Paul Aikhionbare
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Daniel Krátký
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Rebecca Matheson
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the quint
13.2

March 2021

Ray Merlock, *University of South Carolina Upstate*

Antonia Mills, Professor Emeritus, *University of Northern British Columbia*

Ikuko Mizunoe, Professor Emeritus, *Kyoritsu Women's University*

Avis Mysyk, *Cape Breton University*

Hisam Nakamura, *Tenri University*

Andrew Patrick Nelson, *University of Montana*

Julie Pelletier, *University of Winnipeg*

Vincent Pitturo, *Denver University*

Frances Pheasant-Kelly, *University of Wolverhampton*

Christian Riegel, *University of Regina*

Steve Roe, *Northern Lights College*

Dan Smith, *University College of the North*

Robert Spindler, *University of Innsbruck*

Nicholas Tyrras, Independent Scholar

Darrell Varga, *NSCAD*

Gene Walz, *University of Manitoba*

Robin Waugh, *Wilfred Laurier University*

David Williams, *University of Manitoba*

contents

EDITORIAL

March 2021: COVID-19 continues throughout the North. as winter lingers with ice storms and snow flurries. This, *the quint's* eclectic fifty third issue, begins with Khan Begum's "Advancing Global Literacy through Graphic Novels of Crises Torn Landscapes" which considers how literature desseminates knowledge of other cultures and peoples, especially through the lens of theFrench Canadian travelogue cartoonist, Guy Delisle. Next, Paul Akhionbare and Oghale Okpu examine the properties of dyes originally sourced from nature in "Exploring the Versatility of Natural Dyes: A Focus on Natural Dyes in Nigeria," and offer the textile industry in their country alternatives to popular, toxic synthetic dyes. Then, Silver Abuhimlem Ojieson's "Product Placements in Selected Nollywood Films," examines the tendency in Nollywood movies to resort to alternative financial avenues like integrated marketing that makes audiences pay for their patronage. Following, in "NEW MEDIA AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION: WHAT OPTIONS FOR AFRICA?," Festus Prosper Olise considers options for Africa regarding new media/ Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and development communication practices. Then, Justine Shu-Ting Kao's "Geographical Imagination, Spatial History, and Like-Minded Spirits in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes*" examines how the Indian tribe Sand Lizard refuses to disappear.

Following, Jonathan Desen Mbachaga's "Communion with the Dead: Images and Functions of Alekwu Masquerades in James Alachi's *The Dilemma of Oko*" considers the communion with the dead that takes place in the *Alekwu*, a festival held in honour of the spirits of ancestors that links the spiritual and material and is a forum in which the living and their ancestors interact. Then Joseph Agofure Idogho's "African Ancestral Veneration Practices in J.P. Clark-Bekederemos's Drama: A Study of *Three Plays: Song of a Goat, The Masquerade* and *The Raft"* analyzes African veneration practices and believes and examines how Clark-Bekederemo's dramaturgy broadens our understanding of these practices and beliefs and the important roles they play in conflict resolution in African traditional societies. Following, Henda Ammar Guirat's "Metafiction and Reading

Mode in Iam McEwan's *Atonement*" argues that McEwan's Atonement brings the metafictional mode and its engagement with the reader to a wholly new level. Completing the offerings of this issue's articles, Osakue Stevenson Omoera and Enuwa Evelyn Obekpa's "Communicating Development through Transparency and Accountability in the National Home Grown School Feeding Programmes: The Advocacy Visit of Civil Society Organisation to Traditional Institutions in Kaduna State, Northwest Nigeria" synthesizes data from during state-wide advocacy visits to the traditional institutions in 2019 to argue for the inclusion of traditional leaders and institutions in communicating development programmes in grassroots Nigeria.

the quint is happy to announce that film *and* book reviews are to be found in this issue. Brecken Hunter Wellborn's film review, "Black Is King: Beyoncé's Authorial Morals" finds that Beyoncé's film revels in visualizing a collected black unity. Francis Mickus' "From Ingres to Ensor: Retrieving Welles" contends that Orson Welles' *The Other Side of the Wind* (2018) reveals hat there is no longer any distinction between the personal and the public. Daniel Krátký's "Headlines and Meetings: Narrative Redundancy in *Battle in Outer Space*" deems the film's sophistication renders it worthy of attention over sixty years since its release. *the quint* is also privileged to present two book reviews by John Butler. He finds David McIlwraith and Wanda Joy Hoe's *The Diary of Dukesang Wong: A Voice from Gold Mountain* puts a face on the thousands of Chinese who came to Canada. He then judges Timon Screech's *Tokyo Before Tokyo: Power and Magic in the Shogun's City of Edo* a poetic reference to what would eventually became Edo.

No issue of *the quint* can be complete without its creative component. We are honored to house four extremely powerful new poems by Bill Tremblay. This *quint* is also proud to offer Rebecca Matheson's latest photo-essay *Signs of Spring*. As the North continues to self-isolate, here's to good writing and interesting images. *the quint* returns in June, with more reading for those lazy days of summer.

Sue Matheson

Editor

THANKSGIVING

I give thanks for the aluminum pot

my parents left when they hopped a bus

for San Diego. Praise be also the potato

masher with its diamond holes

the mush squirts through as I mix in butter

and whip it to Arctic peaks.

Praise be the annual flooding of the kitchen

with roast turkey aromas of pork and sage stuffing,

all that's left of my family's Canadian past.

Is it true that origins are destiny?

Or are we looking for some daybreak

from the myth of my family's Iroquois past?

Somewhere a grave beneath a sugar maple.

Ma yells: Raymond Jay Tremblay!

Sonny winks: Oh-oh. What did I do now?

I give thanks for his smile that hints

a choice not to be afraid of Ma's voice magic.

Why does she call Sonny Raymond?

She bastes the turkey with a huge eye-dropper,

hands me the masher. Your father and I we

baptized Sonny Raymond. After we married he got a job

as a milk-man in Somerville. Somerville is a movie set

where one actor tells a story in a spotlight

with soap flakes for falling snow.

They live close to the bon. She takes in laundry.

The baby in the carriage is Nancy. Her brother is

born bow-legged. His Ma makes his shins

grow straight with her magic hands.

Soon he's roaming Beacon Street for the action.

Fifty years later he will still be hunting

through the streets of Tijuana.

More than one time he doesn't come home.

They look everywhere, down brick alleys

where winos pass a bottle.

        It gets dark.

They find him watching a dance marathon

with couples hanging on each other

like everybody else in 1933.

Dad's pay envelope is so thin there'll be no turkey

that Thanksgiving. They give him their last

dime to buy a church raffle ticket.

He comes home with a turkey bigger than he is.

Maybe his nickname gives him a sunny disposition.

Maybe there's only room for one star per family.

Maybe the others must earn the light stars give off from birth.

Maybe they're lost in a Canada they never had.

Maybe I'll never know the weight a first-born carries

hacking a way through the bees, making it easier

for those who come after. It's hard to be

humble when your name is Raymond, king of the world.

I give thanks for my family myth.

It turns out better than anyone expected.

I give thanks to Dee Sharp as I dance

the mash potato and use a wooden spoon

to sculpt them into a replica of Plymouth Rock.

—*Bill Tremblay*

Advancing Global Cultural Literacy through Graphic Novels of Crises Torn Landscapes

Khani Begum

Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio

Literature, besides being an artistic and creative discipline, occupies an important place in the dissemination of knowledge and experience of other cultures and peoples through the genres of fiction, poetry, memoirs, graphic novels/texts, and drama. It plays a major role in allowing us to see the humanity of those who are different from us, who speak a different language, eat different foods, pray to different gods, yet, who have the same hopes and dreams as the rest of us for their families to live happy and productive lives free from fear and the threat of starvation or annihilation through wars or natural disasters. A majority of writers from Africa, South America, Canada, Asia, South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean Islands, and the Middle East voice the experiences of their people in English or their work is translated into multiple languages, English being one of many. In addition, there are many writers from the West who have ventured into "other" territory through travel writing and memoirs of their experiences, or have documented stories of people they encounter in other places and cultures. All

of these together provide a treasure trove of literary material for cultivating global and cultural literacy and enhancing our knowledge of diversity.

Global and cultural literacy have not been prioritized in most North American High School and College literature course curriculums until the cultural landscape began changing rapidly over the last two decades due to increased migratory movements across continents instigated by global environmental disasters, economic downturns,, and internecine conflicts. As these shifting immigration and economic patterns continue, educators face new challenges in preparing the next generation to adapt to new realities. Institutional curriculums in all disciplines informed by the last generations ideologies and teaching strategies no longer reflect the new reality of people's lives and social structures. As a result, many educators and institutions, responding to these changing times are revising curriculums, engaging new technologies, and developing innovative pedagogy. An examination of how administrators and teachers of literature in high schools and colleges across the United States are facing these challenges reveals many curriculums now include more diverse cultural and global literary texts beyond those assigned in world literature surveys. They also introduce diverse works in other core literature courses. Several institutions, with mission statements promoting global cultural literacy and diversity, include in required area tracks new courses on multicultural, world, global, transnational, and diaspora literatures.

The more the world expands the closer it brings peoples and cultures together. Faster, efficient, and affordable travel, the Internet and social media, and economic and business partnerships, all have made distances between people and places easily surmountable. In the 21st century, knowledge about other cultures and people with different life experiences is essential for broadening understanding, creating empathy, and connecting people. Those failing to rise to these challenges risk contributing to the propagation of negative dangerous stereotypes of other cultures that scapegoat people from different countries and of different racial, ethnic, and religious background or ancestry living in the West. Clearly the rise in divisive and hate filled rhetoric in numerous developed Western nations in recent times is responsible for continual eruptions of violent outbursts and hate crimes against immigrants and people who are different. One could say that at this moment in history, we are entering code red territory for intolerance of difference on this planet and stronger measures are necessary if we as a human race are to find a way to live together peaceably.[1]

We live in an era when something that happens in one hemisphere, inevitably has ripple effects across the rest of the globe, so knowledge of other cultures and places is essential if we are to function as educated and empathetic human beings who respect one another and solve their differences without resorting to violence. Students, who are culturally and globally literate, can analyze and think critically about the world and their roles in it, can empathize with others different from themselves, and are prepared to accomplish positive and lasting change for the planet by working together.

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1. Here is a short selection of links to Websites and articles on importance of global and cultural literacy in literature and language curriculums. These are their positions at this time, but in coming months we are likely to see changes to these documents as ideas about global and cultural literacy continue to evolve as they have been over the past few years at most institutions:
https://oucc.dasa.ncsu.edu/world-literature-16wlm/
https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1159911.pdf
https://longviewfdn.org/files/2214/4741/8337/Longview_Foundation_compressed.pdf
https://scholar.umw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=education\

On the Website for Global Village Academy Collaborative, the Asia Society based in New York City addresses what young people today need to work, produce, and participate in a global and diverse society. It defines global literacy knowledge, skills, and values as:

- Knowledge of other world regions, cultures, and global/international issues.

- Skills in communicating and collaborating in cross-cultural environments and in languages other than English, and in using information from different sources around the world, and

- Values of respect and concern for other cultures, peoples, and places.

Global literacy involves learning about other world regions through arts and culture, language, economics, geography, mathematics, and science. It can be interwoven through a variety of projects and activities, including performances, festivals, celebrations, sports, games, and food, as well as various approaches to learning such as themes, simulations, leadership experiences via travel and technology. Global literacy is not a separate subject, but rather a perspective that informs and modernizes every academic subject and area of cognitive and social development (Global Village Academy Collaborative Website).

A number of institutions of Higher Education across the United States have committed to include courses on global and cultural literacy in their curriculums with strong statements relating to promoting diversity and inclusion in their policies. It is critical to note that the teaching of global and cultural literacy needs to go hand in hand with that of diversity and inclusion. A student that develops knowledge and skills around cultural and global issues also develops empathy for diversity of language, race, class, gender, religion, and disabilities and understands how power relations work within hierarchies.

Promising as these efforts to cultivate greater cultural and global literacy and enhance diversity in higher education may be, many students today encounter literature about and from other cultures and possibly diversity for the first time when they step into the undergraduate literature classroom. Hence, teachers need to go beyond traditional materials and methods to adopt creative pedagogies to engage students, expand horizons, and cultivate empathy for experiences of others.[2] They are further challenged if they want students to learn how scholars, journalists, and social justice activists theorize and work to redress inequities resulting from colonization and slavery that are the root cause of racial discriminatory practices and hateful attitudes towards immigrants and people of color. The need for global and cultural understanding and empathy has become exponentially urgent in light of ugly politically motivated racial rhetoric, reaching new levels, which has unleashed violent acts against people of color and migrants in developed Nations at an alarming rate.

2. There are many educators and administrators who genuinely desire to expand their students' knowledge about literatures and cultures beyond their own and wish to further diversity on their campuses. Often, lacking experience of other cultures and literatures and /or training in teaching global cultural literacy and knowledge of diversity themselves, they cannot always comprehend the effects of discrimination and lack of cultural awareness in standard institutional practices sufficiently to critique them and make real sustainable change. Their well-meaning efforts too many times have fallen short. When decisions are made democratically, often the majority vote, whether fully informed or not carries. Democracy works in favor of the majority voice and for minority voices to be heard and have action taken that furthers their perspectives is not a given. It will only happen if the majority is willing to throw them a bone. Since in most educational institutions in the West, the white and/or western raised faculty, student body, and staff undoubtedly outnumber faculty and students from global and minority cultures and ethnicities, a democratic approach to revising curriculums is not the most effective path for change. Apparently more times than not what becomes more important is the rhetoric promoting change rather than actual substantive change.

Having worked for more cultural and global diversity in curriculum revisions numerous times at different institutions, it seems that it will take decades more deliberation before global cultural literacy is widely accepted in all disciplines as the norm.

While the year 2020 will be marked historically for the global pandemic of COVID 19, the pain, hurt, and loss suffered due to this virus is exacerbated by events of the past year starting with increased police shootings of innocent African American men like the killing of George Floyd that sparked a summer of Black Lives Matter protests across the country and worldwide, rivaling the Civil Rights marches of the 1960s. The response by local police and armed National Guard contingents to these protests was swift and prompt in many cities and resulted in violent clashes and imprisonment of protestors. *The Associated Press* and *The Guardian* reported that over summer 2020 more than 10,000 people were arrested, most of them non-violent. ("AP tally: Arrests at widespread US protests hit 10,000" by Anita Snow *The Associated Press* June 4, 2020 and "'They Set us Up': US Police Arrested over 10,000 protestors, many non-violent" by Michael Sainato, *The Guardian* June 8, 2020). On January 6, 2021, domestic terrorism, simmering through prior rallies of White Supremacist groups across the continent for several years, reared its head in full regalia of racist hate filled violent symbolism of a hangman's noose and Confederate flags when it attempted to kill 'democracy' with its Insurrection at the Capital Building. Spewing death threats towards legislators and brutally assaulting Capitol Police, the crowd of thousands of insurrectionists failed to reverse the 2020 election results, instead their insurrection left 5 people dead and 140 injured. The unrest and racial divisions unveiled during these events did not end there, for barely two months later on March 16, 2021 a lone white gunman rampaged through Atlanta, Georgia picking out three Asian Spas across the city killing eight people, six of them being Asian women. Once the suspect was apprehended 'without incident' (as most white suspects are), the response of the Spokesperson for the Cherokee County

Sheriff's office to media questions was:

> the suspect does claim that it was not racially motivated. He apparently has an issue, what he considers a sex addiction, and sees these locations as something that allows him to go to these places, and it's a temptation for him that he wanted to eliminate. And he was pretty much fed up and had been kind of at the end of his rope and this was a really bad day for him and this is what he did." (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JkTc3TL6Go)

Reactions to this report were swift and strong, especially from Asian American groups working to fight against discrimination and hate crimes against AAPIs (Asian American and Pacific Islanders) such as CAA (Chinese for Affirmative Action) among other anti-hate groups around the country. What is more disturbing about this explanation of what clearly is a targeted hate crime against women of a particular ethnicity and culture, is that such a crime has been feared among the AAIP community as a definite possibility since the pandemic began and they noted a rise in crimes against their community. Asian Americans have been reporting hate crimes (as of this writing NBC and other news outlets have reported 3800 incidents of anti-Asian attacks in the past year) and have been calling out for concerted action, but little notice is taken and in many instances were not prosecuted as hate crimes. These crimes have spiked 150% since the pandemic began with their targets being women and the elderly. Many have led to the death of those attacked while out grocery shopping, walking on city streets, or using the Subway. The reason for this spike is clear. The rhetoric about COVID 19 that US officials and especially POTUS in referring to this virus as the "China Virus" or the Wuhan Flu" has

created an atmosphere of fear and hate towards China and people of Chinese descent and placed a target on the backs of all Asians (since apparently we all look alike to most non-Asians). This is not, however, a problem confined to the United States. In a report issued by the *Human Rights Watch* on May 12, 2020, the organization, putting forward action plans to counteract the rise in anti-Asian racism and xenophobia worldwide, calls out the rhetoric of many governments against China and Asians during the COVID 19 crisis, holding them responsible for the rise in anti-Asian racism and xenophobia:

> Government leaders and senior officials in some instances have directly or indirectly encouraged hate crimes, racism, or xenophobia by using anti-Chinese rhetoric. Several political parties and groups, including in the United States, United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Greece, France, and Germany have also latched onto the Covid-19 crisis to advance anti-immigrant, white supremacist, ultra-nationalist, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic conspiracy theories that demonize refugees, foreigners, prominent individuals, and political leaders. ("COVID 19 Fueling Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia Worldwide: National Action Plans Needed to Counteract Intolerance" *Human Rights Watch Report* May 12, 2020).

Under these circumstances and these times, we can understand how significantly vital it is for all to embrace global and cultural literacy and foster appreciation of the diversity of cultures and peoples and in developing empathy for others. Literature has taught us about people from the earliest centuries to the present and has allowed us to cross the borders of time and space, so we can turn to literature of other cultures as well

as literature that explores encounters between cultures to develop in the next generation a deeper understanding and empathy for diverse others. This is not to say that global and cultural literacy cannot be employed in teaching other disciplines, it is just that stories have a power to raise the human spirit and allow us to connect with others in-spite of and sometimes because of our differences.

In her acceptance speech upon receiving the Cecil B. De Mille lifetime award at the 2021 Golden Globes, Jane Fonda, two-time Academy Award winner and activist, makes an impassioned plea for the power stories have in raising consciousness. Having worked on several social justice causes most of her adult life, Fonda continues to exude the same passion and commitment to causes at eighty four years of age when she speaks about climate change or when urging Congress to pass the HR1legislation on the Voting Rights Act, as she did in her twenties when protesting against the Vietnam War. Addressing her Hollywood community as "storytellers," she speaks to the importance of storytelling in "turbulent, crisis-torn times" such as ours:

> . . . stories can change our hearts and our minds. They can help us see each other in a new light. To have empathy. To recognize that, for all our diversity, we are humans first, right? . . . Because the nonlinear, non-cerebral forms that are art speak on a different frequency. They generate a new energy that can jolt us open and penetrate our defenses so that we can see and hear what we may have been afraid of seeing and hearing. (Nolfi)

The power of storytelling in literature and art is not lost on educators who use well-told stories to raise consciousness and foster understanding of difficult issues. "Non-

linear cerebral forms that are art" because they "speak on a different frequency," can bridge difference and connect us to others in unpredictable ways. Fonda is speaking primarily about written (novels, scripts) and visual (films, Television, documentaries) texts as equally impactful forms of storytelling. I would add to these the graphic text or graphic novel, for its unique ability to raise cultural and global awareness and empathy[3] for the experiences of others. This generation, raised predominantly on visual stimuli, has mastered visual literacy, which facilitates their ability to grasp and retain meaning through visual language. By providing visceral access points, graphic texts also cultivate empathy development, making it easier for students to identify with people, places, and experiences otherwise distant from their own. The visual impact of a graphic image while similar to a filmic one can have longer lasting impact because it can be returned to again and again. Sean Cubitt, discussing the variance between still and moving images, points to moving images being reliant on sound as the still graphic image is on text (360-1). In questioning the image text relation, which he sees as an unresolved issue, he addresses how still images create movement:

> . . . still images attempt like maps of ocean currents and ephemerides, to render movement in spatial form, not by imitation, like a futurist painting, or by empathy, but as information. To some extent, any map is also a picture of time as much as it is of space, and thus of movement caught in a static graphical form (362).

The graphic novel through still images tells stories that provide information that allows readers to ponder the facts and emotions expressed in the still image at length returning

to it as and when they wish while at the same time the image by rendering the story through space, provides a sense of movement of time.

Many high school and university educators and librarians, recognizing graphic texts reach students at both the intellectual and visceral level simultaneously are adding them to their curriculums and creating Library Blogs and materials for teaching them.[3] While graphic novels are used regularly in art and creative writing courses, they can offer meaningful engagement in a wide variety of courses from introductory and world literature courses to ones that address multicultural, postcolonial, racial and social justice, disability, gender, and psychological issues in literature. The graphic text can introduce students to a serious issue or conflict in readily digestible form. It's visual registers trigger initial interest, but once students become engaged in the story and its social justice issue, their curiosity leads them beyond required texts to seek out similar narratives.

In my Postcolonial and World literature undergraduate courses, which are in essence courses on cultural and global literacy, I find a few students whose social conscience, once awakened by one or more of these works, are inspired into analyzing ideologies of colonialism and tracing the histories of postcolonial resistance and freedom movements. They exhaustively argue the pros and cons of whether or not violence in freedom struggles is necessary, especially after reading Frantz Fanon's *Towards the African*

3. NCTE Blog by Cody Miller https://ncte.org/blog/2019/04/using-graphic-novels-and-video-essays/
Reading for Social Justice: A Guide for Families and Educators. Teaching Tolerance: A Project of the Southern Poverty Center. School of Education. University of Colorado Boulder:
https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/TT-Reading-For-Social-Justice-Guide.pdf
Robbins, Margot. "T35 Using Graphic Memoirs to Discuss Social Justice Issues in the Secondary Classroom." Virginia Tech University Libraries v 42:3 Summer 2015. https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/v42n3/robbins.html Schwarz, Gretchen. "Graphic Novels, New Literacies, and Good Old Social Justice." Virginia Tech University Libraries v 37:3 Summer 2010. https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ALAN/v37n3/schwarz.html

Revolution and *Black Skin, White Masks*, often fixating on whether or not Fanon advocates violence as a viable means of resistance. These instances of engagement, while not the norm in every course, indicate that once students understand and engage with culturally different texts they desire to learn more about other cultures and places and find ways to connect what they learn to their own times and experience. This enthusiasm may be limited to a select few with prior knowledge of power relations in their neighborhoods or to their having experienced discrimination some time in their lives. Then the question becomes how to get *all* students to engage meaningfully with issues of postcolonial and social justice through literary works without overwhelming them with the weight of the world's problems that can leave them feeling dejected and depressed by the end of the semester? How to teach emotionally difficult historical material without draining the joy of life out of them? What pedagogical strategies successfully develop students' ability in recognizing relationships between theory and real life? How to teach them empowerment and empathy through ideas generated within larger contexts of historical colonization and communal conflicts in various parts of the world? I struggle with these questions at the start of social justice related courses even as I seek out new materials and strategies.

As Gretchen Schwarz notes in her essay, "Graphic Novels, New Literacies, and Good Old Social Justice" which surveys the many contemporary graphic novels that can be used to teach social justice issues, the graphic novel is "a natural choice for bringing ongoing social problems into question." Distinguishing between "comics" and "graphic novels" she addresses how reading a graphic novel requires multiple literacies in addition to traditional literacy skills.

The last few decades have hosted a plenitude of graphic artists and writers who address other cultures, travels, wars, and traumatic environmental and geopolitical crises, with many of them also taking on difficult identity, multicultural, and disability issues, and dysfunctional family dynamics. These works bring personal stories set against the backdrop of world changing events to life for new audiences interested in wider worldviews. Some of the authors of these graphic texts are also journalists who feel compelled to shed light on global political/cultural conflicts and political oppression in various parts of the world and have turned to the graphic genre as their medium of expression. Others are immigrants to Western countries from the global South including places such as Iran, Vietnam, China, Japan, and Korea, whose works are written either in English or their mother tongues and have been translated into multiple languages. Yet others are writing and publishing in countries around the world and being translated into several languages as their work gains recognition within their own communities. The emergence and success of these writers and their works signals a hunger in the current reading public for information about our world past and present and a desire to connect with others.

Art Spiegelman, often credited as the father of this form of graphic journalism and historical narratives, was one of the earliest to produce graphic works of political, global, and cultural significance. In 1986 he wrote his most groundbreaking work that showed how graphic artists were moving in new directions to address crucial historical and contemporary events of cataclysmic proportions they felt compelled to report upon during times of turmoil. His two volumes, entitled *Maus,* (*Volume I: A Survivor's Tale* and

*Volume II. Here My Troubles Began), tell the story of Vladek Spiegelman, his father, who survived the Jewish Holocaust by escaping from Hitler's Europe to America. His son, a cartoonist tries to come to terms with his father's personal story, as do his readers with the horror of the holocaust. In cartoon form, *Maus* presents the unspeakable, with the Jews drawn as mice and the Nazi's as cats, shocking readers out of familiar ways of recalling childhood memories of cartoons of mice and cats. A haunting tale within a tale, the story of Vladek's survival becomes also the story of Spiegelman's relationship with his aging parent as he tries to understand what his father has gone through and to imagine him as a youth during that horrendous time. He struggles to understand the wide difference in their experiences--at times feeling distant from his own father. Students who come to his work in *Maus* with historical knowledge of the Jewish Holocaust, through the tenuous interactions between father and son, recognize how generational distance can divorce us from the experiences of others and are able to develop a new understanding of the effects of the Jewish Holocaust on two generations of survivors. Through Spiegelman's work they experience a uniquely different historical and documentary representation of the Jewish Holocaust than ones they may have experienced prior. Almost two decades later, in a new work of memory and mourning, Spiegelman voices his pain following the World Trade Center attacks with *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004). A work that, like *Maus*, addresses survivor's guilt in its reflections on a national tragedy even as it explores the crisis-torn landscape of New York City in the aftermath of 9/11.

Once the bar was set with Spiegelman's *Maus*, regarding what heights a graphic text could achieve, another powerful and prolific graphic journalist had begun to address other historical atrocities that occurred during the 1990s. The Maltese born, Joe Sacco, whose award winning travelogues on Palestine and Bosnia (*Palestine*, Fantagraphics Books 1993, *Safe Area Goradze*, Fantagraphics Books, 2000, *The Fixer*, Drawn & Quarterly, 2003, *Notes From a Defeatist*, Fantagraphics Books, 2003, *Footnotes in Gaza*, Henry Holt & Co, 2009) now classified as "war journalism, gave voice to the silent daily struggles of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation in Gaza and to the victims of genocide in Bosnia. Spiegelman's body of work and Joe Sacco's war journalism, together have brought journalistic authenticity and credibility to the graphic medium's potential for representing political and human rights issues with integrity. They have succeeded in making the lives of others viscerally accessible to academics as well as a general public that may not know about these events and places otherwise. Both writers engage dark material with analytical precision matched by a balanced level of emotion and empathy.

To address the question about best ways to teach dark subject matter without creating global problem fatigue raised earlier, I return to Jane Fonda. During her appearance on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3jj0iSEIms March 5, 2021) a few days after her Golden Globe speech, she recalls Dalton Trumbo's (an anti-fascist activist who was blacklisted for becoming a Communist party member) advice on not getting overwhelmed while participating in the Vietnam protest movement. She admits to keeping Trumbo's dictum, "Don't forget to be happy," front and center and finds joy in raising people's consciousness and celebrating each small victory. Teachers and scholars when using politically and culturally difficult and gripping graphic novels/ texts need to realize the importance of this dictum when encouraging students to learn

about events of global and domestic conflicts. Students need to feel empowered and energized from these readings, so in addition to how these texts are approached, their election and sequencing in the semester can help balance positive and negative aspects of reading works about crises, wars, and political turmoil. These considerations can allow room for them to feel positive and hopeful that things can improve and they have a role in making the world a better place.

Of the many graphic artists and writers I have used in my courses, one whose work my students find most accessible even when they are critical of his stance on other cultures or find his perspective orientalist, is the travel writer, animation artist turned journalist, French Canadian travelogue cartoonist, Guy Delisle. Many of his graphic travelogues have garnered critical praise and international awards for their cultural and global critiques. While his work is not as politically charged as Sacco's or emotionally reflective as Spiegelman's, it plays on a frequency that can jolt students "open and penetrate [their] defenses so that [they] can see and hear what [they] may have been afraid of seeing and hearing." This is especially true of his Asian travelogues, which reference his empathy with Asian cultures despite an occasional cultural faux pas. Delisle admits to a partiality for travel in Asian countries over the Middle East or elsewhere. In an interview with the *Washington City Paper*, speaking about his most recent work on Israel and Palestine (*Jerusalem* 2011), he says: "I'm more of an Asian or South American—Asian probably— type of guy. " (*Washington City Paper*-Art Desk Interview Apr 25 Oct 2012).

In his three Asian travelogues which document his experiences traveling through China, North Korea and Myanmar during times of economic and political turbulence—

namely, *Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea* (French 2005, English 2005), *Shenzhen: A Travelogue from China* (French 2000, English 2006), and *The Burma Chronicles* (French 2007, English 2008). Originally from Quebec City, Canada, Delisle studied animation in Toronto and worked for Cine Group, a French Canadian animation studio in Montreal that often sent him as animation supervisor to their studios in Germany, France, China, and North Korea. His experiences while on assignment in far-away places became the inspiration for his travelogues on these countries. Married to Nadege, an administrator for Medecins Sans Frontieres he spent time in Myanmar when Nadege was stationed there during the time that Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's (then Burma) political activist and leader was under house arrest. Aung San Suu Kyi, who had been detained before the elections, remained under house arrest on and off for almost 15 years from 1989 and 2010. In his travelogue on Myanmar, Delisle walks past her house when taking their newly born son for fresh air outings around the city of Rangoon and catches glimpses of her through the garden as he muses on the political unrest in the country.

- Both *Pyongyang: A Journey in North Korea*, and *Shenzhen: A Travelogue From China* are based upon his experiences in the two Asian cities while serving as supervisor of animation for his employer, Cine Group. I used both these texts in two different undergraduate courses, an introduction to literature course with a mix of Literature and non-Literature majors and an upper level undergraduate course on Postcolonial literature primarily for literature majors. These texts allow students to dialog with issues of culture, politics, and human rights in multiple ways and at the same time

lead them to question their own assumptions and orientalist thinking about Asian cultures. Delisle's graphic texts incrementally ease their readers incrementally ease their readers into unfamiliar terrain showing how the author himself works through his unease to arrive at a new understanding of each country he is traveling through and the political and social situation he is experiencing. When readers are introduced to a new culture alongside a fellow traveler documenting his own unease with the different and the unfamiliar, the reader is encouraged to reflect on his own experience of reading and experiencing these places vicariously. The reader is able to go beyond his/her initial unease to consider other ways of understanding what is being revealed.

Despite the fact that Shenzhen and Pyongyang present language barriers for Delisle, he strives to form a rapport with the Korean and Chinese translators and guides assigned him in each city. From a postcolonial theoretical perspective, his French Canadian perspective on Asian societies is limited, and could be perceived as the gaze of a contemporary orientalist. I find, however, that because he acknowledges his outsider perspective right from the start of the text he gains the reader's trust. He can then bring readers along with him to empathize both with the people whose lives he is documenting and commenting on and his own bewilderment and occasional unease upon encountering cultural difference. This outsider position of looking in on problems faced by his Asian subjects that the reader sees through Delisle's eyes in their journey alongside him through the crises torn landscapes he travels, allows for a certain guilt free

bewilderment when they encounter difference in just reading about it. It is, however, important to ask to what extent he critiques his own discomfiture and whether this sheds sufficiently honest light on the culture and the people he encounters. Yet, despite these obvious limits of Delisle's outsider position, I find his graphic texts on Asian cultures succeed in presenting significant details and information about the oppressive regime in North Korea in *Pyongyang*, the problems and inequities brought about as a result of globalization in *Shenzhen* in China, and the effects of the atmosphere of suspicion in the political turmoil in *Burma Chronicles* in Myanmar. These texts resonate more strongly with undergraduate students by giving them both a factual and emotional understanding while lengthier and nuanced fictional works on these cultures that cover similar content fail to grab their attention or understanding.

I found that students engaged with the text more than I had anticipated and became interested in discovering more information about the places he was describing. Students with little to no knowledge of these places and their cultures, claiming they had not been interested in them before, now wanted to find out more and began questioning the involvement of the US and the West in the cultural and economic changes occurring there. Those students, with some background in postcolonial theory, either through readings in Frantz Fanon and/or Edward Said, are quick to notice the colonial gaze through which, Delisle discusses his inter-actions with the N. Korean and Chinese characters he encounters. As a French Canadian, whose sensibility is very much North American, Delisle's own North American perspective puts undergraduate students at ease making them willing fellow travelers to parts unknown.

•   Delisle writes about his travels in countries as varied as North Korea, China, Burma or Myanmar, and Israel. He has also spent time in Ethiopia and other third world locations, but admits that it is only those travel experiences that he found unsettling that were the ones that he felt compelled to document in graphic form. Since most students who have not had the benefit of travel and are somewhat unsettled when required to confront texts from different cultural and geopolitical perspectives, Delisle's sense of dis-ease or un-ease in cultures unfamiliar, allows students to accept and confront their own sense of distance and discomfort with other cultural spaces without feeling lacking for doing so. As a result, in class discussions students are freed enough to talk about why Delisle finds certain cultural experiences disturbing or why he is confused by certain behaviors that do not conform to his expectations or his preconceived stereotypes of the places and people he visits. They also begin to realize that while he is an experienced traveler, he too has difficulty with a different language, with different food, and different customs.

Monica Chiu, speaking of Delisle's art with respect to *The Burma Chronicles* says that Delisle's apparently uncomplicated cartoon style eventually unveils complexity of character and nation because "[b]y the conclusion, his iconic self-confidence—imaged by the protagonist's ever upbeat and indefatigable personality—is replaced by humility" (67). The uncomplicated simplicity of his style as well as his Western personae allays any unease students unfamiliar with Burmese culture and people may feel. With a few simple strokes and his ironic musings as he wanders the city, he takes his readers

trough unfamiliar territory and allows them to join in his own reflections and eventual insights about the unfamiliar and remote. As Chiu and others have written about the stereotypes that Delisle's work at times appears to traffic in, what is important to note is that while he addresses racial and cultural stereotypes he does not 'empower' them--instead he juxtaposes the white protagonists (himself among them) "against their nonwhite counterparts to ask who has power and visibility in the narrative, in which situations, and why?" (67). This gives each image new meaning and students at first do not get to the multiple levels at which his images operate, but through group work on short sections, through guided discussion, many of them begin to recognize the different layers and some become quite passionate in defending their interpretation.

Delisle's style and genre choice, that of the travel narrative, allows him to replicate the form of earlier colonial narratives of travel and thus to speak about cultures that are hidden from the Western gaze. Some of the earliest accounts of Eastern cultures written by Europeans took the form of the travel narrative, the most notable being the work of Lady Montague in the early18[th] century, who recounted her travels to the Harems of the Muslim Middle Eastern families she was privileged to visit. Much like Lady Montague's exclusive access, Delisle has exclusive access to the city of Pyongyang that only a few Westerners are allowed to visit. This access is made possible in his role as animation supervisor for Cine Group. When students are asked to think of this text in light of earlier travel narratives in colonial literature, students begin to make connections and see parallels with the colonialist perspectives in previously read works. They recognize how the West has read the East in the past, and I can then ask them to determine to

what extent Delisle's reading of the East differs from earlier European travel narratives of Middle Eastern and Asian cultures.

Delisle's graphic style, while it shares the same impetus as that of Spiegelman and Sacco, has its own unique quality that is defined by simple stark lines and a wry sense of humor, even when he is depicting extremely dark events. His particular style of reserved critique, often expressed with a tongue-in-cheek attitude, explores cultures other than his own with empathy even in the face of his own bewilderment, and at times amusement. By highlighting some of the elements of Delisle's style of depicting cultural and political oppression that he observes in these two cities, I draw students into discussing how despite his sometimes orientalist and colonialist perspective towards Asian cultures, he is able to engage in a self-critique that eventually lays bare the problematic of any Western writing about other cultures. Some eventually realize how Delisle's empathy with Asians is reflected in both these work and how in both cities where despite the language barriers, he strives to form a rapport with the Korean and Chinese translators and guides he is assigned in each city.

