not a good guide to the relative strength and dynamism of African companies.

Sources

The sources for the study of African business history are broad, and they vary in quantity and quality. In this section, I discuss both primary and secondary sources for the historical reconstruction of Africa's business past. For primary sources, I examine oral interviews, business records or private papers of individual African entrepreneurs, as well as newspapers and magazines. Business historians studying African entrepreneurship face an enormous challenge in locating and securing access to primary sources, particularly the personal business papers of African entrepreneurs. In fact, much of the preliminary work of locating and archiving—including sorting , classifying, and indexing—African business records for use by professional researchers has yet to be undertaken.

Data collection on African business activities in the post-independence period has been severely hindered by the corrupt and rent-seeking activities of many African businesspeople. These entrepreneurs have serious doubts about allowing professional researchers access to their records. The conventional (and valid) argument for confidentiality is that access to business records will damage their businesses by assisting their rivals. But fear of prosecution for tax evasion, corruption, and illegal rent-seeking activities have often led African businesspeople to restrict access to their personal or company business records. Data to assess the profitability of African businesses are perhaps the most difficult to access because of the above reasons.

Oral Interviews

Recording oral testimony from African businesspeople is a matter of great importance and urgency. Because of the lack of written evidence on many aspects of African business history, I argue for greater use of oral interviews that will broaden and enrich the story of Africa's entrepreneurial past. Oral interviews can provide a wealth of empirical detail in reconstructing both the lives of African entrepreneurs and their business activities. Business historians should endeavor to make good use of oral

testimony from prominent African businesspeople. Oral testimony should be recorded, especially in the case of family firms which have failed to preserve their early records.

Some of the recent publications on African business history demonstrate the importance and analytical power of oral interviews in reconstructing the African business past. These works include Forrest's *The Advance of African Capital*, Jalloh's *African Entrepreneurship*, Dumett's *El Dorado in West Africa*, and Volker Wild's *Profit Not for Profit's Sake: History and Business Culture of African Entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe*, translated by Daphne Dorrell (Harare: Baobab Books, 1997). The authors enrich their narratives through the extensive use of oral testimonies to give voice to African entrepreneurs and to produce group portraits pieced together from a series of case studies of individual African founder-entrepreneurs.

I argue that there is a need for an African business documentation project that will identify and preserve oral evidence on African business history. Possible funding may be obtained from private foundations like Ford Foundation or international institutions like the World Bank. Leading African universities representing different regions of the continent like the University of Ghana at Legon (West Africa), Makerere University (East Africa), and the University of Cape Town (Southern Africa) may become the headquarters for a pilot project. The use of computers and the latest information technology can greatly aid in the accessing, preservation, and dissemination of data on African business. Business historians studying African entrepreneurship need to explore the full potentialities of the computer. In particular, this technological tool can be of great use in statistical historical inquiry.

Business Records of African Entrepreneurs

The business records of individual African entrepreneurs are essential for the historical reconstruction of African business. Yet, they are perhaps the most difficult to locate and access by business historians because of some of the reasons discussed above. These records include business correspondence, bank statements, accounts, and lists of creditors and debtors. They would help the business historian reconstruct a more nuanced and illuminating account of African business activities.

Magazines and Newspapers

Research on modern African business is now facilitated by the availability of a number of magazines published overseas and in Africa that are devoted entirely to business on the African continent. Most of these

magazines are in English, and they cater mainly to an international audience. Some of the magazines circulate only within an African country, particularly in the major cities like Lagos and Accra. The magazines with an international readership include *African Business*[8] and *Business in Africa*.[9] In Nigeria the leading business magazines include *Financial Punch* and *Financial Guardian*. In Ghana one of the major business magazines is *Business Watch*.[10] Some of the non-specialist international African magazines like *West Africa*[11] and *New African*[12] contain a broad business section, alongside their emphasis on politics.

These business magazines provide a wealth of data on African economies in key areas like commerce, telecommunications, information technology, industry, transport, mining, agriculture, and energy. Opportunities and challenges in doing business in Africa are also covered in these magazines. In particular, issues like tax holidays, stock markets, venture capital, free trade zones, joint ventures, consumer demand for certain products and services, government auctions of state businesses, governmental regulations and taxes, as well as corruption are treated in these publications. Also, these periodicals provide information on the relationship between African enterprises and the international economy. The business historian may also obtain valuable biographical data on some of the major African entrepreneurs from these publications. The biographical information may include career history, business vision, educational background, family, overseas business experience, and management style.

Unlike newspapers in developed countries like Britain and the United States, most African newspapers do not have a business section. Political issues dominate print media coverage while business coverage is often limited to advertisements. Sometimes African newspapers like *Daily Mail* and *We Yone* (Sierra Leone), *Daily Times* and the *Guardian* (Nigeria), and *New Vision* (Uganda) contain valuable data on the business activities of African entrepreneurs and politicians, as well as those of important non-African mercantile groups like the Lebanese. In particular, newspaper accounts of corruption often contain useful data for the business historian on questions relating to the nature and size of African businesses, the financial assets of African politician-businessmen and entrepreneurs, their real estate investments, their sources of capital, the relationship between their business activities and the state, the management of their enterprises by family and non-family employees, and their overseas investments. Also, newspapers sometime carry biographical sketches of African entrepreneurs, particularly those who are involved in politics. The business histories by Jalloh, *African Entrepreneurship*; Wild, *Profit Not for Profit Sake*; and Dumett, *El Dorado in West Africa*, which draw extensively on

contemporary newspapers, illustrate the importance of newspapers as a source in the historical reconstruction of African business. In Wild's study alone nearly forty newspapers and magazines were consulted in the reconstruction of the history of African entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe.

Secondary Academic Literature

The secondary academic literature on African business history has improved over the past three decades both in terms of quantity and quality. The studies can be grouped in various ways: sectoral studies like Dumett's *El Dorado in West Africa*; case studies of African mercantile minorities like Jalloh's *African Entrepreneurship*; comparative macro-studies of African entrepreneurs like Wild's *Profit Not for Profit's Sake*; company histories like Inanga's *History of Akintola Williams and Co.*; and case studies of African enterprises like Forrest's *The Advance of African Capital*.

As a result of many years of very careful historical research on African women entrepreneurship, it has been shown that women were a large and important part of the African business past. The secondary literature reflects this significant historiographical progress. Recent publications on gender and commerce include: Iris Berger and E. France White, *Women in Sub-Saharan Africa: Restoring Women to History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History* (Bloomington: Westview Press, 1997); Claire C. Robertson, *Trouble Showed the Way: Women, Men and Trade in the Nairobi Area, 1890-1990* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Kathleen Sheldon, ed., *Courtyards, Markets, City Streets: Urban Women in Africa* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996); Claire C. Robertson, *Sharing the Same Bowl: A Socioeconomic History of Women and Class in Accra, Ghana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

The business histories of African women cover a wide range of issues, including gender division of labor, trade and distribution, marriage, class formation, family change, and female empowerment. These studies also show that African women dominated small-scale trading. However, there are still gaps in the literature. For example, more research is needed on the business activities of African women in sectors like hotel catering, garments, fashion design, supermarkets, insurance, banking, laundry, maternity homes, clinics, and hairdressing.

Conclusion

Over the past three decades there has been considerable progress in the researching and writing of African business history. This is evidenced by

the quality and quantity of the growing literature on the subject. This advance in the historical reconstruction of African business has been helped by the use of various methodologies and sources, which have been expanded and improved over the last three decades. However, much work remains to be done on collecting, classifying, and archiving both oral and written source material for the study of African business history. External funding from institutions like the World Bank and the use of computers can certainly help in this documentation endeavor.

Also, there is ample scope for future detailed research and publication on every aspect of African business history. In particular, future research on African business history should include book-length biographies of male and female African entrepreneurs, comprehensive business history of African firms, macro-studies that compare African business groups and their interactions with non-African business entities in national economies, full studies of formal and informal cross-border trade, and parallel currency markets.

Notes

1. See A. G. Hopkins, "Big Business in African Studies," *Journal of African History* 28 (1987): 119-40.
2. For recent works in African economic history, see Shiferaw Bekele, ed., *An Economic History of Ethiopia*. Vol. 1: *The Imperial Era 1941–74* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1995); Tiyambe Zeleza, *A Modern Economic History of Africa*. Vol. 1: *The Nineteenth Century* (Dakar: CODESRIA, 1993); and Ralph Austen, *African Economic History* (London: James Currey, 1987). Founded in 1976, *African Economic History* is now published once a year from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (USA).
3. On A. G. Hopkins's suggestion, see his articles, "Imperial Business in Africa, Part I: Sources," *Journal of African History* 17, no. 1 (1976): 29–48; and "Imperial Business in Africa, Part II: Interpretations," *Journal of African History* 17, no. 2 (1976): 267–90.
4. The *Journal of African Business* is published quarterly in the United States.
5. See A. B. Assensoh, *African Political Leadership: Jomo Kenyatta, Kwame Nkrumah, and Julius K. Nyerere* (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Publishing Company, 1998); Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1957); June Milne, *Sekou Toure* (London: Panaf, 1978); Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965); William E. Smith, *Nyerere of Tanzania* (Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House, 1981); Siaka P. Stevens, *What Life Has Taught Me* (Bourne End, Buckinghamshire: Kensal Press, 1984); June Milne, *Kwame Nkrumah: A Biography* (London: Panaf, 2000); N. R. Bennett, ed.,

Leadership in East Africa: Six Political Biographies (Boston: Boston University Press, 1968); and Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1995).

6. See also Ian Duffield, "The Business Activities of Duse Mohammed Ali: An Example of the Economic Dimension of Pan-Africanism, 1912–1945," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 4, no. 4 (1969): 571–600.

7. For a discussion of prosopography, see Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).

8. This is a monthly business magazine published in the United Kingdom since 1966.

9. This is a monthly business magazine published in South Africa.

10. This is a monthly business magazine published in Ghana.

11. This is a weekly magazine published in the United Kingdom.

12. This is a monthly magazine published in the United Kingdom.

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II

African Creative Expression
in Context

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7

African Art: New Genres and Transformational Philosophies

Christopher Adejumo

For several decades, various forms of African art have been lumped together by European and Western observers who perceived the works as a body of cultural artifacts consisting of magical objects and fetishes. This view of African art is increasingly becoming obsolete as art enthusiasts around the world are becoming better informed on the diversity of African art of the past as well as the new. African art is constantly evolving. The dynamic nature of the art forms is especially obvious in contemporary works, in which nontraditional media and materials are combined in new methods of production. Apart from employing new methods, African artists have expanded their audiences beyond local residents to include regional, national, and international collectors and connoisseurs.

As the new genres of African art evolved, there was a simultaneous expansion of the philosophical basis that informs traditional African aesthetic assumptions. This essay will explore the new genres of African art and discuss some of the philosophies that nurture them. In reviewing the various stages of development, the three phases of artistic proliferation, vis-a-vis precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods are discussed with focus on their modes of production, stylistic attributes, and philosophical orientations. The curios are classified as "traditional" (precolonial), "transitional" (colonial), and "transformational" (postcolonial). The

transformational works are discussed with more depth, as they represent the canon of new genres in African art.

The focus of this essay is not without peculiar problems. The most salient and intractable difficulty in the study of African art is the diversity of the cultures that produce the works. To solve this problem, Western scholars have improvised various approaches to viewing African art, such the categorization of art works by the nationality of their makers, and the grouping or classification of works by typology. Although these approaches have been useful in identifying regional activities and stylistic categories, they have proved inadequate in facilitating the understanding of the social and cultural contexts in which the works were produced. Due to these limitations, the methodology adopted in this essay entails a synoptic overview of past and present artistic activities on the continent, using the works of some artists as examples in the various segments discussed.

There are several thousands of practicing African artisans and fine artists. In spite of their ethnic differences, their works often depict common visual elements, such as the use of decorative patterns and illustrative representation of experience. For example, the pathos of South African artists like Dumile Feni and Vumikosi Zulu is reminiscent of the apathetic figures sometimes seen in the works of Zimbabwean and Nigerian artists like Sylvesta Mubayi (Shona) and Paul Igboanugo (Igbo). Because this essay does not purport to categorize the new genres of African art by ethnic distinction, artists and works used as examples have been chosen randomly. Some of the artists were referenced as a result of accessibility to pertinent data on their works.

Precolonial African Art

For one to give an in-depth account of new genres in African art without casting a retrospective glance at the traditional art forms that preceded and in most cases inspired them, would be analogous to recounting a story from the middle. The phrase "traditional African art" is used in reference to works of art produced in Africa during precolonial and most of the colonial eras. It is difficult to establish the beginning of artistic activities in Africa. This is so because traditional African art has not been well documented. Most of the artifacts were made out of materials that have a relatively short life span, such as wood, clay, fiber, and animal skin. The humid climate conditions of the continent and inadequate conservation measures have led to the disintegration of a myriad of African works of art. Although the exact time of their production is difficult to ascertain, terracotta heads and figurines excavated in the Nok area of northern Nigeria have been scientifically dated to around the 4th century B.C. The Nok sculptures and

similar works found in South Africa around the 6th century A.D. are some of the earliest works of art produced in Africa.

The corpus of traditional African art entails ubiquitous items, such as masks, religious icons, figurines, house posts, pottery, textiles, carved doors, jewelry, and body art, most of which were produced for religious purposes. Through rituals, traditional African art was used to communicate beliefs about life and after-life. Special objects were crafted as part of the paraphernalia for copious ceremonies involving birth, rebirth, puberty, marriage, coronation, worship, and death. For precolonial Africans, rituals fostered purity, harmony, balance, unity, and prosperity within the community. Apart from their earthly functions, rituals were regarded as a medium for the acknowledgment and placation of the metaphysical powers of ancestors.

Traditional African artists often practiced their crafts as supplementary activities to other occupations, such as subsistence agriculture. The type of art produced within a locality depended on the availability of raw materials. For example, woodcarving was prevalent in the highly forested evergreen belt of the Western shoreline, while inhabitants of the undulating plains of the Central zone were known for their outstanding skills in pottery produced from the clayey soil of the region. Despite their self-sufficiency, precolonial African communities established trade contacts with other cultures near and far. As a result, the peoples were able to import and export goods and services within their increasingly dynamic economies. Traditional African artists benefited from the trade contacts by becoming exposed to new ideas and by expanding the outlets for their products. The artists also gained access to materials that were not available within their immediate communities.

Conceptually, adherence to long-established techniques, forms, symbols, and icons were major preoccupations of traditional African artists. Apart from iconography, traditional African art was also inspired by folktales, proverbs, adages, myths, and legends. African myths are usually based on the exploits of certain individuals who triumphed over adversities to positively impact the lives of members of their communities. The colorful stories surrounding the lives of these heroes and heroines have provided African artists with themes for their works. Forms, tones, and texture in African art are expressions of the peoples' perception of the world around them. In short, they are portrayals of their ways of knowing and collective aesthetic preferences. As a result, the works are often used to evoke order, tranquility, and continuity in community life.

The royal institutions and traditional religions that sustained the production of precolonial African art came under attack with the strengthening of foreign religions like Christianity and Islam around the

later part of the fourteenth century. Africans were forced to destroy works of art that Christian missionaries and Islamic crusaders associated with rituals. Instead of cult and court objects, artists were encouraged to produce household utensils and icons for the Christian Church. Renowned African art historian Marshall Mount commented on the impact of Christian missionary activities on the paradigmatic changes observed in traditional African religions, art, and social institutions when he stated that:

> The breakdown of traditional [African] religions has . . . had the most devastating effect on traditional art. Christian missionaries, permanently established in Africa by the mid-nineteenth century, sought to supplant the prevailing religious practices by establishing their own churches and schools. At times they actually destroyed publicly, sometimes in dramatic bonfires, objects associated with African religious beliefs. Thus missionaries often almost completely destroyed native religious practices, thereby eliminating one of the strong raisons d'etre of most traditional African art. . . . Today, the religious and social traditions of Africa are in a state of flux. In many places they have already almost completely disintegrated. As a result, it is now exceedingly difficult to find artists who work expertly in the styles of their ancestors.[1]

In spite of their demise as described by Mount, aspects of the traditional art forms are still practiced throughout Africa and beyond. This continuity may be credited to the diligence of the apprenticeship systems and artists' guilds. Traditional African works of art have contributed in no small measure to the artistic culture of the world, and their sheer splendor has inspired numerous artists and art movements within the continent and beyond for centuries.

Colonial African Art

The colonization of several African nations by European powers around the nineteenth century resulted in paradigmatic changes in the social order of those societies. The European imperialists introduced autocratic governments that transformed the political, social, and economic establishments of their protectorates. For example, the British colonies were governed through the system of "indirect rule," while other colonial administrations, such as French and Portuguese, practiced totalitarianism.

These political developments led to the decline of traditional institutions. Artists who produced commissioned works for the institutions had to seek alternative livelihoods. Many became innovative by producing utilitarian items for the masses. For example, Benin court bronze casters gained the freedom to produce commissioned works for members of society after

being sworn to secrecy on the processes involved in royal casting. Another major transition that occurred in African art during colonization was the expansion of production techniques, which resulted from importation of new art materials and tools from Europe.

Post-Colonial African Art: New Genres and Transformational Philosophies

Postcolonial African art may be grouped into three major categories: traditional, urban, and international.[2] These three modes of production often share common sources of inspiration, and some of the artists defy any type of classification as their works shift back and forth from one category to the other. Traditional African art forms have managed to retain their essential characteristics because of the artists' ability to adjust to rampant socio-economic, religious, and political changes. The resilience of the traditional artists is seen in the works of Lamidi Fakeye and Jinadu Oladepo, both of Nigeria, and John Takawira of Zimbabwe.

Born in the ancient Yoruba town of Illa Orangun (in 1928), Lamidi Fakeye is a descendant of two generations of Yoruba wood-carvers. After being introduced to carving at an early age by his father, he became an apprentice at the sculpture workshop of his Uncle, George Bandele. Bandele had learned his outstanding carving skills from his own father, Areogun (1880–1954), who was one of the most prominent of all documented traditional Yoruba carvers. In addition to his seminal apprenticeship, Fakeye attended Father Kevin Carroll's sculpture workshop in Oye-Ekiti (1947–51), and shortly after, he enrolled in the prestigious Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, France, to study stone carving for a period of one year (1962–63). He has since worked as artist-in-residence in several art institutions that include the University of Ibadan, Nigeria; Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan (1966); and the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, Illinois (1972). Despite his academic engagements and numerous international art exhibitions, Fakeye's work remains rooted in the traditional Yoruba forms that inspired his humble beginnings as an artist. However, unlike his forefathers, who worked mostly for royalty and traditional religious purposes, Fakeye works on commission for corporate organizations, academic institutions, and collectors around the world.

Like Fakeye, Jinadu Oladepo is a Yoruba artist who uses traditional approaches in his work. Born in Oshogho, Nigeria, in 1924, Oladepo was trained as a blacksmith at a very early age by his father. He later attended the Oshogbo workshop in the mid-1960s, where he learned to sculpt and make household utensils under the guidance of Susan Wenger, and

Georgina and Ulli Beier, all of whom were European expatriates. A skillful brass caster, Oladepo uses the lost-wax method to produce editions of Ogboni cult figures. What distinguishes Oladepo's work from those of his predecessors is that apart from meeting the dwindling demands of local Ogboni cults, he had diversified his art to meet the demands of an international audience. His new products include accessories like bracelets, anklets, pendants, broaches, and rings. Today, his works are some of the most sought-after collectibles in contemporary African art.

John Takawira of Zimbabwe is another contemporary African artist who uses traditional approaches in his work. Born in 1938, Takawira was introduced to carving while attending a mission school in his hometown of Inyanga, Zimbabwe. His work reached maturity when he enrolled in Frank McEwen's art workshop, known as Vukutu school. In spite of limited sources of stylistic reference in Zimbabwean art, Takawira had found ways of integrating aspects of cultural heritage in his art. The themes of his works are inspired by traditional folktales, myths, and legends. He is well known in Europe, where his works are widely collected and shown in several art exhibitions.

Urban African Art

Urban art evolved in Africa with the development of metropolitan communities in the colonial and postcolonial periods. This art form usually depicts aspects of everyday-life activities in the urban dwellings. The stylistic approach of urban art includes realistic and semi-realistic renderings of familiar themes and fantasies. The artist's ideas are rendered in colorful paintings and transit art. Most of the urban artists are self-taught and they produce non-formal art. Their rudimentary depiction of urban life, which may be likened to child-art in some cases, has become an important hallmark of city life in Africa.

Urban Painting

The methodology employed by urban African painters is somewhat eclectic. The vibrant socio-economic and political atmosphere of urban centers provides the artists with an assortment of experiences from which the themes and contents of their works are drawn. For example, widespread poverty presents the artists with a recurring subject in their works. Following the euphoria of nationalism in the 1960s, most of Africa was besieged with ubiquitous military takeover. As inflation and poverty began to spread a suffocating blanket over the continent during this period, social

consciousness found refuge in the writings of indomitable journalists and the didactic works of urban artists.

Urban art is highly popular among Africans because the public often finds their novelty of appearance entertaining. Traditionally, Africans are accustomed to viewing works of art by looking first for the subject or scenario being conveyed. Urban art is suitable for such disposition, as the works usually relate their import in narrative formats. The efficacy of this art form in communicating visceral contents is evident in the works of Musa Yola of Nigeria and Marie Biazin of the Central African Republic.

Born in the Hausa-Fulani area of northern Nigeria in 1939, Musa Yola is an outstanding urban artist whose work has had a considerable impact on society. Essentially a muralist, Yola uses the medium as a means of reaching large audiences. His technique involves the juxtaposition of urban scenes against rural settings, thereby emphasizing the contrast between the two different environments. Although mural painting is not an entirely new art form in Africa, Yola, among other urban artists, had introduced pictorial murals in the post-independence years.

Pictorial murals are the largest and perhaps most compelling of the new genres of African art. They are commissioned by government agencies, corporate organizations, educational institutions, and private citizens. The tools and materials used (such as bristle brushes, latex paints, and tiles), and their contents and context of production contribute to their newness. Stylistically, bright colors are used to depict realistic representations and semi-abstractions of city life. The works connect artistic ingenuity with the history, hopes, and aspirations of the communities in which they are located.

It is worthy of note that some of Africa's urban muralists have advanced degrees in Western-styled education in the arts. Their academic training is usually reflected in their formal approach to composition and portrayal of influences from non-African mural traditions. For example, there is evidence of European mural influences in the works academically trained muralists like Yusuf Grillo and David dale of Nigeria.

Clement-Marie Biazin (1924–1981) introduced an anthropological dimension to urban painting in Africa. Biazin was, perhaps, the most pragmatic urban painter of his generation. He hailed from the Yacoma tribe in the Central African Republic, where he developed a keen interest in cultural anthropology and the preservation of traditional customs. Unlike most urban African artists, Biazin's effort at understanding and preserving aspects of his cultural heritage extended beyond his immediate community to include several other societies. At about the age of twenty, young Biazin began to educate himself about various cultures around the world. His primary objective was to study the relationship between the socio-economic

activities and visual culture of ancient societies. He familiarized himself with the challenges of exploration, and as a result, learned how to communicate in about six languages before embarking on a voyage of cultural fact-finding across Africa that would take him approximately twenty-five years to complete. Among the countries that Biazin visited during his odyssey were Gabon, Uganda, Tanzania, Zaire, Cameroon, Chad, and Sudan. Traveling on foot, Biazin painstakingly recorded his experiences in a journal in the form of written descriptions and quick sketches.

The philosophy that guided Biazin's art was centered on his sensitivity towards the preservation of African traditional cultures. He believed that African cultural practices are being methodically phased out by foreign influences, and should be documented for posterity. Biazin's work was inspired by African oral traditions, myths, and legends. Scenes generated from his cultural knowledge are combined with records of his odyssey in the production of highly didactic images. These elaborate works are embellished with texts and decorative patterns that are reminiscent of ancient Egyptian frescos. His oeuvre consists of about 800 drawings and paintings. Ironically, before his death in 1981, Biazin's lifetime work was documented on video tapes by French film producer Robert Seve. Seve also arranged for his works to be shown in several parts of Africa and Europe, including the prestigious Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, in 1978.

Flour-sack painting is a newly introduced genre of African art. This art form entails the stretching of flour-sacks over a wooden frame as a substitute for the more expensive canvas. Enamel paints are used instead of pigments designed for oil painting. Flour-sack painting began as a way of recycling the abundantly available brown fabric that was used in packaging flour from Western and Asian factories. This medium was made popular in the 1970s by urban Congolese artists and has since been widely used by other urban artists across the continent. Several flour-sack painters work under challenging conditions in the large cities, and they hardly have organized ways of selling their products. Because materials used in producing flour-sack paintings are relatively inexpensive, the paintings are sold at affordable prices by street vendors and in open market spaces. The various cultural activities in the urban communities provide the artists with a variety of subject matters to work with. Works produced are also influenced by the artists' exposure to foreign visual and material cultures, such as textile designs, fashion trends, and motion pictures.

Transit Art

Transit art is widely practiced among urban artists. The works usually entail parabolic texts and illustrations rendered on the side-panels and

tailgates of haulage and commuter vehicles. The art works bear messages of hope and moral virtues that are quoted from familiar adages, parables, and religious verses. For example, verses from Psalm 23 are widely used in Christian populated parts of West Africa, while verses from the Holy Koran are used in the Islamic regions of Central and Northern Africa. One of the most widely used transit art verses in the Yoruba region of Western Nigeria is: "Oluwa ni oluso aguntan mi" or "The Lord is my Shepherd." This verse is usually embellished with illustrations of two angels flanking the text on both sides. This pragmatic use of transit art was directed at curbing the excesses of secular practices in African societies. Other stylistic approaches include the eclectic appropriation of images of foreign heroes (especially motion picture heroes), characters from folk tales, myths, and legends.

Art Workshops

Several non-academically trained urban African artists attended art workshops for the purpose of developing their creative skills. Art workshops became prevalent in postcolonial Africa as a means of introducing new styles and materials, and encouraging experimentation and continuity of traditional art forms. Sponsored by private organizations and government agencies, the average workshop is conducted over a period of one to two weeks. A few programs sometimes metastasize into structured art centers, as was the case with the Vukutu workshop in Zimbabwe. Although artists hardly participate in the workshops for the purpose of making profits, they sometimes benefit from the sales of their works. Because participants are not charged any fees, they are obligated to give an agreed number of produced works to organizers. Donated works are featured in traveling exhibitions or displayed in the corporate buildings of sponsors. As a result of widespread economic problems in Africa, most of the workshops and exhibitions are sponsored by foreign consulates and philanthropic organizations like the Harmon Foundation.

Some Christian missionaries from Europe organized art workshops in the early part of the postcolonial era for the purpose of fostering creativity and upright behavior among the youth in African communities. Examples of such workshops include Father Kevin Carroll's in Nigeria, and Father Groeber's in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). A distinct characteristic of works produced in these workshops is that they used Christian themes for contents.

Experiences in the workshops and follow-up exhibitions have provided participating artists with increased visibility in their communities and beyond. As a result of such exposure, some of the artists have been offered teaching residencies in Europe and America. Among the urban artists who

have participated in overseas residency programs are Twins Seven-Seven and Jimoh Buraimoh of Nigeria.

Twins Seven-Seven is one of Africa's most famous urban painters. Born in 1944 in Kabba, Nigeria, Twins Seven-Seven's birth names are Taiwo Olaniyi Oyewale Salau. Seven-Seven'attended the Oshogho art workshop in 1964, where he learned how to paint on cloth and other surfaces. His fantasy-like paintings are inspired by Yoruba myths and legends. These phantom tales constitute a pool of ideas and philosophies from which the artist draws the contents of his art. Seven-Seven has conducted several painting workshops in the United States. He also worked as a teacher at Merced College, California, in 1972. A prolific artist, Seven-Seven's works has been displayed internationally in about fifteen solo shows and one hundred group exhibitions.

Born in 1943, in Oshogbo, Nigeria, Buraimoh attended the Oshogbo art workshop in 1964 where he learned painting. In 1974, he received a certificate in sculpture from the Department of Fine Arts at the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria. Prior to his workshop experience, Buraimoh had worked as a light technician and stage performer with the Duro Ladipo traveling theater. His activities with Ladipo's group provided him with a broad range of subjects for his paintings. As in Ladipo's theater performances, the contents of Buraimoh's art works are inspired by Yoruba folktales, myths, and legends. European influences are seen in his formal stylistic approach, which entails the overlapping of geometric shapes. Buraimoh's style was also influenced by his exposure to European mentors such as Ulli and Georgiana Beier, Susan Wenger, and Father Kevin Carol. While in the Oshogbo workshop, Buraimoh expanded his media to include painting and mosaic murals. Today, he is one of the most internationally recognized Nigerian artists. He has produced a total of fifteen commissioned mosaics in Nigeria and has conducted art workshops in several institutions of higher learning at home and in Europe and the United States. His oeuvre entails characteristics of both urban and international art categories, and has been shown in about twenty solo exhibitions and one hundred group exhibitions.

International African Art

Western-Styled Education and Modernism

International African art represents the antitheses of the traditional and urban art categories in artists' training. Most international artists received Western-type training in the arts from institutions of higher learning. The introduction of Western-styled art instruction in Africa could be traced to

the integration of "modern art" into the high school curriculum starting from around the 1920s. For example, Nigerian artist Aina Onabolu introduced realism to Nigerian school art when he returned from Europe in 1920 with a degree in Fine Arts. Ghana and Cameroon also introduced modern art courses in their high schools around the mid-1920s. Upon graduating from secondary school, several prospective artists had registered in institutions of higher learning for advanced studies in the Fine Arts. The first of these institutions of Fine Arts was established in 1936 as an academic division in Achimota College in Accra, Ghana. Other art institutions that were founded in subsequent years include the Makerere University College of Fine Art, which was established in 1939; the Poto-Poto School of Art, established in Brazzaville, Congo, in 1951; and the art division of the Nigerian College of Arts, Science, and Technology, established in Ibadan, in 1953. These schools have influenced the philosophical orientation and art production processes of several International African artists.

Apart from the influence of Western-styled education, the introduction of "modernism" as a way of life in Africa has had a profound impact on the careers of international artists. Modernism was imposed on African societies by industrialized nations as a means of helping the indigenous peoples to elevate their "primitive" ways of living to "modern" standards. The modernization of Africa therefore connotes social and economic transformation. The method applied in effecting the prescribed change entailed the introduction of machinery, industrially mass-produced goods, and new sets of moral, social, religious, and political values. As a result, several Africans have viewed modernity with suspicion as an agency for the domination of African nations by capitalist economies.

Despite the perception of modernity as a destabilizing phenomenon in Africa, it led to paradigm shifts in education across the continent. In art education, there were tensions between two schools of thought as to what the curriculum should entail. Some were in favor of "modernization" of the curriculum, while others advocated the development of indigenous art forms that were inspired by traditional aesthetic philosophy. In Nigeria for example, Onabolu advocated a formal modernist approach to school art, while Kenneth Murray (a British educator) encouraged the integration of traditional art forms in the curriculum. As in other parts of Africa, Onabolu's advocacy for formalism prevailed. School art programs were restructured to meet the needs of the changing societies. For example, woodwork and technology are often taught in an interdisciplinary manner in the "modern schools" as a way of changing the traditional mode of woodwork from the simple tools approach to a technology-based industry. The goal of this approach was to structure the curriculum in ways that

would prepare school graduates for productive participation in the increasingly internationalized economies. The introduction of modern education in combination with the importation of new tools, materials, and ideas in the arts, eventually led to the development of new genres in African art.

Stemming from their intellectual capabilities, the international artists have been able to put both past and present activities in African art in perspective. This category of artists often temper their formal education in the Fine Arts with some degree of interest in traditional art forms. The artists recognize the importance of sustaining their artistic heritage for posterity, while simultaneously embracing the challenges and opportunities presented by an increasingly connected global environment. As a result of their global outlook, the international artists have extended their audience base beyond their immediate societies to include foreign countries.

International African art has been marked by the introduction of new media, styles, and the adaptation of traditional African symbols in nonconventional ways. They experiment with a variety of new media, such as easel painting, printmaking, plastic sculpture, photography, and cartoons. As a result of their independence from conventions, international artists are usually individualistic in their stylistic approach. While they are influenced by both Western styles and traditional African art, they are not confined by them. Many of the artists have become quite famous both at home and abroad as a result of their remarkable works and exhibitions. A close observation of the professional activities of international African art reveals complex patterns of development.

Easel Painting

Easel painting is the most popular of the new genres in African art. A majority of Africa's easel painters have advanced training in the art form from Western-styled institutions. In countries like Nigeria and Senegal, paintings produced are hybrid works that draw upon traditional forms. Academic training has provided most of the international painters with opportunities to explore new creative possibilities. As a result of extensive formal education, many of the artists have acquired the skills and knowledge needed to establish individual styles. Their self-determined career paths have been influenced by political awareness and social activism. The intellectual environment of the institutions of higher learning and the communicative possibilities provided by the art media have empowered the artists as agents of social change. This added sense of purpose has provided the artists with pride in their work. Although the artists are widely perceived as innovative, critics have sometimes described

them as being too self-absorbed in rhetorical discourse at the expense of qualitative studio production.

Another impact of Western-styled training on the on the works of the artists is their attribution of originality of concept with excellence. This and their knowledge of world art history are the primary factors that distinguish academically trained artists from their self-taught and apprenticeship-trained counterparts whose works are based on prototypes. The academically trained painters have produced art works that compare favorably with those of their European and American counterparts. However, their works have not been adequately appreciated at home because of their hybridization and perceived disconnection from established art traditions. Furthermore, the artists' works are yet to be accorded equal international status with those produced by their European and American counterparts. In spite of these and other challenges, several of the academically trained painters have gained national and international recognition for their superb productions. Among such outstanding artists are Yusuf Grillo of Nigeria and Ibou Diouf of Senegal. A synoptic review of these artists' professional activities will enhance an understanding of the significance of their works.

Inventiveness in contemporary African painting is seen in the works of Yusuf Grillo. Born in 1934 in Lagos, Nigeria, Grillo is one of Africa's foremost painters. He was one of the pioneers of the Nigerian College of Arts, Science & Technology, Zaria, where he received a diploma in fine arts in 1960. After receiving a postgraduate diploma in education from the same institution a year later, Grillo proceeded to study at Cambridge University, England, in 1966. He studied in the United States and in Germany, where he was awarded a diploma in industrial design education in 1979. Stylistically, Grillo's work combines the angular characteristics of traditional Yoruba sculpture with the formalism of Western art traditions. He portrays scenes from every-day Yoruba life in shades of blue that are reminiscent of Yoruba "adire" or resist-dye textiles. Grillo produces his paintings on canvases and primed hardboard. A versatile artist, his commissioned works include about fifteen mosaic and low-relief murals, and twenty stained-glass church windows. Grillo's exhibition record includes about ten solo and thirty group shows, some of which took place in Europe and the United States. The philosophy that guides his work is based on the belief that art production should not be confined to established traditional methods. In a comment about the sources of influence on his work, he stated that:

> The contemporary Nigerian artist must accept those influences which are vital to him. It does not matter whether these are drawn from Yoruba

> sculpture or Picasso paintings, both of which incidentally, I find exciting.
> The artist should not worry about the results of these borrowings because
> the work, if sincere, cannot help but be a Nigerian work since it is created
> by a Nigerian.[3]

Adaptation of Western aesthetic concepts has been criticized by advocates
of traditional African art as a negative departure from the ancient art forms.
The German art critic Ulli Beier reflected on the careers of contemporary
African artists whose works are influenced by Western-styled education,
when he stated that:

> Educated at specialized institutions in Africa and overseas, most of them
> belong to a second generation in the field, and if they consciously relate to
> earlier African art, they know how to distort it, how to submit it to their
> own creative process . . . if the past inspires them, it does not bind them.[4]

Most modern African painters are influenced by abstract expressionism as
they are by traditional art forms. The artists often adapt these influences in
ways that result in unique works.

Ibou Diouf of Senegal is another renowned contemporary African
painter whose work falls into the category of international art. He was born
in Tivaouane in 1953, where he studied painting with Senegalese master
painter Papa Ibra Tall. Diouf's paintings are done on a large scale and with
intricate details. His use of geometric shapes and decorative patterns is
reminiscent of ancient Egyptian murals. Diouf is committed to the
promotion of Senegalese art as a form of national identity. As a result, his
works often depict aspects of Senegalese cultural practices. Like Tall, Diouf
adopted the nationally popular technique of tapestry. Leopold Senghor, who
was President of Senegal between 1960 and 1980, had encouraged tapestry
in his country as a way of establishing a national identity. Senghor's interest
in this art form was inspired by the philosophy of Negritude and the need to
establish a pan-African aesthetic. Negritude was promoted across Africa by
Senghor as an attempt at re-establishing traditions that were displaced
during colonialism. Diouf's politically inspired tapestries have been
featured in numerous exhibitions around the world.

Printmaking

Printmaking was introduced to African art through Western-styled art
institutions and workshops. The medium became popular among African
artists because of its variety of methodology (such as etching, lithography,
serigraphy, and relief) and the advantage of multiple editions. The contents

and stylistic approach of contemporary African printmaking are as diverse as the training and cultural experiences of the artists. This diversity is seen in the works of quintessential printmakers like Irein Wangboje and Bruce Onabrakpeya of Nigeria, and El Loko of Togo.

Irein Wangboje (1930–1999) was a renowned printmaker and one of Nigeria's pioneers in the field of art education. His training included a diploma in graphic and commercial design from the Nigerian College of Arts, Science & Technology, Zaria, in 1959. Shortly after graduating from Zaria, he traveled to the United States to study advanced design at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. He received a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Cranbrook Academy in 1963, and proceeded to complete his academic training with a doctoral degree in art education from New York University in 1968. Like some of his contemporaries, such as Grillo and Bruce Onobrakpeya, Wangboje pursued two careers as artist and educator. As an artist, he experimented with various printmaking materials and techniques. Some of his outstanding works were done in etching and linoleum relief prints. With these materials, Wangboje explored aspects of Nigerian cultural practices.

Exploration of the possibilities of printmaking as a medium is central to Nwangboje's works. He employed gestural lines and stylized forms in conveying mnemonic import as opposed to realistic representations. The design approach to his works entails the use of overlapping geometric forms that recall traditional African sculpture and European cubist renditions. His ascetism with color is somewhat foreshadowed by a pervasive use of traditional African patterns and themes. The philosophy that guided his work was that art is essentially didactic in nature. He believed that contemporary African artists have a collective responsibility to reconstruct the limiting legacy of colonialism by rejuvenating traditional aesthetics and cultural values. His works has been displayed in Nigeria and abroad in eight solo exhibitions and thirty group shows.

Wangboje emphasized the need to make art education accessible to all Nigerian children. This view was echoed in many of his academic engagements across Africa. While Wangboje advocated Western-styled art education, he also encouraged the integration of traditional art forms in the school curriculum. During his tenure at the Obafemi Awolowo University (then University of Ife) and in Zaria, he invited non-academically trained artists to participate in campus workshops as a means of developing their skills and sharing their knowledge of traditional processes with faculty and students. Wangboje pioneered the advocacy for artists-in-schools residency programs in which traditional artists were encouraged to collaborate with public school teachers in the process imparting knowledge about traditional art techniques.

Bruce Onabrakpeya is widely regarded as the most versatile printmaker in all of Africa. Born in 1932, in Agbarha-Otor near Ughelli, Nigeria, Onabrakpeya was introduced to art at an early age by his father, who was a sculptor. In 1961, he received a diploma in fine arts from the Nigerian College of Arts, Science & Technology in Zaria. A certified teacher, Onabrakpeya combined a career in studio art with grade-school teaching until he became a full-time artist in 1980. Although he is essentially a printmaker, his body of work includes several paintings, drawings, and low-relief sculpture.

Onabrakpeya emerged as a nationally and internationally recognized artist in 1964, when he produced a series of successful prints at workshops organized in Ibadan and Oshogbo by Ulli Beier and the Dutch printmaker Ru van Rossem. During these workshops, Onabrapkeya developed the technique of embossed prints. He often generates his themes from myths, legends, and folk tales told within the Urhobo culture. Sylistically, Onabrakpeya embellishes proportionate figures with intricate traditional motifs. His prodigious oeuvre is inspired by various stylistic sources as his travels around Nigeria and beyond has provided him with a reservoir of artistic knowledge from which he draws symbols and ideas for his work. Onabrakpeya's work demonstrates exceptional talent for improvisation of forms and use of decorative patterns. His proclivity for eclectic forms distinguishes his work from those of other contemporary African artists. The philosophy that nurtures Onabrakpeya's art is somewhat pragmatic. He believes that a work of art should inform its viewer about the aesthetic sensibilities that inspired it. He therefore perceives works of art as instruments for the expansion of cultural and aesthetic experience. Due to his large number of commissioned works and a high demand for his prints, Onabrakpeya employed about three assistants to work with him in his studio, a practice that is reminiscent of traditional apprenticeship workshops and Western-styled printmaking studios, as in Andy Warhol's in the United States, in the early 1970s. Onabrakpeya has staged about fifty solo exhibitions and participated in over 150 group shows.

El Loko is another prominent printmaker from the coastal areas of West Africa. Born in 1950 in Pedakondji, Togo, Loko attended school in the neighboring country of Ghana, where he learned printmaking. He later traveled to Germany for further training in painting and printmaking. Loko combines traditional African art forms with his keen interest in Western art techniques. He uses plane forms and traditional African motifs that give his works a decorative appearance, and his art philosophy is based on the Western theory of mimesis. Loko finds it appropriate to replicate ideas and images from established art traditions, regardless of whether they are native or foreign. He posits that it is inevitable for the artist to add a personal touch

in the process of appropriation. Loko's work has been exhibited extensively in Africa and Europe.

Sculpture

Sculpture is, perhaps, the art medium that has gone through the most distinctive transformation of all African art media. Although they often incorporate the iconographic and symbolic contents of traditional African sculpture in their works, contemporary African sculptors have adopted the "plastic" forms of Western sculpture. As in other new genres of African art, the adaptation of plastic sculpture was inspired by the importation of new materials, exposure to Western art production processes, and reaction to market forces. The introduction of new art materials like fiber glass, plastic raisins, and casting plaster made it possible for African sculptors to adapt their works to more organic and dynamic forms.

Through Western-styled training, many of the sculptors were exposed to various Western methods of production. For example, the use of highly stylized forms in the work of Ben Osawe of Nigeria was influenced by his exposure to the art of prominent Western sculptors like Henry Moore and Constantin Brancusi, both of whom he learned about during his training at the Camberwell school of Art and Crafts in London, from 1960 to 1965. Before going to Camberwell, Osawe had received a diploma from the School of Graphic Arts in London, in 1959. Born in 1931 in Abgor, Delta State, Nigeria, Osawe's father was a court artist at the palace of the Oba of Benin when he was a child. He became exposed to sculpture by observing his father at work at a very early age. Despite his father's suggestion that he should learn a more prestigious trade, Osawe developed his lettering skills and became a sign writer and muralist earlier in his career. After his education in Europe, Osawe adopted a syncretic approach to his work that allowed him to combine Western formalism with traditional African forms. Osawe's work is influenced by his early exposure to traditional Benin art. With wood as his favorite medium, his works entails a vivid reference to the geometric shapes of Benin court carvings.

In contrast to Osawe's focus on formal aesthetic issues, the works of several contemporary African sculptors are guided by marketing conditions. This situation is most commonly found in countries like Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Kenya, where many of the contemporary sculptors produce exclusively for export purposes.

In Zimbabwe, British collector Frank McEwen had helped to establish an intellectual framework for the appreciation of contemporary Zimbabwean art. This resulted in the depolarization of art contents and the ability of foreign audiences to understand the works. McEwen also helped

to establish a broad-based market for the artists. In 1956, as the Director of the newly established National Gallery in Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe), McEwen influenced the works of several artists such as Mukarogbwa, whom he converted from stone carver to painter, and Paul Gwichiri, who was encouraged to leave his work as a museum attendant with McEwen to become a painter. As part of McEwen's efforts at motivating the artists, he introduced them to the works of European artists like Pablo Picasso, Henry Moore, and the German Expressionists, such as Emile Nolde and Oscar Kokochska. Familiarity with the works and life experiences of these foreign artists was expected to inspire discipline, focus, and originality in the works of Zimbabwean artists.

Apart from the syncretism of combining foreign influences with original ideas, McEwen encouraged the artists to create works that are reflective of their artistic heritage without confining themselves to established styles. As an incentive for producing original works, McEwen's American-born wife, Mary McEwen, organized a monthly merits award session in which selected artists were recognized for innovative concepts, and especially for works that successfully integrated Shona traditional forms. The integration of traditional symbols had facilitated a positive reputation for the workshop in foreign markets. It also helped to sustain continuity in Shona art. McEwen's workshop was eventually moved to Vukutu as a means of avoiding excessive government control over the artists' creative processes. For the purpose of reaching larger audiences, some of the workshop artists were producing two types of work, one for local consumers and another for export. Emphasis on exportation had lead to the proliferation of tourist art, which McEwen described as "airport art." Although McEwen's promotion of individualism may have generated originality in works produced, it was antithetical to the traditional apprenticeship systems that had sustained the Shona art traditions for several decades.

McEwen has been criticized for exploiting participants in his workshop by controlling their creativity for personal gain. Upon relocating to Africa from Paris as an unsuccessful artist, McEwen cautioned against the deleterious effect of Western influence on authentic traditional art. He perceived Western-styled art institutions and their formal styles as corrupt and destructive to the purity of African art. When reviewed closely, McEwen's polemic is not without contradictions, in that the extent of his knowledge and understanding of Zimbabwean cultures were not sufficient to justify his self-appointed position of cultural leader. Furthermore, his preoccupation with mercantilism is antithetical to the traditional emphasis on creativity, apprenticeship, and continuity. His nebulous perception of originality may have resulted in the denial to his workshop participants of beneficial influences.

Despite the lure of money, some African artists have managed to resist outside control over their works. For example, the sculptors of Makonde, Tanzania, resisted the domineering posture of gallery owners by forming cooperatives. These artists' groups were created for the purpose of developing a bargaining leverage with workshop coordinators and gallery owners. As a result of emerging mercantilist approach to Tanzanian art, the artists perceived their participation in issues of valorization and control of art contents as crucial to the survival of their art traditions. In Nairobi, Kenya, members of the Ngecha Artists' Association and workspace (formed in 1995) often combine their skills to produce elaborate works of art. The artists have used these collaborations as leverage for bargaining for prices and promoting the careers of members. Joint projects also provide members of cooperatives with opportunities for peer mentoring. These defensive reactions by artists' groups were triggered by overbearing demands by some art workshops, galleries, and collectors, who, among other requests, insisted that the artists produce works that look "primitive" for the purpose of conforming to stereotypes. Postcolonial Makonde artists were encouraged to use figurative approaches to produce works that illustrate their experiences of community life. They were advised to explore subjects that were traditionally perceived as unsuitable, but reflect contemporary social reality. As a result, social ills like poverty, homelessness, and violence are used as themes for several contemporary African sculptures and other works of art.

Some contemporary African sculptors produce nonconventional works for local audiences. For example, casket sculpture is an art form that was introduced in some African societies in the post-independence years. In the Ga culture of Ghana for example, caskets are modeled in form of luxurious automobiles, houses, animals, and ostentatious household items. The ideology that inspired the production of casket sculptures is based on the widespread belief in life-after-death. In Ghanaian cosmology, the quality of life as lived in the tangible realm of the living, is perceived as a precursory indicator of the quality of existence in the transcendental realm of spiritual entities. In a comment about the sculptural coffins of Kane Kwei, a Ga native, dele jegede, noted that:

> An engaging undercurrent in Kwei's work is the notion of location, relocation, and dislocation. His work embodies a philosophical sophistication that addresses certain immutable paradoxes: fixity and impermanence, death and life, hyperbole and eternal reticence. Nothing can be more postmodern than coffins that subvert the essence of terminality, triggering a euphoric joie de vivre in the beholder. This, precisely, underlines the significance of kwei to contemporary visual

culture: his ability to translate the arcane and rarefied philosophy of life into something graspable, practical, and colorful.[5]

The coffin sculptures has expanded the dimensions of expressive culture among the Gas. Such innovative approach to visual and material culture has resulted in widespread reconstruction of authentic traditional practices across Africa. Classical and modernist conception of African art has been challenged by the postmodern rejection of marginalizing stigmas.

Photography

The beginning of photography as a medium in African art could be traced to advancement in the practice of journalism beginning in the colonial era. During this period, socio-political events were documented in glossy black and white prints. Such documentations were eventually used as illustrations in pages of daily newspapers and periodical news bulletins and magazines, as seen in the exploits of Peter Obey of Nigeria, who became a household name in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of his graphic documentation of widespread poverty and social injustices within the Nigerian society. As an art form, photography has provided some contemporary African artists with an avenue for evocation of traditions, culture, customs, and social status. For example, Seydou Keita of Angola's photography represents a window to his cultural heritage. Keita documents important socio-political developments and expressive cultural practices in Angola. In colonial Africa, the transfer of knowledge in photography was done through the process of apprenticeship. Contemporaneously, the teaching of photography as a subject in Western-styled institutions had resulted in a broader use of the medium.

Other new genres of African art include cartoon and commercial art. Cartoon presented several African artists with the opportunity to make socio-political commentary. The cartoonists were able to reach a large number of Africans by publishing their commentaries in magazines, journals, and daily newspapers. Because of their roles as socio-political critics, several cartoonists were denied freedom of expression by totalitarian military regimes. In spite of the political oppression of cartoonists and journalists, many of them became popular figures within society. In Nigeria, dele jegede and Josy Ajiboye were newspaper cartoonists who became household names in spite of numerous incidences of government aggression towards the newspapers that featured their works. Their playful line drawings and the didactic texts that accompanied them were sources of socio-political enlightenment for many Nigerians and international observers in the 1970s and 1980s.

Commercial art evolved with the growth of industries in postcolonial Africa. The use of these art works has been successful because it entails exciting illustrations and catchy phrases. For this reason, they are accessible to a diverse audience. For example, individuals who are unable to comprehend the text of a poster may be able to decipher its contents by analyzing the visual illustration. This has been especially effective in posters of consumer products like beverages and cigarettes. Poster designs have also been used by government agencies for purposes of education and propaganda. This use of posters has been very effective in the rural communities, where most people have limited channels for receiving information as a result of illiteracy, poverty, and lack of electrical infrastructure with which electronic equipments could be operated.

Isms

Some contemporary African artists have sought avenues for the dissemination of common ideas and promotion of collective visions and philosophies. For example, Ulism and Onaism were established by some Nigerian artists as a forum for the propagation of shared aesthetic values. In a comment about the development of new art movements in Nigeria, Bernice Kelly and Janet Stanley noted that:

> Among the academic artists [of Nigeria], recent groupings of kindred spirits with a shared vision or philosophy have led to the development of self-defined circles of artists, reflecting such "isms" as Ulism and Onaism. These movements are inspired by Igbo and Yoruba heritage respectively, but project a decidedly modern vision imbued with a social responsibility. Uli is a symbolic design system used among the Igbo to adorn women's bodies and decorate shrine walls. These uli symbols have been adapted by Nsukka artists to form part of their visual vocabulary. Ona is a Yoruba word meaning decoration, pattern, ornamentation, elaboration and has become the philosophical foundation for the Ona artists at Ile-Ife. Nigerian artists at Nsukka, Ile-Ife and elsewhere are beginning to forge a national identity, as they adapt and fuse the traditions of the past to the realities of the present.[6]

It is safe to assume that the development of Western-styled art movements in Africa, as in Ulism and Onaism, may be attributed to the exposure of the artists to similar movements in Europe. The primary difference between these movements and the European models is found in their *raison d'être*. For example, while the establishment of the German Expressionist movement was inspired by the need for social reform in post-

war Germany, both Ulism and Onaism are derivations of vicarious cultural promotions that are validated with cerebral manifestos. African art isms have not received ubiquitous acceptance because their beginnings are not necessarily based on profound philosophical constructs.

Art and Nationalism in Africa

Traditional African communities perceived art as an integral aspect of everyday life, while contemporary societies view art as a modern paradigm—an autonomous domain that is worthy of isolated contemplation. For this reason, contemporary African art has been perceived by African governments as inherently imbued with unique aesthetic qualities that could be channeled for promotion of national pride. In countries like Senegal, Nigeria, and Ghana, government agencies were established to oversee the development of art and culture in society. These initiatives began during the early years of independence as an intervention to revive the deteriorating art and cultural institutions. Through these agencies, promising artists were groomed for good citizenship and continuity of established artistic traditions.

As the development programs matured, the promotion of a positive national identity became more important to some of the artists than personal aggrandizement. Artists across the continent began to develop a sense of responsibility to society and to their peers. This feeling of "collective consciousness" resulted in the formation of several artists' cooperatives and associations.

As a result of national consciousness on the value of art and culture, there was a surge in artistic productivity on a scale that was unprecedented in the history of the continent. One of the most important developments during this period was the initiative to experiment with new ideas and media. Several artists benefited from art education grants with which they received advanced training at home and abroad. This resulted in the acquisition of new skills and the creation of new genres. Many of the vanguard artists of the early years of nationalism have developed their works to internationally acclaimed standards.

Despite pockets of success in the initiative, the goal of promoting a national identity through art has been difficult to achieve in some of the countries as a result of sectional differences. Most of the artists produced works that were reflective of their cultural or ethnic backgrounds as opposed to their national identity. This is because the artists' ethnic backgrounds provide readily accessible experiences for mininarratives as opposed to the more detached metanarratives of a nationally focused art. For example, it may be easier for a Yoruba artist to show "Yoruba

influences" as opposed to "Nigerian influences." Several African countries have attempted to blur the "ethnic divide" in their societies by developing and implementing special initiatives for national unity through art. Clearly defined national identities are difficult to form and sustain in Africa because of entrenched ethnic differences. Furthermore, ad hoc concepts of nationalism have been espoused by the various governments through agencies and social institutions that are estranged from the daily realities of most Africans. The further removed an African is from the urban centers and the governments instruments of propaganda, the less meaningful the concept of nationalism becomes.

In Nigeria, the Federal government commissioned several artists from different parts of the country to produce exquisite works of art for the nation's ultramodern international airport in Lagos, known as the Muritala Mohammed Airport. The artists were charged with producing works that would foster the image of a united, progressive, and culturally rich society. Although national initiatives like the Muritala project are sometimes successful, they hardly provide long-term solutions to the problems they were meant to address. Some artists have found that Government-sponsored art projects often entail stipulated guidelines that stifle creativity. Furthermore, government-sponsored projects may be disrupted by sudden changes in administration, especially in countries under military rule.

The current shift towards the postmodernism paradigm has resulted in the re-embracement of traditional art forms by several contemporary African artists, especially those who initially abandoned them for the trendy doctrines of modernism. Although there is still a widespread appetite for imported products and ideas, there is also a renewed interest in locally produced goods and services as a source of cultural identity and pride.

Migration and Cultural Displacement

Some contemporary African artists have relocated abroad for the purpose of overcoming limitations like inadequate sponsorship and patronage, scarcity of tools and supplies, and lack of broad-based appreciation for their conceptual and stylistic approaches. Ironically, some of the artists residing overseas, especially in the West, are also marginalized in ways that include lack of full appreciation for the contents of their works and the contexts within which they were produced, because the artistic intent of the works are often difficult for members of the host country to appreciate. Such artists often feel culturally displaced. This situation is usually compounded by their lack of access to government grants and scholarships. Furthermore, their process of creativity is sometimes hampered by lack of tangible cultural stimulation for inspiration. Therefore,

the artists often depend on memory for African oriented visual references. As a result, their works sometimes lack clarity of contents. Like their contemporaries back home, most of the artists are dependent on galleries for the distribution of their art works. The marketing transactions are not without problems, as some collectors regard works produced by African artists living overseas as lacking authenticity. Such perception is based on the idea that "real" African art should be produced in Africa. European and Western audiences are apt to generalize works of art produced by outside groups through characterizations. The idiosyncrasies of individual artists within these groups, especially those temporarily or permanently removed from the group, are perceived as less significant in relation to commonly shared traits.

Through their writings, African intellectuals have contributed to the understanding and acceptability of African art worldwide. Among such activists are literary writers and historians, such as Wole Soyinka and Toyin Falola. African artists, regardless of the training they have received, have also influenced the popularity of their profession through outstanding exhibitions and publications. Lastly, international popularity of African art has been enhanced by increased movement of goods, services, and ideas between Africa and the rest of the world.

Conclusion

In spite of the diversity of contemporary African art, pervasive aesthetic idioms are linked in a web of seminal metaphors. The profundity of the new genres is indicative of an indomitable vision. Unbounded by categorizations, the artists often syncretize traditional forms with individual innovations and foreign influences. It is quite foreseeable that the visual arts will continue to provide Africa with an avenue to make unique contributions to the human experience.

Notes

1. Marshal Ward Mount, *African Art: The Years since 1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 4.
2. Susan Vogel, *Africa Explores: 20th Century African Art* (New York: The Center for African Art, 1991).
3. Quoted in Mount, *African Art*, 127.
4. Quoted in ibid., 133.
5. jegede, dele. *Contemporary African Art: Five Artists Diverse Trends* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Museum of Art, 2000), 52.

6.   Kelly, Bernice. *Nigerian Artists: A Who's Who and Bibliography* (New York: Hans Zell Publishers, 1993), 6–7.

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8

The Role of Traditional Music in the Writing of Cultural History: The Case of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya[1]

Maurice Amutabi

I

It was Bethwel Allan Ogot who pioneered in the use of oral sources in Kenya in particular, and East Africa in general, in the writing of history. In his seminal publication of his research work among the Luo entitled *History of the Southern Luo*, the world was introduced to new possibilities in reconstructing African history (Ogot 1967). This genre led to a plethora of works by almost two generations of scholars in Kenya and East Africa (Were 1967; Mwaniki 1973; Kipkorir and Welbourn 1973; Muriuki 1974; Ochieng' 1974; Mwanzi 1977; Ayot 1979; Towett 1979). Many of the works were also published by B. A. Ogot's project, the East African Publishing House. Today, cultural historians all over the world are reconstructing the past using anthropological tools that have long been used in Africa. They are using art, architecture, perception and senses, production and consumption, the body, popular culture and class identity, mentalities, emotions, memories, and music. It is against this background that this paper examines the place of music in the reconstruction of Abaluyia history. It is a revisionist attempt that highlights and compliments the work of G. S. Were, the most authoritative source of the history of the Abaluyia.

Music, especially songs, may be critiqued as representing fiction and essentially the imagination of composers. There is music that is composed to commemorate or celebrate or remember certain historical moments, the "spirit of the age." Such songs are as much records of historical facts as they may be forms of entertainment or mourning.[2] The fictive notion of music is not denied, however, but this does not render it useless in informing us about any event. This is one notion that has dominated a certain clique of traditional historians who have rejected fiction as having nothing to contribute to history, insisting on history as "fact." But an analysis of levels of conceptualization of historical work, according to Hayden White, reveals the subjective nature of all forms of writings and the influencing role of the "environment." This therefore challenges the traditional notions of "fact," making "fact" almost a mirage and at times an exercise in futility.

The line between fiction and history is no doubt very narrow. White says, "The historian 'finds' his stories, whereas the fiction writer 'invents' his," although he concedes that the invention may also play a part in the historian's operations (White 1973, 6). White points out the levels of conceptualization in historical work as including chronicle, story, mode of emplotment, mode of argument, and mode of ideological implication. These forms represent certain "processes of selection and arrangement of data from unprocessed historical record in the interest of rendering that record more comprehensible to the audience of a particular kind" (White 1973, 5). Having been conceived in this manner, the historical work represents an attempt to mediate between the historical filed, the raw fact, the existing historical writings, and the consumers of history.

The role of oral sources in the writing of history in Africa has been crystallized by many years of debates, postulation, and acceptance. Many researches have authenticated the feasibility and therapeutic efficacy of uses of this genre of sources in reconstructing history. It is a crusade that was formidably fostered by the work of Africanist and African scholars like Thomas Hodgkin, Basil Davidson, Terence Ranger, Philip Curtin, Steven Feierman, Leonard Thompson and Jan Vansina, K. O. Dike, and B. A. Ogot. The centrality of oral sources has been revealed in many historical writings on Africa ever since (UNESCO 1984; Miller et al., 1980; Spear 1981; Tonkin 1992; Vansina 1967, 1985). It was perhaps cultural anthropologist Melville Herskovits who first brought to the attention of scholars the usefulness of oral transmissions, when he pointed to the surviving aspects of African culture among New World Africans in Diaspora in what he called "cultural tenacity" (Freund 1998, 8). Certain aspects of culture that obtained in African societies were still prevalent among the Africans in the Americas, especially music and aspects of

language. It was this reason and the concern and creativity of Africanists, that made scholars embark on an examination of oral sources in reconstructing African history. One of the major considerations was, of course, the place and use of music in diasporas to reconstruct and reflect on the African past (Waterman 1943; Merriam 1951; Fred 1956; Rath 1993; Thornton 1998).

Music has four major attributes that make it particularly valuable in the reconstruction of cultural history. The first is that music and its instrumentality are a universal trait in many societies. Many members of any given community can learn it. It is a very easy representation of collective memory at all stages, through lullabies, dance songs, heroic songs and compositions, initiation and marriage songs, and even death songs. Second, music has the advantage of being carried below the level of consciousness and is therefore particularly resistant to change. Herskovits suggested, "The peculiar value of studying music . . . is that, even more than other aspects of culture, its patterns tend to lodge on the unconscious level" (Herskovits 1941, 19). What this means is that patterns of music do not seem to be objectified by most members of the social group, even though they are thoroughly learned. People will recognize what is consonant and what is dissonant in their music and learn patterns of their music well enough to know when the closing measures of a musical composition are brought to a satisfying or to an unfinished end. This is how traditional music is learned or appreciated. The Abaluyia for instance dance to *lipala*, *omutibo*, and *esikuti* tunes anywhere and at any time, and there is no school for it. They just have grown up with it and appreciate it almost invariably and uncritically.

Thus people learn the kinds of sounds that are satisfactory without necessarily knowing anything at all technical about music; so much structure is carried subliminally, and it is resistant to change. Many Abaluyia,[3] children and adults alike, have sung these songs and have even played "isukuti" since time immemorial without really unraveling the inner meanings and complexities in them. This does not mean that music or instruments do not change; they do change, but except for cultural accident, they change within what seems to be a culturally determined framework. An *isukuti* drum, for example, is made from the same type of material it was made from several centuries ago. In other words, barring exceptions, we can expect music and music instruments over a period of time to retain their general characteristics. This is born out in studies of New World African Americans, as noted by Rath and Thornton, who demonstrate that African music and instruments survived in the New World (Rath 1993; Thornton 1998, 217, 226–27).