Delisle often expresses his frustration at not being able to talk freely with the North Koreans he encounters. Puzzled by their reserve and silence, he wonders how much of it is based upon fear of the regime and how much upon their undying devotion to their leader, Kim Jong Il. Housed in a hotel with other foreign workers, his only real contact with N. Koreans is during the day with the other animators, his translator, and guide without whom he is not allowed to leave his hotel. Even when he wants to take a walk, he has to be accompanied by a "designated companion." He notes that "it was during these long walks that I was able to talk more freely with the only North Koreans that I was authorized to associate with" (56).

Finding himself under conditions that resemble house arrest adds to Delisle's frustration at not being able to see the "real" North Korea. He calls Pyongyang "a phantom city in a hermit nation" (25), a city where "everything is very clean, too clean in fact. No one lingers in the streets. Everyone has somewhere to be, something to do. No loitering, no old folks chatting. Total sterility"(25). These interpretations are based partly on the reality of what he is experiencing and partly on his own preconceptions about North Koreans that can be interpreted as orientalist. However, just as the reader begins to take offence to what could be described as Delisle's orientalist attitude, Delisle edits himself remarking on his own colonialist perspective. In such moments, he finds himself in empathy with those around him, and starts to see things from their perspective.

Students in Introduction to Literature courses quickly identify with Delisle's frustration at trying to understand the inscrutable East and begin sharing their own experiences when they encountered cultural differences that either shocked or surprised them; however, students in upper level courses often respond differently. For instance, in the postcolonial literature course, after being fed a fairly steady diet of activist postcolonial theory and literature, beginning with Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*, Ousmane Sembene's film *Black Girl*, and Mohsin Ahmed's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, among others, some students come down quite severely on Delisle for stereotyping North Koreans and their culture. While they still essentially agree with his observations regarding the lack of freedom in the Kim Jong Il regime and how Korean people are often surveilled,

etc., some of them consider Delisle "an insensitive jerk" for presenting such a negative picture of North Korea. Their overt politically correct responses result from having taken Fanonian and Saidian rhetoric so much to heart that they tend to miss Delisle's ironic stance that points to a more nuanced reading of his observations. On the other hand, in my experience most undergraduates have a difficult time reading irony, so their reactions read the text far more literally than Delisle expects his readers to do.

Left to his own devices most of the time in Pyongyang, he interprets what he sees around him in Orwellian terms. The connection with George Orwell's novel *1984* is made at Pyongyang airport when he explains to the custom's official who checks him into the country that the book in his bag is a classic work of literature from the 1950s. After a few paranoid experiences he picks up Orwell's book to realize that although he has read the book before, now "re-reading it in the last bastion of Stalinism reveals the full extent of Orwell's prophetic insight" (40). During every conversation he has with his North Korean animators, his translator, his guide, he thinks "in fact they live in a state of constant paradox where truth is anything but constant." (75), and realizes that "at a certain level of oppression, truth hardly matters, because the greater the lie, the greater the show of power" (76).

Despite Delisle's acknowledged empathy with Asia and Asian peoples, his perspective on North Korean and Chinese cultures in *Pyongyang* and *Shenzhen* shifts back and forth between the gaze of the colonizer and the colonized. In *Shenzhen,* Delisle is also sent to supervise the production of the animation team for Cine Groupe. It is his second visit to China, although it is his first time in Shenzhen. He expresses his disappointment with

the globalized city landscape and its capitalist ethos that he finds quite different from his previous experience of Chinese culture when he spent time in Nanjing. Delisle, nostalgic for the China that was more "essentially Chinese," is irritated by the sterile businesslike soulless global metropolis that Shenzhen now represents. Yet he also quickly realizes his own colonial perspective as he remarks: "I'm back in China in the South this time. The first time I was north in Nanjing. I rediscover what I had forgotten: the smells, the noise, the crowds, the dirt everywhere" (7).

He often responds to the behavior of people he encounters and situations like a typical Western tourist. When his translator takes him to a dentist to get his aching tooth checked out, he is overwhelmed at the sight of the congested dentist office and the unsanitary conditions and quickly leaves the office returning to his hotel unchecked. He is irritated each day by his hotel elevator operator who never lets him open the elevator door and keeps trying to converse with Delisle in broken meaningless English phrases. Then one night when Delisle, returning to the hotel after a late dinner, notices the elevator operator is not at his post, he is upset. In the very next frame, however, Delisle remarks rather sheepishly on how his own colonial attitude had suddenly reared its head and he, having become used to being greeted and serviced by the elevator operator, had begun to take it for granted. Such conscious self –editing by Delisle, discernible in both texts, is missed by students intent on a postcolonial critique of the work and of Delisle the author.

The graphic medium facilitates the exploration of Delisle's colonial perspective, while also allowing him to become the messenger of unfamiliar cultures to the rest of the world. Delisle's own sense of distance and "otherness" from North Korean and Chinese

cultures is mirrored in the distance that Delisle's Western readers will experience. Despite this deliberate strategy of distancing, however, during an interview with *The Washington Post*, when asked by the interviewer if he found himself "suffering from compassion fatigue" Delisle's answer is rather pragmatic

> I think it's better to be kind of cold about the situation and then you don't get too involved. You can feel for the people, but if there's not much you can do—well, it's just the way it is. You can talk about it…you're going to help them…and that's it. You're not going to live their lives, they're not going to live yours, and that's how I felt when I was in North Korea. I would feel sorry for these people, but once you go, you can't even be in contact with them. I think it would be dangerous for them, and that's it. You just say bye-bye and you know you're never going to see them. I feel terrible, but I think I have that distance that I can really look at the people.
>
> (*The Washington Post* Interview)

Delisle here acknowledges that in order to really feel for the people he needs to distance himself and become objective. Sometimes that may appear cold and insensitive. It is similar to the strategy that doctors use to be able to continue to do their work in the face of extreme tragedy and pain. What Delisle's works manage to do is allow readers to first view these experiences from a distance that are punctuated with glimpses or moments when the oppression, the tragedy, and the silent pain becomes almost viscerally visible. Delisle's style, in its ironic subtlety never overwhelms the reader, instead it slowly brings about a more nuanced understanding of the issues we as global citizens need to consider.

Delisle makes the unknown more visible by depicting his own sense of shock and confusion over the political and economic problems that beset the people of Pyongyang and Shenzhen. Despite Delisle's Western gaze, his interactions with individual characters and his speculation over what is left unsaid by his translators and his guides in both cities, Delisle manages to draw the alienated Western reader to consider other ways of reading the plight of the people in both cities. While most undergraduate students willingly join Delisle in his travels, and begin to develop empathy for the different experiences of people he encounters, several critique him robustly for his coldness and distance. They are especially critical of his portrayal of average Korean citizens whose unvoiced plight Delisle remarks on consistently through his sense of hopelessness and powerlessness to help the people in constructive ways. Students usually miss this element unless it is discussed more critically. Despite raising points of contestation in representations of Chinese, Korean, and Burmese people and their cultures, his novels spark more passionate discussions than most, and inspire students to think more carefully when encountering stereotypes of Asian cultures. They feel empowered when they realize that they have applied their newly learned knowledge of postcolonial theories to unpack Delisle's limitations in representing other cultures. They can build on these skills once their interest and their desire to discover is triggered and can move toward more challenging texts both in the graphic medium and other genres of literature. In my teaching experience, Guy Delisle's graphic novels successively engaging students with global geopolitical issues, provide glimpses of Asian cultures that further their empathy and understanding of difference to help students develop skills in global and cultural literacy.

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Exploring the Versatility of Natural Dyes: A Focus on Herbal Dyes in Nigeria

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Abstract

Dyes were originally sourced from nature until the advent of synthetic dyes in 1856. The overwhelming advantages of the synthetic dyes have caused the production of natural dyes to plummet over the years. Despite these advantages, the toxicity of the synthetic dye is beginning to elicit some concerns globally. Therefore, there is a dire need to safeguard the health of textile producers and users, particularly in growing societies such as Nigeria. This has prompted a series of studies to explore the diverse possibilities of the natural dyes judged to be eco-friendly. This article uses analytical, interview and direct observation methods to examine the versatility of herbs as possible sources for textile dyes in Nigeria. Herbs like *Turmeric*, *Hibiscus Sabdariffa* (zobo leaf) and *Allium Ceppa* (Onion peel) were considered in this study, with emphasis on *Allium Cepa* that was found to be polygenetic. That is, it produces different shades of colour as the conditions of extraction are altered. The exploratory study entailed varying the conditions of extraction such as the medium of extraction, pH value of the dye bath, material to liquor ratio and particle size of substrate. The resultant shades of colour for every varied condition were appropriately documented. It was observed that the *Allium Cepa* gave various shades of colour for every varied condition, giving credence to its polygenetic nature. The conclusion reached is that there is no end to the exploration of possibilities with natural dyes. The more one varies the conditions of extraction, the more varied the resultant colours one gets. It is hoped that this study would further encourage the exploration of plants from the immediate Nigerian environment for natural dyes as this would be of immense benefit to textile students, scholars and professionals in the textile industry in Nigeria.

Keywords: Natural dyes, Synthetic dyes, Toxicity, Polygenetic, Extraction, Nigeria, Textile industry

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Introduction

Nature has endowed humanity with limitless sources of potential colourants. Dyes were originally sourced from nature before the advent of synthetic dyes in 1856. They were obtained from natural sources like minerals, plants and invertebrates. To date, the overwhelming advantages of the synthetic dyes have greatly hindered the development of the natural dyes. Natural dyes, however, do need to be studied and documented. As Sangeeta (2015) asserts, it is of great importance to have a comprehensive study done on the natural dyes so that a formal documentation with all associated factors can be gathered. Synthetic dyes, which give a variety of brilliant colours, are readily mass-produced and can be replicated with precision. Affirming the advantages of synthetic dyes, Chhabra (2015) argues that "the synthetic colours allowed manufacturers and dye houses to operate in large quantities, and offer vivid, rich colours. They became the go-to option, they stick to fabric easily, don't lose pigmentation, and offer limitless palette of

colours".

The preference for synthetic dyes, however, has been dwindling with the recent, surging quest for sustainable textiles. Sustainable textiles are those that have little or no tendency to be harmful to the environment. That is, textiles that are eco-friendly. World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) defines sustainability as the ability "to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their needs and desires" (Eco-friendly Textiles, para. 4). This aptly suggests, in our quest to take care of the present, we should be cautious not to endanger the future generation. Synthetic dyes are known to be very hazardous to the environment and also harmful to the user who might inhale their fumes. Lately these undeniable facts have been militating against the continued use of the synthetic dyes. With the growing emphasis on sustainable textiles, the preference is gradually shifting to natural dyes that are less toxic. In addition, with the drift towards natural dyes, there has been a conscious effort to source fibres that are environmentally friendly. In this regard, fabrics are now being made from recycled plastic bottles, corn, wood pulp, fermented wine, coconut husks spoiled milk, genetically engineered bacteria, and hagfish slime.

Herbs

There seems to be a general misconception about herbs being just plants that are of medicinal value. There are several other attributes of herbs. Yarrow (2011) remarks that "[b]otanically herbs are non- woody plants. Although we consider any plant that is valued for flavour, scent, medicinal, or other qualities as herb" (What are Herbs?, para. 1). Here, Yarrow implies that the herb does not grow to have sturdy stem and could have flavour or fragrance. Deni explains further that

...[t]he term "herb" also has more than one definition. Botanists describe an herb as a small, seed bearing plant with fleshy, rather than wood parts (from which we get the term herbaceous). In this book, the term refers to a far wide range of plants. In addition to herbaceous perennials, herbs include trees, shrubs, annuals, vines and more primitive plants, such as ferns, mosses, algae, lichen and fungi. They (herbs) are valued for their flavour, fragrance, medicinal and healthful qualities, economic and industrial uses, pesticidal properties, and colouring materials (dyes). (2001: 8)

This further illustrates the versatility of herbs in meeting several human needs and constitutes the core of the motivation for this research. After all, it is pertinent to note that nature seems to have everything to meet the needs of man. Man, however, has not been able to adequately explore these endless provisions of nature. This research focuses on the colouring property of herbs for the production of Herbal Textiles which are produced solely from herbal extractions without any chemical additive and hence classified as sustainable.

Here it is important to note that dyes made from herbs also have those medicinal properties associated with those herbs. As Aparna (2013) remarks,

...[h]erbal textile is dyed with herbs having medicinal property, it is but natural that the end products made through it will definitely have some or other health benefits. Depening upon the herb used to make the dyes, herbal textile can contend with disease like hypertension, heart ailment, asthma and diabetes to make the dyes. ("Eco-Friendly Textiles", Para.22)

Bestowing medicinal value is an added advantage which gives some herbs an edge over

other natural sources of dye. Herbs like *Allium Cepa* (Onion), Turmeric and *Hibiscus Sabdariffa* (zobo), for example, have been found to give appreciable coloration when applied on fabrics. It is pertinent to note that virtually all the dye extracts from indigenous herbs during the course of this study, effectively saturated the immersed fabric, giving appreciable colouration. However, the intensity of the colouration varied from one herb to the other. The prevailing conditions of extraction and dyeing processes were determinant factors. There is no end to the exploration of dyes from nature because of the various factors that could culminate in diverse outcomes. Just a slight alteration of a particular factor can produce an overwhelming difference. This study explored *Allium Cepa* (Onion peel) which gives brilliant shades colour and is readily available at little or no cost.

Determinants of the Resultant Colour during Extraction of Natural Dyes

The extraction of dye from nature is the physical or chemical separation of the required colourant using a solvent. The extraction efficiency of dye is often dependent on several variables. These determinant factors are:

(i)   pH value of the media;

(ii)   Media type – aqueous, acid or alkali, organic (alcohol);

(iii)   Conditions of extraction – material to liquor ratio (MLR), particle size of substrate.

The aqueous extraction process entails partial or complete dissolution in water. Hence, a pH value could be ascribed to the extracted solution. As Helmenstine (2017) points out, "pH is a measure of Hydrogen ion concentration, a measure of acidity or alkalinity".

The value of an extracted solution's pH could also be defined as a measure of acidity or alkalinity of water soluble substances. The letters (pH) stand for "power of Hydrogen" or "potential of Hydrogen". The value of a solution's pH ranges between the values of 0 to 14. At the 0 point, the solution is said to be strongly acidic and strongly basic at 14 as shown below. The middle point which is 7, is neutral and it is taken to be the value of pure water. While the acidity decreases from 0 to 6, the basicity increases from 8 to 14.

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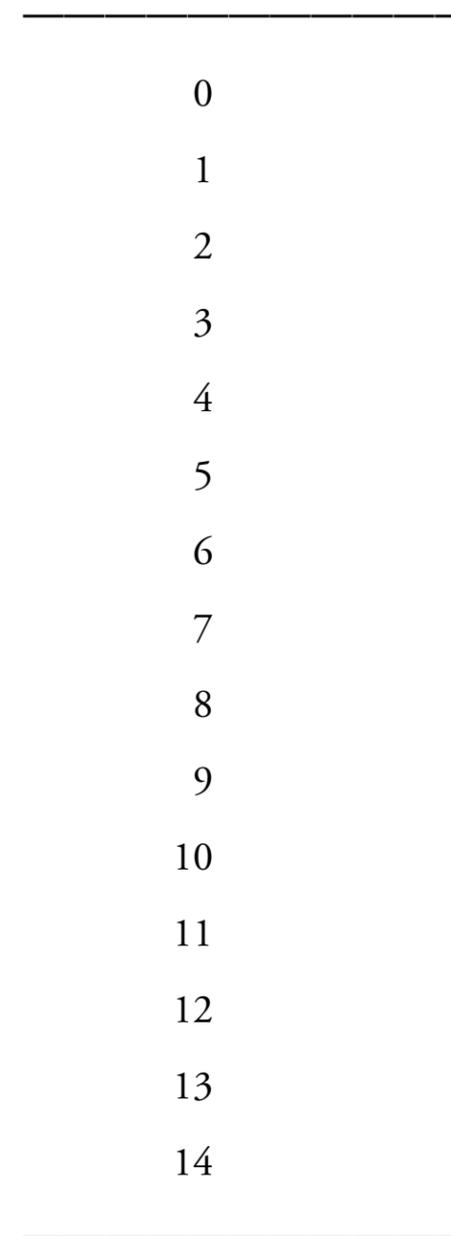
Figure 1: The pH scale

Here it is important to note that the pH value is a logarithmic scale in which two adjacent values increase or decrease by a factor of ten (10). For example, pH of 4 is ten times more acidic than pH of 5 and a 100 times more acidic than pH of 6. In the same vein, pH of 9 is ten times more alkaline than pH of 8 and 100 times more alkaline than pH of 7.

Plate 1: pH Metre.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2018

Effects of pH in Dyeing

It has been established that every chemical reaction works best at a certain pH. Ascertaining what is an optimal pH becomes vital for the optimal result from any process of chemical reaction. Dyeing entails a chemical reaction that culminates in a bond between the dye and the fibre structure of the fabric. Therefore, it is important to ascertain the optimal pH that would yield the best shade of colouration. However, it is pertinent to note that the pH level for optimal extraction results can vary from one source of natural dye to the other.

The dye bath pH value is an overwhelming factor which considerably affects and determines the outcome of the dyeing process. As Yanfei (2016) asserts, "pH value of the dye bath has great effect on apparent colour and colour strength". This implies that the pH value also determines the shade of colour that results from any dyeing process and that varying the pH of a dye solution results in different shades of colour. Plates 5 and 6 show how the shade of colour varies when a mordant alters the pH of extracted dye from *Allium Cepa* (Onion peel).

Experiment 1

Aqueous Extraction of Dye from *Allium Cepa*(Onion)

Technical Details

Fabric Type: Cotton

Yardage: 1

Herb: *Allium Cepa* (Onion)

Weight: 200g

Water: 4,000ml

Temperature: 42.7C

Procedure: With the aid of a weighing scale (Plate 2), the desired quantity of the Allium Cepa was measured. Using a calibrated plastic vessel (Plate 3), commensurate volume of water that is adequate for the intended fabric to be dyed, was also measured. The Onion peels and measured volume of water were poured into a pot and boiled for forty five (45) minutes. Thereafter, the aqueous solution was sieved into a clean vessel. The pH value of the aqueous solution of *Allium Cepa* was taken before the fabric was immersed in the solution.

pH of Aqueous solution: 4.5

The fabric was left in the solution for thirty (30) minutes for effective dyeing to take place. It was then removed from the dye solution and rinsed thoroughly to discharge traces of dye not wholly bound to the fibres of the fabric.

Plate 2: Digital Weighing Scale.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2018

Plate 3: Calibrated Plastic Vessel
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2018

Plate 4: Resultant Dyed Fabric from an Aqueous Solution of *Allium Cepa* with
pH 4.5
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2018

Experiment 2

Extraction of Dye from *Allium Cepa* using Alum as a Mordant

Technical Details

Fabric Type: Cotton

Yardage: 1

Herb: *Allium Cepa* (Onion)

Weight: 200g

Mordant: Alum

Weight: 200g

Mordating Method: Simultaneous

Water: 4,000ml

Temperature: 41.7C

Procedure: As in Experiment 1, the desired *Allium Cepa* and water were measured accordingly. The required Alum (mordant) was also weighed. Employing the simultaneous mordating technique, everything was poured into a pot and boiled for forty five (45) minutes. Thereafter, the aqueous solution was sieved and the pH value taken.

pH of Aqueous Solution: 2.4

The fabric was then immersed in the dye solution and left for thirty (30) minutes. The dyeing process was concluded with a thorough rising of the fabric to remove any loose traces of dye.

A comparative analysis of experiments 1 and 2 reveals:

(a)   the pH value of *Allium Cepa* changed from 4.5 to 2.4 when mordanted with Alum. This implies that the mordanted solution is of a higher acidity;

(b)   the resultant dyed fabric from the mordanted aqueous solution of *Allium Cepa* is of a darker shade of colour than the one not mixed with alum.

These results suggest that that the shade of colour becomes darker as the acidity of the dye solution increases.

Plate 5: Resultant Dyed Fabric from an Aqueous Solution of *Allium Cepa* (Onion) Mordanted with Alum.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2018

Conditions of Extraction – Material to Liquor Ratio, Particle size of Substrate

(a)   The effect on the pH and shade of colour of the dye extract when the alum is pulverized;

(b)   The effect when the quantity of the alum is increased.

Experiment 3

Extraction of Dye from *Allium Cepa* using Pulverized Alum as a Mordant

Technical Details
Fabric Type: Cotton
Yardage: 1
Herb: *Allium Cepa* (Onion)
Weight: 150g
Mordant: Alum
Weight: 200g
Mordating Method: Simultaneous
Water: 2,000ml

Procedure: As in the previous experiments, the required *Allium Cepa* and water were measured. The Alum (mordant) was pulverized with the aid of a manual grinding machine, and the desired quantity was weighed. Everything was poured into a pot and boiled for forty five (45) minutes. Thereafter, the aqueous solution was sieved and the pH value taken.

pH of Aqueous Solution: 2.4

The fabric was dipped in the dye solution (Plate 6) and left for thirty (30) minutes. Thereafter, the fabric was rinsed thoroughly to remove traces of loose dye.

Plate 6: Fabric Immersed In An Aqueous Solution of *Allium Cepa* Mordanted With Pulverized Alum.

Plate 7: Resultant Dyed Fabric from an Aqueous Solution of *Allium Cepa* Mordanted with Pulverized Alum.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2018

Experiment 4

Extraction of Dye from *Allium Cepa* using a Solid Mass of Alum as a Mordant

Technical Details

Fabric Type: Cotton

Yardage: 1

Herb: *Allium Cepa* (Onion)

Weight: 150g

Mordant: Alum

Weight: 200g

Mordating Method: Simultaneous

Water: 2,000ml

Procedure: As in Experiment 3, the required *Allium Cepa* and water were measured. The solid mass Alum (mordant) was pulverized, weighed and everything was poured into a pot and boiled for forty five (45) minutes. The aqueous solution was sieved and the pH value taken.

pH of Aqueous Solution: 2.5

The fabric was then immersed in the dye solution (Plate 8) and left for thirty (30) minutes. The rinsing process followed to remove loose dye from the fabric.

Taking a comparative look at the results from studio activities 3 and 4, the following could be observed:

(a) The aqueous solution of dye mordanted with pulverized alum is lighter in colour than that of the solid mass of alum (Plates 6 and 8);

(b) The resultant dyed fabric from the solution of dye mordanted with the solid

mass of alum is of a darker shade of colour than that mordanted with pulverized alum (Plates 7 and 9).
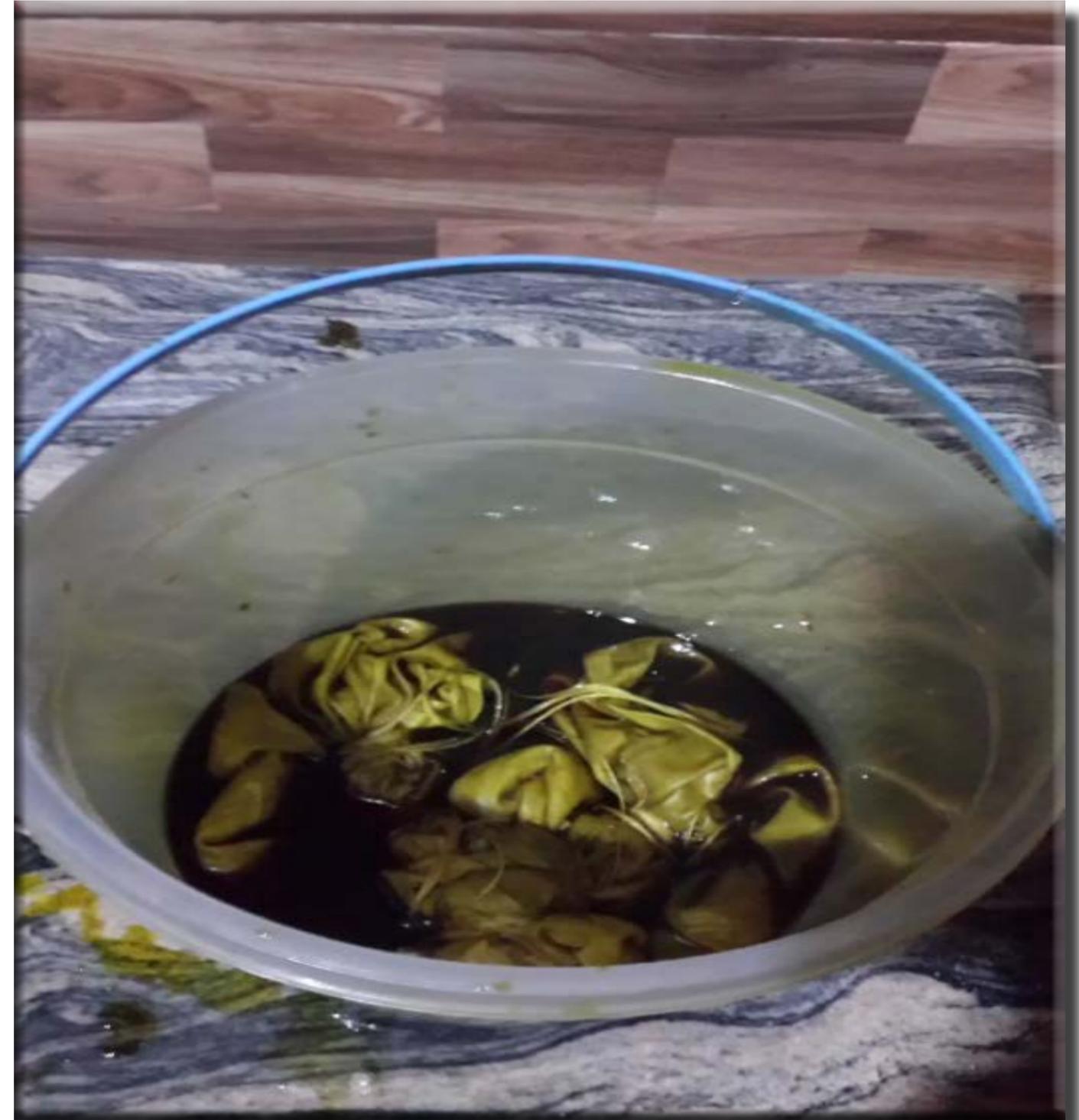
Plate 8: Fabric Immersed in an Aqueous Solution of *Allium Cepa* Mordanted with Solid Mass of Alum.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2018

Plate 9: Resultant Dyed Fabric from an Aqueous Solution of *Allium Cepa*
Mordanted with Solid Mass of Alum.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2018

Adducing reasons for the variations in the results of Experiments 3 and 4, Igbinomwanhia P. states:

> ...[a] fast rate of reaction can give a different product from a slow rate of reaction, depending on the chemical nature of the reactants. The pulverized alum avails the aqueous solution of Allium Cepa [sic] more surface area for chemical reaction. Hence, the rate of chemical reaction is faster than that of the solid mass of alum that has a lesser surface area. The difference in the rate of reaction is the reason for the different results from the pulverized and solid mass of alum. (personal communication, November 18, 2018)

Also discussing the effect of increase in surface area on chemical reaction, Moore (2017) writes:

> [r]ates of reaction increase according to the frequency of collisions between the reacting species. for example, a solid reactant which is in contact with an aqueous solution of another, increasing the surface area to volume ratio, by pulverizing the solid into fine powder, means that same number of moles of reactant now occupy a greater surface area form. This means that surface of the reactant, where reactions occur and collisions take place, is greater, so there is possibility for more collisions per mole to take place. Therefore the rate of reaction increases.

Considering the foregoing comments, it is evident that as the physical property is altered, so also is the chemical property. In short, grinding the physical state of a mordant changes its chemical property, and in turn imparts the shade of colour of the dye being mordanted as illustrated in Plates 7 and 9.

Experiment 5

Ascertaining the Effects of Increasing the Quantity of the Mordant

Technical Details

Fabric Type: Cotton

Yardage: 1/2

Herb: *Allium Cepa* (Onion)

Weight: 150g

Mordant: Alum

Weight: 100g

Mordating Method: Simultaneous (comordating)

Water: 2,000ml

Procedure: Just like in the previous experiments , the required *Allium Cepa* and water were measured. The Alum (mordant) was weighed and everything poured into a pot and boiled for forty five (45) minutes. The aqueous solution was then sieved and the pH value taken.

pH of Aqueous Solution: 2.6

Thereafter, the fabric was immersed in the dye solution and left for at least thirty (30) minutes. The rinsing process followed to remove loose dye from the fabric.

Plate 10: Resultant Dyed Fabric from an Aqueous Solution of *Allium Cepa* Mordanted with 100g of Alum.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2018

Experiment 6

Ascertaining the Effects of Increasing the Quantity of the Mordant

Technical Details

Fabric Type: Cotton

Yardage: 1/2

Herb: *Allium Cepa* (Onion)

Weight: 150g

Mordant: Alum

Weight: 250g

Mordating Method: Simultaneous (comordating)

Water: 2,000ml

Procedure: The required *Allium Cepa* and water were measured. The Alum (mordant) was weighed and everything was poured into a pot and boiled for forty five (45) minutes. The aqueous solution was sieved and the pH value taken.

pH of Aqueous Solution: 2.9

The fabric was then immersed in the dye solution and left for at least thirty (30) minutes. The rinsing process followed to remove loose dye from the fabric.

Plate 11: Resultant Dyed Fabric from an Aqueous Solution of *Allium Cepa* Mordanted with 250g of Alum.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2018

A clear deduction can be made from studio Experiments 5 and 6. The resultant dyed fabric in experiment 5, mondated with 100g of alum is of a lighter shade of colour than that of experiment 6 mondated with 250g of alum. This implies that an increase in the quantity of mordant could produce a darker tone of colour. Ize-Iyamu (personal communication, December 6, 2018) saw the results from experiments 5 and 6 in the light of Auxochromes. According to him,

> auxochromes are colour enhancers. The alum used as a mordant in the above experiments, is an auxochrome that has helped to amplify the shade of colour. The more the auxochrome, the richer the colour. Hence, as the quantity of the alum is increased, a resultant darker shade of colour evolves.

This certifies all mordants as auxochromes, which invariably makes them colour enhancers. Ize-Iyamu further explains other factors that could determine the shade of colour in a dye bath:

> Some metals when present in colour formation could exhibit different oxidation state. As the oxidation state varies, the resultant colour varies. For instance, Iron II($Fe2$) has a different colour from Iron III($Fe3$). Chromophores which are referred to as colour formers are vital determinants of colour shade. The more the chromophores in a dye bath, the darker the shade of colour. Conjugation which is the chemistry of the dye is another factor. This has to do with the bonding of the elements which could be uniformly single and double As shown below. The more the conjugation, the darker the shade of colour $C=C-C=C-C=C-C=C-C=C-C=C-C-C=C-C=C-C.$

It has become very apparent that the dyeing process being a chemical process has several overbearing factors that determine the final outcome.

Alcoholic extraction of Dye from *Allium Cepa* (Onion) without a Mordant

Technical Details
Fabric Type: Cotton
Yardage: 1/2
Herb: *Allium Cepa* (Onion)
Weight: 130g
Ethanol: 1.4 Litres

Procedure: Measured the required weight of pulverised *Allium Cepa* (Plate 12) and measured the volume of Ethanol (Plate 13) Poured everything into a pot and boiled for ten (10) minutes. It was observed that the pulverised onion peels became very tender and brittle (Plate 15) and the ethanol almost completely evaporated. Thereafter, the crispy onion peels were poured into boiled water and sieved after twenty minutes to extract the colourant. The fabric was then immersed in the extracted colourant and left for twenty minutes. Rinsing of the fabric with water followed to wash off loose dye on the surface of the fabric.

Plate 12: Pulverised *Allium Cepa.*
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2019

Plate 13: Ethanol.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2019

Plate 14: Crispy *Allium Cepa.*
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2019

Plate 15: Resultant Dyed Fabric from the Alcoholic dye Extract of *Allium Cepa.*
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2019

Alcoholic extraction of Dye from *Allium Cepa* using Ferrous Sulphate as Mordant

Technical Details

Fabric Type: Cotton

Yardage: 1/2

Herb: *Allium Cepa* (Onion)

Weight: 130g

Mordant: Ferrous Sulphate

Weight: 4g

Ethanol: 1.4 Litres

Procedure: The *Allium Cepa* was pulverized and the required weight was measured. The pulverized *Allium Cepa* was poured into a pot with a measured volume of ethanol and boiled for ten (10) minutes. As in the previous experiments, the pulverized onion peels became brittle and the ethanol almost completely evaporated. Thereafter, the crispy onion peels were poured into boiled water and sieved after twenty minutes to extract the colourant. The Ferrous Sulphate mordant (Plate 16) was added to the dye extract and mixed thoroughly. The fabric was then immersed and left for twenty minutes. Rinsing of the fabric with water was carried out to wash off excess dye on the surface of the fabric.

Plate 16: Ferrous Sulphate Mordant.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2019

Plate 17: Resultant Dyed Fabric from the Alcoholic Dye Extract of *Allium Cepa* using Ferrous Sulphate Mordant.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2019

Alcoholic Extraction of Dye from *Allium Cepa* using Potassium Dichromate as Mordant

Technical Details

Fabric Type: Cotton

Yardage: 1/2

Herb: *Allium Cepa* (Onion)

Weight: 130g

Mordant: Potassium Dichromate

Weight: 4g

Ethanol: 1.4 Litres

Procedure: The required weight of the pulverized Allium Cepa was measured. The measured weight of *Allium Cepa* and a measured volume of ethanol were poured into a pot and boiled for ten (10) minutes. The pulverized onion peels became brittle and the ethanol almost completely evaporated. Thereafter, the crispy onion peels were poured into boiled water and sieved after twenty minutes to extract the colourant. The Potassium Dichromate Mordant (Plate 18) was added to the dye extract and mixed thoroughly. The fabric was then immersed and left for twenty minutes. Rinsing of the fabric with water carried was out to wash off loose dye on the surface of the fabric.

Plate 18: Potassium dichromate Mordant.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2019
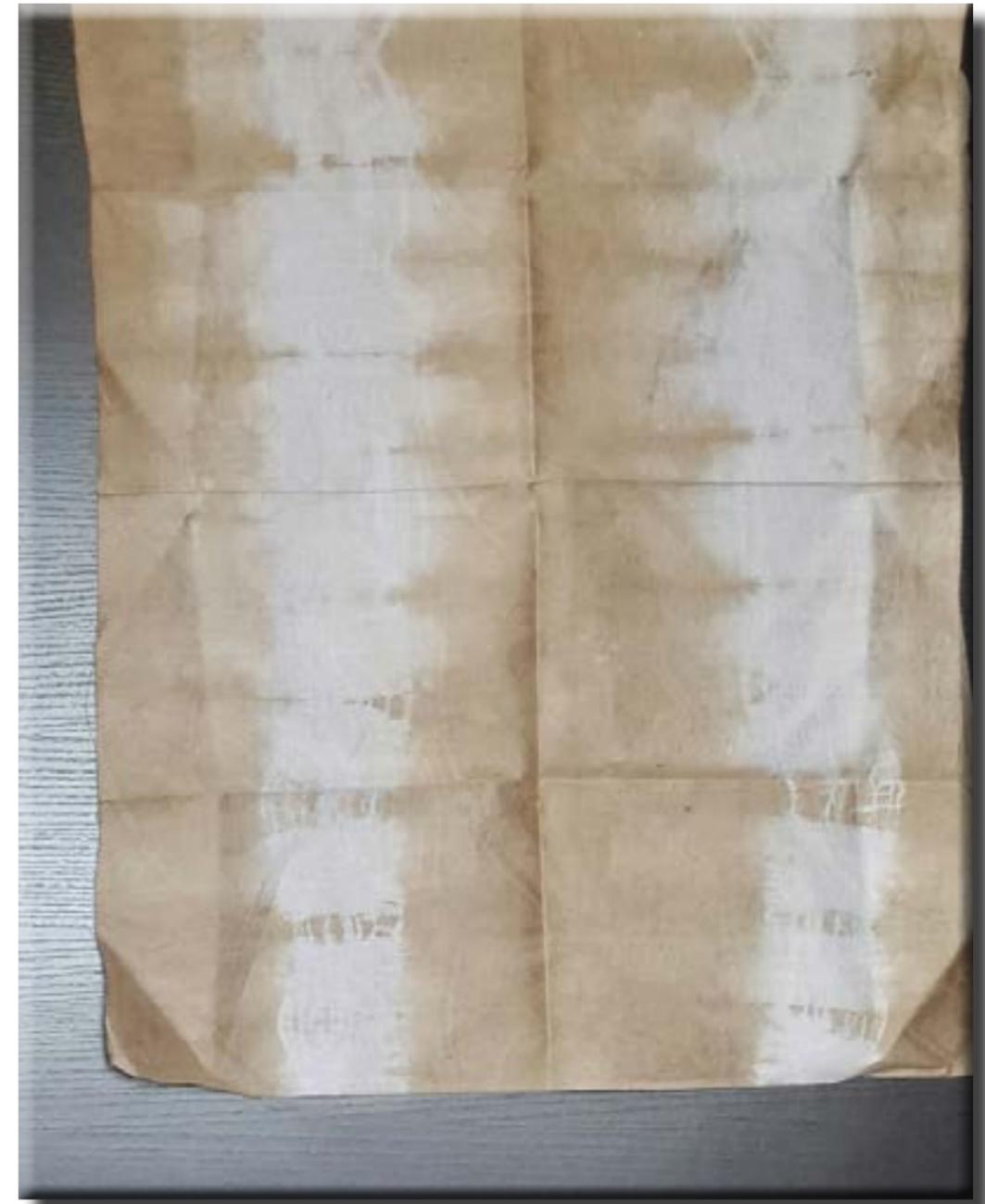
Plate 19: Resultant Dyed Fabric from the Alcoholic dye Extract of Allium Cepa using Potassium dichromate Mordant.
Photo: Paul Aikhionbare, 2019

Two deductions can be adduced from these alcoholic extraction experiments:

(i)   Varying the medium of extraction alters the resultant colour as could be observed in Plates 4 and 15;

(ii) Varying the mordant also has an impact on the resultant colour as exemplified in Plates 17 and 19.