The third attribute of music and musical instruments that make them especially useful in studying cultural history is the fact that they are the creative aspects of culture, which, through recording and creation, can be frozen as they happen. Thus music, for instance, can be repeated over and over and studied in detail with very minimal change in meaning. For the instruments, succeeding generations will make and remake them even if they are modified. That is why "Mwana Mbeli," a traditional Abaluyia folk song that has been sung for a long time in Kenya, has undergone many performances but still retains much of its original texture. There are certain modifications in the tune, especially in modern stage competitions, but the root words remain the same. Today, it is almost the national anthem of Abaluyia folk dancing and singing. Similarly, the *isukuti* drum is not only the Abaluyia trademark musical instrument but has almost become Kenya's national drum. Many musical groups at the local and national level have incorporated *isukuti* in their dances, but the source for the drum remains among the Abaluyia in western Kenya. The factory-produced *ebikuti* do not have the same aesthetic renderings and effect as those produced from the skin of a monitor lizard and the hollow *omumile* tree trunk.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, music is one of the relatively rare aspects of culture whose structure can be described through ideology, emotions, memory, metaphors or symbolism. The music for youth is more rhythmic and has very many dance patterns. Music for the elders and general public is often slow and less energetic. The music for initiation, engagement, wedding and marriage, and other celebratory ceremonies, is often very dynamic and fast. On the other hand, music associated with funerals is slow, reflective, and somber. Thus music has the capacity to revive memories by constantly reconstructing the situation that created them. It has the capacity for retention and reconstruction. As part of culture, especially language, it is a stabilizer of memory as it denies single-agency, and it has the quality of avoiding destruction and manipulation, since it is a chain of emotions that are transmitted from one generation to another, and are resident in collective memory. For instance:

> Mama mbe tsimindi nzie okhumitsa,
> Nzie nzie nzie okhumitsa.
> Silabula esirietselo khane inzala yakhwira,
> Nolola akhanyama, osetsanga nokonga,
> Nzie nzie nzie nzie okhumitsa.
>
> [Mum give me cowpeas seeds so that I can go to cast (plant)
> So that I can go to cast (plant)
> If we did not have *esirietselo*, hunger would have killed us

If one saw meat, she ground millet as she danced,
Let me go and cast (plant).]

This song was sung to remind the Abaluyia society of the need for disaster preparedness in food, and it reminded them of past famines. It sounds a warning and, therefore, the need to plant new crops each season without failure. The song celebrates planting, but at the same time laments the past, when there was not enough to go around. It was sung both as a lullaby and as a harvest song. It was thus used to transmit values of working on the farm to the young people, and at the same time sounds a warning to the indolent and motivates them to get involved. It also teaches contingency as a last resort by use of *esirietselo*, a common shrub in the Abaluyia country, which is an evergreen that lives however severe a drought might be. It is never used in ordinary circumstances, but only during severe famines. So, to use *esirietselo* during a time of plenty and when there is no adverse drought is scoffed at and ridiculed among the Abaluyia. This is a societal sanction against depleting a food reserve.

Another shrub celebrated in song and dance and transfixed in Abaluyia memory—and of strategic importance in Abaluyia food management—is *indelema*. Indelema is a twining plant found in thick forests, and, like *esirietselo*, it is eaten only during famines and for medicinal purposes. As such there are very many songs composed about it, concerning where it is found, when it is supposed to be eaten, etc. One of the songs says that "omukhasi omukara niye otekhanga indelema mutsikura" (it is only the lazy woman who cooks *indelema* when there is no famine in the land). Through these songs, therefore, the teaching is that societal resources are preserved for a time of need. Thus industry and enterprise are celebrated and encouraged, and laziness is frowned upon and thus discouraged through these topical songs, which function as a societal censor. *Esikuti* or *isikuti*, the Abaluyia drum, always accompanies public performance of these songs.

Therefore, in dealing with music as a tool for historic reconstruction, we must consider the music and the instruments and be prepared to use either or both as the possibilities present themselves. Though examples are few, there is some evidence indicating the use of song texts in Africa to bring historical information to mind. Waterman and Bascon, for example, in commenting on the topical song in Africa, write:

> Topical songs have been known to persist for generations when they commemorate some historic event or when they treat with some incident of lasting interest. Thus songs referring to battles of the 18th century are still current in Nigeria, just as calypsos were composed in Trinidad deriding certain slave overseers or commemorating the first visits of The

Graf Zippelin of the Duke and Duchess of York. (Waterman and Bascon 1949, 21)

Thus, a song could last for many years in people's' memories. The song could be remembered and sung by all those born in the society. It would require a curious mind to establish connectivity especially if there is a distance of time or memory. Among the Abaluyia there are many historical moments that are captured in songs. The most popular include the arrival of the white man in 1850s; World War I, which is sung about as the "Lihe lia abachelemani" (War of Germans), "Inzala ya Esikombe" (literally "famine of the cup").[4] Similarly, Herskovits notes the historic usage of song in Dahomey:

> Songs were and are the prime carriers of history among this non-literate folk. In recounting the ritual associated with the giving of offerings to souls of those who were transported into slavery, this function of song came out with great clarity. The informant at one point could recall the sequence of important names in the series as he was giving. Under his breath, to accompaniment of clicking fingernails, he began to sing, continuing his song for moments. When he stopped he had names clearly in mind once more, and in explanation of his song stated that this was the Dahomean method of remembering historic facts. The role of the singer as the 'keeper of records' was highly commented and remarked of by those who visited the kingdom in the days of its autonomy. (Herskovits 1938, 321)

But we must take cognizance of the fact that music and music instruments, as forms of recording and preserving history, are not just confined to the pre-literate societies. Songs such as Australia's "Waltzing Matilda," England's "London is Burning," and black South Africa's "Nkosi Sikelele Afrika."[5] Quincy Jones's "We Are the World" (from the album *USA for Africa*) remind us of certain historical moments. Poet Banjo Paterson composed "Waltzing Matilda" in January 1895, against the backdrop of great labor strikes on Australian ranges that occurred between 1890 and 1894. So great was this song in capturing the mood of the time that it was sung for the Prime Minister of Queensland on 6 April 1895. Soon afterwards, the song was carried throughout the state by horseback-riding singers. Today there are several versions of the song, the most famous being the "Queensland version" and the "Victorian version," but the words remain the same. The same song was sung at the summer 2000 Olympics in Sydney with the same words, over one hundred years later.

England came under heavy attack by German warplanes in 1940 during World War II, and some parts of London were burned as a result of this bombardment. The song that developed out of this historical moment has survived many years of state attempts at destroying its representation and at trivializing it. The song was initially popularized under the British Empire but was discontinued after it was realized that it presented a negative impression of the empire. "Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrica," composed at Lovedale, Fort Hare University, by first nationalist elite, was sung by South Africa blacks to agitate for their rights. It was first sung publicly in 1899 at the ordination of Reverend M. Boweni, a Shangaan Methodist minister. Today it is one of the national anthems of South Africa. The song represents nationalist fervor, and the tune was adopted by many African nations, including Tanzania and Zimbabwe, among others. The song "We Are the World" from the album *USA for Africa*, created by Quincy Jones, brings to memory the Sahelian drought of 1984. The song brought together megastars like Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, and Harry Belafonte in raising funds for famine-ravaged Africa in 1986. It is still a signature tune to many charities and philanthropic messages.

II

Merriam writes: "It would appear that music offers one extraordinarily precise way of reconstructing contacts between peoples as well as the migrations of cultures through time" (Merriam 1967, 107). This illustration very much fits the Abaluyia, as it would fit any society. The place of music in the Abaluyia cosmology is very central. They use music in every public ceremony, at home, in worship, in divination, and in every segment of private and public life. The earliest written records of the Abaluyia are those of explorer Joseph Thomson (1883), British colonial administrator Sir Harry Johnston (1902), and Christian Missionaries. Anthropologist Günter Wagner (1949) carried out the first extensive study of the Abaluyia, between 1934 and 1938. Although he has an impressive record of songs and dances carried out among the Abaluyia clans, these songs were to Wagner just like any other cultural artifacts, devoid of anything beyond the Abaluyia sense of creativity, aesthetics, entertainment, mourning, etc.

In his two-volume work, *The Bantu of North Kavirondo*, Wagner brings to life memories of the Abaluyia past that live only in historical writings. Utilizing oral sources as narrated by people from all walks of life, he records a superb recollection of the Abaluyia past, especially the cultural aspects. The words in songs and the musical instruments accompanying them are not interrogated at all in this narrative. Taking cognizance of the importance of folk songs, Fabian has noted that "Individuals who live when

key historical events are unfolding often describe them on paper in form of folk poetry, particularly songs. Although some folk songs may be simple, they provide a rich source of information for the historian since they form a record of how people felt and illustrate how they documented their feelings and positions and opinions" (Fabian 1998, 34).

In his comments concerning a song sung during a ceremony celebrating the birth of twins, Wagner writes, "The texts of the songs consist either of plain obscenities or of hints with ambiguous meanings which everyone understands" (Wagner 1949, 327). This is a contradiction of sorts for if something is ambiguous then it is vague, not clear, and should not be understood by anybody. But since it is Wagner who does not understand, the whole exercise is dismissed. This is the closed-mindedness that informs much of the writings concerning cultural history of researchers using their own background as the frameworks of looking at what Fabian calls "the other" (Fabian 1983). Anything that does not fit in this scheme is dismissed as being inconsistent. The first and last stanzas of the song that Wagner comments about are quoted as going as follows:

> *First stanza:*
> Wanamukwela
> Sokwela siefutuvile
> > [Who is dancing?
> > He may dance like the *efutuvile*-fish]
> Khukhine vumuranga eee ee
> Nanu owalakhola Fuamba owa Wasula.
> > [Let us dance the dance of shaking shoulders
> > As Fuamba did, the son of Wasula.]
>
> *Last stanza:*
> Namunonoli noo, omwana wa Nguvo
> Negasoda omwana owa Luvoya,
> Wamukhundila khutonje, ovwene nivusila
> > [Namunoli, the son of Nguvo,
> > He copulated with the daughter of Luvoya;
> > He had intercourse with her at the veranda (sic) pole,
> > Then his own (sperm) was spilled.]
> > (Wagner1949, 327–28).

To Wagner, this song was supposed to reflect the "mystical force behind twinship," but he must have been disappointed that it did not, hence his outbursts in dismissing it as being merely vague and vulgar. First, it is important to note the presence of the fish, *efutuvile* fish (mud-fish) that is

found mainly in flood pains and marshy places. If one were looking for this fish in Kenya today, the obvious areas to look would be the regions around the Lake Victoria. Any other place would be the Great Lakes region where the migration historians have traced the Abaluyia cradle. It therefore indicates a long tradition of fish in this community. The Lake region has had an incredible influence on the people around it. Second, it is necessary to know what Fuamba represents and why he is brought up in the song. Not everybody has songs composed about him or her unless he or she is a societal hero or has a special place. Third, he is said to be the son of Wasula. This relationship is very important in tracing the genealogy of these people and their connectivity to the larger societal fabric. Fuamba may even be the originator of the dance, an obviously incredible achievement. Even his name has meaning that is perhaps symbolic. Similarly, the last stanza, which perhaps led Wagner to dismiss the whole singing as vulgar, has hidden meaning, a metaphorical application. Namunoli, son of Nguvo, is said to have mated with the daughter of Luvoya. Whereas the name of the man is given, that of the woman is omitted, but that of the father is given. This, of course, reflects the Abaluyia patriarchal arrangement, but also indicates the importance of the male in genealogical analysis. It also means that the two ancestors, Nguvo and Luvoya, are not from the same clan, because the Abaluyia are exogamous.

Wagner also recorded circumcision songs among the Abaluyia. The first and last stanzas of one of the songs are reproduced here.

First stanza:
Omusinde oteremaka,
Achia ebunyolo haaha, haaaho,
Embalu eluma vuvi,
Elimatavula haaa hoo.
> [The uncircumcised boy who always fears,
> He may go to the Luo (country), haaha, haaho,
> The knife when it hurts badly,
> (The pain) is near to coming to an end.]

Last stanza:
Haha, hoho, haha, hoho,
Khunyama mbolo Murunga walila ari:
Enjala Ebuwanga haha, hahe
Khunyama mbolo Murunga walila,
Gimiva giase haho, hehe,
Khunyama mbolo.
> [Haha, hoho, haha, hoho,

> About the rotten meat Murunga cried like this:
> The hunger (is great) in wanga country!
> About the rotten meat Murunga cried:
> My sugar-cane haho, hehe,
> About the rotten meat.]
>   (Wagner 1949, 341–42)

The Luo have been neighbors of the Abaluyia for a long time, and this is a historical fact. The recognized difference that the Luo do not carry out male circumcision is made clear by the song calling for those who fear the knife to immigrate to the Luo country. The reference to Murunga in the song is also an important historical factor, because Murunga was perhaps the greatest precolonial leader of the Ababukusu clan. Murunga was very charismatic, and his activities are well remembered in the oral traditions and are also well documented by early colonial writers. There is also mention of sugarcane. There have been a lot of controversies about the origin of sugarcane currently grown in Kenya. While it is not in dispute that certain species of sugarcane, especially the present industrial sugar, are not indigenous to Kenya, there are many sugarcane varieties that are certainly indigenous and were present in the traditions of the Abaluyia even before the colonial period. Evidence such as this confirms that sugar cane existed in western Kenya before the colonial government established the first commercial sugar cane plantation in the Miwani area in 1946. In the second stanza, the same song also refers to rinderpest, which, together with smallpox, ravaged Abaluyia country in the first decade of the twentieth century. Many of the events covered by these songs are replicated in other works on Abaluyia (Amutabi 1992, 1995; Were 1967b; Wolfe 1969; Makila 1986).

Many of the songs recorded by Wagner carry hidden historical facts. One of the most striking is the song based on the Ababukusu creation story. It refers to the first man who gave commandments to the Ababukusu and taught them their wisdom (Wagner 1949, 286). On casual examination of the song, the tendency is to be carried away by the ritualistic and even rhythmic aspects of the song, and not the metaphorical and heavy-laden import of the song. The song enumerates all the major progenitors of the clans of the Ababukusu, including Livusi, Vugelembe, Mudonyi, Gitwika, and Vasava. G. S. Were has recorded these clan genealogies, and his records agree with what the song has enumerated (Were 1967b, 157–85). Certain songs carry important messages and symbols that cannot be easily comprehended because they are mired in metaphorical and symbolic presentation.

For instance there is an initiation song which says, among other things, "I am an Omuyonga; I do not eat *kizalala* (fish)," and in addition, the author states vaguely in a footnote, "The members of the Yonga clan do not eat the kizalala-fish" without any further elaboration (Wagner 1949, 334). The Abalokoli, where the Yonga clan is, are neighbors of the Luo, near Kivaswa (Kiboswa) and the Maseno areas of Western province. There is no major geographical demarcation between these two groups. There is, therefore, a desire to demarcate and even differentiate themselves from each other, and kizalala, a popular type of fish among the Luo provides such differentiation. A second explanation has to do with the fact that kizalala is very easily available in shallow lake waters and would easily have dominated the barter trade between these two peoples. The banning of its consumption may have been for economic expediency and the widening of the items of trade and exchange.

Writing the first scholarly and authoritative histories of the Abaluyia in the 1960s. neither Gideon S. Were nor John Osogo treated music and its instruments in their narratives (Were 1967; Osogo 1966).[6] They concentrated on perpetuating the "great man" style of writing history. They concentrated on oral sources that remained captured in the minds of those who could remember. However, many of the facts that were gathered by Were would later be subjected to the general interrogation of more people to establish their authenticity. These focused group discussions that Were conducted as seminars were not, however, the only ways he got his information and data. In such meetings, corroborative linkages and dialogue were established, and therefore recognition of the validity of collective memory.

In his *Western Kenya: Historical Texts*, Were utilizes individual genealogies to re-enact the history of many Abaluyia sub-ethnic groups, and he successfully links them in a general historical strand. For instance, he traces the Wanga in the Abatirichi and Abawanga genealogies to indicate their historical connection in ancestry (Were 1967b, 1). He demonstrates this historical connection very strongly throughout the text by using the same technique on the Abafofoyo clan of Marachi (p. 32), the Abanyala of Nabakholo (p. 37), the Abashimuli clan of Abetakho (p. 59), and the Ababukusu (p. 162). Although they did not thoroughly explore the active and dynamic sources of historical fact-songs and poems, Were and Osogo utilized oral sources diligently. Music was perhaps not incorporated as a source in the earlier researches on Abaluyia because of the rich oral traditions, which were, by and large, adequate and exhaustive. Were talks of having used the "informal and confidential" method of interviewing, where he sollicited information from his informants discreetly, and the "public" method, where he interviewed "numerous number of informants to assist

each other so that evidence is a result of team-work" (Were 1967, 23). This is an acceptable methodology that is still utilized to this day. However, its major shortcoming, like other sources of history, is reconciling problems of altered and even false memory.

The dominant characters, usually chiefs and clan leaders, on whom Were and Osogo relied, can easily impose their memories, even if they are not correct. These are in fact the people that Were and Osogo relied on as first-hand informants. Of his informants, Were says that they "would probably appoint their own 'spokesman' who was regarded as 'the expert'" (Were 1967, 23). This is, of course, privileging some voices over others, but it indicates the process of recollecting history using oral sources. The information-gathering system using oral sources suffers from many intervening variables, which Were reconciles appropriately in his discourses. Because of public scrutiny, certain memories are repressed and/or repudiated, according to the status of the individual in society. Also, some views may have been stifled, not because they are wrong but because these are now considered personal. Some of these individual memories are also subjected to constant reconstruction within the inner selves of the individual and hence suffer certain idiosyncrasies. It is due to these disadvantages of the subjectivity of inner individual or group memories that are first appropriated and then regurgitated that the collective dynamic memory carried in music becomes more advantageous. Unlike the inner memories that are prompted by a researcher to come out, songs do not require any prompting or persuasion to unearth the historical fact inherent in them. They do not suffer from personal prejudices of retention and construction. Songs and memories of them also cannot be destroyed or manipulated.

From the accounts of Were and Osogo, one can denote that the work of one historian may be diachronic or processsionary in nature (stressing the fact of change and transformation in the historical process) while another may be synchronic and static in form (stressing the fact of historical continuity). Thus the writing of the history of the Abaluyia by Were in 1967 a year after Osogo had done it in 1966 is indicative of differences in the historical methods. Were's study was more thorough, larger and even holistic in terms of thematic approach. It included economic, political, social, cultural, and even environmental aspects of the Abaluyia cosmology. It relied more on oral sources than any sources then considered conventional.

Wagner's anthropological method and approach appears to have been very holistic also in capturing the Abaluyia past. This again shows that where one historian takes as his task to re-invoke, in lyrical or poetic manner, the moment of the past age, like Wagner does, another may take it

as his task to penetrate behind the events in order to disclose the laws or principles of which a particular moment is only a manifestation or phenomenal form, as is done by Osogo and Were. All accounts are plausible, as they represent alternative interpretations. This apparent difference in interpretation of a portrait of an age, or in understanding a historical moment is increasingly becoming of great interest to historians. Simon Schama, among others, has demonstrated this difference in interpretation by showing the "Many Deaths of General Wolfe" as portrayed by different interpretations of the same historical "fact." Schama demonstrates how one event, the death of General Wolfe, has received different interpretations from different scholars (Schama 1991). This further erodes the sanctity of "fact" in historical writing as opposed to fiction.

Further examples could be cited, although the study of song texts with particular problems of Abaluyia history in mind has not been frequently or exhaustively undertaken. The difficulty of this approach lies in the problem of authenticity of texts in terms of accuracy of the message or description conveyed. The acceptability of such songs may also be a subject of varying interpretations, especially if the message is metaphorical. The Abaluyia are many sub-ethnic disparate groups that have often been grouped together because they have shared linguistics, certain cultural traits, and historical background. Thus it is not easy to find a common ground, with the few exceptions like the case of *isukuti* and "mwana mbeli." This is a similar difficulty to that involved in the acceptance or rejection of the evidence of oral literature in Africa.

However, we do have at least one example of a song text, which has remained unchanged over the past hundred years. This is "mwana mbeli," which became very popular with supporters of the nationalist fervor in the 1960s in Kenya. It was in the 1960s that it was adopted unofficially as a nationalist anthem at political rallies in Western Kenya. It was particularly popularized by *isukuti*. Where *isukuti* has reached, "mwana mbeli" has also. "Nkosi Sikelele Afrika" also became popular in South Africa, especially after 1948 when the Nationalist Party enacted the apartheid system. The song became a rallying ground of nationalist enthusiasm in parts of central and South Africa, and even as far as Tanzania (Rhodes 1962, 17). It appears, then, that song texts are capable of existing unchanged in the folk idiom over substantial periods of time, although we do not know for how long. A study and analysis of this problem might well lead the investigator into some relatively important areas of historic information. Given the durability of the song text, it appears that music may be more useful in this way than has ever been imagined.

III

From the foregoing, the contribution of songs to the writing of history is noticeable and certainly fundamental. We note that the use of music and musical instruments as described in historic accounts is a second kind of reconstruction of cultural history in this same general category. Jones (1960), for example, reports information concerning the xylophone in East Africa dating back to 1586, and considerable number of references since that time give us rather remarkable information concerning African instruments over past four centuries. The Abaluyia *isukuti* drum is one example of a traditional instrument that has remained unchanged for many years. Music has a life span that can last for centuries. With respect to musical notation, however, the time depth is much shorter, although fragments of notated songs appear from time to time in the accounts of early travelers, explorers, missionaries, and others.

We also note that music is a part of culture, and that culture moves through time, and thus through music we can approach certain kinds of history. The Abaluyia celebrate certain parts of their past through music: flora and fauna, their neighbors, food, crops, diseases, heroes and heroines, wars and famines, natural calamities like earthquakes, ceremonies, and other historical moments. Merriam agrees when he says, "Song texts may preserve historic occasions and events; descriptions of music and music instruments in literate societies tell us much about change and development in forms as well as of continuities and discontinuities through time" (Merriam 1967, 92).

Music as an aspect of culture, which is descriptive of one phase of culture that is active and dynamic, is very easy to notice and study. It can be easily be transcribed primarily through extrapolation, for determining the relationship of that active aspect of society to other aspects of culture. Through our memory and its reconstructive process, music that depends not only upon evidence but also upon joint and controlled societal participation can be described as the active and dynamic archive that can unravel and lend itself to comparative analysis and logical deduction of historical facts. Thus, it appears that while songs are not necessarily the African historian's nirvana, they can, when judiciously combined with the findings of oral traditions, oral literature, and oral history; archaeology; paleontology; archives; and other fields of study, assist us in our collective enterprise of reconstructing Africa's past.

Notes

1. I would to thank my colleagues at Moi University (Kenya) and the University of Illinois (U.S.A.) for positive criticism of the initial ideas and drafts of this paper. I would also like to thank Prof. E. S. Atieno-Odhiambo (Rice University) and Prof. Thomas Spear (University of Wisconsin, Madison) for going through the paper and giving very useful comments. This paper was first presented at the conference "Pathways to Africa's Past" at the University of Texas at Austin, 30 March–1 April 2001.
2. The interest in the historiography of music of the Abaluyia came in 1989 during research for my masters dissertation on the African Interior Church. There was an array of music compositions on many church records since 1947. These were musical pieces that had been sung during the various music competitions of the church.
3. The Abaluyia are the second largest ethnic group in Kenya, currently numbering five million, according to the 1999 Kenya Population Census; they occupy the Western Province and parts of the Rift Valley Province of Kenya. They are divided into sixteen clans: Ababukusu, Abalokoli, Abanyole, Abamarama, Abashisa, Abatiriki, Abitakho, Abesukha, Abawanga, Abatsotso, Abanyala (ba Ndombi), Abanyala (ba Busia) Abakabras, Abatachoni, Abamarachi, and Abakhayo.
4. This was a great famine that ravaged much of Buluyia during and immediately after World War II; this was part of the spillover effects of the great depression to the peasantry in Kenya. *Esikombe* (a cup) was used for measurement of cereals and flour at markets during this period, hence the name.
5. The Xhosa version is "Nkosi Sikelele Afrika" and the Zulu version is "Nkosi sikeleli'iAfrika."
6. Gideon Saul Were's *A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya* (1967) and John Osogo's *History of the Baluyia* (1966) remained the most authoritative works of the history of the Abaluyia for over three decades, until the emergence of the cultural wave of history which realizes that they left out many aspects of the Abaluyia in their research.

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9

The Global History of African Music: The Kenyan Song "Malaika"

Ian Eagleson

In December 1963, a large number of international visitors traveled to Nairobi to attend the independence celebrations and official ceremonies of turning over sovereignty to the newly constituted Republic of Kenya. Among them were three musicians who were very important in the folk music revival that was going on in the United States—Pete Seeger, Miriam Makeba, and Harry Belafonte. Meanwhile, at the same time this was going on, the song "Malaika," performed and recorded by Fadhili William and the Black Shadows, was enjoying success as a popular song in Kenya. Within a year, this same song would be peformed by the above-mentioned folk music artists in some of their concerts in the United States.

From a broader point of view, around the world the early 1960s was a time of foreboding as well as optimism. In Africa, there was an overall sense of optimism regarding the end of colonialism and the founding of newly independent states. At the same time, there was also an awareness of the great challenges that lay ahead, in terms of establishing nations that truly provided an avenue for social and economic freedom and simultaneously upheld threatened African cultural values. Meanwhile, in the United States, there was a corresponding feeling of tension. While the rampant technological advancement characteristic of this time offered hopes of a better world, at the same time it threatened to turn around on itself and destroy any traces of cultural grounding that were left in America, leaving

Americans with a nostalgia for a time when people were closer to their roots.

In this paper I want to illustrate how a Kenyan popular song, "Malaika" (which means angel in Kiswahili), offered an avenue for a creative response to these tensions both in America and in Kenya. In my discussion I will examine three versions of this song: the original recording by Fadhili William and the Black Shadows released in Kenya in 1963, and two American versions: one performed by Pete Seeger and the other by the performing duo of Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte; both of these versions were recorded and released on albums in the United States in 1964 and 1965, respectively. "Malaika" has subsequently been redone in a number of different styles and locations, all of them interesting interpretations, but I will focus specifically on these three. (A list of other available recordings is in the discography.) In my analysis I will illustrate that the meaning this song had to musicians and listeners in Kenya during the 1960s was quite different, even contradictory, from the meaning it had in America. By looking into this contradiction, we can gain insight into how people in different locales in the 1960s were experiencing the tension between cultural forces of tradition and modernity, and how a particular expressive vehicle, the song "Malaika," provided a coherent framework for articulating these experiences. The ways "Malaika" is musically produced in these different instances point to an interesting paradox: while the song for Kenyans was an articulation of aspirations towards modernity, the same song, being from Africa, was to Americans a representation of something natural and exotic that brought them closer to deep cultural roots and provided a safe haven from the bewilderment of modernity. In this paper I will discuss how this song, in terms of the images it produces, was able to do this. Throughout the examination I want to look at the historical circumstances underpinning the presentations of the song. I also want to explore how the different musical interpretations of "Malaika" articulate very different images of Africa.

The history of "Malaika" is similar to that of many internationally recorded songs in the 1960s in that it originated from a sort of folk/popular base, very much grounded in the specifics of a locality, and then it quickly spread and was reinterpreted through popular recordings and performances by high-profile artists in many situations. In addition to the versions I will discuss here, the song has emerged as a German disco hit with groups like Boney M, has been incorporated into the repertoire of Indian film music stars like Lata Mangeshkar, and has continued to be a lasting hit in Kenya since its initial appearance.

In understanding why this song offered appeal to Kenyan as well as Western audiences it is important to note that the musically creative

processes out of which "Malaika" was born in Kenya shared many things with Western musical sensibilities in terms of melody and chord structure, a correspondence that resulted from the general globalization of music in the twentieth century. As a musical text to be engaged in by their audiences, "Malaika" worked well for performers like Pete Seeger, Miriam Makeba, and Harry Belafonte. The song also provided a means for producing specific images concerning Africa and its relation to the West.

In examing the ensuing reworkings of the song that occurred in the hands of these artists, it is necessary to look at the particular underpinnings of the folk song movement that had emerged at that time, and why a song like "Malaika" fit well with this style. At the beginning of the 1960s in the United States there emerged a popular conception that the final triumph of modernity posed some serious problems for humanity, and that contemporary American society, in its obsession with technological progress, was rapidly severing its ties with any real, historically grounded culture. Many popular movements arose to try to remedy this situation, some of them in the form of musical developments that tried to search for and reincorporate a sense of idealized culture, of tradition, and of organic quality. This romantic turn toward nature was the basic premise behind the American folk revival, a movement whose general ideological underpinnings are well summed up by writer Robert Shelton in the book *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock.* He says:

> There's another way out of the dilemma of modern urban society that can teach us all about who we are. There are beautiful, simple, relatively uncomplicated people living in the country, close to the soil, who have their own backgrounds. They know who they are, and they know what their culture is because they make it themselves; in their whittling, their embroidery, in their painting, but mostly in their singing. Look to the country, confused, uprooted, city boys and girls, and you will rediscover yourselves. (Shelton 1975, 8)

In propelling the movement to reinvigorate modern capitalist society with the beautiful simplicity of the folk, musicians like Woody Guthrie, Pete Seeger, and Harry Belafonte relentlessly collected songs in their travels to add to this folk repertoire, which, through circulation in performances and recordings, would hopefully make the world a better place for their listeners. Seeger was largely responsible for bringing many African songs into this repertoire, among them the South African song "Mbube" (also known in the United States as "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" or "Wimoweh") and "Malaika." What is ironic is that both of these songs, while presented as manifestations of folk life, came from emerging African urban genres of

music that were influenced by modern Western musical conventions, and were hardly representations of a folk, country lifestyle for those who originally produced them. Pete Seeger was certainly aware of this, and in his memoir *The Incomplete Folksinger*, he notes that much of contemporary African music is created out of a combination of European and African traditions (Seeger 1972). However, it is doubtful that his audiences realized this.

In reading the significance of Seeger's performance of "Malaika" at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival, I can suggest the following images created by it. By nature of its inclusion in the program of the folk revival, it is presented as an African folk song, something that has arisen out of a simple life close to nature. In his performance, after singing the melody Seeger suggests to the audience, "Isn't this a nice language?" suggesting that the unfamiliarity of the song's Kiswahili lyrics creates a novel experience for American audiences. The melody itself fits well within many of the conventions of American music, utilizing typical chord changes that many would recognize (which I will define in more detail below). Performing it in the same manner in which he adapts songs from many styles and places (as a banjo-playing songster), Seeger makes an image of African folk culture easily available to folk music audiences.

Miriam Makeba and Harry Belafonte's version is formulated within a similar historical context, although it worked with a characteristic sound that was more refined to Western audiences. As the liner notes to the album in which this version appeared announce, Belafonte has been called "the man who has brought folk singing into its own with other musical forms such as jazz, opera, and the classics" (liner notes to Belafonte/Makeba 1965). While the musical presentation here is more complex and refined according to Western conventions of the time than Seeger's, utilizing classical guitars and double bass, it succeeds for many of the same reasons—its melody and structure are familiar to Western ears. This familiarity, along with the Kiswahili lyrics, allow the song to work as a majestic African folk lullaby of sorts, conjuring up images of beauty, refined yet simple.

While Seeger's version was deliberately anti-modern in its bare bones presentation, this version, as is alluded to above in the quote about Belafonte, is a deliberate attempt to transform the melody into a stylized rendition suitable for performance in the elite world of show business. In the early 1960s, Belafonte was one of the most successful concert attractions in the world and was revered for the personal artistry that he and his counterpart Makeba gave to simple folk melodies.

In both cases, the general idea is that an essence of African folk culture is being effortlessly transmitted to the audience. While these performers

have good intentions, their seemingly effortless transmission of this supposed "folk" song is ambivalent in that it perpetuates the idea that African music is intrinsically tied to a folk-based, non-cosmopolitan history. And again, it is made all the easier for "Malaika" to fit into this program because its general melodic makeup adheres to many of the basic principles of Western musical aesthetics. At the same time, through the exotic sound of its Kiswahili lyrics, the song enables an experience of Africa based on a sense of "otherness," of the serene wholeness that the folk revival was searching for.

What we have here is basically the opposite of the original motivations of a Kenyan popular song like "Malaika," which was originally created out of a rapidly developing style of popular song that emerged in Kenya after World War II. Although syncretic musical forms had been developing profusely during the colonial years in East Africa, especially forms such as *beni* (brass band) and *dansi* (an early form of popular dance, featuring small string and wind ensembles), the radical shift that the war had brought, in terms of the development of mass media, electronic technology, the exposure of Kenyans to international strains of music during the war, and the general environment of increased investment on the part of European entrepreneurs in Kenya's music industry encouraged the emergence of new forms of song, new kinds of musical professionalism, and a new sense of a consuming public for this music.

It was in this environment that Kenyan musicians experimenting with novel music forms would create a version of "Malaika" that would achieve lasting popularity in Kenya and beyond. Musically speaking, Fadhili William's "Malaika" did not emerge from a rural, folk-based repertoire. Rather, the song is characteristic of some of the urban, particularly modern influences of the time. As phonographs and transistor radios became increasingly available in this period, emerging Kenyan tastes in music were very much shaped by imported music. By the early 1950s the catalogs of the major transnational record producers in Kenya (Columbia and HMV), as well as the locally run independent label (Jambo Records) had in common a repertoire of waltzes, fox-trots, and rumbas (Harrev 1989, 105). Especially popular was Afro-Cuban dance music, which was widely appreciated in Central and East Africa as a whole. In this part of Africa, the generic name for the style that these recordings inspired is "rumba" or "bolero." These terms refer to specific Latin-based dance rhythms and melodies, but in Kenya they were also used to describe a musical style constituted by a variety of different elements, in terms of musical characteristics, ensembles, and song forms. "Malaika" was a product of this interest in working with a Latin American style in new music. Its melodic and harmonic structure, as well as its rhythmic character, are heavily influenced by the rumba.

Interestingly, the rumba song style, originally a result of Afro-American musical syncretism in Latin America, was popular with African musicians and audiences for many of the same reasons that the song "Malaika" was popular for American folk musicians: it provided an expressive medium that enabled them to articulate a sense of possessing something that was lacking—an equitable position within a modern-industrial lifestyle, while simultaneously reinforcing something which they already possessed—polyrhythmic dance music. As the musicologist Gerhard Kubik has noted, "Even in this diluted form, the African roots of the Latin American rumba were so clear that a sensation of shock—on recognizing something familiar in a new garment—was bound to occur, and this was finally to have creative results in Central and East Africa" (Kubik 1981, 92). Additionally, the modernity of "Malaika"' is asserted in that it is performed on electric guitars. While the acoustic, or "box" guitar (as it is known in Kenya) had come into widespread use among musicians all over Africa in the 1940s and 1950s, represented in Kenya by the popular finger-style guitar music of musicians like John Mwale, the electric guitar, which had only come into mass production in America in the 1950s, was a novelty, and further reinforced the decidely modern sound of the production of "Malaika". This also put the song in a league with another Western genre that was rapidly gaining popularity—rock and roll, which achieved much of its distinctive sound through its use of electric guitars.

It is in this context of a striving for cosmopolitan musical images that the melodic and chordal structures that would appeal to musicians like Pete Seeger and Miriam Makeba were developed. The rumba style relied on the use of concepts of Western popular chordal harmony, like the I–IV–V and the I–vi–ii–V chord progressions. In utilizing these Afro-American influenced musical structures to create an urban, modern sound, the creators of "Malaika"' provided an easy way for musicians like Seeger and Makeba to appropriate the song for Western audiences. The point I am trying to get across here is that what in one situation was an articulation of modernity, was in another situation a vehicle for attempting to revitalize an anti-modern sentiment.

There is further reinforcement of the idea of the cosmopolitan nature of "Malaika" in what its lyrics say. The musicians who were recording songs like "Malaika" at this point were mainly migrant workers living in the major towns of Kenya—Nairobi in the interior and Mombasa on the coast. In terms of lyrical content, the performers generally sang about their unstable lives as migrants, often singing about unemployment, lack of education, and economic hardship. Additionally, love songs were popular. "Malaika" is basically a combination of these two strains in terms of lyric content. The meaning of its lyrics is grounded in a common problem of

young male migrant workers in Nairobi: that of not being able to find a bride because of the economic constraints of urban poverty. Although "Malaika" is a love song, it is also a commentary on some of the ambiguities of modern life. While the cosmopolitan life of Nairobi brings certain material advantages such as access to modern commodities like the latest clothing, records, and bicycles, certain economic institutions such as the provision of bride wealth suffer in this environment and lead to inevitable hardship.

> Malaika, nakupenda Malaika.
> Malaika, nakupenda Malaika.
> Nami nifanyeje, kijana mwenzio,
> Nashindwa na mali sina, we,
> Ningekuoa Malaika.
> Nashindwa na mali sina, we,
> Ningekuoa Malaika.

> Pesa zasumbua roho yangu
> Pesa zasumbua roho yangu
> Nami nifanyeje, kijana mwenzio,
> Ningekuoa Malaika.
> Nashindwa na mali sina, we,
> Ningekuoa Malaika.

> Kidege, hukuwaza kidege.
> Kidege, hukuwaza kidege.
> Nami nifanyeje, kijana mwenzio,
> Nashindwa na mali sina, we,
> Ningekuoa kidege.
> Nashindwa na mali sina, we,
> Ningekuoa kidege.

> [Angel, I love you Angel.
> What should I do, your boyfriend?
> I'm defeated by wealth, I don't have any.
> I would marry you, Angel.
> *2nd verse*: Money is troubling my soul. . . .
> *3rd verse*: Little bird, I always dream of you, little bird. . . .]

Additionally these lyrics are grounded in a sense of nationalism. On the eve of gaining independence, Kiswahili, which had historically emerged as a regional trade language, became more important then ever for the

articulation of a sense of national identity, Kenya having over forty different local languages. Therefore many of the popular songs that were circulated at this time were sung in Kiswahili, as there was a general sense of optimism concerning its use as a general mode of expression resonating with ideas of nationalism. Significantly, Kiswahili later fell from prominence as the chosen language of composition for Kenyan popular song, and by the late sixties pop songs in Kenya were increasingly composed in local languages intended for local audiences, and many have come to see this shift as a crisis in national identity. (Low 1982, 30) Nevertheless, "Malaika" as a Kiswahili song articulates a knowledge of a greater Kenyan audience—in the sense of an emerging Kiswahili-speaking nation which would take pride in this particular form of expression, as well as in the sense of trying to address as many working-class consumers as possible in this newly emergent music business.

Therefore, far from representing a pure, rural folk form, Fadhili William's "Malaika" reveals a lot about how Kenyans were engaging in the global spread of capitalism and modernity in the early 1960s. For one thing, the recording itself was the outcome of the beginnings of the mass commodification and mediation of local music forms in Kenya. By the mid-fifties cheap battery-powered transistor radios were introduced to Kenya, making songs like this accessible to many. Commodities such as radios, bicycles, and records were becoming increasingly important to working class Kenyans as symbols of success in this new environment. However, as the subject of "Malaika" shows, this situation was indeed ambiguous. I think it could be said that the song's value as a musical product to be engaged in for working class Kenyans in 1963 is that it represented an articulation of an idealistic sense of belonging to the modern world, as well as an articulation of very local realities which many who identified with this song had to deal with. The Kenyan scholar Kimani Gecau, in discussing popular song in Kenya, comments:

> To most of its local audiences, the strength of the popular is its ability to respond to specific aesthetic, cognitive, emotional and identity needs arising out of their specific history and experiences, which global music [meaning imported forms] may not meet. For such audiences the singer needs to be a modernizer, but within a recognizable continuity of feeling and form. (Gecau 1995, 567)

The language, lyrics, and vocal harmonies of "Malaika" stress a sense of local aesthetic qualities, while its melodic constitution, chord progressions, overall structural form, its studio sound, as well as its mode of mediation represent a cosmopolitan, modern expression.

From the various manifestations of "Malaika" that have offered potential sites for pleasurable engagement it could be surmised that this song is particularly well suited to be circulated globally as an expressive vehicle. For Kenyans, the song offered a novel experience that incorporated aspirations to modernity as well as affirmations of a local reality. As the song was appropriated by folk music artists, arranged by studio producers, and later, transformed into disco music, it is clear that "Malaika" again offered a novel experience in that it furnished a vehicle for articulating Western musical aesthetics as well as producing images of an Africa epitomized by the exotic and nature, images seemingly craved for by the Western public in the 1960s and 1970s. What becomes clear is that as the age of global capitalism has arrived, songs like "Malaika" provide a useful glimpse into the ways that people from all parts of the world engage in the global circulation of images constituted in sound. In all cases, this experience is a positive one, at least when seen from a narrow point of view, such as when the songs gained popularity in specific locales. From a broader standpoint, it is also clear that while these localized experiences are positive, there is a significant amount of indulgence in illusions about what Africa is to the West. In many of the ways Africa is represented in the sound-images of the covers of "Malaika," it is almost sterilized as belonging to a more generic sense of nature and otherness. This is negative in that it fosters a misunderstanding about the reality of Africa. Coupled with the unbridled exploitation of cultural property that these practices entail, a case could be made that one person's 'getting close to the soil' may be another's disempowerment.

The point that these ambiguous situations make is that in the 1960s, and arguably, up to the present, there was a sense of longing pervading the entire globe, a longing to forget the shortcomings of one's own reality and to find something pleasurable in the novelty of a foreign image. The global spread of capitalism and electronic media has made the cultural expressions of remote locales available for all in this need, and the way the song "Malaika" was experienced by musicians and listeners in different situations provides us with a glimpse of this process at work.

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Discography: "Malaika"

(Note: Date of initial recording precedes citation followed by artist name and album title.)

(Note: a cassette of sound examples related to this paper may be obtained by contacting the author at 620 Underhill Avenue, Yorktown Heights, NY 10598.)

1963	Fadhili William and the Black Shadows. Originally issued on Equator Records EU 7-130 (Nairobi, Kenya) b/w Hakuna Mwingine. Reissued 1983 on *Before Benga Volume Two: The Nairobi Sound.* Original Music OMCD 022 (Tivoli, NY).
1964	Pete Seeger. *Live at Newport.* 1993. Vanguard VCD 77008 (Santa Monica, Calif.).
1964	Gale Garnett. *My Kind of Folksongs.* RCA Victor LPM 2833 (New York).
1965	An Evening with Belafonte/Makeba. *Songs from Africa.* RCA Victor 3420 (New York).
1973	Gale Garnett and other artists. *African Tribal, Ritual and Love Songs.* Request Records C 5033 (Hollywood, Fla.).
	Miriam Makeba. *Miriam Makeba in Concert.* Peters International PLD 2082 (New York)
	Bata Illic. *Meisterstucke.* Polygram/Spectrum 518 155-2 (Germany).
1979	Saragossa Band. 1995. *The Best of the Saragossa Band.* BMG/Ariola 74321 26928 2 (Germany).
1981	Boney M. 1995. *Sunny.* BMG/Ariola 74321 24931 2 (Germany).
1983	Lata-Kishore. *Live at London, Wembley Arena.* Music India 2675 524 (Bombay).
1991	Angelique Kidjo. *Logozo.* Mango 162–539 918-2 (New York).
1994	Them Mushrooms. *Songs from Kenya.* Rags Music RPM 002-2 (London).
1995	Dance Little Bird. *The Duck Dance.* Madacy Entertainment SD–2–4969 (St. Laurent, Canada).
1999	The Safari Sound Band. *Mombasa Moon.* Laserlight 21195 (Los Angeles).

10

Telling Africa's Past in Literature: Whose Story Is It Anyway?

Oyekan Owomoyela

Pathways and Authenticity

The contemplation of pathways to Africa's past entails not only the issue of what avenues promise the surest access to it, but also the implication of the chosen route for the authenticity of the discovered, revealed, or exposed past, the reliability of the picture of the past that that approach proffers for general acceptance. The question of authenticity and reliability is of crucial importance in exploring Africa's past (by which I mean more than simply what we commonly refer to as history but include the way we were, the way we lived, and the way we thought), more so than, say, in researching the past of Europe or China. Several reasons account for the difference. First, until recently, memory, rather than documents, constituted the primary means of preserving, disseminating, and transmitting records, unlike in those other cultures of the world. Information preserved and transmitted in this (the traditional African) fashion is more prone to alteration, deliberate or otherwise, than information committed to physical or material records.

Second, while some defenders of orality have advanced arguments that transient, memorized histories, much like unwritten constitutions, free their owners from the tyranny of immutable texts and permit them to make revisions to suit their changing circumstances and their evolving sense of self, they also by the same token lend themselves to ruinous distortions at

the hands of unscrupulous manipulators. Third, and this is related to the second, the colonialist affiliations of the Europeans whose accounts of events in Africa for long passed as the sober and unassailable picture of life on the continent did ensure that the materials they propagated would be slanted to justify European adventurism on the continent.

Fourth, not only did the colonial project (with its christianizing arm) mount a determined assault on African civilizations and their props, pathologizing their present and their past, it also succeeded to an impressive degree in estranging Africans from things African: the converts turned away in embarrassment from reminders of their past, and resolutely pursued "civilization," in the process (and that of proving themselves true and faithful converts) lending helpful hands in the figurative demolition of their own fathers' houses.

For the foregoing reasons, among others no doubt, the situation arose in which colonialist-authorized texts dominated, indeed almost monopolized, the library of information on Africa until near the beginning of the decolonization era. Whereas, therefore, with regard to the history of places like Europe or China, the historian's problem might be how to decide among conflicting textual truth claims, with regard to African history (when its existence was acknowledged), only one body of text was available, the colonialist one, which for the most part favored fiction over fact.

I want the premise for my argument to be clearly understood, at the risk, perhaps, of some repetitiousness. The reality we must accept regarding the African condition is that in the literate, documentary, or graphocentric present (in which we participate willy-nilly), the compliant texts that purport to document the African past supercede (have superceded) the transient, unwritten stores of memory. Scholars are even now still busily scouring the field to discover and physically record hitherto undocumented survivals of the African past, mindful of the oft-repeated conviction that whenever an old sage steeped in African tradition and knowledge dies the event implies the loss of a virtual library.

I argue, therefore, that even with regard to literary (rather than strictly historical) representations of the African past, we cannot afford to be indifferent to the unrestrained exercise of poetic license or artistic freedom. The imperative of assembling a picture of the past that is as close to the real thing as possible, and the allied one of correcting misrepresentations that have already gained currency, dictate that, while we must not prevent artists who choose to take liberties with the African experience—even to the end of corroborating the historical, interested misrepresentations of it—it is crucial that at the very least, other voices go on record to challenge their products and the departures from reality of their proffered versions of the

African past. Otherwise those versions might become authenticated by default.

Mythologies and Disguises

Some years ago I became interested in a popular campaign to hellenize the history of Yoruba theater. At the forefront of the effort was Joel Adedeji, who offered some quite audacious and breathtaking packaging of anecdotes and folklore to demonstrate that a dramatic tradition developed among the Yoruba in precisely the same manner as it did among the ancient Greeks, and exhibiting parallel dynamics.[1] Fans of Yoruba "opera" and others who found the Hellenic connection attractive responded with some anger when I contested the findings of Adedeji et al. and their methodology.

In a related development, the Austrian Ulli Beier, a student of Yoruba cultures, invented a Yoruba persona for himself in the 1960s with the collaboration of his protege, Duro Ladipo. As Obotunde Ijimere he wrote and published several plays that he offered to the public as the works of a Yoruba artist immersed in Yoruba life. In order to bolster Ijimere's authenticity and ensure the public's and posterity's acceptance of his impeccable Yoruba credentials, he concocted a detailed biography for himself that succeeded in achieving his aim. A measure of Beier's success was the use by no less a Yoruba luminary than Wole Soyinka of Ijimere's presumed but bogus Yoruba insider's insight in *The Imprisonment of Obatala* (1966) to correct the Brazilian Zora Zeljan's supposedly outsider's misapprehension in *The Story of Oxala: The Feast of Bomfin* (Soyinka 1976: 176B).[2]

More recently, my long-standing interest in the career of Amos Tutuola culminated in the book *Amos Tutuola Revisited* (1999). As a creative artist, Tutuola had exercised his right to write what he chose and as he chose, and his readers obviously continue to derive a great deal of pleasure from what he wrote, as they have every right to. Tutuola was, however, not just another writer, nor was he perceived or received simply as such. Robert Plant Armstrong, one of his early admirers, welcomed and applauded his English-language novels (or "romances" as some critics described them) as a boon to "serious students" who did not know Yoruba well enough to gain access to "traditional texts *as they are traditionally communicated*" (Armstrong 1971, 151; my emphasis). Tutuola was, in other words, doing more than simply entertaining his readers with fiction that was free of substantial cultural implications. For Armstrong, and no doubt other readers, he was what one might describe as an authorized and authoritative purveyor of authentic traditional texts in authentic traditional fashion.

Not unlike the angry response to my earlier challenge of the version of Yoruba theater history Adedeji and his school advertised, reaction to my irreverent devaluation of Tutuola has been spirited and choleric. Typical is Micheal J. C. Echeruo's review of the book, in which he angrily enumerated the flaws I charged to Tutuola and then commented, in one of his more moderate passages:

> There will no doubt be many readers, including this reviewer, who will agree with every bit of what Owomoyela finds inadequate in Tutuola, but who will want to hear a critic who can explain why they yet remain fascinated, spellbound, intrigued, and even delighted while reading Tutuola's fantastic (absurdly fantastic) tales which absolutely refuse to be contained or even constrained. For me, neither what Owomoyela calls Tutuola's "obvious uncertainty of command of English," nor his "maladroit handling of plot and structure," nor even his demonstrated "lack of originality" . . . seems to affect this primal response and may well be beside the point. (178)

But, I am afraid, it cannot be beside the point in an evaluation of literature, about which we have to have standards of evaluation besides "primal response[s]." What Echeruo's review leaves out is precisely what he says we need, an explanation of why he, among many others, remain "fascinated, spell-bound, even intrigued" by Tutuola. Beyond that, I will reiterate that I do not question his or other's rights or reasons to respond as they do to Tutuola's writing. But I insist that, as long as people like Armstrong (who is by no means a cavalier reader) regard him as an authoritative exponent of the Yoruba imagination, there must be a limit to how self-indulgent we can allow ourselves to be in reading or evaluating his works. Verisimilitude matters; the integrity of the past matters; the reliability of the African past (or present) that we ask the world to accept from us on trust matters.

Desirable Disciplinary Multiplicity

In this discussion I address the fact that the task of ascertaining Africa's past, at least the claim to be so doing, has not been an exclusive preserve of academic or professional historians, by which designation I mean people trained in the modern Western approach to documenting the past. Africa's experiential remoteness from Europe and its otherness (cultural and ontological), as much as its importance in Europe's mercantile and imperial calculations, whetted Europeans' appetite for knowledge about the continent, and ensured an avid readership for just about anything that passed itself off as a representation of African realities. While prominent

historians apparently held the belief that there was nothing worthy of their attention on the continent, explorers like Hugh Clapperton and Henry Morton Stanley, colonial officials like Charles Kingsley Meek and Edward B. Tylor, and fiction writers like Joseph Conrad and Edgar Rice Burroughs satiated the European (or Western) appetite for information about the continent and its peoples, sometimes from direct personal experience but often from no other fount than their imagination.

Today also, the source of information about the continent, its past, and its present, is not confined to any one discipline. Historians and archeologists vie with creative writers in the effort to bringing our past to life in order to provide even us, Africans, with a better understanding of where we were and how we got where we are. It is this multi-disciplinary participation that necessitates discussions like the one I am engaging in at this time. Historians have largely ceased to pose a danger to the sanctity of the African archive, but dabblers in history continue to do so. The most dangerous among them, for obvious reasons, are the Africans.

Africans and the Recovery of the African Past

Post-colonial African historiography, a field that has attracted African intellectuals of uncommon brilliance and industry, has been preoccupied with correcting the pseudo-history that colonialism privileged, the UNESCO *History of Africa* series being a fitting monument to their effort. I do not want to be misunderstood as suggesting that only Africans have been responsible for the rehabilitation of African history, because some enlightened and quite formidable non-African scholars have also contributed significantly to the enterprise. I do mean to assert, though, that the authoritative presence of a sizable number of Africans in the discipline has most certainly moderated whatever tendencies might still exist "out there" to indulge in fanciful creativity whose end is to force the African experience into conformity with anti-African agendas.

The celebrated Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, whom many identify as the father of modern African fiction, explained that his original motivation came from reading the writings of colonialist novelists on Africa. At some point in the course of his colonial education it suddenly dawned on him that the world he was reading about in such novels as Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson*, Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* was the one of his daily experience, and that, indeed, Mister Johnson was a fictional version of himself, and he was astounded by the discrepancies between what he knew (and was) and what he read. Since such materials, despite their scant claim to credibility, seemed to monopolize the public's attention, he resolved to contest their

claim to purvey the truth by contributing texts drawn from direct experience.

Quite obviously, Achebe took those colonial representations of Africa seriously, enough so to embark on a career of challenging them, and equally obviously, he assumed that their readers took the works as seriously as he did, even though none of the writers claimed that what he offered his readers was anything other than fiction. In reality, whatever the claims or disclaimers of their writers, fictional works tend to assume some aura of truth, their persuasive power varying in direct proportion with the remoteness of the subjects from the reader's world and experience. The use in numerous universities in this country of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* in history courses on Africa is a tacit acknowledgment of the acceptance (perhaps unwitting) of fiction as a reliable mirror of life, especially where there is a paucity of general knowledge or otherwise reliable information. It also endorses, in a way, the saying that the task   of burnishing one's being (or image) belongs to none other than oneself.

In the *Lincoln Journal* of Wednesday, July 27, 1987, a certain Mrs. Kathryn Jiskra wrote (inter alia) in the Opinions section: "I've heard that in Africa they drive their old folks and sickly out into the wilds to die" (9). The writer or someone she knew had most probably read Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, and had remembered the information that certain people dying from the swelling disease, like Okonkwo's father Unoka, were taken to the bush and left there to die. Incidentally, the opinion was a response to the criticism of certain businesses in the United States that continued to do business with the apartheid regime in South Africa. Mrs. Jiskra's point was that if Africans were such inhuman beasts, apartheid was a prudent mechanism for keeping them quarantined from civilized white people.

Ama Ata Aidoo on History

Delivering her keynote address at the fourth annual African American Book Fair in Accra on July 26, 1998, the Ghanaian writer Ama Ata Aidoo began by recalling a feature story in a recent Ghanaian daily about a historic town in the country. The story began, she said, with the words, "As legend has it, . . ." The town, she noted, was still very much extant; people still lived and died in it. Why then, she asked, should the writer rely on legend for his information about it? "Where," she wanted to know, "are our historians? Because we have not made any effort to recover our own history," she continued, "others are stealing it and distorting it. We should be proud of our history, just as others are proud of theirs."

The significance of her remarks on that particular occasion became clear as she got into the substance of her presentation, which concerned the trans-

Atlantic slave trade and her use of it in her popular play *Anowa* (1970). She sought to disarm any members of her audience who might wonder about the pathologization of Africanity, specifically her version of African patriarchy, in the play and in what was to follow by citing a proverb: "We have only one set of teeth," she argued, "and even if the teeth are yellow we still have only them to suck." With that rationalization she launched into what has become, from all appearances, the authorized Ghanaian line on the slave trade. The proposition, dramatically elaborated in *Anowa*, is that African *men* (not women) routinely resorted to slavery *before* the advent of the European slavers, persisted in the activity without the their urging once they arrived, and thereafter collaborated enthusiastically with the Europeans in the inhuman transaction. The excerpt she read from her play, about a mother's reluctance to answer her inquisitive daughter's questions about the fact of African slavery, dramatized her proposition. Her thesis was that slavery, and the slave trade, were integral parts of our past, and we must embrace that past, metaphorical warts and all.

The discourse on slavery in Africa and African involvement in, and responsibility for, the trans-Atlantic slave trade is contentious, reflecting diverse agendas and ulterior motives, as the response to that aspect of Henry Louis Gates's *Wonders of the African World* amply demonstrated. I do not intend now to contribute to it, or to comment on the merits of Aidoo's theme in *Anowa*, especially as I have already expressed my views on the subjects in print.[3] I am concerned instead with the persistence of the will to distort when the subject is Africa's past, even on the part of African chroniclers, and even as they affirm, implicitly or explicitly, a privileged, unassailable, and insiderist access to the truth.

Past Chroniclers and Falsifiers

The temptation to falsify has dogged African creative writing right from its inception, bedeviling the products of the earliest African fiction writers. Thomas Mofolo qualifies by any standards as a pioneer of African literature, if not *the* pioneer, and his career is a fitting testimony to the determining role of the Christian enterprise in the development of literacy and literature in sub-Saharan Africa. The missionaries who developed alphabets for African languages and established schools to educate Africans in the later half of the nineteenth century did so to facilitate the propagation of their faith. They expected the products of their schools to prroduce, among other things, texts in their various languages suitable for spreading the gospel. Mofolo, a beneficiary of the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society establishment at Morija, was exemplary. His *Moeti oa Bochabela* (The Pilgrim to the East), published by the Morija press in 1907, was the

sort of text his mentors wanted. It depicted a young Musotho who leaves his vice-infested community and travels east. There he encounters white Christian missionaries who educate him and show him the path to salvation.

His second manuscript must have given the Morija missionaries some consternation and misgivings about their ward. *Chaka* was about the career of the legendary Zulu king and warrior, whose exploits precipitated the wholesale demographic disruptions known as the *mfekane* in southern Africa early in the nineteenth century. The missionaries rejected it in 1908, a decision that most probably alienated Mofolo from the mission and caused his defection in 1910. *Chaka* was finally published in 1925, but not in its original form. As Daniel Kunene reveals in his Introduction to the 1981 Heinemann edition, at least two chapters on Zulu history and customs were expunged, ostensibly to reduce the length of the manuscript (but an explanation that apparently fails to satisfy Kunene), and the remainder were reworked with direct assistance from the Reverend Alfred Casalis (Kunene, xii-xiii).

Both Kunene and (earlier) Janheinz Jahn credit Casalis with eventually getting the work published. As Jahn notes, the same Casalis was manager of the press when it rejected the manuscript in 1908, although "he and his colleague Edouard Jacocett . . . [had] trained Mofolo and encouraged him to write" (Jahn 1968, 101). Apparently Casalis had left the mission at some point after 1908, because Kunene reports that the revival of interest in the manuscript coincided with his return to Lesotho from France in the early 1920s (Kunene 1981, xiii). After the book was published, he left his position for good (Jahn 1968, 102). One gets the impression that he went back to Morija expressly to do right by Mofolo, and that he retired after he had accomplished his mission.

What interests me at this point is Mofolo's version of the past in *Chaka*, which Kunene describes as a "merging of history and fiction" (xiv). He quotes Mofolo's description of the text as "what actually happened . . . to which a great deal has been added, and from which a great deal has been removed . . . with the aim solely of fulfilling my purpose in writing [the] book" (xv). In fulfilling the purpose Mofolo endows Chaka with character traits that, taken together, make him a most repugnant figure. First, he represents Chaka as the illegitimate product of a rape—Sanzangakhona's of Nandi. Next he invents the sinister sorcerer Isanusi (with his two helpers Ndlebe and Malunga), who makes Chaka's bloody successes as king possible, and who urges him to ever increasing, and finally indiscriminate, even demented, bloodletting. Further, he introduces the extra-historical figure of Noliwa as a sister to Dingiswayo, Chaka's protector and benefactor. Finally, he makes Chaka kill Noliwa, who loved and trusted him, even though she was pregnant with his child, because Isanusi tells him

that is the only way to ensure his achievement of the unprecedented greatness he craves; Isanusi also tells Chaka to murder his own mother Nandi because she sought to curb his insatiable appetite for blood.

Kunene is of the opinion that the effect of these historical distortions "is to build up greater intensity in the plot, and to increase dramatic tensions by creating new juxtapositions of highly volatile events and situations" (xv). But the distance Mofolo is prepared to move away from fact in order to achieve that purpose, if that was indeed the purpose, is evident in what Kunene further tells us about the actual circumstances of Nandi's death. Chaka was on an elephant hunt with his friend Henry Francis Fynn, sixty miles away from where Nandi was, when news reached him that she was ill. Chaka, who adored his mother, abandoned the hunt and led his party on an all-night march to get to her. On their arrival Fynn did all he could for her at Chaka's request, but she died anyway, of dysentery. When Fynn came out and announced her death, "Chaka went and adorned himself in his best war attire and then came and stood before [Nandi's] hut" (xviii). Kunene continues with Fynn's eye-witness report:

> For about twenty minutes he stood in a silent, mournful attitude, with his head bowed upon his shield, on which I saw a few large tears fall. After two or three deep sighs, his feelings becoming ungovernable, he broke out into frantic yells, which fearfully contrasted with the silence that had hitherto prevailed. (xviii-xix)

Given this unchallenged version of what really happened, and given the customary veneration of African mothers by their children, Mofolo's assault on Chaka's memory is breathtaking in its daring.

Kunene remarks that Chaka's image "could be, and probably was, hurt" by Mofolo's determined distortions of history, and wonders if he intended that effect (xix). In fact the account testifies quite eloquently that he did indeed intend that effect. In numerous authorial commentaries he stresses Chaka's progressive loss of humanity, as evidenced by his wholesale killings. The following is typical:

> It was through Chaka that the *difaqane* came into existence, the time when people ate each other, and stole or took by force what belonged to others; it was also the time of the homeless wanderer, something that had not been known before. It was through him that cannibalism first came into being, this thing which is uglier and more despicable than all others, when people hunted each other like animals for the sole purpose of eating each other. (153–54)

One would be imputing naïvete of the highest magnitude to Mofolo if one speculated that he was probably unaware of the likely effect of his characterization on his readers' assessment of Chaka.