Conclusion

Because of the abundance of plants, embedded with colouring substances that could be extracted as dyes, it is most disheartening to note that not much is being done to adequately source dyes from our naturally endowed environment. There is a dire need for an in-depth exploratory study and conduct comprehensive studies on natural dyes that would facilitate accurate and adequate documentation of all determinant factors and their resultant effects. This would go a long way to bridge the apparent gap that had been created over the years in the study of natural dyes. This study has shown the variances in shades of color that can occur when factors like the pH value of the media, particle size of the substrate, and medium of extraction are altered. Thes differences give credence the possibilities of with the natural dyes as the more you vary the conditions or process of extraction, the more varied are the results. This study has documented the following the resultant effects of varying these determinant factors. They are

(i) Medium of extraction determines the resultant colour;

(ii) As the acidity of the dye bath increases, the resultant colour gets darker;

(iii) Different mordants give different shades of colour;

(iv) Solid mass of mordant gives a darker shade than the pulverized;

(v) Increasing the quantity of the mordant gives a darker shade.

Reliable pedestals for future exploration, these findings pave the way for further study of the versatility of natural dyes. It is important to note, however, that it is almost impossible to replicate the exact shade of colour of natural dye. This may be attributed to the several variables associated with the extraction of natural dyes. These variables, often informed by nature, are never consistent from one extraction process to another. These variables ascribe to the natural dyes a fascinating uniqueness that has continued to elicit the interest of scholars.

Here it is important to note that the production of natural dyes began to dwindle by the advent of the synthetic dyes in 1856. This was a result of the overwhelming advantages synthetic dyes' cost effectiveness and variety of colours. But it is pertinent to note that natural dyes also offer similar advantages. Findings from this study show that natural dyes can be cost effective and offer a reasonable variety of colours. Of these dyes, the *Allium cepa* (Onion peel) is most cost effective because onion peels are waste that can be gathered at no cost. With this in mind, the advantage of the cost effectiveness of synthetic dyes over natural dyes is diminished. Furthermore, *Allium Cepa* is polygenetic. It gives different shades of colour as the conditions of extraction are altered.

The aggregate of findings from this study generate the following recommendations:

i. Virtually every plant in our immediate environment is a potential source for textile dye that must of necessity be explored;

ii. Extraction of natural dyes should be quantitatively done. This will help in adequate documentation;

iii. There should be further exploration of mordants for natural dyes, and comprehensively documenting their effects.

As well, this study creates awareness about the diverse possibilities with natural dyes and at the time, helps the furtherance of eco-friendly textiles.

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Rebecca Matheson

Product Placements in Selected Nollywood Films

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Abstract

Film industries owe their prolific features to the funding accruing to productions released. Places like California, Bombay, Hong Kong, London, Lagos and its contending film production spots in Nigeria attract minimal funding making some filmmakers to rely on product placements. This translates to recourse to desperate measures in which some films become avenues for hawking merchandise. Reviewing selected films in which product placements are visibly incorporated, this article examines the tendency to resort to alternative financial avenue and make the audience members pay for their patronage. Arguably, to some extent, this assuages financial inadequacies inherent in the film industry and alleviates funding stress by financially easing the burden borne by the producers, logistically and monetarily concretizing the motion picture from a mere idea. While the need for production budget padding is the main reason integrated marketing is used, if well exploited, this marketing also serves other purposes, among them, aesthetic and artistic uplifting of the film's contents.

Keywords: Funding, Nollywood, Product placements, Productions

Introduction

Nollywood made the Guinness Book of World Records 2017 with Ayo Makun's *30 Days in Atlanta* as the highest film with a domestic gross at the cinemas. This recognition, in spite of better quality and funded films globally, signposts the film industry in Nigeria as a very vibrant economic activity. What this supposes is that the dramatic construct and technical quality of Nollywood films are calibrated in a manner that compares favourably with standard international productions. Yet, the question of Nollywood's operational modalities comes to some as happenstance which leaves much to be desired. The rise of a home video system since the late 80s, which consolidated after 1992, has enabled the movies in Nigeria to be household items. However, following Silverbird's Cinemas' re-awakening of a once moribund cinema culture in the year 2004, filmmakers now jostle for a place in the silver screen (www.google.com/search/highestgrossingNollywoodfilm).

The earnest pursuit to have one's film seen on the big screen in Nigeria brings with it problems, the most fundamental being funding. In this regard, Nollywood has no respite. Several forums have been convened, and committees and agencies have been set up to look into the film industry's financial dilemma with many of them turning out to be white elephant projects. For example, *Project Act Nollywood*, by the Goodluck Jonathan Administration, *Project Nollywood* by the quartet of Fidelis Duker, Fred Amata, Charles Novia and Chico Ejiro with support from Eco Bank as financier did not translate to its lofty ideals with which it set out to ape Dream Works SKG, respectively. There have been other avenues such as the Bank of Industry BOI funding for filmmakers as well as *AccessNolly* funds instituted by Access Bank Plc. All of the above and more are laudable

steps in the right direction to ameliorate the funding shortfall bedevilling Nollywood (*This Day*, July 20th 2014, https://www.thenigerianvoice.com/nvprint/3318/4/project-nollywood-introduces-distribution-magic-wa.html, http://www.businessdayonline.com/access-bank-launches-n1bn-accessnolly-fund/).

In the atmosphere in which Nollywood operates (without corporate support and unable to operate in the mainstream economy), producers are devising other means to make films. One of the noticeable trends presently being witnessed in Nollywood is the prospect of product placements in films. Studies of this phenomenon demonstrate that the shortage of viable funding sources is the major reason that many producers resort to integrated marketing. Technically known as product placements, filmmakers derive financial benefits when they systematically incorporate commercial entities in their plot structures by making room for the expression of deliberate economic space in feature films and accelerating commercial exposure to target audience. The placement of Reese's Pieces in Steven Spielberg's *E.T.-Extra Terrestrial* is often considered to be the first of many explosive appearances of branded products in films (Gardiner, 2015, p. 1).

The Concept of Product Placement in Films

According to Mridanish, "[p]roduct placement is defined as the planned insertion of a brand or product into a movie, television show and some other media program with the purpose of influencing the viewers" (2012, p. 1). As Kit and Qui P'ng point out, movies are not exempted from product placements; instead, they are seen as the new advertising avenue for advertisers. One example is the popular movie, *Transformer 3: Revenge of the Fallen* (2009). Its product placement partners include Burger King, 7-Eleven, LG

phones, Kmart, Wal-Mart, YouTube, Nike, Inc., M&M's, Jollibee in the Philippines, General Motors, Apple, Mercedes Benz, Lenovo, CNN, and Fox News. *Brand Channel*, an online exchange website, has awarded *Transformer 3* the 2011 Award for "Achievement in Product Placement in a Single Film"(2014, p. 138). This non-traditional method of advertising brands in such a way that the audience is spared the agony of a commercial-break has proven profitable for all parties over the years. Its subtle articulation of using dialogue and visuals, corporate bodies and individuals integrates and embeds in movies a number of commercially viable products. As Mridanish asserts, "the high cost of conventional media, accompanied by the growing clutter had made product placement an exciting and viable opportunity" (p.1) for alleviating funding duress of commercial film production.

Kaur remarks that "[t]he cost of product placement is quite low...compared to the above-the line methods of advertising or endorsement" (2014, p. 53). Unlike advertising, Kaur argues "product placement does not interrupt programming and hence is less obtrusive". According to Kaur, products gain greater credibility when popular and respected movie and television stars use them. Also, product placements have more reach than advertisements, because films are released in a wide geographical area and across borders as well. Via film, products are accelerated into more homes thereby increasing the brand's corporate image many times (Kaur, 2014, p. 53). Williams et al. remark that

> [p]roduct placement is the purposeful incorporation of commercial content into non-commercial settings, that is, a product plug generated via the fusion of advertising and entertainment. While product placement is riskier

than conventional advertising, it is becoming a common practice to place products and brands into mainstream media including films, broadcast and cable television programs, computer and video games, blogs, music videos/DVDs, magazines, books, comics, Broadway musicals and plays, radio, Internet, and mobile phones. To reach retreating audiences; advertisers use product placements increasingly in clever, effective ways that do not cost too much. (2011, p. 1)

As Williams et al. point out, because of its low cost, product placement is a subtle strategy aimed at reaching audiences wary of traditional adverts. Waldt et al. posit that "[b]y cleverly weaving a product into a scene, marketers hope audiences will connect their brand with the stars or story they see on the screen" (2007, p. 19). The purpose, according to Waldt et al. is "to counter television commercials zipping and zapping, audience fragmentation due to the rise in the number of cable channels, commercial clutter driven by increasing time allocated to advertisements and a simultaneous decrease in commercial length" (2007, p. 19). It is Corniani's opinion that "[p]roduct placement (or product tie-in) is a corporate communication tool which allows us to plan and carry out the placement of a product or brand within the scenes of a film within a specific budget and defined contractual terms (2001, p.66)". Agreeing, Choi states that

[m]arketers focus on finding the best vehicle to feature products or brands that will ensure a high return on investment. Thus, it is important for marketers to know how audience responses to products differ depending on movie genre, the duration of product exposure, the modality of product placement (audio/visual), and varying degrees of product connection to the plot. More variables are likely to affect audience responses to product placements, such as product involvement, viewers' moods while watching the movie, and whether or not the viewer saw the film in a theatre or at home. Among these variables, the degree of a product's integration into a storyline, audience involvement, and prior brand evaluations were selected to understand the effectiveness of product placements. (2007, p. 3)

Despite Choi's assertion, deliberate integration of commercial products in feature films is experienced by most audience members as a welcome sensation when they see their preferred brands. Of course, people's preference for a product can also be the result of its inclusion in a film, especially when a notable film star is associated with it.

Walton points out that advertising and branding allows organizations to have control over their message and its dissemination, but advertisements are often viewed as being less credible than product placement by audiences (2010, p. 70). As Guth and Marsh remark, product placements in any entertainment medium are mediums for audience indoctrination. Products are placed with the aim of achieving a benefit-mix known as 'hybrid messages'. One type of hybrid message is achieved by the planned and unobtrusive entry of a branded product into a movie or television program (2016, p. 29-30). Walton says that while many cite Steven Spielberg's film *E T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* as the beginning of product placement, closer examination shows that products were present in cinematic films from the creation of the medium (2010, p. 70).

Wiles and Danielova argue that as a result of the diminishing effectiveness of

broadcast advertising, firms are increasingly turning to product placements in films and television to promote their brands. Thus, product placement, which is also sometimes referred to as "brand integration", is the inclusion of branded products or identifiers through audio or visual means within mass media (2002, p. 23-24). In Todd's opinion, Hollywood films are a hot bed for the proliferation of promotional activity. This is because in 1998, 475 movies carried a total of 98 product placement partners; by 2003, slightly fewer films were produced, but 196 partners were associated with placements. According to Todd, product placement is best defined as the practice of "incorporating brands in movies in return for money or for some promotional or other consideration" (2004, p. 5).

Kramoliš and Kopečková hold that dominant shot (apparent, on-set placement) in an audio-visual work where there is is a direct shot of a product at the forefront so that the greater part of the TV screen is filled by the product and so it is immediately identifiable by the viewer. Dominant shots can be further classified into integrated and non-integrated placements. A non-dominant shot (hidden, creative placement) is an indirect shot of a product in the background so that the smaller part of the TV screen is filled by the product, which is, therefore, a natural component of the shot, and viewers are not necessarily noticed it. Verbal mention (audio placement) also occurs when the product is openly spoken of in a work. According to Kramoliš and Kopečková, verbal mention involves not only mentioning the name of a brand, a product or service, but also making remarks about its essential features. Active product placement (audio-visual placement) occurs when a product is used by some of the movie's characters. For viewers

the audio-visual placement in combination is more noticeable, and such placement can be mingled with the ordinary action of the program. Passive product placement (visual placement) occurs when a product either appears in a shot of a movie or a TV program, or is placed in a virtual environment (Kramoliš and Kopečková, 2013, p. 102-103).

PICTORIAL ANALYSIS OF PRODUCT PLACEMENTS IN SELECTED FILMS

PRODUCT PLACEMENTS IN *THE FIGURINE*

Sola (Kunle Afolayan) entices Femi (Ramsey Nousah) with a Cigar and hands Femi *Lucozade Sport* drink.

In the frame above, P.1, Sola introduces a cigarette to Femi telling him that he does not know what he is missing. Sola further reiterates this notion by downplaying Femi's asthma. In **P.**2, seeing that his attempt to sell Femi a cigar did not work, Sola introduces another product saying, "I have something for you though" and unveils a *Lucozade Sport* energy

drink. The unveiling of this *Lucozade sport* is timely. Femi appreciates the kind gesture following his asthma and in view of the tiresome endurance trek. As an energy booster, Femi could not ask for more, and there is no argument about the health implications of this product, especially as Kunle Afolayan takes advantage of his character in the creation of this scene and leverages his salesmanship.

Mona (Omoni Obali) meets with her Professor and Femi (Ramsey Nouah) at a Lagos park and garden, respectively.

In frame P.3, *Lucozade Boost* is conspicuously integrated into the shot-frame in such a way that its prominence is emphasised when Mona, Sola's pregnant wife grabs it, while exiting the professor's office. Frame P. 4 is a depiction of Femi and Mona's rendovzous at a Marina-Lagos open Garden. In this frame, the panorama of Marina-Lagos, as the camera pans towards the old lovers, is established. This brings us to Mona and Femi 's conversation in which the former spends a great deal of time extolling the fantastic work being done by the Raji Fashola administration. Femi is awe-inspired by the transformation initiated by the Lagos State Government and says in his dialogue that the garden in which

they sit was not there before. This scene practically sells Lagos State as a tourist haven by amplifying its "Centre of Excellence" motto.

Sola and Femi network at the MicCom Golf Course and Bini Prince eats snacks in *Invasion 1897.*

In the above frame, P.5, Sola and Femi play golf at MicCom Golf course. But instead of paying attention to playing golf, Sola is thinking like a salesman, highlighting how he discovered MicCom Golf course and its business-cum-networking prospects. Femi agrees with Sola and notes that MicCom Golf can compete with European standards. In frame P.6, we see the Prince holding a snack, *Ade Chips,* a Nigerian brand snack popular with Nigerians in the UK, while he talks with the Professor of History. Intermittently the Prince munches on them with relish. While this may pass unnoticed, it is a crucial instance of product placement deployed in the film. The filmmaker (Lancelot Oduwa

Imasuen) says *Ade Chips* was plugged in for the promotion of the Nigerian brand even though no financial incentive was given for the product in the film.

PRODUCT PLACEMENTS IN *INVASION 1897*

Sapetro and FevaTV brand integration and a neon lit logo of CITI Group in London.

1. Frame P.7 is the corporate logo of Sapetro (South Atlantic Petroleum) and *FevaTV* (First Entertainment Voice of Africa Television). In an interview with Lancelot Oduwa Imasuen (Producer/Director) of *Invasion 1897*, it was revealed that funding for the film's budget came from owners of Sapetro. Accordingly, the company's logo was infused into the film. *FevaTV,* which operates in Canada, facilitated the screening of *Invasion 1897* in that country. In the interview, Lancelot OduaImasuen made it clear that Capt. Hosa Wells Okunbo *Invasion 1897's* second produer was involved in every phase of production, including the locations used in London, obtaining supports from the British Authorities for police vans, vests, hotel bookings, flight arrangement and accommodation services for cast and crew. Remarkably, during the trial of the Prince, *FevaTV* is the only accredited media house reporting the case—given undue advantage over any other TV house in England all the way from Canada. **P.8** is a

nocturnal aerial view of London. This establishment shot which differs markedly from the dark ages picture of the ancient Benin Kingdom at night is significant for its alluring tourism potential. It is a clear case of brand integration using marguee as its preferred mode of publicity. A closer look at the left corner of the screen displays CITI Group's logo which did not find its way into this film by accident. As much as it may seem aesthetically appealing to show the neonlit skyscrappers, the shot projectsthe corporate entity of CITI, a Nigerian affiliated financial operative in London.

PRODUCT PLACEMENTS IN *30 DAYS IN ATLANTA*

Lekki Gardens' signage populate the background in both exterior and exterior scenes.

In P.9, Akpos yanks the bouncers after the Wife of the MD, Lekki Gardens instructs the security to allow him and Richard entrance into the building. It is not Akpos's actions that are notable in this scene, but the banners advertising the numerous buildings that Lekki Gardens wants the audience to see. The manner in which the 8-ft banners are positioned encourage an uninformed audience to mistake them for real houses. As if this was not enough, P. 10, which is the interior, is a replication with posters of Lekki Garden's luxurious mansions everywhere. This is done in such a way that there is no single camera

shot without a part of these posters in the frame. In the latter photo, the MD of Lekki Gardens takes quite a long time informing us about the dream he had in 2012 to build affordable homes for all. He takes pride in the fact that the real estate company has been fulfilling its promise in highbrow areas all over Nigeria. In this way, the event sets in motion the film's plot, initiating an all expense oversea holiday trip for two. Akpos and Richard, the sole beneficiaries are flown to the US for a trip of a lifetime in Atlanta.

Richard (Ramsey Nousah) and Akpos (Ayo Makun) patronise *Yomi Casual*; a boutique specializing in designer's wears.

P.11 above advertises the *Yomi Casual* brand which specialises in trendy Nigerian designs. In P.12, the logo of Yomi Casual is visibly projected, while Akpos and Richard shop for their clothes in a bid to look trendy when they travel overseas. One can relate with this brand because Yomi Casual is a known indigenous brand which gives Nigerians what foreign designers are unable to deliver in terms of the specifics of clothing. It goes without saying that the costumes for this production emanated from this boutique. After the introduction at the CoolFMstudio, Akpos tells Freeze, the Radio presenter, that "I like this your shirt, if you see the original you go like am" meaning that Yomi Casual where he shopped before coming to the studio must have influenced him as quality products are stocked there.

Mother and Uncle of Richard (Ramsey Nouah) communicate with him via *SKYPE*.

Before Richard travelled to Atlanta, he called his mother on phone telling her that his Uncle will send a laptop. He goes further to specifically state that they were going to keep in touch using the *Skype* medium throughout his overseas trip. Richard, like a salesman, extols the distinctive features of the *Skype* transmission which allows them to see each other when communicating. As depicted in P.13 above, Richard's mother is quite elated, pointing a finger at Richard whom she can see on the screen. At the other end, Richard is in frame P.14 far away in the United States of America, talking to his familywhich is back home in Warri-Nigeria. The point at which Richard scolds Ese for lying to Kimberly about their stale relationship as well as when he called the mother to reject Ese are all communicated through Skype. The use of this application in this Nigerian film, which does not fall short in its prmotional antics to woo potential millions of Nigerians to use the platform generates a feeling of camaraderie as most Africans in the diaspora cherish their nuclear and the extended family culture, distance notwithstanding.

PRODUCT PLACEMENTS IN *93 Days*

P.15

A fleet of Mercedes ambulances convey Ebola patients to the hospital.

The above frame clearly defines the establishment of Mercedes Benz in the acclaimed Nollywood film, *93 Days,* which reenacts the outbreak and containment of the 2014 Ebola crisis in Nigeria. It cannot be determined whether the company supplying this branded product purchased its commercial exposure or if the auto makers donated the vehicles for promotional purposes to ease the props hurdles of the production. The Mercedes Benz signature is noticeable because of the use of the luxury SUV by the heroine of the film in the frame below.

P.16

Dr Adadevoh (Bimbo Akintola) arrives at the quarantine scene.

Further Remarks/Conclusion

The rates at which branded products are appearing in Nollywood films speak volumes about advertisers' confidence in the quality of Nigerian cinema. Indeed, the extent to which Nollywood's reach globally calls attention to how well indigenous films are faring. As studies on the phenomenon of marketing has demonstrated, more often than not, audiences are attracted to products, both new and old, because of their film placements. Film placements may be the result of promotional deals between filmmakers corporate platforms. Aside these, however, it is imperative to understand that product placements in films may also be desperate measures undertaken by filmmakers because of the lack of funding agencies. In such situations, individual producers, seeking co-productions and international collaboration, are at a disadvantage because they do not have marketing units to woo potential brands. The lack of experienced staffers and relevant links with the corporate world create enormous challenges.

As the films in this study suggest there appear to be deliberate attempts by filmmakers to match the content of what they find in commercials to their plot outlines. Many other Nigerian filmmakers have yet to realise the potential goldmine that the incorporation of branded products is to their films' financial wellbeing. Often branded products are used and their value extolled without apparent financial awards. For instance, Coke bottles and other soft drinks are used in shots without financial benefits. Craig Daniel's 007's role in the James Bond franchise, it is said, attracted up to a quarter of the film budget for 007 simply sipping from a bottle of Heineken beer in his *Skyfall* portrayal (www.google. com/productplacementsinSkyfall/Heineken).

Studies of filmmaking have also demonstrated that some films offset their budget upfront of 30% with product placements. The trend is not so pronounced in Nollywood films because in this part of the world, it is more of a corporate social responsibility for debutants, and producers of repute to use branded cars, wine bottles and beer containers without receiving payment in so far as the brand serves as functional props. Recently, peeling off the logo from the body of a brand seems to be the in-thing, but the truth is that the audience can recognise and relate to such props having had an affinity with these products. It is expedient to have a rethink and commercialise such product placements in indigenous movies. In Hollywood films, shots are deliberately constituted to capture only the focus of a sequence and all branded items, except where financial agreements have been established are edited into a film's shot. In Nigeria, it is a free-for-all market and when some producers make an attempt to authenticate some products in a film, the companies brag about their well-known exposure, while ignore the film's promotion of their products and disregard the filmmakers who are usually considered desperate and broke.

This repugnant behaviour by corporate entities with regards to product placements in movies is succinctly captured by Gardiner's reminiscence of how Mars Inc., a chocolate manufacturer was indisposed to the idea of product placements in *ET*. The lack of receptivity and collaboration which stunts the Nigerian movie industry cum the corporate world's exploration of brand integrations in Nollywood movies is demonstrated in the following comment. Gardiner says "To be fair, you can see why Mars Inc. didn't jump at the opportunity to let a 10-million-year-old space visitor with penis fingers and a face modeled after Carl Sandburg, Albert Einstein, and a pug help sell candy" (2015, p. 1). Many corporate entities, for reasons best known to them, are short sighted, not recognizing the prospects of product placements and how these placements can empower their organizational drive towards greater profits.

The Nigerian situation has been particularly awkward because when approached by filmmakers, brands tend to disassociate themselves from 'tie-ins', only showing interests during the premier and TV broadcasts which do not give them the leverage for authentic exploits in the dramatic construct itself. For example, Lekki Garden (*30 Days in Atlanta*) and Peak Milk (*A Trip to Jamaica*) are two notable instances in which obvious and deliberate product placements are utilized by the same producer (Ayo Makun) and the scenes fly! Continuing, Gardiner submits that "[b]ut that now famous M&M balk was a massive payday for its rival, Hershey's. After investing $1 million in an ad tie-in for *E.T.*, which included the rights to use the movie's name and characters on its products, sales of the company's new candies tripled within two weeks, according to Joël Glenn Brenner's *The Emperors of Chocolate*. In many cases, vendors couldn't meet demand for months (2015, p. 1)".

Mars Inc.'s M&M blunder clearly demonstrates that disconnction between the film industry and potential corporate clients is capable of causing great losses—if the advertising potential of Nollywood films is not taken advantage of by corporate branding. The enormous financial returns of *E.T.'s* use of M&Ms candies to Hershey's have proven beyond reasonable doubt that the apathy exhibited by some corporations when approached by filmmakers can work against them. Such rejection is more pronounced in the Nigerian

movie space given the attitude by corporate entities to look down on indigenous films which are fast becoming an item internationally. The determined strides made by Nigerian filmmakers whose locally produced films are being screened at prestigious film festivals for both European and American audiences, show that Nollywood is up to date. Its content is being sought after these days. The marketing potential of such films' product exposure and positive reviews that add weight to their entertainment value are opportunities that corporate brands should capitalize on. The deployment of branded products in *The Figurine*, *30 Days in Atlanta*, *Invasion 1897* and *93 Days*, as indicated in the pictorial references provided, exemplify the alternative funding sources used by some filmmakers to address budgetary inadequacies.

As Nollywood grapples with problems of quality output, funding received for filmmaking cannot be divorced from its constituent elements. To a large extent, the inherent artistic, technical, and creative endeavours embedded in indigenous films' own associated influences are made possible by their production budgets. When some producers are skillful enough to recognize that extra-funding can be sourced by branding and product placements in Nollywood films, itseems that it would pay to explore this avenue rather than abuse the circumstances necessitating it. Aside from what appears to be an apparent need to brand films via commercial tie-ins, product placements in movies also create awareness about brands. In this way, new consumers are added to the patronage chain system of some advertised goods and services. As well as the financial advantages of product placements for film productions, well-known products that carry cultural values add beauty to the aesthetic templates of films, functioning as pointers, being props that are fundamental units of the whole movie's content. In final analysis, it seems evident that product placement is a good avenue, despite producers' avoiding them if they can, because they can serve as launch pads for funding future productions.

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THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF GOOD & EVIL

Some mornings my eyelids are glued.

My heart races. Have I gone blind again?

Light bounces off the lunar crags

of my corneas, but cannot find a way

to reach my optic nerves.

I grope to the bathroom sink,

wash my eyes with boric acid in an eye-cup.

I see a pirate in the mirror with a crystal eye.

Out the window, a sailing ship moving van.

Men lug a sofa upstairs. A girl and her brother

in p-coats stand in the street. Thorns of sunlight

on the power company barbed-wire

make them squint. I slip on my jacket,

fly out the door through air hard as winter

clotheslines, land next to them. Would they like

a tour? The brother punches me in the belly.

I walk doubled over to my apartment,

ask my mother why somebody would do that.

Moving is hard on a family, she tells me.

Sometimes bad things happen and we never know why.

Mysteries everywhere. It's second grade.

Goobye, Dick and Jane. Hello, more than one-syllable words.

The Catechism asks: What is the meaning of life?

Rings on fingers means a vow two people

expect each other to keep. When people forget

the Archangel cleaves them with a flaming sword.

<div align="center">(more)</div>

The wound hurts like hell. No memory, no meaning.

When God loves us into this world,

He gives us a dying part and a part that cannot dies.

The body's job is to carry its hidden cargo.

How long, how well we carry it is life's test.

Do not ask why. Besides, it's not us. It's Adam and Eve.

We try to grasp it but must have faith until we do.

Dizzy's mother says to her husband:

Don't fall asleep on the stairs. I can't carry you.

Sadness inside her scolding. That without wine

there would be not a drop of joy in his life.

She's one of many with drunken husbands

or secret love affairs or a bad gambling habit.

What does that do to people? Puts them in shadow.

—Bill Tremblay

NEW MEDIA AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION:
WHAT OPTIONS FOR AFRICA?

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Abstract

This paper examines options for Africa in the era of new media/ Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and development communication practice. Using development media and technological determinism theories, it discusses the nature of development communication in Africa, different types of new media, the relevance of new media, and other factors involved in the use of new media/ICTs for development communication. Its findings show that despite the economic and political climate of most African countries like Nigeria, new media/ICTs have transformed development communication in Africa. Because no nation can develop using only technologies developed by other countries, the combination of Africa traditional/indigenous media like drama, community newspaper, community radio, and gong with new media/ICTs like the Internet, mobile phones and computers, etc for development communication

in Africa is a viable option. Africa leaders should create modalities for the training and re-training of journalists and others involved in the effective integration of media for development as this could lead to the production and exportation of Africa technologies to other countries.

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Introduction

It has been over five decades since the collapse of colonialism and the emergence of developing countries which are striving to be like their colonial masters. Most Western countries have a vast collections of entrepreneur skills, high level of technological development; in-depth knowledge, basic and advanced infrastructure, political and stable atmosphere. Desiring these, however, is not enough, for developing countries, especially those in Africa, must recognize that developed nations have experienced what are tough processes and should be ready to take the necessary measures to actualize their growth. Development is not just the economist idea of development which has variables like the Gross National Product (GNP), Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and income per capital. The term, development now includes connotations of political, cultural, social, psychological and technological progress. Oladipo (1996), Soola (2002) and Nwanne (2006) observe that development is a process of economic and social advancement which enables people to realise their potentials, build self confidence and live lives of dignity and fulfilment. Essentially, development is the process of participatory social, political

and economic change meant to benefit the people. To occur, development messages must be transmitted to the people. This is because development begins with the change of attitudes of the people in any given society. The idea of using communication for the purpose of advancing the goals of development received a "boost when it was realised that development has to do with the generation of psychic mobility and changing of attitudes" (Salawu, 2007, p.2).

People-centred as well as participatory, development must be transmitted to the people through various media. Recognising this task resulted in the rise of development communication in which there are various communication channels that are used. Some communication scholars like McPhail (2006) use the term, development communication, interchangeably with development journalism, but development journalism is a more narrow form of development communication. But whatever the case may be, for effective development communication, an appropriate channel of communication must be in place.

One efficient and appropriate channel for development communication in Africa is through ICTs which are new media used as channels for the acquisition and dissemination of information to a heterogeneous audience regardless of time, space and distance. ICTs, such as the internet, mobile phones and computers, have proven to be most dependable ways of surviving and progressing. New media have been widely acknowledged as having strong effects on changes taking place in every country globally. ICTs are known to have demonstrated unprecedented speed, efficiency and cost of effectiveness in attaining many facets of human endeavours especially in development communication. Against this backdrop, this paper examines new media/ICTs and development communication with a view to unravel the options for Africa.

Theoretical Constructs

The theoretical constructs of this paper are anchored in development media and technological determinism theories. According to Folarin (2005), development media seeks to explain the normative behaviour of the media of communication in what are conventionally classified as developing countries. Technological determinism theory is also methodologically appropriate because it too supports claims that technologies have the power to bring about social change. In short, the essence of the use of new media in development communication is to encourage and bring about national development through positive change. Development media theory focuses on the use of the media of communication for national development, socio-political autonomy and cultural identity of any developing country. It also aims at fostering economic development and nation building. As Okunna (2002) observes, the concept of development communication and development journalism are off-shoots of development media theory which advocates positive influences on the development process.

Technological determinism theory provides a bearing for this paper because it encourages the use of technologies for development. Although Sparks (2002) argues that for over the last 75 years media effects researchers have usually lagged behind in studying the impact of the very latest media, today, the impact of new media/ICTs in the life of man is found in many studies like Obijiofor (2003), Olise (2011), and Pavlik and McIntosh (2011). Dominick (2011) states that technological determinism theory holds that technologies have overwhelming powers to drive human actions and historical

change.

The Nature of Development Communication in Africa

Though rampant in Africa, development communication had its origin in Asia where developing countries promoted the use of communication. Development communication arose because of the need for development in developing continents like Africa and the need to reduce Western domination of the global media and information system. Udoakah (1998) notes that development communication is a remonstrance by developing countries against the industrialised countries. Similarly, Daramola (2001) observes that since Western countries have principally marginalised the media of developing countries, there is the need to fashion a re-balancing of information through a new information order that seeks to balance global information in a way that would benefit the world in general. Such a re-balancing lies primarily in the domain of development communication, because development communication is a planned, systematic and deliberate means of using different appropriate media to communicate development messages to people living in both urban and rural areas for the purpose of achieving national development. Folarin (2005) argues that this re-balancing is the trump card of the scholars from developing countries who wish to "cut the umbilical cord" that has tied them to communication scholarship from the West, since it has been discovered that Western models of journalism and development communication are unsuitable for Africa.

In Africa, development communication emerged because of the pressing concern that news reporting be constructive and geared towards development ends, that its focus should be in long-term development process rather than day-to-day news, and that Western news values do not apply to those of developing countries (Folarin, 2005). With this in mind, in Africa, the nature of development communication should be opposed to dependency on foreign/western culture and news values. It should presuppose the use of new media for national development as well as autonomy and cultural identity especially national identity. It should focus on rural development by stimulating the people to reflect on the way forward. Development communication in Africa should be followed with or preceded by social policy of reducing the suffering of the ordinary citizen and the provision of basic amenities. If these considerations are put in place, Africa would be regarded as a developed continent . Considering that we are now living in a technologically-driven world, a world that has been reduced into an atomic village through the developments, innovation, and transformation of new media, there is the need for African leaders and their citizens to fully embrace the different types of new media.

Different Types of New Media for Development Communication in Africa

In various ways, new media have affected development communication/journalism. New media offer speedy and accurate dissemination of development messages to target audiences. Dennis and Merrill (2002) observe that insiders, who think about it, know that new media provide the means for better journalism. For those not professionally engaged in media, common sense tells that new media can only enhance what they have been receiving all along. The fact remains that development communication has and will still continue to benefit from wonders brought about by new media, such as the

Internet, Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), Compact Disc Read Only Memory (CD-ROM), computers among others.

- **Internet:** One cannot talk of new media/ICTs without mentioning the Internet. This is because the Internet is the major wonder of this technological age. The internet is basically a network of computer networks hooked together. It enables people who are hooked to computers or other new media/ICTs to communicate at electronic speed regardless of time, distance and geographical location. The Internet gives the development communicator – the person who communicates development messages, large quantities of information. Because the internet is current most times, it makes it a very useful tool for development communication and the public can interact with the internet and be sure of immediate feedback as well as up-to-date information. The Internet is the nexus connecting all new media. It is the springboard on which virtually all new media, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube among others, rest on and extend and expand development communication.

- **Digital Television:** This is one new media which enables the digitalisation of video signals in a compressed format; more information can be carried and disseminated. The development communicator can make use of digital television to disseminate multiple forms of development messages on the spectrum space to target population.

- **Mobile Phones:** One booming technology for development communication in the 21st century is the mobile phone. With a mobile phone that fits in the palm of a man or woman and is easily carried about because it is wireless, the development communicator can communicate with target audience through calls, text messages and even send e-mails. In view of this, McMillan (2006) notes that the coming of the mobile era has created further changes as mobile phones now are the receivers for everything from e-mail to news.

- **Digital Versatile Disc (DVD):** The Digital Versatile Disc or Digital Video Disc (DVD) is a disc that stores audio, movies, video and graphics in digital format that is compatible with DVD players and home computers (Hoffmann, 2007). The DVD is an advancement from the Compact Disc (CD). The 4.7 inch high quality DVD looks exactly like CDs and deliver high quality digital images and sound. Viewers can stop images with no loss of fidelity, can subtitle movie in a number of languages as well as access background information. The DVD is a potential new media for development communication. The person charged with the responsibility of bringing about change can save development messages and subtitle them in local languages for rural dwellers. Such messages can also be subtitled in English language when ithey are relayed in local languages.

- **Video-Conferencing:** Videoconferencing provides real-time transmission of video and audio signals, by enabling people in two or more locations to have a meeting. In some cases, videoconferences are held in a special purpose meeting room with one or more cameras and several video display monitors to capture and transmit the video signals (Fitzgerald and Demms, 2005). Videoconferencing can be used for live discussion on development communication issues between the development communicator and target audience. This is because it is one technology that combines sound, oral, and video communication effectively.

- **Computers:** The computer is an electronic device that processes data to produce information. Computers are used virtually in all aspects of human endeavour. Since

development communication should be a long or short term project, the development communicator can use computers to store their information for present and future use. Moreover, computers are useful tools for the development journalist because they are handy like notebooks, and hence can be used anywhere.

There is no gainsaying that the aforementioned new media/ICTs, among host of others, are tools for development communication practice in Africa. These ICTs can be used to promote development by transmitting development messages, especially to those at the grassroots.

Relevance of New Media in Development Communication in Africa

New media have the capability to bring about changes in communication practices which benefit the world. ICTs have affected most of the traditional means most media organisations use in transmitting messages. New media have also greatly affected the way media audiences view/listen/read media messages in the 21st century. Usng new media in development communication also can bring about socio-economic change in Africa. , ecause ICTs encourage speedy, timely and cost effective dissemination of information for development (Olise, 2008). New media are indeed relevant in so many ways for development communication. In development communication in Africa, new media includes but is not limited to the following:

- **Socio-Economic Development:** ICTs are very reliable for the dissemination of messages that would enhance the socio-economic development of every nation in Africa. The development communicator can use ICTs like the Internet to impact the government, rural and urban dwellers while transmitting the importance of the eradication of poverty and to redeem the country or continent from a weak economy. If new media/ICTs like mobile phones tc are used continually to foster and transform socio-economic activities in Africa, development would not be far behind.

- **Agricultural Development:** Economic and social historians have argued that most developing countries, especially those in Africa, have not experienced the agricultural or industrial revolutions like those of the developed countries (Tiamiyu, 2002). However, with new media, the window of awareness for agricultural revolution in Africa is now opened. Development communicators can use new media to orient farmers about innovations in agricultural practices and likely problems farmers may encounter, and to inform them about how they can further improve and promote agriculture.

- **Health Development:** Health promotion relies on the knowledge and information available to local health workers and the people. New media offer reliable means for the dissemination of accurate information about health matters. Also, new media can be used to mobilise Africans towards embracing issues like HIV/AIDs prevention. In addition, new media can be used to remove resistance to developmental innovations that relate to health. Satellite controlled computers; Internet and other new media can be used to let a patient appreciate the risks inherent in fibroids that are not removed in time. The health of citizens can also be made known to them via new media, and citizens can be motivated to participate

actively in health development efforts. Development communicators can use new media to instill in people trust in reason and science while creating a new existence in which diseases can be controlled.

- **Cultural Development**: Cultural development in Africa is enormous. Central to this is language. The English-speaking countries of West Africa use a foreign language for governance, mass media communication, and the education of its young people. The people use their own language in everyday life, but the laws, constitution, and institutions of daily governance are all transmitted in a foreign language (Karikan, 2000). However, with the use of new media in development communication, the problems of communicating in foreign language can eradicated. Development communicators can speak with the people in local languages through translating facilities, inbuilt interpreter devices or a, in-person interpreter. ICTs can also be used for the transmission of cultural heritage. Development communicators can keep the people constantly abreast with information on cultural values, norms and belief system using new media.

- **Education Development**: Africans need to be aware of the role of education in national development. New media can be used to enlighten them in this regards. Education, Wilson (2005) states, is the social and technical transmission of knowledge from one generation to another through formal and informal media of communication. Olise (2008) adds that education is the direct means by which one sharpens his or her destiny in order to transform what one knows himself/herself to be into what he

or she hopes to become. Because education is an important component in the life of every individual in every society, which leads to national development, it is necessary to utilise ICTs. ICTs to be used not only to transmit educational messages but for education itself.

Factors to Consider in the Use of New Media for Development Communication in Africa

Before the adoption of new media in Africa for development communication, some of the factors which must be considered are poor funding, management issues, illiteracy, the lack of technical know-how, the low level of technology penetration, non-viable information/science, and science and technology policies that encourage a weak economy. The acquisition and maintenance of ICTs/new media require adequate funding. Unfortunately, Africa, though a rich continent, has not been able to provide the needed funds for the development of ICTs. Instead, most Africa revenue is pushed into the political sector to prolong the tenure of most of Africa leaders. This, in turn, leads to weak economies amidst abundance. Until Africa breaks the chain of economic stagnation propelled by poor management, the deployment and effective utilisation of new media/ICTs in Africa will not be realised.

The main management issue troubling Africa is bad leadership. Most Africa leaders have not given serious thought to development in their country. Instead they scheme ways to remain in office for life. The situations in Zimbabwe readily comes to mind in this regard. Other related factors include political instability, non-viable information, and science and technology policy. Political instability has caused many problems in

Africa which has hampered new media development. Most African countries, in the 1990s and more recently, have been experiencing political crises. Countries like Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Egypt, and Tunisia have all had their fair share of political turmoil. It is not surprising that Africa is lagging behind in ICTs/new media development. Very few African countries have information policies; even those who have do not all the time implement them adequately. This lack of a feasible information policy on science and technology has led to low levels of technology penetration in Africa that has helped to increase Africa's illiteracy problem and lack of expertise The low levels of technology penetration often has Africans continuing to depend on foreign countries for the production and maintenance of ICTs. In a situation in which development communicators and rural and urban dwellers in Africa do not have convenient access to, or do not know how to effectively utilise most of the new media/ICTs, what is the fate of development communication in Africa in this age of new media/ICTs?

Conclusion

Recent efforts by most African countries concerning the development of ICTs/new media clearly indicate there is hope for Africa. For instance, Rwanda recently signed a multimillion dollar deal to secure Internet connection in a bid to keep her citizens in both rural and urban areas informed with current global trends. The launching of the Nigerian Communication Satellites – SAT-1, SAT-2 and SAT-X by the Nigerian government is another welcome development. The introduction of the Explorer television receiver by the South Africa DSTV company is also a major boast in ensuring that new technologies are within the reach of Africans.

It is evident that the use of new media/ICTs such as the Internet, mobile phones, computers and digital television, and social media for development communication in Africa is a welcome idea despite the issues of poor funding, bad management, weak economies and the low level of technology penetration. Using new media for development communication would bring about and even hasten socio-economic development, agricultural development, health development, and cultural development. Nevertheless, development communicators must be aware that using new media for development communication is not an easy task, for they must adhere strictly to the principles and philosophy of development journalism. Also, since new media are western products and development in Africa without African technologies may not be worthwhile. McPhail (2006) notes that development communication discourages reproduction of western media model which debase or marginalise local and traditional cultures. Ndolo (2005) avers no nation can develop using technologies developed by other societies. Media integration and cross fertilization, however, are also options for Africans to explore. Development communication is a widely participatory process of communication. Therefore, everyone – the government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), urban and rural dwellers all in Africa and those in diaspora need to put their hands and heads together to work as a team to ensure that new media/ICTs and Africa traditional/indigenous media are used to achieve national development in every African country.

Recommendations

The following are suggested as ways of achieving a widely participatory process of communication in Africa:

1. Media Integration is the deliberate bringing together of two or more media systems to provide a purposive mix/blend is proposed. In essence, there is the need to join together traditional/indigenous media of Africa, such as the gong, flute, community newspaper and local radio, with Western new media, such as the Internet, satellite television and mobile phones, for the practice of development communication. The kind of blend being advocated here should be complementary and also enhance greater technology penetration and efficiency in the dissemination of information to the Africa people. This blend would also encourage and improve two-way communication, and increase a faster and deeper reach of grassroots globally.

2. African countries can use traditional media, like radio, newspaper, and drama, alongside new media, like digital satellite television, mobile phones and Internet, for the dissemination of development messages. This can be achieved through Community Viewing Centres (CVC) and Community Listening Centres (CLC) – designated places where people can converge to view or listen to a particular development-oriented programme. An interpreter can be employed to interpret such programmes in the local language in the case of rural areas.

3. Mobile media broadcasting is another option for Africa in the practice of development communication. This is a kind of mobile broadcasting, a system that would allow messages to be transmitted via a mobile vehicle with different transmitting equipment hooked to the broadcasting station. For this to be effectively achieved, there is the need for proper training of development communicators.

4. African leaders should endeavour to work out strategies for the urgent and proper training of development communicators/journalists in their different countries. Those who are trained should be encouraged to re-train others in a bid to increase new media/ICTs experts in Africa. It is time Africa begins to produce her own technologies and export them to other continents, encouraging other countries to depend on African technologies just as they depend on African oil and manpower.

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Rebecca Matheson

Geographical Imagination, Spatial History,

and Like-Minded Spirits

in

Leslie Marmon Silko's

Gardens in the Dunes

Justine Shu-Ting Kao

Abstract

The Indian Removal Act of the colonial age is generally identified as a historical catastrophe for the affected indigenous tribes. Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes* demonstrates the Indian tribe Sand Lizard as an ongoing landscaping power that refuses to disappear despite the rising power of imperialism. In *Gardens in the Dunes*, what the tribal people depend on is their tribal geographical imagination. Their geographical imagination is integrated into an *in-between* space—a common ground existing between the Sand Lizard culture and Old European culture—and functions as collective memories through which the protagonist Indigo reconciles the two worlds, and keeps alive her identity as an indigenous Sand Lizard.

Geographical Imagination

In the essay "Geographical Imagination," Stephen Daniels examines the existence of the perennial theme "the geographical imagination" over the past 50 years, noting that this theme has been explored as both "the darker side of the geographical imagination" and "the brighter side of the geographical imagination" in the study of human geographers. While scholars analyze "the darker side of the geographical imagination" in the field of "consumer worlds" or "geo-political implications" in terms of cultural or historical theorists (for example, Edward Said), noting the "imaginative geography as an imperial projection" (Daniels 183), the geographers of "the brighter side of the geographical imagination" shift "the emphasis from critical interpretation to creative practice, from meaning to making," extending its scope to "environmental concepts" (Daniels 183). "The geographical imagination," whether it is an imperial projection or a creative practice as an artistic medium, is "shaped by the position and pressure of an array of contrapuntal concepts" (Daniels 182). It is affiliated with terms like "invention, exploration, creativity," "curiosity," "illusion, reverie, fancy and ideology,[,]" and it brings "material and mental worlds into closer conjunction, to connect the mythical and the mundane" (Daniels 182). The physical sites of the geographical imagination might be found in "studios and theatres," "private realm of homes and gardens," "geography's institutional premises like map libraries and field sites," and "the substance and structure of landscapes and regions," since those places might invite us "to explore a variety of performative engagements, as matters of touch and emotion as well as seeing and reason" (Daniels 185). Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes* exemplifies Daniels' notion of "the geographical imagination," exploring physical sites as media for performative engagement in individual emotions as well as a social-cultural-historical framework.

Silko's geographical imagination opens up to a diametrical opposition of the two worlds—imperial projection of colonialism and the tribal internationalism that resists the imperial/colonial world. On the one hand, Silko adroitly presents the land—a garden or a landscape—as a victim under the political structure of imperialism/capitalism/colonialism. On the other hand, the author disrupts the colonizing view of the land as an insentient instrument by affiliating the land with tribal geographical imagination that positively brings hope to those who have been seen as inferior under the system of colonialism/imperialism. In *Gardens in the Dunes*, the protagonist Indigo is a typical character in holding the power of tribal geographical imagination; her view of the land, particularly the gardens, functions to overcome the limitations of the Native American diaspora and resist the loss of her home/identity through the connection/coalition of multi-cultures/multi-ethnic groups. The spatial itinerary in Indigo's travel—from the west to the east and then to Britain, Italy, and Corsica—is a significant spatial/historical experience. It is not merely an exploration of Euro-American forgotten rituals/cultures/histories, but it is also a process of inspiring a tribal geographical imagination (based on the convergence of indigenous oral stories and Euro-American non-imperial histories/traditions) that functions to rejuvenate a particular strength for the retrieval of what has been forgotten/lost or suppressed.

Imperial/Capital/Colonial Geographical Imagination

The story of the Sand Lizard sisters, Indigo and her elder sister Sister Salt, begins when the police start to seize participants of a Ghost Dance[1] held in Needles, California. Indigo and Sister Salt, during their escape along the Colorado River, hide themselves in the old gardens located in the dunes, awaiting their reunion with their grandma and mother. Their mother never comes back to them. Their grandma returns, but dies after her exhausting search for their lost mother. The two sisters bury their grandma near the apricot seedlings in the old gardens, and later they leave their home, motivated by their desire to find their mother. Unfortunately, as they return to Needles, the two sisters are captured by the Indian policeman and are forcefully separated. Sister Salt is given into custody at Parker Reservation, while Indigo is sent to an Indian boarding school. Indigo successfully escapes the boarding school. By chance, she walks into a garden in Riverside, California, where she makes friends with the monkey Linnaeus, and the owners of the garden, Hattie and Edward, temporarily take her in until they find it possible to return the child to the boarding school. Traveling with Hattie and Edward, Indigo encounters diverse styles of garden—an English garden and Italian garden in New York, Aunt Bronwyn's gardens and some relics of an ancient landscape in Bath, England, and Laura's gardens in Italy. In contrast to Indigo's adventurous travels, Sister Salt stays near the Colorado-Arizona border. She befriends indigenous twin sisters and finds protection

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1. Participants in the Ghost Dance believed in the return of their ancestors and the renewal of the Earth. They held their dancing ritual in the form of a circle. Their Paiute spiritual leader, Wovoka, through a vision of God, spread the ritual to the Plains and beyond, with its message of peace among the Indians as well as with the white people. Yet some US Indian agents misinterpreted the Ghost Dance as a war dance directed toward whites. "Wovoka had them dance the Ghost Dance to begin to bring the different tribes together. Tribes that had been enemies and warring against one another were brought together in one common faith of the coming of this great age of peace that the Messiah was to bring" ("The Ghost Dance and the Second Coming"). On November 15, 1890, Agent Daniel F. Royer contacted the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and five days later, U.S. troops interrupted their dance.

under Big Candy. To survive, she and the twin sisters set up a laundry service business near one of the dam construction sites.

Indigo's travels with the white couple and Sister Salt's struggle for survival near a dam construction site reflect the real life/situation of the indigenous people throughout the colonial history of America. As noted by William Willard, one of the reviewers of *Gardens in the Dunes*, the indigenous people were living as nomads within the diaspora:

> In the time when *Gardens* is placed, the indigenous people of the U.S. Southwest and the Mexican Northwest were experiencing what was intended to be the fatal impact of the final solution on their continued existence. The native people were driven from their homelands to exile on federal reservations in the United States and to hacienda peonage in Mexico. Those who, for whatever reason, escaped being marched to reservations or haciendas moved to the degradation of shantytowns outside towns along the railroad. There they could supply cheap labor for the townspeople. Women could sell baskets to tourists at train stations. The women could also sell their bodies to whomever paid. They could fill in the rest of survival by scavenging and begging. (139-140)

This fatal impact on the indigenous life was caused by the imperialist policy of Native American Removal. In the early 19th century, the underpinning strategy behind Native American removal by the U.S. government posited that the purchase of Indian lands could avail them for better use. Thomas Jefferson initiated discussion over whether portions of this land could be used to solve what some viewed as the "Indian problem." In 1830, the first legislation came into being. Signed by President Andrew Jackson,

the Indian Removal Act aimed at relocating eastern Indian tribes to lands west of the Mississippi. Jackson stated that, "Humanity has often wept over the fate of the aborigines of this country, and Philanthropy has been long busily employed in devising means to avert it, but its progress has never for a moment been arrested, and one by one have many powerful tribes disappeared from the earth."[2] From 1830 to 1840, more than 70,000 Native Americans were forced to migrate. Jackson and his supporters claimed that the "savage" Native American culture must inevitably give way to the onslaught of civilization. Thus, the President suggested the policy would "cast off their savage habits and [help them] become an interesting, civilized, and Christian community."[3] However, the act of removal caused a scattering of the diaspora from the viewpoint of the Indians. Many tribes resisted such army-enforced relocation, resulting in incidents such as the Seminole Wars and the Trail of Tears. A great number of Indians died through famine or disease while moving towards the West. Moreover, the Act itself was ingenuous. The indigenous people did not permanently dwell on the land of the West as the government had promised them. They were constantly moved from reservation to reservation, and their children were taken away to boarding schools. In Silko's *Gardens*, "the refugees keep arriving" in the old gardens, because they flee the Indian police and soldiers with the "orders" that state "all Indians must leave their home places to live on the reservation at Parker" (*Gardens* 18). Those people are starving and ravage the food in the old gardens of the Sand Lizard, leading to food shortages in those gardens. Just like those refugees who refused to be taken to the reservation, Indigo escapes as she is put in a boarding school. Though the government claimed their policies to be a philanthropic action for

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2. From "President Andrew Jackson's Case for the Removal Act, First Annual Message to Congress, 8 December 1829" <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/andrew.htm>

3. From "Transcript of President Andrew Jackson's Message to Congress 'On Indian Removal' (1830)" <https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=25&page=transcript>

the improvement of all Native Americans, the peoples in question actually experienced the suffering of diaspora, disease, and death. Rather than progress toward citizenship, the removal policy as well as the reservation and boarding school policy that followed were in actuality a historical race-extinction—a genocide—of those indigenous people.

The policy of Indian removal and settlement on reservation areas was incorporated with an imperial geographical imagination. Silko in *Gardens* reveals this imperial geographical imagination, showing those forces that threaten to destroy Native cultures and peoples. To some degree, Silko is one of the human geographers who "have explored the darker side of the geographical imagination, in analyses of consumer worlds saturated by image-making…in the design of buildings and landscapes of power…" (Daniels 183). Indeed, the Native American Removal policy and the reservation policies that follow are not merely grounded in political ambition, but also economic activities that resort to the expansion of capitalism on the lands of the indigenous people. As the reviewer Ellen Arnold indicates, Silko in *Gardens* shows "the flowering capitalism in the Americas":

> British and American capitalism consumes the world without giving back, epitomized by the damming of the Colorado River, the burning of large areas of Brazilian jungle to [ensure] that Victorian investors possess the only specimens of rare orchid species or disease-resistant rubber plants, and Edward's theft of citron cuttings in an attempt to break Corsican monopoly of the citron trade. (103)

Characters like Edward Palmer, Susan Palmer, and those merchants competing for orchids, citrus, and other valuable objects all sink into their geographical imagination of "the reshaping of the land for power, profit, and display that builds on the exploration and destruction of its native human, animal, and plant inhabitants" (Arnold 103).

Edward's geographical imagination is grounded in colonist/capitalist fantasies of the land as lucrative since it provides rare animals, plants, and minerals. On his expeditions in those places (in Tampico, on the Para River, and towards Corsica), Edward desperately searches for rare species of orchids, citrus cuttings, meteor irons and rare archaeological artifacts because they are objects of high value in the business market. His quest for lucrative objects unfortunately leads him to ignore/offend unknown forces dwelling within those objects; he sees only their mercantile value. For example, as he purchases the tin mask and the lead cursed tablets from an ancient artifact major, he does not understand the inscribed curse that he reads on the tablets: "To the goddess Sulis. Whether slave or free, whoever he shall be, you are not to permit him eyes or health. He shall be blind and childless so long as he shall live unless he returns to the temple" (*Gardens* 258). This curse is actually a warning to thieves or people like Edward, those participating in the colonist/capitalist work of stealing native species. "The old Celts and the Romans believed sacred wells and sacred springs had the power to expose and punish thieves and cheaters" (*Gardens* 258). Edward never rids himself of his leg pain until his death. His view of the world extends to his dream realm; he never forgets exploring his orchid business, citrus business, and meteorite business in his dreams. This ambition unfortunately leads him to befriend Dr. Gates, a quack who dishonestly boasts to Edward about his medical skills, yet subsequently mistreats his illness. As he ignores Hattie's disapproval of his cooperation with Dr. Gates in a meteorite business, the Indian burial of meteorite is found, "the 'baby,' or meteor iron…Funeral offerings of food and a toy whistle were carefully arranged in the stone cavity with the meteor iron" (*Gardens* 413). Nevertheless, Edward does not stop his mining venture despite overseeing the scene of the remainder

of funeral. Edward's declining health might be associated with these cursed tablets and the scene of the funeral; he might be punished as a capitalist for stealing the Native lands. Dying, Edward still dreams of a property lush with the lucrative citron:

> Now when he dreamed, not only was the Riverside property all his, but his father was alive in the dream, standing with him between rows of mature citron trees directly west of the house. (*Gardens* 426)

Similar to her brother, Susan Palmer develops her geographical imagination in accordance with imperialist/colonialist/capitalist possessive desire. Though possessing a garden, Susan is definitely not a gardener. Instead, she "is destroying a hundred-year-old garden to replace it with a 'Blue Garden' for a party to which all the ladies will wear blue" (Moerman 411). Susan's "Blue Garden" is designed for the display of conspicuous consumption. Obsessed with the decoration of her garden, she orders the workmen to move two giant beech trees through downtown Oyster Bay.

> Wrapped in canvas and big chains on the flat wagon was a great tree lying helpless, its leaves shocked limp, followed by its companion; the stain of damp earth like dark blood seeped through the canvas. As the procession inched past, Indigo heard low creaks and groans—not sounds of the wagons but from the trees. (*Gardens* 183)

In much the same vein, other plants do not escape the tragedy of transplantation to a new environment to which they cannot get accustomed. Some of them, after having been uprooted from somewhere, soon wither and die within Susan's "Blue Garden" (*Gardens* 184). The two parrots and other caged birds in the garden have lost their freedom, since they also function as displayed objects in this luxurious garden. Susan claims as she

introduces the two parrots, "Oh that's a parrot—I bought two of them because I thought they'd be handsome in that lovely gilded cage in the conservatory among orchids, but one died and now the whole look is spoiled" (*Gardens* 187). Just as Edward sees the land primarily as a lucrative object, so Susan manipulates her garden, indulging in her imaginary possessive power.

As the idea of capitalism globally disseminates, everyone might participate in the business of capitalism. Big Candy plunges into the business of gambling, while brewing tents target the workers-customers near the construction sites. Though he is not an imperialist or colonialist, his geographical imagination of the land is shaped in the manner of a colonialist. For Big Candy, the construction sites that replace the original landscape (because the lives of the river are killed) contain an abundance of wealth; with the money he earns from those construction workers, he believes he can run a restaurant somewhere. Obsessive with this dream of accumulating wealth, Big Candy becomes incommunicative with Sister Salt, who has just delivered a baby that he believes will soon die. His incommunicative attitude toward Sister Salt entails his ignorance of an upcoming disaster that Sister Salt learns of from Delena as prophesized in a set of Gypsy cards and Mexican cards.

> In the next row Sister Salt saw the Owl's feet first, upside down, and knew this picture spelled trouble too. Delena pronounced its meaning as failed plans, things that never worked out, though one waited hopefully. Right next to the Owl was the hindquarters of the Pig on its snout, a bad omen— Sister guessed this before Delena said it meant greed will be punished. (*Gardens* 356)

The Pig Card that signals that greed will lead to the loss of one's fortune refers to Big Candy and his loss of the safe that he has buried in the sand.

Tribal/International/Cross-Bordering Geographical Imagination

As an opposing force to the capitalist/imperialist/colonialist geographical imagination, Silko's tribal geographical imagination is purposed to dissolve forces that threaten to destroy the Native American cultures and peoples. This geographical imagination is creative and grounded in the memories that indigenous people find in the land/environment, just as effectively as in the oral tales, legends, or myths of indigenous people. Silko's *Gardens* is a re-examination of the imperialist history in the colonized land, offering "spatial history as an alternative"[4] so as to restore the "lost history" of Native Americans, recuperate from their trauma, and enact a future of new history space which is immune from forces of threat or destruction. As Denise K. Cummings notes, "Silko's myth and storytelling in *Gardens in the Dunes* function to bridge a rupture and perform cultural recovery in yet another genre, another form" (Cummings 84). To achieve the goal of recovering the livelihood of the Native Americans, Silko locates her story on the capitalist/imperialist/colonialist land and draws upon nineteen-century literary conventions (e.g., Henry James) (Arnold 101; Aldama 458) since she intends to seek the lost history/tribal traditions of mainstream Euro-American history via tribal geographical imagination. Silko's *Gardens* offers a new "historical trajectory, one that moves toward spiritual and mystical recuperation" (Cummings 84).

The tribal geographical imagination in Silko's *Gardens* is associated with recuperation

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4. In his *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History*, Paul Carter re-examines the history of European settlement of Australia as "positivist, imperialist chronology" and draws on the term "spatial history" as an alternative (Cummings 67). Carter's spatial history "draws attention to the lost history" in Australia and advocates engagement in "a genuinely dialectical activity" for the lost history (Cummings 70).

of the land/the culture of the ancient indigenous people. *Gardens* continues the theme in *Almanac* that shows the opposing views of the land exemplified in Euro-American traditions in contrast to their Native American counterparts: the former traditions are based on a "disconnected view of the land" (Romero 625) while the latter "pay close attention to and interact with the land in order to survive" (625). For those who had lost their land due to the policy of Indian Removal and the policy of transforming the land into one of lucrative value with the construction of dams on the lands of the indigenous people, there was an imperative/urgent need for the indigenous people to interact with their ancestors, as they believed their ancestors would help them survive on the land despite it being plundered by the colonizers. This urgency is reflected in Silko's novels which emphasize the connection of indigenous people with the ancients. The fourth Almanac in *Almanac* is a prophetic document predicting "the gradual disappearance of European culture and customs" (Romero 627). The Ghost Dance in *Gardens* strengthens the indigenous people's faith in the guardian of their ancestor spirits and the return under ancient spirits' guidance to their original home, immune from any threats or destruction of the indigenous cultures and identity. Those indigenous people in Silko's novels urge the fulfillment of "reindigenization"—reconstruction of the relationship between the land and people in terms of an ancient indigenous view—and they seek this dream through geographical imagination of the ancient indigenous world.

As Silko says, "Our human nature, our human spirit, wants no boundaries, and we are better beings, and we are less destructive and happier" (Köhler 244). Silko's tribal geographical imagination is grounded in cross-boundaries/transcendence of the limitation of time and space. As her indigenous protagonists explore the physical sites as media for performative engagement in their individual emotions, they transcend the limitations

of the imperial/colonial social-cultural-historical framework, and then trace back their memories about ancient indigenous space and time. This view of cross-boundaries and transcendence of time is significant in ancient American Indian cultures. It is reinforced in Silko's interviews and novels related to the policy of reindigenization. For instance, in an interview with Ray Gonzalez, Silko points out that this ancient American Indian's view of time "stands in sharp contrast to the linear distinction between past, present, and future time privileged by the dominant Euro-American culture's reliance on the normative Christian worldview" (Romero 628) since it is "consistent with how 'a lot of tribal people see and measure time—past, present, and future at once'" (Romero 627-628). In an interview with Laura Coltelli, Silko also states that "'in the days before monarch's maps with boundary lines, the tribal people of the Americas thought of the whole earth as their home' and travel freely" (Romero 628). In *Gardens*, Silko integrates the ancient indigenous view of time and space with the Ghost Dance ritual and Indigo's geographical imagination.

Both the Ghost Dance ritual and Indigo's geographical imagination follow the spirit instructed by Wovoka—"harmony" and "making no distinction between the tribes or the people" ("The Ghost Dance and the Second Coming of Christ"). "Far from suggesting a diametrical opposition between White and Indian worlds" (Lynch 291), Silko's *Gardens* and its geographical imagination is about "seeking out like-minded peoples who are open to new visions and to change, and who share a deep commitment to the earth and the human spirit" (Aldama 458). In other words, Silko's story concerns "cross-cultural connections" that "strengthen American Indian nationalist concerns through international alliances" (Romero 624). Though "the exploited and powerless can join together" (Arnold 103), this alliance seeks not forces of destruction, but a force of remaking the world by "restoring life-giving practices of caretaking and inclusivity" among all different ethnic groups (Arnold 103); this alliance is national as well as international. They share a deep commitment not merely to the human spirit, but also to all animals and plants, since they believe "there has been a community of people…[who] treat plants and other living things, even stones, neither as soulless entities nor as exploitable commodities, but as members of a fellowship of animate and spiritual beings" (Lynch 291). In order to dissolve "the form of a radical homogenization of differences" (Köhler 238) that has caused destruction of the colonialized land and lives, Silko's *Gardens* is grounded in the idea of offering a "spatial history" as an alternative—construction of a new form of globalization/cooperation among all people and creatures—through the framework of geographical imagination attached to the blessed world of the ancient indigenous people.

Indigo, Sister Salt, Hattie, and Like-Minded Spirits

Don Mitchell in "Landscape" distinguishes the landscape's sense of place from the landscape of capitalist relations. The landscape in capitalist relations is a property with "a detached, individual spectator to whom an illusion of order and control is offered through the composition of space" (Mitchell 50). Such a landscape is a "built form" with "enormous inertia," for which "people work very hard to maintain, to reproduce, the already existent landscape" (Mitchell 51). The landscape in capitalist relations functions to separate workers on the land from the land itself and causes workers' sense of alienation from the land they work. In contrast to the built form landscape in capitalist society, the landscape of sense of place is seen as the emotional attachment of its dwellers to the lands. Mitchell believes that "people do form affective identification with the landscapes they live in, and they often seek—sometimes violently—to defend 'their' landscapes against perceived threats and assaults from outside" (Mitchell 53). In much the same

vein, Doreen Massey holds that the global sense of place is not always what Marx called "the annihilation of space by time" or an inclination toward "homogeneous entities." The global sense of place, in Massey's redefinition, is "constructed out of an introverted, inward-looking history based on delving into the past for internalized origins" (Massey "Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place" 64).

> Globalization (in the economy, or in culture, or in anything else) does not entail simply homogenization. On the contrary, the globalization of social relations is yet another source of (the reproduction of) geographical uneven development, and thus of the uniqueness of place. There is the specificity of place which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a distinct mixture of wider and more local social relations. (Massey *Space, Place, and Gender* 156)

As Massey reinforces, the idea of mobility is a "progressive concept of place," not frozen into homogenization. In multi-identities floating in social relations, mobility becomes a medium for the internalization of social relations through affection or mutual understandings.

The theories of Mitchell and Massey help us to examine the significance of geographical imagination in terms of reindigenization. The Indian child Indigo in *Gardens in the Dunes* constantly internalizes the exterior world into her memories about the old gardens through her tribal geographical imagination. At the sight of twilight in one of the gardens in the Riverside, Indigo buries "her nose in each blossom" of flowers and recalls Grandma Fleet in the old gardens (*Gardens* 82). In the blue garden of Oyster Bay, she dreams of her grandmother's embrace (*Gardens* 176). She also appreciates the Masque of the Blue and

the blue dress she is about to put on, its shade of blue matching the color of the rain clouds in the old gardens. The ball held in the blue garden reminds her of the Ghost Dance and Messiah's blessing (*Gardens* 196). Indigo's dynamic internalization of the surroundings continues with her travels to Europe. In Aunt Bronwyn's gardens, she is "fascinated with the bubbling sand and water over the mouth of the spring" since they resemble so much "the dancers bobbling and swaying" at "the sight of the Messiah and his family" (*Gardens* 256). In Laura's gardens, she is amazed by the diverse terra-cottas in animal shapes such as birds, bears, and snakes which inspire her dream of a big rattlesnake with her pet-parrot, pet-monkey, and the hybrid-gladiolus in the old gardens (*Gardens* 304). Indigo's dream is a time-compressed space that incessantly absorbs "new objects" and integrates those new objects into the world of her Sand Lizard family. To preserve the images in her dream and those in the real physical world, Indigo draws pictures of those plants in her leisure time. The space of pictures then becomes a visual extension of the space of those gardens. Her space is not simply a visual entity; it is also made of the sense of smell and hearing that brings her a progressive sense of place in a real and imaginary geographical landscape. Just as Michael Bull observes in "Reconfiguring the 'Site' and 'Horizon' of Experience," the imaginary journey through music is a form of having a home and past memory within urban spaces. In contract with Edward's or Susan's view of the garden, Indigo's view of each garden is featured with "the Native American world of blessed subsistence, most vividly pictured in Grandma Fleet's efforts to transform the desert into a garden as their basis for survival" (Köhler 239). The seeds of plants that Indigo collects and the pets-animals that she takes care of survive well in both her imaginary and real geography of the old gardens of the Sand Lizard.

The image of animals in Indigo's geographical imagination is linked with the protective

force of the Sand Lizard ancestors. First, the set of artificial objects in Aunt Bronwyn's gardens is comparable to the set of artificial objects in Laura's gardens. The miscellanea of sculptures and terra-cottas—the sculpture of Minerva-Sulis, the snake goddess terra-cotta, the bird goddess terra-cotta, the bear goddess terra-cotta, and the Medusa sculpture, etc.—demonstrate fertility in Western cultures. The appearance of the bird goddess terra-cotta in Laura's gardens has something to do with the culture of the old European Bird Goddess associated with the concept of birth, death, and regeneration. Laura's gardens have many vulva-shaped stones and caves that symbolically connect life to death. As with the bird terra-cotta figure, the snake terra-cotta figure—"a snake-headed figure with human arms and breasts that held a baby snake" (*Gardens* 296)—symbolizes the power of fertility and nourishing offspring. The stones, both in Aunt Bronwyn's gardens and Laura's, underscore the maternal characters of the Bird Goddess and Snake Goddess. "Stones of the circles," in Aunt Bronwyn's gardens, "were eyes of the original Mother" (*Gardens* 265). Stones in Laura's gardens are in the shape of vulva (*Gardens* 290).

Laura's gardens are not a made-up world, as they reflect on those bird/snake goddess figurines (discovered by archeologists) that demonstrate the goddess culture of Old Europe. For example, a bird-goddess "appears on a burial urn from early Bronze Age Troy in western Anatolia (ca. 3000-2500 B.C.) with owl eyes and beak, breasts, upraised wings, and a pronounced vulva." "The Goddess' arms are often schematic wings or stumps, and her eyes are very large, as seen in a figure from the late Vinca culture, ca. 3800-3500 BC." The posture of the bird-goddess also appears in a Cucuteni figurine from northern Moldavia (ca.4000B.C.).[5] Those bird-goddess figurines symbolize the concept of the cycle of life (birth, death, and regeneration). In much the same vein, snake-figure

5. Those examples are found in Michael Everson's "Predynastic goddess figurines and the Old European." <http://www.evertype.com/misc/egyptgoddess.htm1>

artifacts in Laura's gardens correspond to the archaeological significance concerning those snake figures. For example, Laura's Medusa statue corresponds to the "Medusa-head" in a Thracian tomb that represents regeneration.[6] Archeologists' excavations of bird/snake goddess terra-cottas or artifacts from the archeological sites of Old Europe demonstrate the motif of the cycle of life in pre-patriarchal cultures. As Miriam Robbins Dexter notes in "The Monstrous Goddess," the Neolithic and Bronze Age European bird goddess and serpent goddess possess the same power of the cycle of life:

> Both the bird and the snake figures depicted a goddess of the life continuum, a goddess who was responsible for the fertility of womb and fruitfulness of earth, and, on the contrary, for the barrenness of animals and vegetation. She both gave and took life. (185)

Second, the sculptures and terra-cottas in the gardens of Aunt Bronwyn and Laura are not merely mysterious miscellanea of certain significance, but they are also connected with the symbolic protective force of indigenous matriarchal culture. For Indigo, the symbolic significance of maternal fertility and protection embraced by the set of deities shown on those sculptures and terra-cottas is similar to the significance of fertility in the ancient indigenous culture. Both Old Europe and the Sand Lizard have stories of maternal protection. The traits of protection in myth or legends about the snake that Indigo hears of in her travels are internalized as part of her (un)consciousness/imagination, since they parallel those customs or stories told by her grandmother in the old gardens. Thus, Laura's story related to the legend of the white snake goddess (*Gardens* 299) does not sound unfamiliar to Indigo because it is comparable to "the snakes" (*Gardens* 36) that people respect for their protective force of precious water, "the eye of the big

6. See Dexter's "The Monstrous Goddess," page 186.

snake" "watching out for them" (*Gardens* 321), or the "old Grandfather Snake" (*Gardens* 476) in the stories or real life of the old gardens. For the Sand Lizard people, the snake symbolizes fertility and the continuity of life, and for Indigo, this force of protection never disappears despite living outside her home. Indigo is able to "discover moments of similarity between what she experiences in American and European gardens and the stories her Grandma Fleet told about her own people's gardens" (Köhler 241). Indigo survives, and as she and her sister (Sister Salt) return to the old gardens, the daughter of the Old Snake (a big rattlesnake that protects the old gardens until it is killed by some strangers) moves back home.