The enormity of Mofolo's license, and of its impact on Chaka's memory, is illustrated in Léopold Sédar Senghor's poetic homage to the king. In *Chaka* the poet unquestioningly accepts Mofolo's testimony, lending it greater credence and wider dissemination, because of his (Senghor's) stature and authority. Senghor, one must admit, sublimates Chaka's crimes. When the White Voice cites "millions of men" and "whole regiments of pregnant women and children at the breast" that he had killed, Chaka responds, "I have set the axe to the dead wood, lit the fire in the sterile bush // Like any careful farmer. When the rains came and the time for sowing, the ashes were ready" (68). And to the taunt that he also killed Noliwe [*sic*] he responds,

> I would not have killed her if I had loved her less.
> I had to escape from doubt
> From the intoxicating milk of her mouth, from the throbbing drum of the
>   night of my blood
> From my bowels of fervent lava, from the uranium mines of my heart in
>   the depths of my Blackness
> From my love for Noliwe
> For the love of my black-skinned People. (69)

Senghor thus rationalizes the alleged killings as a necessary sacrifice in the interest of black-skinned people; how much the rationalization helps posterity's view of Chaka is open to debate. What is significant, though, is that for Senghor, the apostle of negritude and champion of the African image, Mofolo's fiction succeeded in supplanting history.

It is worth noting, I believe, that Senghor chooses not to touch the matter of Chaka's murder of his mother Nandi; he will follow Mofolo only so far, and no farther.

Ayi Kwei Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons*

More recent that Mofolo's opus are Ayi Kwei Armah's epical documentations of African history. Like Aidoo, he has been preoccupied with the slave trade, which accordingly commands a considerable part of his focus, especially in *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973) and *Osiris Rising* (1995). Either would serve to illustrate my argument, but for my present purposes I will confine my attention to the first. In this historical fiction, or fictionalized history, Armah offers an explanation for the thousand-year

disruption of the African universe, during half of which period they were doomed to spend in pursuing perdition, and the other half in attempting a return to rectitude. Under pressure from white predators from the desert (the Arabs), and later white destroyers from the seas (the Europeans), and no doubt capitulating to their own innate baser instincts, the people turned off "our way, the way," forsaking its pillars of reciprocity, connectedness, and creation to "wander . . . along steep roads declining into the whitest deaths" (2). Since the work has attracted considerable critical attention I will be sparing in my comments, only citing a few details that recall Mofolo's approach to, and use (or abuse) of, the African past.

Practically from the outset Armah mounts an assault on both the family, the social institution at the core of African communal relationality, and the elders on whom the peace, harmony, and good order of the community depend. In this account the elder's perverse carnality precipitated the dispersal of the community. Brafo was a seventeen-year-old master hunter, whose skills surpassed his fifty-year-old father's and had won the heart of Ajoa, his father's fifteen-year-old ward. Brafo had also fallen in love with the girl, but unfortunately for him so had his father. The discovery of the children's mutual affection so enraged Brafo's father that he sought to destroy them both. But "the children were wiser than their elder" (5); they stole away, with Brafo's mother and other members of the family, and settled far away beyond the reach of the father's demented and unnatural vengefulness.

Having demonized the family patriarch as a betrayer of his trust concerning his family, Armah turns his attention to the king, the symbol and guarantee of his people's well-being. King Koranche of Anoa, far from opposing the white destroyers from the sea, about whose fiery destruction of Enchi and its recalcitrant people he and his subjects had heard, actually yearned for their arrival:

> He had been to Poana, visited the king there, Atobra, seven times since the coming of the white destroyers to Poano, seen how the selfish power of Atobra had grown against his people in the vivid glare of the white destroyers' presence, and his rotten soul cried out for the coming of the white destroyers to Anoa also. (77)

Koranche's people sought to get rid of the unwanted white men by setting their ship alight, but the repercussion, Armah intimates with Koranche's connivance, was a deadly bombardment of the town by the whites, after which they received an enthusiastic fraternal welcome from Koranche and his court. When the sagacious and venerable counselor Isanusi advised him against fraternizing with his people's murderers, Koranche banished him,

and in anticipation of a stalwarts' march on the palace to remonstrate with their king, ensconced within and reveling with his guests, he left orders with the guards as to how to receive petitioners:

> The guards' weapons barked long that morning. There was no counting the number of our people who died then. Their corpses were left around the palace for three days—a warning to all who still had the spirit to pit themselves against the king's friendship with the white destroyers. (84)

In a later incident, only one of several similar atrocities, the king lured the dissidents onto the white men's ship with the promise of a reconciliation feast, and had them carted thence into slavery (110).

Armah's zealotry in demonizing traditional authority figures, in order to establish his character Isanusi's belief that "kings and leaders had [not] enough wisdom to grasp their own folly" (96), is manifest in other instances, such as when a curious Koranche asked one of the first white men to visit him to demonstrate the power of his gun by shooting, and killing, a woman Koranche selected at random (96). And before Koranche there was Jonto, another in Armah's parade of dehumanized "kings," who erected a special enclosure to confine virgins and young boys for his sexual pleasure. In one of the milder examples of the coarseness that characterizes the language of the novel Armah reports that Jonto "loved particularly the tender arseholes of boys not yet in the thirtieth season. Some he had oiled for ingress but in his happiest moods he dispensed with oil, preferring as lubricant the natural blood of each child's bleeding anus as he forced his entry"[4] (65).

A dialogue of sorts is evident between Armah and Mofolo, the former paying homage to the latter by reincarnating Isanusi, although as a just and compassionate counselor who opposes Koranche's bloody cupidity. Further, Armah gives the name Mofolo to one of the brave young dissident followers of "the way, our way," Efua's choice in the dance of love in which maidens chose spouses for themselves. He also names the young clairvoyant maiden who foresaw and warned of the ominous coming of the white destroyers Noliwe.

I referred earlier to "the authorized Ghanaian line on the slave trade," a description that deserves some justification. The Jerry J. Rawlings government inaugurated Emancipation Day in July 1998, an observance that would annually mark the emancipation of slaves in the United States of America. The government intended it to serve as a ceremonial healing of the multifaceted traumas of the slave trade. Every year Africans from the diaspora (by which the organizers meant the descendants of those Africans captured during the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries and

transported as slaves to the Americas) would return "home" to a festive welcome by their Ghanaian hosts; there would be a ritual reenactment of the march into captivity, and a therapeutic reversal of the journey. The government also promised diaspora Africans, all diaspora Africans, the right of return and abode in Ghana, in other words, automatic citizenship of the country.

One feature of the inauguration was the ceremonial reinterment at Assin Manso of the remains of two slaves (identified as Samuel Carson and Crystal) that had been exhumed and retrieved for the purpose from different sites in the Americas. Another was a dramatic reenactment, in the National Theatre on July 30, of the capture and transportation of hapless Africans across the ocean. The Ghanaian organizers, and the author of the drama, went to considerable lengths to underscore African participation in the capture of slaves, to the extent even of casting Africans in decisive roles in the play. In his address to open the festivities, the author (and presidential adviser), Kofi Awoonor, called attention to the featured African who *led* the slave raiders, and Accra's *Daily Graphic* report of the following day cited that detail as "the most worrying aspect of the drama" (*Daily Graphic*, Friday, July 31, 1998, p. 3). Practically every discussion of the historical event being commemorated emphasized African guilt for selling their "brothers and sisters" into slavery, and the necessity for Africans both to recognize that demonstration of essential evil in the African makeup, and to apologize to the descendants of the people they sold into slavery.

The *Daly Graphic* coverage of the opening ceremony included a front-page photograph of President Rawlings delivering his address. Behind his podium a huge banner covered the wall, boldly proclaiming and acknowledging the auspices of the Ghana Ministry of Tourism (p. 1). The wooing of African Americans, the President and other officials indicated, was part of the country's resolve to make Ghana the tourism gateway to Africa, and to attract African American investment in the country's economy. When I commented to a colleague at the University of Ghana at Legon that the Ministry of Tourism's sponsorship of the events and the unabashedly publicized hope of economic gain from the cultivation of diaspora Africans lent some cynicism to the whole enterprise, he explained that the Ministry was in fact not the agency originally given the responsibility of staging the ceremonies; it inherited the task when the body originally designated to run it defaulted. But the Ministry has nevertheless retained the portfolio.

In the course of my affiliation with the English Department at Legon in the 1998–99 academic year I took on the advising of a Ph.D. candidate whose thesis was on slavery as a subject in Ghanaian literature. He chose to focus on Kofi Awoonor's *Comes the Voyager At Last: A Tale of Return to*

Africa (1992), and Ayi Kwei Armah's *Osiris Rising*. I quickly discovered, to my discomfort, that he did not see the works as fictional texts, or his function as a commentator on the authors' literary approaches and their products' aesthetic appeal. Rather, the works were for him reliable sources of historical data, and corroboration for the assertion that, as he elaborated, slavery, including domestic servitude and the sale of one's sons, daughters, and siblings, was a common and accepted constituent of traditional African society. That fact explained, he argued, why Africans had no qualms when Europeans arrived on the scene wishing to purchase slaves, such commodities having always been plentifully available for sale, anyway. The thesis he was writing consisted of citations of applicable scenes from Awoonor's and Armah's books, followed by lengthy doleful commentaries on the inexplicable African proneness to such inhumanity. In these jeremiads, which formed the greater part of his drafts, he wondered what in the nature of the African predisposed him (he was insistent on the gender specificity) to regard his kith and kin as mere saleable articles. He was unshaken by reminders that he was dealing with works of fiction, that he was writing a literature thesis, not a sermon, that his understanding of servitude in African societies needed reexamination, or that his assumptions on the role Africans played in the slave traffic were somewhat simplistic. We were both relieved when my stint as his adviser ended, and I assume that he went on to complete his thesis.

Concurrently with my involvement with the graduate student, I was also working with a young American exchange student from Chicago, who was spending the year at Legon. Beth described her ethnic background as mixed Western European, but, as she said, the European connection had become so attenuated by the several-generations' remove from Europe that she could "feel no weight of any tradition" behind her. She had decided to come to Africa because she wanted to experience, vicariously, what it was to live in the bosom of one's ancestral tradition, or at least within easy reach if it. Africans were fortunate, she had believed, to be surrounded by their own cultures, to be able to feel the weight of centuries of tradition behind them. She has been astonished, however, indeed shocked, to find that Ghanaian students put more stock in becoming like Americans than in being themselves. They knew about as much about American (or Western) literature as she did, she observed, whereas she knew little about African literatures. She had taken the few courses available on the subject at her home university, she said, but they did not amount to much. She implied (also) that her African counterparts knew much more about their own literature than she did, but I knew that she was wrong. More pertinently, for my present discussion, she expressed her great astonishment at the readiness, even eagerness, she had found among students at Legon to claim

a share of the guilt for what Europeans had done to Africa, from the slave trade, to colonialism, to neo-colonialism.

Gates's *Wonders of the African World*

Because of my Ghana experiences, I was not overly surprised when I saw Henry Louis Gates's version of the history of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in *Wonders of the African World* (1999), a television series was financed by the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) and sponsored by PBS (the United States of America's Public Broadcasting Service). In the relevant sequences, filmed mostly in Ghana but with supplements from Benin, Mali, and Tanzania, Gates relentlessly pressed his case that Africans were more to blame for the outrage than Europeans, because, as he argued, without African participation there would have been no slave trade. In Accra (in the segment he titled "The Slave Kingdoms") he got a Legon history professor to admit that her ancestors were slavers, and to apologize to him as a representative of all descendants of Africans enslaved by Africans. In Ouida (in the same segment) he found a descendant of a Portuguese slave merchant to apologize to him, and in Zanzibar (in the segment "The Swahili Coast"), he wheedled another apology from a descendant of Tiputip (or Tipoo Tib).

Gates's wonders provoked a firestorm,[5] predictably among Africans who thought he had enlisted his powerful voice, for reasons best known to him, in the service of constituencies intent on besmirching the African past and displacing the blame for European misdeeds on the continent from the real culprits, and onto Africans, the victims. He won little support for his gambit among African Americans, many of whom were astonished that he would deliberately undercut the movement to encourage the West to at least acknowledge error and responsibility for centuries of inhuman exploitation of Africa and Africans, and perhaps offer some reparation in contrition. But, not surprisingly (at least to attentive watchers of the African scene), he had some support from some Africans, most notably the Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka.

The BBC must have been pleased with their choice of Gates to do the expose on the African past and the African world, and they must have applauded his version of history. It was a coup of no small significance to have succeeded in enlisting the figure rapidly becoming the academy arbiter of all matters pertaining to Africa and its diaspora in the exculpation of Europe and the West, at least in the matter of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Sorious Samoura and "Our Own Story"

Impressed perhaps by BBC's coup, another British broadcasting outfit followed suit by hiring an African, a "son of the soil," to expose an aspect of Africa's present, from the horse's mouth, as it were. The Sierra Leonean filmmaker Sorious Samoura attracted worldwide attention in August 2000 when the Liberian government arrested him and his documentary film crew, reportedly because the government was unhappy with the exposure it feared it would receive from them. The BBC gave the story considerable play in its World Service, and especially in programs like *Focus on Africa* and *Network Africa*. Samoura, whose crew included a Briton and two South Africans (one with dual British citizenship), had some award to his credit for hard nosed investigative documentary, and he had permission from the Liberian government to investigate allegations that Charles Taylor (the Liberian president) was involved in aiding the rebellion in neighboring Sierra Leone, and in other nefarious activities like diamond smuggling.

The crew's arrest provoked considerable anger internationally, especially among champions of press freedom who saw it as another demonstration of Africans' understandable but still reprehensible aversion to unfettered news coverage. The outcry was loud enough to persuade Taylor and his government to release the men after they had apologized. It turned out, though, that the Liberian government had not actually acted arbitrarily, even though it might have overreacted. Samoura and his crew entered the country with an already written shooting script that included scenes designed to confirm the allegations against Charles Taylor. Their intention, therefore, was to find suitable footage to sell a story they had already scripted without the benefit of any investigation or interview. Questioned about the wisdom (if not the ethics) of pre-scripting what the investigative documentary was supposed to discover, a spokesman for Channel 4, the sponsors of the project, told the BBC that the script was really about "a programme which might have been made, and not actually the film they were making. 'There's no question that we would have made, as we always seek to make, a fair and impartial and accurate programme,' he said" (*Daily Graphic*, Monday, August 28, 2000, p. 5).

Samoura was more candid in a BBC *Focus on Africa* interview. He had written a script damaging to Taylor, he said, because that was the only way he could secure financing for the project. He followed with a vehement protestation that it was time that African governments realized the importance of having Africans "tell our own story" after so many years (or centuries) of having non-Africans tell the African story. As far as he was concerned, his project was an effort to "tell our own story," and he failed to see any discrepancy between his protestation and his action.

Samoura is correct on one point: his statement on the agency for representing Africa and the African world only reenacts a fundamental reality that continues to prove its resilience and astonishing resourcefulness for disguise and self-transformation. Had he and his crew succeeded in shooting the necessary footage to make the sort of documentary that would serve as a satisfactory payoff to his sponsors, he would have felt justified to proffer the film to the world as "our story," the African story told by an African, and therefore predicated on nothing but the best interests of Africa and Africans. But he would only have been a ventriloquist's prop. In this Samoura brings to mind the successful and internationally acclaimed Nigerian novelist Buchi Emecheta, whose thoroughgoing and persistent demonization of African menfolk (and African diaspora ones also in *The Family*) has endeared her to international feminism. She is at least honest about her choice of constituency, for she has admitted, "I write about Africa for the Western world and at the same time Africa for Americans" (Umeh, 252).

All of the foregoing leads us back to the point I made at the beginning: contemplation of pathways to Africa's past must entail consideration of the implications of the chosen routes for the authenticity of the recovered past. Quite obviously some of the routes chosen, and some of the agencies responsible for choosing them, have been, and are, problematic, thus placing the integrity of the discovered past in doubt. Samoura, Gates, and other chroniclers I have cited bring to mind the title of Jean-Marie Téno's 1981 film, *Afrique, je te plumerai* (Africa, I will fleece you!) It suggests what Africa represents to some chroniclers of Africa's past and present. The continent has long been, and continues to be, a commodity to be exploited for gain by all comers, African, Africa-descended, and others.

Achebe explained that when he embarked on his career as a creative writer, he assumed the task of proving to Africans (as well as to others) that the African past was not one long night of savagery from which the European, acting on God's behalf, came to deliver them. In *Anthills of the Savannah* (1989) he reemphasizes the role of the storyteller in helping people negotiate their present by providing them with clarity about their past. The old man from Abazon considers the relative importance of the sounding of the battle drum, the fighting of the battle, and the telling of the story after the battle, and says, "if you ask me which of them takes the eagle-feather I will say boldly: the story" (113). He continues:

> It is the story that outlives the sound of war-drums and the exploits of brave fighters. It is the story . . . that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind . . . it is the story that owns us and directs

us. It is the thing that makes us different from cattle; it is the mark on the face that sets one people apart from their neighbors. (114)

Achebe testifies here to the crucial importance of history, and of the creative writer (or storyteller) as historian, in the project he embarked upon when he began to write fiction. What I have sought to show in this paper is that the task has not been accomplished, that if anything it has been undermined and complicated by complex circumstances (that I cannot explore in this essay) that make the continued demonization of Africanity more profitable than its vindication.

The Irrelevance of Patriotism

I referred earlier to Echeruo's irate reaction to my book on Tutuola. In his ire, Echeruo astonishingly misread my argument in the last chapter as a "lament [of] the lack of recognition granted Tutuola" and evidence of "opportunistic heroism" and "an ambivalent rhetoric that allows [me] to *appear* patriotic enough to sit with those scholar-nationalists who think Tutuola should have won the Nobel Prize for Literature and more, and brave enough as well to tell the world that Tutuola is a bad symptom, a not-to-be-much-cherished kinsman" (178–79; italics his). I have re-read that chapter he cited to satisfy myself that I had not so drastically mangled what I intended to convey, which was certainly not *my* lament for Tutuola's lack of recognition, and most certainly *not* a belief that he deserved the Nobel Prize for Literature. I stand by what the chapter *actually and demonstrably* says. As for my patriotism, which he dismisses as "woolen," I would simply observe that my patriotism, whatever its texture, is irrelevant in this regard. Echeruo unfortunately misses my point: concern for representational integrity does not have to manifest patriotism, and I might just cite an intriguing Yoruba proverb: *Asiwèrè èèyàn ní ngbèjà ilú è* (Only an imbecile gets into a fight in defense of his town). The import is complex, but it will reward some reflection.

Notes

1. Joel Adeyinka Adedeji, 1969, "The Alarinjo Theatre: The Study of Yoruba Theatrical Art from Its Earliest Beginnings to the Present Times" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Ibadan).
2. See Owomoyela 1991, 123–35.
3. Ibid., 70–75.
4. Armah's time measurement in this work is two seasons to the year; he means boys not yet fifteen.

5.   See Owomoyela 2000.

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11

Representation of a Colonial Reality: World War I in *La Victoire en chantant* and *Amkoullel, l'Enfant peul*

Edgard Sankara

In this paper, I examine the representation of the historical reality of World War 1 by two creative media: film and literature. World War I was fought not only by Europeans but also by Africans who, under French colonial rule, took part in this historical event. How is this reality of the past represented in the postcolonial era by a film director belonging to the ex-metropole and by an African autobiographer who witnessed the beginning and the end of the French colonial era? What new elements can the comedy *La Victoire en chantant* and the autobiography *Amkoullel* bring to the understanding of both the colonial and post-colonial periods? What are the values of the two artistic media in the representation of historical reality? Do they confirm each other or contradict each other? These are some of the questions that this paper will address.

La Victoire en chantant (Black and White In Color) is a comedy and was directed in 1976 by Jean-Jacques Annaud from Georges Conchon's script. (This author is famous for his novel later adapted to film *L'Etat Sauvage*, a criticism of independence in African nations.) *La Victoire en chantant* is a film released sixteen years after what is considered the symbolic and general date of independence of African states, 1960, and goes back to the colonial past of France in Africa. It is a parody of World War I as experienced by both the French and the colonized Africans in the colonies.

One may wonder about the reliability of this film in rendering the historical reality, since it presents itself as a comedy. The director, Jean-Jacques Annaud, says in the French film review *Cinéma Français*:

> J'ai voulu faire un film plutôt comique sur un sujet plutôt sérieux, un film qui serait une partie d'une anthologie de la bêtise, qui serait aussi une façon d'ironiser sur la décision de la guerre. (22)

> [I wanted to make a rather funny film on a rather serious topic, a film that would be part of a collection of stupidity, which would treat ironically the decision to go to war. (22)]

Still, certain elements of the film try to reproduce accurately the social facts as they were in usage in the colonial era. One of these elements is the representation of the agents of France in her colony through the characters. The religious type is represented by two missionaries; the military type is represented by Sergeant Auguste Bosselet; the trader is represented by the curious brothers Rechampot (who have a "ménage à trois" with the older brother's wife). The missing type is the administrator; yet Hubert, the young geography student who will more and more assert himself as a politician throughout the film fills this vacant role.

It will be worthwhile to contrast the memoir by Amadou Hampâté Bâ: *Amkoullel, l'Enfant peul* (Amkoullel, the Fulani Boy) with the film. It is the first volume of this Malian author's memoirs. Bâ was born at the beginning of the twentieth century, and his book is a collection of memories on the author's life. One part of this memoir refers specifically to the symbolic year 1914:

> Cette année là, il n'y avait pas eu de célébration du 14 juillet. Le Commandant de cercle de Bandiagara avait convoqué tous les chefs de canton pour le 13 juillet, mais en raison de la famine, chaque chef ne devait être accompagné que de deux ou trois notables(. . . .) Certes, la famine sévissait encore, mais le véritable motif qui empêchait la célébration avec pompe de la prise de la Bastille était tout autre. Depuis le 28 juin 1914, date de l'assassinat de l'archiduc François-Ferdinand d'Autriche et de son épouse à Sarajevo, une menace de guerre planait dans le ciel de l'Europe particulièrement sur la France, l'Allemagne et l'Angleterre. En Afrique, tous les représentants de l'autorité française vivaient dans l'inquiétude. Les chefs militaires s'agitaient. Les dignitaires de l'administration civile (le commandant de cercle et son adjoint) et ceux de l'administration militaire (le capitaine de Bataillon et son adjoint) ne cessaient de se réunir et de palabrer entre eux, ce qui

étonna tous les fonctionnaires indigènes car militaires et civils n'avaient
pas précisément pour habitude de travailler ensemble; la plupart du temps,
ils vivaient plutôt comme chiens et chats. (383–84)

[In 1914, there was no celebration of the 14th of July (Bastille day). The
Commandant of the Bândiagara division had called on all the chiefs of
villages to come on the 13th of July, but because of the famine, each chief
was to be accompanied by only two or three notables(. . . .) It was true that
the famine was still going on, but the real reason that prevented the joyful
celebration of Bastille Day was a totally unnexpected one. Since the 28th
of June 1914, the day Austrian Archduke Ferdinand and his wife were
assasinated, the specter of war was threatening Europe; especially France,
Germany and Great Britain. In Africa, all the colonial representatives
were becoming more and more nervous, and the military officers were
getting ready for action. The executives in the Civil service (the division
Commandant and his associate) and those in the Army (the Captain in
chief and his second in command) would meet and discuss constantly, to
the astonishment of the African civil servants since the French military
and civil servants did not have the habit of working together in the past;
most of the time they stayed apart like cats and dogs. (383–84)]

In the film, the anxiety preceding the event is not emphasized as it is in
Bâ's memoir. Surprisingly enough, Hubert brutally and informally
announces the news of France's declaration of war on Germany to the
whole French colonial society at Fort-Coulais. The film sets the action in
1915, whereas Bâ's autobiography insists that already in July 1914 the
French colonial authorities in Africa were in a state of alert for war with
Germany. It seems that the film took some liberties with historical facts
and dates. One may also be surprised that the French community in the film
was so cut off from France that such serious news as the declaration of war
was not announced by the military representative (Sergeant Bosselet) but
rather by a young civilian, Hubert. As a whole, the French community
seems to be isolated and living in autarchy in a remote area of Africa,
without any means of communication with other administrative divisions of
the country. We must remember that under French colonial rule, African
countries were internally divided into "cercles" and "cantons" administered
by French representatives. The film also distorts the colonial organization
by omitting any external communication with other divisions in the same
country. At the same time, this distortion of political and administrative
organization can be explained by the author's endeavor to simplify a vision
of the colonial society through a reduction of characters (or types) and

place, the whole forming a sort of microcosm. This is in substance what the co-scriptwriter Conchon says about the film project:

> A partir de l'observation d'un microcosme de société, notre ambition a été de faire apparaître—avant la lettre, en germe—la plupart des comportements qui devaient conduire l'Europe de l'abattoir de 14 à l'apocalypse de 40: stupidité de classes moyennes soumises d'instinct à qui paraît devoir sauvegarder leurs profits, partage du monde en 'hommes' et en 'sous-hommes', fascination des intellectuels pour des pouvoirs de plus en plus totalitaires, démission de l'Eglise devant la montée du Mal, etc. (22)

> [Through the observation of a microcosm, my goal was to reveal before the facts the typical behaviors that would lead Europe to the slaughterhouse of 1914 and the apocalypse of 1940: the stupidity of the middle class clunging to its selfish interests, the division of the world between a so-called "superior race" and "inferior races," the intellectuals' fascination for totalitarian regimes, the passivity of the Church confronted with the rise of evil, etc. (22)]

This statement by Conchon shows that beyond its comical aspect, the film's vision was twofold: to show the absurd behavior of French authorities during World War I and also to reveal that it was the same type of incoherent and silly behavior that led to World War II.

In the film as in the autobiography, there is a convergence: the existence of a counter-discourse by colonized people who criticize the French. This is visible in the film in the passage where the two French missionaries are transported on the shoulders of Africans who are singing in their native language: in Mandinka. The meaning of the song is "These white folks are really evil. They have a long nose. . ."; the missionary who is delighted by the melody naively exclaims: "Ah! I love this song so much!" In the autobiography of Bâ, it is also a singer who focuses criticism against the colonizers:

> La célèbre cantatrice Flateni, ancienne griote du roi Aguibou Tall, accompagnait généralement le cortège. De sa voix émouvante et puissante, qui dominait la foule, elle chantait les vieux péans de guerre où l'on célébrait les exploits des héros toucouleurs de l'armée d'El Hadj Omar aux Batailles de Médine, Tyayewal ou autres. Ses chants tiraient des larmes aux plus endurcis. Mais il arrivait qu'ils les fassent pleurer de rire car elle n'était pas tendre pour les toubabs, "peaux allumées" et "gobeurs d'oeufs." Heureusement les dignitaires coloniaux ne

comprenaient pas le peul! La population ne pouvait faire autrement que de subir la colonisation, mais chaque fois qu'elle le pouvait, elle se payait largement la tête des colonisateurs, à leur nez et à leur barbe! (382–83).

[The famous singer Flateni, the former griote of king Aguibou Tall, would accompany the parade. With her moving and powerful voice that dominated the crowd, she would sing war songs celebrating the feats of the Toucouleur heroes in El Hadj Omar's army in the battles of Medina, Tyayewal and others. Her songs would always make people cry, even the tough ones. Yet, she sometimes made them laugh to tears because she was not kind to the white folks, the "light skin ones" and "swallowers of eggs." Luckily, the colonial executives did not understand Fulani, the language she was singing in! The population passively accepted colonization, but on any possible occasion, they would make fun of the colonizers under their noses. (382–83)]

One scene in particular is a big "farce" that must be compared with the corresponding scene in Bâ's autobiography. In the film, the whole French community (including the civilians) is dressed in military clothes, under the leadership of Sergeant Bosselet, when they start the recruitment process of African soldiers to fight the war. The "recruitment" is supposed to require the "volunteering" of the participants according to the article of law that Sergeant Bosselet reads in French in front of the Africans. Hubert requests that the article be translated into the native language of the Africans, but the Sergeant and Rechampot are categorically opposed. It is therefore by kicks in their behinds that the Africans are "recruited"; they are given in return some cooking ware as reward for their "voluntary" enlistment. The film, by using a comic tone criticizes the double face of French law as it was practiced in French Africa: the article of law is differently interpreted depending on the two groups it is applied to, the French or the Africans.

If the film makes it a point to criticize the "forced" recruitment of African soldiers during World War I, such is not the case in Bâ's memoir:

Aux premières heures de la matinée, le commandant de cercle réunit tous les chefs et notables du pays et leur décalara: "L'Allemagne vient d'allumer les poudres en Europe. Son Empereur, Guillaume II, veut dominer le monde. Mais il trouvera devant lui notre France éternelle, championne des libertés(. . . .)"

L'administration mobilisa d'abord les réservistes, puis fit appel aux volontaires. Plus tard, on procéda à l'appel des jeunes gens par classe. A Bandiagara, cela ne souleva pas trop de difficultés; à la limite, les gens

> n'acceptaient pas trop mal le recrutement—du moins avant qu'il ne devint excessif—car pour eux faire la guerre était un honneur, une occasion de montrer son courage et son dédain de la mort, et Dieu sait s'ils l'ont montré au cours des deux dernières guerres! (386–92).

> [Early in the morning, the Commandant of the division called on all the chiefs of villages and the notables of the region and declared: "Germany has just started the war in Europe. Her Emperor Guillaume II, wants to control the world, but she will always find on her way our eternal France, champion of freedom (. . . .)"]

> [The administration mobilized the reservists first, and then called up the volunteers. Later on they drafted the young men by class ages. In Bandiagara, it went on without so many difficulties. Up to one point, people did not refuse the recruitment—at least before it became excessive—because for them, to go to war was an honor, an opportunity to show their courage and their fearlessness of death. And God knows how well they showed all these during the two world wars! (386–92)]

Two things need to be noted here: First, the autobiography of Bâ narrates in a serious tone how the recruitment process went on, and the author emphasizes that the Africans, driven by a sense of honor they saw in taking part in this war, voluntarily enlisted. This is far from the schematization of the film, which was showing the contradictions and the absurdity of the so-called "voluntary recruitment." Still, far from contradicting the film, the story in Bâ limits its focus to the recruitment in Bandiagara, a region of Mali, where the author contends, "At Bandiagara, the recruitment went well." It is good to note that in the film, the country is not identified and therefore there is a trend to generalization not found in the autobiography. Bâ relates the war to an expected glory while the film shows the same recruitment as being "forced" on Africans and disgraceful to them.

To these two representations of the same historical fact could be opposed what a more scholarly historical discourse says about how France recruited Africans to take part in World War I, especially in the region formerly called Afrique Occidentale Française (French West Africa). Gilbert Meynier's article "La France coloniale de 1914 à 1931," published in *Histoire de la France coloniale (1914–1990)* sheds some decisive light on the matter:

> A partir d'août 1914, nécessité guerrière fit loi. La guerre dura et se révéla mangeuse d'hommes (. . . .) Il fallut, en 1915, augmenter les effectifs. La plus grande partie des recrues resta composée d'*engagés théoriquement*

volontaires (. . . .) Le recrutement en A.O.F. fut, par la force des choses, fragmenté en "recrutements" inégaux selon les territoires, et qui ne touchèrent jamais la totalité des jeunes gens, pas plus tard que le système des engagements "volontaires" qui se substitua à l'appel en 1916. (76–77). (C'est nous qui soulignons)

[After August 1914, war dictated its law; the war continued and took many lives (. . .) Therefore in 1915, more recruitments were needed. Most of the recruits were composed of people theoretically enlisting on their own will. (. . .) The recruitment in French West Africa was under these circumstances fragmented in unequal "recruitments" varying from one region to another, and they did not apply to all the young people, nor did the "voluntary" enlistment system that replaced the draft in 1916. (76–77) (My emphasis)]

Meynier explicitly puts in quotation marks the words "recruitments" and "voluntary" thus showing their problematic status. At this level, the historical discourse seems to agree more with the representation in *La Victoire en chantant* than Bâ's narrative. Therefore, the film appears more critical than the memoir, and this harsh criticism of the French colonial past by a French director reflects the evolution of the French cinema that takes its distance from the official discourse starting from the 1970s. This is pretty much what Dina Sherzer says in her article "Race Matters and Matters of Race: Interracial Relationships in Colonial and Postcolonial Films," in which she locates the Second wave of colonial film between 1970 and 1990. Needless to say, *La Victoire en chantant* is part of this Second wave, marked by a critical rereading of France's colonial past as Sherzer affirms:

La Victoire en chantant (Black and White and in Color, 1976), Rue *Cases-nègres* (Sugar Cane Alley, 1983), *Fort Saganne* (1984), *Chocolat* (1988), *Le Vent de la Toussaint* (1989), *Outremer* (Overseas, 1991), *L'Amant* (The Lover, 1992), and *Indochine* (1992) are the imaginings and refigurings of colonial life that appeared in a France traversed by various successive tendencies including deconstruction, feminism, postcolonialism, reflections on identity, resurgence of racism, and return to and nostalgia for the colonial past. (235)

Pursuing Sherzer's idea, I must say that the French cinema from 1970 to 1990 takes more liberty in the representation of a situation in which France was involved in order to criticize her behavior during that era. Arnaud's film can be viewed as a post-colonial one, and post-colonial means here

"after the colonial era" and implies a rereading of the said era. Post-colonialism allows a certain freedom to the director, freedom that could have been denied to him during the colonial era. As a matter of fact, the freedom and the comical tone give an image of a ridiculous France confronting the Africans, who make fun of these people in an aside that they cannot understand. This is why, at the end of the film, when Hubert and the German officer he had been fighting chat as if they were the best of friends, the Africans shake their heads in disbelief as if to say "Ah! These white folks, they are hard to understand: they fight each other over nothing and here they are chatting as if they were friends and nothing has happened." Parody in the film simplifies the fact by showing various types of members of French colonial society through a limited number of characters at Fort-Coulais. Through the representation of a microcosm, the film uses simplicity to show something symbolic in order to ridicule it. All the symbols are subverted and ridiculed: the Sergeant seems to spend his time sleeping with African women, the Rechampot are nothing but two crooks, and the priests take part in politics. This film can be criticized further because it tends to trivialize World War I. Nevertheless, one may also think that the film is not only about reduction or distortion, as the film reaches its comical objective by keeping the spectators at a critical distance from the historical truth. One example of the liberty taken by the film with historical facts is the passage where the French community all dress up in Sunday clothes as if going camping while they plan on attacking the Germans who are on the other side of the river. Paul Rechampot, talking to his fellow countrymen, says that this African river represents the rive Rhine that he, Rechampot, is going to cross.

    La Victoire en chantant was released in 1976, that is, sixteen years after the end of colonization, and *Amkoullel, l'enfant peul* was published in 1991, thirty one years after the end of the same era. One can be surprised by the freedom of tone in the film directed by a Frenchman that ridicules France while Bâ's memoir gives a limited and reserved vision of the French colonizers. It seems that in Bâ's autobiography there is a criticism of the recruitment of African soldiers, but it is a limited criticism that could be justified by a search for objectivity. Therefore, it could be said that Bâ respects the exigencies of the genre he is writing in by asserting his own limitations; the memoir, unlike other autobiographical genres seem to respect the historical facts more. On the other hand, Annaud's film takes more liberty with the historical facts because this genre does not require objectivity. In the two artistic media there are limitations: Bâ cannot take subjective liberties and Annaud cannot limit his film to an objective documentary of historical facts, which would reduce the success of the film. As a whole, it could be said that Bâ's narrative is closer to historical

objectivity whereas the film representation, by its fictional character, allows itself some subjectivity. This contradiction brings us back to what I had stated above; yet, it is the film that is closer to the historical fact in its representation.

From another standpoint, if one considers that each work is produced for a predetermined audience, one can understand that Annaud's film, by its humorous side, is more likely to move a French audience independent of the state ideology. This is what Conchon declares to *Cinéma Français*:

> (. . .) Tout cela, bien sûr, très triste, accablant, mais d'abord et éminemment stupide, donc bouffon. De là notre ton, et notre pari: si le spectateur de 1976 accepte de rire de cette bouffonnerie—mieux: s'il en rit librement jusqu'au bout—c'est que de tels aveuglements n'ont plus cours, sont devenus définitivement anachroniques. Dieu veuille! (23)

> [(. . .) Of course, all this was sad and painful, but first, it was utterly stupid and therefore ridiculous. From there comes our challenge: If the spectator of 1976 laughs at this farce—great! If the spectator laughs until the end of the film—it means that such blindness has become anachronistic. Thank God! (23)]

As for Bâ, the audience could be the Africans, and the author wants to give his version of the historical reality that colonization represents for Africans. Yet, Bâ's case is complicated, as it was under the instigation of his French friends that he undertook to write his memoirs, and many traces in his autobiography show that he wrote primarily for a French audience.[1] This means that Bâ's account may have not been totally free because of his friendship with French colonizers, especially when many of them took part in the colonial era.

What can be said at the end of this analysis? I compared two media in their representation of historical facts. In the film, a French director ridicules the French colonial era, and in the autobiography, an old African attempts to recall his memories of the past. The paradox is that despite its less serious tone, it is the film that seems to be closer to the historical reality, especially in its description of the "voluntary recruitment" of African soldiers by French colonial authorities to take part in World War I. The film seems to be more modern by its criticism and the freedom of its tone, and this is due mostly to the evolution of French cinema whose Second wave starts from the 1970s and takes more liberty with the French government's discourse on colonization.

Notes

*   All translations are mine.
1.   Among such French readers are the famous anthropologist Théodore Monod, and Hélène Heckmann, Bâ's literary legatee for the two volumes of his memoirs. In the second volume of the memoirs, Heckmann, talking about the genesis of Bâ's memoirs, acknowleges that Bâ sought advice from her and from other French friends, and they even served as judges of his first drafts. The traces of a European audience are shown directly and indirectly in the memoirs through some references to "le lecteur européen," "le lecteur non africain," etc.

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III

Writing Colonial Africa

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12

"Good Men in Africa"?
From Missionaries to Mercenaries

Barbara Harlow

Barmen, commercial travellers, and lawyers briefed in diamond cases, tell the best diamond stories, part of the folk-lore of a territory still steeped in the excitement of prospecting, ore rushes and the lucky finds of unexpected wealth.
Ruth First,
South West Africa. 1963

I

The "best diamond stories" that Ruth First tells here are from South West Africa, now Namibia, but they tell as well a longer and wider history of the competition waged by European contenders for the mineral wealth and material resources of southern Africa more generally. The discovery of diamonds in the Cape Colony in 1867, and of gold in the Transvaal in 1886, led to "rushes" to those provinces of what is now South Africa, the bustle of prospectors and speculators, the schemes of entrepreneurs and eventual mining magnates, the biddings of big buyers and small claims holders—and the muscle, blood, sweat, and tears of African laborers. Those still-buried riches were, according to some critics, the cause of the Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902), fought between the British colonizers and the Boer settlers of the territories. But they also provided the stuff of the stories—diamond stories, war stories, adventure stories, the lore and legacy of those who

struck it rich and the others who would pay—and pay again and again—for it all. What has come to be known as the nineteenth century's "scramble for Africa" might well be retooled, however, at the end of the twentieth century as the "scramble for contracts." In 1884–85, summoned by the German Prince Bismarck, the European contenders for the "dark continent" met in Berlin and parcelled out the territories amongst themselves. As Marlow, in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, described the resulting map, "There was a vast amount of red, good to see at any time, because one knows that some real work is done there, a deuce of a lot of blue, a little green, smears of orange, and, on the East Coast, a purple patch, to show where the jolly pioneers drink the jolly lager beer."

In the 1890s, while Marlow was diligently occupied in following the River Congo across central Africa, in the southern part of the continent other adventures were unfolding, and Cecil John Rhodes was just as busily designing to paint the entire continent in the hues of a bright British imperial red. His ambitions reached even the British magazine *Punch* which caricatured him at the time as the "colossus of Africa." While the territory that he claimed for, and named after, himself—Rhodesia—was redesignated on independence in 1980 as Zimbabwe, Rhodes's legacy continues both in the companies—De Beers and Anglo-American—that he left behind and in the generous and much-coveted scholarships that he endowed in his "last will and testament," for the "education of young Colonists." Rhodes scholars, that is, continue to study at Oxford and the Rhodes House Library at that venerable institution that has been recently granted the archives of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, which for nearly three decades—from its founding in 1958 till the negotiations in the early 1990s—campaigned against apartheid rule in South Africa.

Still, there are those diamonds and the gold, the men who mined the minerals and the men who made their monied fortunes from them, and the writers—together with the "barmen, the commercial travellers and the lawyers"—who recorded their stories and bequeathed in print their legendary escapades both to contemporaries and to posterity. As Olive Schreiner's hero in her novel portrayal Trooper *Peter Halket of Mashonaland* (1897) would ambitiously muse to himself while on service in the territory: "All men made money when they came to South Africa,—Barney Barnato, Rhodes—they all made money out of the country, eight millions, twelve millions, twenty-six millions, forty millions; why should not he!" (32).

Both H. Rider Haggard (1856–1925) and John Buchan (1875–1940) began their careers as representatives of British imperialism in South Africa, and translated that early African experience into the adventures of their novel's protagonists on their return to Britain. Haggard had gone to

South Africa in 1871 at the age of nineteen as secretary to the governor of Natal, Sir Henry Bulwer, and in 1877, while on the staff of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, hoisted the British flag over the newly annexed territory of the Transvaal. The hero of several of Haggard's adventure novels, Alan Quatermain, makes his first appearance in the still popular *King Solomon's Mines* (1885). In the company of Sir Henry Curtis and Captain John Good, whom he has met on board a ship lingering in Durban harbor, Quatermain, who had until then "made his living as a trader in the old Colony" (11), sets out to follow an ancient map in order to recover Curtis's brother George; to quest for gold and diamonds; and in the process, to liberate a tribe of African natives from their despotic ruler and restore their chief, Umbopa/Ignosi, to his rightful place at the head of his people. A no less legendary mineral animates the exploits of the young Scotsman David Crawfurd in John Buchan's *Prester John* (1910). Like Haggard, Buchan had gone out to South Africa in secretarial service, as one of the young men who came to make up Milner's "kindergarten" in 1901. Rather than restore an African chief to his position of leadership, however, Crawfurd, just as much a mercenary as Quatermain, must assist instead in the subduing of a native uprising, led by the redoubtable Laputa, and both recover the sacred ruby necklace of Solomonic legend and discover the diamonds alleged to have been pilfered by the African workers from the mines and which were said to have been collected in a secret, ceremonial cave secreted well beyond the mountain passes.

IDB, or "illicit diamond buying," provided not just the impetus for adventure stories, however, but was seriously prosecuted by the mine owners and their overseers. In 1891 Lord Randolph Churchill M.P. (father of Winston) visited the mining areas of southern Africa. Churchill was a shareholder in Rhodes's Chartered Company and was responding to the magnate's "cordial invitation to visit the Cape" (recounted in his *Men, Mines and Animals in South Africa* (2). In one of the letters he filed with the *Daily Graphic*, and which were subsequently collected in his above-mentioned book, Churchill describes the tortuous measures prescribed for dealing with such illegitimate activities, particularly on the part of the African workers in the mines. His description, however, also exposes the scandalous working and living conditions of the migrant laborers who made—and made possible—the mining wealth of South Africa:

> The company sustain a considerable loss annually, estimated now at from 10 to 15 per cent., by diamonds being stolen from the mines. To check this loss, extraordinary precautions have been resorted to. The natives are engaged for a period of three months, during which time they are confined in a compound surrounded by a high wall. On returning from their day's

work, they have to strip off all their clothes, which they hang on pegs in a shed. Stark naked, they then proceed to the searching room, where their mouths, their hair, their toes, their armpits, and every portion of their body are subjected to an elaborate examination. White men would never submit to such a process, but the native sustains the indignity with cheerful equanimity, considering only the high wages which he earns. After passing through the searching room, they pass, still in a state of nudity, to their apartments in the compound, where they find blankets in which to wrap themselves for the night. During the evening, the clothes which they have left behind them are carefully and minutely searched, and restored to their owners in the morning. The precautions which are taken a few days before the natives leave the compound, their engagement being terminated, to recover diamonds which they may have swallowed, are more easily imagined than described. In addition to these arrangements, a law of exceptional rigour punishes illicit diamond buying, known in the slang of South Africa as I.D.B.ism. Under this statute, the ordinary presumption of law in favour of the accused disappears, and an accused person has to prove his innocence in the clearest manner, instead of the accuser having to prove his guilt. Sentences are constantly passed on persons convicted of this offence ranging from five to fifteen years. It must be admitted that this tremendous law is in thorough conformity with South African sentiment, which elevates I.D.B.ism almost to the level, if not above the level, of actual homicide. (44–46)

Louis Cohen, by contrast, who worked with both Rhodes and his rival Barney Barnato in the mining houses of Kimberley, recalls in his *Reminiscences of Kimberley* (1911) the practice of IDB rather differently from his parliamentary compatriot. Cohen, that is, does not "think any writer has yet told the history of IDB in all its native truth" (141). According to Cohen, "If you come to look the matter squarely in the face, it is not such a serious one as first appears. Many of the claimholders, I repeat, commenced their diamond field life as professors of the same art, and when, after robbing the Dutchmen of their ground and diamonds, they themselves became mineholders, then they discovered, to their intense horror and indignation, the heinousness of a crime which they had practised themselves so successfully" (143). Cohen has himself more than a bit of the "barman" in him, and something less than Trooper Peter Halket's illusions, in his provocative recollections of the diamond stories of Kimberley. Thus Cohen maintains in the introduction to his reminscences, "The admiration which is felt in so many quarters for millionaires, billionaires, and self-styled magnates should have a distinct slump if my yarns be believed. [. . .] The

stories I intend to tell," he goes on, "will, I trust, point a moral, and adorn a tale—if only the tail of such a donkey as I have been" (11–12).

Magnate dynasties continue to mine the mineral wealth of South Africa at the end of the twentieth century, but the miners themselves have come to play a new and critically decisive role in demanding a different distribution of that wealth. In "A Distant Clap of Thunder," the South African Communist Party and its leader Joe Slovo, saluted South Africa's black mine workers on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the 1946 mine strike.

> Over fifty thousand dead. More than a million permanently disabled. Hundreds of thousands diseased through inhaling the poison dust. Millions displaced from their homes, separated from their families and locked into a chain of guarded, high-walled labour camps. These are not the casualty figures for a major war; they are the price already paid by black miners for digging gold and coal from the bowels of South Africa's earth. . . .
>
> Today, our black working class, the creator and owner of all our country's wealth, is in the forefront of the mass forces which are poised to deal a deathblow to the tyranny of race rule and its roots in capitalist exploitation. And within this working class, the mines undoubtedly constitute the backbone of a rapidly growing Trade Union which has alredy demonstrated its massive potential in the liberation upsurge (Joe Slovo, Introduction).

In *Black Gold: The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant*, her last book, which was published posthumously, following her assassination in Maputo in 1982 by a letter bomb sent to her from South Africa, Ruth First (who was also Slovo's wife) and a team of researchers at the Eduardo Mondlane University investigated the ways in which the "South African economy [. . .] found the power to command the labour forces of numbers of dependent countries in the sub-continent, which furnish to South Africa an industrial reserve army of labour" (1). The study includes statistics and interviews, and also songs sung by the migrants and the families they leave behind. One of these songs is "Maghalangu":

> *Leader*: Maghalangu Maghalangu Maghalangu.
> *Chorus*: Heeyoo! Maghalangu.
> *Leader*: Maghalangu has taken his son.
> *Chorus*: Heyoo! Maghalangu.
> *Leader*: Maghalangu has killed his son.
> *Chorus*: Heyoo! Maghalangu.

Leader: Maghalangu has taken his wife.
Chorus: Heyoo! Maghalangu.
Leader: Maghalangu Maghalangu Maghalangu
Chorus: Heyoo! Maghalangu.

(In between the leader and the chorus the following comments or phrases are thrown in by members of the chorus.)

Drive carefully, we are going to Joni! [Johannesburg, or to the mines]
Drive carefully, otherwise our provisions will spill off!
Father, please buy your son a pair of trousers! [woman]
You must take good care of my field—cultivate it properly and plant every crop . . . ! [man]
You must write letters, father!
I will send the money for hut tax, I shall send the money!
Please, don't forget us here at home! [woman]

Interviewer: Do you sing this song when you are saying goodbye?
Singers: Yes, when we left Maghalangu's recruiting station.
Interviewer: And you say Maghalangu is taking my son away?
Man: The women are saying that Maghalangu, the recruiter, is taking [stealing] their sons to Joni. Maghalangu was the recruiter for Wenela. Maghalangu is taking away my son who might get killed in Joni and never return. Maghalangu is taking the man away who, upon his return from Joni, may find that his wife has gone with another man! (38)

But those same migrant miners have become the heroes perhaps of a new version of the nineteenth-century adventure story, a sequel to the earlier "diamond stories," another direction even to the mineral stories once told by "barmen, commercial travellers and lawyers" and mined by popular scribblers, leaving behind the Alan Quatermains and the David Crawfurds of the last century, the precursors of the mercenaries of today,

In the "comic book," *Zeke and the Mine Snake* (1998), written by Vuka Shift and illustrated by Joe Dog, Zeke's "journey to the centre of the earth" succeeds in exposing the deadly "mine snake," the noxious vapors breathed underground by the culpable neglect of the strident and striding mine owners aboveground for even the minimal well-being and safe-passage of the workers through the mines and home to their families when the job has been done. The story of Zeke, the mine laborer, and his comrades in the union ends happily this time round, but tentatively only, for as the final line spoken by one of the workers says, "snakes always shed their skins, you know" (40). Future adventures of Zeke in South Africa are promised, the

addenda to the "folk-lore of a territory still steeped in the excitement of prospecting, ore rushes and the lucky finds of unexpected wealth," a new agenda, but told now in the interests of, yielding other interest on the investment in, a different—post-colonial and post-apartheid—South Africa.

II

"Send in the mercenaries!" suggested William Shawcross in a widely distributed editorial written in mid May 2000. As Sierra Leone rebel forces held nearly 500 United Nations peacekeeping troops hostage, Shawcross maintained that "[i]t is perhaps not surprising that traditional peacekeeping troop contributing countries—from both the First and the Third World—are more and more reluctant to expose their soldiers to the dangers that peacekeeping involves." Shawcross, political analyst and author of *Deliver Us from Evil: Warlords, Peacekeepers and a World of Endless Conflict* (2000), went on editorially: "This surely means that we should start considering the unthinkable. The recent history of Sierra Leone shows that mercenaries or private security forces, properly supervised and controlled, may be the best answer to this and some other crises." But the privateers are for their part financing their agendas from Angola through the Democratic Republic of the Congo and into Sierra Leone and Liberia with diamonds, the "blood diamonds" or "conflict gems" that threaten not only African lives and limbs but De Beers's very gemocracy itself.

The recent history of Sierra Leone to which Shawcross refers involved the activities on behalf of the country's much-beset government, first, of Executive Outcomes, a South African mercenary enterprise, managed and staffed in significant part by former apartheid operatives, and subsequently, of Sandline, a UK-based organization of similar sort with personnel emanating from British military and intelligence apparata. Both Executive Outcomes and Sandline, like several other contemporary analogs, succeed in important ways to a long history of European incursion into colonized and formerly colonized territories, from what in the nineteenth century was hailed as a "civilizing mission" to the late twentieth century's disputed project of "humanitarian intervention." From the representatives of missionary David Livingstone's three imperial "C's"—civilization, Christianity, commerce—to the peacekeepers, aid workers, venture capitalists, and adventurers of globalization, there is a long lineage of "good men in Africa," depicted in works of popular fiction, policy papers, adminstrators' agendas, and travelers' legends and logbooks.

A Good Man in Africa, the title of William Boyd's 1981 novel of the foibles and follies of a minor British functionary in West Africa, describes then an extended genealogy of such men, from missionaries like

Livingstone to the mercenaries of Executive Outcomes, and the narratives that chronicle their exploits and exploitations: evangelical travel narratives and administrative reports from imperial days and the reports from the field of postcolonial non-governmental agencies. But there is as well a just as long and novel story of secret agents and detectives who have made Africa their fiefdom—from John Buchan's Richard Hannay to the hard-bitten Bruce Medway chasing down toxic-waste dumpers, diamond traders, and child prostitution ringleaders in Benin in Robert Wilson's novels, whose *A Darkening Stain* (1998) turned into a horrific front-page story in April 2001 when a West African child-slave ship sought land and mysteriously lost its human cargo. Then there are the endless pulp versions of mineral firms and kinship capitalism by Wilbur Smith, such as *When the Lion Feeds* (1964), *Gold Mine* (1970), and *The Diamond Hunters* (1971). The travesties and treacheries of the multinational pharmaceuticals have more recently still played their own part both in poisoning the continent and its peoples and in depriving them of access to remedies. HIV/AIDS in particular and the depradations inflicted cross-continentally by these postcolonial traders and profiteers have been featured in at least three recent "biological thrillers": Ben Geer's *Something More Sinister* (1998), Patrick Matchaba's *Deadly Profit* (2000), and John LeCarré's *The Constant Gardener* (2000). But that's another story still. Along with that of the trial of Wouter Bassoon, apartheid's chemical warrior who declined the invitation to apply for amnesty, continues in South Africa—although the "big pharma," faced with face-losing on an international scale, capitulated—again in April 2001—and dropped its legal case against the government of South Africa which sought to make available low-cost and/or generic medicines to its population ravaged by HIV/AIDS.

In post-apartheid South Africa, meanwhile, other apartheid apologists, like Craig Williamson, amnestied by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for his part in bombing of the ANC offices in London in 1982; the murders of Jeanette Schoon and her six-year-old daughter Kathryn in Angola in 1983; and the assassination of Ruth First in Mozambique in 1982, have gone on to become security advisers for mining companies and to manage consultancy firms for both business and government alike. At the same time, at home—from Joburg to Cape Town—the crime rate is said to be amongst the highest in the world and the crime fictions and documentaries are appearing alongside to tell those stories—as well as the criminal past of the apartheid regime in the testimony before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's various commmittees: human rights violations, amnesty, and reparations, and rehabilitation.

Ernest Mandel, the Marxist political economist and Fourth Internationalist, studied the evolution of the mystery novel into the

international thriller—from street to stately home to transnational boardroom, as the dustjacket says, or, in other words, from colonialism into late capitalism—in *Delightful Murder: A Social History of the Crime Story* (1984). And as one century turns into another, the "good men in Africa" are turning to still other more likely and even less liked prospects, but which continue to be just as proselytizing as those of their missionary predecessors, every bit as bureaucratic as their imperial forebears, and each one perhaps as mercenary as the next.

And the diamonds are providing now again, at this century's turn, the costs of Africa's "civil wars." The IDBism of the late nineteenth century has found its successor in the "conflict gems" of the late twentieth century. According to a special report on Angola, for example, presented to the UN Security Council in March 2000, "diamonds had a uniquely important role within UNITA's political and military economy" (par. 77), and the panel went on to implicate at least seven other African countries—including Namibia (formerly South West Africa) and South Africa—in the illegal trade, abetted by the traders in Europe and the mining companies such as De Beers.

De Beers's own history of diamond mining and trading in the "native question" in Africa has a long history, one that goes back to the discovery of diamonds in South Africa in 1867. Emerging out of the competition for a monopoly over mining rights, a competition eventually won by Cecil J. Rhodes, De Beers has since come to control two-thirds of the world's diamonds. Theirs is perhaps still one of those "best diamond stories," that Ruth First wrote of in her 1963 study, *South West Africa*. But First, who was assassinated in 1982 in Mozambique while working at the Eduardo Mondlane University on a project on migrant labor to the mines, had also planned to write the "profile of a corporation," and that corporation was Anglo-American, still another of the offsprings of Rhodes-ian design, and now owned along with De Beers by the Oppenheimer family: a diamond story in the rough—and still another story, a literary gem in its own right.

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13

The Horror of Reproduction in
Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*

Eve Dunbar

In a speech given in Kimberley in 1888, Cecil Rhodes is said to have told his audience: "We must endeavour to make those who live with us feel that there is no race distinction between us; whether Dutch or English, we are combined in one object, and that is the union of the states of South Africa without abandoning the Imperial tie" (Vindex 361). In a time when race signified, among other things, the differences between the multitudes of white races/nations, Cecil Rhodes' made one of his goals in South Africa to bring the Dutch and the British (two white races) together under the British Imperial flag. However, as Verschoyle Vindex tells us, one of the most difficult impediments to such a union was the question of the status of native Africans, the black race, in South Africa. Vindex writes that in the face of a unified, white South Africa, the "native question was to be in the future the question of questions in South Africa" (362). Because the South African Dutch considered the natives "animals, differing essentially from white men, and absolutely without claim to the civil rights which the British Government asserted and conferred," the split between the British and Dutch in South Africa became one centered around how to treat the native Africans (362). Thus, the only way to create a unified, white South Africa was to answer the Native Question.

In 1894, as Secretary for Native Affairs, Rhodes legislatively addressed the Native Question, and as Vindex informs us, Rhodes "moved the second

reading of the Glen Grey Bill (July 1894) [as] a practical attempt to deal with the native question" (369). Though the bill was said to be enacted as a protective and educative measure to cease the alcohol consumption of native Africans—as drinking was thought to be directly proportional to the crime rate—it could have run into opposition because the Dutch wine-growers and brandy-farmers were said to think themselves losing a vast buying public (Vindex 371). However, such opposition was avoided because of "the labour clauses, which redeemed it for [the Dutch]" (Vindex 371). Thus, the Dutch agreed with the bill because it mandated them a steady supply of working bodies, according to Vindex.

In addition, what I find most interesting about Rhodes's comments concerning the bill and the "Native Question" in South Africa, is his attention to not only what the Empire should do with Africans, but, more specifically, what was to be done with the abundance of African bodies. In his address to the Cape House, Cecil Rhodes told the legislators:

> The natives [in South Africa] are increasing at an enormous rate. The old diminutions by war and pestilence do not occur. Our good government prevents them from fighting, and the result is an enormous increase in numbers. The natives devote their minds to a remarkable extent to the multiplication of children. The result is an increase in the population. The problem before us is this—What is to become of these people? (Vindex 373)

Though Rhodes believed that war—which he called "an excellent pursuit in its way"—was the best method to be rid of African bodies, he was well aware that bridges and roads needed to be built, and diamond mines needed to be hollowed out for their wealth (374). Rhodes told his audience: "We have to find land for these people; we have to find them some employment; we have to remove the liquor from them; and we have to stimulate them to work" (Vindex 388). Thus Rhodes favored what he called a more practical answer to the Native Question: he proposed that the government encourage black Africans to put their bodies to work and that they be taught the "dignity of labour" (Vindex 374).

Creative Imperialism and Annihilation

However, not all representatives of the British Empire were as practical as Rhodes. In fact, some were quite creative in answering the Native Question. Indeed, the genre of fiction offered many British Imperialists the option of addressing the question of what was to be done with the abundance of black bodies—these writers had the option of constructing

narratives of imperialism more creative and malleable than any government official or diamond magnate could ever accomplish in "real" life. I would argue that one such practitioner of creative imperialism was Rider Haggard.

Born in Norfolk, England, in 1856, Rider Haggard spent much of his early life living on his family's rural estate. In 1875 his father wrote to Sir Henry Bulwer enquiring as to a position in the Natal for his son, and as Wendy Katz tells us, "since the Bulwers and the Haggards were old family friends, a place was found, and Haggard, at the age of nineteen, started off for South Africa" (7). In 1876, after watching a war dance, Haggard wrote an article for *Gentleman's Magazine* titled "A Zulu War Dance," detailing a romantic vision of a primitive Africa (Katz 8). And thus began Haggard's narrative as creative writer and his insertion into the narrative of British Imperialism. Best known now as a nineteenth-century writer of boys adventure novels, his time spent as a civil servant for the British Empire[1] earned him his knowledge of the South African landscape (both physical and political), and made him well aware of the Native Question. In fact, more than *King Solomon's Mines* just giving an awareness of the Native Question, I would argue that Haggard's novel 'functions as creative answer to a very serious question of the time—"What is to become of these people?" Haggard's answer: kill them, more importantly, kill the women.

In *King Solomon's Mines* Haggard begins his creative annihilation by having his narrator, Quatermain, write a strange "history" that contains no women (Haggard 6). Though Quatermain quickly acknowledges the presence of Foulata and Gagool, he even more quickly denies their femininity and presence in the tale. Foulata and Gagool represent aspects of African culture that Haggard's tale wishes to eliminate: a means of reproduction (Foulata) and a means of history retention (Gagool). As the reader becomes aware that these two African women will play a crucial role in the unfolding of the tale/history, their nonexistence and, more importantly, their deaths become even more crucial to Haggard's proposal to the Native Question, the annihilation of bodies is at the core of Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*.

Creative annihilation is the term I use to describe the means by which authors are able to eliminate certain segments of populations (usually racialized segments) through writing narratives that lack or actively kill these populations. In his essay "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," M. M. Bakhtin informs us of the work of the author:

> The author is the bearer and sustainer of the intently active unity of a consummated whole (the whole of a hero and the whole of a work). . . . [T]he author not only sees and knows everything seen and known by each hero individually and by all heroes collectively, but he also sees and

> knows more than they do; moreover, he sees and knows something that is
> in principle inaccessible to them. . . . [T]he hero lives his life cognitionally
> and ethically: he orients his actions within the open ethical event of his
> lived life or within the projected world of cognition. The author, on the
> other hand, orients the hero and the hero's own cognitive-ethical
> orientation within a world of being that is in principle consummated. (12)

The work of the author is to complete the life of the hero; the hero is
eternally dependent upon his/her author, without whom life would be
impossible. In addition, Bakhtin envisions a very maternal author-hero
relationship: "the words of a loving human being are the first and the most
authoritative words about him" (49). Much like Rhodes's intention to
instruct and make native Africans useful members of the population,
Bakhtin's author is the life generator and caregiver of his hero. So, the
relationship of dependence upon the author is not unlike the dependent
relationship imperial rhetoric presumes.

However, more important than the care giving or life generating aspect
of Bakhtin's author is the power this author has to eliminate the life of his
hero. In fact, authoring requires the killing of characters for Bakhtin. He
tells us the hero is always consummated, and "if I am consummated and my
life is consummated, and I am no longer capable of living and acting. For
in order to live and act, I need to be unconsummated, I need to be open for
myself" (13). Thus the correlation between narrative and colonialism (one
that has been made many times) becomes one in which life and meaning are
bestowed upon the hero-natives, but also requires the inactiveness/death of
the hero-natives. The method by which one understands how authors
consummate (annihilate) their characters by narrating them seems quite
similar to the way colonialism seeks to annihilate the native populations by
narrating their subjugated position (or, as in many cases, by literally killing
their bodies).

Body Count

The reader of *King Solomon's Mines* is constantly made aware of how
important bodies are to this particular narrative. Native African bodies are
everywhere, and we are made to feel their presence. Early in the text
readers watch as the Quatermain expedition dismember a native African for
no apparent reason:

> It turned out Good was a bit of a doctor, having at some period in his
> previous career managed to pass through a course of medical and surgical
> instruction. . . . He was not, or course, qualified, but he knew more about it

> than many a man who could write M. D. after his name, as we found out afterwards, and he had a splendid traveling medicine chest and set of instruments. *While we were at Durban he cut off a Kaffir's big toe in a way which was a pleasure to see.* (Haggard 36; my emphasis)

Though this scene is increasingly interesting because at the end of the dismemberment the "Kaffir" encourages Good to replace the original two with a white toe since they were in pinch—subtly indicating the ease by which black and white bodies may be mutilated and/or joined—other than as a testament to Good's medical expertise, the scene serves little function to the narrative. The mutilation of the "Kaffir" is strictly gratuitous, thus marking the beginning of the narrative's compelling quest to mutilate as many native African bodies as possible.

As the expedition travels deeper into the African country they lose many of their black African companions to various grotesque accidents. During an elephant hunt Khiva, a young African man, is maimed and killed. Quatermain tells us that " the brute [elephant] seized the poor Zulu, hurled him to the earth, and, placing his huge foot onto his body about the middle, twined his trunk round his upper part and tore him in two" (Haggard 51). Quatermain narrates Khiva's death as stemming from Khiva's desire to save Good from the elephant; a very honorable death, indeed. Still, what is important in this scene is the spectacle made of the killing black bodies.

However, the number of African bodies is recovered when the Quatermain crew reaches the outskirts of Kukuanaland and is met by the Kukuana troops traveling to the interior of the kingdom. Quatermain is struck by the vast number of Africans in Kukuanaland, and we see this when he tells us that

> Suffice it to say that as we went the country seems to grow richer and richer, and the kraals . . . more and more numerous [and]. . . . As we traveled along we were overtaken by thousands of warriors. (Haggard 110)

He notes the number of kraals, signifying the number of residents on the land, and tells us his party is "overtaken," or more specifically, overwhelmed by the number of warriors passing along the road. On more than one occasion attention is paid to the number of bodies present in Kukuanaland: "All along each side of the wide pathway that pierced the kraal were ranged hundreds of women" (Haggard 106) or "on the farther side of open space . . . that is to say it would have been open had it not been filled by company after company of warriors, who were mustered there to the number of seven or eight thousand" (Haggard 115–16). We are even

told by Infadoos that when the Kukuana warriors are gathered their numbers are "like the sea sand, and . . . their plumes cover the plain as far as the eye of man can reach" (Haggard 101). As Quatermain informs us, African bodies take up too much space in the landscape—one must remember that space taken up by African natives in the nineteenth century was space that wasn't being utilized by white imperialists.

What follows from this constant body count—the marking of the number of dead or maimed bodies in the vicinity—is Haggard's attempt through narrative to be rid of African bodies. The attention paid to the number of Africans present at any moment is great. We are constantly made aware of how many African bodies are around the three white men and how many African bodies die around these white men. The story conveniently ushers in a new tribal order that requires a massive intra-tribal war. The reader witnesses bodies being struck down by the thousands in this text. Quatermain notes that "to and fro swayed the mass of struggling warriors, men falling thick as leaves in an autumn wind" (Haggard 170). As the battle comes to a close Quatermain, while listening to the "wailing of women whose husbands, sons, and brothers had perished in the fight," remarks, "no wonder they wailed, for over twenty thousand men, or nearly a third of the Kukuana army, had been destroyed in that awful struggle" (Haggard 201). According to Quatermain's calculations over 40,000 warriors remain and, although he seems to be perceptive of the death toll, he is also aware that only a fraction of the troops have been eliminated. The creative annihilation is only partially successful.

The Threat of Women

What I find most interesting about the previous remark made by Haggard's narrator is the ubiquitous nature of the wailing Kukuana women. Quatermain tells his reader that the wails come from every direction. So, though a third of the male population has been annihilated, the women still remain and they will not be quieted. Later in the same chapter, as Quatermain relates the carnage of the battle to an old African warrior, the warrior replies, "many were killed, indeed, but the women were left, and others will soon grow up to take the places of the fallen" (Haggard 202). In both instances it is made clear that women are key to the continual supply of native male bodies, they are the steady creators of non-White life. Haggard's narrative is able to demonstrate that the threat to white culture is not rooted in the native warrior—after all, Ignosi is a friend to the Quatermain party—but that it is actually located in the native African woman.

Though the three white men of the tale were able to survive the vicious battle that killed 20,000 African warriors, their lives are most threatened by a shell of a woman, Gagool, the most horrible woman in *King Solomon's Mines*. She is far beyond childbearing years and out of the cycle of reproduction, but nonetheless represents what is most menacing about the African woman: immortality. It is her great age that distresses Quatermain, and he describes her as:

> a woman of great age, so shrunken that in size it was no larger than that of a year-old child, and was made up of a collection of deep, yellow wrinkles. . .fearful countenance, which cause a shiver of fear to pass through us as we gazed on it . . . the old woman was very terrible. (Haggard 122)

It seems almost comical that a woman said to have the stature of a small child could strike fear in the hearts of thousands of men (white and native), but her excessive age grants her power because it indicates that she holds the knowledge of the tribe's history. Gagool is the "evil genius of the land . . . she, and she only, knows the secret of the Three Witches yonder, whither the great road runs, where the kings are buried, and the silent ones sit" (Haggard 203). Gagool's threateningly evil immortality is further captured in the dialog between her and Quatermain late in the novel:

> [*G*] "Once a woman showed the place to a white man before, and behold evil befell him," and here her wicked eyes glinted. "Her name was Gagool, too. Perchance I was that woman."
>
> [*Q*] "Thou liest," I said, "that was ten generations gone."
>
> [*G*] "Mayhap, mayhap; when one lives long one forgets. Perhaps it was my mother's mother who told me; surely her name was Gagool, also. But mark, ye will find in the place where the bright playthings are a bag of hide full of the stones. The man filled that bag, but he never took it away. Evil befell him, I say; evil befell him! Perhaps it was my mother's mother who told me." (Haggard 210)

In Gagool's statements there is an absence of time's passing in a linear manner. She instead speaks to time's unfolding monumentally—a concept Julia Kristeva makes clear in her essay call "Women's Time." Kristeva tells us:

> as for time, female subjectivity would seem to provide a specific measure that essentially retains *repetition* and *eternity* from among the multiple modalities of time known through the history of civilizations. On the one

> hand, there are cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological
> rhythm which conforms to that of nature and imposes a temporality whose
> stereotyping may shock, but whose regularity and unison with what is
> experienced as extra-subjective time . . . On the other hand, and perhaps
> as a consequence, *there is the massive presence of a monumental
> temporality, without cleavage or escape, which has so little to do with
> linear time (which passes) that the very word 'temporality' hardly fits: all-
> encompassing and infinite like imaginary space.* (190; my emphasis)

Thus according to Kristeva's concept of time, Gagool represents all that is
monumental, and we get the feeling that she is "without cleavage or
escape." Gagool "has so little to do with linear time" that Haggard's
narrative must be rid of her because she disrupts the linear history created
by his narrative, and undermines Quatermain's narrative authority.

Like Gagool, Foulata must be destroyed. Representing the "cycles,
gestation and eternal recurrence of biological rhythm" of which Kristeva
speaks, Foulata must be annihilated because she is just one of the many
reproductive members of the Kukuana tribe. However, the necessity for her
death is doubly important. Foulata, while representing a viable
reproductive member of her tribe, also serves as a threat to white purity.
Quatermain frowns upon a love affair between Foulata and Good and tells
us "he did not like Miss Foulata's soft glances, for [he knew] the fatal
amorous propensities of sailors in general, and Good in particular"
(Haggard 206). Foulata must die because more horrific than the production
of African bodies to Haggard is the creation of miscegenated bodies.

Thus to destroy black bodies and undermine the native women's ability
to reproduce these bodies and their history is at the heart of Haggard's
narrative. *King Solomon's Mines* seeks to destroy black bodies and, as
demonstrated by the intra-tribal war, killing African warriors might not be
the most fruitful method for getting this job done. More than a racist and a
misogynist, Haggard proves himself to be well aware of the politics of
reproduction. Haggard's narrative destroys the native body and history at
its source, the native African woman. So, though Rhodes offers a more
practical answer to the Native Question, Haggard, with knowledge gained
from his time spent as a government servant in South Africa, is able to be
more creative in his answer. Therefore Haggard's novel serves as a
testament to the Empire's ability to contrive new ways to demolish the
native population in an attempt to answer the Native Question.

Note

1.   See Wendy Katz's *Rider Haggard and the Fiction of Empire* or *Rider Haggard's The Days of My Life* (vol. 1) for more on Haggard's time spent as a civil servant.

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14

Performing Trauma: The Body as Site of (De)colonization in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*

Jennifer Williams

One of the most provocative discussions of the impact of colonial trauma on the colonized body is Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks*. His psychoanalytic probing attempts "a complete lysis of [the black] morbid body" by unveiling the unconscious mechanisms of colonialism and racism (10). Without disavowing the grave socioeconomic impact of colonialism, Fanon suggests that the inferiority of the colonized is inscribed at the bodily level. A "historico-racial schema" fashioned by the colonizer supplants the native's development of his "bodily schema"—the way in which he defines himself in relation to the world (*Black Skins*, 111). The existence of the colonized subject ends up fragmented, split between her/his own subjectivity and the colonizer's objectivity.

Fanon's premise necessitates an engagement with various theoretical positions. Though Fanon takes a psychoanalytic approach to colonialism and racism, he is ambivalent in regard to Freud aside from claiming the unconscious as a primary source of analysis. However, he does appropriate (and racialize) Lacan's mirror stage, insisting that the real Other of the white man is perceived at the bodily level and is always the black man (*Black Skins*, 161). He also agrees with Lacan on Hegel's concept of "recognition," but disturbs the notion in light of a colonial situation: "There is of course the moment of 'being for others,' of which Hegel speaks, but

every ontology is made unattainable in a colonized and civilized society" (*Black Skins*, 109). Here Fanon seems to veer into a Sartrean view that "being-for-another" alienates one from the self. According to Sartre, the Other's look is possessive: "The Other's look fashions my body in its nakedness[. . . .] By virtue of consciousness the Other is for me simultaneously the one who has stolen my body from me and the one who causes there to be a being which is my being" (quoted in Hall, "The After-life of Frantz Fanon," 29). A Sartrean analysis is even more suggestive when applied to a colonial situation, for the colonized body cannot exist for itself; colonialism literally steals the ontological freedom of native people. The natives' subjectivity—including their social, cultural, and spiritual worldviews—and their objectivity, reflected in the look of the colonizer, are at odds. As the body is the primary signifier of difference—no matter how surface the differences might be—in the eyes of the colonizer, it is at the corporeal level that the colonized is not only marked as inferior "other," but also deemed pathological. The body as a site of colonization becomes even more poignant a consideration when, in addition to being racialized and colonized, the body is gendered.

Fanon evades any real consideration of colonized women. He confesses: "about the woman of color. I know nothing about her" (*Black Skins*, 179–80). Yet his theory of the colonized/racialized body proves valuable when looking at the intersections of racism, colonialism, and patriarchy. *In The Hysteric's Guide to the Future Female Subject*, Juliet Flower MacCannell's contention that "The signifier white carried its own traumatic Thing in its wake and invaded the colonized with it" is both racially and sexually evocative (65). The invaded colonized woman suffers at the level of her racial and her sexual body. She is doubly colonized, by the system of colonialism and, more often than not, indigenous patriarchy. Therese Saliba argues, "With the hybridization of culture resultant from colonialism, indigenous women's bodies have come to signify, within indigenous male ideology, sites of cultural impurity, bodies polluted or sickened by 'diseases' of Western influence" (par. 4). Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* refuses pathological notions about the female body while (re)claiming it as a site upon which the illnesses of colonialism and patriarchy are writ. Further, she posits the performative female body as a mode of resistance.

Set in colonial Rhodesia, *Nervous Conditions* exposes colonialism and patriarchy as co-conspirators in the subjugation of girls and women. She borrows the epitaph, "The condition of native is a nervous condition," from Sartre's introduction to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Indeed her novel seems to be speaking back to Fanon as she weaves a tale about women, inspired by Fanon's works on the psyche of the colonized, yet

picks up from his neglected gender analysis.[1] According to Hershini Bhana's "'The Condition of the Native': Autodestruction in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*": "Dangarembga read Fanon only after she had written *Nervous Conditions*. But her post-novel choice of title was brilliant in that her work takes up where Fanon leaves off to elaborate on how colonial structures enforce horizontal violence" (*Alternation*). Borrowing Fanon's terminology, Bhana refers to colonized men's violence against colonized women as horizontal, rather than vertical, thereby dismissing indigenous hierarchic structures and presuming that oppression invalidates men's power over women or elite natives' dominance of the peasantry. Dangarembga refutes such notions, portraying male violence against women as comparably vertical to the settler's against the native. Her work also welcomes a Marxist analysis.[2]

Nervous Conditions traces the development of two female protagonists, Tambudzai (Tambu) and Nyasha, whose passage into womanhood is challenged by the inherent paradox of colonial education coupled with the patriarchal law that commands women's silence in Shona culture. Tambu announces the narrative's feminist agenda as the tale is about the "entrapment," "escape," and "rebellion" of women in her family (1). Although Dangarembga admits that the novel's central purpose is feminist—she wanted to write a novel that speaks to girls and women—she also "stresses that she has moved from a somewhat singular consideration of gender politics to an appreciation of the complexities of the politics of postcolonial subjecthood" (Marangoly and Scott,"An Interview with Tsitsi Dangarembga," 309). Inspired by African American women writers, Dangarembga heeds the call for Zimbabwean women to create a literature of their own (Wilkinson, "Tsitsi Dangarembga," 194). Yet, in alliance with most black feminists, Dangarembga supports the idea that women's wellness and the wellness of the entire community are interconnected. Toni Morrison's notion about the "presence of an ancestor" in African American writing tends to resonate in Dangarembga's text as well ("Rootedness," 343). As a postcolonial text, *Nervous Conditions* attests to the loss of self that colonialism inflicts upon the colonized.[3] Educated under the colonial system, Dangarembga discloses the ways colonialism destroyed much of Shona indigenous culture and history. She admits, "I personally do not have a fund of our cultural tradition or oral history to draw from, but I really did feel that if I am able to put down the little I know then it's a start" (Wilkinson, "Tsitsi Dangarembga," 191). The narrative structure of Nervous Conditions is reminiscent of African oral traditions. The novel begins and ends with Tambu's announcement that she is telling a story, "my own story, the story of four women whom I loved, and our men . . ." (204).

Tambu seems an appropriate narrator, grounded in her indigenous Shona culture and schooled by her grandmother in its oral tradition (17). As the orator, she also assumes the responsibility of testimony. While recounting her development into self-awareness, Tambu articulates the "nervous conditions" suffered by the colonized and personified by each member of her family. The story builds up to Nyasha's rebellion, which Tambu declares "may not in the end have been successful" (1). It is through Tambu's articulation of Nyasha's performance that readers witness the disorder of colonialism and patriarchy.

As sites of productive and reproductive labor, the bodies of colonized women constantly perform for an Other. Sartre's quotation—"The Other's look fashions my body in its nakedness[. . . .] By virtue of consciousness the Other is for me simultaneously the one who has stolen my body from me and the one who causes there to be a being which is my being"—warrants repeating. For colonized women, the Other is not only the system of colonialism and its accomplice, capitalism. The system of patriarchy is also supported by women's labor and subjection. Tambu's mother teaches her early on: "'This business of womanhood is a heavy burden[. . . .] How could it not be? Aren't we the ones to bear the children? [. . .] And these days it is worse, with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa! What will help you, my child, is to learn to carry your burdens with strength'" (16). Tambu finds out at a young age that women's bodies-as-labor are manipulated to maintain male dominance. Tambu has to work so her brother Nhamo can get an education, yet her own school fees are always left to chance. When Tambu attempts to benefit from her own labor—she grows maize to sell so she can continue school—her brother steals much of it and gives it to his friends (23). After Tambu successfully earns her fees, with the help of her teacher, her father tries to claim the money for himself, "'Tambudzai is my daughter, is she not? So isn't it my money?'" (30). Her father thinks it is useless for girls to be educated for "'they cannot cook books and feed them to [their] husband[s]'" (15).

Tambu imagines education as a magical rescue from physical labor and a road out of poverty. After all, her uncle Babamukuru is black but not poor, and his wife Maiguru is female but apparently not "crushed by the weight of womanhood" (16). Her brother's death affords Tambu the opportunity to further her education at Babamukuru's mission. But it is her cousin Nyasha who "wreak[s] havoc with the neat plan [Tambu] had laid out for [her] life" (76). In and through Nyasha we see women's knowledge proclaimed as forbidden fruit.

Education in the novel, represented somatically, endorses Sartre's claim for the European elite's manufacture of the native elite: "They picked out

promising adolescents; they branded them, as with a red-hot iron, with the principles of Western culture; they stuffed their mouths with high-sounding phrases, grand glutinous words that stuck to the teeth. After a short stay in the mother country they were sent home whitewashed" (7). Yet appetites for and digestibility of colonial education are gendered in Dangarembga's tale. When Babamukuru returns from England, Jeremiah exclaims: "'Our father and benefactor has returned appeased, having devoured English letters with a ferocious appetite! Did you think degrees were indigestible? If so, look at my brother. He has digested them!'" (36). Deepika Bahri comments, "Indeed men can digest degrees as well as the food prepared by women since both sustain their stature while failing to 'nourish' the women" ("Disembodying the Corpus," par. 12). While Maiguru has ingested just as many letters as her husband, her education does little to improve her status. It does not grant her the freedom to make family or financial decisions nor does it provide an escape route out of a discontented marriage.

Notwithstanding the textual implication that education for women has the greatest potential to deconstruct the patriarchal stronghold, the work's characterization of Maiguru portends that education alone does not guarantee women's liberation. Maiguru, the most educated woman in the novel, remains trapped. While throughout the novel, she progresses from an infantile wife who affectionately refers to her husband as "daddy" to a fed up woman who voices her discontent, she has nowhere to escape to, nowhere to "break out to" (174). Maiguru tells Tambu: "'When I was in England I glimpsed for a little while the things I could have been, the things I could have done if—if—if things were different[. . .]'" (101). Maiguru's foiled "emancipation"—she walks out on Babamukuru and stays at her brother's house for five days—is additional fodder for Nyasha's despair. Her mother fails to provide the answer Nyasha seeks: "So where do you break out to?" (174). Nyasha's rebellion is based in part on her disconnection from tradition and her refusal of the roles her parents play.

After witnessing the loss suffered by her parents, Nyasha remains torn between the benefits and the dangers of colonial education. Her education in England estranges her from native language and traditions. At a family gathering, she either does not recall or ignores traditional greetings, and she tries to mime her forgotten language. Tambu remembers the return of her morose cousin:

> She did not talk beyond a quick stuttered greeting. Nor did she smile anymore at all[. . . .] I missed the ebullient companion I had had who had gone to England but not returned from there. Yet, each time she came I could see that she had grown a little duller and dimmer, the expression in

her eyes a little more complex, as though she were directing more and
more of her energy inwards to commune with herself about issues she
alone had seen. (51–52)

Nyasha's inability to communicate verbally with others gives rise to her
body as a dialectic space. She turns inward to sort out the reality of her
situation, and, in a quite sophisticated manner, she articulates the
consequences of her Anglicization: "'We shouldn't have gone[. . . .] The
parents ought to have packed us off home[. . . .] Maybe that would have
been best. For them at least, because now they're stuck with hybrids for
children[. . . .] I can't help having been there and grown into the me that has
been there. But it offends them—I offend them'" (78). Nyasha's cultural
hybridity, more so than her brother Chido's, offends her parents and the rest
of her family, because her articulation of ideas and her subsequent refusal to
be silent does not conform to the expected role for a Shona woman. A good
Shona woman is evaluated in terms of her deference to patriarchal authority.
As a cultural hybrid, Nyasha is already slightly recast—not quite English,
not quite African. Homi Bhabha's "Of Mimicry and Man" advances the
potential subversive power of being "not quite." He suggests, "The menace
of mimicry is its double vision which in disclosing the ambivalence of
colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (88). But similar to Fanon's
assertions, Bhabha's premise takes on new meaning when applied to a
gendered subject. The disruptive power of mimicry is complex for women,
especially in cultures where the dominant employ violence to maintain their
positions of power. Nyasha's loss of tradition then functions as a double
entendre. Her rootlessness is a fissure in her ethnic identity. However, not
having been rooted in Shona tradition, she has no investment in upholding
those customs, many of which preserve men's control over women.

In *Nervous Conditions*, women's access to power via education is
monitored akin to a girl's virginity. In Babamukuru's estimation, education
affords women too much freedom and compromises their decency, thereby
marking them as loose. Maiguru retorts: "'I don't know what people mean
by a loose woman—sometimes she is someone who walks the streets,
sometimes she is an educated woman, sometimes she is a successful man's
daughter or she is simply beautiful'" (181). Maiguru's assertion of Nyasha's
"loose connections" earlier in the text (107) can be read in multiple ways in
light of the above explanation, but perhaps Nyasha's looseness links her to
society's wild women who are chastised for shaking up the status quo. Aunt
Lucia, one of the "escaped" females to whom Tambu refers, is also
considered loose, for she defies cultural stances on marriage (even after she
becomes pregnant), she sleeps with whomever she chooses, and she mocks
at the family hierarchy. Lucia's signature act of rebellion is her disruption

of a meeting, "a family dare" held by the patriarchs to decide her fate (136). Lucia's behavior signifies her as madwoman or witch (143, 148) but also conjures respect and a certain amount of awe from the men in the family. Even Babamukuru says Lucia is "like a man herself" (171). Equating her to a man does attest to her agency but it also presumes that she has freed herself from her sex. In fact, Lucia uses her body to manipulate the male ego in order to secure sexual and financial fulfillment. Uwakweh points out, "Her 'escape' from male control and her attainment of independence and financial security lie in her pragmatism. She identifies the line of weakness in the patriarchy and utilizes it to achieve her goals" (81). Nyasha perceives Lucia's tactics as further evidence of women's dependence on men and their confinement in their female bodies.

Not only do colonialism and patriarchy objectify colonized women and trap them in the bodily schema, but colonialism also forfeits individuality and evaluates women as a collective mass. "The colonized is never characterized in an individual manner; [s/he] is entitled only to drown in anonymous collectivity" (Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, 85). Fanon speaks passionate resistance to entrapment in his black skin. As a fated representative of blackness he describes himself as a "prisoner of history" (*Black Skins*, 229), "battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetichism, racial defects, slave ships [. . .]" (112). His testimony images the trauma of being a racialized other and reinforces the incompatibility of subject/object positions in a colonial context. Fanon's sorrowful poetics resonate in Tambu's assessment of the women in her family:

> [. . .] [T]he sensitive images that the women had of themselves, images that were really no more than reflections. But the women had been taught to recognise these reflections as self and it was frightening now to even begin to think that, the very facts which set them apart as a group, as women, as a certain kind of person, were only myths; frightening to acknowledge that generations of threat and assault and neglect had battered these myths into the extreme, dividing reality they faced[. . . .]"
> (138)

Those "myths" to which Tambu refers are rooted in the ideology that sex and gender are synonymous. Those myths and traditions construct public images of women that do not necessarily reflect their private selves. Similar to the way Fanon mourns having his very Being judged in terms of his black skin, Tambu underscores the subject/object variance women endure. Haaken reinforces the disassociation of female as Self and female as Body for a "subject who has access to various images, memories, and affects but

lacks the capacity to make integrative use of them" (*Pillar of Salt*, 100). Responding to Irigaray and Cixous, Haaken further locates the body as a possible vessel of memory: "'Body memories'—physical sensations invested with disturbing, psychological meaning—do not 'tell us' a specific story of past injuries; our unarticulated achings remind us that we are embodied beings and that our histories have been denied us" (*Pillar of Salt*, 104). Haaken wants to make a distinction between the body's articulation of traumatic events and the body's general state of repression. Whether the aching body 'speaks' or just 'reminds' us of traumatic events, it warrants investigation as a potential site of testimony.

In reference to *Black Skins, White Masks*, bell hooks remarks, "Fanon feels '[N]ausea' when confronted with a corporeal schema that demands that he be 'responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors'" ("Feminism as a Persistent Critique of History," 83). Fanon's quotation speaks of an internal reaction to external violence. His invocation of Nausea alludes to Sartre's novel *La Nausée*, a work that destabilizes binary opposites, particularly race and sex. Doubrovsky assigns Nausea "capital importance [literally and figuratively]: it attains a status which is clinical, as the symptom of a malady, ontological, as the revelation, through this malady, of the subject's mode of being-in-the world, and esthetic, as the call of salvation through art[. . . .]" ("'The Nine of Hearts,'" 378). The three elements of Nausea that Doubrovsky lays out—clinical, ontological, and esthetic—may be used to characterize Nyasha's development of eating disorders, symptomatic of her ontological insecurity. Her performance, as her method of salvation, also has esthetic dimensions.

Nyasha's rejection of food bears witness to the Nausea of a Being subjected to a corporeal schema not of her own design. Dangarembga is possibly the first African author to explore eating disorders—commonly associated with westernized societies—in the consciousness of an African protagonist. Nyasha is linked to a western economy as a member of privileged class with ample food supply, yet she acknowledges the conflict between her and her father/the patriarchal order as "more than just food. That's how it *comes out* [my emphasis], but really it's all the things about boys and men and being decent and indecent and good and bad. He goes on and on with the accusations and the threats, and I'm just not coping very well" (*Nervous Conditions*, 190). Seldom are eating disorders about food. They most often serve as a way for the body to publicly perform private distress.

In *Food, Consumption and the Body*, Sceats argues, "The central role and multiple signifiers of food and eating entail a link with epistemological and ontological concerns. The prevalence of eating disorders within western culture indicates at least an insecurity about embodiment, the nature of

being and the boundaries between the self and the world" (1). Of typical concern for Nyasha is her assignment as a sexualized object. She refuses food for the first time after Babamukuru confiscates her copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* due to its "inappropriate" sexual content (*Nervous Conditions*, 84). Her insistence that she has "had enough" is a direct affront to Babamukuru's role as provider and her refusal to perform as "good girl" (84).

Babamukuru needs Nyasha to 'behave' in order to safeguard his standing in the community. Babamukuru is the school headmaster, a "good African" and the maintenance of his position partially rests on Nyasha's playing the role of "good girl" as it is "generally believed that good Africans br[eed] good African children [. . .] " (107). Bahri notes, "The survival of patriarchal ideology, of which Babamukuru is torchbearer, depends on its enactment on Nyasha's very person. This should not be surprising since, in postcolonial terms, the female body has often been the space where 'traditional' cultural practices that ensure male control over it, encoded in words like 'decency,' must be preserved" ("Disembodying the Corpus," par. 17). Nyasha's body becomes the battleground of an anti-colonial warfare. Babamukuru fights to maintain his authority while Nyasha struggles to decolonize herself. If, as Fanon argues, "decolonization is always a violent phenomenon," Nyasha's instinctual recourse is to meet violence with counter-violence.

When Babamukuru calls Nyasha's decency into question a second time, their verbal sparring shifts to a physical altercation. His repeating "I" in the encounter negates Nyasha's subjectivity: "I am your father. And in that capacity I am telling you, I-am-telling-you, that I do not like the way you are always walking about with these—er—these young men" (*Nervous Conditions*, 113). Both his speech and his violent action threaten Nyasha's survival and trigger her instinct for self-preservation. When she strikes her father back, he accuses her of "behav[ing] like a man" and threatens to kill her before he will allow "two men in this house" (115). It is tolerable for someone like Lucia to behave like a man because, while not succumbing completely to the patriarchal system, she does work within it. Nyasha, by refusing to abide by patriarchal law, endangers Babamukuru's position in the hierarchy that he has constructed.

The violence against Nyasha's body provokes a somatic response. Nyasha's inner withdrawal and self-starvation act as nonviolent protestations to her father's authority. Anorexia for Nyasha is more than a refusal of food, it is a rejection of everything her father offers and tries to force her to consume. By not nourishing herself, she also stalls her physical development into womanhood, in general, and into African womanhood, in particular.

A voluptuous African woman is a sign of beauty and proper nourishment, as indicated by Dangarembga's depiction of Lucia (127). But for Nyasha, the African woman's body is a symbol of undervalued labor. Nyasha's idea that "angles [are] more attractive than curves" is not about her desire to be slim or her preference for the European "svelte" sensuality over the African round one (135). Nyasha's aching speaks her longing to be liberated from a gendered body. From Kristeva's perspective, Nyasha "embraces the abjection that comes from seeking a 'pre-objectal relationship,' becoming separated from her own body 'in order to be'" (quoted. in Bahri, "Disembodying the Corpus," par. 9). Nyasha turns into a hunger artist of sorts, her body-acts taking on a ritualistic quality. When Tambu departs for the convent school, Nyasha announces in a letter "that she [has] embarked on a diet to 'discipline my body and occupy my mind [. . . .]'" (197). Nyasha engages in a semi-private dialogue with her body. Yet, as Hewitt puts forth, eating disorders rest "on their potential to be witnessed[. . . .] The anorectic exhibits her emotional struggle and protest with her physical appearance, which is public for all to observe" (*Mutilating the Body*, 58). The performative implication of Nyasha's dis-order is its demand to be seen.

Anorexia and bulimia, both communicative forms of hysteria, are organically performative. By tagging eating disorders as performative, I am not implying that they are verbal speech acts per se. Instead I am locating them at the level of the spectacular, as body speech acts. According to Linda Ruth Williams, "Hysteria displays, gives out, puts on show a 'pantomime' of symptoms [. . .] read as external 'representations' of internal unrest" (*Critical Desire*, 4). She further claims that "the body of the hysteric literally 'speaks', with a body language which expresses symbolically something which cannot otherwise be spoken" (5). Williams' position touches upon to the unspeakable nature of trauma and reinforces hysteria as an alternative form of testimony. Though hysteria has been typically regarded as a female malady, if we consider Sartrean Nausea as a bodily response to trauma, we will have to un-gender hysteria.

In Dangarembga's text, however, only female characters speak their "nervous conditions" with their bodies. When Babamukuru imposes his law and arranges a Christian wedding for Tambu's parents, her "body [reacts] in an alarming way[. . . .] I suffered a horrible crawling over my skin, my chest contracted to a breathless tension and even my bowels threatened to let me know their opinion" (149).[4] Babamukuru's plan despoils the existing marriage of Tambu's parents and denies Tambu's legitimacy. On the morning of the wedding, Tambu is unable to move, "I found I could not get out of bed. I tried several times but my muscles simply refused to obey the half-hearted commands I was issuing to them. Nyasha was worried. She

thought I was ill, but I knew better. I knew I could not get out of bed because I did not want to" (166). Tambu's protest supports the subversive potential of body acts. Though she is punished for her behavior, she moves a step closer to her liberation. "'I've had enough, I tell you, I've had enough of that man dividing me from my children. Dividing me from my children and ruining my life[. . . .] To wear a veil, at my age, to wear a veil!'" (184). Babamukuru invalidates Mainini's marriage and her parental authority. Mainini's protest takes shape similarly to Nyasha's: "She ate less and less and did less and less, until within days she could neither eat nor do anything, not even change the dress she wore" (184). Women's bodies, in Dangarembga's text, serve as radical forms of contestation. But Mainini and Nyasha's debilitating conditions warn of fatal consequences.

Nyasha's binging and purging enacts "a horribly weird and sinister drama" (198). Tambu witnesses her cousin's fragile state: "Nyasha was losing weight steadily, constantly, rapidly. It dropped off her body almost hourly and what was left of her was grotesquely unhealthy from the vital juices she flushed down the toilet. Did he not know? Did he not see?" (199). Babamukuru sees his daughter's emaciated body as an affront to his notion of the proper and determines to make her eat: "'You will eat that food,' commanded *the man* [my emphasis]. 'Your mother and I are not killing ourselves working just for you to waste your time playing with boys and then come back and turn up your nose at what we offer. Sit and eat that food. I am telling you. Eat it!'" (189). Nyasha devours mouthful after mouthful until her plate is cleaned. She masquerades as "good daughter" then purges her father's plateful of patriarchy in the solace of her bathroom. Nyasha's distaste for her father's things echoes Fanon: "In the period of decolonization, the colonized masses mock at these very values, insult them, and vomit them up" (*The Wretched of the Earth*, 43).

Négritude author Auguste Desporte's "Nausea" adds poetic dimension to Nyasha's suffering:

> Slow rolling wave of feeble souls
> slow swirling eddy of vapid dreams
> dizzying nausea of wearied brows.
> Your moist hands clench
> in a hiccup shaking
> your broken body with its flailing limbs;
> [. . . . .]
> let yourself sink within the liquid sheets
> of dismal apathy,
> [. . . . .]
> your fetid bowel-rumblings

> have become spasmodic
> hiccups
> and you puke out
> all your wretchedness
> of a flat dull vacuous existence
> in a resentment
> in a revolt of
> your entire being. . .

In her repudiation of her female body and her attempt to return to a pre-Object state, Nyasha almost destroys herself. She makes a grotesque spectacle with "sunken eyes, her bony knees pressed together so that her nightdress fell through the space where her thighs had been, agitated and nervous and picking her skin" (*Nervous Conditions*, 200). Her skin is her most tangible connection to self and affirms her capacity to feel. Nyasha's sensitivity to her skin also portends an eruption of violence for "violence is just under the skin" (Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 71). She warns Tambu of her impending tempest:

> 'I don't want to do it, Tambu, really I don't, but it's coming, I feel it coming.' Her eyes dilated. 'They've done it to me[. . . .] It's not their fault they did it to them too[. . . .] They've taken us away. They've deprived you of you, him of him, ourselves of each other. We're groveling. Lucia for a job, Jeremiah for money. Daddy grovels to them. We grovel to him.' (*Nervous Conditions*, 200)

Nyasha identifies the etiology of the native's nervous conditions but she, in kind with Sartre, holds natives culpable for maintaining the systems of their oppression. She is the only character who distrusts the "good" of the missionaries and acknowledge the guerilla warfare going on during the time the novel is set (late 60s-early 70s). She expresses concern "that freedom fighters [are] referred to as terrorists [. . .]demand[s] proof of God's existence [. . . and thinks] that the missionaries, along with all the other Whites in Rhodesia, ought to have stayed at home" (155). Nyasha also is aware that her father represents the native elite whose sustenance depends on the continued suppression of the subaltern. "He's a good boy, a good munt. A bloody good kaffir," she mocks in a Rhodesian accent (200). Yet Nyasha declines the colonizer's "Good/Thing" (MacCannell, *The Hysteric's Guide to the Future Female Subject*, 68). She brands herself as "evil" and in so doing embraces a native personality, for the native "represents not only the absence of values, but also the negation of values. [S/he] is [. . .] the enemy of values, and in this sense [s/he] is the absolute evil" (Fanon, *The*

Wretched of the Earth, 41). Her rejection of the colonizer's values, the apex of her performance, is acted out in a fit of rage:

> Nyasha was beside herself with fury. She rampaged, shredding her history book between her teeth ("Their history. Fucking liars. Their bloody lies."), breaking mirrors, her clay pots, anything she could lay her hands on and jabbing the fragments viciously into her flesh, stripping the bedclothes, tearing her clothes from the wardrobe and trampling them underfoot. "They've trapped us. They've trapped us. But I won't be trapped. I'm not a good girl. I won't be trapped." Then as suddenly as it came, the rage passed. "I don't hate you, Daddy," she said softly. "They want me to, but I won't[. . . .] I'm very tired," she said in a voice that was recognisably [*sic*] hers[. . . .] She curled up in Maiguru's lap looking no more than five years old. "Look what they've done to us," she said softly. "I'm not one of them but I'm not one of you." (201)

Nyasha casts herself simultaneously as native, woman, and other.[5] Her body performs the role of the colonized, assaulted by colonizer's Thing, with no history of her/his own to claim. Hers is the abject body of the colonized woman, a receptacle of traumatic memory. Nyasha is that "not quite" Other that yearns for synthesis and redemption from the objectifying gaze.

MacCannell asks, "Why does a woman's voice have to be recognizable, hearable only through the 'man's' word?" (*The Hysteric's Guide*, 182). Without endorsing a body/mind binary opposition that distinguishes women's speech from men's, I do want to support the female body's performance of trauma as an alternative mode of testimony. An essential claim in Dangarembga's novel is that the body speaks—its trauma, its desire, and its resistance. Also implied in the text is a need for collective speech, for a genealogy of women. Lucia resuscitates her sister Mainini from a madness that threatens to kill her (*Nervous Conditions*, 184–85). Tambu remains Nyasha's one true anchor to sanity and Nyasha plants the "seed" that causes Tambu's mind "to assert itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed" (204). Naturally, then, as Nyasha's progress remains "in the balance," so does Tambu's (202). Saliba points to a political schema springing forth from the text: "The coalescing of individualized and collective voices throughout the text suggests that a healthy women's community relies on the well-being of its individual members, as well as the ability of women to unite across class lines to cure the ills of community" (Saliba, "On the Bodies of Third World Women," 141). Tambu's final statement, "[T]his story is how it all began," hints at the transformative possibilities of women's textual bodies.

Notes

1. It is worth mentioning that Dangarembga and Fanon were trained in medicine and psychology.
2. Deepika Bahri's "Disembodying the Corpus: Postcolonial Pathology in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*," provides an exceptional Marxist reading · of the text (Journal of Postmodern Culture. 5, 1 [1994]).
3. David Eng and Shinhee Han's "A Dialogue on Racial Melancholia" depathologizes Freud's melancholia and applies his theory to a collective body of racialized subjects .
4. Tambu's parents have already had a traditional wedding ceremony.
5. I am appropriating this terminology from Trinh Minh-Ha's text *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

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15

Child Abuse or Conflict of Interest? Maryse Condé's Autobiographical Writings

Hal Wylie

The theme of this volume may be seen as particularly appropriate to literary scholars, who are often seen as dwelling in some world apart. But yet literature is relevant; it still is needed as a mirror in which a society sees itself reflected in such a way that we can understand ourselves. This source of information is especially important for little-studied areas such as Africa, and its cultural offshoot, the Caribbean. Here fiction and autobiography, picking up where oral story telling and song leave off, shed light on subjects for which other information is lacking.

An article by Lillian Corti, "The Psychology of Abuse in Ferdinand Oyono's *Vie de boy*,"[1] drew my attention to the theme of child abuse in African writing. We know that this new theme has been well documented in the first world, where sociologists have scientifically brought to light a major problem, long neglected. Corti's article, by giving a new reading of an old classic from Cameroon, showed that the problem also exists in the underdeveloped world, even though many Africans deny the relevance of the concept to Africa. Other early African writers have also problematized the theme. Perhaps the most striking example is the opening scene of Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure* (1961) in which the Koranic teacher punishes Sambo Diallo by pushing his sharp fingernails through the child's ear lobe. Joseph Zobel also presents dramatic illustrations of punishments whose ambivalence obliges readers to wonder

about abuse (in *La Rue cases-nègres*, Black Shack Alley). Camara Laye's *L'Enfant noir* (Dark Child) shows how the protagonist is abused at school.

I saw a connection with a problematical aspect of the Guadeloupian writer Maryse Condé's works. Readers have noticed that her novels lack role models and abound in bad mothers. And yet there is a definite feminist thrust in Condé. I decided neglect and lack of maternal love were major factors in the portraits of her women figures and the relationship between mothers and daughters.

Corti used two sources in outlining a theory of child abuse, Dorothy Bloch's *So the Witch Won't Eat Me: Fantasy and the Child's Fear of Infanticide*,[2] and Leonard Shengold's *Soul Murder: The Effects of Childhood Abuse and Deprivation*.[3] Bloch, after providing numerous cases in which parents seemed bent on harming the child, analyzes the psychological reaction of the child to being in the double-bind situation of being dependent on ones who are not nurturing him or her satisfactorily. Shengold defines child abuse as "the deliberate attempt to eradicate or compromise the separate identity of another person." (2) "The victims . . . remain in large part possessed by another, their souls in bondage to someone else." (2) He points out that parental indifference, "lack of loving care and empathy," (2) can be as damaging as physical abuse.

Ronald Laing in *The Politics of Experience* studies the warping of the child's mental processes by domineering parents who try to define the child's feelings and experience for him or her. He believes this is the major cause of schizophrenia and has come up with the new term "schizogenic," mostly used to refer to parents.[4] And Frantz Fanon dwells upon theories of rejection and abndonment in elaborating his "Peau noire masques blancs" (Black Skin White Masks) complex.[5]

Simone de Beauvoir's treatment of maternity in *Le Deuxième Sexe*,[6] although revolutionary for its time, is quite sketchy. She had no desire to play the role of mother, perhaps because her analysis was a first step in the demystification of the conventional myth of motherhood, which she claims is archetypal and universal, implying that cultures have idealized the role of mother in a very unrealistic way in order to bind the person to the role. She was perhaps the first to so insistently emphasize child bearing and rearing as a conflict of interest for the mother: ". . . le foetus est une partie de son corps, et c'est un parasite qui l'exploite. . . . elle forme avec cet enfant dont elle est gonflée un couple équivoque que la vie submerge. . . ." (307. ". . . the foetus is a part of her body, a parasite which exploits her. . . . she forms with this child with which she is swollen an equivocal couple that life overwhelms. . . ."). The mother's health is put in jeopardy by the new being, which also confuses the psychological identity of the woman. Even

after birth, de Beavoir stresses, the new mother has difficulty balancing the demands of the child with those of her own well-being.

Condé goes beyond de Beauvoir in demystifying the politics of mothering. What is so "politically incorrect" in Condé is that she knows she is going to displease readers with her portrayal of the struggle of individual women to deal with a difficult, onerous, and dangerous responsibility. She is challenging beliefs and ideals cherished by almost everyone.

It took Maryse Condé most of her lifetime to sharpen her analysis of the myth of mothering, culminating with the depiction of Jeanne Quidal, her own mother, in *Le Coeur à rire et à pleurer*[7] (Laughing and Crying Heart), the most revealing and politically engaged of the portraits of mothers. In her talk "The Role of the Writer,"[8] presented at the Puterbaugh conference in Norman, Oklahoma, in 1993, she told a story about her mother. She used an image that revealed the spirit of her mother in a childhood portrait. Her mother was a school-teacher, apparently of the old school. Every morning she had two students come to accompany her to school; one would carry her books, the other would carry the pile of student notebooks; her mother followed behind with the symbolic parasol. When she read her portrait she was surprised by her mother's vehement emotional reaction of disapproval.

In an interview[9] I asked her about that story. She said:

> It was her birthday, and I was supposed to write a play, a poem, about her, the way I pictured her, the way I saw her. At the same time a kind mother, very full of love and warmth, and also very authoritarian lady who was fond of controlling people. I wrote that she was a multifaceted person, as we all are. And when I tried to write that in a poem and I read it to her she was so upset that she nearly cried, and said, "This is the way you see me? I'm not like that." Because she wanted to be one-dimensional, and in fact, nobody is. She wanted me to see her as a kind of saint, the good mother, and she did not want me to see already the complexity of her person. . . .

> I think that a fact which is very important is that my mother died when I was nineteen. It is something in fact I never recovered from. So if you look for autobiography in the novels, you should take into account the fact that a very spoiled child, very full of her mother, although I was afraid of her in some way, but very fond of her, very close to her, a bit too close to her maybe. There was something a bit . . . unhealthy maybe in that kind of affection. I go to France to study at the age of seventeen and something happens to her, and two years later, at 19, she's dead. In fact I never saw her alive after leaving Guadeloupe. So it seems to me that it's a thing which left a mark. If you want to account for all those motherless children

> that you find in the novels, it is one possible explanation. . . . I kept away
> from Guadeloupe for at least thirty years. I could not go back.

In her recent autobiography, *Coeur à rire et à pleurer*, she tells the story more precisely. The tale "Bonne fête, maman" (Happy Birthday, Mom) makes a feminist point in analyzing the situation of her own mother, viewed as representative of the general situation of motherhood. But the depiction of a very bright although self-contradictory woman caught in a most unique situation is highly ambiguous. In the first tale or chapter of Coeur, "Portrait de famille" (Family Portrait) Sandrino, Condé's older brother, labels their parents "une paire d'aliénés" (14. "a pair of alienated or crazy ones"). The mother's alienation is derived more from class than race. She feels more at home in France than Guadeloupe and clearly wears the Fanonian mask. She is a self-made woman, rejecting her mother who lived a life of poverty and subservience. Sandrino states that she is sexually frustrated because of having married an older, wealthy, man. What Condé focuses on is her mother's insecurity and defensiveness bordering on paranoia. She describes the family as feeling constantly under siege, having to project an image of perfection to the outer world in order to live up to their conception of French standards. The tension between the role being played and the existential reality is particularly abusive for the children, to whom spontaneity, authenticity and truthfulness are denied. Coeur à rire centers on family politics in which parental authority is used to build barriers, erect constraints, remove freedom and choke off expression of affection.

Two tales document the mother's heartlessness; in "Lutte des classes" (Class Warfare). Jeanne Quidal, Condé's mother, is shown ruthlessly firing the warm-hearted maid for not coming to work because of her dying daughter's illness (30). "Bonne fête, maman" describes the alienation between Jeanne and her mother Elodie: "Les gens . . . racontaient qu'elle était une sans-sentiment qui avait brisé le coeur d'Elodie" (69. "People said that she was a cruel child who had broken Elodie's heart").

Coeur à rire et à pleurer gives us the most fulsome self-portrait. She first depicts herself like the Rimbaldian "Poète de sept ans" ("Seven-year old poet"): "Je saurais dissimuler les plus grands chagrins sous un abord riant" ("I would know how to hide the greatest pains under a smiling face").[10] But the need to express the truths she felt repressed broke out in compulsive "affabulations:" ("Stories") "A voix haute, avec de grands gestes, je me racontais des histoires" (41. "Out loud, with big gestures, I told myself stories").[11] Only as she matured into puberty did she take more overt steps to define her freedom.

I had suspected that the character Thecla in the novel *Vie scélérate* (translated as The Tree of Life) was an autobiographical projection of

unexpressed aspects of her inner self, so I asked Condé in my interview. She said:

> [Thecla] is a very autobiographical character, belonging to the same generation as I do, wanting to write a highly political novel and incapable of doing that, at the same time being divided between her ambitions, ideas and life, and ending up marrying a white man, as I did, and not being able to come to terms with that. . . . I wanted to pass a judgment on her. There's a sort of negativity in her that's not in the others. I wanted to judge her and judge myself at the same time . . . or maybe I was Thecla at the time and I became someone else. . . . She remained Thecla and I changed.

The development of the fictional character Thecla comes at a pivotal moment in Condé's life and may have facilitated the transition from Africa and Europe back to the Americas. The dominance of Africa in the early works can be interpreted as an escape from self, though Veronica in Hérémakhonon and some of the other heroines may be seen as self-projections. The absence of Guadeloupe in the early work is glaring. One fact Condé has presented in provocative language helps explain both Thecla and the transition. Condé told Clark: "J'ai remis mes enfants à Condé [her husband] pour être un peu libre" (103. "I gave my children to Condé [her husband] in order to be free").[12] She told Pfaff: "Je lui ai donnés les enfants pour reprendre mes études" (128. "I gave him the children to resume my studies").[13] One suspects this fact lies behind the depiction of Thecla as such a bad mother.

I also asked Condé about the character Coco, Thecla's mistreated daughter: "A character I am so full of. The girl, the child, who is motherless in a way. No love from her mother, no father, looking for herself in life, not knowing what to do, where to go. It is a kind of cliche in all my novels; all the characters, after all, come back to Coco in a way. She's the mother of so many characters."

Condé has experienced both sides of the equation and identifies both with the abused child and the stressed mother in a context where colonialism and Fanon's "black skin white mask" complex add psychological alienation to an already difficult situation. When I inquired about her relation with her own daughters she laughed and said: "Very close. Because having lost your mother when you are very young you tend to idolize your own children . . . not trying to be overprotective or trying to have control, but to be a part of their lives as much as you can. So it seems to me it is normal that if you do not have a mother you want to be a mother."[14] I believe the ambiguity of the Thecla/Coco relation, and of the

mother/daughter relation in *Coeur à rire* . . . is an attempt to revise the simplistic conventional understanding of mothering.

Those who have empirically examined the parent/child relation have well documented the tensions that are naturally part of this connection. The birth of the child reflects the tensions in the erotic connection between the father and mother. Several of the most important mothers in Conde's novels reject the child whose resemblance to the hated father makes them incapable of loving her or him.

Condé's works problematize the theme of maternity in another way. An examination of the most striking images of Tituba, for instance, reveals a polarization, with strong negative images such as the slaves' "assassination of newborns" by planting "une longue épine dans l'oeuf encore gelatineux de leur tête" (83. "a long spine in the still gelatinous egg of their head") or that of the dead rabbit spilling a flood of black stinking blood when cut open, and "deux boules de chair en putréfaction . . . enveloppés d'une membrane verdâtre" (256. "two balls of putrifying flesh enveloped in a greenish membrane"), contrasting with the positive images of the herbal/amniotic bath Tituba gives Betsey to restore her health (102) and the womb-like bowl of water in the window which refracts the light and fertility of her tropical island. Upon her return home Tituba chooses the vocation of curing (234) and mothering, and surprises herself by reacting with joy to the discovery of her new pregnancy (242–43). Such images can be supplemented with many others from other works reflecting the ambiguity and complexity of motherhood.

Situating Condé in her moment of history gave me the clue that unlocked the mystery of the bad mothers. The Paris where Maryse attended high school was still animated by the newly proclaimed "existentialism" centered on freedom. *The Second Sex* was only a few years old. I believe Condé absorbed the key precepts of the new system and made them part of her ideology. The number one idea of existentialism is choice. De Beauvoir had examined the problematical aspects of maternity as choice; Condé has dramatized them in her works. Many of her heroines have clearly not chosen to be pregnant, and when the new child arrives choose to deal with it summarily, as Thecla does in leaving Coco in Brittany.

Women who freely choose to play the role of mother are depicted as the best mothers. They are often not the biological mother, but a volunteer or substitute mother, such as Man Yaya for Tituba, or Patience and Flore for Coco. In *Coeur à rire* Condé implies she felt closer to servants such as Madonne than to her real mother. Thecla, Condé's mother, and Tituba's mother, among others, feel trapped in a situation they feel not of their own choosing. Since they are strong women they act with dispatch to handle the situation as they see fit. The loss of the extended family in these cases, as

well as in modern society in general, has deprived mothers of relief and help in raising children. The change is particularly striking in the African context, where polygamy and the extended family are still alive and provide co-wives, grandmothers, etc. to play the role of "second mother," as in Laye's *L'Enfant noir* (Dark Child). The welfare state (in France much more than in the U.S.) has started to provide some help, such as nursery schools. A socialist state would provide vacations for mothers and other aid to liberate them from the overwhelming burden of unrelieved responsibility for the health and education of the child.

So I conclude that Condé is both a realist and an idealist in her literary exploration of parental politics; she is both progressive and feminist in her revolt against the simple-minded mythology of motherhood, by portraying mothers whose actions problematize the challenging situation of maternity. Just as many women have rejected the old rules and myth of marriage, and the social taboo against abortion, Condé rejects many of the aspects of the idealistic but confining myth of motherhood and shows that Africa and the West Indies today suffer from similar tensions as those already exposed in the West.

Notes

1. *Multiculturalism and Hybridity in African Literatures*, ed. Hal Wylie and Bernth Lindfors. Lawrenceville, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1999, pp. 137–44.
2. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1978.
3. New Haven, Conn.: Yale UP, 1989.
4. Chapter 5, "The Schizophrenic Experience," of *The Politics of Experience* (New York: Ballantine, 1967) is the most relevant for this study.
5. See especially his discussion of the abandonment neurosis in his chapter "L'Homme de couleur et la blanche," beginning with his citation of Germaine Guex's *La Névrose d'abandon* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), p. 78+ in the Seuil edition of 1952.
6. See chapter 6, "La Mère" in *Le Deuxième Sexe*. II: L'Expérience vécue. (The Second Sex. II. Lived Experience) Paris: Gallimard, 1949.
7. Paris: Laffont, 1999.
8. Later published in *World Literature Today* (67:4) Autumn 1993, 697–99.
9. The interview was conducted at the 1998 conference of the African Literature Association in Austin, Texas, by myself and several students.
10. "Ma naissance" p. 25.
11. "Leçon d'histoire" p. 41.
12. Vèvè A. Clark, "Je me suis reconciliée avec mon île," *Calaloo*, 12 (1) Winter 1989, 85–133.
13. *Entretiens avec Maryse Condé*. Paris: Karthala, 1993.

14. She also provided this information:
    "Sylvie [was working on a master's degree.] Now she's married and has
    two kids. [She is living in] Abidjan.
    H: Do you see her fairly often?
    MC: Yes, I plan to go there in May to see her.
    H: What about the other two daughters?
    MC: One is now working in Ruanda, for the international court, with the
    genocide people. So she is there for six months or a year, I don't know.
    The other one is working in Burkina Faso. The two of them are in Africa.
    H: They were all born in Guinea?
    MC: One in Guinea, one in Senegal, one in Ivory Coast. . . . They
    discovered Guadeloupe quite late. When I went back to Guadeloupe they
    were already 15, 18."

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16

Colonization or Globalization? Ernst Udet's Account of East Africa from 1932

Nina Berman

I

I would like to begin my discussion of a German account of East Africa which dates from the 1930s with a few general comments about the status of scholarship on images of Africa within the discipline of German literary studies. By and large, research on the German presence in Africa has been scarce during the last few decades, because post-war German society and the academics who study Germany have been primarily concerned with arriving at an understanding of World War II and the holocaust. For Germans and scholars of German history and culture, the legacy of the German colonial period, which officially ended in 1918, was not as pressing as were the horrors of World War II. While French and English Departments took up the question of colonialism during and after the period of decolonization, critics based in German Departments have only relatively recently and in small numbers joined the group of postcolonial scholars.

Another aspect significant in this respect is the relative absence of voices from Africa and Asia in German Departments. In recent years, an increasing number of critics with roots in India, the Caribbean, or Africa, have become members of English or French Departments in Europe and the United States. These critics were able to challenge their respective fields from within by ensuring that their concerns acquired a central place within the

scholarly debates. Although there is a considerable number of African and Asian literary critics who are trained in German literature and culture, these critics are usually not employed at European or North American institutions, but teach in Africa and Asia. They tend to be marginalized within the discipline and—with few exceptions—have not been acknowledged by mainstream German criticism. In a similar way, intellectuals from Africa and Asia who live and work in various areas of contemporary Germany, are not recognized as significant voices.[1] As a result, German literary criticism has not been challenged in ways comparable to what we have seen in English or French Departments. While the field of German-Jewish studies has succeeded in producing ground-breaking scholarship and in forcing scholars in various disciplines to evaluate their parameters, a similar development has not yet occurred in terms of Germany's relationship to Africa and Asia. Recent discussions of the flourishing minority culture in today's Germany, however, seem to signal the emergence of a new brand of criticism.

In addition to the limited scope of a postcolonial debate in Germany, most explorations of images of Africa focus on the relatively short period of German colonialism (1884–1918).[2] As a result, the bulk of the abundant fictional and non-fictional writings and the plethora of films about Africa that were produced before and after the German colonial period have not been evaluated. Because discussions of colonialism are conventionally tied to a critique of the colonial nation-state, texts and films that were produced before or after the colonial era seemed to have nothing significant to say about the actual relationship between Germans and Africans.[3] Most representations were treated as colonial fantasies that functioned to define the German nation.[4] Rather than seeing the writings of Kant, Hegel, and many others as reactions to three hundred years of slave trade and colonialism, these theories were often seen as establishing the foundational discourse that would ultimately result in the holocaust. German scholars have only recently begun to see German writings about Africa in the context of larger European and global politics.[5] In addition, following the conventions of the dominant theoretical models, scholars ignored situations that were not related to either the German nation-state or to German colonialism, but nevertheless involved Germans. As a result, the continuous presence of Germans in various areas of Africa since the end of the eighteenth century as businesspeople, missionaries, nurses, teachers, development aid workers, or tourists, was rarely acknowledged in relation to the cultural representations produced in and about Africa.

Another aspect impeding scholarly engagement with German material on Africa is not specific to German departments, but stems from a malaise endemic to literature departments in general. While postcolonial studies has

generated a flood of analyses pointing out the mechanisms employed for misrepresenting African peoples, the critique often does not include a consideration of the material, political, economic, and intellectual history of Africa. Since poststructuralist and deconstructionist critics argue that any claim to "truthful representation" is impossible ("crisis of representation"), the restoration of the "real" image of Africa became anathema to literary critics. While questions of representation, subjectivity, and power relations need to be taken seriously, the avoidance of the actual subject, namely the reality of Africa and Africans, in most of the analyses produced by literary critics, has led to a perpetuation of the old model of Africanism (and Orientalism etc.). That is, even though critics have thoroughly criticized the misrepresentations of Africa and Africans, ignorance about the political, social, economic, and cultural history of Africans persists. (The reverse situation would be unthinkable: if scholars from Africa or anywhere else were to write about images of Germans without knowing anything about German history or culture, the scholarship would not be taken seriously.)

Another aspect that obstructs the study of Africa in the U.S. context, and which is a problem not only within German Departments, is related to the specific political landscape of the United States. The focus on race and ethnicity has led many critics to ignore other structures that determine the relationship between Africans and, in our case, Germans. Cultural critics who are based in the United States tend to see most societal phenomena through the lens of race and ethnicity. The specific parameters of the immigrant societies, where questions of race and ethnicity play a distinct role, are transferred onto situations where these terms have a different historical meaning. As a result, interpretive models are employed that are not appropriate for the analysis of situations in Africa and omit the study of other phenomena which are more or equally pressing in the African context.

This issue leads me to the actual subject of my essay, which is based on research for a larger project in which I investigate the German presence in Africa, in particular the relationship between social action and textual representation. In this study I try to understand the mindset of Germans who considered themselves basically sympathetic to non-European cultures and who did not conceive of themselves as racist. I want to expose more subtle forms of domination that derive from a philosophy of progress and "good intentions," from a belief in helping and developing which ultimately can lead to the same structural imbalances that the overtly racist model of colonization produces.

One of the individuals who is typical of this mindset was the German flying ace Ernst Udet, who starred in a movie that was shot in East Africa in 1930–31 and premiered in Germany on April 12, 1932 (*Fliehende Schatten*, 'Fleeting Shadows'). The film's plot revolves around a melodramatic love

and adventure story, and the film was received with both reservation and praise by contemporary critics. Most of the praise was reserved for the excellent shots of the African landscape and animals, but the film's narrative was considered simplistic and unnecessarily comical.[6] It is noteworthy that one critic appreciated the film as a critique of conventions typical of the exoticizing German Afrikafilm.[7] Today, only a fragment of the film exists in an archive in Berlin.[8]

More interesting than the film itself is Udet's autobiographical account of this trip to East Africa, which contains 119 photographs and two maps (*Fremde Vögel über Afrika*, 'Strange Birds Over Africa,' 1932). The photographs and their captions are noteworthy for their presentation of African landscapes and peoples. I suggest that the text and the photographs are reflective of the lingering German dream to recapture a colonial empire. Interestingly, however, these representations do not convey racist stereotypes about Africans, but rather take an appreciative, and at times idealizing stance. Likewise, the territory to be potentially colonized is not rendered in ways familiar from earlier colonial literature, where it often appears as boundless and undeveloped. What are the implications of such images? In what ways do they differ from earlier (and later) colonialist and racist representations?

II

Ernst Udet was born on April 26, 1896. He started flying early in his life, became a hero during World War I, and was celebrated again during the Nazi period. His death remains controversial to this day: he died on November 17, 1941, from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, and it has never been firmly established whether he committed suicide or died in an accident.

Udet's journey to Africa lasted from November 1930 to April 1931, and falls into the period before Hitler's rise to power. At the time, Udet supported himself by flying acrobatic stunts at airshows, drawing crowds of up to 60,000 people. In an exquisite study of the role aviation played in shaping the German national imagination, Peter Fritzsche discusses the development of German nationalism from the Wilhelmine Empire through the Nazi period. Taking the Nazi slogan "We must become a nation of fliers" as a starting point, Fritzsche shows how Germans derived a sense of empowerment from their nation's successes in aviation. Pilots became the heroes of a development that tied together technological progress and nation-building.[9] This close relation between individual icons and the power of the state can be observed in the story of Udet, whose relationship to the

state was never quite clear, but who in the end became entangled in the fascist state's destructive missions.

With his trip to Africa, Udet brought the power of the pilot's symbolic function to the German dream of recapturing a colonial empire. At a moment when Germany was on the brink of entering the Nazi period, the book, more than the film, reflected the German desire for the lost colonies, and both partake in the shaping of collective hopes about a renewed German presence in Africa.

Before I turn to the analysis of the text, a look at the larger history of the German presence in and German writings about East Africa is warranted. Udet's book needs to be understood in the context of the profuse fictional and non-fictional literature about the region, which dates back to the early nineteenth century and continues into our time, when German tourists, doctors and aid workers continue to offer their views on East Africa, and today particularly Kenya.[10] East Africa, and later Kenya, has had a strong appeal for Germans since the beginning of the nineteenth century when Germans became invested in an area which was known as Deutsch-Ostafrika from 1885 to 1918, and which reflects largely the territory of today's Tanzania. The explorer, missionary, and linguist Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810–81) was a key figure inspiring and reflecting the German interest in East Africa. Together with Johannes Rebmann (1820–76), who also conducted linguistic research, he served for the Church Missionary Society, and established a missionary station at Rabai, not far from Mombasa. They became the first Europeans to penetrate into the interior; in 1848, Rebmann was the first European to see Kilimanjaro, and in 1849, Krapf the first to see Mount Kenya. Krapf's autobiographical account, *Reisen in Ostafrika, ausgeführt in den Jahren 1837–55* ('Travels in East Africa, undertaken in the years 1837–55'), was published in 1858.[11] Similar to Krapf's autobiographical and linguistic works, texts published in the precolonial period chronicle expeditions and a range of scientific topics. The fact that these texts were written before the founding of the German "protectorate" in East Africa illustrates the close relationship between scientific and missionary exploration and the ensuing economic and political occupation.