Just as the bird/snake symbolizes life/fertility/regeneration related to the survival of the Sand Lizard, so the image of "the Blessed Mother" stands for a religious force connected to the ancestors or the dead of the Sand Lizard. Indigo's attachment to her home does not decline or dissolve due to her being separated from her families, but it is intensified because of the image of "the Blessed Mother" and Christian stories about the Messiah. For example, a miraculous wall of the schoolhouse in Borgo that shows the image of the Virgin Mary evokes Indgio's memories of the Ghost Dance in which she participated with her sister, mother, and grandmother (*Gardens* 319). Through geographical imagination, what Indigo sees is not simply the miraculous wall that the villagers see, but she also sees her family; the snowflake brings into mind the image of the Messiah and the indigenous people's story about Mother Earth.

Confined within a disturbing environment, Sister Salt cannot transform the physical world into the old garden as her younger sister does. The sounds of coins from the gamblers at night and the "earthmoving machines" (*Gardens* 218) from the construction site of dam disturb Sister Salt and evoke homesickness "for the dunes, for the peacefulness and quiet" (*Gardens* 218). The construction site is threatening the indigenous creatures of the river. It is after the birth of her child that she dreams more and more frequently about the old gardens and her families. She "dreams about the old gardens, where Mama and Indigo were planting red amaranth and speckled yellow beans" (*Gardens* 338). "As she fell asleep she wondered where Indigo was, what she was doing at that moment, and Sister dreamed she was back at the old gardens" (*Gardens* 353). Though she does not have the capability of geographical imagination, Sister Salt is sentient of the existence of Indigo; this sentience parallels Denela's cards that make predictions of her return to the old gardens with her sister.

Aunt Bronwyn and Laura are like-minded people in Silko's *Gardens* because they share the same spirit of the ancient indigenous people, or rather they are Silkos' "eye of the gardener" "sharply contrasted with modern turn-of-the century American society's ambitions to conquer nature for purposes of modernization and urbanization" (Köhler 239). They are similar to the Sand Lizard people who give back "respect and love" to the land (Arnold 103). Aunt Bronwyn "transform[s] her originally traditional home into a proto-environmentalist garden of creative ingenuity and artistic innovation" (Köhler 240). In much the same vein, as a gardener, Laura "reintegrates the monuments of Roman antiquity into their natural environment of flora and fauna" (Köhler 240), reviving the spirit of the ancient world.

Hattie, like Aunt Bronwyn and Laura, is one of the like-minded people who are "open to new visions and to change" (Aldama 458). Nevertheless, Hattie is not a gardener capable of transforming the ancient world of love and respect into her environment as

Aunt Bronwyn and Laura do. Hattie comes from a world based on the patriarchal social structure that does not encourage women to confront any "oppressive hold" (Li 31). She is "denied the right" to decide on her position (Köhler 239). Her mother impedes her growth and "stifles any meaningful relationship she may have to the natural world" (Li 30). Her thesis grounded in the Gnostic heresies that confirm the power of women is unacceptable to "a male-governed intellectual world" (Aldama 457). Perhaps Hattie is much more like a diaspora than Indigo, having no affectional attachment to her people and the land. Hattie "functions largely as an empty vessel to be filled with the beliefs and ambitions of others" (Li 31) when she is living in the Euro-American imperialist/colonial/patriarchal world. Unlike Indigo, she cannot associate the physical world (the land/the geography) with her childhood memories or develop any attachment to her ancestors or families through geographical imagination. Instead, she decides not to return to her parental home—not to return to "her stifling upbringing" (Li 33). Her memories teem with trauma about being denied the right to confirm the existence of female principles in Gnostic theories. Hattie is disconnected from the land, people, and her "self" in the Euro-American patriarchal world.

As a fiction that encourages globalization and an alliance of like-minded peoples of different ethnicities, Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes* renders women like Hattie conscious of a dynamic life in the indigenous culture. Hattie's geographical imagination is impromptu, rather than drawing on the accumulated memories of her Euro-American imperial society. As she sees the landscape in the gardens of Aunt Bronwyn and Laura, she is sentient to the force of fertility and protection of life which is significant in ancient indigenous cultures and nature. Hattie is aware of "the glowing light" (*Gardens* 319; 327; 372; 423) connected with the light in the legend of the white snake goddess. She dreams

of "the Blessed Virgin Mary standing on a snake" (*Gardens* 304) after the visit to Laura's gardens. Her dreams reveal her desire to have a home with Indigo in terms of the ancient indigenous matriarchal culture; her geographical imagination is associated with the culture of the Earth-Mother goddess or the Snake (whether it be in the ancient European world or the ancient Native American world) that holds the power of protection in maternal culture and inspires a maternal instinct for the indigenous child she would like to protect. Influenced by her vehement maternal affection for Indigo, Hattie develops a geographical imagination overlapping the collective memories of the ancient worlds (the worlds of both ancient Europe and the ancient Americas); in turn, this development of geographical imagination strengthens her maternal love for Indigo.

Hattie's process of conversion to the ancient indigenous culture formed in her geographical imagination is impeded by the unjust frame of society. She looks for the opportunity to adopt the Indian child Indigo, but the real world does not allow her to do so. "Non-Indians weren't allowed to reside on the reservations without government permits, and only merchants, missionaries, and schoolteachers could obtain them" (*Gardens* 440). She still desperately helps Indigo and her sister; she strives to purchase some items and send them to the two Indian sisters and their friends. On the way to Road's End, the kind white woman is attacked by an anonymous assailant. Her carved gemstones are plundered. "The loss of the carvings was worse than the outrage done to her body" because those carvings contain the recollection of her father's love (*Gardens* 458). Though a deputy files a report of the crime, his attitude is impassive and lacking any urgency (*Gardens* 459). Hattie has no specific memory about this assailant, and the hotel staff intends to erase the evidence ("the livery stable had no record of a fare from the hotel on the day of her attack" (*Gardens* 459). Obviously, "The townspeople protected

one another" (*Gardens* 459). At that moment, Hattie is seen as a strange white woman with "a squaw dress" or an outcast denied the right to claim this outrage in the town. Hattie still travels to reach the destination to deliver the merchants to Indigo. As she joins Indigo and her sister, the Ghost Dance ritual for the return of the ancient people has just begun. The police interrupt the ritual, and Hattie is brought back by her parents. Hattie might have found shelter/protection among her Indian friends if "the luminous glow streaming in all around the edges of the blanket" (*Gardens* 469) had continued to shimmer until the coming of Messiah. Furious, Hattie flees and sets a fire in the town of Needles, a town of an unjust society.

> At the corrals, she let the terrified horses run free, and followed them to a hill east of town, where she watched—amazed and elated by the beauty of the colors of the fire against the twilight sky. As the flames snaked over to catch the roofs of buildings on either side of the stable, the fire's colors were brilliant—the reds as rich as blood, the blues and whites luminous, and the orange flame as bright as Minerva's gemstone. (*Gardens* 473)

Looking down at the fire, Hattie might extend her geographical imagination further to encompass the revolutionary souls against injustice. Spiritually, Hattie joins the revolutionary individuals in Silko's *Almanac of the Dead*, who as a natural force of destruction act "as a catalyst for social change" (Romero 636). At that moment, Hattie, in her liberation of those confined horses, has transformed from a confined creature under the unjust frame of society to a human warrior in the age of revolution as prophesized by Silko in *Almanac*—"the 'world the whites brought with them' would be 'swept away by a giant gust of wind'" (Romero 635). Yet Silko settles Hattie into a peaceful life in the gardens of Aunt Bronwyn—a media connected to the old European world that shares similar traits of protection with the old gardens of the Sand Lizard.

Conclusion

The Indian Removal Act of the colonial age is generally identified as a historical catastrophe for indigenous tribes. Yet such a policy that displaces indigenous people, uprooting their cultures, cannot be regarded as a panoramic view of history, as there exists no "spatial history" that involves (un)conscious activities of ancient indigenous peoples. As history is constantly shifting its social power, landscape becomes more and more complicated because it contains multiple layers of cultural activities, some of which have extended to images of the mind (memories) and the oral form as a medium for recollection. As the forgotten or ignored activities on the land are recalled, the imperialist ambition of orienting itself toward a single system cannot completely eliminate the memories of the indigenous cultures and people; those memories related to indigenous cultures are integrated into an ongoing "spatial history" dynamic in geographical imagination. Leslie Marmon Silko's *Gardens in the Dunes* demonstrates the Indian tribe Sand Lizard as an ongoing landscaping power that refuses to disappear despite the rising power of imperialism. Moreover, her like-minded indigenous or non-indigenous people creatively affiliate the land with the force of ancestral protection through their geographical imagination, reversing the condition of their traumatic history. In other words, Silko in *Gardens in the Dunes* envisions a culture of reindigenization without ethnic borders in an *in-between* space—a common ground between the Sand Lizard culture and Old European culture—that functions as collective memories for a cultural sustainability which is spiritual and religious.

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Signs of Spring #7

Rebecca Matheson

Communion with the Dead: Images and Functions of *Alekwu* Masquerades in James Alachi's *The Dilemma of Oko*

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Abstract

Communion with the dead connotes a relationship concerning socio-spiritual interaction that exists between the living and their ancestors. The *Alekwu* (guardian spirit) is a festival held in honour of the spirits of ancestors and is the forum for a spiritual and material link in which the living and their ancestors interact. *Aje* are the ancestors who emerge as *Alekwu* in the physical world. The term, *Alekwu* simply means ancestral mask/masquerade, and as such it is an embodiment of the ancestor's spirit. This article closely looks at Alachi's play, *The Dilemma of Oko* with a focus on images of ancestral visits in form of masquerades. It uses qualitative content analysis which focuses on the characteristics of language as communication with attention to the content or contextual meaning of the text in discussing the play. His use of *Alekwu* motifs to dispatch instructions and promote social control runs through the play. Alachi's choice of the family unit to capture the relevance of ancestors to the living is also suggestive of the enduring link between living and supernatural beings. He stresses the consequences of neglecting this link and emphasizes the need to sustain the practice. James Alachi's fascination with masquerade theatre is connected to his commitment to cultural values which he recreates in his drama to confront contemporary social realities. His dramaturgy is enriched by cultural features that celebrate indigenous culture and promote the specific experiences from his Idoma culture which strongly inform his use of *Alekwu* masquerades in his play.

Keywords: Communion, Ancestors, Culture, Masquerades, Idoma, *Alekwu*

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Introduction

In traditional *Idoma* society, there exist certain basic concepts and beliefs in which *Alekwu* (guardian spirit) is central. An *Alekwu* is a noble ancestor who is immortalized, personified, and serves as a reified medium between the living descendants and *Owoicho* – God Almighty or supreme god. E.O. Erim in his book on the Idoma people identifies three types of spirit manifestations among the Idomas. "The first was the *Owoicho* (the supreme god), the second *Aje* (the outstanding earth) the third *Alekwu* (the ancestral spirits)" (1981: 145). Erim further contends that: "However, in their opinion, He - *Owoicho* is considered too removed physically to cater for their immediate interests and needs. As a result, they employ such intermediaries as Aje (the spirit of the kindred group, etc) and *Alekwu*." Ancestral reverence or communing with dead ancestors is a critical aspect of Idoma worldview. In the words of Alachi (2012: 212):

> The Idoma People revere their ancestors; their traditional philosophy and religion is rooted in ritualistic ancestral worship, which is informed by the union of spiritual, metaphysical and material forces governing the Idoma universe. Within this continuum, *Aje* (earth) cult provides the basis for understanding the mind and world view as regards Alekwu festival. *Aje* are the dead ancestors who re – emerged as *Alekwu* in the physical world.

Alekwu simply means ancestral mask/masquerade and it's an embodiment of the dead ancestor's spirit.

The *Alekwu* is also a festival held in honour of the spirits of ancestors. Anyebe (2014:321) explains that "[a]n Alekwu's appearance on stage, for instance, is not viewed as one Mr. John wearing a costume and imitating Joseph's character. The *Alekwu* is viewed in its holistic sense as the ancestor, making a live stage appearance, and performs roles according to a communal script. The lines delivered by an *Alekw'Afia* exist in the collective text. The lines come from text of the people's oral tradition. *Alekw'Afia* performance includes chants describing family or line of descent. The story of Idoma migration, told in the context of a particular lineage passage in history, forms the plot of the *Alekwu* performance". In this forum, the unseen spirits of the dead (*Alekwu*) commune with the living in the *Idoma* world view and perform functions such as leading the spirit of a dead person from the physical world to the metaphysical. *Alekwu* is also believed to cleanse the land for the living of all troubles and woes as well as providing hope.

Not forgetting that, *Alekwu* serves as the entrance point to the spirit world, as such, it is the bridge between the living and the dead. Ngugi Wa Thion'go (1997: 138) in his article "Learning from our ancestors" asserts that: "The dead as part of the living and of the unborn is the one common thread in African thought and Experience". This 'thread' emphasizes the continuity of life. Thus, communing with ancestors is "reverence for the ancestors and reverence for life; for continuity and change. (Wa Thiong'go, 1997: 139). It is ancestral veneration and respect given to one's dead elders as they occupy a revered place where they are invoked and appeased for favours, guidance and protection from the living. So, to an Idoma man, death is seen as transition from the world of the living to the spirit world where his spirit continues to influence the people living. It is in this

light that *Ijah Alekwu* festival is held to create a forum where spirits of ancestors are appeased and faith in ancestors and unity of the community is reinforced. Gift Mtukwa (2012: 2) aptly describes this relationship as 'ancestral worship' defining it as the act of "engaging in worshiping and praying to one's relative who has died either in the distant past or recently". This means, living together with ancestors is part and parcel f the daily life of Africans and non Africans alike.

Oyin Ogunba (1978: 9) acknowledges this and reiterates the link between ancestors and humans in the Yoruba world view and submits that; "Each year, gods, ancestors and all the heavenly crew come down to earth in their various forms – some to jubilate with man for the completion of another cycle of events; some to help him purify his environment; and yet others to remind him of his duties." This happens when the departed spirits of ancestors manifest as masquerades. As such, masquerades are revered as spirits of the dead who are perceived to be guests of the living. This breeds the state of transition in the African world view where the living, the dead and the unborn revolve in a continuum. Thus, "[m]asquerade theatre provides a common ground for shared experiences between men and their ancestors, between the natural and the supernatural and between the mundane and the metaphysical … after all, the ancestors were once in their life time, humans and they continue to have those humanistic predisposition and tastes even as spirits" (Anyebe, 2013: 320).

The foregoing emphasizes cosmic connectivity between the living and their ancestors. Masquerade performances provide the platform for sustained interaction aimed at maintaining the community's' essence. The essence of masquerade art in traditional societies is strongly connected to ancestral manifestations. The strength is in the perception of masquerades as an embodiment of the spirits of ancestors. It suffices to

say that masquerades take on a spiritual quintessence, 'something other' than the person. Masked in certain sacrality and awe, the masquerade performer is transformed beyond ordinary performance. A certain spiritual awe is attached to masquerades and performers who wear masks that gives the performer an elevated regard from the audience that watch the performance. Thus, the masquerade is not seen as an entertainment device to his audience, he is respected and seen as spirit in his own right. Francis Harding (2002: 12) believes that

> [t]he human performer can be temporarily transformed in his or her own perception and that of the spectators, into a spirit character. There is no contradiction here, no suspension of disbelief but rather the confirmation of and participation in, a dominant, informing belief. The power to transform in perception without altering bodily allows the physical presence of a human mask – wearer to be one with the supernatural presence of the spirit: a human – performer/a spirit character without division of identity.

The ethereal essence of the masquerade, which gives it power and supernatural attributes, coupled with the belief that ancestral beings have vested their powers in the masquerade, help enforce this transmutation. This transformation is aptly "described by Soyinka as a 'dome of continuity' a state of transition while Sofola refers to it as a 'state of perpetual transmutation' which makes unbroken continuity possible" (Ododo, 2015: 2). The human/performer in a masquerade is therefore accepted and viewed as ancestors or gods. This is because; the person behind the masquerade is transformed as he takes on the character and attitude of the spirit or mask represented. As Perani and Smith, cited in Anyebe (2012: 448-449), note, "[e]ven though he wears the mask.

He is no longer himself when he dons the mask. The masker is transformed into this inbuilt persona as soon as he wears the mask". In discussing ancestral masks, Alex Asigbo (2013: 3) aptly corroborates this when he submits that the phenomenon of masquerades or spirit manifests—ancestral masks in most societies in Africa—has continued to be shrouded in mystery. Donning the ancestral mask is always, an exclusive act seen as symbolization and manifestation of the continuing relationship between the living and the dead, masquerades continue to play a vital role in the life of many African societies. It is against this backdrop that James Alachi's *The Dilemma of Oko* will be considered, especially the functions of the dead ancestors among the living, with a paarticular focus on the functional values and socio–political control among the *Idoma*.

The Representation of Ancestors in Alachi's *Dilemma of Oko*

Annual ancestral visits to the living, in form of masquerades, is a sacred, revered cultural event among the Idoma speaking people of Benue state and indeed all Africans. The reverence connects the belief that spirits of ancestors manifest as guests to the individuals, families and communities. Thus, the respect accorded to dead ancestors and appeasement in times of trouble, connects strongly to the functional values and hopes for blessings, healing and interventions from departed spirits of their forebears. Alachi's dramaturgy is replete with images of ancestral visits in form of masquerades. The use of *Alekwu* masquerades to dispatch instructions and promote social control runs through his play. In his play *The Dilemma of Oko* we encounter several masquerades as spirits of ancestors when Oko mistakenly kills his cousin Agada with whom he has a dispute over a piece of land and refuses to go for purification. Alachi's choice of the family unit to capture the relevance of ancestors to the living is suggestive of the enduring link between the living and supernatural beings. He stresses the consequences of neglecting this link and blames

western influences on local culture. Esi the old man remarks that

> ...the world has really turned inside out. … killing your own brother and refusing to come for purification. … those days when our fathers cured the sick by just looking at them. Those days are gone. Moon playing is gone. All is gone. All is black magic, barbaric and pagan practices they say. … why reject home? I don't say they should not learn the good things of the white people. That is why we sent them to school. But why reject what is good in our tradition … they don't know the difference between culture and religion … if Oko does, he couldn't have refused traditional purification. If you do, the unnecessary conflicts will be no more (*The Dilemma of Oko* 64)

Esi's lines above project fury and lamentation at the obfuscation and failure of the present generation to recognize what is beneficial in their culture. Traditional purification by confessing to *Alekwu* absolves the culprit and stops impending danger or calamity. In traditional *Idoma*, submission to cleansing rites is an agreement to maintain social and spiritual stability. However, western education tags these rites as fetish, barbaric and pagan practice. This negative branding emanates from the influence of Christianity which sees traditional practices especially masquerade performances as evil and satanic manifestations. Also, the awe and mysticism that surrounds masquerades is emphasised by the playwright. Esi remarks,

> As I was saying, Oko is one of them. His refusing to come has forced the gods, the great ancestors out of their resting place at this odd time. When the ancestors come out like this, a traditional cow, white must go. If this is not done, a human head will follow – just sudden death, no illness. (*The*

Here, Esi not only reports the potency of masquerades, further reference also is made to them as gods! This description is due to the fact that it is believed that masquerades carry with them a sanctified attitude as well as supernatural powers that allows them unhindered access to intervene in human affairs and serve as "agencies that can chastise them (humans) for their iniquities… Ododo (2015: 5). In the case of Oko in the world of the play, the ancestors have been forced to emerge from their world as a result of his refusal to submit to the cleansing rite. According to Oko, "that is a barbaric tradition. It's about the only thing I hate and detest in your tradition". (*The Dilemma of Oko* 57). His refusal creates a chasm in the cosmos and breeds evil among the living members of the community and cleansing the culprit, clears the land of bad blood. Here, refusal spells out doom for the land. The referent to ancestors as 'gods', by Esi stems from the reverence, respect and awe attached to ancestors as supernatural beings. Anyebe (2013: 323) aptly explains this and submits that

> [a]ncestors in Akweya and indeed all Idoma cosmology are conceived as supernatural beings and are believed to live in the space within the neighborhood. They are rated very high to the point of deification. Some of them make appearances as masquerades during festivals and other special occasions … ancestors are dead relatives who are believed to have transformed into spiritual beings. These dead relatives move to the ancestral realm (ubankwu) where they become spiritual intermediaries, carrying prayers from their relatives to Akpmochi.

This ancestral affiliation validates the presence of ancestors in the form of

masquerades in the space of interaction, what Anyebe describes as 'ancestral courtship' (2013: 324), where the socio-spiritual relationship is sustained. Ododo (2015: 6) refers to it as the 'God essence' which is perceived more in the area of meaning generated in his (the masquerades) performance. He further submits that "God is an omnipresent and omniscient phenomenon. The intersection of his omnipresent nature is what makes masquerading an art linked to 'the God essence'; a potent tool for unmasking the hidden truth, revealing the concealed fact and making visible the invisible reality of human existence, while projecting clairvoyantly into the future (emphasis mine).

After Oko shot and killed his cousin, he claims that he thought his relative "was an intruder, a thief" (*The Dilenma of Oko* 39). To ascertain the truth and verity of this claim, 'the God essence' is required. Alachi consciously creates the '*Alekwu* presence' in the world of the play, to depict the religious belief of the Idoma's in 'the God essence'. Only the all knowing, all seeing and all powerful essence can ascertain Oko's innocence or guilt and enable an unquestionable revelation of the truth regarding Agada's death and recommend the proper appeasement that will purge the community of such sin. Here it is necessary to mention that the 'God essence' and omniscient nature creates an aura of fear in community members. Whatever decision is pronounced by the masquerade is taken seriously by the clan and reprisal or revenge is averted for fear of the wrath of ancestors, because they are perceived as gods. 'God essence' essentially occupies a central position in masquerade manifestation as gods and its spiritual significance among African tribes shows the binding communal force as well as awe and fearful reverence of masquerades involving spirits of dead ancestors.

In the world of the play, Alachi makes conscious effort to list and describe various masquerades in the *Alekwu* collective. Beginning with Enumiru who is described

as eldest and most knowing, who always smoking like the everlasting god he is. He is wise, fair, and firm, the father of Inamu Oloha, conqueror of daylight (*The Dilenma of Oko* 65). Then, *Onah* the ancestor in the second masquerade is introduced. *Onah* is described as special adviser of *Enumiru*. He is the Knower of all secrets, knower of all herbs. *Oko Alari* in his masquerade is the fighter of the land, the killer of monsters and all enemies. He is identified by the palm fruits he eats. Also, there is *Agbo Oriko*, the maker of goods and lover of peace. Last but not the least, *Akor, the* god of king makers, justice and endurance completes the list (*The Dilenma of Oko* 66). Alachi introduces different types of *Alekwu* on to the stage, and in so doing, also brings the community on stage because all the masquerades are named after dead ancestors of *Orokam* where the play is set and validates the relationship of humans and dead ancestors, placing value on this aspect of Idoma culture.

Another potent function of masquerades lies in their justice administration and social control. In our traditional festivals, in which ancestors manifest as masquerades, these masquerades are not perceived as entertainment but instruments of control, justice and peace arbitrators who exude a high sense of power and command reverence. Manifested from the spirit realm of ancestors, they are "masked spirits depending on their purpose and function possess attributes ranging from spiritual (in)sight, clairvoyance, agility, unusual strength and other forms of super human characteristics" (Asigbo, 2013: 3). Alachi clearly establishes these functions when the oldest *Alekwu* masquerade (*Enumiru*) sits in judgement to decide the fate of Oko with other *Alekwus*.

> Agborioko: We want peace in our land. Oko is our son and when a son errs
>
> he is punished. We only asked him to come for purification. He refused.
>
> That means … he has denied us. Because the palm tree has grown Tall, it

insults the ground, forgetting that it still stands on the ground and that it is the ground which will eventually welcome it when it dies.

Enumiru: …. No individual is mighty. Community stands supreme. Oko has to Pay for refusing to listen to the voice of tradition, Oko is, one, exiled, ostracized and excommunicated. He is never to set foot on the land of *Orokam*, he is never to interact with any free born of *Orokam* and he is forbidden from tasting any food or water, from or by any *Orokam* man. Two, he is not to enter his wife for twenty moons and two market days. Three, the land in dispute has for the time being been confiscated by the community … and the last, neither *Orokam* nor her land will have anything to do with his dead body. Since he is our son, we however will forgive him with conditions, if he changes his mind. *Onah Aakpa, Oko Agada Akpaka, Agboriko, Akor, Inamu Oloha*, your elder greets you. (*The Dilenma of Oko* 68 – 69)

The ancestors serve judgement on Oko the culprit and dispatch legislation on the crime committed. He is cut off from friends, neighbours, loved ones and family. In traditional societies, this judgement, pronounced by ancestors is the highest decision and demonstrates the gravity of their displeasure towards the crime committed. The judgement goes beyond the culprit as community members are also given strict instructions regarding the issue. Community members believe that not adhering to the instructions of the masquerade (who is believed to be spirit and speaking with spiritual authority) will lead to more consequences for the community. Through masquerades, dead ancestors legislate and perform the function of directing human affairs, controlling deviant behavior, enforcing discipline, and providing a platform where natural law is upheld and peace sustained among community members and groups. Perhaps, one can say, ancestral visits in the form of masquerades help provide divine guidance and balance between human and ancestral (spirit) worlds.

It is pertinent to note that the reason for a sustained communion between man and spirits is the well being of man. This means ancestral visits in masquerade form to the land of the living are aimed at maintaining the health and vitality of living relatives as well as the entire community. Anyebe (2012: 453) believes that "[t]he festival is a celebration of life, a celebration in search of productivity and longevity in the here and now. The celebration is not about life here after but the improvement of financial and social conditions of present life" (emphasis mine). Because of this, the sheer presence of a masquerade creates an atmosphere of expectation in the audience. This atmosphere is shared collectively throughout the entire community, because the masquerade is believed to be a carrier of the spirit of the tribe and a visitor from the spirit world who brings with him blessings and gifts for relatives and the community as a whole.

James Alachi's fascination with masquerade theatre is connected to his commitment to the cultural values that he recreates in his drama to confront contemporary social realities, especially in the wake of western ideals and influences which relegate certain cultural practices to the background and brand same as fetish, barbaric or demonic. His dramaturgy calls for rethinking as African communities blindly embrace western cultures and abandon positive and vibrant cultural practices. It is pertinent to say that Alachi's revelation of ancestral links in his works resonates in the works of older playwrights on the Nigerian dramatic and theatrical space, such as Joel Adedeji's ritual drama (1969) Wole Soyinka's fourth stage, J. P. Clark's "sacred ancestral", and Oyin Ogunba's theories

of festival drama in which he classified two types of theatre in Nigeria—the indigenous and the foreign. Ola Rotimi's work is a clear pointer to earlier studies on masquerade theatre. Sunday Ododo's *Facekuerade Theatre* is also a recent addition to this list.

Conclusion

In *The Dilemma of Oko*, the cosmic relationship of human beings and their dead ancestors ,featured in several masquerades, create a bond and sustain relationships between the living and the dead. The need for this communion occurs because man needs to improve his well being and requires blessings and gifts from ancestors who are believed to have become heavenly beings. Accordingly, Alachi's masquerades are strong vehicles for ancestors to continually relate and release such blessings, cleanse, and legislate issues. As a dramatist, Alachi presents us with a theatre full of reverence for ancestors which focuses on the *Alekwu* masquerade and its relevance among the Idoma tribe in Benue State, Nigeria.

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PLAYHOUSE 90

She can knit and watch television.

The grime of sweat and cigar ashes

comes through as the granular smoke

in the basement of the orphanage.

This lanky heavyweight with a face of

stitched-together scars float from the arena

between his manager and his cut-man.

KO-ed by an invisible left hook knocks

his consciousness on the bloody canvas.

A circle's been closed: he's been beaten

by the kid he once was. Men.

What makes them risk cauliflower brains?

In the shower, he stands baptized

in the waters of solitude. She senses

he's always been afraid of being alone.

Doc says if he's hit again he might go blind.

No more smoke-filled rings, the surf of crowd noise.

His only comfort will be the earth

he'll be buried in. He won't have a dime

for a head-stone that says, "One hundred

eleven fights, and he never took a dive."

The sub-plot is working on her guts.

His manager's a gambler in hock to the mob.

The man in the shark-skin suit is cool.

She knows this story all too well.

Her husband's been black-jacked by mobsters.

The other sub-plot is the ex-boxer and the lady

at the employment office who wants to help.

The story moves like a fast game of chess

with commercials. The boxer will be a wrestler

in mountain-man garb, a wooden squirrel-gun.

The cut-man begs the manager not to hurt

Mountain's soul. He was fifth in the world.

Tennessee cicadas whine from power lines

about things he could not have changed

on the scorecards, sacrifices for people

he never knew would sell him out.

She's wakened from this dream by her son,

home from a football game under the lights.

His dinner's warm on the stove.

He takes it into the room where his mother watches TV.

Come over here, she says. I want to look at you.

He bends down. She turns the lamp toward him,

winces when she sees his black eye.

Sorrow, even if it has it place in its keeper's

destiny, doesn't batter the heart any less.

Men. Why do they sacrifice their precious brains?

Aw, gee, Ma, he says. We've been all over this.

I know, she says, but promise me

you'll marry a girl who won't hurt your soul.

Marry? What have you been watching, Ma?

—Bill Tremblay

African Ancestral Veneration Practices

in

J.P. Clark-Bekederemo's Drama—A Study of *Three Plays: Song of a Goat, The Masquerade* and *The Raft*

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Abstract

It is a truism that every artefact is culture bound, while every culture has explicit peculiar practices and values that knit the different segments and serve as instrument of social control that stabilizes the society. Prior to the spread of Islamic and Christian influences, most African societies thrived in a complex structure of spirits and ancestors who influenced the living that were venerated through traditional religious rites. This study examines the African ancestral veneration practices and examine how they offer societal control and stability in J. P. Clark-Bekederemo's *Three Plays: Song of a Goat, The Masquerade* and *The Raft* which are set in modern societies that have bastardized African traditional values and institutions. The study's findings reveal that the neglect of traditional practices, namely, ancestral veneration, the pouring of libations, and ancestors serving as arbiters in most societies has led to increase in crime and the devaluation of African traditional institutions. This

study, therefore, recommends that African societies should revert to the traditional ancestral-cult system which adopts ancestral-cult and ancestors as supreme arbiters of society and guardian of the African cosmos. This is because the modern government's legal systems and other agents of crime control, such as the police force have failed and in cases where they acted as reconciliatory agencies,more conflicts among the people have arisen.

Keywords: African ancestral veneration practices, Ancestral-cult, *Song of a Goat, The Masquerade, The Raft,* Culture

——————————————

Introduction

Culture is not just about the different attires people wear and the various dances they perform, it is also about how the people achieve their set goals and aspirations based on their belief systems and practices. Societal growth and development also hinges on people's belief systems and their values. Idang remarks that culture is to be understood as the way of life of a people, and values are to be understood as beliefs that are held about what is right and wrong and what is important in life (98). It has become common credence among contemporary Africans who have lost touch with their roots to supporting their western colonizers by belittling what is African. Thus African culture and values continue to be misconstrued as either barbaric or idolatrous. Such destructive and dehumanizing misinterpretations have led African scholars and ardent believers in African ideologies and worldviews to unanimously agree to propagate and promote African cultural heritage in their scholarship and lives.

Culture has often been described as a rich heritage of a society. Because every work of art is the product of an artist living in a particular place at a given time, art also reflects the culture in which it is made. Idogho, for example, remarks that "[o]ver the ages drama has been an essential aspect of culture. For the Greek drama, where drama (claims its origin formally), it developed partly in reacting on to the period of barbarism from which the society had emerged to reinforced the moral values of civilization of that period concerned" (59). The activity from which drama derives its material stems from man's interaction with his environment—both the spiritual and physical. Indeed, man's encounter with the supernatural forms the bedrock of his life's expressions which are sometimes enacted in festival celebrations that are themselves the origin of drama. Ironically, Africans seem not to understand nor appreciate their own rich cultural values and norms which enabled traditional African societies to thrive in the pre-colonial period. Against this backdrop, this paper considers African ancestral veneration practices/beliefs, deemed paramount for African existence and as tools for social control, and examines how they are used in Clark-Bekederemo's *Three Plays: Song of a Goat, The Masquerade* and *The Raft.*

Theoretical Framework

This study hinges on *Afro-Centricity: The Theory of Social Change*, proposed by Asante (1987), which views African cultural beliefs, practices and values as the basis of the African-centred or Afro-centric worldview. Asante provides an Afrocentricity theory grounded in the African context. He argues that Africans should view phenomena from the vantage point of an African worldview that is in turn informed by African culture. He observes that an Afro-centric worldview or the African-centred worldview is based on African cultural beliefs, practices and values. According to Asante, Afrocentricity implies the placement of African culture at the centre of any analysis that involves the study of African people. He asserts that Afrocentricity is a perspective that allows Africans to be

subjects of historical experiences rather than objects on the fringes of Europe (Asante 111). Further, Asante elaborates that culture-based indigenous knowledge should reflect the customs, beliefs, values, knowledge, habits, skills, arts and way of life of African people. He points out that culture-based African ancestral veneration practice/belief, which is the bedrock of African customs, values, skills and arts, is reflected in the people's way of life even though it appears to have been relegated in contemporary African societies.

Ancestral Veneration in Africa Theology: The Relevance and Prejudice

According to Diane Stinton, the vital role of ancestors in traditional African thoughts is beyond dispute, and it is apparent in numerous literatures that deal with African Religions and African Christianity (112). Bènèzet Bujo (cited in Stinton) asserts that the notion of communion with the dead is central to the worldview of African peoples as evident in funeral rites, initiation rites, hunting ceremonies and other rituals (113). Bujo further says that ancestral veneration is one of the fundamental pillars of religion for many ethnic groups in Africa. With this notion in mind, he further notes that anyone, who would propose an Ecclesiology, a Christology or a Sacramental Theology from the point of view of African ancestral veneration, would have to pay particular attention to those living dead, whose commemoration is regarded by their descendants as dispensable and beneficial or even redemptive for their earthly existence. Jean Marc Ela (cited in Stinton 104) agrees. He says that despite the fact that ancestral veneration takes different forms in different African societies, the cult of the dead is perhaps that of the culture to which the African is most attached – it is a heritage clung to above all else (112).

For a better understanding of the cult of ancestors in Africa societies, the *Ijaw* communities inclusive, a brief insight into the concept of death and burial rites is deemed necessary. Death, although a dreaded event, is perceived as the beginning of a person's

deeper relationship with all of creation; the complementing of life and the beginning of the communication between the visible and the invisible worlds. The goal of life to an average African of old is to become an ancestor after death. This is why every person who dies must be given a "correct / proper" funeral, supported by a number of religious ceremonies. If this is not done, the dead person may become a wandering ghost, unable to "live" properly after death and therefore a danger to those who remain alive. It might be argued that "proper" death rites are more a guarantee of protection for the living than to secure a safe passage for the dying. It is believed that the dead have power over the living (Tempel 42). People usually take care and cherish their ancestors in order to be protected and prosper. Africans usually take care of their Ancestors' tombs or give gifts and offerings such as honey, fruits, rum, and usual tools; they place them near the ancestor's tomb.

Ancestor cults and ancestral worship figure prominently in the anthropological image of sub-Saharan Africa. Comparatively viewed, African ancestor worship has a remarkably uniform structural framework. The spirit world is believed to be a radically different world, it is also a carbon copy of the countries where [the ancestors] lived in this life (*Concepts of God*, Mbiti 72). Ancestors are vested with mystical powers and authority. They retain a functional role in the world of the living, specifically in the life of their living kinsmen; indeed, African kin-groups are often described as communities of both the living and the dead. Ancestors are intimately involved with the welfare of their kin group but they are not linked in the same way to every member of that group. The linkage is structured through the communities' priests, elders of the kin-group, whom are the representatives of the ancestors and the mediators between them and the kin-group

The ancestors are believed to be those who have died, who exist in some usually

undefined and unknown place to which the living have no access. There they look after their descendants' welfare, and expect their cooperation in return. They have power to both help and harm their wards; they are only there to help them and protect them.