In 1885, one year after the German Empire established protectorates in Southwest Africa, Togo, and Cameroon, it responded to the activities of Carl Peters (1856–1918), one of the leading proponents of German colonialism, and a key figure in East Africa. The German Empire gave protection to his German East Africa Society, and Britain recognized the German protectorate in East Africa in 1886. Until World War I put an end to Deutsch-Ostafrika, scores of publications about the region were disseminated and reflect the different trajectories pursued by agencies and

individuals in the region. Some texts also comment on the bloody conflicts between the German Empire and the local population, such as the Maji-Maji uprising of 1905–6.[12]

The end of the German colonial Empire did not quell German fantasies about regaining the colonies. Throughout the Weimar Republic, countless publications about all aspects of East Africa continued to fascinate German readers. Udet's text, *Strange Birds*, thus appeared within the framework of a well-established field, and contributed to an archive made up of novels, films, autobiographies, travelogues, scientific accounts, and histories written about East Africa.

Udet's account of his time in East Africa contains ten pages of introductory text, followed by two maps and 119 photographs. The introduction provides background information to the expedition. The first-person narrative begins with a quotation from the authorization which allowed the Germans to enter British colonial territory: "Permission Udet three planes Kenja Uganda Tanganyika Sudan granted. Director of Civil Aviation London."[13] Udet and his eleven-member crew of pilots, producers, actors, and technicians, arrive in Mombasa in November 1930. As Udet states in the introduction, the declared goal of this mission in Africa is "to fly in Africa and to film there, in order to catch a bit of the warm sun south of the equator, which we up here in the cold north need so much, especially today, more than ever" (3).[14] But the pilot is not only interested in capturing Africa's sun for his fellow Germans; together with Edy von Gontard and Willi Zietz, who were responsible for the expedition and the production of the film, he develops a broader narrative concept for his flying mission:

> We wanted to give Africa its due and present it in all her beauty and originality, and to underscore the contrast between civilization and the modern accomplishments of technology and an untouched Africa. In order to be able to present our shots coherently, we decided to develop a frame narrative for the manuscript. We agreed that the title, "Strange Birds Over Africa," most adequately expressed what we had decided to be our task. (3)

The expedition was thus constructed along the lines of a dichotomy between civilization and nature, the modern and the traditional. In this passage and throughout the text, the premodern and natural is defined as beautiful and worthy of admiration. However, the contrasts outlined here by Udet do not seem to result in tension or conflict between German and African cultures and peoples. Rather, this aspect—the compatibility of the modern and the traditional, technology and nature—emerges as the principal narrative thread throughout the book, and defines the framework

for the text, the illustrations, and the captions that comment on the illustrations.

The itinerary of the expedition takes the crew from Mombasa via Voi to Arusha, and finally to the shores of Lake Manjara, which becomes the headquarters for the filming. With the beginning of the rainy season in April 1931, the group splits up and embarks on separate return flights. Udet, whose original plane is no longer fit enough for a flight to Europe, flies another aircraft via Uganda, Sudan, and Egypt.   The text ends in anticipation of the landing in Cairo, which is presented as the "return into the grayness of daily life" (12).

In his introductory narrative, Udet reports on his encounters with East Africans, the animals observed, the landscape, and some of the settlements and lodges he and his crew visit. Dangerous episodes, such as the attack by a lion on Udet's and another companion's airplanes, give the narrative the atmosphere of an adventure novel. A crash of the second pilot's plane into a termite hill turns out to be even more serious, and Udet, who rescues the survivors, considers it a "miracle that [they] got away alive" (7).

Most interesting are Udet's portrayals of amiable encounters with Africans.   The pilot first mentions Africans when "30 blacks" help to construct an airport and a hangar close to the film crew's camp (4). The next reference to Africans describes the reactions of several locals who witness samples of Udet's acrobatic flying stunts, which are "admired by the black honorary committee" that had been assembled by a German settler to welcome the members of the expedition (4). Udet also recounts an episode in which an old Maasai chief is visibly irritated with the pilot's acrobatic flights, and questions another member of the expedition why he did not send an older man on such a dangerous mission. Once the pilot lands safely, the chief is relieved but confused, evidently having expected the flying stunt to end in Udet's death (5).[15]

Udet points out repeatedly that the Maasai take a strong interest in the airplanes. The old Maasai chief is reported to inspect the planes every morning with great curiosity (5). Another group of Maasai observes the maneuvers of the airplanes and approaches the planes after their landing, "running, visibly joyful" (5). Demonstrating their peacefulness, the Maasai plant their spears in the soil at a respectful distance from the planes. The encounter is described in enthusiastic terms: "Rarely did we meet such friendly and intelligent people as these, with whom we became friends in no time" (5). The Maasai inspect the cameras, and the chief and other warriors are allowed to try out the pilot's place and experience the steering wheel.

Udet praises the appreciation the Maasai seem to have for modern technology:

> The Masai people did indeed display an understanding for our modern gigantic birds, and our friend answered the questions of our white guide De Baer quite appropriately: 'Aren't you amazed that these birds fly?' 'Why should I be amazed if you yourself are no longer amazed?' (5)

This encounter is representative of the approach Udet takes in his portrayal of Africa and her people: there is no conflict between technology and nature, between civilization and the premodern environment.

Another group of Africans is praised for their beauty and delightful dances: "The Ufiume-negroes are distinguished by their good stature and grace, and their dances and songs are a pure joy for whoever enjoys beauty" (7). Thus Africans are generally described in sympathetic ways. Only when Udet leaves East African territory does he meet locals who are either hostile or who can not be trusted. Just as the climate in Sudan is "unbearably hot and humid," its people are "not hospitable" and attempt to cheat the pilot and his companion (10–11). The enthusiastic reactions to the landscape and the peoples of East Africa are absent in the descriptions of the return flight via Sudan and Egypt.

Notable are also the comments on the white settlers and the colonial infrastructure. The British always appear in the most positive light; they are cooperative, chivalrous, and reliable. While in East Africa, Udet eschews criticism and avoids confrontation; the British and the Maasai are portrayed throughout the account in a respectful, amiable tone, and the entire stay in East Africa is conducted in a spirit that wants to convey an air of cross-cultural respect and understanding.

Most importantly, however, the travelers can count on the support of Germans in the area. Father Siedentopf, who joins the crew as a guide, is referred to as an "old Lettow-Vorbeck warrior" (7). Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck (1870–1964) was the military commander of the German troops in German East Africa until 1918; the enthusiastic connection of the German Siedentopf to one of the key symbolic figures of German colonialism stresses the continuity of the German presence in East Africa.[16] When Udet needs repair work done on his plane, he finds two German carpenters in Arusha: "What Master Glaser and Master Bleich, who had never before seen an airplane from the inside, accomplished together with Baier in ten days, with the most provisional means, greatly honors German craftsmen abroad" (8). The fact that an infrastructure of German craftsmen exists in East Africa highlights the uninterrupted German presence in the former colonial territory, a presence uninterrupted by the change of colonial ownership.

Following the introductory text, two maps are inserted. The map at the top of the page renders the entire African continent, but no nation-states or

colonial state borders are identified (13). The only geographical references are rivers (such as Niger, Kongo, Sambesi, Oranje, Nile) and Lakes (Lake Chad, Lake Victoria), and the names of places important to Udet's excursion (for example, Mombasa, Voi, Arusha, Khartoum, Cairo). The slightly smaller map below focuses on East Africa and features mostly Kenya, a part of Uganda, and a small slice of the Belgian Congo. The area of what is today Tanzania is referred to as "Tanganyika-Territory, formerly German East Africa." Below this caption, in smaller print, the words "British Mandate" reveal the current status of the region. Thus the area is first and foremost presented as former German territory, while the reference to British ownership is only added secondarily.

This map clearly reveals the underlying subtext relevant to Udet's mission. The excursion does not venture into just any African territory, it focuses on an area known to Germans from the days of Empire when it was one of Germany's most attractive colonial possessions. Placing his trip to East Africa in the framework of German colonial history, Udet brings his symbolic power to rekindle the lingering German dream for a colonial empire.

The photographs make up the largest part of the book (over eighty percent of the pages) and underscore the goal of this peaceful but ultimately colonial mission, where nature meets civilization, and where technology is brought to Africans who are portrayed as responding in ways that highlight their appreciation of the blessings of modernity. Subjects of the photographs include pictures of animals, Africans, settlements, landscapes, the airplanes, and the crew. Many of the photographs focus on cultural contact: they show Africans and Germans, Africans and airplanes, animals and airplanes, or landscapes and airplanes.

Many of the pictures were taken from above, by cameras that had been attached to the outside of the airplane. This photography from above is emblematic of the political and cultural power structure existing between Germans and Africans. The former colonizer surveys the space from a privileged position, overseeing the land he imagines to recapture, and thus literally occupies what Edward Said has termed "positional superiority."[17] Also, because a single shot taken from above can capture a wide geographical area, these photographs emphasize structures not visible otherwise. Regular patterns emerge that would not be noticeable if the pictures had been taken at close range. In his book *Colonial Space*, John K. Noyes, drawing on Homi Bhabha, argues that in colonialist literature, African territory was often at first presented as boundless, which entailed on the one hand a promise of freedom, but also implicitly seemed to call for the presence of the colonizer to introduce order.[18] The first step in taming the wilderness was achieved through the description, categorization, and

classification of space, and the subsequent drawing of boundaries. Space was made accessible and manageable, and was appropriated this way for use by the colonizer.

In Udet's portrayal of East Africa, the region is either already under control because it bears the marks of civilization, for example, through settlements and roads, or African space is represented in ways that amounts to an appropriation of the territory. In many of the pictures of taken from the airplane, either a structuring shadow falls onto the landscape, often in the shape of a cross (at times even resembling the Christian cross, see p. 9), or part of the airplane itself is seen on the picture (28).[19] Two pictures show jeeps parked against the backdrop of a beautiful landscape (52, 61). Other pictures combine animals, landscape, and airplanes. Some shots of airplanes or of other examples of modern technology (cars, cameras) are set against the background of a landscape that includes Africans, and some of the pictures combining several topics again feature a cross cast over the scene (41). A number of pictures focus on animals in the landscape; only five pictures of landscapes do not feature any forms of life, that is, animals, Europeans, or Africans, and four of those are portraits of mountains (20, 21, 23, 57, 65).

Ultimately, most of the pictures of landscapes contain evidence of European modern life and of African people, settlements, and animals; only rarely are the landscapes void of any form of life. Cars and airplanes indicate the presence of Western technology and civilization in the African space, and they also confirm the existence of the nearby agents of development. The shadow cast by the airplanes over African land is the most subtle image confirming this presence.

Pictures that feature settlements also convey an image of Africa that is already developed. Again, those pictures taken from above indicate the existence of controlled and planned development. Arusha (5), Umbuque (32), Nairobi (68), and game park lodges ("The Fig-Tree-Hotel," 62) are distinguished by wide, linear streets that follow regular patterns.[20] A Maasai village ("Typical Masai-Kraal," 33) emerges as an orderly settlement, and the view from above emphasizes its recognizable structure and architectural design. The one settlement that makes the least structured appearance is a coffee-farm which includes the house of an official who checks passengers coming from the north for tsetse flies (59). However, several streets connect the various buildings on the compound and lead to larger roads, thus showing the connection of the settlement to a larger infrastructure. Only one shot is included which does not bear any signs of modern development and reminds of colonial representations that emphasize the "uncivilized" nature of African settlements, namely that of a hut which is nestled into the surrounding vegetation (57 bottom).

The captions commenting on the two pictures of Nairobi reveal Udet's enthusiasm for finding evidence of modernization in Africa. The picture at the top presents a wealthier neighborhood: "Nairobi is developing. In the foreground the new English church. Notable are the many cars, which are parked along the modern and spaciously designed roads" (68). The focus on a symbol of Christianity in this picture emphasizes the presence of Western civilization and further suggests a conflation of modernization with Westernization. The picture at the bottom of the same page shows a neighborhood inhabited by Africans: "A Negro settlement in Nairobi. The roofs are covered with the metal of Shell gas-containers. From many kilometers afar one can see the shine of this practical and cheap roofing" (68). These buildings, which are all approximately the same size and situated on streets that run in consistent patterns horizontally and vertically, reflect an air of regulated development and urban planning. In Udet's description, the shining roofs appear as harbingers of modernity. In essence, both pictures and their texts point out to the German audience that Africa is modernizing and progressing. Similary, the caption introducing the settlement of Umbuque makes a point of connecting the place to the larger infrastructure: "Umbuque, one of the largest Negro settlements in Tanganyika, extends over many kilometers. The road at the top of the picture leads to Arusha, and is part of the famous Cairo-Cape Road" (32). Consistent with previous photos, this one is taken from above so that the buildings appear as elements of regular patterns.

This emphasis on an intact infrastructure emerges as the most important aspect in most of the images focusing on settlements. That is, Udet's visual account of Africa emphasizes the accessibility of the East Africa territory, its potential for development. This is not in line with the spirit of the early phase of colonization, where the call to conquer Africa was put forth to potential settlers through images of supposedly unclaimed land, thus encouraging Europeans to fantasize about ownership. Here, the appeal conveyed through the shots of settlements taken from above emphasizes possibilities for development and the general accessibility of the country. This African territory is no longer a wilderness, but a region with a potent infrastructure, a region open to further modernization. Both modes of fantasizing about Africa are ultimately about mastery and colonization, but the approach toward Africa is fundamentally different.

The many photographs taken of Africans during Udet's expedition also diverge from other portrayals of African peoples as they were known especially from ethnographic photography. In contrast to the more positive photographic representation of peoples from the South Pacific, for example, ethnographic pictures from the late nineteenth century onwards predominantly portrayed Africans as mysterious, uncanny, and

unappealing.[21] With regard to textual representations of African territory during the period of German colonialism, Africans were often denied their existence altogether. In his analysis of several German colonial novels, Noyes—drawing on studies by, for example, Mary Louise Pratt and Johannes Fabian—discusses the strategies employed to erase the presence of the native Africans, in order for the colonizer to claim the territory.[22]

Udet's portrayal differs from these earlier conventions of depicting, or erasing, Africans. We have already seen that locals are rendered in a sympathetic light in Udet's text; a similar approach can be observed with regard to the photographs. Here, Africans appear as noble savages, naive, but perfectly capable of meeting the Germans on account of an honor code adhered to by both sides, and on account of a value system shared by Germans and Africans alike. Udet's Africans are able to value the blessings of modern civilization: The reaction of an old man to the airplanes is described as expressing amazement, but also "authentic joy" (7). Especially the Maasai come across as a group of people at ease in their encounter with modern civilization. Several images show Africans working on the airplanes or collaborating with Germans in other ways (2, 3, 6, 22 top and bottom). Only two photographs depict Africans as porters or servants, roles familiar from traditional colonialist representations (31, 37 top).

The message conveyed through Udet's representation of Africans stands firmly in a tradition which portrays members of premodern cultures as noble savages.[23] This tradition was only rarely part of German portrayals of Africa; one would have to go back to Wolfram von Eschenbach's medieval epic *Parzival* (1200/10) to find possibly the most positive black characters German literature has ever created.[24] Another example of a more positive (though not unproblematic) take on Africans can be found during the Enlightenment period, when a number of Africans were brought to Germany and educated, in order to prove the point that the state of African civilization was a matter of "nurture" not "nature."[25] While this line of thought existed in German culture consistently from the Enlightenment period onward, the exact opposite mode of thinking became the dominant model from the days of German colonialism. This new approach also had its roots in the Enlightenment era, but developed into a biological racism that relegated Africans to the premodern period and was void of any form of humanist trajectory.

Africans in Udet's account appear to stand in the tradition represented by Wolfram's epic and the Enlightenment ideal of progress and cultural development. Here, the native inhabitants are somewhat naive, yet honest, and follow a codex of knightly conduct, valuing honor and friendship. This code of honor is appreciated by Udet whose own behavior as a pilot was often juxtaposed to other famous pilots who lacked precisely that kind of

chivalry.[26] Udet's Africans are at ease with the blessings of modern civilization; they admire the airplanes, and are not intimidated by them. Photographs that depict Africans and Germans working together stress this ability to function within the modern framework.

The juxtaposition of photographs that stress the beauty of Africans and those that focus on the ability of Africans to behave as moderns seems to suggest that a certain sense of beauty and character predisposes Africans for an appreciation of technology and modernity. This association of beauty and worth, beauty and cultural status, is typical of an approach that only a few years later became crucial to one kind of Nazi aesthetics. In Leni Riefenstahl's documentary films about the 1936 Olympic Games, *Fest der Völker* (Festival of Peoples) and *Fest der Schönheit* (Festival of Beauty), for example, the sense of beauty conveyed crosses cultural boundaries and includes individuals from different cultures; the emphasis is on muscles, proportion between height and weight, gestures, mimikry, and gait.[27]

But this kind of seemingly appreciative attitude toward Africans is not necessarily a sign of an emancipatory stance. As Alain Patrice Nganang has shown, even films shot during the Nazi period employ the image of the "nice African." Here, Germans appear as the better colonizers in comparison to the British or the French, and Africans are portrayed as hoping for the return of the Germans. That is, the dream of a German colonial empire is additionally legitimized through its correspondence with the desire of Africans themselves.[28]

Along these lines, the superior position of Germans is not questioned in Udet's account. Africans are not truly equals; even though the friendly portrayal of Africans suggests collaboration, it is quite clear that Germans are controlling the situation. Whether Africans are porters, servants, or engine maintenance people, the Germans offer employment and pay the wages. It is noteworthy, however, that Udet's discourse is not one of racial superiority. The aspects that enable the Germans to occupy the superior position are solely connected to the achievements of modernity.

III

Udet's portrayal of Africa and Africans stresses the compatibility of German and African culture. Areas of commonality include ideas of physical beauty, a shared code of honor, and a common positive relation to modern invention. Racial difference is not presented as a factor that divides Africans and Germans, and even cultural development is not presented as an impediment to communication. However, all of this does not amount to a challenge to the German position of superiority. The appropriation of landscape and the ownership of technology clearly indicate who is in

charge. Germans appear and leave with their airplanes in a deus-ex-machina-like fashion, foreshadowing the appearance of Adolf Hitler at the beginning of Leni Riefenstahl's documentary of the 1934 Nazi party rally in her *Triumph des Willens* (Triumph of the Will). But domination is achieved without drawing on the vocabulary of racism.

The message sent to the German readers is one that encourages the presence of Germans in East Africa in the context of modern development. Africans are not hostile, but friendly and open to modernization and development. The land already has an infrastructure that allows for further development. Ultimately, racism is not the driving factor determining the encounter between Germans and Africans. At the center of this encounter are ideas about development, civilization, beauty, ownership, and modernity. Udet's commentary on Africa is representative of attitudes that are reflected in Leni Riefenstahl's work and in other films of the era. The views he expresses are also on a continuum of attitudes about modernization and progress that originated with the Enlightenment and determine German representations of non-European cultures since the late 1700s. While biological racism emerged in the late eighteenth century as a belief system dominating views of and later actual policies toward African cultures, the non-racist approach toward cultural difference coexisted throughout. Depending on the area and the time period, one or the other of the two models prevailed, but to this day, both models result in domination of African countries and peoples from the outside. Udet's case exemplifies what Michael Adas has described in detail in his excellent study, *Machines as the Measures of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance*. Adas shows how "Europeans' perceptions of the material superiority of their own cultures, particularly as manifested in scientific thought and technological innovation, shaped their attitudes toward and interaction with peoples they encountered overseas."[29] Udet's approach to Africa also confirms one of Adas's central arguments, namely that "racism should be viewed as a subordinate rather than the dominant theme in European intellectual discourse on non-Western peoples," and that "terms such as ethnocentrism, cultural chauvinism, and physical narcissism more aptly characterize European responses" to the cultures they encountered.[30]

In our current historical context, Udet's account of East Africa encourages us to think about the vocabulary of globalization. Even if the agents of today's push for globalization refrain from using a racist vocabulary and employing racist policies, attention needs to be paid to questions of agency and to the actual results of the encounters between Africans and, in our case, Germans. While Udet's images of Africa are a reflection of a then novel approach to colonization, his approach is

comparable to strategies that can be observed today in the latest push for the global expansion of capital.[31]

Notes

♦   I would like to thank Rebecca Lorins for her editorial comments on this essay.

1.   See my article "Multiculturalism, Reintegration, and Beyond: The Afrikanisch-Asiatische Studentenförderung in Göttingen" for a discussion of the situation of African and Asian intellectuals in Germany. *South Central Review* 16.2–3 (Summer-Fall 1999): 34–53.

2.   See, for example, Joachim Warmbold, *'Ein Stückchen neudeutsche Erd' . . . '— Deutsche Kolonial-Literatur: Aspekte ihrer Geschichte, Eigenart und Wirkung, dargestellt am Beispiel Afrikas* (Frankfurt: Haag + Herchen, 1982).

3.   One of the few scholars who take a different approach is Marcia Klotz who extends her exploration of colonial discourse to the fascist era in "White Women and the Dark Continent: Sexuality and Gender in German Colonial Discourse from the Sentimental Novel to the Fascist Film" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1994); see also her article "Global Visions: From the Colonial to the National Socialist World," *European Studies Journal* 16.2 (1999): 37–68.

4.   See, for example, Susanne Zantop's excellent study, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770–1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997).

5.   Susan Buck-Morss discussion of the influence of the Haitian revolution on Hegel's writings stands out as an excellent example of the contextual approach that sees German ideas of race in the context of European colonialism. "Hegel and Haiti," *Critical Inquiry* 26.4 (Summer 2000): 821–65. Zantop also demonstrates that the Haitian revolution was discussed widely in Germany at the time, and made the subject of a plethora of fictional and non-fictional writings. "Betrothal and Divorce; or Revolution in the House," in her *Colonial Fantasies*, 141–61.

6.   See, for example, E.A.S., "Fliegende Schatten [*sic*]," *Germania: Zeitung für das deutsche Volk*, April 14, 1932; L. H. Eisner, "Fliehende Schatten—Ufa-Pavillion," *Film-Kurier*, April 13, 1932. More critical is the review by P.A.O., "'Fliehende Schatten' Im Ufa-Pavillion," *Berliner Tageblatt*, Abendausgabe Arpil 13, 1932.

7.   Walther Victor, "Persiflage des Afrikafilms," *8 Uhr Abendblatt*, April 13, 1932.

8.   Bundesarchiv, section Filmarchiv, in Berlin.

9.   Peter Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers: German Aviation and the Popular Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

10. Most recent examples are the novels of Stefanie Zweig about her childhood years as a Jewish refugee in Kenya, the most popular of which is *Nirgendwo in Afrika* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne, 1995). Corinne Hofmann's account of her marriage to a Kenyan from the Samburu tribe, *Die weiße Massai* (Munich: Al-Verlag, 1999), ranked first on German bestseller lists for many months. Miriam Kwalanda's *Die Farbe meines Gesichts: Lebensreise einer kenianischen Frau* (with Birgit Theresa Koch; Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1999), can be seen as a counternarrative to Hofmann's text, but in complicated ways it perpetuates stereotypical images about Kenya.

11. The text was translated into English and published in 1860 as *Travels, Researches, and Missionary Labors, during an Eighteen Years' Residence in East Africa* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields).

12. *Die Tätigkeit der Marine während der Niederwerfung des Eingeborenen-Aufstandes in Ostafrika 1905–06* (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1907).

13. Ernst Udet, *Fremde Vögel über Afrika* (Bielefeld: Velhagen & Klasing, 1932), 3.

14. All translations from Udet's text are mine.

15. Udet reports that the Chief comments on his safe return to earth with the words "Schauri a mungo" (actually, "shauri ya mungu" in Swahili). He translates this as "Geisterzauber," (necromancy), 5. Actually, the Swahili proverb means "It is up to God" or "It is God's wish." By translating it as "Geisterzauber," Udet implies that the Masai believe in spirits, while the phrase could just as well be understood as an expression acknowledging the greatness or incomprehensibility of God's creation.

16. It is noteworthy that Lettow-Vorbeck's books about his time in colonial Africa were reprinted over many decades and enjoyed popularity even after World War II.

17. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978), 7.

18. "In order that boundaries be defined across the colonial territory, it is necessary that the space of the colony first be rendered uniform and homogenous . . . ." John K. Noyes, *Colonial Space: Spatiality in the Discourse of German South West Africa 1884–1915* (Chur: Harwood, 1992), 166.

19. The pagination of the photographs begins again with page 1.

20. The shots of Egyptian settlements likewise stress the structured nature of the architecture (75–80). The images of Sudan and Egypt (70–80) are not included in my analysis.

21. See Thomas Theye, "Anmerkungen zur Kolonialfotographie in Schwarzafrika," in *Der geraubte Schatten: Die Photographie als ethnographisches Dokument*, ed. Thomas Theye, 244–45 (Munich: C. J. Bucher, 1989); Ricabeth Steiger and Martin Taureg, "Quellentexte zur ethnographischen Fotografie aus Schwarzafrika," in *Der geraubte Schatten*, 246–63.

22. Noyes, *Colonial Space*, 188–214.

23. On the subject of the rhetorical idealization of other cultures, see "Idealization: Strangers in Paradise" in David Spurr, *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* . (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 125–40.

24. Here, the black queen Belakane has a son with the white knight Gahmureth; this son, Feirefiz, is spotted black and white all over and plays a pivotal role in the resolution of the narrative.

25. The most famous of these Africans who were brought to Germany during the Enlightenment period was Anton Wilhelm Amo (ca. 1700–after 1753), who taught as a professor of philosophy in Halle and Jena.

26. See Fritzsche, *A Nation of Fliers*, 87–88, 92.

27. Riefenstahl is also famous for her images of the Nuba, published as *Die Nuba* (1973; The Last of the Nuba, 1974) and *Die Nuba von Kau* (The People of Kau, 1976). Over one third of her autobiography is entitled "Africa," which highlights the crucial role Riefenstahl assigns to her encounter with Africa. She explains her initial fascination with the Nuba as originating with a picture she saw in a magazine: "[T]he black man's body looked like a sculpture by Rodin or Michelangelo. . . ." Her commentary emphasizes the aesthetic interest that is legitimized through the comparison with canonical figures of Western art. Leni Riefenstahl, *A Memoir* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 462.

28. See, for example, the films *Die Reiter von Deutsch-Ostafrika* (1934) and *Carl Peters* (1941) by Herbert Selpin; *Das Sonnenland Südwest-Afrika* (1926) by Hans Dietrich von Trotha; *Sehnsucht nach Afrika* (1939) by Georg Zoch; *Deutsches Land in Afrika* (1939) by Walter Scheunemann and Karl Mohri. Alain Patrice Nganang, "Der koloniale Sehnsuchtsfilm: Vom lieben Afrikaner deutscher Filme der NS-Zeit," unpublished paper.

29. Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989), 4.

30. Ibid., 12.

31. For a critique of the term "globalization" see Victor Li, who argues that the term masks the crass inequalities of the global economy. "What's in a Name? Questioning 'Globalization,'" *Cultural Critique* 45 (Spring 2000): 1–39.

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State and Civil Society in Local and Global Contexts: Colonial Contact and Bourgeois Reforms among the Yoruba of Nigeria

Saheed A. Adejumobi

This chapter seeks to clarify what is referred to as "globalization" or the "global economy" and its radical effect not only upon the fundamental redesign of the planet's political and economic arrangements, but also upon the production of historical scholarship. The epistemological and substantive foundations of historical knowledge have been dramatically altered since the 1960s, when, as a result of intellectual upheavals, historical knowledge and specialization were splintered in marginalized areas such as Latin America and Africa. Although the areas that have come to be called the "Third World" experienced a period of social awakening after the Second World War, most scholars have explored these developments from the Manichean perspective of Cold War-derived principles. The post-Cold War era has been marked by a rapidly declining interest in intellectual traditions born from progressive or humanist ideals. "Globalization" supposedly propels intellectual and political ferment, but African intellectual and material products remain largely irrelevant outside of marginal entertainment or academic contexts.

Historian Frederick Cooper argues that the Western view of Africa as a continent of disasters and bad government is a reflection of the development framework,[1] which has continually pushed Africans into the role of a quiet and productive junior partner in the world market. As a corollary, the failures of the former colonies, particularly in Africa, often serve as a

retrospective vindication of the legacy of imperialism.[2] In a unipolar world marked by the absence of the Cold War scenario in which West fought the East over the terms of economic and cultural nationalism, once tepid liberal rallies for African rights are now fully undermined.[3] In a postwar world characterized by East-West divisions and the hegemony of the United States within the world economic system, a major decolonization process and the resolve (at Bretton Woods) to impose a liberal world economic order created the framework for the "developing" world for twenty-five to thirty years and of continuously rapid rates of economic growth and capitalist development, which led to the "Golden Age of Capitalism" and the rise of the welfare state in the West.[4]

Dominant paradigms of human and international relations fostered by capitalist advancements were fueled by assertions of highlighting the "the clash of civilizations" or the upholding of the triumph of western political and economical liberalism as "the end of history."[5] There are also popular paradigms which used the encounter between Europe and Africa as one reference point and the implied inability of Africa to manage transformative ideas of "gentlemanly capitalism," or the "liberal idea of improvement," as the other.[6] However, the oppositions of Western/non-Western or domination/resistance, although useful as devices for opening up questions of power, constrained the search for precise ways in which power is deployed, engaged, contested, deflected, and appropriated.[7] In essence, images of Africa and the history of capitalism and colonialism have become mirrors that have served to reflect western institutional sentiments, rather than serving as windows to the complex, dynamic realities of "non-strategic" societies, many of whom are engaged in nation-building projects. This chapter argues that among the themes yet to receive critical treatment in African historiographies are: (a) the reconstruction of precolonial equivalents of principles of commonwealth, citizenship, and social welfare; (b) the racialization of these concepts through the expansion of European market forces and liberal ideas; (c) the expansion of capitalism and its corollary class contradictions that were consolidated in the evolution of the modern state; (d) the unfulfilled aspirations of indigenous communities who, either willingly or through force, subscribed to metropolitan cultural and economic principles; and (e) the continual evolution and expansion of metropolitan capitalist expansion through "legitimate trade," "free trade," "development and welfare reforms," "national development," and "liberalization and deregulation." By placing specific focus on the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, this chapter highlights the global and local contradictions that emerged as a result of British religious and colonial enterprise in Yorubaland. By extending Western-oriented claims and ideologies as universal reasons in religious or secular liberal contexts for

industrialization and growth, redefinition of the parameters of global and local nationalism, and citizen politics, the focus of local politics is shifted towards the external stimuli of transnational capitalists. In addition, there is very little room left for a systemic alternative.

Capitalist Expansion, Political Transformation and Bourgeois Relations: The British-Yoruba Paradigm

In a June 1952 letter to one of his fellow officers, colonial administrator J. D. Macpherson complained about the highly strained relationship between Yoruba ministers from Nigeria's western region and British officials in the colony. Writing in the decolonization era, he lamented how a lack of synergy and a perennial atmosphere of acrimonious debate characterized the modern British-Yoruba relationship, asking, "Why was it that there was this clash in [Nigeria's] West? It could not be said that the expatriates in the West are different from those in other parts of the country."[8]   Macpherson went on to accuse the Yoruba leaders of being oversensitive in their claims that British officials lacked respect for newly appointed Yoruba ministers. He also chided local Nigerian leaders because of their demands for a power structure that might give them greater autonomy and access to funding for social programs. Even the personal relations between the two groups came under criticism by the British. Another official once said about the Yoruba intellectual and political leader, Obafemi Awolowo, "if only Awolowo would relax, and have a glass of sherry with us sometimes!" Yet Awolowo's apparent socio-cultural faux pas signified more than simply an unintended cultural insult. Rather, it was a metaphor for the debate over direction the trajectory of political development in Nigeria and a reflection of the congruence and dissonance over reforms on civil society as the century-long Anglo-Yoruba relationship faced the need to establish a new legal framework in which bourgeois capitalist relations could operate in postcolonial Nigeria. The outcome of the Anglo-Yoruba dialogue in this era of decolonization had a pivotal impact upon the trajectory of postcolonial Nigeria. Ultimately, the failure of the postcolonial Nigerian State demonstrated the limitations of bourgeois liberal economic and political principles for decolonization reforms, to which many Yoruba nationalists also subscribed.

The historiography of the African intellectual and political transition to the modern era has largely ignored the congruence and dissonance between European and African intellectual ideas regarding the epistemological evolution of such principles as "development," social welfare reform, citizenship, and nationalism. The historiography of modern Africa is often based on generalizations about the ability of people all over the world to

adjust positively to free market capitalism, which largely depends on the capacity of ruling classes and their ideologues to bend people to their will and convince them of the benefits of capitalism. Events in modern Yorubaland and several other African states are characterized by a search for a more authentic platform that appreciates universal rights and a democratic system based upon ethnic solidarity and consensus. The instablity of the postcolonial Nigerian state, with economic burdens and highly unequal income distribution and power relations, is also triggered by the fact that many polities suffer from a volatile economic and political atmosphere in which reforms have been guided by transnational and local elites in the service of the global economy. In this regard, the contradictions of European liberal traditions with local aspirations in the world is arguably most visible in Yorubaland, where there has always been a lack of synthesis between the global and the local evolution of economic and social reform. In addition, expertise in western education and intellectual practices have hardly endeared progressive Yoruba with metropolitan powers, nor has the region granted global access outside of the activities of select individuals operating outside of the patronage of a corrupt State. Many Yoruba bourgeois elites have also not been excluded from a minority of bourgeois elites who undermined unique individual and national interests in the history of Nigeria.

Although historians of Africa have focused on the history of capitalist development as symbolized by the concentration and centralization of capital in the last decades of the nineteenth century, there has been critical work on the growth of large industrial and financial forms of capital, the growth of corporate monopolies, the territorial division of the world into colonies, the export of capital, and the worldwide extension of the market based on a division of labor between countries specializing in the production of manufactured goods and those oriented towards the production of raw materials. Nevertheless, there has been relatively little appreciation of an exploration of the emergent modes of class relation and production within the nation-states or for an exploration of the colonial-guided economic and social reforms in an attempt to consolidate legitimacy for the capitalist state.[9]

The historiography of modern Africa has also neglected the attempts by selective African elites to create an alternative political sociology that emphasizes local needs and initiatives that are often undermined by global imperatives. The overwhelming focus on the ideational ensembles of nation-states, ethnic groups, and tribes detracts from critical explorations of political and social reforms in Africa. Studies of the decolonization era would greatly benefit from an appreciation of the futile efforts of those local elites who clamored for post-Enlightenment ideals that appreciated

domestic economic and political interests. Although the tumultuous nationalist politics made clear the limits of colonial-guided nation-state formations, scholars have yet to examine critically the attempts made at providing social programs specifically targeting welfare, health, and education. In the postwar decolonization context, the deepening of social reforms temporarily instituted a social democratic form of state capitalism. This state-led capitalist development expanded production on both a national and global scale. The evolution of a colonial development-hinged "partnership" led to the 1929 Colonial Development Act, followed by similar version in 1940, and, ultimately, the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945. Highlighting the need for a more critical insight into bourgeois relations in this era, scholar D. George Boyce asked, "Was partnership an end in itself, or a means to an end, and if the latter, what end? Who were the 'partners' to be? Were some African communities likely to prove more easily subsumed in the partnership principle than others? Were there loyal and disloyal African nationalists? Could the disloyal be isolated, even maintained in a kind of political quarantine?"[10]

Historian John Flint, writing on the decolonization era, identified two ideological schools, namely the "liberal nationalist" and *Dependista,* or neocolonial school. The former school of thought, according to Flint, is largely from propagandist sources; it views the decline of empire as a "conflict between firmly drawn characters, a struggle of will, an unfolding plot, and a final resolution of conflict with hero taking on the villain." The latter school, on the other hand, rationalized decolonization in terms of the underdevelopment theory, whereby the transfer of formal political and administrative power was preceded by the creation of a *comprador* class, or an indigenous elite class that protected foreign capitalist interests.[11]   Flint concluded that the imperialists and nationalists did not stand on opposites poles once colonial reform was underway after 1938, but that they were mere historical reflections of one another. He thus rejected the idea that there was a "struggle" by "nationalists," who were in reality more concerned with inheriting the colonial state and its apparatus, its frontiers, and its power.[12]   Other scholars discussing African decolonization, however, highlighted the contradictions of colonial racism and African bourgeois elites' intimacy with European life and thought, often culminating in a deep sense of alienation from African culture and interests.[13]   Historian Cedric J. Robinson also observed that these conditions combined to produce a black radical intelligentsia.   According to Robinson, when confronted with the limits of democracy under "racial capitalism" and colonialism, combined with the uprisings of the black masses, whose access to bourgeois European culture was limited, this black bourgeoisie was forced to critique and challenge western hegemony.[14]

In the era of anticolonial activities, only a minority of the Nigerian intelligentsia based their nationalist platforms on the premise that a weak civil society, as inherited from the colonial state, is more readily dominated by partisan political or market imperatives. The reformist vision of the Awolowo-led Action Group—after an apprenticeship with Marxist, liberal, and Fabian socialist principles—subscribed to such a perspective. The Yoruba politicians also exploited the crises in global economic and political relations and workers' anticolonial sentiments to create an association based on indigenous cultural antecedents, which, they argued, gave them the right to pursue economic and political development on both a domestic and international scale. Awolowo, in rejecting colonial reforms, declared that the problem of freedom and welfare could be solved only by careful and well-calculated planning, adding that "welfare can never be achieved under foreign rule."[15]

The impact upon the working class of the relationship between the colonial and local elite has often been subsumed within the emphasis on the intrigues surrounding "modernization" and political party narratives. This condition, described by Peter P. Ekeh as the "academic belittlement of the individual," has had a devastating impact upon the notion of civil society, especially on minority groups, women, and the very young. The void created by a lack of a viable nation-state progressive intellectual and economic traditions that nurture social reform has created an atmosphere in which the diasporic group bears the responsibility of development outside of major towns and cities.[16] International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also borne some responsibility in recommending social reforms. The NGOs, however, often operate from a moral platform that shields their character of being the local face of imperial-guided economic development projects. Like the religious institutions that emerged bearing the fruits of Enlightenment, the campaign by contemporary NGOs for a "progressive world" free of "modern slavery" (for example, child slavery and female circumcision) also deflects issues of economic discontent into the popular epistemological realms of religious and communal rivalries and conflicts. Although they describe themselves as the harbinger of "civil society" operating in the interstices of the "global economy," they are also limited in their usefulness because they concern themselves with the provision of resources for a thin stratum of the population who are thus able to escape the ravages of the neo-liberal economy that affects their countries.

By tracing globalization back to the era of industrial revolution, one could argue that the Yoruba emerged as one of the major components of a "globalized" world order, even if this has traditionally been based on an unequal exchange. Scholars have argued that the first historical event that diminished the worthiness of the unique individual in many parts of Africa

was the slave trade. This was of profound importance in West Africa and, more importantly, in Yorubaland where the corollary intergroup warfare exposed the various polities to Islamic and European influences. In this regard, Peter P. Ekeh argued that after the slave trade, the Fulani Sokoto Jihad—a revolution organized against the excessive freedom the Hausa kings granted their citizenry—emerged as the second historical event characterized by the gradual abrogation of individual needs. The third and most consequential event affecting the individual needs of modern Nigeria's working class was the imposition of formal European colonialism. Thus, the history of modern Yorubaland, and by extension Nigeria, is incomplete without reference to these three events and their impact upon bourgeois relations and reforms. I argue that the enduring link between the political project of a transnational capitalist class that centralized their activities in the nineteenth century's imperial project evolved during the decolonization era to represent today's global economic order. In this regard, the failure of the Nigerian State could be attributed to the legacy of the colonial divide-and-rule policy, which engendered the unequal access to western education and material resources. This condition also helped to restrict suffrage to an electorate of an influential minority. As a result, what is often constituted to be "ethnic" or collective interests was in reality an evolving client-patronage structure fossilized by failures of decolonization reforms. Hence, the examination of British and Yoruba intellectual interaction reveals the state's lack of commitment to the revolutionary social reform, since this reality might have undermined bourgeois capitalist relations in local and global contexts.

Although scholars have also explored the various levels of interaction of "Atlantic ideas" in epistemological and cultural contexts between British and Yoruba bourgeois elites, the most important foundation for this relationship was laid in the idea of the "civilizing mission" that was designed to make colonized populations into disciplined agriculturists or workers and obedient subjects of a bureaucratic state. With this aspect of the imperial project in Africa, analyzing the Anglo-Yoruba relationship opens up a discourse on the social and political consequences of promises made by Europeans to Africans who embraced western ideologies and material goods.

The British-Yoruba Relationship in Historical
and Cultural Context

The Yoruba culture has a wide global reach due not only to the slave trade but also to the exploits of a more recent diaspora in Europe and the Americas, namely the educational and occupational migrations in the

twentieth century. Scholars have argued that the various elements of Yoruba culture do not fit into a neat binary logic or mutually exclusive totalities, especially regarding imported British ideas on progress. In its geopolitical complexity and expanse, the Yoruba worldview, according to Andrew Apter, belies its treatment as a mere ethnographic project in popular literature. Essentialist terms like "tribe" and "chiefdom" are reductive terms that mask evolving patterns of authority, especially through colonial transition.[17] Hence present-day Yoruba culture bears a combination of indigenous oral texts, eastern cultural elements, and legacies of interaction with classical European liberal traditions. There is also a resilient ethnic core in Yorubaland of pre-modern traditions, memories, myths, values, and symbols sustained in elite hegemonic relationships and within popular culture.

Scholars of Yoruba intellectual history have also focused on the antecedents of the relative concepts of civil society and social reforms in Yorubaland. Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka declared that the *Ifa*, the foremost Yoruba corpus of spiritual precepts and secular philosophy, is unequivocal in its support for progressivism. Since *Ifa* represents the dos and don'ts in each community, as well as a locus of intellectual interaction between activists that includes the herbalists or *babalawo*, poets, and artists and the rest of the community, it served as the linchpin of individual and communal goals as it related to social welfare, politics, and the local economy, irrespective of age and class.[18] According to J.D.Y. Peel, the saliency of the *Ifa* corpus, especially after the nineteenth-century colonial contact, lies in its ability to "ride social change" by detaching itself from much of what the Muslims and the Christian called paganism, and to impose itself on the respectful attention of emergent western-educated citizens.[19] Other scholars have also expounded on how Yoruba individuals and groups have created a new culture to intentionally disrupt hegemonic expectations.[20] Wole Soyinka went so far as to declare that if the mainstay of the liberal worldview is the reconciliation of the hitherto conflicting demands of the individual and community, and hence the sovereignty of the people, the latter philosophy is simply "one of the West's own indigenous myths."[21] Regarding Yorubaland, a change was on the horizon, however, as variants of liberal worldview were exported to the communities through colonial missionary activities and imperial political and economic enterprises.

"The Imperialism of the Welfare State": Empire and Social Reform in a British-Yoruba Colonial Context

Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, the west experienced a primary accumulation of capital and established a power base from which it launched a modern industrial and political future. The development of plantation slavery and the trans-Atlantic trade led to a radical realignment of the coastal exchanges between European and Yoruba economic elites. The slave trade also stifled technological development and the production of crafts and goods from local industries.[22] This period not only altered the social dynamics within West African and New World societies, it was responsible for a downturn of African economic, political, and intellectual status.[23] The slave trade also imposed a gap between the theory and practice of the cultural and epistemological dimensions of indigenous communal welfare obligations, as social and political relationships were realigned with emphasis placed on security and military investments. By the last decades of the nineteenth century, there emerged a concentration of capital resulting in the merging of large industrial and financial forms of capital, the growth of corporate monopolies, the territorial division of the world into colonies, the export of capital, and the worldwide extension of the market based on a division of labor between those countries that specialized in the production of manufactured goods and those that specialized in the production of raw materials and commodities.[24]

Many influential Yoruba political and economic elites were also convinced that a new and better imperative for progress lay in access to the coast with the promise of "free trade" and progress. The utopian ideal about the abolition of slavery was to be accompanied by the introduction of an export market of cash crops backed by a new purchasing power to import European manufactured goods. Above all, there was the promise of the unlimited potential of western liberal and progressive ideals in educational and socio-economic advancements. Principles of Enlightenment exported from Europe were laced with notions of equality for all. There was also the European bourgeois concept in which bringing the fruits of Europe's civilization to others who were less fortunate was considered a virtue.[25] The rhetoric of social redemption and the elevation of African communities, it was argued, could occur only if the metropolitan state, assisted by religious, philanthropic, and educational infrastructures was actively encouraged to bring about the social adjustment and integration of emancipated Africans. In essence, the Crown and diverse bodies of religious and pedagogical institutions considered Africa a territory in need of serious social, cultural, and economic reform.[26] The Fowell W. Buxton Niger Expedition, which took place from 1841 to 1842, was geared towards creating a new labor

pool of emancipated and "unemployed" Africans through the help of "the Bible and the plough." A combination of scriptural and secular liberal principles called for the need to help cultivate a new "civilized" African citizen who was honest, sober, industrious, orderly, humble, self-denying, philanthropic, and kind.[27] Buxton saw the return of new converts of about forty to fifty thousand liberated African captives of the slave trade to Yorubaland as a golden opportunity for western values as well as cultural and economic development.[28] Britain also provided colonial grants-in-aid for education and provided minimal subsidy for educational prupoes to the three missionary societies based in Lagos—the Church Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and the Roman Catholic Mission. This, in essence, was the seed of the interplay between the Yoruba bourgeois and an evolving capitalist relationship with the West.

The most important figure in this transition era in Yorubaland, and by extension, the West African region, was Ajayi Crowther, a former captive who later became a missionary with the Church Missionary Service after being rescued on a slave ship. Crowther's career came to embody the promised European Enlightenment and its implications for expansive cultural, religious, and economic projects. Born in Osogun in 1806 and sold into slavery in early 1821, Crowther was rescued by the Royal Navy and taken to London, where he impressed state and mission officials with his intellectual accomplishments. Crowther not only invested intellectual and material resources into metropolitan religious and corporate economic activities, he lobbied European religious and economic bodies to help alleviate the poverty and deplorable health conditions in many parts of West Africa. He also emphasized the connection between the provision of financial assistance for the cultivation of marketable produce and improved social welfare and economic conditions in Africa in correspondence to organizations such as West Africa Company.[29] Other important metropolitan figures included David Livingstone and Henry Venn, who through "native agents" helped spread Christianity to Yoruba towns and villages including Badagry, Ibadan, Shaki, Iseyin, Ijebu region, Okitipupa, Ilesa, Oyo, Ogbomoso, Ilaro, Ekiti region, and Ondo. By 1842, over five hundred Saro-Yoruba had returned to Abeokuta, with about three hundred settling in Lagos.

The nineteenth-century dimension of liberalism revolved around the notion that society strives to ensure that all of its members are equally free to realize their capabilities. The incorporation of Yorubaland into the British Empire brought relative affluence to a segment of proto-bourgeoisie traders and a new corps of western-trained elites. The introduction of the three "R"s—reading, writing, and 'rithmetic—and the establishment of "model farms" geared towards cash-crop production and teaching Africans

"the domestic and social duties of the colored races with respect to European mother country" were sanctioned by the Crown and mission institutions.[30]   There was an overemphasis, however, on hygiene and agricultural education over industrial training, as missions emphasized the need to rid the natives of their fear and superstitions. Other metropolitan influential figures such as Thomas Atwood helped to define what could be described as the "imperialism of the welfare state" when he highlighted the link between social welfare reform in England and British hegemony at home and abroad. Atwood and several other influential lobbyists who saw the connection between the expansion of British welfare reform initiatives and the spread of her international spheres of influence, called for educational reforms. These, they thought, could help expand the market for British goods and full employment at home on one hand, and also help advance the imperial project through the establishment of cash-crop model farms in the colonies on the other.[31]

With the gradual expansion of metropolitan interests in Yorubaland, Crown officials often intervened in local politics by supporting bourgeois elites, potentates, and mission officials who guaranteed the protection of metropolitan economic investments and political interests.[32]   When the British Crown annexed Lagos in 1861, several African businessmen penned editorials in support of an impending era of "free trade." They also sought the protection of metropolitan officials from those considered as less appreciative of the coming progress. Others saw the European presence as the apogee of the liberal democratic tradition and called for the establishment of a new legislative council in Lagos, the colonial administrative capital, to guarantee their political interests. Many Yoruba Christians also provided support for what they considered the impending triumph of laissez-faire economic policies, in which the connections between the introduction of free trade, western education, and civilization attributes would guarantee social and economic development. This new philosophical ideal would become a major part of religious and secular discourse in Yorubaland. Those who had suffered as a result of the wars induced by the slave trade equated the expansion of British spheres of influence with peace and the consolidation of a ready and profitable market for agricultural products throughout Yorubaland. The conservative social reforms consisting mainly of increased hygiene and provision of western medicine also appealed to a cross section of Yoruba elites. In reaction to these expectations, Yoruba with bourgeois aspirations chose to exploit their membership in ethnic and religious associations as platforms for development projects by investing in outdated European ships in readiness for import and export trading activities. There also emerged a "vertical

migration" of the children of Yoruba elites to metropolitan institutions as a means of consolidating bourgeois aspirations.

A small but relatively influential crop of British-trained Yoruba architects, masons, medical doctors, and engineers returned to Yorubaland to assist with new development projects such as the construction of bridges and roads and to help spread the growing popular appeals of Mother England. There was also an increase in the intellectual relationship between British and Yoruba mission officials. This new development was crowned by such achievements as the development of modern orthography for indigenous languages, largely influenced by the need to translate the Bible into indigenous African languages. This evolution of Yoruba cultural iconography from oral to written and the publication of a relatively large quantity of Yoruba literature also helped to consolidated a latent pan-Yoruba ideology.

The new corpus of Yoruba bourgeois elites included James Johnson, an Anglican Minister; Mojola Agbebi of the Native Baptist Church; and J. B. Benjamin of the Breadfruit Church. Other elites included R. B. Blaize, a journalist and founder of the Lagos *Times*, and G. A. Williams, founder of the Lagos *Observer*. Other successful merchants included J. J. Thomas and J. S. Leigh. The field of medicine produced figures such T. N. King, Obadiah Johnson, and Kitoyi Ajasa. The civil service sector produced J. A. Payne and Henry Carr.[33] Sapara Williams was Nigeria's and Yorubaland's first barrister. The most prominent Yoruba surveyor was Herbert Macaulay, the grandson of Ajayi Crowther. Two medical practitioners, Dr. O. Obasa and Dr. J. K. Randle, founded the first distinctly political organization in Lagos, the People's Union, with the stated mission of looking after the welfare of the Lagos community. The organization reached out to metropolitan liberal organizations such as the Federation of Free Churches in England and the Aborigines Protection Society, who combined charitable activities with the promotion of British spheres of influence.

Most of the aforementioned individuals performed an intermediary role in the political economy of informal empire. With the entrenchment of Yorubaland into the formal British colonial administration, the Yoruba elites lacked the numerical and political potential to exercise all the functions of hegemony expected in a metropolitan bourgeoisie. Herbert Macaulay ultimately emerged as a major architect in the transition to modern Yoruba and, by extension, nationalist and anticolonial movement. He laid the foundation of the future political relationship between the western educated bourgeois elites and the traditional ruling class and also provided the lighting rod for the launch of anticolonial development initiatives beyond bourgeois circles into popular and working class sectors

of Yorubaland. A minority of small-scale traders also thrived in their role as middlemen for European merchants between the coast and the Yoruba hinterland. By the late nineteenth century, a concentration and centralization of capital and a growth of corporate monopolies helped convince Britain to establish formal colonial rule in Nigeria. A combination of forces, including lagging economic conditions and the proliferation of pseudo-scientific theories regarding the differences between races, with special emphasis on the supposed inferiority of Africans, also contributed to the racialization of capitalism in this era.[34]   This development prevented the Yoruba bourgeois from fully freeing themselves from pre-modern economic relations, thus leaving them in a stage of proto-bourgeoisie.

This earlier generation of Yoruba "proto-bourgeoisie" emerged as a result of the conjunction of large numbers of freed slaves or their descendants returning to western Nigeria and the limited benefits of the political economy of an informal empire. Trained to be junior partners in the colonial state, this bourgeoisie experienced racism from European secular and religious officials, and their economic and political potential was in fact reduced and deflected by the imposition of a colonial regime. The influence of the "proto-bourgeoisie" was limited by various factors which include the fact that although their numbers ranged in the thousands and they performed an essential intermediary role in the political economy of an informal empire, the group was however not large enough to exercise economic, political, or cultural control vis-à-vis indigenous elements. In addition, when the resources and organizational skills they possessed were measured against those of metropolitan bourgeoisie, the influence of the former group was hardly enough to exercise all the functions of control which the metropolitan bourgeois had by virtue of military and economic power. In spite of these limitations, however, the very process of discrimination and repression of these skilled Africans helped to create the nucleus of a black radical intelligentsia and, more significantly, laid the foundation for modern Nigerian nationalism.

The establishment of a Nigerian nation state by Britain was marked by the incorporation of virtually all of Yoruba civil society into a new administrative structure. The increased influence of monopolistic corporations, the greater potential threat of military retribution, and the co-optation and realignment of the hierarchy and role of traditional rulers all meant that the profits of European expatriate merchants were placed above local politics as it related to social welfare needs. Military reprisals in Ijebuland in 1892 and the threat of meting a similar punishment to Egbaland in the following year made the presence of a new order very clear to Yoruba ruling elites. Above all, the introduction of the policy of indirect rule—a

strategy of colonial administration through local officials—in Yorubaland and southern Nigerian territories represented the extension of a colonial centralization of authority and practice from the Sokoto caliphate-dominated Northern Nigeria.

The 1914 amalgamation of Northern Nigeria, where the Sokoto feudal caliphate helped to entrench the policy of indirect rule with Southern Nigeria, which had a more diverse and more receptive attitude towards progressive liberal reforms, could be characterized as the utmost sacrifice of logic for metropolitan political and economic expediency. According to J. A. Mangan, Frederick Lugard resented the blunt attitude of the western-educated southern Nigerians, although he delighted in the conservative philosophy of the feudal Muslim north. He particularly considered the western-educated Yoruba bourgeois as products of the mission's unsatisfactory educational project. The missions, he continued, were guilty of creating "dangerous notions of democracy, of human equality, among those who should be kept in a position of inferiority."[35] Lugard's attitude, according to Christine Bolt, was part of a global pattern of request for metropolitan rule over inferior peoples often couched in benevolent language and contexts.[36] Lugard's administration was characterized by a major critique of religious liberal education. He described mission-guided educational policies as being too generous and guilty of creating an educated elite critical of European imperialism. Lugard also launched a new developmental policy of "Dual Mandate," which was supposedly mutually beneficial to England and Africa. The mandate declared that the primary object of all schools should be the formation of character and discipline rather than "book learning" or "technical education." Such education, which questions orthodoxy, has no place in primitive setting, he concluded.[37]

Yoruba elites condemned the new order as one that was inimical to the promised gains of intellectual and economic cooperation with the mission and the Crown. They saw in amalgamation the destruction of the judicial system through the inauguration of new provincial courts, the reduction of the embryo parliament to the status of municipal board, the attempt to impose new water rates in the city of Lagos, and the imposition of taxation without representation as subversion of civil society for the benefit of metropolitan monopolist corporate interests. The amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, which was and is still being condemned by elites from both regions, sowed the seeds of the failure of the bourgeois nation-state project of Nigeria. It also undermined close to a century-long relationship between British and Yoruba elites as it effectively placed a nail in the coffin of the Enlightenment era development and social reform. Under the leadership of Frederick Lugard, imperial governance of the

nation-state project laid the foundation for the launch of a new Victorian liberal development school, which survived until the Second World War era.

The erosion of African political and mercantile autonomy visible in the elimination of African participation of trade on the Niger River and in Lagos was also accompanied by racial discrimination in local civil service appointments and promotions. Other Yoruba bourgeois elite maintained their contacts with relatively progressive metropolitan religious and secular officials such as Sir William MacGregor, whose career highlighted the gap between the theory of progressive social reform and the colonial practice of politics in Yorubaland.[38] Another metropolitan voice of concern came from Walter R. S Miller, who accused Britain of having "rigidity of system and closed minds." Miller also questioned the inconsistent logic of indirect rule, emphasizing that the policy had failed in its purpose, resulting in a "dire situation of obstruction, oppression, and gross obscurantism which gave excuses for some few British officials of the *laissez-faire* type to wink at and even endorse a state of evil and feudalism, which, as Englishmen, they should loathe."[39] The Reverend S. G. Pinnock, a champion of liberal reform in Oyo, also described indirect rule as "the revival of harsh methods of government in which the poor were oppressed."[40] In spite of such oppositional rhetoric by select metropolitan elites, they were hardly a match for the expanding force of global economic order spearheaded by political and corporate lobbyists with overwhelmingly superior material and intellectual tools.

Between 1895 and 1903, Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain led the clamor for the development of the empire under a new scheme, which, according to D. George Boyce, was hardly accompanied by practical effort. The launch of the Colonial Development Act in 1929 introduced a new concept of loans required to develop regions with most cases of extreme backwardness and poverty. A new idea of "partnership" was also inaugurated, which subsequently underwent various evolutionary stages; it was given a new practical urgency in the interwar years and then during the Second World War. The 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act also promised more generous grants for "development and welfare" than what was obtained from the 1929 Act. This was subsequently followed in 1945 by a reformed Colonial Development and Welfare Act. All bills, according to Boyce, were in reality an outcome of a combination of altruistic and selfish motives.[41] While metropolitan officials vacillated over Yoruba social welfare reform, overseas expansion of British corporations continued with newer and higher stakes placed on the "imperial estates." Between 1929 and 1936, multinational companies like Unilever had joined a conglomerate of the United African Company with thirty-seven other

companies that controlled fifty-six percent of Nigerian exports of palm oil, cocoa, and peanuts. On the other hand, by 1938, fewer than five percent of Nigerian children attended formal schools, with most coming from the Igbo and Yoruba population. In Southern Nigeria, particularly in Yorubaland, increased agitation for a fairer share of the market went hand in hand with clamor for a higher level of colonial investment in education. Members of the Awolowo-led cultural group, the *Egbe Omo Oduduwa*, emphasized the extent to which the Colonial Office's postwar social and economic reforms alienated Yoruba businessmen and middle-class elites. Inspired by the fact that the region, a major cocoa producer, was the breadbasket of the country, the group launched competitive educational scholarships to complement colonial-funded reform and compete with other aspiring bourgeois from other cultural groups.

Bourgeois Relations and Racialization of the Welfare State

The specter of poverty that resulted from the Second World War engendered an even more pervasive presence of the state—the welfare nation state. Metropolitan acknowledgment of the destabilizing effects of global and local war conditions on colonial markets and local economic initiatives in indigenous societies triggered new interest in administrative reforms. The series of uprisings in major colonial cities, widespread poverty, and political neglect also helped to convince London to introduce larger-scale social, political, and economic reforms. The consensus that achieving economic growth and improvements in the standard of life and human welfare in the form of central management became the animating spirit for an international welfare state, or a great effort to bring a better life to what had been called the underdeveloped or backward areas, but was soon to be known as the "Third World." Britain had fought on a platform of a moral course and the interests of "small peoples," and thus was obliged to find additional money to provide for the welfare of the many millions of people who were under colonial trusteeship. Britain also represented as public opinion its decision to fulfill the third article of the Atlantic Charter, signed by British statesman Winston Churchill and U. S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in August 1941. Although the charter referred to the "rights of all peoples to choose their form of government under which they will live," the not so subtle hint of the racialization of postwar political reform was visible in the subsequent statement of the British statesman that article number three applied only to European countries under German occupation. For British colonial elites, political and economic reforms were necessitated by the desire to rebuild metropolitan trading activities and infrastructures as well as an opportunity to resolve the growing intenxe

nationalist and cultural group competition for control of the state and its shares of the national product, and especially to mount the moral and political pedestal of defining the new and more progressive and goal-oriented reforms.

For the interwar and postwar African elites, the nationalist fervor in the colonies and the spread of communism offered as great an opportunity as did a threat which was acknowledged by both British authorities and the United States. The idea of "development," a major theme of the postwar British Empire, was thus closely linked with Britain's perceived key role in checking the spread of communism throughout the world. Regarding British policies, Boyce argued that, "if the poverty, unemployment and deteriorating living conditions of masses of people were an invitation to communism, then for ideological reasons also it was essential to try to improve the lot of British colonial subjects including those in Africa."[42] The decision to incorporate the colonies into a grand theory of political reforms such as federalism and parliamentary democracy, economic unity under the rubric of "development," and welfare regimes was eventually a self-defeating process hinged on racialized policies from the metropolitan capitals and ethnic politics within the colonies. The above factors influenced the emergence of a new era of British-Yoruba bourgeois relations.

The world wars had also discredited the European powers' claim to a "civilizing mission." Between 1940 and 1950, under the auspices of decolonization reform efforts funded both by private sources and the colonial state, an assembly of social anthropologists participated in numerous advisory committees dedicated to making recommendations on educational and political initiatives. Colonial Office archives reveal that existential questions surrounding unique individual needs were often subjugated as the Development and Welfare Act revolved around the imperatives of the nations' state with minor reference to broad kinship categories. The "Mass Education" and "Education for Citizenship" projects constructed and supervised by London were also largely subsumed within metropolitan goals such as the need to positively influence public opinion, the need to tailor metropolitan initiatives to reflect emergent Cold War politics, and the desire to "manage" the activities of nationalist actors who promised to improve the quality of life of their citizenry even if the definition of citizenship remained vague and resources for such a project were very much uncertain. There was also a class dimension to the financial support provided by metropolitan officials for the expansion of educational projects and facilities in Africa at the university level. These reforms hardly compared to the metropolitan concept of the welfare state.

Sociologist Gosta Esping-Anderson identified three ideal types of "welfare state regimes" as liberal, conservative, and universal. While "liberal" regimes entail minimal intervention in the market with a corollary complex and often largely exclusive social programs, "conservative" regimes maintain traditional status relations by providing different programs for different class and status groups, as visible in Colonial Office-guided decolonization reforms.[43] An influential segment of the Yoruba nationalists, in spite of the fact that this was a bourgeois movement, were influenced by the utopian "universal" regimes promoting equality of status by endowing all citizens with certain similar rights, regardless of social class or occupation. The Awolowo-led Action Group, whose slogan was "life more abundant, freedom for all," placed education and social reform as the major focus of its platform. The group also sponsored bills granting subsidies to farmers, since the largest occupational group in postwar Yorubaland consisted of farmers and agricultural workers. This helped balance the focus of production between cash crops intended for metropolitan industries and food for local consumption, but, above all, the group sought to legitimize the peasant class as a major electoral base in the emerging democratic disposition. The "life more abundant" platform was also guided by two main purposes: (a) to embarrass the colonial government who they claimed had ignored the welfare needs of the masses, and (b) to establish themselves as the party with the greatest mass appeal not only to replace the colonial officials as the new beacon of modernization initiatives, but also to assume the reign of leadership out of all the emergent cultural-based political parties. There was a positive reaction to these programs in Yorubaland, and the legacy of these and other social reforms still endures.