With this notion of ancestral veneration as the core of African religious traditions: then, follows the roles of the ancestors in African thoughts. Nyamiti outlines five common elements: (1) *Natural relationship* between the ancestors and his or her earthly relatives, usually based on parenthood but sometime on brotherhood or membership in a secret society. (2) *Supernatural or secret status* acquired through death and understood in terms of super-human powers and nearness to God. Ancestors are presented as ambivalent in character, for they can be benevolent to their earthly kin but can also intervene in human affairs to bring change particularly punishment for relatives who have neglected them or committed some offence within the community. (3) *Mediation* between God and humanity because of their supernatural status and proximity to God. (4) *Title to regular sacred communion* with earthly relatives with whom the ancestors long to maintain contact. (5) *Exemplarity,* as models of good behaviour (53). As well, Mbiti sum up the roles of ancestors as follows:

    a) Unifying families and people, caring for each other, empowering, blessing,
       rewarding and inspiring.

    b) Protecting families and clans from diseases, evil, enemies, even in war.

    c) Mediating between people and the Divinity.

    d) Enforcing discipline–in case of the breaking social values.

    e) Facilitating holistic healing. (*Concepts of God,* Mbiti**,** 96; *African Religions*
       Mbiti, 9)

Bishop Perter Sarpong from Ghana (cited in Stinton 112) adds the criteria for

becoming an ancestor to the roles of ancestors as listed above; saying that not everyone becomes ancestor but only those who fulfil specific conditions. First, the person is to pass through the critical stages of life to attain adulthood which is generally determined by marriage rather than by old age and which assumes procreation. An unmarried person, however old, is disqualified from ancestor hood. Second requirement is to die a natural death, excluding tragic deaths such as those by accident, suicide, unclean diseases or in childbirth. Third, the person has an exemplary life by tribal standards, demonstrating good characters and behaviour according to traditional morality (Stinton 113); in other words, he or she must live a holy life. African ancestors are remembered, honoured and venerated by their living kin. They are invoked for their intercessory helps by the living kin and for the living kin.

Ancestral Veneration Practices in *Ijaw* Worldview and the Sociology of Bekederemo's *Three Plays*

In the traditional religion of the *Ijaw*, veneration of ancestors plays a central. While water spirits, known as *Owuamapu*, figure prominently in the Ijaw pantheon. In addition, the Ijaw practice a form of divination called *Igbadai*, in which recently deceased individuals are interrogated on the causes of their death. They also believe that water spirits are like humans in having personal strengths and shortcomings and that, humans dwell among the water spirits before being born.

In the traditional *Ijaw* society, like the *Urhobo* society and every other African society, communal interest is more important than personal interest. On the other hand personal gods, *teme* is as important as the communal god or the ancestor or *Duwoyou*. According to Philip (cited in Wren 6), "ancestors or *Duwoiyou*, are an important part of one's life, especially if they are honoured and shown respect through thorough sacrifices.

Oru or *Oruma* are local gods". Festivals are celebrated every year to mark the harvest seasons. During this period, the people interact freely, they worship their God-gods-divinities/deities-and their ancestors. There are diversion fishing and other occupations. They relate freely and celebrate life lavishly during festive periods. The *Ijaw* people have a unique and standard political system; the *Pere* or King is the head of the government and he has a council made up of chiefs and elders of the land. The women are also recognized likewise the age-grade in this complex political and spiritual arrangement. There are strict traditions and customs governing people, which can be refers to as their culture or cultural heritage; which ancestral veneration paramount. However, like in every community, there is bound to be conflict in the process of interaction and relationship; which could manifest in deviant behaviour or abominable act abhors by the society: the *Three Plays* draw their rhythm from this.

Song of a Goat (1964), *The Masquerade* (1964) and *The Raft* (1964) published under the title *Three Plays* (1964) form the earliest plays of Clark-Bekederemo make up the three plays under investigation. These three Plays respectively focus on events in the village setting around the area known as Kiagbodo in the Niger Delta, *Ijaw* area precisely of Burutu LGA of Delta State today. Some of the prominent towns in this area are: Okrika, Burutu, Akugbene, Ngbile, etc., although Kiagbodo share common boundary with the Urhobos and they have almost the same cultural practices. Their language is *Ijaw*, and they are predominantly fishermen and petty traders. The people owe their origin to common ancestor (Wren 4-5), this explain why the *Ijaw* in that area are closely knitted. It is worthy of note that the *Ijaw* speaking tribe spread across all the States in the Niger Delta area of Nigeria of today: Delta, Edo, Ondo, Rivers and Cross Rivers with Bayelsa State as their major state.

In the *Song of a Goat*, the hero Zifa is a man of substance in his community, but bears the two-fold of a family curse and sexual impotence. His aunt Orukorere anticipates the tragic consequences, but her gift of prophecy (given by the sea gods) has a limitation; and was not believed. Zifa's wife, Ebiere takes as her lover Zifa's younger brother Tonye. Having become pregnant, Zifa discovers the infidelity. In a rage, Zifa ritually slaughters a goat and requires Tonye to put the head into a pot too small for it, symbolically indicating his brother and wife's illicit relationship. Tonye out of shame and fear hangs himself and Ebiere collapses. Zifa departs and a neighbour (as messenger) describes his suicidal walk into the sea. Here, the playwright relies on the traditional institution of ritual, sacrifices, to the ancestor and proper death and burial (ancestral veneration) to convey his perception and thumping of the traditional African society:

> Zifa: Oh, why is such a cure not open to us
> Men? I'd give the gods and my fathers
> The fattest bull in the land to retrace
> My course and cast off this curse. ...
>
> I have been to all experts between swamp and
> Sand. What has any of the lot been able
> To do but to suggest I adjust myself to my curse.
> Curse! My father who they dared
> Not spit at when he lived is dead
> And lying in the evil groove. Was that
> Not enough penalty?
> Off course, I have recalled

Him to town so at times of festival he can

Have sacrifice...   (Clark-Bekederemo 9)

Masseur: Of course not. You did what every

Dutiful son would do when you brought

Him back home among his people

It may have been a little bit early

For one who died of the white taint.

Zifa: And for that they have picked my flesh

To the bones like fish a floating corpse.

Others grumble it was in time

Of flood. They will all too ready now

To smirk if they hear I am become

Drained of my manhood. (Clark-Bekederemo 10)

In *The Masquerade*, Clark-Bekederemo uses the institution of ancestral veneration and its importance to the marriage institution to express the dynamics of *Ijaw* traditional society. *The Masquerade* is a sequel to *Song of a Goat*: in *The Masquerade* Tufa is the son of his mother (Ebiere) who died in his, Tufa's birth, Tufa is the son of (Tonye), his mother husband, (Zifa) younger brother; and was raised by an aunt (Orukorere). Tufa was supposed to marry Titi, but Diribi his supposed father-in-law having realized the person of Tufa, a person with dented lineage record (cursed breed) pleaded with her daughter to quit the marriage: but Titi remained adamant to his father's plea and she insist to go with Tufa. Too late and as a result of the curse on Tufa, the trio –Titi, Tufa

and Diribi meet their tragic end.

The institution of ancestral veneration and its importance to the marriage institution play out in the following dialogues:

Titi: ...Right there in the presence of all friends

And the family gathered around, you

Invited us in with open arms and eyes ...

On me. Not only that. Before the dead

And the living of the land, you asked us to kneel

At your paternal feet, and there in words ... (Clark-Bekederemo 66)

Umuko: Your husband! (*She spits*) The gods

And the dead do not hear such talk! The man is

No more your husband now happily

His past and back are all in full view. ...

Your father and I and all the family- both the living and the dead

In the name of all that is divine and decent

Have dissolved it. Indeed it

Never was a marriage. (Clark-Bekederemo 71)

The Raft portrays the misadventure of four lumber-men; Olotu, Kengide, Ogrope, and Ibobo, who in attempting to bring logs downstream to be sold, drift down the Niger in their lumber raft; because the raft drifts from its moorings, it goes out of control. The four men are thus cut off from all else except each other and left to face hunger and danger together. Caught in a whirlpool, they rig a sail so that a storm will not blow them out, but the raft breaks up and Olotu is carried off on the part up. Ogrope, trying to

swim to the boat to be rescued, is beaten off by the boat's crew and caught in the boat stern-wheel. Kengide and Ibobo draft on towards Burutu but become lost in the fog while trying to make a landfall by night.

In *The Raft,* Clark-Bekederemo explores the concept of destiny in relationship to the ancestral veneration practice of the Ijaw belief system and the environmental hazard of the Ijaw society. Thus Arthur (8) observes; "though *The Raft* is set in a modern situation, its characters are at the same time all bound up by tradition. Their ill-fatedness is like that of other earlier plays: *Song of a Goat* and *The Masquerade* bound to some ancestral or cosmic force". This is suggested when Ibobo complains: "I promise you a goat At the next festival, my grandmother. Now How have you led us into this" (Clark-Bekederemo 101). After reminding us of the annual ancestral worship of grandmothers and grandfathers, the "Pious"Ibobo again says:

> You will see the light soon-when it is; Darker. There, I know we'll make it, oh.
>
> My grandfather and your gods on land; And sea, just see us safely make port
>
> And I'll slaughter that goat long since assigned… (Clark-Bekederemo 123
>
> - 124)

Ibobo equally shows his piety (the qualification of been ancestor - "befitting burial") to his living mother when he thinks it is his special duty to accord her a befitting burial. Consequently, amidst the uncertainty of their lives in the fog that has accompanied their drift away from the port of call, he exclaims: "Oh mother, my mother, won't I give you a burial home" (Clark-Bekederemo 133).

In *Song of A Goat, The Masquerade* and *The Raft*, the ancestors or the living-dead, are believed to be prominent in the Ijaws like every other African society and the living must maintain rapport with them, to ensure unity within the community and the larger society. Since the ancestors actually exist, the relationship between the living and the dead is continuous, from generation to generation, and must not be broken: thereby making ancestral veneration / worship an essential aspect of African culture. From the *Songs of a Goat,* the calamity that befell Zifa's household came as a punishment from the Ancestors and the gods as a result of Zifa's actions of hurriedly performing the final burial of his late father who died a tainted death. The ancestors were angry with Zifa ,because he performed the burial too soon. In *The Masquerade* calamity befell the Diribi's household because Tufa, a tainted seed from the illicit relationship between Tonye and Ebiere in *Songs of a Goat* in which Titi is forceably taken as a bride. Every effort to restrain Titi from this illegal marriage proves ineffectual, because the Ancestors are bent on vengeance. In *The Raft*, the four men in the lost raft know the importance of Ancestral veneration which is an essential aspect of the *Ijaw* and African religion. When they are lost in their voyage, they pour libations to their ancestors, and pray for protection and victory.

Conclusion

The ancestor cult is the central feature of African religion, the heart of the African spirit world. It is not an outmoded belief nor a superstition that is dying out in the African continent, as some Africans and non-Africans claim. The veneration of ancestors is still widely practiced among the *Ijaws* and in many other parts of Africa, irrespective of the people'sr modern religious affiliations. Despite urbanization, modernization and the dpresence of foreign religions (Christianity and Islam), this age-long practice among Africans continues to be accepted today. For a great many Africans and Black-Americans the ancestors are a reality, to be given due acknowledgement and to whom individuals

and groups must seek recourse for a stable life and stable society. With this in mind, it seems that modern African societies should consider traditional institutions of ancestral cult and ancestral veneration as their supreme arbiters, as a mechanism for social control and stability, especially when it comes to oath-taking among politicians and other public office holders during their swearing-in ceremonies. Clark-Bekederemo's dramaturgy broadens our understanding of ancestors and ancestral veneration and the important roles they play in conflict resolution in African traditional societies.

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Signs of Spring #9

Rebecca Matheson

Metafiction as a Reading Mode in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*

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Abstract

McEwan's *Atonement* is a work that refuses to be self-reflexive although it includes a metanarrative commentary that points to the creative process and discusses the god-like powers of the author. Its lack of narcissistic self-reflexivity makes it resist the most important theoretical definitions and typologies of metafiction. This article argues that, in its commitment to the notion of constructedness of meaning, *Atonement* does not interpellate its readers to construct meanings that it appropriates through self-referential narrative techniques; instead, it allows them to exert their free will to co-produce meanings and, thus, actualise its metafictional function. In so doing, it brings the metafictional mode and its engagement with the reader to a wholly new level.

Key Words: *Atonement,* metafiction, self-reflexivity, aesthetic illusion, mise-en-abyme

Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001) takes a fictional author at its centre, shows its interest in the creative and reception processes through the metanarrative comments of the first-person narrator, and seems to point to fiction as artefact. Its uniqueness as a metafictional work, however, does not lie in these metafictional concerns but, rather, in the discreetness it chooses in not flaunting its devices as well as in the obliqueness of giving precedence to the character's work and allowing her to usurp McEwan's authorial powers. The structural neatness in which it separates fiction from metafiction seems to work against the alternative possibility of pointing back to itself, of drawing attention to itself as fiction. In fact, it limits the use of metafiction to the last nineteen pages of the book, i.e., to the separate section, "London, 1999," in which the fictional writer, Briony, straddles the boundaries between character, narrator and author and makes very important confessions about her novel's ending and the legal issues that hinder its publication. It is true that the novel points to its narrative identity taking us off guard when it finally allows us a belated realisation that the character Briony is the "true" creator/writer of the first three parts of McEwan's work. But the movement of the reader from one narrative level to the next surprisingly happens smoothly and quickly without the use of some kind of excessive metaleptic jump made by character or narrator that would create temporal and spatial discrepancies and subvert the linearity of the story. Realising that the signature "BT" features the initials of Briony Tallis, the character, we quickly adjust ourselves to this "reality": we accept the separation between the fictional and metafictional and willingly make the move from one narrative level to another, from the fictional world she creates to the "real", or rather the fictionally real, world she lives in. Meanwhile, we remain completely taken by Briony's story and engrossed in her universe, considering the first three parts as the main story and the

remaining part of the McEwan's work as the explanation she provides.

Atonement seems to opt for an art of obliqueness and strategies of deception that led much criticism about the work to allot its attention to the separateness of the bigger section of the book, the sum of *Part One*, *Part Two* and *Part Three*, from the book's final section. Brian Finney, for instance, points out that "[t[he status of the coda 'London, 1999' is uncertain" as the "novel appears to end with the end of Part III signed by 'BT, London 1999'" (81). Stefanie Albers and Torsen Caeners refer to "the dichotomy that exists between the main plot and the last chapter" in terms of a "postmodern shock" (707). Richard Pedot discusses it in terms of a "break" or "gap" that "has little been dramatized in the novel" and argues that this "can explain why re-reading the novel with hindsight does not alter significantly our first perception of Briony's experience" (9). This article argues that the obliqueness and discreetness of *Atonement* turns its metafictional aspect into a mode to be activated by the readers as soon as they decide to resist being absorbed into Briony's fictional world and to stop judging her for lying as a character or as an author. They would, instead, effect, rather than simply witness, continuous crossings and re-crossings of narrative levels and ontological boundaries to inscribe the long creative process of writing, rewriting, and editing onto the latest version of Briony's attempt at atonement. The reading activity, in this sense, becomes both self-conscious and self-reflexive as the readers become aware of reading as an activity that is integral to the meaning-making process and essential to actualising the entertaining, instructive, and cathartic functions of a story of atonement. The main contention of this study is that *Atonement* is an artistic work that brings the metafictional mode and its engagement with the reader to a wholly new level. It tries to investigate the way this work activates a metafictional reading practice that re-defines what it means for us to read a novel, revolutionises the role of the reader, and reconceives of the relation between text, author and reader. *Atonement* does not point back to itself to jolt the readers into an awareness of its artificiality and fictionality; it primarily points to the reader, to their essential role in activating meaning, as it thematises its own construction.

Strategies of Deception/Un-deception in Atonement

Atonement is a narrative whose author seems to relinquish an important marker of authority: an extradiegetic narrator that would introduce the story and announce the character's book and her diary. In so doing, he transfers to his readers the difficult task of deciding whether Briony has atoned for her tragic misconception that cost two lovers their happiness and life or not. He does not make use of imposed metaleptic jumps and transgressions of ontological boundaries through addressing his readers. Instead, he silently draws them into a task that necessitates a process of meaning making that is predicated on their conscious treatment, and not simply awareness, of the narrative as an artefact that needs a constant shuttling across its multiple layers and levels. This kind of self-conscious reading experience, however, is not possible until the readers manage to shake off their illusionist immersion in the story world. This is not easy, given the fact that, in encouraging immersion, the narrative seems to prompt what metafiction means to counteract. It not only produces aesthetic illusion through maintaining an inconspicuous discourse level serving mainly to depict the life-likeness of the world of the story and its worthiness. It also grants it a referential dimension through the very

revelation that undermines it: Briony's confession of having changed the ending ironically reinforces the idea that the story has occurred in a "real" world.

Atonement tells the story of a novelist telling us how she has tried and is still trying to tell her own story, the story of a long-life desire to atone for a self-consuming guilt. This main story line, however, is missing as the novel refuses both to introduce the story and to provide an ending to it. Instead, it takes the posture of a silent narrator handing us over Briony's book and then her diary. This leaves us with one embedded story or one story world embedded within the story world of its author. However, the narrative seems to avoid the mise-en-abyme structure and instead juxtaposes these two levels, which leads us to classify them in terms of the opposition that sets fiction against truth. Moreover, with the conflation of character, narrator and author, the readers tend to merge the two levels into one story that generates in them a desire for justice that could be fulfilled only if Briony publically confesses having falsely incriminated Robbie for Lola's rape. *Atonement*'s blurring of its main diegetic level and its silence on its internal structure are, then, means to elicit immersion in what we tend to consider as the real world of the story, to push the reader to classify the world into fact and fiction, truth and lies. To transcend this immersion is, therefore, the first rite of passage towards awareness of the necessity of blurring the boundary between fact and fiction. Take for instance the desire to have Briony set things right by disclosing the truth publically. As soon as we conceive of it as an expression of our inner longing for closure, for restoring order and stability to the world, we come to understand that like Briony we all display the tendency to fictionalise and reorder the world around us and that the distinction between reality and fiction no

longer holds. In this sense, the protagonist's narrative of atonement and its ending take the meaning of a life-long desire to impose order on a chaotic world, rather than to lie and hide the truth.

That the narrative significantly remains silent on its internal organisation until the very end of Briony's three-part book is not meant simply as a "postmodernist ploy" but is part of an authorial desire to share not only authority with his readers but also to allot them the ethical responsibility of condemning or forgiving (Ingersoll 250). This reader's task, however, is not made easier, for the two startling and surprisingly-belated revelations about the "real" or, rather, the "fictionally real" author destabilise the readers and force them to remove Briony from their sympathies because of their disappointed hope for her to set things right. On first reading, the realisation that the first three parts are "actually" written by the seventy-seven-year-old Briony whom we have already met as a younger character in the story, and that the last part is Briony/the author's diary leads us to conflate the two characters. This conflation makes it very difficult, if not impossible, to sympathise any longer with the guilt-ridden Briony who lies to us about the two lovers being alive, well, and together, and who has never atoned for the wrong and suffering she caused them. We might even condemn her for turning their tragic story into another opportunity for achieving more success as an author. The shift from the third-person storytelling to the first-person diary of the last section entitled "London, 1999" impels us to read the latter in terms of a confessional mode. We grant it belief while knowing that we would never re-read the three parts in the same way again, that we will never be willing to suspend disbelief, again, for them, on second reading. A direct result of these

revelations is that when we think of the novel in retrospect, we tend to conceive of it in terms of a binary structure. We draw a boundary between what turns out to be a novel by Briony and the section in which she makes metanarrative comments on her work. It is a boundary between fiction and truth.

The missing main diegetic level[1] of *Atonement* allows the middle to pose as a beginning and to toy with the readers' expectations and strategies of receptions constituted by the inception of a tale by an extradiegetic narrator. It is an absence that haunts the narrative and purposefully counteracts the book's requirement of suspension of disbelief. In this sense, the engendering of aesthetic illusion that confuses the distinction between fact and fiction is repeatedly and persistently undermined by the constant tendency to relate the embedded narrative and what seems like its epilogue to the printed author's name on the book cover. Interestingly, this readerly acknowledgement and affirmation of McEwan's authorial powers (seemingly usurped by his protagonist) turns out to be the condition for power sharing between reader and author. The drawing of the outer frame that would encompass the two major sections of the book is a task allotted to the reader allowing them to re-examine the desires and responses triggered by the story and place them within the context of narration. In this sense, the reading act becomes a self-conscious and active participation in the meaning-making process. Note our desire for Briony, the author, to tell the truth. As soon as we draw the outer frame and restore fictionality to Briony's authorial world as McEwan's imaginative creation, we redefine our desire in terms of our need for poetic justice and for closure. No longer are we, then, capable of judging Briony harshly or condemning her for lying about what happened to the lovers,

Cecilia and Robbie. The achievement of atonement, therefore, truly becomes a two-way narrative process involving both character and reader, or both text and reader; for its meaning could only be inscribed when the readers, in their awareness of the constructed nature of the world, identify with Briony and become willing to grant her their sympathy.

In an attempt to sharpen its readers' awareness of the constructed nature of reality and narrative, *Atonement* undertakes the metafictional project of making them engage with a conscious examination of their own responses to the text. This undertaking accounts for the haunting quality of the text. It is true that the story is very moving, but our retrospective revisiting of it unravels our insistent need for the fictional categories of order and closure. This foregrounds the narrative's fictional status and counteracts the illusionist game through which it makes its readers take fiction for reality. The missing main diegetic level and the narrative's silence on its internal structure are, then, oblique metafictional strategies that work to point to the constructed nature of the narrative by raising the readers' awareness of the way stylistic choices and devices affect their responses. It makes them adjust their emotional response to the shift in their perception of the narrator. In fact, upon first reading, we identify the omniscient narrator with the author's name printed on the cover and seem to associate his omniscience with objectivity. As soon as we make the surprising discovery about the "real" writer, that omniscience becomes, for us, a self-serving strategy used by an unreliable narrator. With such a perception of the protagonist/writer, atonement becomes an inaccessible objective for Briony. What this implies is that the presence or absence of a self-conscious examination of our responses have a direct impact on the process of meaning making.

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1. The missing level is the level zero or the basic narrative level.

The fact that the main diegetic level in *Atonement* is missing and its primacy usurped by an embedded narrative (Briony's novel) two levels lower than it means that McEwan's book does not contain textual sections we could refer to as the opening or the ending. The open ending of "London, 1999" should not be considered as the ending of the book but rather the ending of the level-one embedded narrative. This makes *Atonement* a book without a beginning or ending, but one that deceitfully pretends to have them. In so doing, it not only renounces the ethical responsibility of introducing the tale and its meaning or concluding it with a clear message of condemnation or sympathy; it also makes the readers experience the shifting performative aspect of narration and sensitise them to the constructedness of meaning and to the narrative nature of the process of meaning making. Without a beginning that would introduce the extradiegetic narrator of the three parts as Briony's own choice to tell her own tale of guilt, McEwan manages to give us a "surprise ending" resulting from a "sudden, surprising change of a certain frame of expectations" (Wenzel 141-2). This "surprise ending" defines the reader/text relation in terms of a mixture of emotions the most obvious of which are shock and disappointment. It not only makes it difficult for the reader to develop a more detached critical perspective and attitude but also compromises the possibility of appreciating the unity and coherence of the work. What is seen as a mere "postmodernist ploy" is, however, the point at which the reader realises that their expectations and reading strategies constituted by the opening of the work must undergo a major revision that would ultimately change the meaning and lesson of the tale. A retroactive reading by the most willing and patient reader would reorder the diegetic levels inside a frame narrative and re-write it as a multi-layered whole effecting a shift from concern with the book-within-the-book (seen as the main story) to an interest in storytelling. This does not simply entail an interest in Briony's meta-commentary but, more importantly, a consideration of how *Atonement* creates a fictional world that includes both the product and the process of its making. It may look like it merely juxtaposes them, but the inevitable re-ordering of the diegetic levels induces a sorting out of the various narrative threads and texts that intersect through the multiple narrative levels and establishes a very strong link between fiction and narration turning them into exchangeable categories. Note how *The Trials of Arabella* creates a pattern of parallels that run through the different narrative layers foregrounding the artistic consciousness that it emanates from. The meta-commentary the seventy-seven-year-old Briony makes about the similarity between her novel and her childhood play directs our efforts to investigating the way her novel thematises and mirrors its own narration: "I have not travelled so very far after all, since I wrote my little play. Or rather I've made a huge digression and doubled back to my starting place" (370). The question of whether her journey from the play and back to it is a marker of circularity and lack of maturity or a sign of growth necessitates a focus on the way fiction and narration in *Atonement* reflect and incorporate each other.

The open ending of "London, 1999" which deceptively fills the absence of an actual ending in McEwan's work seems to have the objective of unsettling the soothing sense of closure reached through the promising and reassuring open ending of Briony's novel. Armelle Parey points out that the epilogue in *Atonement* does not work like one, that the novel uses its "final pages to unsettle the conclusion reached earlier, and leave the reader in a state of uncertainty" (1). She, therefore, refers to "London, 1999" as

an "unsettling epilogue" that runs "contrary to traditional practice" of epilogues (1). In the diary, Briony's confessions upset the reader because Briony the character promises the lovers to write the letters and make the statements that would convince everyone her evidence was false. Interestingly, the absence of an ending to McEwan's work is made difficult to detect as we are encouraged, through a number of different paratextual markers to identify "London, 1999" as the book's ending. The divisions of Briony's book into parts, the signature at the end of *Part III*, and the heading, "BT London 1999" (a spatial and temporal marker similar to a diary entry) allude to closure. They point to the completion of the three parts that precede "London, 1999" and intensify our sense of the one whole they make up. They also signpost and announce the diegetic difference of the last section whose generic features and thematic concerns certify its apartness and make it read like an epilogue or a postscript to the book-within-the-book. Textual markers also abound in this section announcing a quickly approaching end as we meet an elderly, frail, and sick Briony whose tone and attitude of confession are made necessary by her disease (vascular dementia) and her realisation she might die before the guilty Marshalls who go on enjoying their luxurious and powerful life.

"London, 1999" poses as an ending, but it is not one. To say that it is the ending by setting it in opposition to the ending of Briony's book is to succumb to the narrative twist that reinforces the division between fact and fiction and imprisons us inside the pathos of the story. It is also to impose finality and closure to a narrative endeavour that is still uncertain and probably still ongoing as Briony the author seems tempted to re-write the ending. It is true that this section unsettles the ending of Briony's book and

that it does not cancel it as Parey rightly argues (7). But the epilogue/ending that Parey points out to as a second ending that coexists with the first one is of our own making; we fictionalise and imagine it in terms of negativity: the promise she did not keep. This ending Parey speaks of exists neither in the story world nor in a narrative form. Note how Briony tells us, in "London, 1999," that "she never saw [the lovers] that year" and that she was "unable to confront her recently bereaved sister" (370-371). This means that she never made that promise in real life. Besides, real life becomes a chimera and reality untraceable among the many revisions and drafts written over fifty-nine years. Briony's book ends on a note that suggests that it has never been her intention to falsify the truth and that she has been truthful to her endeavour at atonement since her first attempt to write about Cecilia and Robbie by the fountain. She ends her book thus: "Together, the note to her parents and the formal statement would take no time at all. Then she would be free for the rest of the day. She knew what was required of her. Not simply a letter, but a new draft, an atonement, and she was ready to begin" (349). Briony, then, makes a clear distinction between the legal measures that are meant to set things right and her desire to atone through the writing act. This distinction is overlooked in the midst of our tendency to equate atonement with the legal statements we want her to write.

"London, 1999" is a narrative in its own right and has its own open ending, one that unravels the narrative nature of the endeavour at atonement. As the book closes, Briony feels like going to bed without making any decision about the fate of her own work; therefore, we are left uncertain about whether it will be published or not, whether it will be published as fiction or as a memoire, and whether its ending will be rewritten

or preserved. Interestingly, this makes us feel the urgency to have the book published, for time is no longer on Briony's side. In this sense, "London, 1999" awakens us to the constructed nature of fiction and to the fact that the book is just one draft in a series of different drafts and may not be the last. It has the double function of both deceiving and undeceiving. In both cases, its artificiality is unravelled as a narrative device whose function is to direct our attention to the twist in the story and redirect it towards the narrative process. This realisation allows us to see that the two narratives pertain to different diegetic levels and that "London, 1999" occupies a higher level that contains, rather than "unsettles," the narrative prior to it. It should be conceived as a level-one embedded narrative that raises questions the character/author has no answers to but that explain why she turns atonement into a life-long assignment. Her questions evoke her doubt about the compatibility of her endeavour at atonement with her god-like authorial position of authority and authorisation. It also voices her anxieties about the issues of verisimilitude and misrepresentation. The retrospective movement of the reader back to Briony's book is to accept one's part in trying to answer these questions because it is up to us to decide whether Briony is forgiven or not and whether verisimilitude is or is not a requirement for atonement.

The sense of dissatisfaction and restlessness the substitute ending, "London, 1999," then, causes us does not simply emanate from the surprising twist the book takes but more importantly from the way this twist problematizes the significance of endings to narratives. While they are important in constituting the messages of the narratives, their meanings and their receptions, this ending opts for the voice of the guilt-ridden Briony

and, therefore, endorses her views and comments. In so doing, it paradoxically both legitimates her lie and casts doubt on the selflessness of her motive:

> It is only in this last version that my lovers end well, standing side by side on a South London pavement as I walk away. All the preceding drafts were pitiless. But now I can no longer think what purpose would be served if , say, I tried to persuade my reader, by direct or indirect means, that Robbie Turner died of septicaemia at Bray Dunes on June 1 June 1940, or that Cecilia was killed in September of the same year by the bomb that destroyed Balham Underground station. That I never saw them that year. […] How could that constitute an ending? What sense or hope or satisfaction could a reader draw from such an account? Who would want to believe that they never met again, never fulfilled their love? Who would want to believe that, except in the service of the bleakest realism? I couldn't do it to them. (370-71)

Briony tries to shun the accusation of misrepresentation and points out that her ending fulfils the expectations of the readers. This causes us to feel torn between the desire to perceive her as an honest character and the suspicion that she might be a self-serving character and an unreliable manipulative narrator. The self-analytical overtones of the passage, however, require the reader to engage in self-scrutiny and to admit the artificiality of endings that both define and are defined by the readers' expectations. We may end up agreeing with Briony, but the decision to forgive her and grant her wish must be an expression of our free will. It is a full assumption of our active part in the story, our

ethical responsibility whose condition is our awareness of the constructedness of the text.

The disguised absence of beginning and ending in McEwan's *Atonement* is an oblique and subtle strategy that, when attended to, sets the metafictional mode of the work in motion and triggers a self-conscious reading that makes visible the link between the creative process and its product. It necessitates a reordering of the diegetic levels that are deliberately confused and messed up rather than transgressed and violated. In fact, in the absence of a level zero narrative, level one which is a secondary narrative embedded within the primary one turns out to be the "London, 1999" section which is posing as a metadiegetic level. It is characterised by a high degree of intersection of its metanarrative reflections with the narrated story. Level two is the fictional world of Briony's creation posing as level zero, while in fact it occupies a hypodiegetic level. The result of this confusion in the diegetic levels, is that Briony's book is given precedence and much attention, while the last part of the book takes a seemingly marginal position reflected in its structural position at the end of, rather than within, the ongoing story. This structural marginality of the metanarrative comments on Briony's work accounts for the critical view that limits the function of the last section in the book to exposing Briony's second lie. The fact that the internal structure of the book is frequently read in terms of a division that sets one important part or, rather, an independent whole in the book against a less important one testifies to the deceptive game that McEwan's novel plays. The different critical conceptions of the novel's structure in terms of "body and tail,"[2] "text and paratext"[3] or "embedded narrative/novel-within-a-novel and coda" do not give credit to the last section as the main story; nor do they attribute any significance to it apart from its obviously explanatory motive. Far from being an addendum or appendix, "London, 1999" activates the metafictional mode of McEwan's work by triggering a re-reading of the three-part story as a fictional construct subject to a fifty-nine-year process of writing and rewriting. Its diegetic precedence over the three-part memoir defines it as the fiction that poses as metafiction, the fictional space where the boundary between fiction and metafiction disappears.

Reordering these levels unveils *Atonement* as an overtly diegetic narrative[4] whose mise-en-abyme effect without its structure invites the reader to experience a new level of reading activity, one that is both highly reflective and self-reflexive in its self-conscious engagement with the narrative strategies that shape the readers' affective responses to the text as well as their expectations and reading strategies. Rather than simply impelled by the desire to know what happens next in a straightforward linear movement, reading takes the form of an ongoing boundary crossing, a back and forth movement or shuttling between different ontological worlds. It engenders and re-engenders itself in different directions as it sorts out plotline parallels and intersections. Take for example Briony's

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2. In his article "A Cracked Construction: Postmodernist Fragmentation and Fusion in McEwan's *Atonement*," Gutleben refers to the novel as a "two-sided work [that] is monstrously misshapen, monstrously lopsided with one huge narrative part and one tiny explanatory addendum" (3). According to him, the two parts of the work, "the tail (to which the coda etymologically refers) and the body are then ontologically and generically fundamentally mismatched and unalike. In other words, the body and its tail, the narrative and its epilogue, the novel and its afterword are of different natures, traditions and perspectives" (3-4).
3. Referring to the "London, 1999" section as a "closing paratext," Monica Spiridon suggests that it offers "alternative reading strategies to the text" as it competes with "the text" over "the understanding of the story" (53).
4. *Atonement* both fits and does not fit into Hutcheon's overt diegetic narcissistic narrative (7). It lacks the narcissism of self-reflexivity but creates an effect of mise-en-abyme, which Hutcheon identifies as one of the major overt forms of diegetic narcissism.

childhood play whose performance is recounted in "London, 1999." It simultaneously revisits the beginning of Briony's story world in which the performance of the play never takes place and announces the approaching closure of the section. In this sense, it belongs to two different diegetic levels and two different plot moments creating an effect of mise-en-abyme. It, thus, testifies both to the unity of the book and to the artificiality of its formal choices. However, two metanarrative comments made by Briony/the author evoke this play again and suggest that it can pertain to a metadiegetic level higher than the one occupied by Briony's metanarrative comments, a meta-metadiegetic level that the reader has to take over as their own right. In the first comment, Briony writes that she has "made a huge digression and doubled back to my starting place," while in the second she refers to her book as the draft in which her "fortuitous spontaneous sister and her medical prince survive to love" (370-371). Here, the circular pattern that the evocation of the play suggests may cast doubt on Briony's maturity as an author who seems to say that she is not much different from her childhood authorial self. This should incite the reader to embark on a metafictional project of exploring the way her journey of growth, rather than "digression," is inscribed in the many drafts contained within her latest one. In her diary, Briony doubts the existence of an "entity or higher form" than herself "that she can appeal to, or be reconciled with, or that can forgive her" (371). The readers are such entity; they can grant Briony atonement or withhold it depending on their degree of engagement with the performative aspect of her work. It depends on their awareness of the formal choices that work to reflect Briony's growth as an artist trying to give an account that is not concerned about verisimilitude as much as about giving justice to wronged ones. This reader/text interaction is predicated on their engagement with the palimpsestic nature of Briony's work, one that would bring together the product and its process.

The unity of McEwan's work whose internal structure leaves a stretching gap that unsettles many critics is not an intrinsic textual element as much as the outcome of the reading process. It depends on a twofold realisation that "London, 1999" offers an unmediated access into an artistic consciousness that tries, in a detached way, to chronicle its own development without mythologising itself and that atonement is and can only be a life-long self-changing and perception-changing process. In fact, both the first-person diary and the third-person memoir display an attitude and tone of self-mockery and self-doubt. The shift of point of view and the constancy of detached self-scrutiny allows us an ongoing movement "in" and "out" of this artistic consciousness and facilitates a relationship of rapport and detachment with its authorial self. To re-read the work in the light of this realisation becomes self-reflexive in its awareness of its motive to evaluate Briony's act of representation and the aesthetic choices that inscribe her changed self-perception and perception of others. Thus, our own perception of McEwan's work would undergo a major change. It would no longer be a fictional work and its epilogue but a metafictional künstlerroman that activates a self-reflexive reading practice conscious of its role in the meaning-making process. In this light, the last section does not compete with the first three parts to provide an alternative "understanding of the story" (Spiridon 53); it actually makes its performative project of atonement possible by inviting us to lay bare the different palimpsestic traces of its previous attempts.

Reading the Product and its Process: The Palimpsestic Traces in *Atonement*

Reading Briony's book of atonement as the product of layering of texts, recurrent grafting, and repeated rewritings is to blur the boundary between story and storytelling, fiction and metafiction and bring them together. Her work presents itself as an altered version, a "definition" of a prospect which in "refin[ing] itself over the years" bears visible traces of its earlier forms (40). The result is one of a cumulative palimpsest as the successive layers remain superimposed one upon the other producing a narrative that resists origin and makes the real untraceable. For instance, the portrayal of the day that brings disaster on the characters involved is the result of multiple versions prior to it. We are told that Briony knows that "it was not the long-ago morning she was recalling so much as her subsequent accounts of it" (41). This means that the last account that we have is not concerned with verisimilitude and truthfulness as much as with the desire to achieve a satisfying narrative form of atonement. Visible traces of earlier versions abound and testify not only to the effort and patience it has taken Briony to try to come to terms with the past that haunts her but also to her desire to keep track of her artistic development and of herself as the source of these representations. In a comment that turns out self-reflexive when we identify the extradiegetic narrator with Briony/the author, an allusion is made to the future of the young Briony as an author concerned with plot. We are told that "like all authors [. . .] she felt obliged to produce a story line, a plot of her development that contained the moment when she became recognisably herself" (41). The comment unravels the depth of self-awareness that the seventy-seven Briony has achieved and establishes an ouroboros-like representation of her own development that inscribes both beginning and end. In fact, her final draft is a plot-added version superimposed on her earlier version entitled *Two Figures by a Fountain*, the version that marks the genesis of her recognisable more mature artistic self.

Traces of *Two Figures by a Fountain* are made visible through the arresting way in which the final draft both encloses the editor's letter of rejection and stands as a witness of how it has implemented some of its recommendations. The most important of these suggestions is the shift this draft seems to effect from concern with characterisation to concern with plot. In fact, the requirement of the editors for Briony "to create some tension, some light and shade within the narrative itself" reveals that *Two Figures by a Fountain* is rejected because it conveys only young Briony's perceptual contact with the world (313-14). This is due to the fact that the child could not fathom the scene unfolding in front of her:

> the sequence was illogical – the drowning scene, followed by a rescue, should have preceded the marriage proposal. Such was Briony's last thought before she accepted that she did not understand, and that she must simply watch. Unseen, from two storeys up, with the benefit of unambiguous sunlight, she had privileged access across the years to adult behaviour, to rites and conventions she knew nothing about, as yet." (39).

The incapacity to understand, however, triggers an important realisation about the relationship of self to others. This revelation marks both a turning point in Briony's artistic development and the genesis of the recognisable self we come to discover in her book and diary. The conception of the characters as independent minds not only informs

her representation of the fountain scene but also the final draft we are reading. The decision to write it from three different perspectives is a trace left visible in *Part I*.

Briony's newly emerging concern with characterisation at the expense of plot signals the beginning of her journey of maturity leaving aside fairy tales and conventional romance plots to deal with "the strangeness of the here and now" (39). Her final draft could be read as a rewriting of her childhood play showing her initial child-like interest in happy endings but manifesting a much more mature sense of authorship. The older novelist is aware that her creative powers endow her with a god-like position, but she is no longer interested in turning experience into "something greater that would be polished, self-contained and obscure" (116). The final draft represents experience by drawing on a shared background of emotions and perceptions. It enacts the embodied existence of her characters whose perceptual and emotional interactions with the world allow the readers to identify with them. Her motivation in "Two Figures by the Fountain" is to evoke the texture of her experience and her characters', but her imaginative reconstruction of these experiences draw on her own sense of bewilderment at what was going on before her. The recommendations and suggested rectifications for the sake of more plausibility, such as the comment about the Ming vase being "too priceless to take outdoors," draw on the editors' familiar interactions with the physical and social world (313). Their response points to the fact that she has to learn about writer/reader relationship which she, in her first stages of development as a writer, seems to understand as a one-way process:

The simplest way to have impressed Leon would have been to write him a story and put it in his hands herself, and watch as he read it. [. . .]. A story was direct and simple, allowing nothing to come between herself and her reader. [. . .]. In a story, you only had to wish, you only had to write it down and you could have the world. [. . .]. By means of inking symbols onto a page, she was able to send thoughts and feelings from her mind to her reader's. [. . .]. Reading a sentence and understanding it were the same thing; as the crooking of a finger, nothing lay between them. (37)

In watching the scene between the lovers near the fountain, Briony takes a role that blurs the boundary between reader and writer, interpretation and writing. Her bafflement and later misreading of subsequent scenes (the sexual encounter between the lovers and her cousin's rape scene) testify to her incapacity to engage with what does not draw on her own familiarity with the world. As a result her writing of that scene, although fascinating and "arresting" to the editors, does not relate to their familiar world either and, thus, does not allow for a perceptual and emotional identification with the characters.

Briony's narrative draws on both her familiarity with the world and ours. Her final draft is a piece of work with a strong narrativity because it has the quality of "experientiality," "the quasi-mimetic evocation of real life experience" (Fludernik 12). This makes it, to use the words of Rutjer J. Allan a narrative that offers "a subjective representation of actions, intentions, and feelings filtered through the medium of consciousness" and that has the capacity to "effect a certain psychological experience for its recipients" (15). This means that Briony's book is a good and gripping story because it is well narrated. It creates a common experiential background for characters and readers to share and restructures it to make a strong impact on our perceptions, emotions, and values. The readers identify

with the characters, sympathise with them, and end up revising their worldview. Such a conception of the narrative as experiential is an essential stage in Briony's artistic growth, which explains the importance of the part dealing with Briony as a nurse. At the hospital, tending to the suffering and dying soldiers, nurse Briony is no longer an audience. She is forced to perform a scene, to act the role of the beloved in a script over which she has no control. She is emotionally shaken by this experience because she finds herself obliged to identify emotionally and perceptually with the other character; the scene with the dying French soldier resonates with her past experience that has left deep traces and marks on her worldview. Her desire to follow on the footsteps of her own sister and to tend to the wounded soldiers are motivated by the desire to punish the self and atone for her past deeds. But they also present an important stage in which she learns to identify with others, to give up the condescension of her oneness and difference and become Nurse Tallis. Her conception of authorship changes, for when she makes use of omniscience in her last draft, it turns out to be as a means of engaging with their world rather than of ordering it.

The last version of Briony's story testifies to her growth as it tells the story from the perspective of the different characters involved and invites us to enact their experiences and identify with them. In so doing, it blurs the borderline between the fictional representation and the real-life experience making the debate over the issue of authenticity and truth irrelevant and legitimising the use of the fictive. In fact, *part II* which tells of Robbie's experience of war is entirely fictive; Briony could not possibly know about it. However, it serves to magnify Briony's sense of guilt; it shows how much she can be hard on herself in imagining and fictionalising the horror of war and the unspeakable suffering she has caused Robbie. It also serves to romanticise him by attributing to him qualities of endurance and heroism. This part and the fictive ending are examples of how she is not "so self-serving" (372). While her account of her life at the hospital after deserting her family and giving up her education means to elicit sympathy through conveying her torment and sense of guilt. Briony's story, then, is about the self and other, about the self in relation to others:

> I like to think that it isn't weakness or evasion, but a final kindness, a stand against oblivion and despair, to let my lovers live and to unite them at the end. I gave them happiness, but I was not so self-serving as to let them forgive me. Not quite, not yet. If I had the power to conjure them at my birthday celebration… Robbie and Cecilia, still alive, still in love, sitting side by side in the library, smiling at the Trials of Arabella? It's not impossible. (372)

In this light, the ending of Briony's book is not a lie but a case of poetic justice made necessary and appropriate by a narrative that has fictionalised the horrible suffering of the characters. The final version is, thus, a rewriting of *The trials of Arabella* but one that has given life, or in the words of Toni Morrison, "blood and a heartbeat" to it and to its characters (78). Its experientiality and the strength of its narrativity account for the reader's willingness to grant Briony her wish.

Paying attention to the palimsestic nature of Briony's work makes us realise that Briony has never had the option to choose between fact and fiction because "the truth

has become as ghostly as invention" (41). What we are left with after the evaporation of the real, then, is the need for representation, not to be realistic, but to be experientially truthful in its evocation of the world. In her diary, Briony tells us that this last narrative of atonement is better than all the previous "pitiless" versions (370). Its performative aspect is certainly more satisfying than "Two Figures by the Fountain" because it engages and draws on the emotional, conceptual, and evaluative processes of characters and readers in their daily experiential interactions with the world. Its subsequent capacity to appeal to our feelings of sympathy and identification, it is possible to argue, seems to be the reason why McEwan chooses not to give us a framing narrative that would function as a mediator between his protagonist and his readers. His aesthetic choice serves to invite his readers to take a self-conscious and active part in concretising the entertaining, ethical, and cathartic functions of his narrative. He seems to have granted Briony forgiveness before we do, for the curious internal structure of his work and its belated surprising revelation reverses the logic of the mise-en-abyme. Instead of giving us an embedded text that replicates the framing narrative, McEwan chooses to reject the narrative possibility of a framing text and, in so doing, duplicates Briony's deception of her readers. He turns his work and Briony's into mise en abymes of each other and makes *Atonement* a palimpsest of two authors.

McEwan's insistent rejection of the mise-en-abyme structure is liberating to the readers. Without having the artificiality and repetitiveness of the work forced upon their attention, they track the traces of two authorial selves as they pay attention to fiction and narration at the same time in a unique and self-conscious experience. In fact, the blurred boundaries and many points of intersection and unison between McEwan's work and Briony's give the narrative the shape of a Mobius strip doubling back on itself in a reversing loop. Unable to reach an end, we start all over again retroactively as soon as we finish reading. The Mobius strip-like qualities of *Atonement* are markers of its oblique way of pointing to Briony's work and McEwan's as artefacts and engaging the reader's interest in their aesthetic choices. Like the up and down of the Mobius strip or the inside and outside of its surface, its diegetic levels occupy exchangeable, rather than hierarchical, positions. We try to trace the higher level occupied by McEwan only to find ourselves in his protagonist's fictional world which will take us back to that of McEwan. In fact, the half twist that gives the Mobius strip its peculiar loop-like shape and its interesting properties occurs in different places throughout the work, points at which the boundary between the two fictional worlds of Briony and McEwan disappears. The epigraph, which quotes a passage from Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, establishes a similarity between Briony and Austen's Catherine Morland, both prone to seeing the world through the lenses of fictional writings. However, because it is not clear whether the epigraph introduces Briony's book or McEwan's, it blurs the borderline between their diegetic levels as well as between paratext and text. McEwan's epigraph is a paratext that becomes part of the fictional text when considered as Briony's choice. In both cases, it introduces the context and theme, sets the mocking tone of the protagonist's self-reflexive comments, and points to the unity and coherence of the work. The tile of the book is also another half twist that prevents the printed name on the cover to sit firmly on top of the hierarchy of worlds and narratives that a mise-en-abyme structure would create. The term "Atonement" is brought up by Briony at the end of *Part III* and in her

diary as well. This may cause us to perceive the cover-page title as the title of Briony's book and, in this case, makes us relegate the last section to the function of an epilogue. However, it points to the possibility of granting Briony forgiveness and allowing her to achieve her atonement by establishing ourselves as the active and independent entity she is seeking to find and to appeal to. Such a possibility could happen only if we activate the novel's metafictional mode and give it unity. McEwan's "postmodernist ploy," then, is not a means of distancing himself from his protagonist/writer. Instead, it is an aesthetic choice that reproduces the logic of the mise-en-abyme while unsettling its hierarchical structure by truly sharing power with his protagonist and readers.

There must be different degrees to which literary texts can activate the reader's participation in their production and rewriting. *Atonement* engages its readers in an unprecedented way and it does so without having to resort to breaking aesthetic illusion or probably because it does not break it. It jointly and dialectically thematises and fictionalises the production and reception processes to stimulate the readers to take an active role, display awareness of their responses to the story, and examine what triggers them. The novel does not flaunt its fictional devices by employing narratorial intrusions and metaleptic violations of narrative levels that would only temporarily disturb the flow of the plotline. Instead, it strengthens the aesthetic illusion motivating the reader to make the necessary metaleptic crossovers that paradoxically prove the unity of the work and points out to how it collapses its different narrative levels in one narrative space. It poses as a work that separates the world represented from its representation and playfully points to the artificiality of such a division. Offering the last (but possibly not final) version of a haunting experience and attempting to do justice to the difficult task of representing it, McEwan makes the arresting choice of enclosing the event itself which turns out to be a fictionalisation of the long process of writing it. While our awareness of its palimpsestic nature exposes it as a representation that poses as the event itself, it interestingly brings them together as one. Thus, representation and its making-process, fiction and metafiction become the same thing in McEwan's work. In exploring and dramatizing the relation between the fictively real world and the process of turning it into representation, *Atonement* does not point back to itself. It actually thematises itself. The discreetness and obliqueness of *Atonement*'s metafictional aspect can seem contradictory since metafiction is known for flaunting its devices, or in Waugh's terms, for "systematically drawing attention to itself as artefact" (2). *Atonement* is not implicit in its use of metafiction. It rather refuses to appropriate its own critical response and depends on its readers to realise its full metafictional potential. It expands the meaning of metafiction, bringing it into magical alliance with fiction and turning them into exchangeable categories resisting boundaries. It redefines it as an introspective textual construct and an outward-looking interest in co-producing meaning with the readers.

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THE THING

What lies in the ice is a huge exclamation point!

Its mass has pulled the magnetic pole eight degrees.

The theremin makes our skin crawl.

Twenty men holding hands make the saucer circle.

The sled dogs' eyes glint blue as Air Force officers

ignite a thermite bomb. The craft burns its way

down through crust, sinks to blacknesses

inside us where it still flickers like Grendel,

the unknown that freezes us in fear.

But all that is covered over by the normal

A man with a past courts a woman in pants.

There's nothing kinky when she ties his hands.

There must be a woman and we know why.

For the fly-boys and the radio-men it's teamwork.

For the scientists, it's the retorts of their alchemy.

Some fool leaves the electric blanket on.

It comes alive. Sled dogs rip off one of its hands.

Its scaly knuckles click on the rungs of our spines.

Is it really a thinking carrot? Whatever it is,

it's a space ship pilot. And what are its intentions?

At dawn, they find a huskie hanging upside down

like a bottle of plasma feeding alien seedlings.

They catch it indoors and burn it with kerosene.

It runs through snow-drifts, shrieking sheets of fire.

This is getting serious.

We crouch behind the seats in front of us.

The Captain has a plan to trap and kill the thing.

They never tell the plan and we know why.

To keep us hanging upside-down. The head

scientist pleads that knowledge is more precious

than life. The thing hammers the metal door.

And there he is! A monstrous yet humanoid thing.

Electric pitchforks stab it until it melts .

But this is different. It doesn't scare us to restore

calm at the end. "Keep watching the skies," it says.

We have entered the permafrost of anxiety.

We are scared stiff by what we do not know.

The stars are a conspiracy to reclaim the calcium

of our bones. The earth is the grave of our species.

If we wonder why the rich heap up money

insanely while everyone else suffers, hungry, homeless,

the Thing rims the maelstrom of their nightmare.

—Bill Tremblay

Signs of Spring #10

Rebecca Matheson

Communicating Development through Transparency and Accountability in the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme: The Advocacy Visit of Civil Society Organizations to Traditional Institutions in Kaduna State, Northwest Nigeria

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Abstract

The idea of development overtime has been conceived from an elitist perspective wherein community members for whom interventionist programmes are intended, are viewed as weak and without the capacity to respond to development messages competently or differently from the intention of the communicators. Consequently, the participation of such community members is seldom accorded priority in the implementation of development projects in communities thereby leading to unwillingness to assume ownership of the project by such communities. This *lacuna* or missing link has perennially hampered the communication of development messages to Nigerian populace, especially at the grassroots. Practitioners at the fore of development interventions, including civil society organizations, have been found wanting in this regard. This is evident in the implementation of the Promoting Accountability and Transparency in School Feeding (PATSF) project in Kaduna State, in northwest Nigeria, where there was non-inclusion of the traditional institutions in ensuring a transparent and accountable implementation of the National Home Grown School Feeding programme. Like every other government funded project, avoidable corruption cases and other irregularities emanated from the programme that could have been curbed, with the involvement of the traditional leaders or cultural avatars in the designated communities. Founded on the dialogic theory, this article synthesizes data garnered from the field during the state-wide advocacy visits to the traditional institutions in 2019, by a cohort of five nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) under MacArthur Foundation funding in Kaduna State, to make a case for the inclusion of traditional leaders and institutions in ensuring sustainable outcomes in communicating development programmes at the grassroots in Nigeria.

Keywords: Community dialogue, Traditional institutions, NGOs, Development communication, Sustainability, Advocacy, Community media, Grassroots mobilization, Nigeria

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Introduction

Development interventions in the context of contemporary Nigeria and other developing countries in the world can be traced back to the aftermath of the Second World War in 1945. Although development interventions predate contemporary practice, they were intended to move societies from a situation in which they are believed to be worse off, to situations in which they are assumed to be better off. This over the years has generated a great deal of altercations on what determines who is 'worse' and who is 'better.' Such contestations

are, however, largely influenced by individual's history, discipline, ideological orientation and trainings. The traditional paradigms of development have been historically patterned after those of economies wherein a country's gross domestic product (GDP) has been the major parameter with which to measure development. Implicitly, modernization is synonymous with westernization where progress has been conceptualized to be ideal only if it subscribed to the western culture. Along the line of the western ideology, the American President Harry Truman claimed in his inaugural speech in 1949 that

> We must embark on a bold new programme for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas.

Education since then has largely remained one of the key sectors of driving this development mandate of the western countries in the world. Thus, for a nation to be considered to be on the path to socio-economic and socio-political stability, the social sector needs to be developed to make that a reality. Development debates in Africa, to a large extent, reflect the relations of power in the world and also the way the African political leaders have exacerbated their leadership tasks. Hence, there is huge leadership deficit in Africa as many African leaders are still enmeshed in corruption and primitive accumulation of wealth (Omoera & Aiwuyo, 2017) without blueprints to get the

continent and its people out of the woods. Hyden in Currey (1994, p.309) surmises that as a result the foregoing it is the international community that has tried to help set the African development agenda through the ideological perspective of the donor community that Africa has had to respond to. This ideology supposedly is responsible for the several interventions of the Chicago based humanitarian organization, MacArthur Foundation in the education, communication, development, among other key sectors in Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa.

Education and communication work hand in hand for the realization of development. Communication is the exchange and flow of information and ideas from one person to another; one community to another; it involves a sender/communicator/speaker transmitting an idea, information, attitude, or feeling to a receiver/recipient/audience (Onyema, 2019). Communication studies investigate various aspects of the encoding-decoding processes articulated in various texts, dialogues and message encounters.In the contact between the communicator and the receiver, the communicator/speaker sends a message through a medium (in a dialogue format or machine-assisted format) and the recipient/audience receives it with the aim of using the message to bring about possible changes in society. Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma and Tsegyu (2017, p.1) affirm that communication is the central fact of human existence and social process. Nobody can be an island; hence, the need to communicate with other in different ways and this goes a long way to show that human existence would be impossible without communication.

Effective communication, therefore, can engender education, enlightened community dialogue, and development because it involves the transference of understandable information. In this way, development can be communicated to communities through

the use of community dialogues or what Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma and Tsegyu (2017, p.10) call "community media." According to them, community media is community communication that uses community media as a facilitative tool for discussion and engagement of the ordinary citizenry (2017, p.13). It is a two-way process in which targeted communities or their leaders participate as planners, producer, and performers alongside with development communication agents, thereby allowing the dialogic engagement to be the means of expression of the community, rather than for the community.

Theory of Dialogue

Community dialogue is a multidimensional and dynamic approach that is essentially targeted at bringing together, homogenous individuals, to deliberate on specific issues of general concern, with the aim of reaching a consensus or solution by participants or members of the community. There are many contenders attributing the origin of dialogue to western culture (Loode 2015; Dafermos, 2018). According to Loode, dialogue has its roots in Western culture and can be traced back to Socratic dialogues by Plato. This he justified by tracing the etymology of dialogue. The word stems from the Greek 'dialogos:' 'dia' meaning 'through', 'logos' meaning 'the meaning of the word. This implies the stream of meaning that flows between and through dialogue of participants in a community communication or media. Thus, the meaning of words such as accountability and transparency can be demystified when there is a conscious interaction among community members on the issues of the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme through the channel of dialogic communication.

Dialogue is an experience that aims to give participants a safe and structured opportunity to discuss and explore different views about social issues. Justifying his position, Dafermos argues that Plato's dialogue was the first written dialogical accounts in human history as used in the context of the ancient polis. Be that as it may, the description of dialogue best fits the traditional African custom than the Western culture. The African practice may not have been christened 'dialogue,' as is known today; nonetheless, it has been a critical part of African socialization from antiquity till date (Ibagere, 2010). Although modernization is fast eroding the culture of dialogue in Africa, and giving way to a lifestyle of individualism that was hitherto, alien to African practice. Even so, it would be inappropriate to say; the concept of dialogue is traceable to only the Western culture as evidenced above.

Dialogue has been used in the field of public relations as communicating about issues with the publics (Asemah, Nkwam-Uwaoma, &Tsegyu, 2017). There has been a shift from public relations reflecting an emphasis on managing communication to an emphasis on communication as a tool for establishing relationships. The concept of dialogic communication has continued to be the subject of multiple studies and scholarly articles over the past 20 years with various claims to its evolution. The historical perspective of dialogue according to D. L. Wilcox and GT. Cameron can be traced to Grunig's concept of the two-way symmetric model of public relations which according to Wilcox and Cameron (2009), has

> [t]he purpose of symmetric communication, as opposed to the persuasive-oriented model of two-way asymmetric communication, was to gain mutual understanding with balanced effects between an organization and

its publics. The concept, also expressed as 'relationship building' and 'engagement' have policies and actions that are mutually beneficial to the organization and its various stakeholders…corporate social and political activism has the potential of classic dialogic communication theory in terms of building consensus between the organization and Its stakeholders, the primary objective is to participate in the marketplace of ideas and to enunciate corporate values through policies and actions that various segments of the public may not agree with in terms of their own beliefs or political dispositions.

This alludes to the fact that regardless the purpose for which it is engaged, dialogue is a tool for community participation in which participants are able to air out their ideas, views, opinions fears and oppressions in the free market place of ideas. Thus, dialogue is an effective tool for engendering sustainable outcome from such symbiotic transaction process that exist between parties involved in the communication process. Although conceived and applied from business perspective, dialogue is a tool for negotiated exchange of ideas and opinions.

Dialogue can be transformative, generative or strategic. Whether it is applied by a business organization or for a community action project, it imbibes the tenets of being physically and emotionally present to one another in an atmosphere of communalism and oneness of purpose for a common goal or common good, not minding individual idiosyncrasies. It is a collective communication that allows for the sharing of thought that can transform existing beliefs and create new innovations and cultural artifacts. Loode

(2015) affirms that dialogue allows participants to examine and share preconceptions, prejudices and the characteristic patterns that lie behind their thoughts, opinions, beliefs and feelings and roles. The basic idea as Loode hinted is to suspend opinions as well as judgment of what others share and to try to gain understanding of their respective starting points. Dialogue is a 'repeated process of reciprocal translation that eventually forges a common meaning and establishes the basis for a new community, which is not equal of the world of either participants in the dialogue but a transformation of the fundamental relationship of the participants.

At any rate, risk or the intention to communicate with another on their own terms, the amount of information shared or the type of information shared with another could lead to vulnerability and unexpected consequences. Commitment or the degree to which an individual is given over to dialogue, interpretation, and understanding in the process of interactions with others is critical to the development process. Even if someone does not agree with the views of another, one must acknowledge the view as valid and try to find middle ground (Wilcox & Cameron, 2009).

Dialogue was also ascribed to the work of Russian literary theorist and philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, where he developed a multifaceted theory of dialogism based on a set of concepts such as dialogue, monologue, polyphony, heteroglossia, utterance, voice, speech genres and chronotope. Bakhtin's writings inspired many scholars and practitioners to elaborate and apply various dialogical approaches especially in pedagogy, psychology and cultural studies. According to Dafermos (2018), dialogue is a live conversation between two or more people. In other words, dialogue can be identified with oral communication between two or more interlocutors that requires being with other people and responding

to their voices as an essential feature of a conversation. It is in view of this dialectic consideration of dialogue that we noted the essentiality of community media or communication involving traditional institutions or cultural avatars in making sure that NHGSFP that is ongoing in different parts of Nigeria, including Kaduna State in the northwest achieves its set objective.

Background to the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP)

The Federal Government of Nigeria had in 2004, initiated the Home Grown School Feeding and Health Programme (HGSFLP) through the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004. The programme, among other things, is aimed at: reducing hunger and malnutrition among children; enhance learning achievements of pupils; and encourage enrolment and retention in public primary schools in the country. The implementation that was meant to be in phases was first piloted in twelve (12) states and the Federal Capital Territory (Bauchi, Cross River, Enugu, FCT, Imo, Kano, Kebbi, Kogi, Nassarawa, Ogun, Osun, Rivers and Yobe) in the six geo-political zones of the country and subsequently, 31 states in the country today. Kaduna State was one of the first states where the Federal government re-introduced Home Grown School Feeding Programme under the National Structural Investment Programme (NSIP).

Like in most states, Kaduna State commenced feeding in July of the 2016/2017 school session and has continued to be on board till date (Ibrahim, 2019). Currently, the feeding programme is being implemented across over 4000 public schools in the state. It has the mandate of providing primary 1-3pupils in public primary schools with one meal (breakfast, lunch or take-home ration) per each school day. The state government was expected to complement the federal government's effort by providing food for pupils in primary 4-6 but it is yet to commence the project. This leaves primary 1- 3 classes as the only legitimate children entitled to the feeding programme. While this programme may have succeeded in ensuring massive enrollment in public schools, it has also opened up other issues among which is the unwillingness of some children to be promoted to primary 4.

Statewide Advocacy Visits to 22 LGAs in Kaduna State

In the months of November and December, 2019, five civil society organizations under the auspices of MacAthur Foundation in Kaduna State embarked on a rapid state-wide advocacy visits to 70 districts across 22 local government areas (LGAs) in the state. The advocacy visits became necessary owing to emerging issues from the field. Some of such issues were highly sensitive ones that demanded the intervention of traditional institutions. For example, husbands of some vendors were in charge of the vendors' automated teller machine (ATM) cards and determine how much money is given to the vendor. Some food vendors who are not members of a community often travel long distances to supply food to a school that could otherwise be done by women in that community.

The implications of this are numerous: delay in food delivery that also obstructs the school timetable as break time is dependent on when food arrives; cooks could abscond with the funds without traces (https://www.solacebase.come/2020/02/13/9-cooks-with-school-feeding-programme-abscond-with-n700000-in-kaduna). To address the emerging issues, the following key communication strategies were deployed in conveying messages

to the traditional institutions, on the importance of their participation in promoting transparency and accountability in the HGSFP: sensitization; community dialogue; meeting; mobilization by desk officer, SBMC and ES; and open discussions with the full participation of the traditional leaders in concerned communities.

Transparency and Accountability Issues in the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme in Kaduna State

Nigeria has a record against it as notorious in corruption especially in the misuse or mismanagement of public funds (Omoera & Aiwuyo, 2017). According to the 2019 Transparency International's corruption perception index, Nigeria ranked one of the most corrupt countries in the world with 146 out of 180 countries surveyed (Akinpelu, 2020). While it is possible to debate this view as an expression of opinion, the many stories that abound in different sectors in Nigeria tend to attach credence to Akinpelu's argument. This might have informed MacAthur Foundation's intervention in the NHGSFP. According to the Director of MacAthur Foundation African Office Abuja, Kole A. Shettima, "corruption is taxation on the poor; the people are the victims of corruption. We are contributing towards improving the quality of lives of those who don't have the voice or power to fight the corrupt system" (Egwu, 2020).

Since 2017, the foundation has contributed in ensuring that there is transparency and accountability in the implementation of the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) in different states in Nigeria, including Kaduna State. There is a cohort of five nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that MacAthur Foundation partners with to ensure accountability practices and transparency in resource allocation, distribution and management in the HGSFP in Kaduna State. These are Girl Child Concern (GCC); Connecting Gender for Development (COGEN); Federation of Moslem Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN); ActionAid Nigeria (AAN); and Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA). Strategically, they were saddled with the responsibility of monitoring food delivery and distribution in 400 schools out of 4000(10%) public schools where the feeding programme was being implemented in the state. Other activities among the cohort members include: regular and periodic workshops and other engagement at various levels with government functionaries who are stakeholders in the feeding programme in the state and national level, including the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Health, Budget and Statistics, National Bureau of Statistics, among others. Members of the communities engaged with included field researchers who were mostly youths from the benefiting communities, cooks, members of parents' teachers' association (PTAs) and school based management committee (SBMC). The traditional institutions had prior to the advocacy visits, never been engaged with, since the commencement of the PATSF project.

Education has been identified as one of the media that is capable of driving such development. This accounted for the need to capture education among the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and subsequently, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nigeria has been one of such countries in dare needfor sustainable improvements in its educational sector to meet the need of the teeming population in the country and enhance its competitiveness among the nations of the world. This probably informed some recent policies and programmes in the sector. One of which is the ongoing Home Grown School Feeding Programme (HGSFP) across the federation. The programme has

been able to meet its target in growing local economy and encouraging school attendance as seen in massive enrollment of pupils in public schools and the beehive of activities in the communities where it is being implemented. There, however, would be a threat to the sustainability of this initiative if community ownership of the programme and how to continue to demand transparency and accountability from service providers and the political leaders are not appropriately structured. This is why the place of the traditional leaders is crucial in continuing this process after the end of this PATSF project in 2020.

Role of Traditional Institutions in PATSF Project

Before the British colonial era, traditional institutions exercised political authority in their respective communities in varying degree as provided by their traditions and customs. During the colonial era, the role of traditional institutions changed radically. They became prime facie rulers of their institutions or communities under district commissioners, in the present Nigeria. Despite the fluctuation in the relevance and importance of traditional institutions due to the overbearing influence of the political class, they are still held in high esteem by their community members. Hence, they constitute veritable channels of fostering community development.

Ngwu (2019, p.5) attributed the inability of Nigeria as a country to achieve most sustainable development programmes to, the failure to integrate the traditional institutions in their development programmes. Grassroots mobilization is made possible and easier through the help of traditional institutions in the periphery where these development challenges are being experienced. Traditional institutions have been significant features of the people and had also commanded a high degree of loyalty and respect among them. The traditional institutions are considered unique to African society because it is seen as the simplest form of governance and the closest to the people. Members of traditional societies enjoy unlimited and direct access to them. More importantly is the fact that traditional institutions maintain transparent and participatory methods of resolving dispute and collectively making decisions that could foster societal growth and development. In fact, in many traditional settings in Nigeria where the Obas, Emirs, Obis, etc., hold sway, community resources (people, knowledge, land, things and money) are effectively utilized to meet the social, cultural and economic needs of the people (Ngwu, 2009).

The idea of community development as a strategy that evolved out of alternative communication approach was due to the oblivion of both development theories and constitutional theories in recognizing local initiatives and responsibilities as basic realities in the quest for community development. This could be linked to the pervasiveness of modernization notion in development work, which places more emphasis on macro strategies and bureaucratic management with consequent association of village institutions and traditional values with backwardness (Curtis, 1995). One small niche within development thinking has nevertheless persisted over the years, offering some sort of grounding to the idea that communities, however defined, can have a role within the development process. This is community development. Curtis advanced a UN's definition of community development, he found on an office wall in Kachia Local Government, Kaduna State: "Community development is the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the

life of a nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national progress (p.117).

Speaking from the background of his experience in Kaduna State, and as a witness to a demonstration of dexterity of rural Nigerian communities in harnessing local resources for their own development needs; Curtis predicts that, a new dynamic is emerging at the grassroots in Nigeria, and no doubt, elsewhere, which reflects the prevailing conditions of our times. This new dynamic is far more reliant in spirit, more institutionally sophisticated, more economically attuned to the local resource base, and possibly less in prejudice. On this wisdom, development includes the specification that social groups have access to organizations, basic services such as education, housing, health services, and nutrition, and above all else, that their cultures and traditions are respected within the social framework of a particular country. Ignoring structural factors means not only overlooking dimensions that take place at the macro-level, but also not paying enough attention to the micro-level effects of development in the society. Such functional illiteracy is caused, in part, by the fragility of the educational system. Deteriorated schools mirror the economic crisis of developing countries as well as the lack of importance attributed to education by the society. This is largely a result of long-standing social inequities maintained by the elite that benefits from the resulting patron-client relationship (Omoera & Obekpa, 2019).

The notions of 'development' continue to evolve in ways that increasingly address the range of concerns that are expressed by ordinary people in their daily lives, most notably in those countries or regions where such daily lives are often a struggle for existence, or at least an adequate existence (by this, we mean communities in places such as Nigeria, Nepal, Myanmar, India, Pakistan, Southern Sudan, etc). In particular, the expression of concerns

and values that contribute to an expanding idea of 'development' are the product of an increased level of community participation in the development process. The emphasis on development has increasingly moved away from what the 'experts' say 'development' is, to what people seeking 'development' want it to be (Kingsbury, Remenyi, Mckay, & Hunt, 2004, p.6). Community media or communication is critical to development in developing societies such as Nigeria. This is ostensibly because they (community media and their organs such as traditional institutions) are responsible for getting members of the community or public informed on relevant issues and developments that have direct or indirect bearing on them as they unfold.

The cohort of NGOs advanced a number of critical points towards effective communication of development in respect of the HGSFP in Kaduna State, northwest Nigeria. It surmised that terms of reference (TOR) should be provided to the 77 district heads (Hakimis) in Kaduna State to be fully and legally involved in the school feeding. Policy document on social investment programme should be drafted to legalize the programme in the state. There is the need for consistent engagement of district heads or cultural avatars through regular meetings. Traditional leaders should be involved during recruitment of cooks. District heads to serve as guarantors for cooks under their respective domains. All fraudulent cases should be reported to the media to serve as deterrent to others. Also, there is an urgent need for cooks' audit across the state (all cooks not living in the communities where they supply food to should be transferred to schools in their communities or dropped). There should be routine medical checkup for cooks. Schedule of payment to be made available to all stakeholders concerned, including community leaders. Kaduna State should standardize the number of pupils to be fed per cook at a

minimum of 75 and maximum of 150 per cook. Data tools should be made available to all LGAs across the state (Draft communiqué of cohort of NGOs, 2019).

Community Participation in PATSF Project

According to Freire (1970; 1973), the key to development is whether people who were previously treated as mere objects, known and acted upon can now actively know and act upon by becoming subjects of their own social destiny. Agreeably, Vijayan (1995) and Goulet (1986) point out that, when people are oppressed or reduced to the culture of silence they do not participate in their own humanization. When they participate, they become active subjects of knowledge and action and begin to construct an appropriate human history and engage in process of authentic development.

Nevertheless, the working definition adopted by Marshall Wolfe and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is very useful in development circles. According to Wolfe (1983), participation designates the organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements further excluded from such practical control. Such a definition is simple and practical, it can serve as a springboard from which merits and limits of participation in development can be assessed. These can best be analysed by classifying the diverse forms of participation along several axes. Drawing on this, the idea of community participation, particularly by traditional institutions or cultural avatars, in the development process as canvassed in this study could be adapted or adopted in other parts of Nigeria or Africa in achieving grassroots mobilization and communicating development to the populace.

Conclusion

This article has considered how communication can aid development, using the National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP) as experienced in Kaduna State of Nigeria as a basis of critical reflection. It noted that like every other government funded projects, avoidable corruption cases and other irregularities emanated from the programme that could have been checked, with the involvement of the traditional leaders or cultural avatars in the designated communities. Founded on the dialogic theory, it synthesized data garnered from the field during the state wide advocacy visits to the traditional institutions in 2019, by a cohort of five NGOs under MacArthur Foundation funding in Kaduna State, to make a case for the inclusion of traditional leaders and institutions in ensuring sustainable outcomes in communicating development programmes at the grassroots in Nigeria.

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Signs of Spring #11

Rebecca Matheson

FILM REVIEW:

Black Is King: Beyoncé's Authorial Morals

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Independent Scholar

In 2019, Beyoncé released *The Lion King: The Gift*, an album influenced by and referential to Jon Favreau's photorealistic remake of *The Lion King* (2019) in which the singer/actress starred.[1] The concept album, which features snippets of audio from the film, sonically repurposes *The Lion King*'s narrative for Beyoncé to empower and connect with black audiences. The singer's newest music video-epic is at once both a remake of Disney's *The Lion King* (1994, 2019) and a pseudo-sequel to her influential *Lemonade* (2016). Drawing on the narrative of the former and building on the ideological project of the latter, *Black Is King* (2020) exploits its capitalistic origins to moralize lessons of blackness, defined, in this review, as that which communicates or represents black identity.[2]

Rather than attempting to literally recreate the plot of Favreau's film, *Black Is King*

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1. Beyoncé Knowles-Carter, commonly known by her mononym, Beyoncé, is an entertainer and performer. She rose to fame as the lead singer of the best-selling R&B group, Destiny's Child. She has since released six studio albums, two collaborative albums, starred in several films, and founded Parkwood Entertainment.

2. This definition derives from Ed Guerrero's (1993) concept of *framing blackness*, or the representation of black images on screen.

engages with its source text primarily as thematic inspiration. The film does feature a young Simba as he journeys from young outcast to rightful king, but only as connective tissue. Without the postmodernist context of knowing *The Lion King*, the story itself only loosely translates. Instead, *Black Is King* focuses on reformatting the original's spiritual lessons. The protagonist here is not actually Simba, but the Spirit that communicates with and guides Simba throughout his life, played by Beyoncé.