In a well-researched study focused mainly on Southern Nigeria, David B. Abernethy argued that by the 1930s and 1940s the zeal there for education as a means of embracing modernization and progress initiatives was of the highest level in the world in this era. Abernathy concluded, however, that these progressive policies came at the expense of more directly productive investments in agriculture, industry, and transportation, hence its ultimate failure.[44] There is still a crucial lack of critical exploration of the changing dynamics and influences of local and global forces upon the opportunities available to the citizenry in African societies. A more incisive analysis of colonial and nationalist reforms reveals that a premium was placed on holding national competitive elections at the center, with less attention paid to building local democratic structures and practices. In addition, in the western region administered by Yoruba bourgeois, a Royal Instructions Government Clause restricted major political and economic administrative power to the British Colonial Governor. In spite of that fact, that the local intelligentsia held important

portfolios. Although the Yoruba intelligentsia sponsored bills towards radical social reform utilizing state resources through the Production Development Boards, the lack of adequate resources also meant that communities outside direct party patronage and spheres of influence were often neglected.

Although the period between 1950 and 1960 has been described as the golden age of the Yoruba intelligentsia for the success of its education and social welfare reforms, such success came at a great cost: colonial officers refused to release funds which might give one party the advantage of carrying out its social welfare reform initiatives. London also dissuaded the parties from expanding beyond their restrictive geopolitical borders. Above all, however, the nation-state became more identified on the one hand with monopolization and poor production of services, and on the other hand with too much dependence on the central government for capital and direction.

Sociologists John B. Williamson and Fred C. Pampel argued that had the British granted Nigeria its independence at a much earlier point in time, it is possible that the nation would be more developed today and in a better position to provide more generous social reforms, such as social security options for its elderly population. Williamson and Pampel also postulated that it is also possible that earlier independence would have been associated with more internal ethnic conflict rather than more economic growth, with the result that the development of a social security policy might not have been more evolved than it is today.[45] The eventual breakdown of the progressive front in Yoruba bourgeois politics and the conflict over party patronage and political power serve as potential evidence for the latter paradigm. The fact remains, however, that states have pursued various means based on their traditions and history to enhance the prospects of making the future of their citizens more secure. An exploration of British-Yoruba relations reveals that the imperial and decolonization projects stifled this possibility in most parts of Africa.

In his unpublished memoir, former colonial administrator Harold Smith stated that the Colonial Office decolonization reforms were geared toward encouraging collaborators with the colonial regime and those who were prepared to "betray their own people's interests for personal advancement."[46] Smith argued that a major portion of the politicians who made Nigeria notorious for corruption after independence were selected by the British before independence because the former group "need people they could control." This was also manifested in the "chicanery and cynical interference in the electoral process."[47] He also accused the Colonial Office of the act of gerrymandering by "working hand in glove with the North," so that metropolitan powers would continue to rule through the conservative surrogates of the Northern Region. Smith concluded that the thrust of the

British Government's policy was against the Awolowo-led Action Group, which, to the chagrin of colonial officers, sought to extend the politics of social reform to the conservative North. He also accused the British Governor General of Nigeria, Sir James Robertson, of stifling the democratic foundations of a nation-state which, at its inception, had the potential of becoming the fifth-largest democracy in the world.

Conclusion

The historiographical generalizations visible in modern African intellectual and political projects have failed to critically explore critical developments pivotal to the continent's present condition and potential for the future. Colonial and indigenous bourgeois elites reacted to global and local initiatives and manipulated both Western and African events in pursuance of a post-Enlightenment utopian agenda, on the one hand, and protected their economic and political interests, on the other. This stands as a major testimony of the modern African experience. In the decolonization era, selective bourgeois tried to transfer or claim power on the basis of generalized citizenship and inclusive social rights as a means of consolidating influence in the trajectory of the postcolonial state. Most leaders, however, were forced to confront a basic question about whether those European principles of citizenship and the welfare state were applicable to new African nation-states.

Events in modern Nigeria, and by extension a greater segment of the African continent, are characterized by a search for a new political structure and alternative authentic forms of universal rights and democratic process. Some find this in the promotion of ethnic solidarity and security through local development projects. Most state-sponsored development projects are hardly homegrown, however. As a result, both bourgeois actors and the masses are merely caught in the storm of global crusades. Modern African disillusionment with western liberal theories, as visible in Afro-pessimism or anti-neo-liberalist ideals, have also encouraged a new generation of dissidents who claim to have abandoned the teleology of transitory societies and development principles while they still use the emancipatory language of western liberalism, even if it is a subtext to varied indigenous initiatives.

Of greatest importance, however, historians must realize that analyzing contemporary concepts of globalization is more challenging than exploring earlier periods of formal empire. While formal imperialism emphasizes the domination and exploitation by imperial states and multinational corporations, the modern concept of "globalization," in contrast, argues for the interdependence of nations, the shared notions of their economies, the mutuality of their interests, and the shared benefits of their exchanges. The

former imperial countries are also less dependent on the Third World countries with which they trade, since profits, royalties, rents, and interests payments flow upward and outward in asymmetrical fashion under the rigid control of international financial institutions and the support of a few bourgeois elites from the ex-colonial countries.[48] This chapter concludes that "globalization" is a new dimension of "the imperialism of the welfare state" in which the continuation of western redistribution of wealth to its citizens is constructed as antithetical to the growth of the "Third World." By using the British-Yoruba colonial-bourgeois relationship to explore local and global notions of social justice and political and economic democracy, this chapter begins to fulfill the call made by James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer:

> [T]he struggle of the world today is not only between different conceptual, historical or analytical frameworks. It involves living forces. As important as the issue of theoretical clarification is, it is crucial to look at the political actors engaged in the struggles.[49]

It is thus left to civil society comprising voluntary organizations, churches, and trade unions—all sites where people have high concentrations of power—to correct the presumptions of both governments and markets in Africa.

Notes

1. The development framework is a self-legitimizing hegemonic global process; it is largely a Western paradigm for innovation and change, mostly within the former colonies.
2. Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review* 99, 5 (December 1994): 1517. See also Frank Furedi, *The Silent War: Imperialism and the Changing Perception of Race* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1998), 239; and Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).
3. See Gerald Horne, "Who Lost the Cold War? Africans and African Americans," *Diplomatic History: The Journal of the Society of American Foreign Relations* 20, 4 (1996).
4. James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, *Globalization Unmasked: Imperialism in the 21st Century* (Zeb Books, 2001), 14.
5. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Avon Books, 1992).

6.   See Peter Cain and Anthony G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism, Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914* (New York: Longman, 1993).
7.   Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection," 1517. See also Norman Long and Ann Long, *Battlefields of Knowledge: The Interlocking of Theory and Practice in Social Research and Development* (London: Routledge, 1992), 214).
8.   PRO CO 554/313/62295, J. D. Macpherson to H. F. Marshall, Western Nigeria, June 18, 1952.
9.   Exceptions include: Frederick Cooper, "Africa and the World Economy," in *Confronting Historical Paradigms: Peasants, Labor, and the Capitalist World System in Africa and Latin America*, ed. Frederick Cooper, et al., 84–201 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996); Steven Feierman, "African Histories and the Dissolution of World History," in *Africa and the Disciplines: The Contributions of Research in Africa to the Social Sciences and Humanities*, ed. Robert H. Bates, V. Y. Mudimbe, and Jean O'Barr (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).
10. D. George Boyce, *Decolonisation and the British Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 148–49.
11. John Flint, "The Failure of Planned Decolonization in British Africa," *African Affairs: Journal of the Royal African Society* 82, 382 (July 1983): 389–411.
12. John Flint, "Managing Nationalism: The Colonial Office and Nnamdi Azikiwe", Unpublished article, 1999.
13. See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin, 1970). For a critical evaluation of the Fanonian thesis to the Nigerian historical setting, see Olufemi Taiwo, "On the Misadventures of National Consciousness: A Retrospect on Frantz Fanon's 'Gift of Prophecy,'" in *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Lewis R. Gordon, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Renee T. White (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).
14. Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), xix..
15. *Daily Service*, Ibadan, Nigeria, 23 December 1952.
16. See J.D.Y. Peel, "Olaju: A Yoruba Concept of Development," *Journal of Development Studies*, 14, 2 (1978): 139–65; his *Ijesha and Nigerians: The Incorporation of a Yoruba Kingdom, 1890–1970s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Lillian Trager, *Yoruba Hometowns: Community, Identity, and Development in Nigeria* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001).
17. Andrew Apter, *Black Critics and Kings: The Hermeneutics of Power in Yoruba Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.)

18. Wole Soyinka, "Best Idea, Every Dictator's Nightmare," *New York Times*, 18 April 1999. See also Olabiyi Yai, "In Praise of Metonymy: The Concepts of 'Tradition' and 'Creativity' in the Transmission of Yoruba Artistry over Time and Space," *Research in African Literature*, 24, 4 (1993).

19. J.D.Y. Peel, "The Pastor and the Babalawo: The Interaction of Religions in Nineteenth Century Yorubaland," *Africa*, 60, 3 (1990): 338. See also J.D.Y. Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000).

20. See Toyin Falola, O. Oyelaran, M. Okoye, and A. Thompson, eds., *Obafemi Awolowo: The End of an Era?*,. Ile-Ife, Nigeria: Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 1988.; J. Lorand Matory, *Sex and the Empire That Is No More: Gender and the Politics of Metaphor in Oyo Yoruba Religion*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994; Robin Law, "The Heritage of Oduduwa: The Traditional History and Political Propaganda among the Yoruba," *Journal of African History*, 13, 2 (1975): 207–22.

21. Wole Soyinka, *Myth, Literature and the African World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 37–38). See also his "The Past Must Address Its Present," *Black American Literature Forum* 22, 2 (1988).

22. Deji Ogunremi, "Foundations of the Yoruba Economy in the Precolonial Era," in *Culture and Society in Yorubaland* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Rex Charles Publications, 1998), 124.

23. Robert Shenton, *The Development of Capitalism in Northern Nigeria* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 12).

24. James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, *Globalization Unmasked: Imperialism in the 21st Century* (London: Zed Books, 2001), p 13.

25. Robert July, *A History of the African Peoples* (New York: Scribner, 1980) 225. See also Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 151.

26. Leo Spitzer, *Lives In Between: Assimilation and Marginality in Austrian, Brazil, West Africa, 1780–1945*, (New York: Cambridge University Press), 24–25.

27. Church Missionary Society Secretary, *Parliamentary Papers, 1836*, vii (538). See also D. J. East, *Western Africa, Its Conditions, and Christianity, the Means of Its Recovery* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1844), 219–308.

28. Phillip Curtin, *Image of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780–1850* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), 431.

29. Frederick Pedler, *The Lion and the Unicorn in Africa: A History of the Origins of the United Africa Company, 1787–1931* (London: Heinemann, 1974), 115.

30. B. K. Shuttleworth, *Brief and Practical Suggestions on the Mode of Organizing and Conducting Day Schools of Industry, Model Farm Schools, and Normal Schools as Part of a System of Education for the Colored Races of the British Colonies*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1847, 1–5.

31. See Church Missionary Society Secretary, *Parliamentary Papers, 1836*, vii
     (538). See also D. J. East, *Western Africa: Its Conditions, and Christianity, the*
     Means of its Recovery (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1944); and Vincent
     M. Battle and Charles H. Lyons, Eds., *Essays in the History of African*
     Education (New York: Teachers College Press, 1970), 2.
32. Phillip Ehrensaft, "The Political Economy of Informal Empire in Pre-Colonial
     Nigeria, 1807–1884," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 6, 3 (1972): 122.
33. E. A. Ayandele, *The Educated Elite and the Making of the Nigerian Society*
     (Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1974), 72–73.
34. Syed Hussein Alatas, *The Myth of the Lazy Native: A Study of the Image of the*
     Malays, Filipinos and Javanese from the 16th to 20th Century and its Function
     in the Ideology of Colonial Capitalism (London: Frank Cass, 1977) p. 216.
35. J. A. Mangan, "Gentlemen Galore: Imperial Education for Tropical
     Africa—Lugard the Ideologist," *Immigrants and Minorities*, 1, 2 (July 1982):
     149.
36. Christine Bolt, *Victorian Attitudes to Race* (London: Routledge, 1971), 118.
37. Frederick Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Hamden, CT:
     Archon Books, reprint 1965), 431; see also Mangan, "Gentlemen Galore."
38. See R. B. Joyce, *Sir William MacGregor* (London: Oxford University Press,
     1971); I. F. Nicholson, *The Administration of Nigeria, 1900-1960: Men,*
     Methods and Myths (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 68; Olufemi Vaughan,
     Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890–1990s
     (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 25–26; and Toyin
     Falola, "The Yoruba Toll System: Its Operation and Abolition" *Journal of*
     African History. 30 (1989).
39. Walter R. S. Miller, *Have We Failed in Nigeria?* (London: United Society for
     Christian Literature, 1947), 38.
40. Ibid., 114.
41. According to Boyce, partnership summed up the latest twist in official thinking
     about the empire after 1945.   Partnership "was a resonant expression,
     suggesting as it did a certain kind of equality; yet allowing for the superior
     power to define the partnership, the terms on which it rested, and the time
     when—if ever—it might be renegotiated. Boyce, *Decolonisation and the*
     British Empire, 136–49.
42. Ibid., 139.
43. See Gosta Esping-Andersen, *The Three World of Welfare Capitalism* (New
     York: Polity Press, 1990); and his *The Welfare State in Transition: National*
     Adaptations in Global Economies (London: Sage, 1996).
44. David B. Abernethy, *The Political Dilemma of Popular Education: An African*
     Case (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1969), 18.
45. John B. Williamson and Fred C. Pampel, *Old-Age Security in Comparative*
     Perspective (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 214.

46. Smith, "Appointment in Lagos or Sons of Oxford," Unpublished manscript, 1989, 105.
47. Ibid., 105.
48. James Petras and Henry Veltmeyer, *Globalization Unmasked: Imperialism in the 21st Century* (Zeb Books, 2001). 30.
49. Ibid., 31.

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IV

Scholars and Their Work

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18

Stolen Places:
Archaeology and the Politics of Identity
in the Later Prehistory of the Kalahari

James Denbow

Contributions of Archaeology to Historical Constructions in Southern Africa

Archaeological research in Botswana over the past 20 years has made it clear that a complex and diverse mosaic of interactions between foragers and food producers has characterized the prehistory of the Kalahari for at least 1500 years (Denbow 1984; 1986; 1990; Denbow and Wilmsen 1986; 1990; Schrire 1984; Wilmsen 1989). In some areas foragers were incorporated and absorbed within Iron Age political economies. In other areas it has been argued that foragers were "encapsulated" by herding and farming polities, though precisely what is meant by this in social or economic terms is often unclear and, in any case, has likely varied widely from place to place and through time (Bird-David 1990; 1992; 1994; Sadr 1997). The "Kalahari debate" that has grown in part out of these archaeological findings has generated an enormous amount of discussion and debate, with some arguing that, in the Kalahari at least, Iron Age polities had little or no impact on indigenous foraging populations until the fairly recent past (Lee 1979; Solway and Lee 1990; Woodburn 1988). One of the more positive aspects of these debates is that claims to knowledge about agro-pastoral and forager relations, and their changing historical

contexts, can no longer be simply assumed a priori, but must instead be made matters for historical and archaeological investigation before assertions about autonomy, encapsulation, or integration are accepted. As a corollary, archaeological praxis has also had to become more reflexive and more concerned with the ways in which archaeological findings are appropriated to analyses of contemporary conditions and social constructs.

This paper addresses these issues from the context of archaeological excavations at the site of Bosutswe, situated on the eastern fringe of the Kalahari Desert in Botswana. This site was almost continuously occupied from 700 to 1700 CE, making it one of the longest open-air Iron Age sequences in southern Africa. While the site does not extend back to the earliest establishment of agro-pastoral economies in the region, it does straddle the important period when economic responses to this grassland environment led to the emergence of social stratification and political hegemony at the end of the first millennium CE. But these socio-economic developments did not happen in a political vacuum. Instead, they must be set in a context that includes changing relations with indigenous populations and increasing contacts with trade networks that linked the site to more distant regions. Thus, the 4.5 meter deep stratigraphy of Bosutswe attests not to isolated Iron Age developments, but to a long sequence of changing economic and social forces. The excavations thus give us concrete information on past political and economic networks, information that gives us a starting point from which to critique both western and indigenous constructions of history.

The Past As Allegory

Over two decades ago Chinua Achebe (1977, 792) likened western images of Africa to the picture of Dorian Gray—"a carrier on to whom the master unloads his physical and moral deformities so that he may go forward, erect and immaculate." While Achebe directed his criticism at popular and literary conceptions of the continent and its peoples, similar criticisms can also be leveled at more scholarly projections of Western thought onto the African canvas. Anthropological depictions of hunting and gathering societies in Africa during the 1960s and 1970s, for instance, seemed especially prone to allegory. Turnbull's descriptions of the Pygmies of central Africa is a classic case in point. Although there was no archaeological or linguistic evidence that those identified as Pygmies today are the only "true" or "original" inhabitants of the primordial forests of central Africa, he describes them nonetheless as a people who

> have been in the forest for many thousands of years. It is their world, and
> in return for their affection and trust it supplies them with all their needs.
> They do not have to cut the forest down to build plantations. . . . They
> know the secret language that is denied all outsiders and without which
> life in the forest is an impossibility. (1961, 13–14)

For Turnbull it is apparently their relationship to mystic, primal forces,
rather than human, historical ones, that forms the fundamental distinction
between the Mbuti and their non-Pygmy neighbors. Turnbull's historical
allegory becomes racist reductionism, however, when he argues that:

> Most Pygmies have unmistakable features, other than height, that set them
> apart from the Negroes. Their legs are short . . . they are powerful,
> muscular. . . . Another characteristic is the alert expression of the face,
> direct and unafraid, as keen as the body, which is always ready to move
> with speed and agility at a moment's notice.   All these traits are
> uncharacteristic of the Negro tribes that live in the forest around the
> Pygmies.   These tribes are a rather shifty, lazy lot who survived the
> ravages of Tippu Tip's slave-traders by treachery and deceit.   In the
> villages you will sometimes find Pygmies who are like this too, but they
> are scorned by the BaMbuti who have remained in the forest and have
> refused to be settled. (Ibid., 33)

Following a path well-trod before him by Joseph Conrad in *Heart of
Darkness*, Turnbull imbues the forest with a numenistic power to fashion
and transform human character, setting it (and Pygmies) apart from the
effects of more ordinary processes of social action and interaction. Upon
this primordial stage little room is left for discourses on the social
construction of identity, or its transformation through time; instead, simple
pre-formed dichotomies prevail, with the forest as the "true" home of the
Mbuti, while for their Bantu and Sudanic neighbors "it is a place of evil
[because] they are outsiders" (ibid.,13–14). Though in a modern twist to
Conrad's earlier plot, it is now the outside world that corrupts, not the
primal forest.
    Archaeological evidence that "Pygmies have been in the forest for many
thousands of years" is at best equivocal (Bailey et al. 1989). Only a few
sites are known from the forests of central Africa dating to the period prior
to the introduction of food production. At two of these, palynological
studies (Van Noten 1982; Fiedler and Preuss 1985, 181–82; Van Neer and
Lanfranchi 1985) indicate they were occupied during cooler glacial epochs
when the forests shrank and the surrounding countryside was a more open
savanna dissected by swamps and gallery forest. Subsequent phytolith

studies in the Ituri (Mercader et al. 2000, 106) confirm the presence of grasslands there during the last glacial maximum, while "trees and herbs increase greatly during the Holocene, reaching their maximum values in the last 2000 14C yr. B.P." While Mercader argues that forest adaptations are therefore of great antiquity, one must set this into a wider context of settlement in the forest by ceramic using peoples from as early as the mid-second millennium BCE (Wotzka 1995). Even bananas (Musa sp.), a non-indigenous plant that spread from east to west across the tropical forests, have been identified from phytoliths at Nkang in central Cameroon from pits dated to the late first millennium BCE (Mbida-Mindzie 1996). It must have taken some time for this non-indigenous plant to have spread westward from the East Coast, further problematizing beliefs in an earlier stratum of "pure" or "independent" hunter-gatherers in the tropical forest prior to the advent of food production. The archaeological evidence from the tropical forests thus indicates a clear need for more detailed and specific archaeological and historical analyses before grand generalizations about long-term processes of autonomy, symbiosis, or assimilation can be evaluated.

Likewise, studies of desert foragers in Africa have often been set on a stage of ecological and evolutionary mysticism. Consider Laurens Van der Post's first encounter with "pure" or "wild" Bushmen in 1955 when he wrote that:

> one felt curiously close to the secret world into which we had broken, as if clasped in its arms and held close to its warm and deeply breathing bosom. We had made contact! . . . None of us doubted that we had struck a pure Bushman community living their Stone Age life. . . . . I had not expected anything so comely, dignified and orderly . . . our version of history was largely rationalization and justification of our own lack of scruple and excess of greed, and that the models drawn upon by historians and artists must have been the Bushmen nearest them who had already been wrenched out of their own authentic pattern to become debased by insecurity and degraded by helplessness against our well-armed selfishness. (1962, 227, 236–37)

At about the same time as Van der Post, more professional anthropologists were also beginning to write about this "ancient-centred" Kalahari world, bringing with them now-familiar assumptions about the primordial, essentialist nature of Africa and its atavistic effects upon its people (for critiques see Schrire 1984; Wilmsen 1989; Tomaselli 1992; Gordon 1992). The Japanese anthropologist Jiro Tanaka (1974, iii), for instance, found it a "miracle" that one could find people in the Kalahari

Desert "still living in the same fashion as human societies of almost 10,000 years ago." Similarly, Richard Lee (1979, 22, 39) remarks on his attempts to locate groups that "had never been contacted before." When found, they were "[p]rotected by a waterless belt of country on the north, east, and south 50 to 150 km. wide; these two valleys (!Kangwadum and /Xai/xai) have remained hunting and gathering strongholds well into the twentieth century."

It should perhaps come as no surprise that the analytical task in the Kalahari, like that in the Congo, was to examine an ethnographically constructed subset of desert peoples—foragers—as exemplars of an evolutionary stage that had prevailed throughout most of human history. From this perspective there was no discursive process through which communities define themselves in the negotiation of social, ecological, and political space; there was simply physical juxtaposition of ethnically and economically tagged evolutionary stages whose characteristics can be peeled back like an onion to reveal their intrinsic, evolutionarily tagged "cores," which, "despite cultural and geographical diversity . . . represent[s] the basic human adaptation stripped of the accretions and complications brought about by agriculture, urbanization, advanced technology, and national class conflict" (Lee 1979, 2). Solway and Lee (1990,121, emphasis added) state the proposition baldly: "We certainly do not want to minimize the degree of San dependence and subjection to discrimination, but we would suggest that this is best seen as a product of underdevelopment and *not a primordial condition.*"

It is because of the "evolutionary significance" of their "core" features that the Zhu or !Kung have become one of the most familiar images of African peoples to Western audiences. Right along with Australopithecines they have been assigned their (predestined?) place in anthropology texts as archetypal "hunters and gatherers," perpetuating an ahistorical myth of Africa as a refuge for atavism, even though now benignly portrayed. In consequence, popular histories continue to reinforce schizophrenic images of the continent wherein the secrets of nature are held by alert, agile, dignified, and ancient-centered denizens of the genesis-world of hunters and gatherers, while treacherous, deceitful, greedy, insecure, and complicated peoples make up the rest of the continent. Is it any wonder that outside South Africa there are few universities on the continent with Departments of Anthropology—most instead preferring to use the more semantically neutral term "sociology" to describe their human studies?

There is a need to deconstruct such pre-formed Western images of tribalized Africa where pasts are but evolutionary schemata in which actors do not act, but are simply, in the words of Comaroff (1985, 5), "cultural fools doomed to reproduce their world endlessly and mindlessly, without

the contradictions of this world leaving any mark on their awareness until a crisis in the form of 'culture contact' wrenches them into reality". There is widespread agreement that the multi-ethnic pattern of economic and social inter-digitation observed in the Kalahari today has been in existence for at least the past two centuries. It is the effects of this discursive process upon constructions of identity that are in question. With the establishment of colonial hegemony in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, it can be argued that formerly more fluid economic and political identities have been solidified into ranked social strata that lump together marginalized people as undifferentiated "Bushmen" (Denbow, Kiyaga-Mulindwa, and Parsons 1985). As Wilmsen and Vossen observe:

> [C]ontinued tacit acceptance of imposed ethnic terms for current political discourse reaffirms the established status of these terms as the most readily available avenue for collective self-identification and action. . . . [A]s long as social practice continues to be pursued as if ethnicity did hold the key to structures of inequality . . . the protectionism of the dominant and the responses of the dominated alike serve to reproduce an ethnically ordered world. . . . The resultant constructed ethnicities rarely conformed to a people's prior self-identification; for example, all Khoisan languages spoken in the Kalahari region, of which as many as ten are mutually unintelligible, were lumped non-differentially by Setswana under a single term, Sesarwa—the language of Bushmen—while the speakers of these languages became non-differentially labeled Basarwa. In like manner, eponymous Sekgalagadi-speaking Bangologa, Bakgwatheng, Bashaga, Baloongwe, and others living in the dry sandveld were non-differentiated as Bakgalagadi when they were reduced to subordinate status. (1990, 8–11)

Yet despite "contradictions" in the cultural, linguistic, and biological identities of many Kalahari peoples (cf. Chasko et al. 1977), many ethnographers have continued to frame the conditions of their lives within the familiar, essentialist paradigms of "hunter-gatherers" and "food-producers." Not only do such approaches continue the mystification of contradictory cases, their paradigmatic assumptions lead in an a priori fashion to dichotomized research strategies and methodologies. Historical processes whereby "forager" and "herder" identities have been constructed in dialectical relation to one another go unexamined because the analytical units used are separate and essentialist in nature. The results are predictable and flow directly from false presuppositions. While it is no doubt true that even after acquiring livestock Khoisan-speaking peoples in the Kalahari continued to hunt and also to gather wild plant foods, this should not be

taken to imply that the conditions of their lives, and the social and political factors affecting their constructions of identity, have remained static simply because their diets are in some ways similar to those of the past.

One should be critical of projecting contemporary ethnic, economic, and behavioral identities back into the past without at the same time questioning the multiple and complex ways in which these identities have been re-fashioned and transformed by historical forces—not just for centuries as many now accept (Gordon 1992), but for millennia. Kinahan's cautions about the relation between contemporary ethnography and prehistory in the Namibian past apply with equal force to the Kalahari:

> Previously, the remains of human settlement in the Central Namib Desert were assumed to correlate with specific peoples described in the recent ethnography. No systematic attempt was made to verify the ethnography in the archaeological record, for the two were seen as complementary. Now it is apparent that the ethnography has critical limitations, and being based on data collected during the present century after many important changes had occurred, it is of little direct assistance to the archaeologist. . . . Indeed, the nomadic pastoral economy as I have reconstructed it does not admit of ethnic or geographical limits as rigid as those suggested by colonial historians and administrators." (1991, 123–26)

The remainder of this paper will examine archaeological data pertinent to the ways in which identities have been fashioned and transformed in one part of the Kalahari—the eastern Kalahari and the southern Makgadikgadi pans—but the approach and conclusions are of wider applicability. The region to be examined is occupied today by people who formerly spoke, and in some cases still speak, Khoe languages; these people, sometimes referred to as "Black Bushmen" (Cashdan 1986), are divided into many sub-groups. These people live amongst various Bantu-speaking peoples that include mainly Tswana and Kalanga, but also small numbers of Kgalagadi, Yei, and Herero.

Cashdan (1986, 302–3) calls the origins of these Khoe-speakers "something of a mystery" because they do not fit the familiar "hunter-gatherer/Khoisan" and "farmer/Bantu" stereotypes of southern African ethnography. Physically and serogenetically they are closely aligned with neighboring Bantu-speaking peoples (Chasko et al. 1977). In the nineteenth century, however, some also had economies that included herding large numbers of cattle, while farming the seasonal flood plains of the Botletli River, along with fishing, hunting, and gathering:

> [T]he river Zouga was often spoken of by the same name as the Lake [Ngami], vis Noka ea Batletle [river of the Batletli or Dete]. . . . A village of Bakurutswe lay on the opposite bank; these live among the Batletle, a tribe having a click in their language, and who were found by Sebituane [ca. 1829] to possess large herds of the great horned cattle. They seem allied to the Hottentot family. (Livingstone (1858, 72–73)

The condition that Cashdan thinks of as a "mystery," (but which was unremarkable to Livingstone) is that while Botletli "Black Bushmen" economies are based upon ownership of large herds of cattle, all these peoples are descendents of speakers of Khoe rather than Bantu languages as their mother tongue. While some people, such as the Deti, continue to identify themselves using specific ethnic affiliations, most other Khoi speakers today self-identify using more generic and imposed terms such as "Basarwa." Many of the indigenous languages of this region are either extinct or on the verge of extinction, with most Basarwa now at least bilingual in Setswana, and some tri-lingual in Sikalanga or Otjiherero as well.

Archaeological Praxis

As Kinahan notes above, Africanist archaeologists have often based their interpretations of the African past on tribalized images that mirror sometimes rigid and apartheid-like ethnographic depictions of cultures in the region. The makers of microlithic stone tools and hunters of wild animals, for instance, are de facto assigned to the Late Stone Age (LSA) and classified as ancestral "Khoisan," while makers of pottery, iron tools, and herders of cattle are placed within various subdivisions of the Iron Age and are thus, by definition, Bantu. Even the academic training of archaeologists follows these same lines, with students "specializing" in the Stone Age or the Iron Age, often with little overlap in methodologies or readings. Yet as Leonard Thompson points out:

> Those terms [Stone Age and Iron Age] are illogical, ahistorical, and inaccurate: illogical because they confuse chronological phenomena with cultural phenomena, ahistorical because their ages do not correspond with the historian's chronology, and inaccurate because they imply that, for example, every member of an Iron Age community used iron tools and weapons. (1990, 5)

Ruins and other prehistoric sites cannot be simply read as symbolically encoded ethnic "markers"—indexical road signs from the past that unerringly signal continuity with traditions in the present. When the

ethnographic studies of Makgadikgadi Khoe were carried out, for instance, almost nothing was known about the prehistory of the region beyond a few isolated finds.   Indeed, only one "Iron Age" site—a stone-walled enclosure—had been recorded in the Makgadikgadi prior to the mid-1980s (Ellenberger 1971). Predictably this site, situated on the western shore of Sowa salt pan, sparked the imagination of the South African press, where it was regularly equated with Farini's Lost City of the Kalahari. The noted South African novelist Wilbur Smith (1978:152) even spent an evening on the island imagining "the race of foreigners—some say the Phoenicians—who built these sites, enslaved the local tribes, mined the gold and then disappeared mysteriously." As other less fanciful travelers began to visit this ruin in greater numbers, the track, once difficult-to-find, became a many-laned highway. These travelers recorded the name of the island as Kubu, a Kalanga name meaning a large rock. At the same time another name was recorded for the island, Ga'nnyo, in the Sowa Khoe language. This name never gained currency, however, possibly because it was more difficult for both Europeans and Tswana to pronounce, but also possibly because the Kalanga name was thought to be historically more appropriate to a place with stone ruins—Khoe languages being associated in the public mind with hunting and gathering rather than stone masonry. Thus Kubu became the term by which the site was known outside the local region, and it was this name that the National Museum of Botswana printed on a tourist signboard erected there in 1990.

It was only a short time afterward, in the summer of 1993, that the full significance of the politics of contemporary identities, and the effects of static assumptions about their construction, were forcefully brought home to me.   It happened in a simple enough fashion. When I stopped at a Denessana Khoe village on the western side of Sowa Pan to inquire about directions to a track leading to the Botletli River, I began a conversation with an old man who emerged from his compound to exchange greetings and to find out where we had come from and where we were going. During the course of our conversation, it came out that I had once worked for the National Museum in Gaborone and that I was now on my way back there after a short visit to the ruins at Kubu. The formerly soft-spoken man suddenly became agitated and shouted, "You have stolen our place!"

Confused, I asked , "What do you mean?"

"Ga'nnyo," he replied. "Its name is Ga'nnyo but you have put up a sign there calling it Kubu. It is our place. We still go there to pray and to make rain. And now you have stolen it away and called it Kubu."

By choosing a name for the site and writing it on a sign board, discourses on social identity had become fixed, at least in the mind of my informant, in ways more permanent and more threatening than speech. I

then began to realize more fully how artifacts, and the sites that contain them, are enmeshed in multiple planes of ongoing discourse through which their meanings are constructed and renegotiated in an ongoing hermeneutic process. As Geertz (1973: 17) points out, "artifacts . . . draw their meaning from the role they play."

So to whom should one ascribe the building of the ancient enclosure at Ga'nnyo? There is no point in deconstructing the "Phoenician hypothesis" so popular in the South African press; it is clearly a throwback to the racist days when even some rock paintings in southern Africa were described as "white ladies" and offered as evidence for a civilizing foreign source to whom the construction of stone settlements such as Great Zimbabwe was attributed. More detailed archaeological surveys carried out in recent years allow us to begin to contextualize the ruin at Ga'nnyo, and to summarize the historical trajectories of the Makgadikgadi peoples to which it relates (Denbow and Campbell 1980; Denbow 1984, 1985a, b; Main 1996; Campbell 1987, 1988; Van Waarden 1991; Huffman 1994; Samuel 1999). It is to these data that I now turn.

Zimbabwe Ruins of the Makgadikgadi

The site of Ga'nnyo is surrounded on three sides by white salt flats that extend to the horizon; the forth side abuts a narrow sand spit that runs north and south, separating the salt pan of Sowa from the even larger saline deposits of Ntwetwe Pan 15 km. west. Near the summit of the hill, beach gravels attest to the existence of a paleo-lake between 26,000 and 10,000 years ago. During a later epoch, dated between 2500 and 2000 years ago, the beach was at a lower level, leaving most of the rocky outcrop exposed as an island (Thomas and Shaw 1991,176).

Fragments of pottery, stone flakes, ostrich eggshell, and river mussel shell beads can be found at the north end of the island. The pottery is decorated in the style of the Leopard's Kopje Tradition best known from southwestern Zimbabwe, where it dates between approximately AD 900 and 1200. A few blue glass beads found during surface reconnaissances attest that luxury items from the Indian Ocean trade were acquired almost a millennium ago by people living in this now-isolated place. On the southern shore of the island a low stone wall partially encircles a small outcrop of granite boulders. This C-shaped enclosure is over 100 meters wide, with collapsed entrances on the east and north. Near the east entrance a small, square loophole penetrates the wall at ground level; remnants of 24 other loopholes are spaced around the remainder of the ruin (Campbell 1991; Denbow 1999a). North of the stone wall are the remains of 344 circular

piles of stone or cairns, most around two meters in diameter and 75 cm. high. Their function is unknown.

No diagnostic Zimbabwe artifacts have been recovered from the ruins, or from any other location at Ga'nnyo; the only identifiable materials are the Leopard's Kopje ceramics and blue glass trade beads from the north end of the island. There is thus some uncertainty about the cultural period to which the ruin belongs. Three other sites on the eastern and southern fringes of Sowa Pan, however, leave no doubt that Zimbabwe hegemony extended into this area six hundred years ago.

Another site, Tora Nju, is situated on the banks of the Mosetse River approximately 5 km. back from the edge of Sowa Pan (Denbow 1985a,b). Details of its construction and shape are consistent with ruins belonging to the Zimbabwe state, many of which can be found 150 km. east in the vicinity of Sabina and Francistown (Van Waarden 1991). Rolled rim Zimbabwe jars, some burnished with graphite, were recovered. Other artifacts include 27 glass beads from the Indian Ocean trade, a cowry shell, copper and iron beads and bangles, and a soapstone pendant. While these finds are consistent with an archaeological attribution of the site to the Zimbabwe state, both Bantu and Khoe oral traditions from the region are consistent in attributing the ruin to the Sowa Khoe, Cashdan's "Black Bushmen." The name itself, Tora Nju, is Khoe and translates roughly as "house of god." It would be easy to downplay the significance of such traditions were it not for the 2000 lithic remains, including over 200 cores indicative of lithic manufacture as well as use, that were recovered from the test excavations (Weedman 1992).

A second Zimbabwe-style ruin, Tlapana, has been located approximately 50 km. south of Tora Nju on a low hill overlooking the southwestern corner of Sowa Pan (Main 1996). The stone walling encloses a small area approximately 100 square meters in extent. An ashy midden was found eighty meters west of the walling. The midden contained rolled-rim pottery like that recovered from Tora Nju. A third Zimbabwe ruin, lies outside the present village of Mosu, 40 km. west of Tlapana. This site is situated on top of a low hill approximately three km. back from the edge of the salt pan where one has a commanding view to Ga'nnyo 50 km. north. The very well-preserved walls at Mosu enclose an area almost identical to that at Tlapana and at Tora Nju.

The presence of three (four if one includes Ga'nnyo) Zimbabwe stone-walled settlements around the margins of Sowa Pan provides incontrovertible evidence that Zimbabwe hegemony extended into the heart of the Makgadikgadi area 600 years ago. Within the Zimbabwe state, the construction of stone walling was reserved for elite homesteads; people of lesser rank generally had no walling at all around their homes (Huffman

1986). While the amount of walling found at the Makgadikgadi sites would not place them at the highest political tiers of the Zimbabwe state, the people who occupied them undoubtedly exerted considerable economic, political, and social influence within their local areas. The even spacing of these ruins around the eastern and southern end of Sowa Pan suggests that no parts of the present Sowa Khoe region were isolated from the effects of Zimbabwe hegemony. Moreover, if the 50-km. spacing gives an approximate indication of the size of the territories they controlled, then the distribution of ruins suggests that more will be discovered in the presently blank areas lying between Ga'nnyo and Nata.

Earlier Agro-Pastoralists of the Makgadikgadi

Ceramics from several Sowa Pan sites push Iron Age occupation of the region back to the late first millennium CE. Recent reconnaissances in the Mosu area, for instance, have discovered 68 sites—all of them occupied during the period from 800 to 1300 CE, but only 3 that appear to include lithic or Late Stone Age materials based on surface finds (Main 1996; Samuel 1999). Limited excavations carried out at three of these sites, Mosu I, Mosu II, and Kaishe, indicate all were occupied during the tenth century, with Mosu II continuing to be occupied until approximately 1400 CE (Reid and Segobye, in press). Concrete evidence for procurement and trade in luxury items was found at Mosu I in the form of a cache of carved ivory bangles (Reid and Segobye 2000). All these sites have also produced glass beads undoubtedly obtained through exchange with communities such as Bosutswe to the east. Economic and trade ties between the Makgadikgadi and adjacent regions also are likely to have included more perishable items such as salt—a commodity widely valued and traded in prehistoric Africa. While salt is a historically documented trade item produced for exchange across the present Zimbabwe border by Khoe peoples in the Nata area (Hitchcock 1978; Matshetshe 1998), prehistoric evidence for salt trade is largely negative and circumstantial. Two prehistoric sites in Botswana have so far produced evidence for salt manufacture in the form of perforated ceramic salt strainers—the seventh- to tenth-century sites of Divuyu, in the Tsodilo Hills, and Matlapaneng, on the Okavango Delta, both in Ngamiland (Denbow 1999a). After this date, at least at Tsodilo, no strainers were recovered, suggesting that salt was now obtained through trade rather than being locally manufactured. Finds of shale, ostrich eggshell, achatina shell, and mussel shell beads from nearly all sites in the region indicate that luxury items of local manufacture were also widely traded during this period.

The archaeological record in the Makgadikgadi thus clearly indicates that the social, political, and economic contexts within which contemporary identities were fashioned were too complex to be subsumed under models that simply juxtapose "Khoe" hunters and "Bantu" herders prior to the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries.   Rather than imagining social and cultural identities as categorically fixed properties, one might better envision them as coalescences around, to use Giddens' (1984) term, 'deep-level memory traces' of African heritage which become enriched by new experiences, invested with new symbolic meanings, and attached to new social and status differences through time.   What are not clear are the precise forms these dialectics took in different regions and how relations of production and exchange may have been transformed through time.   Such dialectics of power need to be more specifically contextualized, however, if the historical trajectories of contemporary peoples of the Kalahari are to be better understood.   The site of Bosutswe, situated approximately 135 km. southeast of Ga'nnyo on the Makgadikgadi pans, is one site where more than a millennium of changing relations of production and exchange can be examined.

Agro-Pastoral Transformations at Bosutswe

The Makgadikgadi sites discussed above are contemporaneous with hundreds of sites in eastern Botswana belonging to the Toutswe and Leopard's Kopje traditions (Denbow 1982; 1986; 1990; 1999a). Economic and cultural links between the Sowa Pan sites and the political economy of eastern Botswana can be made through the site of Bosutswe, a large settlement that was almost continuously occupied from the seventh to the eighteenth centuries. The site thus has one of longest Iron Age sequences in southern Africa. Bosutswe, which means "place that must not be pointed at"—a reference to the spiritual forces associated with the site—consists of a midden approximately 40,000 square meters in area that completely covers the top of a low hill. When visited in 1990 (Denbow and Wilmsen, in preparation), it was found that members of a schismatic Christian Church from Serowe, 70 km. away, regularly visited the site during evenings of the full moon because of its spiritual associations.

Almost two hundred stone features were mapped on the surface of Bosutswe (Map 18.1). These include 8 semi-circular stone walls associated with the last, as yet undated, occupation of the site. Two other parallel, straight lengths of walling occur on the northwest edge of the site where a slight swale coincides with a break in the cliff edge, providing access to the hilltop for cattle. Almost all of the remaining stone features are circular grain bin foundations.

MAP 18.1
Bosutswe

BOSUTSWE

⬭ vitrified dung
ᕀ grain bin foundation
Ɔ stone wall
⬚ stone feature

0   20
└─────┘
meters

MN ⬅─────

cliff edge
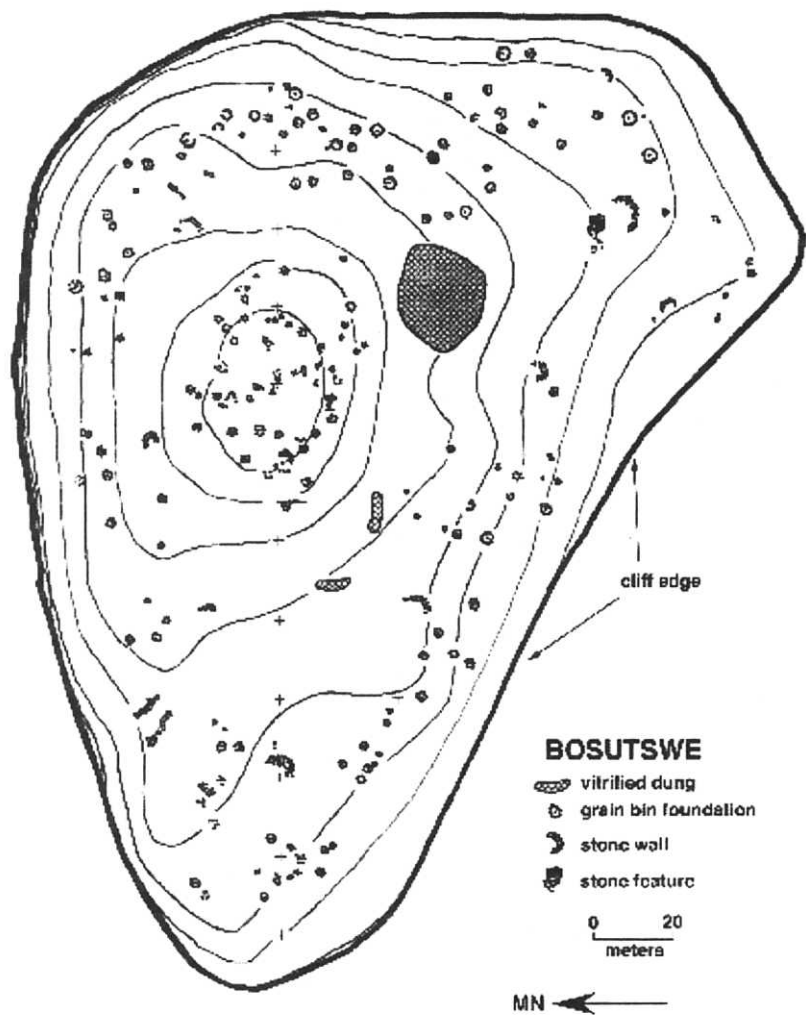
The test squares excavated at Bosutswe ranged in depth from 1.2 meters below surface in the units placed near the edge of the hilltop, to over 4 meters at the deepest part of the site at the central point of the hill. The excavations revealed that the site had been occupied, with some minor breaks, for over a thousand years. The earliest remains and radiocarbon dates came from the eastern end of the hill, where Taukome/Zhizo deposits are dated to the seventh century CE.

TABLE 18.1
Bosutswe Excavations

Area	Unit	Depth	BP Date	S.H. Calibrated Range	Lab No.	Period
Makgolo	19w.0	40-50	520±60	1414-1456	T6988	
Makgolo	20w.0	50-60	1020±70	1002-1163	T6993	Map/Zim
Makgolo	19w.0	60-70	980±80	1015-1204	T6996	Map/Zim
Makgolo	19w.1s	170-180	850±70	1182-1280	T6997	Toutswe
Makgolo	20w.0	280-290	1230±60	779-951	T6997	Early Toutswe
Eastern	60e.29s	30-40	1370±60	656-769	T6994	Early Toutswe
Eastern	59e.29s	50-60	1070±60	980-1033	T6995	Toutswe
Eastern	59e.29s	80-90	1400±60	644-696	T6991	Early Toutswe
Eastern	59e.28s	110-120	1070±60	980-1033	T6985	Toutswe
West	100w	120-130	1200±60	798-974	T6992	Toutswe
Maratsa	1e.6s	50-60	680±70	1288-1405	T6983	Map/Zim
Maratsa	1e.6s	110-120	900±70	1150-1259	T6981	Map
Maratsa	1e.5s	180-190	590±70	1317-1434	T6967	
Maratsa	1e.5s	380-390	1170±80	824-1002	T6982	Toutswe

In the center of the hill, these early levels are overlaid by almost 2 meters of Toutswe midden and dung deposits dating between the ninth and twelfth centuries. Above this lies 1.5 meters of Mapungubwe-age deposit dating from the late twelfth to the early fourteenth centuries. A few Moloko shards recovered from these levels indicate contact with the Limpopo valley during this period (Figure 18.1: B34b, B15c). The Mapungubwe-age strata are followed by Zimbabwe-age levels[1] (and perhaps a minor Khami level as well) where undecorated ceramics with rolled-over rims predominate. Few materials can be definitely associated with the small, semi-circular stone

walls or dikgotla on the surface, but fragments of polychrome pottery (Figure 18.1: B02a, B22b) suggest seventh to eighteenth century dates. Excavations at the nearby sites of Mmadipudi and Lentswe uncovered Zhizo and Toutswe components, but no later materials.

FIGURE 18.1
Bosutswe Remains
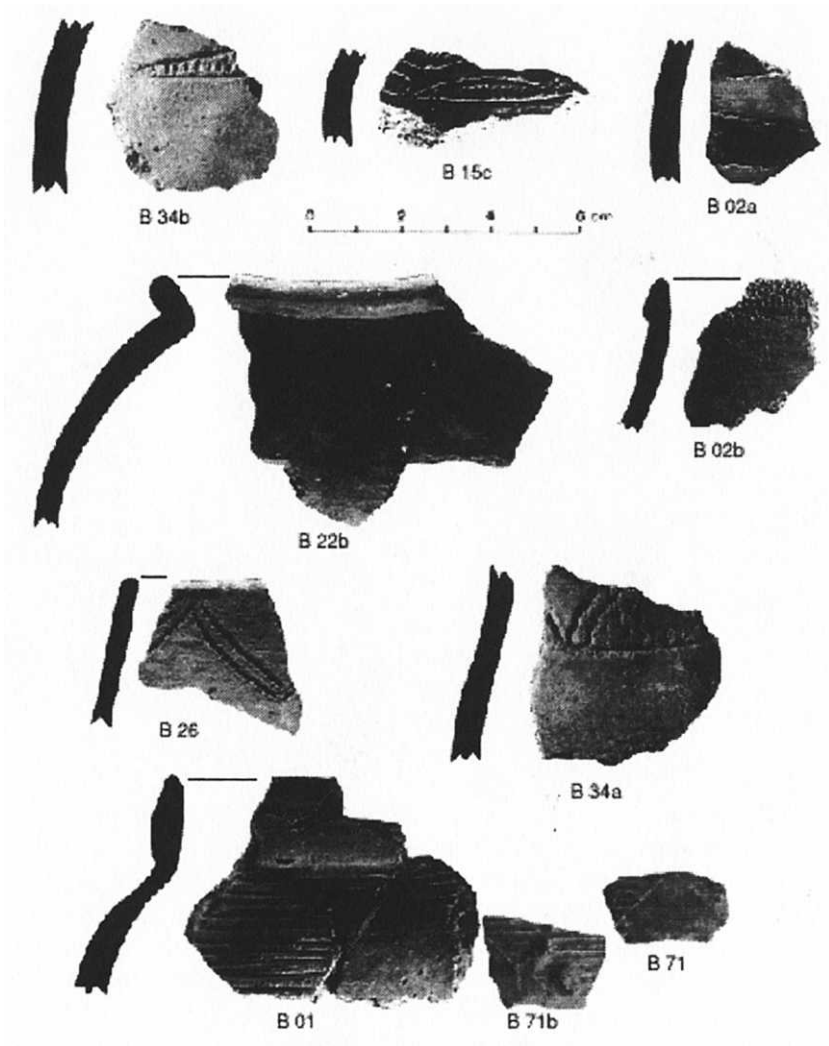
The faunal remains from Bosutswe (Plug 1996) indicate that dependence upon domesticated animals grew gradually from approximately 36% of the faunal remains during the Zhizo/Taukome period to almost 70% of the faunal remains in the Zimbabwe and later periods.

GRAPH 18.1
Bosutswe Domesticated Animals
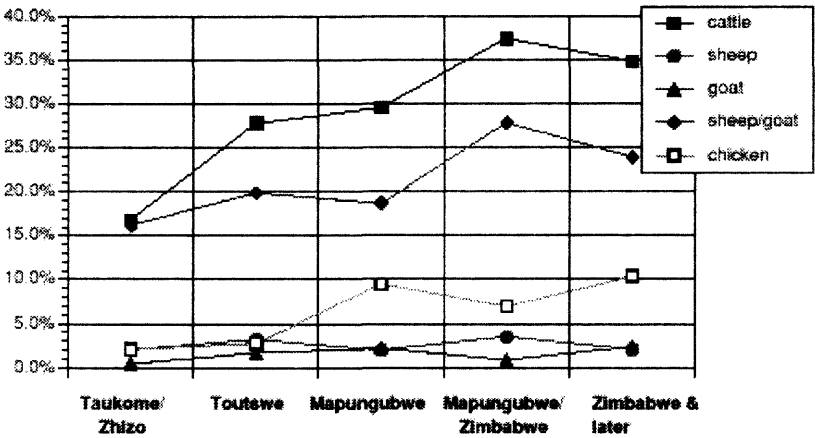
Even chickens, an import from the Indian Ocean trade, increase in numbers through the occupation of the site. What makes this pattern of increasing reliance upon domesticated animals interesting is that the evidence for the corralling of livestock at Bosutswe changed dramatically during the later Mapungubwe and Zimbabwe phases. The extensive vitrified and unburned dung deposits found in the lower levels of the site are associated exclusively with the Toutswe component, indicating that significant numbers of domesticated animals were corralled there. No dung deposits are associated with the overlying levels, however, even though the faunal remains indicate the inhabitants relied to an even greater extent on their herds for meat. Nor are Mapungubwe- or Zimbabwe-age dung deposits found on the nearby hilltops. This indicates that the regional structure of the livestock sector changed during the later phases of occupation, when the site became drawn into the political dominion of Mapungubwe and, later, Great Zimbabwe.

While local changes in the ceramics at Bosutswe reflect these changing alliances and political relations, these wares also maintain enough distinctive features to suggest that power and hegemony were not completely imposed from the center, but allowed room for negotiation, at least on the margins of these polities. Paralleling the changes that occurred

at Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe (Huffman 1986), domestic herds at Bosutswe were shifted away from the hilltop at this time to unknown, but distant, locations. This could be an indication that overgrazing or drying conditions had forced herds to be spread out to more distant locations, thereby spreading the risk of losses. But it is also possible that changes in the structure of herd ownership and care were also being instituted during this period.

Hunted and gathered game makes up the remainder of the faunal remains, though the frequency of different species varies through time. Remains of small and medium sized game animals exhibit an inverse relationship to domesticated stock, declining in number through time (Graphs 18.2 and 18.3). Hunted game of various sizes makes up a much larger segment of the diet during the earlier phases, though it continues to be an important contribution to the diet throughout the occupation. Remains of large game, on the other hand, remain fairly consistent, though elephant remains in the form of ivory fragments peak during the Mapungubwe and Zimbabwe phases (Graph 18.4).

GRAPH 18.2
Small Hunted Game
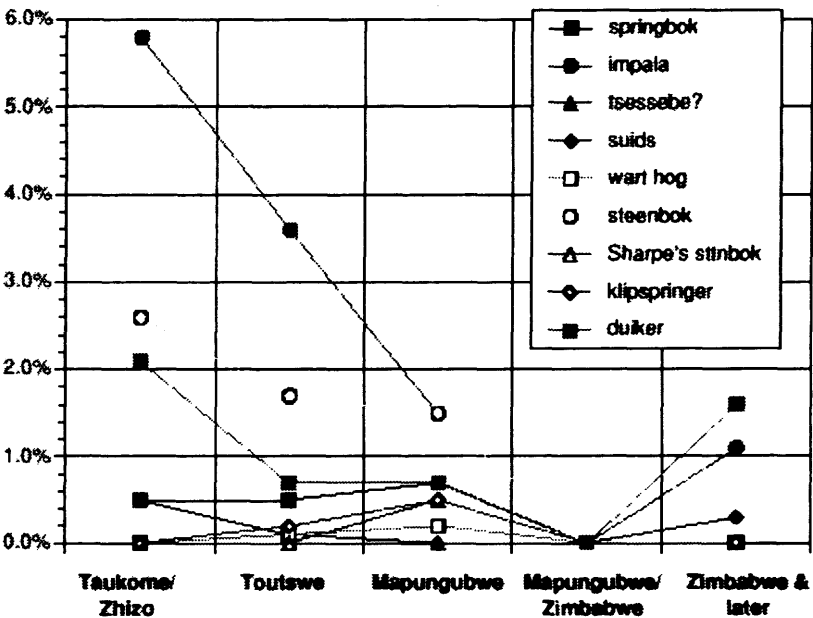
GRAPH 18.3
Medium Sized Hunted Game
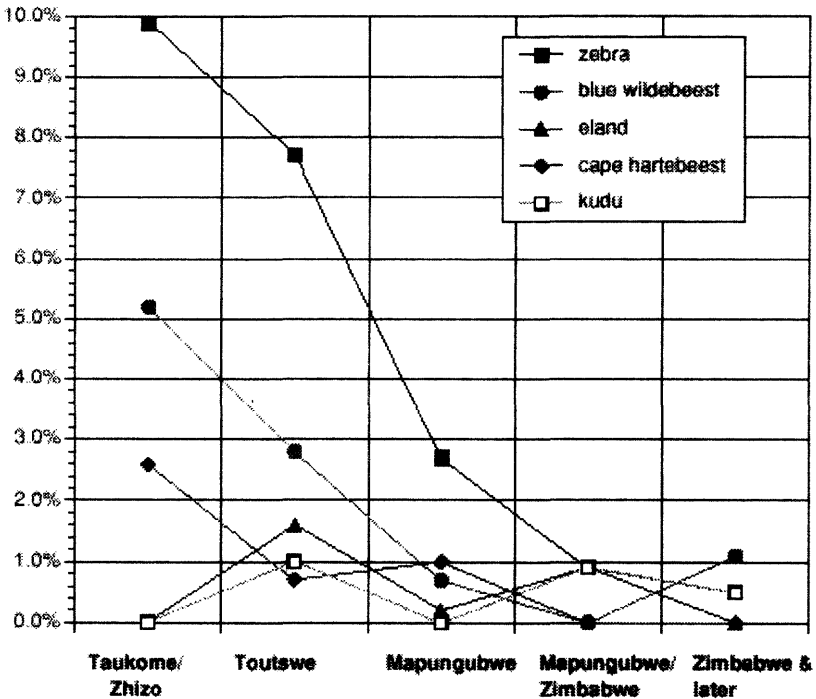
This could be related to increased hunting of these animals to supply a luxury trade. Remains of a bag containing several ivory bracelets, perhaps packaged for trade, suggest some of this ivory may have come from hunters in the Makgadigkgadi (Reed and Segobye 2000). Inter-regional trade in game meat is also indicated, especially during the earlier Zhizo and Toutswe phases, as remains of riverine and woodland species that included water-restricted animals such as lechwe, sitatunga, and hippo were recovered from the lower levels of Bosutswe in small numbers. The most likely source for these animals may be the southern Makgadikgadi pans regions discussed above where newly discovered agro-pastoral settlements have now been dated to the end of the first millennium CE (Main 1996; Reed and Segobye, in press).

GRAPH 18.4
Large Hunted Game
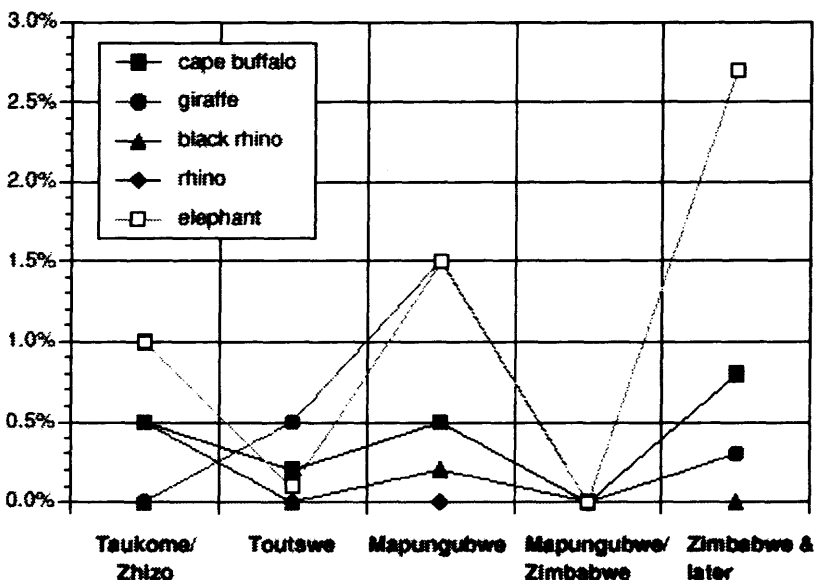
Additional evidence for trans-regional trade was found in the ceramics at Bosutswe. In the lower levels of units on the western end of the hilltop (100W) the remains of at least two ochre slipped, charcoal-tempered, carinated bowls (Denbow 1990; Denbow and Wilmsen 1986; Denbow and Wilmsen in preparation) were recovered in association with a calibrated radiocarbon date of 800–975 CE (Figure 18.1: B01, B71, B71b). This makes these levels contemporary with the Toutswe/Leopard's Kopje site of Kaitshe in the Makgadikgadi (Reed and Segobye, in press), and with the Iron Age sites of Matlapaneng and Nqoma in Ngamiland where identical ceramics are prolific (Denbow and Wilmsen 1986; Denbow 1990, 1999a). It is not known how these Ngamiland ceramics came to be at Bosutswe, or how their makers participated in the social and economic networks that emerged there.

An association of the site's inhabitants with ritual power and symbolism is suggested by the find of over 30 teeth from spotted hyena and a leopard on the floor of a Mapungubwe-age structure uncovered between 110 and 120 cm. below surface at the center of the hill. These animals are widely associated with ritual activities in southern Africa, and it is very likely a ritual practitioner used the structure (Plug 1987). This conclusion is

supported by the discovery of a cache of over a hundred white agate amygdules and tabular chert chunks from the same hut floor. The association of white colors, pebbles, and other objects with liminal states and the ancestral world is so widespread in central and southern Africa that it is likely that similar symbolic associations influenced the valoration of the white agate and chert cached at Bosutswe (Denbow 1999b; Janzen 1982; McGaffey 1986). Other caches, some containing iron bloom, were observed eroding from the surface in at least three other locations on the hilltop.

Our investigations show that Bosutswe lies astride an unusual geological exposure of amygdaloidal basalt in the cylindrical cavities of which white, laminar agates were formed; these appear to be the sources of the nodules recovered. At Lentswe, across a narrow arroyo from Bosutswe, these basalts are overlain by silcretes containing nodules of tabular chert. Chert is a scarce resource in the sandveld, so the outcrops at Bosutswe would have been an attraction for stone-using peoples, though details of this connection are presently uncertain. The excavations uncovered more than 5,000 fragments of chert; but no formal tools such as points, segments, or scrapers were recovered, and most of the cores were not reduced in a systematic fashion to produce blades or tools. So it would appear that the chert was not mined for tool manufacture at Bosutswe, but was, instead, collected and minimally shaped in order to achieve a specific size, perhaps to standardize its exchange value (Weedman 1992, 42–44). At least some of the chert was then cached at Bosutswe along with the locally collected agate amygdules.

The caches observed during the excavation and eroding from the surface suggest that the chert was collected not for local use, but to establish or maintain relations with stone-using peoples in the region; the white agates and hyena canines from the same hut floor suggest that control over ritual resources was a compliment of these relations. As Vansina 1990, 97) summarizes this connection:

> [L]eadership in the whole area assumed that big men were successful because they had extraordinary supernatural power, identical with and often superior to those of witches. A leader was always a focus of envy. A battery of charms helped him to repel the attacks of witches, and his own witchcraft killed competitors or subjects. His success was attributed to the favor of supernatural agencies.

All the other remains of spotted hyena were recovered from the same part of the site, and their absence from other areas argues for spatial continuity of ritual or spiritual activity over time. The probability that the occupants of the central part of the site also participated in other regional networks of

exchange is suggested by the find of two bronze beads from a level just above the "hyena" floor; the majority of finds of other bronze artifacts come from the overlying levels in these same units.

The sixteenth century dates for the Rooiberg tin mine in South Africa, so far the only known source for this necessary component of bronze manufacture, are later than those for the Bosutswe bronze (Grant 1999; Kusel 1974; Oxland and White 1974). There is no reason to suspect, however, that earlier dates for tin mining will not be found, given that bronze artifacts have been recovered from earlier contexts at Great Zimbabwe (Bent 1896; Caton-Thomson 1931; Huffman 1996), as well as later at Khami ruins (Robinson 1959). These artifacts (two varieties of ceremonial spear and one hoe) come from contexts (e.g., the western enclosure at Zimbabwe and a "buried structure" at Khami) that suggest they functioned as symbols of power and authority. If the cultural association with the Mapungubwe levels at Bosutswe is confirmed, it would make the site one of the earliest to contain evidence of bronze in southern Africa. An unworked bronze nugget or prill and a composite bronze and iron helix bangle come from the floor of a structure at a higher level at the site where characteristic rolled-rim ceramics indicate a Zimbabwe, rather than Mapungubwe, affiliation. This is supported by an early fourteenth century calibrated radiocarbon date (1288–1405 CE; Tx6983) for this level. While the bronze beads and other artifacts could have been traded to the site as finished objects, the find of an unworked prill suggests that secondary bronze working may also have taken place, perhaps using imported materials.

A gold helix bangle fragment was also recovered from this upper level. AARL fingerprinting indicates the gold it was manufactured from comes from a source different from those used for gold materials from Mapungubwe and Thulamela in South Africa (Grigorova et al. 1998). Gold artifacts were well-known luxury items controlled by the elite, but their occurrence on archaeological sites in southern Africa is not particularly uncommon. Bronze, on the other hand, is so far an extremely rare commodity in Iron Age contexts. One must remain cautious, however, because early bronze is not easy to separate visually from copper. As a result, it is possible that bronze has been overlooked at many sites, and when more detailed metallurgical examinations are carried out, it will be found to be far more prevalent than was once thought. That being said, no bronze was found in our excavations at Nqoma or Divuyu in Ngamiland, despite the abundance of copper artifacts at these sites (Miller 1996). This leaves open the question of whether tin-alloy technology was an indigenous innovation in southern Africa, or whether it could have been introduced from the East Coast. The late development of gold mining in the region

may similarly point to it as an introduced technology. In any case, the bronze artifacts recovered at Bosutswe reinforces the proposition that the elite who lived there acquired high status material goods that would link them symbolically with other important centers of trade and political power in southern Africa. At the same time, the absence of elite Zimbabwe stone walling, apart from the two short, parallel walls that may or may not be associated with Zimbabwe material, suggests that the conditions of power, and the ways that it was indexed, were different. Internal shifts in the structure of the herding segment of the economy coincide with these cultural shifts. This poses the question of who tended the growing herds at Bosutswe during its later phases of occupation, where were they kept, and what goods, services, or other support were provided in return for their care. The caches of chert, agate, and ritual items recovered from the site suggest that interaction with surrounding stone-using populations may provide part of the answer. What is not clear without further excavation is the precise nature of these relations, or how they changed over the long occupation of the site.

Conclusions

Over the past decade investigations into the later prehistory of the Kalahari have advanced to the point where archaeological data can be used to delineate in outline the history of the region and transformations in the structures of political power within it. On the surface, the Kalahari would seem an unlikely place to search for the early development of hierarchical chiefdoms. It is, after all, the very region where, as Gordon (1992, 3) put it, "almost all contemporary anthropology textbooks still portray 'Bushmen' as if they live in a state of 'primitive affluence.'" However, archaeological evidence for the early presence of metal-working food producers in parts of the Kalahari is now without dispute, and the introduction of pastoral and agricultural economies below the Zambezi-Okavango-Kunene Rivers brought with it a complex interdigitation of peoples that encompassed foragers, pastro-foragers, and agro-pastoralists in complex social formations. Through time, exploitation of variations in the geographical distribution of resources such as rainfall, surface water, and grazing land led to diversification of these communities.

From our preliminary work at Bosutswe, it is clear that the role this site played within a wider network of political and economic relations was defined in terms of both stone-using and iron-using populations. What is not clear is the precise nature of these dialectics, or how they changed over the long occupation of the site. Material culture often participates in establishing and maintaining social relations. Following Giddens (1990,

149), however, the power inherent in such relations is never absolute, but is reciprocal and capable of manifesting "autonomy and dependence 'in both directions.'" From this perspective, the caches of chert, bronze beads, and carnivore canines from the hyena floor at Bosutswe can be viewed as items that were used to both index and create sets of power relations. It is expected that these items functioned not only as commodity exchange goods, but that the symbolic power inherent in their possession and exchange was manipulated to create contrasting images of community by the interest groups that adopted them. The caches of chert and agate thus focus attention on relations with neighboring stone-using foragers, pastro-foragers and, perhaps, clients. The hyena canines from the same floor, on the other hand, suggest that these relations also carried religious and ideological valences. The bronze, copper, and glass beads, along with a gold bangle, index a third, overlapping, dialectic of power relations focused within the local community.

These overlapping and sometimes contrasting sets of social and political relations have a long and complex history that also needs to be set within its own context of changing productive relations, accommodations, tensions, and contradictions. Throughout the long occupation of Bosutswe, for instance, the structure of pastoralism changed as herds expanded and were ultimately displaced from the site. Relations of production also altered as hunted game was progressively supplanted by domesticated sources over the course of occupation of the site. While the overall structure of the subsistence economy with its emphasis on domesticated cattle and sheep remained much the same, the organization of herding within the region altered—perhaps as domesticated animals were farmed out for care to smaller communities. The seeds of a politically encoded, spatially differentiated cattlepost economy[2] may have been sown at this time. Taken together, these changes point to the establishment of new relations of production between hunting and herding, and between hunters and herders, during the Mapungubwe and later periods. Changes in the demand for luxury goods such as ivory also impacted exchange networks, with concomitant effects on the regional political economy and the ways in which social and political autonomy, accommodation, and encapsulation were negotiated.

The Zimbabwe-age deposits at Bosutswe are distinctive because they contain no elaborately decorated elite ceramics, or evidence for prestige stone walling. With the rise of the Zimbabwean state to the east, it would therefore appear that the political center of gravity in eastern Botswana shifted northward to encompass the salt deposits of the Makgadikgadi pans where sites such as Tora Nju and Thitaba were situated, and the newly discovered gold seams of the Domboshaba and Tati areas. Such changes

may indicate a devaluation of Bosutswe's position in the regional political economy, while Tora Nju, Tlapana, Khama, and perhaps Kubu in the Makgadikgadi gained stature. Evidence for stone tool making and use at Tora Nju, and contemporary political discourses of identity and ownership in which many such ruins in the Makgadikgadi are enmeshed, indicates that we must be more sensitive to the varied political and economic forces that have influenced fashioning of contemporary identities in complex and sometimes unexpected ways. Reducing this complexity to inconsequential interactions between stone age and iron age, foraging and food producing, populations defined in essentialist evolutionary terms minimizes the historicity of these processes.

With the collapse of Great Zimbabwe at the end of the fifteenth century, Tora Nju and other ruins on the Makgadikgadi were abandoned; with the passage of time, however, many came to be imbued with Khoe ritual associations. During this period, our excavations suggest that productive forces were shifted away from the use of luxury products from the veld such as ivory, rhino horn, and furs as indexes of power and wealth toward manufactured commodities such as copper, bronze, and gold. These industrial items now become the penultimate material commodities indexing political power. Principles of kinship, residence, land tenure, and the social identities that were tied to these relations, were likely adjusted to accommodate these changes.

Luxury game products would again become important only with the establishment of European demand in the mid-nineteenthth century. The quick response to this demand, and the facility with which local communities organized and commanded labor to construct large game traps and procure weapons and other items to meet it, suggests that intensification of large game production for exchange was not new, but followed well-understood principles that inextricably linked foragers and farmers, Khoe and Bantu, in complementary but now perhaps more hierarchical social and economic systems. The social dialogue that led to a later, more rigid, dichotomization into foragers and farmers should thus be seen as the result of long-term processes of interaction, resistance, and accommodation, not passive isolation or encapsulation of self-contained, homogeneous, and largely ahistoric units.

Notes

1. The cultural terms "Mapungubwe" and "Zimbabwe" are used guardedly as a convenience. While the ceramics recovered from these levels bear many general stylistic resemblances to those from the Limpopo Valley and Zimbabwe, there are many local differences. This suggests that while the site

was certainly influenced by hegemonic developments in other parts of southern Africa there is at the same time evidence that the occupants of Bosutswe locally transformed and adapted these influences to their own tastes and requirements.

2. Amongst the Tswana, a family's herd is usually kept a large distance (50 to 100 km or more) away from the village where they live. These locations are mainly places specializing in animal husbandry. In some instances, they are run by young men who leave their village for several months at a time to look after the family herd in these distant locations.

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19

The Guest is a Hot Meal: Questioning Researchers' Identities in Mande Studies

Brehman Diabate (alias Clemens Zobel)
Sidiki Kouyate (alias Jan Jansen)

Introduction

Just before Ry Cooder starts a guitar solo in the song "Diaraby," Ali Farka Toure says to him: "A minè, Kulibali." (Take it, [Mister] Kulibali.) A few seconds later, Ali Farka realizes what he just said, and he corrects himself by murmuring Cooder's real name: "Ry Cooderrr."[1]

This is one of many examples in which the ascribed Mande patronymic (*jamu*) overruled the visitor's original name. This article aims to explore the consequences of having a *jamu*, in relation to the presentation of the self in the field as well as in relation to the collection of data. Thus, it is an attempt to start an inquiry into methodological characteristics which are pertinent to Mande research, at least in Bamako and South of Bamako. We will often refer to our own research data, but hope to elaborate lines which are significant, or at least recognizable, for every researcher in Mande.

A *jamu* is a necessity for anyone in Mande[2] who aims to be taken seriously in building up social relations; without a *jamu* one does not have an identity. A *jamu* gives a link to the past and to other members of society. It is a prerequisite for decent behavior. As Lansine Diabate from Kela stated: "Anyone who does not have a *jamu*, doesn't have/know shame" (*Jamu tè mògò fèn o fèn na, o tè maloya* [recorded by Kouyate, November 17, 1999]).

Many researchers get the name of their first host (*jatigi*). So did we; Brehman Diabate acquired his patronymic from his kora teacher, the famous kora[3] player Sidiki Diabate (d. 1996), and Sidiki Kouyate is the name of the father of Badigi Kouyate, a hunter from Kangaba who is often consulted by researchers because of his knowledge of Mande culture.

Others have worked with a *jamu* that sounds like their own family name. An example is the above-mentioned Cooder/Kulibali. We suppose that this was also the case with Charles Bird, who is known in Kela as "Berté." We have the impression that Peace Corps volunteers were often taught to transpose their name according to the similarities in sound. The historian David Conrad is a clear example of this principle, since both his names have been transposed; he calls himself "Daouda Kone."[4]

A transposition of the personal name along lines of similarity in sound does not imply that the researcher's individuality has been saved, and that he thus managed to transgress cultural borders. Everyone who accepts a *jamu* immediately risks falling into the deep waters of Mande culture: "Mande is like the water in a calabash; you see the bottom, but if you step in it, you will drown."[5]   The acceptance of a *jamu* inevitably results in a personal statement on Mande society as well as on the role that has to be played in this society. To a considerable extent people we meet, in public as well as in private meetings, adapt their behavior to the *jamu* with which they are confronted. Therefore, a researcher inevitably looks through glasses that give a specific dimension to the things observed. That is why we have "inverted" our identities when writing this article, thus giving predominance to the identities evoked by the *jamu* we bear, and thus stressing how important our ascribed Mande identity might be.

We all "suffer," in a certain way and to a certain extent, from the issues described by Mamadou Diawara (1985), in his article on doing research in one's own society.[6] With a jamu, we always are part of a family (cf. Diawara 1985, p. 11). Any researcher who does fieldwork in Mande should therefore give account of the following items as an obligatory methodological exercise: 1) Which patronymic was chosen and how was it interpreted by the researcher as well as the informants? According to which lines was this new identity negotiated in the field? How was the patronymic used within the presentation in the field? 2) Which consequences might this have for the data collected, and for the range of interpretations possible?

We aim to explore these two points by paying attention to our own presentation in the field. The main thesis is that a researcher makes a statement on Mande society at the moment of a visit to an informant. Since the informant, who is expected to act like a *jatigi*, is meeting a person with a Mande patronymic, the researcher has already determined to a large extent the "ingredients" of the communication, thus structuring the communication

and even the data yet to be collected. Hence the title of this essay, which refers to the proverb, "The guest is a hot meal, the host has to cool him down."[7]

The dichotomy "hot-cold" is often used in Mande discourse on social change. For instance, society is hot, when it is in process of transformation, such as the period after the death of a prestigious person, when his family has to arrange the succession, or when a new age group is inaugurated, and the other age groups progress to one level higher (Jansen 1998).

Assessing the Patronymic

The idea of this article had its origin when we spent a few days together in the Mande hills, southwest of Bamako. As we were already friends, and each had a bicycle as our means of transport, and as we had to go in the same direction,[8] we simply decided to travel together, accompanied by our friends/guides/assistants Namagan Keita (from Saguele) and Daouda Diawara (from Siby). Although the trip lasted only two days, we observed so many differences in each other's approaches that it made us examine the ideas presented here.

We both had conducted extensive research among griots—Diabate in Bamako, and Kouyate in Kela—and at that time our patronymic had looked quite self-evident. Of course, we sometimes met *hòrònw* who complained of our *nyamakala* status, but such people were not central to our research. However, when we changed topics, and both became interested in village foundation stories, we were confronted with a different situation. Now we had to work with village chiefs and notables, who were the most obvious informants for the beginning of our research on this topic. Both in Diabate's research area (the Mande hills) and in Kouyate's (the Kangaba region) collaboration with Keita *mansarenw* and other *hòrònw* was now inevitable.

Diabate's Strategy

Diabate often travelled with his kora, an instrument generating considerable interest in the rural setting. Before approaching a village he would set out the research strategy with his assistant Namagan, choosing the host in relationship to the nature of the subject of enquiry, and deciding how specifically to present the questions to be asked.[9] Upon their arrival, Namagan would introduce himself and Diabate and state the person who had sent them. After having been accommodated they would return to elaborate the reason for their coming (*ka dantigè*). Diabate would give ten kola nuts to Namagan who would pass them on to the host with a short introduction. Afterwards, Diabate himself would often explain that he had

come to ask about the "history" (*tarikw, buruju, bòkolo*) of his host's family or the foundation story of the village or chiefdom (*dugusigicogo, jamanasigicogo*). From the first interviews, conducted together with Namagan, the latter insisted that he not use the term "old things or stories" (*ko kòròw*), but rather identify himself as a *jeli*-apprentice who had been sent by his adopted "father" Sidiki to improve his historical knowledge (*ka tarikuw nyinin*). Diabate added to this that Sidiki had told him that the hòrònw often knew their history better than the *jeliw*. This strategy expressed the classical Mande learning relationship in which the student is entrusted (*ka kalifa*) to one authority by another authority. It avoided being associated with "whites" in search of secrets related to non-Muslim practices or involved in political intrigue. Diabate linked this to the concept of *tunga*: the adventurous traveling of young men seeking to gain knowledge or material wealth. Furthermore, he explained that he was a student at the university (*lakoliba*) seeking to give white people a better insight into an often-misrepresented Africa.

The assumption of a quasi griot-identity could produce several problems. In a few cases his host actually thought Diabate, equipped with a kora and a fine player of the instrument (according to Kouyate), had come to play and ask for money. Therefore, this host was afraid of expenses. Often the host would make Diabate play the kora for the village in order to postpone having to give answers. In other cases an informant said that he could not help, because he did not know the history of Sunjata's time deemed to be the domain of griots. The local history, on the other hand, was often considered a secret that the *hòrònw* protected from the *nyamakalaw* that did not remain in one place. In these cases Diabate resorted to a strategy which he had previously observed and written about (Zobel 1996; 1997), claiming that he was not a "real" *jeli*, but a "noble" *jeli, jeli-hòròn* who did not practice *jeliya* for material benefits, and whose identity was just as much affiliated to the *hòròn*-Traore ancestors as it was to the Diabate *jeliw*.[10] In an analogical sense he compared his function of student/researcher/teacher in his home country with the mediative functions of the *jeli*.[11]

Though these arguments often convinced the informants, problems could arise from other identitary dimensions not directly linked to the *jamu*. Being not only a farmer but also a locally well-known *jèmbe*-drummer, Namagan Keita had an exceptional knowledge of the region, which was essential for the Austrian Diabate. Traveling with him still posed the problem of affiliation with his village Saguele, and thus becoming involved in inter-village rivalry. Often these tensions follow the logic of lineage relationships among the Keita and their allies. On the other hand, the degree of Mande villages' openness to guests/visitors is extremely variable, even among villages with like lineage affiliations. In "rival" territory, the weight of

powerful brokers in negotiating interviews can be considerable. Identifying and winning over these brokers, for example by referring to previous marriage alliances, was an important strategy used by Namagan.

Fortunately, in most instances the respect for the aspiration to knowledge, the morals of hospitality, and the interest to engage in a dialogue pointed beyond the limits of postmodernist skepticism.[12] Making a recording could, however, involve a considerable amount of waiting and negotiating. Spending the night was usually regarded as imperative. Sometimes, complete privacy after everybody had gone to bed was chosen, or Diabate and Keita would have to come back to see their host in the seclusion of his farmstead (sènèkèbuguda). Often younger kin of the informant or other people from the village would intervene in their favor. Thus, interviews frequently involved the rephrasing of questions and answers by third persons. This was especially the case in larger assemblies held for the occasion, where the fear of exposure could lead to the 'hot' question being passed from one authority to the next without ever getting answered.

During interviews Diabate would sometimes offer snuff (siramugu) to his interlocutor, following the idea that goods rather than money would express the respect (bònya) quintessential to the relationship with old people in Mande. Therefore gifts of money were usually given only when the informant was obviously in need of help, or explicitly desired it. If his interlocutor wished, Diabate would submit a copy of the recording to him, or send photos. During his kora performances he frequently was asked to praise certain members of the village community and received small sums of money.

Kouyate's Strategy[13]

Kouyate doesn't play an instrument, and is not as fluent in the Bamanakan as Diabate is (which didn't spare him having to recite some praise-poetry learned in Kela when Diabate was playing in Massakoloma). Although he did his presentation and interview on his own a few times, most of the time this was done by Daouda Diawara, a friendly and polite young man who did not have a knowledge of the region comparable to Namagan's.

Kouyate had instructed Diawara to say that he (Kouyate) was sent for a talk (baro) about the village foundation (dugusigicogo) and the first village chiefs. Diawara was forbidden to use the word tariku, since this term would inevitably complicate things, because it means "secret" in certain contexts. Moreover, Diawara had to stress that Kouyate had nothing to do with development. Diawara often said that they had come to know the togo

("name," "reputation") of the village; the use of this term in this context was Diawara's own contribution.

Kouyate deliberately followed traditional patterns when giving account (*ka dantigè*) of his visit; he let himself being introduced (cf. Diawara 1985, 9), and he emphasized that he was sent by others, thus using a Mande diplomatic strategy.[14] the most remarkable aspect of Diawara's presentation was that he used a wide range of ever-changing themes when he introduced Kouyate, and often added superfluous information. Diawara's introduction was never the same, and always a bit terrifying for Kouyate, who, however, never corrected Diawara in public.

Moreover, Kouyate had a methodological problem due to the fact that the Keita and Kouyate have a joking relationship with each other. Thus, on his arrival people could react with "jokes" like "Kouyate are killed here" or "Kouyate isn't a *jamu*" or "Kouyate are not welcome here." To this he reacted by replying the standard answer "Keita are not serious people." To this he immediately added that his patronymic was nothing but a surname once given to him by his first host, and, since he did not want to insult/disrespect (*dògòya*) his first host, he stuck with it. This reply was always received with approval, and stopped the joking henceforth. However, this denial of his Kouyate identity was in contrast with his behavior during previous fieldwork among griots.

When Kouyate was confronted with his *nyamakala* status, he replied that he was the son of the legendary griotte Siramori Diabate (d. 1989). He claimed that she was his first host. Since she was married to the balafon[15] player Nankoman Kouyate (d. 1998), he had got the patronymic Kouyate. This explanation was always satisfactory, and turned the *horon*'s "disgust" of the Kouyate's nyamakala status into admiration, since Siramori Diabate is a widely appreciated and famous griotte. However, although to many people (even in Kela) it sounds more plausible than the real truth, this story was a construct, because Kouyate's relation with Siramori had become close only during a latter stage of his research. He had been introduced to her by his first host, Badigi Kouyate, who was a "classificatory" younger brother of Siramori's husband, and thus he had the right to call her "my wife." Thus, Siramori was the Dutchman Kouyate's mother only in a classificatory sense.

In general each village chief agreed without hesitation to Kouyate's request to record the village foundation story. Recordings were made often immediately after the arrival. Sometimes, the village chief told the story himself, sometimes he called some members of the village council in order to help him. After the recording, Kouyate donated "kola nut money" (*wòròsongo*) in order to express his respect. Amounts were not substantial, and varied from 500 F CFA or 1,000 F CFA for one person up to 5,000 F

CFA for a group of persons. Moreover, Kouyate made pictures of the village chiefs, and sent these to them afterwards. Often, meals were offered by the village chiefs before the recording or before the departure, and a place to sleep was also easily found at the village chief's compound.

The Confrontation

After having witnessed Diabate's failure in arranging an interview with the village chief of Massakoloma, Daouda Diawara remarked (to Kouyate) that he was so glad that Kouyate did not use kola nuts in his presentation, but did it the modern way, with money. Kola nuts, Diawara argued, only complicate things, since they are the starting point of a serious relationship, and thus they make people fantasize about what they will get from their relationship with the researcher. This point of view came as a shock to Kouyate, who had esteemed Diabate's approach as superior, and had watched Diabate's way of giving account of his "mission" with admiration.

In Massakoloma, Diabate gave a two hour performance on the village square, but this did not result in an interview with the village chief, who was afraid that the white man would misunderstand his words (see note 12) The next day, when Kouyate had left Massakoloma, Diabate discussed the chief's reaction with one of the latter's younger brothers and with his assistant Namagan, and they repeated the village chief's argument.

Diabate reached the conclusion that though the kola nuts and his elaborate self-presentation in Mandinka language gave weight to the encounter—maybe made him a "hot meal" to handle—its underlying interpretation was prefigured by the chief's memories of the colonial situation.

It was clear that Kouyate seemed to be gaining time and producing results with his detached method which involved not talking too much, refraining from asking questions in Maninkakan, also not these questions were inspired by what he understood from the informants' words, keeping a low profile, and predominantly working with village chiefs only. His strategy of "being sent" seems to have been well/positively interpreted by the people he wanted to talk with.

To the contrary, Diabate's engagement in local identitary games, involving his Diabate-*jeli* image and that of his Keita host-assistant, appeared to sometimes slow down or impede the research process. (However, the choice of alternative informants and information gained by conversations while waiting or performing, could also lead to new insights.)[16]

Whatever its implications, both of us realized on this occasion that our presentation was a statement on society, yes, even to some extent a

summary of our research in the past years. Diabate had made an extensive study aimed at the deconstruction of griot identities (Zobel 1996a, 1997). He had adopted the segmentary structural relativity of jeli self-presentations by making personal use of the concept of *jeli-hòròn*, which plays at the same time on both the ambiguity of the origins of all *jeli*-families other than the Kouyate, and the multiple meaning of *hòròn* as a term for a social group, as well as a complex of values related to honor. Similarly, reference to the figure of the outsider in search for knowledge had emerged within his research on Mande political and religious values (Zobel 1996b).

Kouyate's research, on the other hand, had stressed that both so-called historical traditions and identities are contemporary context-bound constructions that serve to demonstrate the status of a person or a group (cf. Jansen 1996). Now he was executing his own premises by presenting himself as the son of Siramori Diabate, by stressing the superficial character of his Kouyate identity, by saying that he was sent, thereby throwing the final responsibility of his work upon someone else, etc.

Conclusion

A *jamu* is negotiable; it is a context-bound status. The role models necessary to perform successfully a person with a particular *jamu* are open to change and variation, but yet have to deal with images and values that permeate communication in Mande. We think that a foreigner is subject, although to a lesser extent than a researcher born in Mande who is doing research on a spot where people know him (cf. Diawara 1985), to the intricacies of the identities related to *jamuw*. As soon he accepts one, it permeates his acts of communication. Yet, as the chief of Massakoloma's reminder of the colonial experience illustrates, the researcher is also confronted with relationships that go beyond the framework of Mande social organization. Colonial or metropolitan associations with the researcher, the heterogeneity of sociopolitical status and individual specificity of villages and informants are important constitutives in the complex reality in which an Africanist is working. This reality may not be accounted for solely by cultural logic; it also contains factors stemming from the singularities of historical conjuncture (Bazin 1996, 408). We argue that, regarding Mande studies, the *jamu*-choice in its context is just such a "singularity of historical conjuncture" which demands serious and systematic investigation.

Nevertheless, the use of the *jamu* generates many questions on research and researchers. In how far is Bird's work "maraboutized" by his Berte identity? Or did he often change *jamu*? Is it a coincidence that Conrad finds so much interesting material on women sorcerers, or is this the result of his

Kone identity, of being an alleged descendant of Sogolon Kèjugu Kone, Sunjata's mother? And what about the impact of the *jamu* when you marry someone from Mande and henceforth work under the *jamu* of your partner? And what about all those crypto-Diabate and crypto-Kouyate who are dominating contemporary studies on griotism in Mali? How biased are their views? Must we all henceforth publish under our Mande patronymic—as we did this time—as an ultimate attempt to try to give account of the constructed character of our research data?

Contributions on fieldwork often discuss the dynamics in long-term relationships between researcher and informants. However, it must be clear that, for Mande, the first presentation may have the biggest impact on whatever relation, since the researcher has already his *jamu*. Indeed, Mande researchers are hot meals that are methodologically difficult to cool down. Incorrect performance of a *jamu* may result in shameful situations, according to the Mande people.

Notes

1. Ali Farka Toure with Ry Cooder, *Talking Timbuktu* (World Circuit HNCD 1381), at 2'39".
2. The area visited in this article is partly in Mali and partly in Guinea.
3. A kora is a lute/guitar-like instrument, with 20 or so plucked strings.
4. Personal communication to Kouyate, August 1994.
5. An expression, part of the praise lines for the Diawara, heard by Kouyate in Kela. On the tape of Kouyate's recording of the Sunjata epic, it sounds like 'Mande is like the water in the palm of your hand ('tègèròkònòji' instead of 'dagaròkònòji'), etc.' (published as Jansen et al. 1995, p. 171).
6. However, of course, a big difference is that foreign researchers do not master languages as well as members of a society, and may not be used to the living conditions in the field (cf. Diawara 1985, p. 7).
7. Taken from Jansen et al. 1995, pp. 100, 105, and 108. In Maninkakan: Lolan siman gwè di, jatigi l'i fèla (In Bamanakan: Dunan ye siman gwè ye, jatigi b'a fifa). Translated as: 'L'étranger est un plat, l'hôte peut souffler là-dessus.' Lansine Diabate puts this expression in the mouth of Sunjata each time he agrees to the conditions set by the kings he visits during his exile. Note that the best translation of lolan is guest or visitor, and not the often-used 'stranger.'
8. Diabate and Kouyate left Siby on February 23, 1997. Diabate had to go to Massakoloma and Karanda. Kouyate was heading for the former canton of Bacama, West of Narena. The first night was spent in Saguele, the second night in Massakoloma. All travel was done on bike.
9. Research involved gaining the multiple historical perspectives of different lineage and specialist groups.

10. The Buffalo of Do, a famous episode of the Sunjata epic, relates the emergence of Traore and Diabate branches from one family.

11. To Diabate's great surprise Namagan had warned him in a conversation about potential archival storage of recordings in Bamako not to say anything about it to the local population. The argument was that for reasons of rivalry, the farther away the place was that knowledge was put to use, the higher the possibilities would be to obtain information. Therefore Diabate associated the gathering of knowledge with writing and teaching activities in a faraway place in which information would not have local repercussions. Of course, this claim is to a certain extent illusory and leaves ethical problems of anthropological representation to be solved.

12. Frequently working with informants who had experienced colonial rule, Diabate's presence was sometimes interpreted within the context of colonial or neo-colonial relationships. This could lead to being accused of being an agent charged with compiling a 'dossier' to be politically used against their interests. Consequently his tape recorder was called 'politiki radiyo' on one occasion. When Diabate and Kouyate encountered the village chief of Massakoloma, he refused to give information or accept the kola nuts Diabate had offered. He explained his behavior by relating the following episode:

13. 'Upon their arrival on the African coast the 'whites' asked a man sitting under a ntòmi tree for the name of the place they were in. The man thought they were asking for the name of the tree's fruits and said they were called 'dakaro.' Ever since the whites have been calling the place Dakar.' Therefore it would not make sense to tell Diabate anything, because he would just misunderstand it and maybe even use it against him.

14. This paradigmatic situation of cross-cultural non-understanding centers around a story, which is an example of numerous historical myths about white people that Diabate heard in Mande. Michel Leiris's account (1996 [1934]) of the hostilities encountered by Griaule and his team during the Dakar-Djibouti expedition produced a scandal. Even though times have changed, situations where 'rien ne va plus' are still an embarrassment to anthropologists. The Massakoloma episode touches upon postmodernist debates (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Obeyesekere 1992 vs. Sahlins 1995) on the status of anthropological knowledge: to what extent is intercultural understanding/translation possible? Is this process not structured by the diverging interests of the researcher and informants, and the symmetries of power in the global order? Although very interesting and relevant to anthropological fieldwork, these topics are different from those discussed in this article in which we focus on Mande prerequisites and role models for decent communication that are relevant for any visitor whatever his ethnic or historical background.

15. Until 1999 my Mande 'identity' had been a griot, called Sidiki Kouyate. During my 1999 fieldwork, I worked 'under the cover of' a different patronymic: Malian friends of noble origin had adviced me to work as Sidiki Kante—a blacksmith patronymic—in the Sobara region, in order to facilitate information exchange about Komo, a cult from which griots are excluded. I had not expected problems in adapting my role model, since both Kouyate and Kante lean on a artisan's identity and a joking relationship with the Keita, the alleged descendants of Sunjata. However, it soon appeared I had been completely miseducated in the period 1988–1999 for a successful performance as a blacksmith; even the (performance of the) obligatory jokes with the Keita were different in form and content. Suddenly I found myself in a different universe. This was much to the amusement of Daouda Diawara from Siby, whom I had known since 1996, and who accompanied me on my first trip in the Sobara region.

16. In October 1994, after having conducted extensive fieldwork, on the day of his departure from Kela, a friend of Kouyate had told him confidentially that he (Kouyate) 'had always done it wrong' by saying that he had come himself, on his own responsibility. He was supposed, in any circumstance, to present himself as someone being sent by others (see also chapter 2 in Jansen 2000).

17. A balafon is a type of marimba, with wooden keys and resonating calabash gourds beneath the keys.

18. The degree of Diabate's and Kouyate's different approaches was also reflected in their assistants' identities: Kouyate's assistant Daouda lived in a regional center where French was spoken, and he had modern entrepreneurial aspirations, while Diabate's assistant Namagan hardly spoke French, was a local musician besides being a farmer, and used his research travels with Diabate for a parallel quest of magical knowledge.

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20

Writing Yoruba Female Farmers into History: A Study of the Food Production Sector

Olatunji Ojo

There is now an increasing awareness of women's studies in Nigeria. The major problem, however, has been the difficult access to documents relating to women. Most of the existing documents, especially archival and written, were created by men, hence it is not surprising that they focus on activities dominated by the men. The lack of existing documents on women's studies in Nigeria is glaring. As I have shown elsewhere, in analyzing the economic roles of women, scholars have described them severally as "traders," "wives," "homemakers," and "farm assistants," but never as farmers. The colonial authorities seemed to have shared this view, hence cash crop production and virtually all other agricultural policies were targeted at male farmers.[1] This assertion obviously neglects the fact that women are heavily involved in farming/agriculture, which remains the most popular and most strategic sector of the economy in which women are heavily involved. There is a second problem. In some cases writers sometimes do accept that Yoruba women farm, but as wives and not in their own right. This theory assumes that all Yoruba women are married and dependent on their husbands. The theory neglects those women who are yet to marry as well as the widows. This paper contends that a misreading of existing materials accounts for the misrepresentation of the position of women. It attempts to re-examine our understanding of "where Yoruba women work" by providing another perspective to understanding the role of

Yoruba women in the economic landscape. I shall discuss this strategy based on my research on women and food production in the period 1920–1960. My research area was Ekiti, in Southwestern Nigeria, comprised of many small farming settlements, sparse population, hilly topography, and semi-forest vegetation. These characteristics suggest that unlike Central Yorubaland with its big cities, political centers, markets, and easy link with coastal trade, the remoteness of Ekiti called for certain peculiarities that differentiated it from the general theories often applied to Yorubaland. The Yoruba women of Ekiti were heavily involved in farming, not just as helpers, but also as farmers in their own right. More importantly, changes during this period transformed pre-existing duties, disrupted old vocations, and at the same time created new opportunities. Before 1920 the involvement of women in food production revolved largely around activities such as planting, harvesting, transport, processing, and marketing. Following the introduction and commercialization of cash crops, the nature of these activities changed. In the first place, virgin lands were increasingly cultivated for the production of cash crops, thereby putting strains on the cultivation of food crops. Whatever crisis this generated was ameliorated with the arrival in Ekiti of cassava and cocoyam, and some years later of rice. Although these new food crops reduced the demand for yam, they contributed substantially to the expansion of farming responsibilities. In a district renowned for farming, but short of labor, female farming assumed greater importance.

From Yam to Cocoyam and Cassava

Yam was the most important food crop among the Yoruba and among the Ekiti in particular. Before the cultivation of cocoa, the prowess of an Ekiti farmer was measured by the size of his yam plot and yam harvest. Men primarily carried out activities such as bush clearing and heaping and weeding of yam plots. These activities were carried out individually or through group farming during peak seasons when there used to be a high demand for labor. For parents whose daughters were of marriageable age, suitors of such girls provided free farm labor as part of bridal obligation. Therefore, parents with more daughters had the advantage of enjoying this kind of labor. When men worked as group farmers or while paying bridal obligation on the farm, women within the household cooked for them.

The major responsibilities of women in yam production were to transport and spread yam seeds on heaps. Women, young and old, with their baskets, sacks, and calabashes, carried yam seeds from old to new farms sometimes a long distance apart. In effect, the months of August, September, and October were busy ones for Ekiti women, especially young

ones who had an obligation to assist their husbands on the farms. In August, minor crops such as pepper, beans, and maize were planted, while yam seeds were planted in September and October, and sometimes as late as early November. In the words of William Bascom, who carried out an anthropological study among the Yoruba of Ile-Ife and Ondo:

> [F]arming is men's work, although a few women worked their farms like men. In Ondo, women help their husbands more that Ife, where men do the clearing, hoeing, planting, weeding and harvesting. A wife may carry yam seeds to the farm and lay them on the yam heaps for her husband to plant. She may help him in harvesting corn, beans, cotton . . . or his yams to the market and sell for him. A man cannot ask his wife to hoe or clear a field and if he even asks her to carry yam sticks to the farm, he is called a tyrant.[2]

The problem with Bascom centers on the fact that he did not consider women farming in their own right nor clearly establish the full ramifications of the "help" rendered by women to their husbands. While women in this category cleared the field personally or hired workers to do this, they frequently carried yam sticks to the farm—transport being one of their major farm duties. The assertion also neglected women's necessary duties, such as a role in decision-making, provisioning of credit facilities, or working on a farm, thereby relieving the husband to work on another.

Evidence gathered from the nineteenth century gives us some idea of the production system. A brief analysis shows that Ekiti societies moved rapidly from seasons of plenty to seasons of scarcity, sometimes coinciding with the change from wet to dry seasons. Hence food used to be plenty between June and October and scarce during other months. Food scarcity was accentuated not only by drought but also by excessive rainfall and warfare. While too much or inadequate rainfall often destroyed food crops, warfare often forced the abandonment of farms and relocation of villages due to the destruction of farmsteads by enemy troops. From the late 1890s, there began rapid changes in the socio-economic and political fronts. Warfare was abolished, and many war refugees and slaves returned to their villages and farmlands; new crops were introduced and new markets were established for them. Some of the immigrants into Ekiti, initially those liberated from slavery in parts of Yorubaland, Brazil, Cuba, and Sierra Leone, and later those who came as a result of the colonial economy gradually introduced cocoyam and later cassava[3] into Ekiti. Oral information collected in Northern Ekiti suggested that women traders were the first to try cocoyam on a large scale. Another tradition traced the introduction of these crops to returnee-liberated slaves. However, it is

certain that cocoyam was introduced and popularized by the "marginalized" sector of Ekiti farmers, among whom women were in the majority. These women bought a few seeds from markets in Ilesa, Ado, and Egosi, initially for themselves and their children. Gradually they began to plant cocoyam on their plots. Madam Ayodele Arotimole planted cocoyam on the plot allocated to her by her husband to cultivate vegetables in the 1930s. Hired laborers cleared the plot until the 1940s when her sons, David Ajibade, Samuel Ojo, Andrew Adewumi, and Sunday Afolayan worked on the farm. Although these crops were less laborious to cultivate and could easily be substituted for yam, Ekiti were cautious in adopting them. As it has been established elsewhere, "new crops were generally tried out cautiously because no community was going to place its established food supplies at risk, through the hasty adoption of untested novelties."[4] Perhaps it is important to ask why established Ekiti farmers initially refused to embrace cocoyam. As found out elsewhere, women and young men quickly embraced cassava and cocoyam because they lay outside the economic sphere controlled by senior men.[2] In other words, senior men in Ekiti concentrated their interest in the production of yam, tobacco, palm trees, kolanuts, and cocoa, to which they devoted the most fertile plots, while the "landless"—women and young men—planted their cocoyam on less fertile plots such as those left fallow, fringes of male farms or planted as undergrowth on tree farms.

The adoption of cocoyam farming by women was connected with economic and social changes induced by the colonial economy as well as ecology and disease. The most notable events were the influenza epidemic of 1918/1919 and the crop failure of the same period. The epidemic caused such a high mortality rate among the children, that Ekiti referred to the era as that of *lukuluku* (sudden death); and the women who doubled as mothers were those who suffered most. The introduction of taxation in the same year forced many men to abandon their families in search of more remunerative jobs, thereby leaving the women as family heads.

As the cocoa "fever" heightened, especially in the 1930s and 1940s, an increasing number of men migrated to cocoa regions. The drift into cocoa, wage labor (road mending, porterage, and sawing), and trade in European goods partly reduced the interest in the production of yam. This was the case in Western and Southern Ekiti where the land was better suited for cocoa. Because of the higher status conferred on cocoa farmers through higher income and better houses, farmers in less fertile plots,for example in Northern and Eastern Ekiti, devoted more of their time to cocoa, thereby undermining food production.

Apart from the attraction of cash crops, which sapped men away from food production, socio-economic changes induced by the depression of

1929–1933 put more strains on the economy. After the depression, there was a rise in the prices of imported goods. This put a squeeze on farmers and caused considerable hardship and poverty. It was easier for men to adjust, since they controlled the bulk of farm income. For instance, for cocoa farmers, the price rose from £17 per ton in 1931 to £45 in 1936[5] and yam sold for about £5 per ton in 1944. In the quest for high revenue, farmers sold yams, thereby putting pressure on family food resources. Also as female local crafts became increasingly unprofitable, interest in cocoyam increased to meet food requirements and provide a new source of income. This continued the trend where gender differences manifested in occupation specifications. As more men produced cocoa and yam, women moved into the peripheral sectors of the economy, which were always unattractive to established men. It was for these reasons that women were in the forefront of trying new food crops.

Although women's right to inherit land was frequently contested, their access to farm plots was significant. As wives and mothers, they had access to plots on their husbands' and sons' farms, where they planted minor crops such as vegetables, which gave them some level of personal income. Similarly, as daughters, Ekiti women retain the membership of their natal homes, from where they secure land from their fathers, brothers, and other male members of their extended families.

The advantages in cocoyam production (such as the use of less fertile plots, lower labor requirement, less vulnerability to climatic changes, and the possibility of spreading the harvest over long periods) also influenced its acceptance even by adult males. Between 1944 and 1945, a long drought, which destroyed yam and maize crops, ravaged Ekiti farms. The resultant famine in 1945[7] was so severe that the District Officer, R.L.V. Wilkes noted that Ekiti women had stopped bringing their children to children's health clinics because of "genuine inability . . . to pay anything."[8] In the words of an eye witness,

> the effect of the famine was not limited to the time of scarcity of food alone. It was more felt when food began to be cheap around July. Many ate fresh corn with greediness. Some died of constipation, some children even collapsed in the street.[9]

As a stopgap measure cocoyam was planted on an "unusually large scale"[10] towards minimizing and possibly preventing future occurrences. By the 1950s, the production of cocoyam and small heaps (piles of soil prepared to facilitate growth of yams) had become associated with female farming. Women were involved in different aspects of its production. Widows, divorcees, and wives whose husbands could not provide enough for the

family were prevalent even in the "sacred" tasks of heaping and weeding, which had previously been the domain of male farmers. Like the yam farms, where both men and women worked as laborers in exchange for cash or seeds, women also worked on cocoyam plots to acquire money, augment food supply, or secure seeds needed for planting on their farms or their husbands' farms. Such women transported, distributed, and planted cocoyam suckers and also harvested the seeds. They also weeded cocoyam plots, especially when working on their own farms or when hired to work alongside other female farmers. With dwindling male labor, wives weeded their husbands' cocoyam farms, and the harvesting was left virtually to the women to handle. On large farms, especially during the harvest period, women mobilized female groups to work, as they did for other crops.[11] The returns to a hired female worker ranged between a shilling daily in the 1940s and two shillings in the 1950s to a half basket or a full basket of seeds within the same period.

Cassava Production and Women's Duties

Unlike cocoyam, the cultivation of cassava did not become a popular crop until during World War II. This had to do only partly with the fact that it was initially not known as a substitute for yam; more importantly the spread was inhibited by technical problems. For a long time it was not known how to process the crop in such a way as to remove the prussic acid which some varieties contained.[12] This fear was not unfounded as some incidents of death and food poisoning were recorded after cassava meals. The processing modalities of cassava into *gari* and cassava flour require much labor, so it was no easy substitute for yam. In essence, while yam and cocoyam were used for pounded yam and plantain flour for *elubo/lafun*, cassava products were known to be poisonous and to cause eye infection. Thus while it had been introduced to the coastal parts of Nigeria as early as the eighteenth century, the spread into the Yoruba interior did not commence until after World War I. It was shown in the Tax Assessment Report compiled for Ekiti Division between 1927 and 1929 that while 55444.89 and 32608.71 acres of yam and corn respectively were cultivated in the sixteen Ekiti kingdoms, only thirty-seven were planted with cassava. In fact thirty-six of these were cultivated in Ado district byoutsiders.[13] The little that was planted by local farmers was used to divert animals away from cocoa and yam farms. These outsiders were mainly Urhobo, Igbo, Ijebu, and Egba who worked variously as traders, farm laborers, road workers, sawyers, and palm oil producers. Coincidentally these settlers came from places that had been in active contact with Atlantic commerce and heavily settled by liberated slaves and returnees from the Americas.

Ekiti women showed interest in cassava first by buying gari from Urhobo women to feed their children, especially as snacks for school pupils. By the 1940s, cassava production had become so popular that *gari* processing became noticeable in 1946.[14] This development could be traced to three major events of the 1940s. World War II, 1939–1945, prompted the colonial authorities to require cassava products to feed the city dwellers and starch for export to Britain. Before the war, expansion in the colonial economy had prompted massive immigration into the cities in search of wage labor, thereby increasing the cost of living in the cities. During the war, a decline in real income accruing to farmers and rural dwellers encouraged more migration to the cities. Thus there was an urgent need to feed the urbanites. A related point was the revenue drive embarked on by colonial authorities towards the prosecution of the war and colonial administration. Increased food production would raise revenue for government; feed the cities, the military, and non-food producing areas; and at the same time reduce rural tension. To ensure that these aims were realized, food production quotas were given to food producing regions. Failure to meet quota expectations resulted in prosecutions. All of these became part of what were called "compulsory measures" or "win-the-war-effort." Although Ekiti received no *gari* quota, it was mandated to supply several army installations with yam,[15] thereby reducing yam available for local consumption and by extension putting a strain on the dietary system. Also the drought of 1944–45 and its attendant famine forced Ekiti to adopt new crops to meet up with the deficit in food supply. Cassava was found to be a good substitute as it was easy to cultivate even in poor soils.[16]

Similarly, there was a drastic social change in Ekiti during the period after 1940. As more children went to school, some in villages other than their own, the demand rose for more cash to pay school fees, buy school materials, and feed the children. Ironically, education thus partly denied the parents child labor. Even though school holidays were arranged to fit into the agricultural calendar, education became an avenue for emigration from Ekiti, especially by young men.

TABLE 19.1
Educational Statistics (Primary School)[17]

Year	No. of Schools	Students	Remarks
1930	132	6,788	Ondo Prof
1935	148	8,905	Ondo Prof
1938	219	14,389	Ondo Prof
1946	160	18,300	Ekiti Only
1948	207	22,438	Ekiti Only
1954	313	40,078	Ekiti (Pry. One Only)
1956	405	39,899	Ekiti

In summary, quota allocation, crop failure, increasing withdrawal of potential male labor, population expansion induced by better health facilities, increasing commercialization of food crops, and the expanding expenditure base of a farming district compelled the mobilization of every available worker and the diversification of crop production. For women who tended to go into "marginal" farming spheres, cassava, like cocoyam was a good choice.[18]

Female cassava planters made their farms on abandoned plots and on the fringes of yam farms, and they used their roots for *lafun*. By the 1940s, Ekiti women had served enough apprenticeship under Urhobo, Igbo, and Ijebu women who pioneered *gari* production. In 1941, demand for *gari* was so high that price rose to four shillings and nine pence for a quarter weight (4/-9d per cwt) at Ado market.[19] Reports quickly went round that government was interested in *gari* production. According to Madam Comfort Medebise, "we were told that the government and the Ijebu were accepting (buying) gari. Many of us (women) quickly apprenticed ourselves to gari processors so as to learn the system."[20] There soon emerged groups of Ekiti women who were regularly available for hire by cassava farmers to process their *gari*. In the 1940s the harvesting of cassava took place some fifteen months after planting, but by the 1950s, new species locally referred to as *ege isobo, paki Ijebu, ege oniyan*, and *ibadi leru wa*, among others were introduced. These new species could be harvested within a year. Men initially carried out harvesting while women gathered the roots. The first explanation for the gender differential obligation was that it complied with previous norms and practices whereby the harvesting of root crops was considered a man's duty. Secondly, cassava stalks were difficult to uproot, especially when farms were overgrown with weeds, as it was problematical for women to go into such farms with their babies. By the 1950s, owing to a scarcity of male labor, increased casava production and the blurring of

certain gender differences in work, this myth was discarded and both sexes harvested cassava side by side and on an individual basis.

Ekiti men had no other responsibility after the harvesting of roots, but this was not so for the women. Cassava roots were processed either into flour or *gari*. To process the roots into flour, they were peeled and soaked in water for about five days, after which they were soft enough and it was easy to remove the fibers. Having soaked for about five days, the roots would have lost much of their cyanide content. The roots would then be sieved, cooked, and stirred to a pulp called *amala, elubo*, or *lafun*. The production of *gari* followed a similar pattern. Peeled cassava roots were washed and grated manually on graters made of punched, rough-surface flat metals. These metals were nailed to planks in a way that grated materials could be collected in bowls and calabashes. Grated materials were packed into bags and pressed with weights to drain out all liquid content. The pressing sometimes lasted for a week, during which fermentation would have taken place, a process that gives Ekiti's *gari* its sour taste. The cassava pulp that resulted was first sieved into a fine floury content and fried into *gari* in shallow, wide frying pots produced by Isan and Ara potters.

Gari processing was slow and laborious. Problems such as rain and intense sunshine forced processors to shift their working sites in search of tree shade. In response, women often spread their wrappers to form canopies or teamed up with their husbands to build farm huts and canopies. Another problem with cassava production was that since it is a timely crop, harvesting and processing must be done within specific times. For example, the harvesting must be done when the soil was soft as to aid digging up the roots. Because of the busy schedule associated with the wet season, many women could not harvest their roots until the dry season, making an increased workload between November and February. Even in the wet season, matured cassava roots had to be removed before the soil became too wet else they got destroyed.[21]

In spite of the scarcity of labor to relieve women of some of their obligations, *Gari* production added to female farming responsibilities. Although cassava was easier to plant, tend, and harvest than yam, women increasingly found that they were regularly saddled with more tasks.[22] In 1953, the strain was so great that Ekiti women, in the opinion of a British official, retreated from *gari* "production due to the worries it entailed."[23]

With increased acceptance of *gari* and the income it generated, women began to buy cassava farms and periodically resorted to hiring male workers, especially young men, to weed and harvest the roots. This was the case in the 1940s. Following a decline in the cocoa trade, some female traders took to buying cassava farms owned by men and also hired female processors to process the roots into *gari*. As trade in cassava products

increased, more men added cassava to the crops they produced. Even though some of these men still refused to eat *gari*, they recognized it as a good market commodity. Before 1930, cassava products were hardly known as an article of trade but by the 1940s, they had become some of the leading commodities of trade[24] and by the 1980s cassava was the leading staple.

Female Rice Farmers

Unlike cocoyam and cassava, rice production in Ekiti was a result of conscious encouragement by colonial authorities who needed it primarily to conserve scarce foreign exchange and to feed resident Europeans and Europeanized-Africans. Initially, these people were fed from imported rice, but later rice was produced in a few locations such as Calabar, the Jos plain, and the Sokoto basin. By 1931, the population of these foreigners had swollen such that government increased the quantity of imported rice, vegetables, fruits, and tinned foods to meet their demand. It might be argued that imported food added to the self esteem of this category of people but it is equally important that the limited varieties in African staples and the overconcentration on carbohydrates made the adoption of new staples irresistible.

In 1931, Provincial Residents of riverine areas were asked to study the feasibility of rice production in their areas. In his reply to the Secretary for the Southern Provinces, the Resident of Ondo Province wrote that even though "there is no grass swamp land but moderately thick bush," he was "convinced that the inhabitants . . . would be interested in rice growing both for home consumption and for sale."[25] By 1932 Ekiti market women often went to the riverine areas of Okitipupa Division to buy palm oil and fish were also buying rice and *gari* for sale in Ekiti markets. A twenty-pound (20-lb.) weight measure of rice sold for three shillings and nine pence.[26]

That Ekiti did not adopt rice production until the 1940s could not be divorced from its pre-1940 economy and society. The 1920s and 1930s witnessed the introduction of and cultivation of cocoa. Unlike the production of cassava and cocoyam, rice production, like yam production, required heavy labor input by adult men to clear virgin plots annually, cut down trees, and set cleared bush on fire. Since the workers were busy on cash crop fields, it took a longer time for rice to be accepted. Even in the 1940s and 1950s the production of rice was restricted to areas where cocoa production failed. Secondly, in the 1930s, the emphasis was on rice grown in swampy areas, and since Ekiti had no such environment they had no option but to wait until the 1940s when upland rice was propagated.

Like the sexual division of labor on yam plots, the clearing of forest for rice was a male task, but the clearing of unburnt materials was carried out

by both sexes. Unlike crops such as yam, cassava, cocoyam, maize, beans, cocoa, and so on, which could be cultivated sometimes with no farm help, especially on small plots, it was hardly possible to cultivate rice without assistance. Rice farmers confirmed that it was impossible to produce rice without an adequate labor supply, especially women, who were needed to plant, harvest, and process it. Rice planting in particular was a slow and "back-breaking" task that men never wanted to combine with hoeing. Hence male planters preferred to use long sticks to drill holes while women and children sowed a few seeds into each hole. As farms expanded, women also worked as drillers, but the men seldom engaged in planting, a task that for crops, except notably yam, was regarded as a woman's duty.[27] The importance of female labor to rice farming must have been realized by Chief Imam Kareem, the President of Igbemo Cocoa Produce Cooperative Society, who on the arrival of rice experts about 1940 "specifically instructed . . . [his] wives to pay attention to the experts' instructions."[28] He must have given his instruction knowing that his wives would plant, harvest, and process his rice while they also drove away pests and rodents from the farm.

Starting from the period of bush clearing in February through to the processing stage, a period spreading throughout the year, rice demanded full attention. It was these labor requirements that prevented many farmers from showing an interest in its production. For women, who had much to gain by working as wage laborers or as rice traders, they were prepared to take the risk, but at the expense of other obligations. For example, palm kernels usually cracked during the "hunger" season, April to June and November to February, got stiff competition from rice production because it coincided with the planting of rice. The Agricultural Department rightly pointed out in 1948 that inadequate rainfall in 1946 could notexplain the decline in palm kernel production in 1947; the decline was undoubtedly due to the "competition with foodstuffs, notably rice. . . ."[29]

Women in their respective households harvested their rice on small plots, but for large acreage, extra labor was sought from among village women and from surrounding villages. This developed into Meeja labor—female laborers who initially came from the Igbomina and Moba areas of Northwestern Ekiti and later from all over Ekiti to harvest rice in the rice regions. It was from the Igbomina dialect for "I want to harvest" (Mejaa) that the laborers derived their name. Many of the Mejaa did return to their towns after the harvest season, but a few got married to their employers and men in rice producing areas.[30] The contribution of women to rice production is better illustrated by production figures recorded for Ekiti. Sixty acres of rice were planted at Igbemo in 1945,[31] but due to the drought and crop failure, which destroyed yam and maize seedlings between 1945

and 1946, rice cultivation rose to 400 and 500 acres at Igbemo and Oke Igbira (now Ayedun) respectively in 1946.[32] By 1949, in spite of the District Officer's assertion that it was difficult "persuading the people to grow foodstuff rather than export crops,"[33] the cultivation of rice rose to 1153.64 and 1800 acres respectively,[34] and to 6000 acres in 1950 from which about seven hundred tons of rice were harvested.[35]

It was realized by the late 1940s that with increased tonnage and competing female duties, the traditional women's mortar-mills used all over Ekiti would be inadequate for local rice production. So in 1950, the Cooperative Rice Farmers Society, formed at Oke Igbira in the late 1940s, bought a rice-milling machine to mill rice for its members.[36] Similar societies founded at Igbemo[37] and Okemesi[38] bought and installed their rice mills in 1952 and 1956 respectively. Three other private mills were opened at Igbemo between 1953 and 1956.[39] Production at two of the cooperative mills jumped from 30,000 pounds in 1950 to 583,518 pounds in 1955/56, and more quantity would have been processed in women's 'mortar mills.'

TABLE 19.2
Cooperative Rice Mill Production (Lbs.)[40]

Rice Mill	1950	4/51-3/52	4/52-1/53	1952-53
Igbira	30,000	138,630	217,885	260,120
Igbemo	------	------	------	------
	1953-54	1954-55	1955-56	1956-57
Igbira	76,580	146,340	244,796	19,822
Igbemo	------	242,646	338,722	100,986

The record of the Igbira Cooperative Rice Farmers' Society shows that it had three hundred members in 1955 with a thirteen-member council, three of whom were women. Although the number of women in these societies is unknown, an analysis of social organizations may give us an idea. Men controlled the cultivation, processing, and marketing of cocoa and all official policies served to reinforce this exclusiveness. Only a man could belong to the Cocoa Farmers' Society, in spite of the fact the fact that women also owned cocoa farms. And as argued earlier, it was pretty impossible to cultivate rice without the involvement of women. In fact, male farmers had no other duty after weeding their rice farms, while female tasks were visible in every sector. Thus to have allowed three women on the executive board in a male-dominated region meant that female membership would have been substantial or accepted as strategic to production.

As for other food items, women wage earners were paid with a given quota of rice harvested. In the 1940s and 1950s, they received a third of their harvest output, but this diminished to about a seventh in the 1980s due to excess supply of Meja. During the planting season, female hired planters were paid in cash. Wives of rice farmers saw their role as part of their family obligation and so expected no payment.

The discussion so far has shown the development from mono-cropping to mixed-cropping and from subsistence to commercial production. It has also demonstrated the various processing methods and how, through women's ingenuity, crops introduced by outsiders were adopted and domesticated for personal and commercial use. Women's ability to do this must be seen as part of their struggles to reduce their alienation from the commanding sectors of the economy. Nevertheless, we must be careful of the role played by commercial production in the expansion of foodstuffs. A proper analysis of the production and trading systems shows that yam remained the leading crop produced for the markets until the 1950s. This implied that a good part of the new crops were consumed locally. In fact, the restructuring of the domestic economy demanded an expansion in food supply to feed Ekiti. It was in this regard that female labor was seen as critical to food production because it was a source of permanent labor.

The production of food crops by women is important to the understanding of gender relations, marriage, health, and the character of the colonial agricultural economy in mid-twentieth-century Ekiti. Consequent upon the production of female-produced crops—cocoyam and cassava, Ekiti men found it profitable to offer more yams for sale and reserve more seeds for planting. This could not have been done if there had been no substitute. Similarly, these crops, capable of being harvested over long periods, helped to reduce the hunger season to just two months.

The desire to minimize hunger and easy production of cocoyam and cassava made them more attractive to women. In 1954, Madam Ojo Arinola of Ado Ekiti wanted a divorce because she often suffered "by feeling hunger [sic] and could not . . . persist it."[41] Another woman, Felicia Uyiola of Efon wanted to divorce her husband, David, who did not feed her and her young daughter for eleven months. Even after reconciliation, David again deserted her for three years and "did not feed me [her]."[42] When Madam Agemo wanted to return to her husband after five years, she claimed that even though her husband would never give food to his children, she wanted a settlement so as to care for her children, who were roaming about the street.[43] It was therefore not surprising that the bulk of the land secured by women for farming was initially devoted to food production, especially cocoyam, cassava, and vegetables. Not until food requirements were met were such plots converted to cocoa farms.[44] Similarly, cocoyam and

cassava, being cover crops, did not expose farm plots to direct sunshine and rainfall.[45] Therefore, they were useful in prolonging the fertility of the soil while their fallen leaves and stems became manure.

In spite of new opportunities, the strains put on female workers by expanded food production was great. Increasingly women's crafts such as weaving diminished in scope, as they needed more hours to work on farms, especially sincecrop production earned more profit than local crafts, while European textiles were better and cheaper. Time allocated to childcare also diminished, thereby forcing them to keep their young children with older women who received various gifts as wages. As crops expanded, farm duties became spread throughout the year, thus forcing the women to sacrifice some of their leisure. For example, male farmers had farm holidays during the dry season, November to February, and in the evenings, they played ago game while the boys wrestled. But for the women, they were always planting, harvesting, processing, marketing, or cooking.

TABLE 19.3
Time Allocation in Cocoa Farming Areas (Nigeria)[46]

SEASON	HOURS FOR WORKER	
	Male	Female
June–August	389	419
September–November	400	434
December–February	333	377
March–May	333	365

TABLE 19.4
Ekiti Farm Calendar Showing Women's Tasks (March–February)[47]

Tasks	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F
Plant rice, early maize, cassava, minor crops	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Harvest yam					•	•	•	•	•	•		
Plant late maize, beans, vegetables				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Harvest early maize				•	•	•	•	•	•			
Spray cocoa, colanuts				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Harvest cocoa							•	•	•	•	•	•
Harvest/plant cocoyam, peak cassava; produce palm oil	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Plant minor crops; process cassava	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Harvest tobacco, crack palm kernel	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Harvest rice								•	•	•	•	•

Women's lack of access to big capital outlay prevented them from improving their production technology. This was why the first set of modern cassava graters and men owned private rice machine mills. Although these machines denied the women their labor and wage and also transferred women's industries (grating and milling) to the men, there was little or no protest as they were relieved of certain obligations, thereby creating more time for other ventures. These ventures were in the areas that gave them more autonomy and higher income, such as in trade, porterage, and crop production. Such desire sometimes resulted in family feuds when their husbands accused them of not helping in farm work. To the women, the issue was not the unwillingness to help, but the lack of gains of such an obligation and, as shown in a study, "some women were refusing to work on their husband's farms because of the uncertainty of ever benefiting."[48]

Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown the dynamics of women's involvement in agriculture and the nature of gender contestations. I have also raised questions, probably implicitly, about received notions on the impact of colonialism on women. In summary the paper attempted at opening another window towards an understanding of women's life histories over the forty years covered. A look at my sources shows a preponderance of archival sources, the target being to show the richness of the archives and how much material on women they contain. More importantly, archival materials show statistics concerning dates and production figures. Where they were lacking, oral information and participant observation supplemented the research. Archival information proved very useful because made it easier to ask specific questions, thereby saving time and resources that were lacking. Indeed I found out that my informants were willing to talk extensively, sometimes giving unsolicited but important information although I thought that I had found out almost everything. Secondly, I let my informants know that I cared about their condition and that my duty was to portray this to the extent that they were willing to let me know. This is slightly different from approaches that make the scholar seem to be somebody who wants the information solely for the purpose of getting a doctorate degree or a teaching promotion.

Notes

- I appreciate the assistance from my informants; Messrs Oladokun; Abioye; Segun Faleye; Mike Oragwa; Yemi Abraham; Mike Ihemadu; John Wale; and Misses Aribusola, Dupe Babalola, and Yemi of the National Archives, Ibadan; and the family of Samuel Ojo of Omu-Ekiti, a farming family par excellence.
1. A review of the literature on Yoruba women's economic role is contained in Olatunji Ojo, "Ekiti Women in Agricultural Production, 1890–1960", Masters dissertation (Ibadan University, 1996). See also my "More Than Farmers' Wives: Yoruba Women and Cash Crop Production, ca. 1920–1957," in *The Transformation of Nigeria*, ed. Adebayo Oyebade (forthcoming).
2. W. H. Bascom, *The Yoruba of South Western Nigeria* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), 20.
3. S. A. Agboola, "The Introduction and Spread of Cassava into Western Nigeria," *Nigerian Journal of Economic and Social Science*, 10, 3 (Nov. 1968).
4. A. G. Hopkins, *An Economic History of West Africa* (London: Longman, 1973), 30.
5. See Susan Martin, *Palm Oil and Protest: An Economic History of the Ngwa Region, Southeastern Nigeria, 1800–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
6. National Archive, Ibadan, (hereafter NAI), CSO 26/1/11874, vol. 14: *Annual Reports on Ondo Province*, 1936 and 1937, 778, 838.
7. Famine popularly called *Iyan Foworemi* (redeem your life with money).
8. NAI, Ib. Min. Agric. 1/368, p. 78; R. B. Kerr, Acting Resident, Ondo Province to R. H. Gretton, Sec. Western Provinces, 26/7/45.
9. A. O. Oguntuyi, *History of Ado Ekiti, Part II*, (Ado-Ekiti: Bamigboye Press, 1978), 124–25.
10. NAI, Ib. Min. Agric. 1/368, p. 22: R. L. V. Wilkes to R. B. Kerr, 21/6/45.
11. G.J.A. Ojo, "The Changing Patterns of Traditional Group Farming in Ekiti," *Nigerian Geographical Journal* 6, 1 (June 1963): 36.
12. Hopkins, *Economic History*, 30–31.
13. NAI, CSO 26/6/51597: Assessment Report, Ekiti Division 1928/29, (by Captain A. P. Pullen) pp. 103–317.
14. NAI, Ib. Min. Agric. 1/368, p. 174: R. B. Kerr to R. H. Gretton 2/6/46.
15. Interview with Chief Joel Ige, ca. 85 years, Omu Ekiti, January 7, 1993. Oral tradition from Isan and Ayede District associated cassava production with yam failure.
16. 1930–1938 Nigeria Blue Books, 1930, 1935, 1938; 1946—NAI, Ekiti Div. 1/1/665, vol. 2, p. 269; 1949—NAI, Ondo Prof. 1/1/2418, p. 4; 1954—NAI, Ondo Prof. 1/120A, p. 14; 1956—NAI, Ekiti Div. 1/1/102, p. 4.

17. For detailed studies of *gari* production, see William Bascom, "Yoruba Cooking," *Africa*, 21, 2 (April, 1931); Galletti, Baldwin, and Dina, *Nigerian Cocoa Farmers*, 368–70; Martin, *Palm Oil and Protest*, 66–77; O. B. Okuseinde, "Gari Production in Ijebu Remo: A Study of Growth and Development in a Local Economy, 1900–1950 (Master's diss., University of Ibadan, 1988), 12–18, 21, 83–100.

18. NAI, Ib. Min. Agric. 1/309: Quarterly Report on Food Production, Jan.—March 1941, Internal Trade, 14.

19. Interview with Madam Comfort Medebise, Omu Ekiti, 23/10/1995.

20. Interviews with Chief Aina Ajayi, Ayede Ekiti, 10/5/95; Comfort Oguntubi and Tinubu Egbeyemi, 17/1/1993; and Comfort Medebise, Comfort Adedoyin, and Ibironke Ojo, 12/5/1995. This reminds one of sugarcane and tobacco production in the Americas.

21. Martin, *Palm Oil and Protest*, 72.

22. NAI, Ondo Prof. 1/1/120A: Annual Report on Ekiti Division, 1953, p. 24.

23. Interviews at Ado-Ekiti with Madams Comfort Oguntubi and Dorcas Filani, 10/2/93; and Tinubu Egbeyemi, 12/2/93.

24. NAI, Ib. Min Agric. 1/1/98, p.11: D.S.Cook to R.E.S. Morgan, 13/5/1933.

25. NAI, CSO 26/1/11874, vol. 12: Annual Report on Ondo Province, 1932.

26. Interviews with Madam Bilikisu Awe, 55 years old, of the Aletile beer parlor, Iworoko, 23/12/94; Madam Alice Falade, about 59 years old, native of Igbemo but married to Matthew Falade of Omu, Ekiti, 15/10/95; and Mr. Saka Suberu, 42 years old, of 10 Temidire Street, Iworoko, 23/12/94.

27. A. B. Sheidu, "The History of Rice Cultivation in Igbemo Ekiti," B.A. essay, History, (University of Ibadan, 1988), 23.

28. NAI, Ib. Min. Agric. 1/359, p. 528: J. W. Shincard to W. R. Hatch, 27/2/48.

29. Interviews with Bilikisu Awe and Saka Suberu, Iworoko-Ekiti, February 22, 1995.

30. NAI, CSO 26/1/11874, vol. 17: Annual report on Ondo Prof., 1945, para. 74.

31. NAI, Ondo Prof. 1/1/110A: Annual Report on Ekiti Division, 1946, p. 9.

32. NAI, CSO 26/1/11871, vol. 18: Annual Report on Ondo Prof, 1949, para. 85.

33. NAI, Ekiti Div.1/1/102, vol. 11: Annual report on Ekiti Div, 1949, p. 5.

34. NAI, Ekiti Div. 1/1/102, vol. 12: Annual report on Ekiti Div. 1950, p. 9.

35. NAI, Ondo Prof. 1/2810, p.34: Oke Igbira Cooperative Rice Farmers' Society Limited.

36. "Western Board Releases Loans Details," *Daily Service*, 13/10/1953, p.1.

37. NAI, Ekiti Div. 1/1/102: Annual Report, Ekiti Division, 1956, p. 24.

38. Sheidu, "History of Rice Cultivation," p. 47.

39. NAI, Ekiti Div. 1/1/102: Annual Report, Ekiti Division, 1956, p. 24

40. NAI, Ekiti Division 1/1/94, vol. 11, p. 657: Ojo Arinola of Ado to District Officer, 26/1/54.
41. NAI, Ekiti Division 1/1/82, vol. 5, p. 370: Felicia Uyiola to President Court, Efon, District Officer and Divisional Adviser, 22/1/1998.
42. NAI, Ekiti Div. 1/1/94, vol. 12, p. 922: Kosenatu Agemo to the Assistant Local Government Inspector, Ekiti 24/1/56.
43. Peter Lloyd, *Yoruba Land Law*, pp. 212–14.
44. NAI, Ekiti Div. 1/1/1021: Annual Reports on Ekiti Division, 1956, p. 24 and 1957, p. 7.
45. Galletti, Baldwin, and Dina, *Nigerian Cocoa Farmers*, pp. 663–64.
46. Based on author's field observation. This table excludes tasks such as weeding which goes on throughout the year.
47. Christine Okali, *Cocoa and Kinship in Ghana: The Matrilineal Akan of Ghana* (London: Kegan Paul, 1983). Cf. Beverly Grier, "Pawns, Porters and Petty Traders: Women in the Transition to Cash Crop Agriculture in Colonial Ghana" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 17, 2 (Winter, 1992): 304–28.

21

Packaging Scholarship[1]

David Henige

I

In the past several years there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of scholarly journals that have undergone facelifts. Hoary old publications like the staid warhorses *Klio* and *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* (*RHE*), which had looked the same for at least sixty years, now have more external color and graphics to appeal to . . . whom? Will more scholars become interested in ancient or church history as a result of this? Will the inside content improve as well? Will the subscription rate increase, as has often happened when this occurs, since it is so much a by-product of falling into the clutches of for-profit publishers?[2] This is undoubtedly a result of the desktop publishing revolution and the concomitant reduction of certain production costs. It is also a particular example of a general principle—by all means *do* judge a book by its cover.[3] Sometimes the changes are minimally cosmetic—thankfully, for example, the *RHE* did not alter its dense typography at all.

But the shiny new appearance of many journals does extend from the cover to the pages. The most common ruse is to adopt more "user-friendly" type, but less of it per page in favor of more open spaces, as though the contemporary mind can absorb information at a lesser rate than of their predecessors. In these cases bright new cover graphics are often a tocsin that worse, or at least less, is to follow. In short, it is packaging.

II

The pursuit of knowledge is often treated as *sui generis*, beyond, and certainly above, the baser motivations that drive the temporal world and its despised bottom lines. Certainly the occasions are there to make this true, but on certain levels the engines that fuel scholarship are all too similar to those that underlie other aspects of life. In particular, there are grounds for looking at scholarly production as simply a market force. After all, the same network functions, with producers/creators, distributors, and consumers, each group playing similar roles in the two cases.

This has never been more than case than in these times, when information has become our most valued, and valuable, commodity. Here I want to look at scholarly research, writing, and publishing as an economist might.[4] This implies treating it as an ensemble of commodities, produced at a cost, assuming a particular form, having intrinsic but also contextual value; aimed at target audiences or market segments, and responding to oscillations in supply and demand. In other words, to think of it as a mutation of say, vitamin supplements with the same ingredients of products, packaging, and propagation.[5] In marketing, packaging and image (though packaging *is* an image) often matter more than content, sometimes even more than price, and thus affect effect as much as, if not more than any other element of the process. What a product "looks like" matters.[6] I take a broadly generic approach and include in packaging: (1) the way research is carried out; (2) the way it is pictured as carried out; (3) the discourse; (4) the accessories; (5) the advertising; and (6) the target market.

At the same time, it is well to bear in mind that in many particulars the marketing of scholarship also differs from its crassly commercial counterparts. It is aimed at a narrower, and more homogeneous, consumer base, one with ostensibly more sharply honed critical instincts. It does not have to meet mandated standards to the same degree than many other products do. In place of the Food and Drug Administration or Occupational Safety and Health Administration, there are editors and referees who can, and often do, operate in idiosyncratic fashion.

Visually, packaging in commerce sometimes relies on established traditional models (Wheaties, Quaker Oats, Hershey), sometimes by trying for bold new approaches that are often outlandishly and deliberately garish (ads for jeans, beer, or motor vehicles). Publishing scholarship necessarily operates a little differently. There is some visual range available—color photographs, type faces deemed to be user-friendly, and graphics (including maps). While these might well have an effect on the reader, it is seldom (ideally, never) the sole determinant.

Then too, scholarly production seeks to provide effect over both space and time rather than mounting saturation bombardment. In fact, it is infinitely consumable, although more laterally (across space) than vertically (through time). The first allows promotion, tenure, grants, and prestige. The second, and much the more difficult, aims for lasting influence. As often as not, these two goals are antagonistic. Scholarship is not much less susceptible to faddism than other products. In history we need only look back the length of an academic lifetime to see how many "solutions" to explicating the past have come, made their splash, and then sunk virtually without a trace. At their point of greatest market penetration, a scholar who is more interested in acclamation than interest can publish almost anything that supports the prevailing hegemonic theory.[7]

On the other hand, there are striking similarities. Once upon a time the market was fairly inelastic, and supply governed demand. There were fewer outlets per practitioner, and so the standards were more carefully defined, even exclusionary. Nowadays, in contrast, the solution—one I adopted myself—is to establish yet another new niche, or sometimes coterie, journal, either by using a specific eponym or by trading adjectives and nouns. Thus new journals have sprouted up called *Ghana Studies*, *Mande Studies*, *Early China*, or *Ancient Mesoamerica*. More common, it seems, is the expedient of spinning out the lexical possibilities: *Journal of Historical Geography*, *Journal of Geographical History*, *Studies in Historical Geography*, *Studies in Geographical History*, *Historical Geography Review*, *Historical Geography Quarterly*, etc., etc. etc. Only one of these is to my knowledge a real journal—so far—but this trend, particularly in the social sciences, is obvious for the looking. This clearly speaks to the advertising conundrum: do products fill needs, or do they create them?

III

"Research and development" are often blamed for the high price of consumer products, for instance, pharmaceuticals. Partly, this claim goes, this is because most R&D leads nowhere because no marketable products emerge from the exercise, because the products would be too expensive even for an affluent society, or because another manufacturer markets a competing product. All this despite market research, another expensive precursor of the product itself. At any rate, the costs become a dead loss for the manufacturer, who must recoup his losses elsewhere with its successes.[8]

Scholarly research bears resemblances to all these. Lines of thought—worse yet, lines of active research—prove to be dead ends because insufficient respectable evidence comes forth; the costs of

proceeding are too heavy in terms or time or money—archeology naturally comes to mind; a colleague or competitor—if they differ—steals a march. Of these the last is most infuriating, because it implies that a fair battle has been openly fought and lost. Research then begins with an examination of problems to be solved, or re-solved. These arise naturally from inquiry; are suggested by a mentor with his own agenda; are determined *faute de mieux* by constraints on travel or research oppotunities, language competence, or the like; or follow through on a longstanding personal agenda.

Whatever the case, market research is central to the process. Determining how fallow the field is, is *de rigueur*, and at this stage it is sometimes fortuitously discovered that others have established tenancy. This usually provokes a slight shift of emphasis, just enough to find the nearest uncleared path. Sometimes, seldom at the dissertation stage, attempts are made to evict the sitting occupants by pronouncing their work defective.

Once determined, research can be seen to have four market segments. The supervisor for dissertations; the community of readers whose favor is sought; funding agencies; and the author himself. In various circumstances one or another of the first three might predominate; there is no point in being brilliant if this proves the wrong market strategy at certain stages. After all, marketers have learned that being just good enough to be better than the competition can be the most rewarding state of affairs.[10] Egos must be massaged, current funding priorities must be discerned and pumped dry; potential colleagues, co-authors, and panel members must not be alienated. Largely, and initially, this is fair enough because, for a while, there are no reasonable alternatives. Just the same, at some point, best early, in a scholar's career, his research must begin to be predicated on his own interests and beliefs about what matters and why. When this moment occurs, it can boil down to deciding whether conscience or pragmatics prevail (of course, in secular marketing the choice is rather different and does not very often involve conscience).[11]

In short, it is likely that individuals' scholarly research will "look" different from one point in his career to another, and generally it should become more personally satisfying as time passes and the scholar achieves an independence of action that the academy discourages in its junior members. To outsiders, this transformation might be hard to recognize unless they are closely aware of the scholar's personal views. Otherwise, it might seem just a change of direction designed to grab onto the next cutting edge on its way by—and might be.

IV

Ineluctably, the shape of an argument tends to reflect the shape of the research that underlies it, so that the look of published arguments should change more or less in tandem with that research. These changes are rather more obvious, simply because they are more visible—or at least should be. Unsure of himself and of the world he is addressing, the fledgling scholar often ends up being schizoid, combining overuse of the active voice and indicative mood with a surfeit of citations to literature that, he hopes, supports this tactic. In part this might be because the topic is not really his preference, but one chosen for him during his career as graduate student *cum* unpaid researcher on behalf of his supervisor. Here enthusiasm and industry are notable by their absence, and there is too little interest—or too great a danger—to bother being critical.

Presumably, as one gathers professional momentum, this changes. Further research, or just unfettered thinking, produces a reaction and early work is disowned, or more likely ignored, once it has served a purpose—tenure. More often though, further reading and rumination simply lead committed scholars along different paths—or fashionable ones along trails blazed by others. In the latter case, the argument resembles the fledgling stage, with an orientation to reputed authorities' works rather than to their arguments, and might well include stretches of discourse with which the author is clearly inexperienced.

In the first case, however, the look of argument changes as much as its content. The author is fully prepared—and fully determined—to engage prior scholarship critically, to state his case confidently, and to treat criticism in its turn as part of the zetetic process. He becomes concerned with cases and not names, and for him there are no Names, merely arguments that succeed or fall on their merits. By the same token, he learns to eschew the active/indicative mode in favor of one that pushes for probabilities by using cautious yet confident discourse. By being a hunter, he realizes that he will also become the quarry. So be it.

In work of this nature, the argument will *look* somewhat like the dissertator's argument—long footnotes, a discussion of the literature of the field, a seemingly endless bibliography—but it will *be* very different. Quotations might still be frequent and longish, but they will be more pertinent; citations will be more precise—bespeaking close engagement rather than window-dressing; works in a greater variety of languages will appear in bibliographies; primary sources will be more than archival.[12] In terms of packaging this might seem full circle—decades of work with ultimately no progress. Of course, this is not the case at all, but merely an indication of how packaging misleads—the cereal box is now full, the small print grows by a few font sizes, fewer products of inferior quality are allowed to imitate their betters.

V

The idea that discourse is the key to successful argumentation goes back as far as there is a documentary record. The concept probably reached apogee under the Roman Empire, when rhetoricians such as M. Fabius Quintilian wrote entire treatises on *how* to say things in order to gain adherence. For the rhetoricians, arguing an unpopular cause to success was the very pinnacle of intellectual activity. When Henry Fonda, in the movie *Twelve Angry Men*, gradually changed the minds of his fellow jurors, he was practicing the very essence of the rhetorical arts in microcosm, and would have gained plaudits from Quintilian and others had they not died nearly 1900 years earlier. This does not quite mean that African historians should measure success by *how many* people's minds they change, but it can serve at least as a reminder that success and popularity are not inseparable bedfellows.

Still, changing minds is a measure of effectiveness that preaching to the converted can never be, but obviously enough, it is a sterner challenge as well. The first requirement is to be faithful to the evidence from the very beginning. This is no invitation to take the evidence as received, but a challenge to read it more carefully, sift it more finely, and seek further testimony. The last of these is often the easiest way to convince against interests, maybe too easy. Although new and discrepant evidence can be construed as a rhetorical device, it bespeaks more to the scholar's assiduousness than to his wits.

Impeaching evidence without the benefit of new data is more demanding, but should not be discouraged by the obvious risks of failure. In arguing a case, the intending heterodoxist must be seen by his audience to have assembled the evidence; searched, whether or not in vain, for further evidence; scrutinized that evidence; played devil's advocate with others *and with himself*; and finally to have drawn measured conclusions from this exercise. As noted, some of this process must be made visible to others, who might otherwise feel inclined to doubt on the basis of inadequate information.

How often does the same case have to be made? Most scholars elaborate multiple treatments of their major work over time; intended for different audiences; prompted by new data; or spurred by tenure, promotion, or curiosity. Certainly it would be too much to ask that the process be reiterated each time. As long as there is one locus for the full discussion, no more than further refinements are necessary. In this respect, different presentations will look different, at least in their emphases. But none

should be without either the full monty or a *précis* with reference to the full monty.

At the coalface level discourse must be measured, defensible, and nuanced. There is plenty of room for the impersonal tense, qualifying adjectives and adverbs, and weasel-words like "seems" and "perhaps."[13] The idea is to use these with restraint, and only in order to distinguish among levels of probability. But *pace* Strunk and White (and others), the crisp declarative sentence has little place in history written for other historians. In terms of discourse, argument has the look of long, not-easily-diagramed, sentences; words and phrases that express ambiguity where needed; and footnotes to explain the explanations.

To what degree historians visualize their audience is hard to say, but it seems safe to assert that, if they regard their readers at all, they see them are heartily agreeable, if sometimes under duress, with their line of reasoning. The author's job is simply to hurdle the refereeing process successfully. Having done so, it really does seem safe to assume that all is well. The paranoid historian is less certain of this. To a degree, lasting success depends on the author having at least a mild case of the Maurice Sendaks, by imagining (only, he hopes) that his work is going to be promptly subjected to the most intense scrutiny by his most avid critics.[14] He realizes the danger implicit in the refereeing system, but is intent on looking farther down the line—at consumer resistance. He knows that television programs, books, cars, and a host of other products passed preliminary tests only to crash in flames in the competitive marketplace. He might at one time have purchased an Edsel or a case of New Coke.

He also realizes that he has read a great deal that he found wrong, unsatisfying, or self-contradictory, and he wonders how it ever got published. In this situation the historian must change places with his readers and imagine how they might react to *his* arguments. If he can, he should learn to become his own worst critic—better he sooner than any number of others later. He must avoid surrounding himself with like minds who, as Rogers once complained of William Stubbs and E. A. Freeman, take turns complimenting each other's work.[15] At the very least he needs one—or more—confidants whose criticism, however harsh, he values and trusts. At the same time he must imagine a cartel of critics out there, eager to tear his latest work to shreds as soon and as publicly as they can. Or worse, a world of readers who ignore his work because it is poorly argued, presumptuous, or irrelevant.

If this sounds darkly gothic, it is partly for effect. Still, no scholar should assume a persistently friendly audience for his work, and strive to do no more than meet its limited expectations. And he should always—always—think long-term. The referees, the immediate readership,

is not unimportant, but if he wishes to be truly influential he must consider how durable his research and arguments will prove to be. If these are based on dangerously thin evidence and pitched in language and argument to the tune of the latest discernible trend, his work—and with it his influence—will last no longer than the trend does, and by definition trends have a brief shelf life.

There must be a look of modesty about the scholar's discourse. Not cloying false modesty, but a real sense that the work is tentative, presented for scrutiny rather than agreement, and colloquy rather than reflexive praise. Among other things, this means a minimum of congratulatory self-citation, no self-quoting whatever, first person intrusiveness kept to a minimum and then only to express that an opinion is a personal one rather than one necessarily shared by others; no clanging name-dropping as part of the citing process; no fawning foreword; no "undoubtedlys" or "as I have made clears"; and only a smattering of "of courses" or "naturallys."

VI

Both research and argument have typographical facets as well. No conscientious research proceeds exactly as envisaged; certain things wax in importance, while others wane. Some become text, some become notes, and some become fodder. The last we can ignore. Although it would probably be of interest to know more about these, this is not likely to happen, and is seldom worth pursuing beyond any revelations in the preface. In this differentiation, we discern an author's chosen priorities, at least as they stood at the point that writing was completed.

In this sense there is diagnostic value in considering the relationship between the larger and the smaller fonts. It is a domestic matter, but are relations harmonious, strained, or belligerent? Ideally an author should labor to make the two-font *corpora* truly complementary and not just supplementary. In other words, in their totality they should be to some degree greater than the sum of their parts. What are the likely effects of this effort on appearance? Should it result in a work where small font matter, italics, and Arabic numbers compete for equality with the larger, presumably more important, text. Publishers think not; many readers and some authors agree. The audience's eye, they say, should be drawn firmly and fairly to the larger font and remain situated there, with only an occasional foray to the annotation. Their grounds are disparate and by no means equivalent.

For publishers, small-font matter is an expensive nuisance, even, they argue, in today's quick-fix world of desktop publishing. They are constantly seeking expedients that cost less—in money anyway—and

presumably tell as much. Readers complain about the placement of notes and about the distractions they create for those who want a good story more than they want a good argument. These readers do not wish to know that an author's claim is disputed or insufficiently based, especially if they are disposed to concur with his case. In this view of things footnotes are pesky gnats, keeping us from absorbing our environment in relaxed fashion by being constantly reminded that corrosive forces are always at work.

The attitude of authors matters most. They after all must generate the work to produce the annotation, and this is not only strenuous, but dangerous. In a real sense, every note is either a real or a potential threat. A simple citation might encourage readers to test the author's case by following the path he has laid out for them—a case of attempted professional suicide? More elaborate footnotes often are designed to provide small-font discussions of differences of opinion among other authorities and between the author and those authorities.

Mostly, however, every note is an invitation to doubt, a chink in the author's armor. Each of them is an author's muted expression of uncertainty. Simple referencing is a self-defense mechanism, while more extensive annotation introduces readers to a larger world of colloquy with all the attendant dangers. Just a glance at the page of a book or article then has the potential to inform readers the degree of confidence an author possesses. No notes at all seems to suggest that the author is so certain of his case that he feels no need to do more than state it.

Or does it? Is any such correlation between argument and annotation straightline, inverse, or random? An author who publicly doubts by way of the apparatus might find that this captures his readers' goodwill by its forthrightness. Conversely, an author who declines to annotate is just as likely to arouse frustration and anger as assent. By these kinds of arguments, small-font text is a good thing, but we all know that good things can become either too good or too many, or both. The degree of annotation is determined by several contextual things: state of the evidence; state of the question; anticipated audience; field conditions and other pragmatics. How much of an author's travail should show up in published work, and how? Not to a postmodern degree where the work and the author are each other's *Doppelgänger*. But neither the older pseudo-scientific approach, in which it was taken for granted that the author's experiences had no effect on the production.

Books, like sentences, have parts, and as with sentences, all parts do not appear in every book. These include foreword, preface, acknowledgments (often now part of the preface), the main text, annotation at foot or end, appendixes, bibliography, and index, not necessarily always in this particular order. The way these appear, their sequence and their relative

magnitude, can be a diagnostic of the author's purpose. Although each of these implicitly treats an author's mind and method, none does so more explicitly—if done correctly—than the preface. Many prefaces are perfunctory, little more than preambles, consisting of a token *réchauffé* of the work with acknowledgments, often in the form of bemused name-dropping. Such prefaces are forewarnings of the argument to follow.

Conversely, an author can use the preface as a chance to orient his readers to both his mind and his method. It is the first thing he writes and the last thing he rewrites. This is not an occasion to dwell on himself, but rather his relationship to his work—the compass between where he began and where he is; where he thinks he succeeded, where he failed; the questions he has answered, the questions he has raised; the next step, whether his or others'; his conclusions in the context of others' work. When a preface is revealing and when readers attend to it carefully, the communication between author and reader is enhanced because the latter are allowed to accompany the author on parts of his own journey.

Another accessory, seldom considered except to condemn, is the epigraph. To some, the epigraph, like a modern antimacassar, is an Edwardian affectation, but this view lacks imagination. The well-considered epigraph serves the same purpose as the gift card or the instructions on a frozen lasagna. It quickly orients the reader to the premises of the author without the need to descend to the topic sentence level.

VII

Pliny the Elder is credited with saying "always something new out of Africa," and modern Africanists have parlayed this into a corporate feeling that theirs is truly a new departure.[16] This allows them to set their own standards in terms of argument and proof. It has also encouraged them to focus too closely on Africa, as though "something new" justified this. It does not; what was true in Pliny's time is plainly no longer so. For Pliny, Africa was exotic, but so would the Far East or the Americas have been, had he been aware of their existence. In the two millennia since, the entire world has been investigated to varying degrees of thoroughness, so that Pliny's observation is now no more than a oddment.

That is, works of history should always look a little piebald. Why then are Africanist historians—and they are not alone—so reluctant to take account of the experience of peoples in other parts of the world, as well as the experience of historians in studying these? While no end in itself, argument by analogy is a legitimate—in fact an inescapable—tool in assessing probabilities. In general, comparison breeds the instinct to be

cautious in claiming too much, lest the weight of *all* the evidence be cast against, or dropped on, the scholar. In truth, at this level of analysis, there is little that can be attributed only to the African experience—or the American or the Japanese or the German. Little occurred anywhere that had no analog elsewhere. Knowing this leads to a different form of argumentation, as well as a more tempered sense of purpose.

Take disease experiences. Besides having its mote of indigenous diseases, Africa has been cursed with introduced diseases that have had various effects and various treatments over time and space. But similar combinations of factors occurred in the Americas in the sixteenth century, in Oceania in the nineteenth century, in Iceland and Japan at various points, in China practically every time a conquering horde swept down from the north, and so forth. And Africa is a *parvenu* when it comes to the contours and effects of "indirect rule." Minus the name, this began in Palestine in the fourteenth century B.C. and has proliferated ever since. Perhaps the most resemblant case is Mesoamerica in the sixteenth century, where the process of imposing "traditional" rulers and the consequences were very similar to what happened in Malaya, the Moluccas, and southern Sulawesi about the same time; in the Hellenistic world 1700 years earlier; or in Africa and Oceania four centuries later. Being able to draw on such cases can strengthen conclusions that would otherwise be based entirely on small sets of examples, or it might serve to modify these conclusions, which is after all the typical by-product of introducing new data.

VIII

The targeted user group obviously affects packaging, but with all the bibliographic databases now available, scholars are even less certain than ever whom they will reach. They are sure only that it is not as large an audience as their work deserves. For our purposes, there are four distinct audience groups: these who know and care something about the subject; those who know but don't care; those who might care if they knew; and—the largest group—those who neither know nor care. The first group, which might he regard as a natural constituency, is already converted and, while the historian's work might add details, change emphasis, and strengthen arguments, it probably can do little to broaden the base, and it is usually not necessary to include large leavens of annotation.

The other three groups involve proselytizing to one degree or another, and this directly affects the shape of the argument. If we are aiming at the second group (but why?), we need to concentrate less on providing data than in applying congenial arguments. With the last two groups it gets more interesting, and in ways that again modify the portrait of our

argument. With the third group, we still want to concentrate on providing argument, but we need as well to provide data (sometimes textually, sometimes by annotation) in order to move the audience from ignorance to informed interest.

We might tend simply to write off the last group, but in a sense it is the most important of all; certainly it is the one that provides the best whetstone for our argumentative skills. Here we need first to arouse attention, then interest, followed by curiosity, and finally goodwill. This requires a very different template than for the first group, or even for the second and third. Whereas the first are already allies and the second and third might need friendly persuasion or small arms, this last group requires a combination of *all* the diplomatic skills from bribery to bludgeoning to bombardment, all disguised of course as reasoned thinking and packaged accordingly.

IX

Comparing the production of scholarly research and arguments with merchandising, one of humanity's more gratuitously odious activities, might seem curious, if not downright slanderous. I hope that I have demonstrated though that, at certain analytical levels and allowing for at least slightly different attitudes, there is merit in accepting the commonalities. If nothing else, we can see how Gresham's Law can work in crannies far removed from the circulation of money. Or rather, that shiny new coins do not necessarily carry more value than ones that are old, dirty, and dented.

If it is possible to identify the causes and effects of certain kinds of patterns in scholarly packaging at the mid-range level, at the level of detail the only observable pattern is that everything is disconcertingly contingent. If twenty authors were provided with twenty identical pieces of data, some true, some false, the response would be twenty interpretations expressed in twenty different ways and in twenty lengths—in other words, twenty packages. To go a step further, if the same twenty authors were given an identical text to edit and revise, the results would be the same—in the end there would be twenty versions, each of which would reflect both the content of the text and the compass of the individual author-editors. To push the point to an extreme, the text in front of readers here could never be replicated, only duplicated. If I had created, revised, and rerevised in any pattern different from the actual—and serendipitous—one, the results would be severally and markedly different. No less different would have been the results had I not had the convenience of word-processing at hand; for better or worse I would have signed off on the paper much sooner merely because of the ergonomic trade-offs. In other words, at the micro-level all scholarly

packaging is the one-time conjuncture of innumerable tiny, unrepeatable, and even indiscernible factors.

None of this is a secret, and never has been, except perhaps during the last part of the nineteenth century, when historians were apt to confuse their sources with scientific evidence and their work with laboratory experimentation. To some this contingency means that there are—because there can be—no truths, so why bother sapping our energy by searching for them. For others it is testimony that the same fundamental truths can be expressed in a number of ways without compromising their essentiality. For still others, it is a reminder that whatever truths there are—and it is accepted that there are many—make elusive targets, but targets nonetheless. And our choices are inevitably affected by the ways in which we encounter evidence and argumentation, both in the work of others and in our own. And along the way we should never forget that our most important market is posterity.

Notes

1. Or "what should research and argument look like?"
2. Thus when the bibliographical tool *Documentatieblad* was taken over by a for-profit publisher in 1994, it promptly changed its cover and its name to *African Studies Abstracts*, and tripled its cost, but nothing at all inside.
3. One editor has described it as "trying to capture visually what you've been trying to capture verbally all along." Judy Austin, *Idaho Yesterdays*, to chj@h-net.msu.edu, 6 March 2001.
4. One sometimes scholarly format not discussed here, but worth attention in terms of packaging and marketing, is the website.
5. Omitted will be projections of profitability, since we all realize that any parallels end here.
6. In some ways there is nothing particularly new about thinking about how an argument looks. Already in secondary school we were taught to use planning outlines, topic sentences, and summary arguments at the beginning and end of a paper. The abstract is a more latter-day expedient. The idea, I guess, is not to surprise readers, but it can often be more memorable to blindside readers when they are least expecting it, and this requires a more complex approach.
7. Or even that which only appears to support it. For a notorious example see *The Sokal Hoax: The Sham That Shook the Academy* (Lincoln, 2000).
8. To keep to the matter at hand, this is very much the pattern in academic publishing, where "popular" titles carry esoteric ones and libraries carry individuals, and hardbacks carry paperbacks.
9. What we think we know about the African past, for instance, has been very much shaped by where researchers have been able to work freely since

independence. Countries with open-door policies and generally stable conditions (e.g., Botswana, Cameroun, Ghana, parts of Nigeria) have inevitably been more densely studied than others (e.g., Chad, Guinea-Conakry, Mozambique) where restictive governmental policies or uncertain conditions have prevailed.

10. Two examples from track and field history make the point. Over fifteen years, Sergei Bubka broke the indoor and outdoor pole vault records no fewer than 35 times by squeezing out a centimeter here, two there. In contrast, in 1968 Bob Beamon broke the long jump record by so much (6.5%) that neither he nor anyone else was able to break it for nearly twenty-five years, and then by only .7%. In the record book then, Bubka gets 35 times as much exposure as Beamon.

11. And of course authors markets their own ideas in hopes of becoming latter-day General Motors or Col. Bullmooses.

12. Take nineteenth-century travel acounts, which are most often used in their most convenient published versions and treated as primary sources. Behind many of these, however, are early drafts, and behind these in turn correspondence which, if used, are more likely than not to cast a very different light on what finally emerged for the public gaze.

13. Other pseudo-weasel-words, such as "could have" and "must have" are anathema, however, because their very purpose is to presume beyond the evidence.

14. Of course, in reality this is a conceit, since most of our work goes unnoticed by the larger community of scholars.

15. J.E.T. Rogers, quoted in William Stubbs, *Letters of William Stubbs, Bishop of Oxford, 1825–1901*, ed. W. H. Hutton (London, 1904), 149–50.

16. Pliny, *Natural History*, VIII.17. This is always rendered as "semper ex Africa aliquid novi"; in fact, Pliny wrote "semper aliquid novi Africam adferre" (same English translation) and described it as "the common saying of Greece."

22

Mindscapes of Politics in Africa:
Twixt Remembering and Forgetting

Peyi Soyinka-Airewele

*The struggle of man against power is the struggle of
memory against forgetting.*
Milan Kundera

Introduction

This paper[1] examines an alternative framework for understanding the
crises of political transitions in African countries (post-colonial, post-
apartheid, and post-authoritarian), situated within the complex processes
involving the construction and functionalization of collective memories
within the political arena. In investigating African politics through these
frames, the analyst is impelled not only to examine "objectified historicity,"
but to seek to understand the impact of the selective remembering/forgetting
of the past on the present contestation for power and on the need and search
for communal catharsis and justice.

This essay does not aspire to provide a definitive theorization of
collective memory, described by Markovits and Reich as "only tangentially
related to the truth" (1997,14). It approaches collective memory in the
discourse of African transitional politics from an interdisciplinary
perspective, engaging without apology in memory work that bestows the
subject with the status of "free floating phenomena" so decried by Gillis in

Commemorations (1994). The subject of memory has certainly been neglected by political scientists who have, quite unfortunately, regarded it as soft politics or the jurisdiction of cultural anthropologists. Contrary to this traditional tendency to construe the study of memory as "schmaltzy," a growing body of political science literature reveals the rendering of collective political memor(ies) as a "critical ingredient in the politics, and legitimation of political behavior, processes and institutions of every society at any point in time" (Markovits and Reich, 18).

The ongoing processes of democratization and peace building in many African countries, for instance, are palpably imbued with unresolved and unarticulated echoes of the past: atrocity, marginalization, state terrorism, and elite impunity. While the tensions and violence that have marked electoral processes across the continent have much to do with the struggle to control national resources as well as the lives of those who depend on them, a thoughtful examination of popular discourse on political actors, groups, and processes quickly exposes a realm of collective memories that assiduously impacts the contemporary political theater. Indeed, the African experience of colonialism, apartheid, militarized politics and state repression, poverty, and ethno-national conflicts would lead us to expect no less.

Thus a critical project for scholars and activists alike is the need to explore the construction and interplay of memory and amnesia in struggles to advance beyond a turbulent past, and to interrogate the domestic and global influences on the uses of the past and the mapping of the future. In this short piece, I argue that while the rhetoric of premature "confession," "forgetting," and "forgiving" is a politically and socially attractive strategy rooted in the pragmatism of collective survival, it often precludes the communal catharsis essential for preventing future impunity in the socio-political arena. I also suggest that an increasing number of African societies will discover that liberal democracy may prove insufficient in itself for answering the moral debate aroused by the memories of marginalized groups.

The Crisis of "Remembering" in African Politics

Halbwachs's somewhat controversial differentiation between memory and history is instructive in examining African politics: history, he argues, "is an externalized, universalistic and objectified process of preserving the past in a cognitively accountable manner. If such is the task of history, collective memory is about 'experience and feeling'" (Halbwachs, 1980, 1992). In contrast to history, he interprets collective memory as a "phenomenon of the present . . . a contemporary experience, a constant

reinterpretation of the historic past," which can be pluralized as "many different contradictory memories can co-exist in every society, harmoniously or otherwise." This summary consignment of collective memory to the realm of the subjectified present has been rejected by scholars who query representations of history as objective, and have argued that collective memory must be understood in all its complexities as much "more than a backwards construction after the fact" (Werbner 1998, 2).

Building upon these debates, one can argue that the rendering of collective political memory (used here in a multi-layered singular and plural sense), actually underscore its "presentist" as well as "historical" attributes. It is a phenomenon of the past, felt, experienced, and conjured, as it were, to the present. Thus in politics, obdurate residues of the past are reconstituted and fostered by modern means for contemporary purposes. The tragedies of the socio-political space in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Rwanda are vivid reminders of the volatility of memory and of its functionalization in the political realm. While the "remembering" in Liberia fostered the demand for a radically new political formula for power, it also culminated in the devastation of the society, so euphemistically labeled "the Liberian Tragedy." Thus the functioning of collective memory in the political space does not necessarily or easily lend itself to the attainment of justice, peace, or an eradication of oppression.

Indeed the experiences of South Africa, Burundi, Uganda, and the pro-democracy movement in Nigeria, for instance, demonstrate that the plurality of ethnic and racial memories within one communal space is likely to instigate tensions that may threaten the process of change. Victims and radical reformers who wish to address the past are likely to be vigorously countered by the perpetrators and their allies (beneficiaries), who wish to entomb the past and may be willing to reverse the process of change in an effort to do so.

Not surprisingly, the "final solution" in Nigeria's turbulent political transition of the last decade, appeared to be the very convenient "deaths" of two core political actors, military dictator Sanni Abacha and imprisoned presidential aspirant Moshood Abiola (popularly regarded as the winner of the 1993 National elections). By 1998, these two personalities had acquired a somewhat stable public utility as symbols of contested memories, interests, and identities: the authoritarian past/present versus the democratic future, reactionary versus progressive concerns, and a range of conflicting ethno-geographical mythico-histories and interpretations.

Their sudden deaths within a month of each other spawned persuasive narratives of "divine providence" versus "dastardly assassination," but an important political engineering process embedded within the workings of political memory had been initiated, namely the facilitation of a new

political mindscape for transitional politics, which would permit the manipulation of amnesiac rememberings, deter the movement towards an uncompromising approach to social justice, and perhaps clear the way for a new, if uncertain, negotiated future.

As a means perhaps, of navigating such uncertain terrain, there is, across the board, a complex selectivity involved in the invocation of memories by a community or groups. This selectivity of memory in the communal space reflects the intricate interplay of power and positional realities and internal, external, elite, and mass goals and concerns, but is often interpreted as amnesia or a "decision" to forget and set aside the past. Political and cultural amnesia is obviously a much abused concept alternately invoked to describe situations as dissimilar as the rapproachement and accommodation informed by deep structural religious or cultural resolution, the pragmatic appeasement that may be offered by communities confronted by entrenched and abusive power, the involuntary and oft temporary erasure of trauma by survivors, or even an emerging communal or intergenerational consensus on the changing agenda for socio-political priorities. Its nature notwithstanding, political amnesia remains of interest because it often bespeaks an incapacitating crisis of memory in an environment of impunity.

Sharon Hutchinson, for instance, has argued that the continuing military confrontations between the Sudanese national government and the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) remain deeply rooted in a politics of memory. She suggests that much of what currently passes for governmental authority (*buom kume*) in war-devastated Nuer regions of South Sudan relies on little more than the demonstrated power to kill with impunity and to declare such acts devoid of all social, moral, and spiritual consequences for the perpetrators (Hutchinson 1998, 58). By incapacitating and crippling the moral dimensions of memory, the Sudanese government legitimated its narrative of rights, power, and violence, on a field of Nuer resistance and accommodation.

The global context has often exacerbated the difficulties of addressing the past for many African societies. During the cold war for instance, Western powers provided external legitimation that shielded a number of African governments, including Zaire's Mobutu Sese Sekou, for example, from domestic accountability. By so doing, they not only recanted on the notion of rights as it applied to these societies, but also decisively disrupted and crippled the internal moral discourse of memory, justice, and closure. Today, the process continues to be distorted as the struggles of marginalized groups such as the oil-producing communities in Nigeria are subsumed within the politics of the global economy, global political environmentalism, and a domestic agenda of regime survival.

The utilitarian nature of a "memory crisis" can be quite striking. For the perpetrator, through manipulation, repression, deliberate forgetting, and outright erasure it serves as an instrument of continued immunity in the pursuit of state/elite-defined goals. No wonder Des Pres observed in his writings on the Armenian Genocide that the effacement of memory, is "not so much the weakness of recall as it is the product of all-too-wakeful consciousness. . . . The fury of the deniers comes from the fact that they must first talk themselves out of what everyone knows to be the truth before they can try to enjoin others to sustain a lapse of memory" (Des Pres 1986; Hovannisian 1992).

However, for the victims of socio-political and economic oppression in African societies, both remembrance and amnesia are equally problematic options. The "forgetting" and "forgiving" of victimhood can be partly understood as a mechanism that permits a conditional survival, recovery, pursuit of limited interests, and a renewal of hope within the parameters of a brutal political arena. But very often, the difficulties that emerge in the present are then re-contextualized in memory, thereby evoking the influence of past betrayals of national or group trust over more recent memories.

The electoral processes in many African countries, including Nigeria and Ghana, have been "distinguished" by the resurfacing and successful politicking of prominent actors who had been previously indicted or convicted of a variety of crimes related to violations of public trust. Their successful bids for office in the new "democratic" dispensation has been dismissed by a number of western analysts as being symptomatic of societies that forget their past. Our analysis of political amnesia must be more nuanced. The presumption that African people lack an ability to make use of the past in effecting desired political changes has been a staple of western discourse of the "African Crisis," and it is rooted in untenable assumptions about the political and social competence of Africans.

In its most benign form, the prevailing discourse suggests that African masses are apathetic and uninformed, myopically tribalistic, lacking in the values and norms of a democratic culture, and incapable of voting according to rational and ethical convictions (see Monga 1995). More astute observers may assume this better describes voting behavior in many Western societies. The political struggles in Africa have for many years demonstrated the existence of vital, irrepressible, and politically aware societies that cannot be dismissed as lacking the moral force of memory.

What must be acknowledged is that societies do approach and address the past through a variety of fluid and crosscutting mechanisms that depend on factors outside the gamut of supposedly "objectified history." Markovits suggests that group memory can be examined in three dimensions: the narrative, in which the past is rendered in the selection of elements of

national experience; the evaluative, in which the rendered past is simultaneously assessed and qualified through the selection and juxtaposition of events; and the prescriptive, in which this selective evocation of the past gives rise to prescriptions for action in the contemporary and future political sphere (Markovits, 18).

In the interplay of narratives and their outcomes, it would appear that the question of "power" and "survival" (economic, social, military, and political) has been particularly influential in determining the process of change in much of the African post-colony. A predominant manifestation of the power imperative is in the rendering of collective memory as a tool of the political elite and governing class in Africa, while the alternation of "forgetting" and accommodation has emerged as a part of the survival strategies of other groups within the larger society. Yet such demarcations are not clear-cut. The configuring of collective memories as collective power is also evident in the sustained political resistance within the nationalist, "pro-democracy," and minority rights movements across the African continent.

If what is so commonly described as amnesia and forgetting can be reinterpreted, understood, and functionalized as a critical "phase" of seemingly dormant processing contextualized within a survivor's remembering, then the continuity of the struggle for rights, peace, or social justice is first acknowledged and then made possible. Thus, I suggest that political amnesia must be approached as located within and not outside the cycle of "wakefulness" and memory. This break with the more traditional perspective on amnesia and memory must inform policy and practice in post-conflict societies.

The history of protracted conflict in Africa suggests a need to seize upon these interludes of "amnesia" with as much informed sensitivity and focused attention as on periods of overt or violent resistance for creating the frameworks that will deliberately revisit the past and construct a lasting resolution. It is my position that in Nigeria, for instance, the period of national "accommodation" and "reconciliation" following the civil war was the ideal period to have provided a re-signification of its causes, atrocities and outcomes for the country's postwar generations.

Tribunals and hearings that purport to address recent national histories are, of course, becoming an increasingly popular pastime of many African regimes, authoritarian and otherwise, that wish to demonstrate their allegiance to peace—a break with the past and legitimation of the present. Unfortunately, (except perhaps, for the still-debated Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa), few have succeeded in even addressing the loss of public trust and the political tensions that pervade fractured African societies. Moreover, faced with the reality of an

authoritarian past and the continued violence of the nascent democratic sphere, many African communities have temporarily elected to contend for the future without seeking resolution of the past. This crisis of memory as public practice is not unique to Africa. Renato Constantino's somber reflection on the Filipino experience is particularly relevant to Africa:

> We see our present with as little understanding as we view our past because aspects of the past, which could illumine the present, have been concealed from us. . . . As a consequence, we have become a people without a sense of history. We accept the present as given, bereft of historicity. Because we have so little comprehension of our past, we have no appreciation of its meaningful interrelation with the present. (Assefa and Wachira 1996, 10)

Such concerns about the incapacitating erasure of memory in post colonies are hardly misplaced. But, we must remember that the sterile official *commemoration of buried memory* has become one of the de-signifying political paradoxes thrust at a generation of Africans caught betwixt the traumas of recent national histories and the violence of the systematic colonization of history, of thought, of ideology, of myths and achievements, and the positioning of the memories of the dominant global 'core' against the marginalized and oppressed.

Conflicting Memories and Sustainable Peace

The literature on peace building and peace sustainability is a rich and rapidly growing one. However, few bridges have been built between the research on peace, development, and social justice and the writings of scholars who have undertaken the task of clarifying the construction, functionalization, and impact of collective memory in the politics of traumatized societies and transitional democracies. Despite the deluge of literature inspired by the South African experience with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a costly disconnect remains in the literature.

In a study titled *Breaking Cycles of Violence*, Janie Leatherman and colleagues concluded that "successful conflict prevention requires policy actors to cover the bases by engaging key societal players, monitor through engagement to discover the causes of conflict, cultivate networks as a source of power, and build coalitions of national and international stakeholders for peace" (Leatherman et al. 1999, 182). But the barely veiled consensus among policy actors at the national and international levels and practitioners working in protracted conflict settings in African countries has been that the volatility of socio-cultural and political memory precludes

direct and sustained engagement with communal discourse on the past except within formally constituted judicial commissions.

Such "indirect peace building" becomes particularly attractive to many international actors because it can be perceived as apolitical by national authorities, yet create access to conflicting groups in an apparently neutral arena. (Anderson 1995; Leatherman et al. 193). The political elite in many African states, on the other hand, are encased within machineries of state power and authority equally supportive of continued denial, suppression, manipulation, or effacement of memory. Thus, external and internal consensus on the value of dormant memory or amnesia rapidly emerges even among the more altruistic proponents of reconstruction, development, and transitional democracy. However, the study of the politics of memory interjects rather disquieting questions about the sustainability of peace and, ultimately, the survival of development and participatory democracy in communities with sharply conflicting collective memories.

Indeed, in commenting on the politics of remembering in countries such as Burundi, some scholars have conceded that a central difficulty in breaking the cycle of violence is the inability to address effectively the past because of the prevalence of opposing mythologies, or "mythico-histories," which represent the construction and functionalization of collective memories by the affected groups. Thus, Lemarchand notes that, before the 1993 collapse of order in Burundi, two radically different and incompatible mythologies had emerged out of two perfectly plausible and complementary lines of reasoning, leaving little room for compromise insofar as they have acquired the force of dogma among some groups on both sides of the ethnic divide (1993, 161).

Leatherman and colleagues have also concluded that to understand the nature of that conflict requires recognizing that each group has constructed and constantly fortifies its own edifice of moral justification for its position on the origins, the nature, and the ideal outcome of the struggle. Even more important is the fact that the two sets of opposing collective recollections have "seldom been openly shared and even less often subjected to sustained critical examination within their own respective communities" (Malkki 1995; Leatherman 1999).

Unfortunately, in spite of the array of scholars who have designed frameworks for operationalizing the prevention of conflict or human rights violations, few of these can be considered to be persuasive either in their theorization or utility partly because of the narrow eurocentric concepts of "world order" and global security that pervade their approaches to conflict in the global "other." However, John Lederach has continued to develop the intriguing paradigmatic shift away from issue-specific conflict resolution and toward a frame of reference that provides a focus on the restoration and

rebuilding of relationships that have been part of the controversial political engineering in post-apartheid South Africa (Lederach 1997). Some of the controversy in South Africa emanated from the rejection of the manipulation of political memory evident in the very use of terms such as "restoration" and "reconciliation," which are suggestive of a mere disruption of a historic friendship (clearly mythic) between blacks and whites as well as the privileging of a stable polity over social justice for the victims of systematized racist atrocity.

Nevertheless, in Lederach's influential work, *Building Peace, Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, the reader is exposed to conceptual scaffolding that might help to bridge the disconnect between sustainable peace and development processes and enhance our understanding of the intersection of the past, present, and future. For instance, Lederach's Positive Dilemma Formulation, emerges out of a central concern with memory and reconciliation and he argues that:

> Reconciliation as a concept and a praxis endeavors to reframe the conflict so that the parties are no longer preoccupied with focusing on the issues in direct manner. Its primary goal and key contribution is to seek innovative ways to create a time and a place, within various levels of the affected population, to address, integrate, and embrace the painful past and the necessary shared future as a means of dealing with the present. (Lederach 1997, 35)

In a study conducted by Brown and Rosecrance (1999, 11) on the costs of conflict, the authors note that an unexplored niche for actors seeking to overturn patterns of cultural and social discrimination is to be found in addressing distorted histories and perceptual factors that generate certain kinds of conflicts. Unfortunately, as Lederach notes, we are much better equipped to respond to the humanitarian crises produced by war than we are to deal with the dynamics and root causes that produce those crises; ultimately the "field of peace building and conflict transformation is still in its infancy in developing this application, both conceptually and practically" (Lederach 1997, 31).

Marginalization, Disaffection, and Voice: The Panacea of Multi-Party 'Democracy'?

More than at any other time, African elections are marked with a growing demand for retroactive accountability by individuals, progressive media, and civil and human rights organizations. In several African countries, such assertions of the right of voice by minorities and

marginalized groups have accelerated with the incursion of competitive politics and are slowly gaining ground as critical issues in the public domain. This trend notwithstanding, there have been very few satisfactory outcomes in the resolution of past violations of public trust or the moral debate instigated by the previously marginalized. In the face of such escalating demands, a coalescence of factors, including elite compromise, unexpected political reversals, and other pressing socio-economic issues have led to two broad positions: the first is expressed as an inclination to forgo resolution, "its no use crying over spilt milk" (as a commercial in the new South Africa loudly exhorted in 1999) and the second as a triumph of optimism, "it will all be resolved within the new liberal democratic dispensation."

In fact, most contemporary African nations have very few 'sites of memory' that distill the past and create a framework for the future, and the fluid intersectionality of memory and identity continues to engender religious pogroms, intra-communal violence, and even state collapse. Yet these are all part of the patchwork that stirred the "wave" of democratization in the continent. Thus, in this context, the call to discount collective memory and its contradictions will only generate platitudes far removed from peoples life experiences and concerns. Fears over group marginalization and disempowerment are powerful and, I would argue, "rationally progressive" attitudes, particularly in countries with a political history of authoritarianism, ethnic domination, and state brutality.

As Werbner observed, potentially explosive situations are created when people are subjected to buried memory and feel compelled, at a future date, to unbury the memory and reject their past submission (1998b, 9). The periodic explosions of racial tensions in the United States demonstrate this outworking of suppressed collective memories. In its role as a catalyst and product of political and social discourse, collective memory performs contradictory functions. Since it represents the convoluted "link" between past and present, in-group and out-group, its inherent turbulence offers scholars and practitioners the opportunity to track and address the challenges posed by the search for peace, justice, and social change in the post-authoritarian period.

In a study of marginalized groups in the United States, Melissa Williams argues that liberal representation is inadequate in guaranteeing principles of democratic freedom and equality for groups, particularly when there is a history of state-sponsored discrimination against the group and the continuance of social, economic, and political inequality along group lines (1998,14). She also contends that the definition of fair representation in terms of an individualistic notion of procedural democratic equality

(adopted by many African nations) does not secure the visibility or constitutional protection of excluded or brutalized groups.

If indeed the most potent locus of collective memory is within the groups and sectors of society that possess a shared memory of discrimination and a conviction of shared political interests in the present (ibid.), a critical consideration emerges for democratizing regimes in Africa: how can resolution for group memory be deliberately constituted in order to rebuild trust in societies characterized by patterns of structural inequality and cultural injustices? When we consider that "contemporary cultural injustice toward members of a marginalized group can take the form of a *public failure to acknowledge* the injustice of a group's historical experience" (Williams, 17, emphasis mine), then it becomes clear that the "democratic" electoral processes (multipartyism) adopted by an increasing number of African countries cannot of themselves satisfactorily provide closure and resolution of the past.

Political analysts must remain sensitive to the fact that it is not only the original events that incense or worry voters and create voting patterns based on memory, it is "their contemporary and repeated enactment on an annual basis, which renders them so real" (Markovits, 16). The experiences of many African societies, both real and mythical, are re-enacted in current experiences of political powerlessness and social hardships. In this sense, collective memory becomes more than a locus of identity, it is also a source of power and resistance and is projected into politics.

Not surprisingly, the polarization of narratives has deepened during the transitional politics of many African states. Vivid illustrations of this can be found in the widespread use of political "memoirs" as part of the countdown to multiparty elections. What we might call "memoirization" becomes an instrument of private "memory" made public and used invidiously to mobilize, form, and reconstitute political bases; revive waning affiliations; reconcile with former adversaries; repudiate ideological beliefs; and gain new constituencies. Against this backdrop, the nature of public challenges or responses to the appropriation and exploitation of collective memories becomes critical in post-authoritarian states.

Even without resort to dramatic and expensive judicial hearings, and beyond the electoral process, social catharsis and meaningful democratic participation might be facilitated as the society is drawn into a process that permits and encourages individuals and groups to "throw their voices" into the public arena, while sustaining the acceptance of multiple narratives and the repudiation of misinformation and denial. Academic institutions appear to be strategically advantaged in facilitating initial public discourse on specific aspects of collective memory and its resolution. However, as the South African hearings demonstrate, the "collective pot" must incorporate

the experiences and issues critical to the widest range of ethnic, religious, class and gender based populations.

There are dangers inherent in this process, including the tendency for a rapid degeneration into political "witch-hunting"; a desensitization of the electorate through an avalanche of "confessions"; an alienating "confirmation" of popular myths and perceptions of the religious or ethnic "other"; and an exacerbation of tensions, frustrations and anger. Richard Werbner indeed highlights a key dimension to this challenge: "the postcolonial memory crisis, emerging widely across the African continent, is not merely over what is to be publicly remembered or forgotten. The challenge in everyday life, in major public occasions and in disruptive events of terror and civil unrest is to the very means and modes of remembrance" (Werbner 1998a, 1). Yet, the inevitability of a social quest for justice and closure justifies a proactive channeling of scholarly efforts to the search for effective strategies that harness the past to the present and the future.

Conclusion: Re-Signifying the Past

It is certainly unlikely that material and social reparations for individuals or groups will occur even in societies undergoing democratic transitions. The economic crisis in many African countries as well as the domestic context of continued political oppression, sharp socio-economic disparities, and ethnic conflicts are often reinforced in the transitional process and may prevent even limited types of restitution. Thus scholars and professionals engaged in the search for post-conflict recovery, socio-political, and economic development in Africa will encounter unique challenges of finding effective means of resolution and healing.

A few societies have sought to come to terms with the past by reinforcing public acknowledgment of victims and achieving some modicum of social justice and resolution through international, regional, and domestic judicial processes. Sally Falk Moore observes that such courageous activists are in a sense, archivists for the future, "they are establishing a documented file in their own countries to support future collective memory" (1998, 134). Unfortunately, the use of judicial instrumentality by victims is less celebrated than the political show trials orchestrated by new regimes. Major actors of the political opposition and the old regime have repeatedly been put in the dock to face charges that seek to discredit the old and legitimate the new at the same time, but in reality, regimes accused of gross abrogation of human rights have often been able to re-negotiate absolution through the manipulation of power and

privilege, international ambivalence, the support of global capital, and the pragmatism of domestic political accommodation.

Rwanda and Burundi are vivid reminders that validating collective memory through judicial means is actually very difficult in countries with transitional political systems where the legal process itself needs to be reconstituted. Moore has drawn attention to the ease with which legalistic formats are harnessed to repressive means, particularly when the state has already used courts and related institutions directly and unambiguously to crush opposition. In 1995, Nigeria's military regime demonstrated that skill, when it first "tried" then hanged the leaders of a movement representing an oil-producing minority community, which was asserting its rights to resource control and protesting the destruction of its lands by the drilling activities of foreign multinationals.

For these and other reasons, competitively elected regimes across Africa are leaning more to the use of pardon, amnesty, and reconciliation, or plain avoidance of the minefields of memory in moving beyond post-authoritarian elections. The concept of "forgiveness" polished in the South African experience has been exploited unsatisfactorily in other countries such as Zimbabwe and Nigeria, with or without the benefit of a formally constituted Truth and Reconciliation Commission. For instance, having presided over state-legislated oppression, President Mugabe's somewhat compelling oratory is as self-serving as others of its genre:

> If we dig up history, then we wreck the nation . . . and we tear our people apart into factions, into tribes and villagism will prevail over our nationalism and over the spirit of our sacrifices. If we go by the past, would Ian Smith be alive today? What cause will there be to impel us to keep him alive? Perhaps I will be the first man to go and cut his throat and open up his belly, but no, we shall never do that. We have sworn not to go by the past except as a record or register. The record or register will remind us what never to do. If that was wrong, if that went against the sacred tenets of humanity, we must never repeat, we must never oppress man. (*Sunday Mail*, 11 May 1997, 1, 4; cited in Werbner 1998b, 96)

Aside from the rather obvious personal dividends that accrue from closing the records, there is indeed an innate dilemma that every transitional regime in Africa will encounter. The president of Uruguay, Julio Sanguinetti,[2] posed that question: "What is more just—to consolidate the peace of a country where human rights are guaranteed today or to seek retroactive justice that could compromise that peace?" (quoted in Smith 1996, 6). In responding to the question, it is important for us to challenge the assumption that justice and peace are mutually exclusive concepts or

that human rights, democratic participation, and peace can be effectively guaranteed in an arena void of social justice, one that confers immunity for impunity.

Liria Evangelista's *Voices of the Survivors* provides an insightful analysis of the representation of the past in the years following state terrorism: "The post-dictatorship era is a period in which there emerges a confluence of different narratives seeking to resignify the historical experiences of the recent past, but it is also the time in which there emerge new stories and new narrative forms that function as sites of enunciation for social subjects who are, at once the product of what was destroyed during the military government and of the emergence of subjectivities tied to the complex democratic transition" (1998, 2).

Confronting the past initially opens dialogue in silenced public arena and engenders the construction of appropriate preventive mechanisms. It may then foster acceptable closure of the past through the reinforcement of the need for accountability, social justice, and a consensus on the rights and equality of groups and individuals. More important, it forestalls the premature erasure of the past that has exacerbated the turbulence of politics and development in Africa. This is not a luxury for post-authoritarian societies, though it posits a potential threat to short-term stability, to regime security, and to powerful interests vested in a premature erasure of the past.

Public commemorations, symbolic monuments and events, public debates, oral history forms, literature and the arts, and even school curricula can be infused with the vibrancy emanating from the moral discourse of non-passive recollections. However, the character of the incoming political elite in many African countries, as well as the politicization of the military, the contempt for the courts, and prevalent economic conditions, make it unlikely that such steps will be taken without tremendous pressure from elements of civil society, such as the academic, pro-democracy and human and civil rights communities.

Many of the tools of traditional narrative and oral history do not convey mere "objectified historicity," but constitute the society's moral socio-political discourse. Increasingly these tools are lost to an emerging African generation and little has evolved to replace them. Few members of the generation that will inherit the democratic future, if it materializes, have been taught or debated, with passion or otherwise, the recollections of the anti-colonial nationalist struggles, past regime atrocities, marginalization, and so forth. As a member of such a generation, a sense of bereavement, a tangible feeling of deprivation often pervades attempts to recreate and reconstitute the political present. Without this discursive moral practice in the public arena, it is difficult to envisage a sustained call to arms in the building of a participatory political entity.

The oral history and conversational remembering of earlier generations, through social and political *itan* and *oriki*[3] and other traditional instruments of memory, might be lost to Africa's globalized generation, caught in the rapid universalization of Western particulars, but the struggle has as much to do with the content of memory as with the form and vehicle of collective remembering. In Kiogora's eloquent call for a "coming of age and re-membering ourselves," he argues that the "image of Africa before us is that of a dismembered body. Cultural, political, economic, and social dislocations have left the continent in disarray. . . . Each society lives according to a story remembered and carried on, even mythically, by her own people. . . . It is dangerous for Africans to continue living as though they have no story to pass on"(Kiogora 1996, 29)

Perhaps the greatest challenge for democratically elected officials in Africa will be the need to remember that even in the face of violence, their populations have consistently resisted, within the mindscapes of political memories, the articulation and imposition of a hegemonic official discourse of a repressive state that circumvents demands for popular voice, justice, and communal catharsis.

Notes

1. This paper incorporates some excerpts from two earlier short articles: "Collective Memory and Selective Amnesia in a Transmutational Paradox, *Issue* 37, 1 (1999); and "The Re-Signification of the Past in Struggles for Peace, Social Justice and Democratic Development," *Newsletter of the Center for Development and Conflict Management* (CEDCOM), Ile-Ife, Nigeria, May 2001.

2. Sanguinetti served a first term of office bewteen 1985 and 1990, and during this period, he was able to garner sufficient public support, by plebiscite, of a contested general amnesty for military elite accused of gross human rights violations under the previous regime.

3. As Pemberton and Afolayan explain, *itan* and *oriki* are "Yoruba oral traditions that are not ahistorical but rather preserve, transmit, and shape social norms and historical identity. Yoruba oral histories (*itan*) and praise songs (*oriki*), contain a cluster of memories that reinforce the sociopolitical traditions of the area. These complex memories, at times conflicting and subversive, reflect the fabric of history, with all its loose threads and contradictory tones" (Pemberton and Afolayan 1996).

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