Black Is King, like *Lemonade*, is written and directed by Beyoncé. Like other films within the emerging form, the music video-epic "allows its female performer-subjects to find their authorial voice" (Wellborn, 68). The visual and sonic elements of the film thus are written by Beyoncé the auteur. In her control over content and form, Beyoncé's direction recalls avant-garde feminist filmmaking traditions, specifically through the use of authorial self-inscription. As Alison Butler (2002) notes, "through authorial self-inscription, women filmmakers have been able to figure the terms of their engagement with the medium and its conventions" (59). Through the use of repeated aesthetic and sonic choices from *Lemonade*, *Black Is King* demonstrates the authorial voice of Beyoncé, which disrupts traditional, linear narrative, and allows the artist to find her own identity within the context of African tradition. The narrative may be drawn from *The Lion King*, but the project is Beyoncé connecting with her heritage, and through her presence as a spiritual cipher, for black people in general to do the same. The messages communicated through *Black Is King* are thus not those passed down from its source material, but instead are the morals of Beyoncé herself.

According to Annalee R. Ward (1996), the spiritual narrative of *The Lion King*

allows the film to moralize the importance of calling, community, and creation (175). If *Black Is King* is read through a similar lens, that of moral educator, the specific values of the film must be explored. In *The Lion King*, Simba must live up to his calling, leaving the pleasures of ignorance behind for claiming the throne that once belonged to his father. Though *Black Is King*'s Simba experiences a similar journey, this value is reenvisioned for black men more generally. Instead of Simba acting as a "chosen one" figure, he is a cipher here—a figure that all black men can see themselves in. Beyoncé communicates this through the use of her audience. Diegetically, she sings directly to the character on screen, but she also breaks the fourth wall to sing directly to black viewers. In "Bigger," she sings, "you're part of something way bigger/Bigger than you, bigger than we/Bigger than the picture they framed us to see." The "they" she refers to is read as the white culture that, throughout history, has worked to contain and deracinate blackness. *Black Is King*, as the film's title implies, calls for its viewers to identify directly with their blackness, embrace it as power, and live beyond the walls of white containment.

Whereas *The Lion King* argues for a community based on physical closeness, *Black Is King* argues for a diasporic unity of blackness, specifically through the presentation of blackness as spectacle. Perhaps the most common aesthetic device used within the film, even more so than music, is the tableau. Each tableau, with its specific arrangement of bodies, contributes to what Lauren Michele Jackson (2020) calls "ethnic splendor," or the glamorization of black figures on screen ("Beyoncé's Knowing Ethnic Splendor"). The tableaus invite the audience to gaze upon the screen, absorbing the spectacle and beauty that is blackness. Though the film's musical numbers are, of course, filled with stunning choreography, the tableaus call attention to black bodies at rest as art. They ask the audience to pause and appreciate the beauty on screen, not for their specific talent or performance, but for their ability to just *be*.

Of the values shared between the films, the spiritual elements of *Black Is King* appear the most similar. *Black Is King*, though, uses the concept of the "Circle of Life," less as a spiritual equalizer and more so as a way to connect diasporic Africana. The Circle of Life does not connect the various animals of the African savanna, as it does in the animated iterations, but rather connects the global black identities rooted in African ancestry. Here, the "great kings" are not deceased monarchs, but are the African roots that connect many black identities.

Though the film is undoubtedly a product of capitalism—this is Disney, after all— *Black Is King* "encourages audience members to better understand, appreciate, honor, and celebrate blackness in its varying forms" (Asare). This includes the authorial and moral forms of blackness on display in Beyoncé's music video-epic. Rather than break apart forms of blackness into discrete tokenistic caricatures, as so often is the practice of major studio films, *Black Is King* revels in visualizing a collected black unity, which communicates Beyoncé's authorial morals.

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Signs of Spring #12

Rebecca Matheson
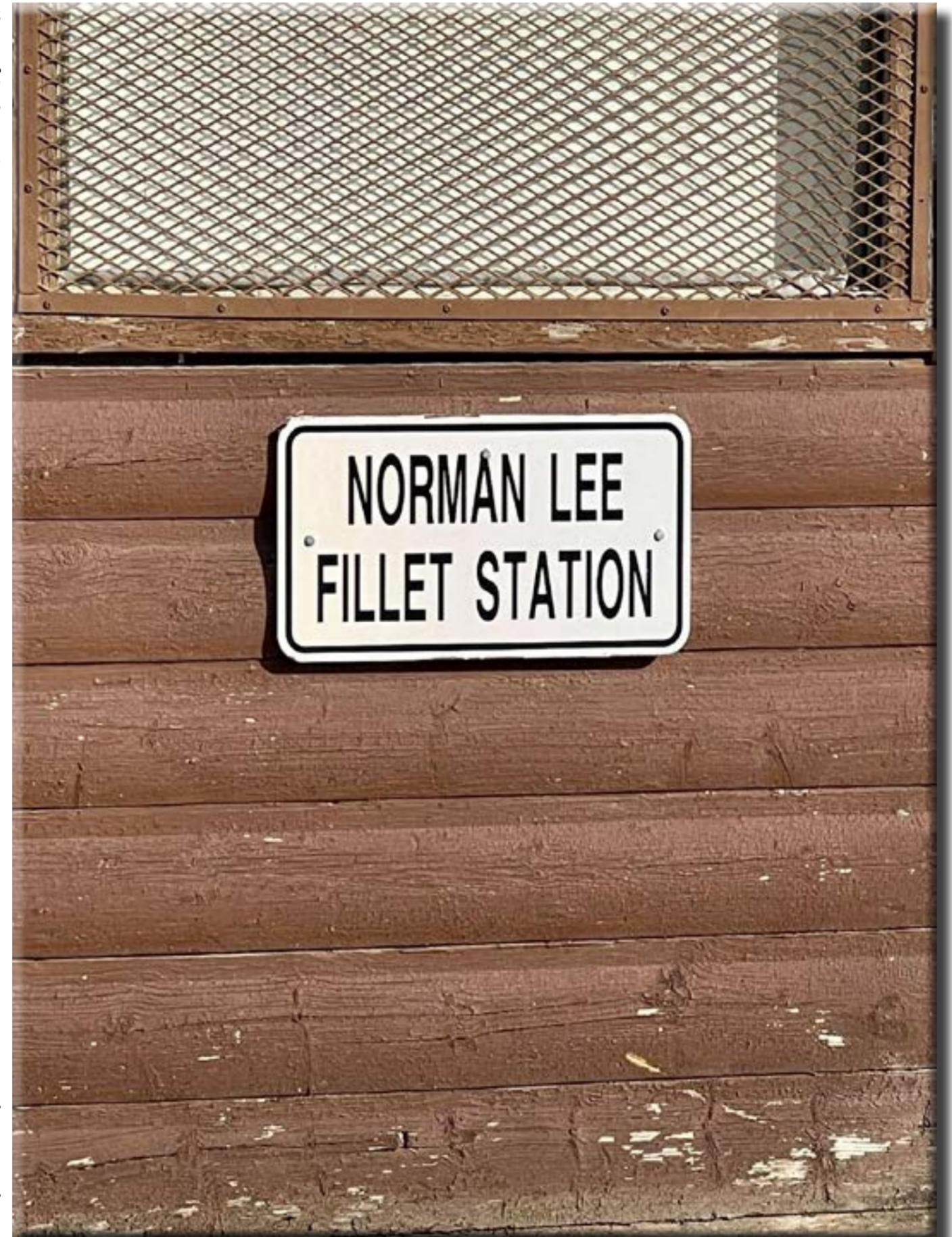
FILM REVIEW:

From Ingres to Ensor: Retrieving Welles

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Needless to say, the difficulties in 2020 in going to the movies have given a boost to a trend that had begun a decade ago: the managed streaming of films over the internet. This platform system is dominated by Netflix, which was already an established internet-based video distributor. Netflix has chosen to consolidate much of its power in the art of making movies, something that has not occurred seen since the days of the great moguls. While commissioning films from influential filmmakers, such as Spike Lee or Martin Scorsese, Netflix has also completed a legend, the subject of this review.

For fifty years, Orson Welles' *The Other Side of the Wind* (2018) had been a lost *cause célèbre*.[1] Welles had intended the film to be shot over a few weeks—a simple 'fast

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1. Orson Welles (1915-1985) worked in theater, radio, film and television. He was a maverick, pushing a medium to its limits. His radio adaptation of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* in 1938 frightened audiences into believing there was an invasion from Mars in progress. The success of the stunt led to his film contract at R.K.O. The freedom that contract afforded him allowed him to explore the inherent possibilities in film. The controversy surrounding the resulting film *Citizen Kane* (1941) would alienate Welles from Hollywood as a director. He was always in demand as an actor, and he never stopped experimenting

and loose' project exploiting the lightweight equipment that was emerging at the time, but it took five years for principal photography and a half-century to complete the film. Beyond the technical and financial difficulties, the film was blocked because nobody wanted to hear what Welles had to say. Even Netflix buried the picture in its library after completion.

The Other Side of the Wind would haunt all those linked to it: no one was willing to let it go. Welles spent the rest of his life trying to complete it while shooting other projects. The film's cinematographer Gary Graver worked on it until his own death in 2006. The surviving members of the crew attempted to crowd-fund its completion, then Netflix stepped in and for the paltry sum of six million dollars, found themselves with a wealth of riches: their investment yielded not only Welles' completed film, but a feature length documentary and a forty-minute *making-of* as well.

The film itself is a contrivance: a film being made within a film being made. Director J.J. Hannaford (John Huston) screens footage of his project to a number of prospective backers to fund its completion. The project is also titled *The Other Side of the Wind*, emphasizing here its foolishly crypto-poetic nature. Alongside these screenings, another movie is being made by all the onlookers who film what they see during these screenings. The resulting work becomes a collage of 'found footage' put together to record what would be the last night of Hannaford's life. Like all gimmicks, it works best because Welles subtly lets you in on the trick. Scattered throughout the movie are clues that hint at the elaborately planned fiction; clues like the private screening for a producer early in the film (who on Earth could have shot that?) and most strikingly at the end of the

evening, where the unnamed actress (Oja Kodar) who had played the fictitious film's unnamed leading-lady joins J. J. Hannaford in shooting the mannequins—and shoots directly into the camera: a surprisingly dangerous angle for a cameraman.

The Other Side of the Wind opens with a filmic convention: the last shot Hannaford would ever take for a film is seen as a montage of scantily clad women wearing turbans. The regular practice of shooting concurrent 'making-of films' was still a decade and a half away, so who shot the film crew? The opening montage is also the key to the entire film. While diegetically it is just another shot for an avant-garde porno-chic art-house film, it is artistically a breakdown of Ingres's last major painting, *The Turkish Bath* (1852-59, now hanging at the Louvre in Paris). Art historian Adrien Gœtz explored Ingres' use of collage in his painting with *the Turkish Bath* being a memorial collage of the artist's favorite model in a variety of poses (9).[2] A viewer may wonder if Welles had not already guessed at that forty five years earlier, or if simply the techniques of film making does not intrinsically point towards a sense of collage in the way we see things. Regardless, the film's references to Ingres places Welles' final film at the core of the central consideration in that cluster of four films: *what is art*?[3]

The Other Side of the Wind offers a pessimistic answer to the question. For both the film and the film-within-the-film show that art is never more than a series of political, commercial, intellectual and aesthetic compromises. Hannaford's party is an attempt to wine and dine a crowd of possible backers while illustrating his interest in the sensibilities of the new generation. Hannaford's project is visibly a failed attempt to outdo what the young Turks both in Europe and New Hollywood were setting out to achieve: filmic meditations on space, time and existence. Such a failure stems from the fact that Hannaford does not quite grasp the meaning of these new questions, and his film consequently becomes artistic drivel. Welles' failure (if we can call it that) stems from the fact that he does, and that he shows up these questions for the sham that they are. Nonetheless, a series of reaction shots during the screenings show that J.J. Hannaford is sufficiently honest (with himself, if not with others) to know that his attempt to create *high art* is in fact a bigger sell-out than any third-rate T&A film. His film is an artistic capitulation, the use of his abilities to submit to a style that is fundamentally alien to his sensibilities.

The 'found footage' arc points to another aspect of the new generation's artistic aspirations, that of *cinema verité*, where anyone who can hold a camera can make a film. The film's referential quality is a motif frequently analyzed by critics: Hannaford's film project parodies Michelangelo Antonioni's ideals of cryptic film making.[4] The real-life film questions with an equal ferocity Jean-Luc Goddard's theories of *collage* film making. Welles makes this world the visual antithesis of Hannaford's project. The images are as grainy as the project is smooth, the shots are as tightly framed and jaggedly cut as the project is ample and graceful. The resulting imagery is a madhouse vision which echoes James Ensor's worlds of monstrous clowns laughing and jeering at the world around them. On both sides of the screen as it were, Welles elevates and reduces cinematic ambitions to artistic questions that have existed long before the advent of film. There is nothing

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2. To what extent is this film not the same thing for Welles?
3. One should always be careful when stating that a film will be Welles' last: much remains in the vaults.

4. See for instance Manobla Dargis' review for *The New York Times*, Glenn Kerry's in rogerebert.com, or David Edelstein's aptly titled article.

modern in modern art that has not been seen and explored time and again. Hannaford's protégé Bruce Otterlake (Peter Bogdonavitch) warns him with the Shakespearian "our revels have ended" to which Hannaford answers with the vulgar colloquialism "you can kiss my sweet ass."

Three years after the Summer of Love and two after the 1968 uprisings, Welles embarked on a project that demonstrated how those two events ultimately failed in their promise of personal freedom. The film is the illustration of the commodification of sex. The bus bringing a group of guests to Hannaford's home lingers in front of a billboard touting *Adult Books XXX for Sale*; a film student in Hannaford's car asks if the camera lens is an extension of the phallus; one backer (Dan Tobin) eagerly wipes the glass to better see Hannaford's film project, in which Kodar's body is lit to look like a goddess from Ingres—which is nothing but an aesthetically sanitized version of the wares touted by the billboard. The commodity of sex is also reflected in the ubiquity of cameras. It is the lecherous backer who ultimately feels the brunt of that ubiquity: he is the one who wants to see without being seen, watching the film while hidden in the booth and he is made to undress in front of the camera. Welles deflates the commercial strength of sex as a form of transgression—the ability to vicariously invade what should be the most private of acts. For in this world of ours, privacy has been voluntarily banished: just as Kodar carelessly struts naked in the wide spaces of the film, all the guests constantly perform before the ever-present camera. We even see Hannaford go to the bathroom. There is no distinction between the personal and the public. We have become prisoners of our own device.

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Signs of Spring #13

Rebecca Matheson

FILM REVIEW:

Headlines and Meetings: Narrative Redundancy in *Battle in Outer Space*

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When we look back at Japanese science fiction of the late 1950s, it seems almost entirely overshadowed by the birth of Godzilla. While not surprising—this global phenomenon has already over thirty entries and counting—we might often forget the context which brought the King of Monsters to its throne. Between the years 1954 and the early 1970s, its creator studio Toho was an unbeatable leader of Japanese science fiction cinema. Nevertheless, many other films were important, successful or representative of that time—genre, cycle or studio poetics—but got lost in the ocean of second-rate DVD releases. One of them is *Uchū Daisensō* (1959), *Battle in Outer Space* by Honda Ishiro, an underappreciated yet endlessly fascinating film that could be considered as shallow on a first sight, though its use of film style and especially narrative structure are surprisingly

complex.

The premise of *Battle in Outer Space* is a simple one: strange events are happening all around the globe and the investigations point to a threat from outer space. Though the general story seems to be inspired by contemporary Hollywood B-movies—such as *This Island Earth* (1955) to name one—the plot's structure is quite innovative. For about the first twenty minutes, viewers cannot be not sure who the actual protagonist is. There are no protagonists or antagonists as viewers might expect. Sekizawa's script goes from global problems to local and then to individual ones. The spectators learn first about extraterrestrial life and the people representing Earth, but there is no individual narrative connection for the viewers, the conflict apparently being only between the planet itself and outer space. Spectators meet their heroes only briefly in the first thirty minutes and, even after that, the main trio of characters functions as an instrument to keep them invested in the narrative—not empathically, but logically. The fictional characters are less obviously trying to evoke the viewers' sympathy, but rather function as narrative devices. While spectators might feel empathetic towards the central couple and their friend, there is no psychological depth to such characters because a great amount of time and focus is instead dedicated to establishing the width of the central conflict—an interesting alternative to Hollywood-style science fiction cinema.

Honda creates his trademarked experimentation with filmic style in such a context. If *Godzilla* (1954) and *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962) test the possibilities of two different approaches to filmic space, while *All Monsters Attack* (1969) is filled with parametric patterns, *Battle in Outer Space* pairs instead its use of color and Tohoscope anamorphic format with adventurous long shots and a decorative mise-en-scene. Yet, what could be considered as groundbreaking in Ishiro's 1959 film is its use of fictional media and political montage. Headlines of newspapers have been a staple of Hollywood cinema for many years: they usually are an instrument for recounting important events and ellipsis. *Godzilla* uses headlines in a particularly Hollywood way, whereas *Battle in Outer Space* goes further than that. Montages of headlines, news reports and United Nations meetings appear throughout the film almost every few minutes. Such an approach presents the crisis as global, rather than involving only the Japanese press and government: the entire planet has to work together to defeat the extraterrestrial threat, which certainly helps to enhance the viewers' suspense. Simultaneously, the frequent use of media or political montage functions as a form of summary of the past events and creates narrative redundancy through the multiplication of the recounting of earlier actions. This is intended as a further way for the viewers not to miss anything that happens. Furthermore, most of these sequences ask explicit questions about the future developments of the story. The first headline comes up by the first five minutes announcing unexplainable events while wondering what their cause might be. It thus guides the spectators' attention towards the upcoming scientific conference and builds up an expectation about the next step of the narrative. Finally, the media and political montages can also be interpreted as some sort of framing device separating the film's acts or narrative segments and setting a fast and dynamic rhythm.

None of these approaches are unique to *Battle of Outer Space*; it is their redundancy and multiplication that makes them so noteworthy. Honda and Sekizawa were always

inclined towards using media, newspaper and political montages. Examples might be found in *King Kong vs. Godzilla* and *Invasion of Astro-Monster* (1965), which tend to insert such montages with the same functions they have in *Battle in Outer Space*. However, the latter film could be considered as a turning point of intensification of narrative redundancy.

Battle in Outer Space is worthy of attention even over sixty years since its release, because it does provide a spectacular viewing experience, but also because of its sophisticated approach to filmic narration and style. Especially now, when Japanese science fiction still remains in the shadow of Godzilla and zeitgeist interpretations, viewers and critics altogether might consider a different perspective that is focused on lesser known yet then popular works and how they tell their stories. Over a hundred science fiction films have been produced in Japan from the 1950s to the 1970s: they are works of art which kept close narrative relationship to their Hollywood counterparts, while at the same time applying several changes to them. *Battle in Outer Space* is only one piece of this narrative mosaic which awaits our attention.

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Signs of Spring #14
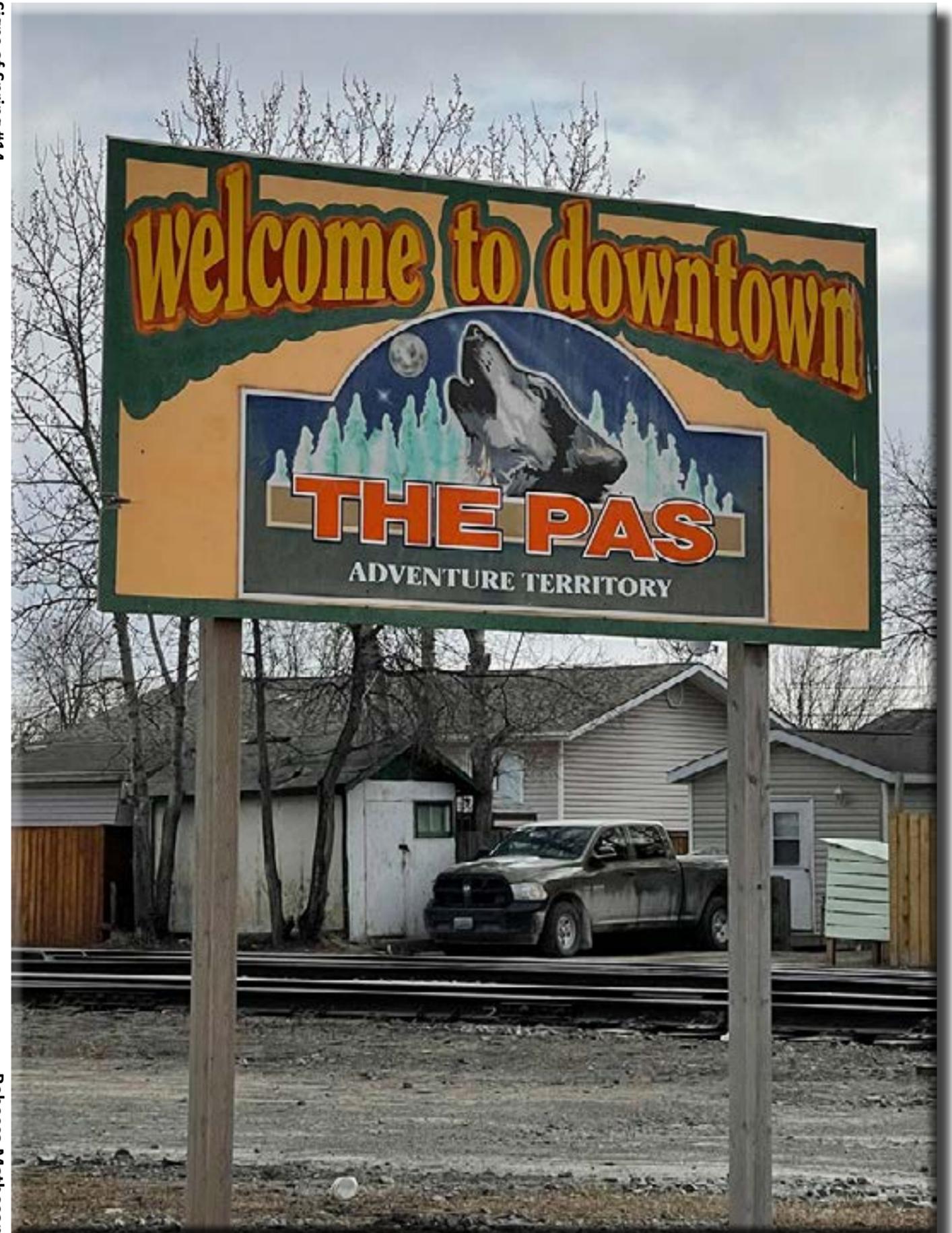
Rebecca Matheson

BOOK REVIEW:

Putting a human face on the thousands of Chinese who came to Canada.....

David McIlwraith, ed./ Wanda Joy Hoe, trans. *The Diary of Dukesang Wong: A Voice from Gold Mountain.* Introduction by Judy Fong Bates. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2020.

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"I'd kill a Chinaman as quick as I would an Indian and I'd kill an Indian as quick as I would a dog." This chilling remark, recorded in a police report, was made in 1884 by a man who had taken part in the lynching of Louie Sam, a fourteen-year old Indigenous boy from the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, Canada. He had been waiting to be tried for murder in New Westminster when he was kidnapped by an American mob, taken across the border and lynched, presumably because the alleged murder had taken place in Nooksack, Washington State. It later transpired that two members of the lynch mob were likely responsible for the murder. This incident, redolent with ignorant, vicious racism, was made when the writer of the diary being discussed here had been living four years in British Columbia, employed as an underpaid labourer in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. It serves to highlight an extreme case of the attitude taken not just by Americans, but by many Canadians as well, towards the thousands of Chinese workers who had been providing the sweat and toil needed to complete the railway since the mid-1860s. It also illustrates how Chinese were thrown, together with Indigenous people, into a maelstrom of hatred, fear and discrimination, abetted by the activities of scurrilous groups such as the Victoria (British Columbia) Anti-Chinese Association. The Canadian government did little to intervene at the time, and when it did it was to impose a "head tax" of $500.00 on Chinese who wished to emigrate to Canada.

Dukesang Wong (1845-1931) was the son of a regional magistrate who in 1867 (ironically the year of Canadian Confederation) was poisoned by arsenic over a legal decision he had made. The first entry in the diary is a poignant memorial to Wong's father. "I must constantly remember only him," he writes, "But I can only remember the black nails of his fingers and they torment my sleep." A year later his mother killed herself. The circumstances of his father's death had meant disgrace for Wong's family, and one of the ways he coped with it was by keeping a diary; this diary would eventually come to be the only known written source of information about the life of a Chinese railway worker in the so-called "Land of the Golden Mountains," as the western area of North America was optimistically called. The diary came to light in the 1960s, when Wong's maternal granddaughter Wanda Joy Hoe, then attending Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, translated excerpts of it for an undergraduate sociology paper. The notebook ended up in the local clan office, and tragically disappeared in a fire. To compound the loss, some tapes on which Hoe's uncle had recorded himself reading the translation were also lost, simply thrown out after the uncle's death. All that remained was Hoe's paper, put away in a box for years and fortuitously rediscovered.

The outlines of the Chinese railway workers' struggles against overwork, racism and physical cruelty at the hands of white people in Canada are now better-known than they were, but until this remarkable diary came to light they were seen as little more than a nameless mass of mostly illiterate people. Dukesang Wong, an educated person

from the mandarin class, was an exception. He was trained in Confucian philosophy and had a good knowledge of Chinese literature, as well as having sat several examinations in the complex system of China's civil service. "These influences," David McIlwraith explains, "shaped Wong's literary style and even the particular script in which he wrote." He believes that "it is writing that makes us mourn the permanent loss of the many untranslated sections of those diaries."

In spite of this, though, enough remains that readers can get a good idea of what the Chinese went through as well as a portrait of Dukesang Wong himself, who emerges as a strong, hard-working, compassionate and intelligent man. "It is hard, this labouring," he wrote in 1881; "but my body seems to be strong enough. The people working with me are good, strong men." Dukesang Wong was, however, a man who never considered Canada his "home." In 1883, for example, we find him writing wistfully, "I wonder when I shall have laboured enough to journey back to my home village." In 1899, now a happily-married man with a family, he asserts "My children are Chinese people!" and goes on to declare "I wish for my children one day to return to China. . .We must not be buried on foreign land!" Photographs of Wong family graves, however, show that fate didn't grant his earnest desire.

What will probably interest most readers is Wong's account of his work with the CPR, after which he started up a successful tailoring business. He embarked in Portland, Oregon (he initially thought it would be San Francisco), which he at first found was "a good place, even though we hear tales of wild and crazy events outside town." With a rather touching naïveté he adds "I doubt the truth of these tales," only to witness, sometime later, "a man being violently beaten by another of his own kind," adding "I

could not believe what my eyes were seeing. . .Surely there are no manners and rules here." In spite of this, he is determined to succeed: "I must save as much as I am able," he says, "and live humbly in piety. . .My years of learning, however, will be a great aid, and I shall try to teach once I have saved some money." His "years of learning" and his Confucian values probably helped him get through the years of racism, injustice and exploitation at the hands of his CPR bosses and the Canadian authorities. "So many of us Chinese suffered and died recently," an entry for 1885 reads; "But the western people will not allow us to land here any longer, while they scold us for not working enough. . .The work is great, but there aren't enough labourers." He concludes this entry: "These mighty lands are great to gaze upon, but the laws made here are so small." Indeed they were. "My old way of life—my soul desires it," reads an entry for 1887; "and my mind continually wanders to those days of no cares and worries."

Another aspect of Wong's diary is fascinating in spite of its brevity as far as entries is concerned, and that is his attitude towards other non-white people. He met Indigenous people, Indians (he calls them "Hindus" and Japanese during the course of his CPR job and, presumably, afterwards as well. "The Hindu people," he says without explanation, "cannot labour as we are able to." When he went on a journey to Victoria, he got some guidance from Indigenous people: "their help in the return journey was great," further observing that "they are solitary people, but they know the land so well," and in 1900 he noted that "the Indians have great ways to obtain food—meat from the wild animals. Sing has brought some deer meat from one such Indian family, tasting wild, but meat still." As for the Japanese, Wong tells us that they are "treated with great deference by the westerners," and he's not sure why, as "their ways are so much like ours." He did not live to see the Japanese placed in internment camps by the Canadian government during

World War II.

What this book does is put a human face on the thousands of Chinese who came to Canada in the nineteenth century and gradually managed, by dint of sheer determination and hard work, to make themselves good lives. Wong himself eventually finds his calling in tailoring, a profession in which he seems to have done well and which was, likely to his great relief, a far cry from the days of hard labour on the CPR. "My life is now good," he says in the autumn of 1888, "The tailoring work has been worthwhile and is of a good trade, for which we can hold our faces up." Judy Fong Bates, who has written about her own experiences as an immigrant child in Canada, states that Dukesang Wong's diary "gives him back his humanity and his individuality." I wish that there had been more of it, but we should be very grateful for Wanda Joy Hoe's undergraduate effort (she did get an A in the paper) and for David McIlwraith's helpful commentary. As Dukesang Wong so thoughtfully and poignantly observed after seeing his old world gone with the end of the Qing dynasty and the outbreak of World War I, "It is said that the old ways cannot last and that people must change and be continuously renewed. I have even taught this—yet I fear that I cannot change enough for this new world."

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Independent Scholar

Rebecca Matheson

BOOK REVIEW:

Providing a poetic reference to what would eventually become Edo....

Timon Screech, *Tokyo Before Tokyo: Power and Magic in the Shogun's City of Edo.* London: Reaktion Books, 2020.

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From about 1765 to 1840 Japanese finding themselves in Edo might have been amused by skimming over a few *senryū*, short satirical or comical poems which made fun of the pretensions of the administrative capital. One wag wrote

> The things to see in Edo
>
> Are no more than this:
>
> 'pieces' and 'gold'

the "pieces" in question being low-value copper coins, and the "gold" representing the supposed materialistic greed of Edo's inhabitants. "But most *senryū*," Timon Screech writes in his new book *Tokyo Before Tokyo*, "are mostly self-validating statements mocking lightly in a kind of praise."

Although Screech, a professor of art at the University of London and author of several books on Japan, knows Edo and its inhabitants intimately, he points out at the end of his book, Edo "dwindled and departed. Today it is gone." In this lavishly-illustrated, beautifully-written and comprehensive book, the splendid yet informal writing enhanced by anecdotes, contemporary art and poetry from beginning to end, Edo comes back to life, its vibrancy restored and its former grandeur put on display. The feeling is of actually being there, in this departed city, with an informed, instructive and often witty guide showing the sights. It's as close as anyone living today could ever get to understanding the Edo "mentality", if we may use this term with impunity. Rather than a history and a tour around the principal monuments of the city, Screech approaches Edo by presenting it in a series of "vignettes".. This allows him to explore the inner spirit of Edo, reveal what it represented, and how it became the soul of the Tokugawa shogun's realm, demonstrating his power both physically and spiritually. The emperor, known then as the *dairi*, by contrast lived (often in retirement) in Kyoto, rarely venturing outside its limits and wielding little more than a shadowy semblance of power. It was the Shogun who ran the show, and, as Screech shows us, the former small town of Edo transformed itself into an important centre of political and commercial power. It was never actually the capital of Japan until 1868, when the Meiji emperor was restored to imperial power and it officially became Tokyo. Screech connects Edo with modern Tokyo in a short epilogue showing us that as Japanese society changed after 1868, the rigid hierarchy began to loosen and its contacts with the west became ever closer, the character of the city changed, too, and Tokyo, now an ultra-modern megalopolis, is today "almost entirely from the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries."

The vignettes through which Screech acquaints us with Edo include physical aspects such as the castle, the great bridge known as Nihon-bashi (replaced by a stone bridge in 1911) and the infamous Yoshiwara "pleasure district", but they also discuss the city as

a "sacred space", an "ideal" city and a place with a real "poetic presence". These chapter headings explain Screech's subtitle; there's political power being displayed through physical symbols such as impressive buildings, but there's also a spiritual or even magical side to Edo, and they both coalesce to demonstrate and cement in people's consciousness the power of the Shogun.

By contrast, the Yoshiwara district, in its metaphorical guise as the "floating world", offered people an escape from the strictures of civilised society and the world of work or commerce—it was a world that was almost surreal, transient in the Buddhist sense. One couldn't stay there if one came from outside this world, and those who live and worked in it, such as the geishas and courtesans, could not leave it. To get there, a visitor had to cross the Sumida river, which formed the barrier between the two worlds; as one crossed it, the material world receded into the background and the "floating" world drew nearer. Screech is particularly adept at describing how this must have felt: "after a night in the Yoshiwara," he tells us as he describes a print by Utamaro, "visitors reach a state of detachment from this-worldly cares akin to Enlightenment." Screech explains this: "In a way, a courtesan and a Buddha were alike. Both were unhoused, untied, without karmic links." Utamaro's print, incidentally, depicts a typical Yoshiwara geisha, exhausted after a night's work, holding a man's robe which has a depiction of Bodhidharma (Daruma in Japanese, the founder of Zen Buddhism) on it. In the end, Edo itself would prove transient too, although, as Hippocrates allegedly remarked (originally in Greek, of course), "*ars longa, vita brevis*", so we still have its art, poetry, printed books, archival material and a smattering of architecture, such as the remains of Edo castle's wall (the castle burned down in 1873), to keep it alive.

Yoshiwara, which we often think of as merely a red-light district, was a small area of the city, it often functioned only in the imaginations of men fuelled by the readily-available prints and literature about it, or, as Screech tells us, it was as much myth as reality. However, in Edo itself there were several concrete reminders of life outside the floating world. The rulers constructed an "ideal" city from it, centering their efforts on bridges and the castle. This meant employing the traditional grid system of older Japanese cities, which was the first step in establishing "order and stasis in rectilinear, symmetrical form" with proper attention to what the Chinese call *feng shui.* The rulers were very serious about their use of geomancy, which involves specific rules about the auspicious placement of structures, and would, for example, position Edo Castle), the "single greatest and most visible structure", in the centre of the city, with the surrounding area cleared of people so that one had to look north to see the ruler's location because "it was improper to look south." *Facing* south, on the other hand, was, according to Confucius and others, an expression denoting regnal power, and therefore the proper direction for the ideal ruler to face.

It was Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the Imperial Chief Adviser (*kampaku*) to Emperor Ogimachi (reigned 1557-86) who built the great Third Avenue bridge, the latter's purpose being "to link, rather than separate," but it was Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first of his line of shoguns, who built the even more impressive Nihon-bashi in 1603. Its purpose, other than the practical, was that it represented for those who crossed it "present and future hope and the benevolence the shogunate would always show its subjects throughout the land," another example of the shogunate's close attention to geomancy. Screech's detailed and fascinating account of this bridge both as an architectural masterpiece and a symbol of shogunal power may be found in Chapter 2, where it is presented as "a site of intense

meaning;" people crossing knew that it was near the shogun's government buildings, but they could not actually see those buildings, which were set back a few streets from the bridge and thereby "spared scrutiny by commoners."

> The shoguns were not content only to establish their presence and power through secular edifices, but also felt a need to have sacred spaces aligned with them. In Chapters 3 and 5 Screech concentrates on the "non-physical aspects" of Edo, dealing with the city as a "sacred space" and its "poetic presence".

The physical geomancy had to be augmented by a sacred version; "Buddhist history was mapped onto Edo's quite recent space," Screech explains, "By this Edo was sacralised and became custodian and successor of the entire history of Japanese faith." The Tokugawa clan themselves were Pure Land Buddhists, a belief which claims that invoking the Buddha's name will result in practitioners attaining to a blessed existence in the "pure land". Adhering to geomantic practice, the shogunate placed new Buddhist temples in the north-east or expanded the ones that were already there to suit its needs. Thus, for example, we find Ieyasu "relocating" the Zōjō-ji temple, expanding it and adding a large number of monks; in 1622 his successor Hidetada "donated a massive gate, still standing as one of Tokyo's oldest structures." Because of the Tokugawas' dedication to Pure Land Buddhism, Hidetada also installed a statue of Amitabha Buddha, whose attendant, Kannon (Chinese: Guanyin), goddess of mercy, is also revered by Pure Land devotees, and who also features in a number of important temples.

Screech begins Chapter 5 by noting that "as a location Edo had its own meanings" apart from being, from 1603, the centre of the shogun's government. It possessed "authority and culture," he tells us, "but it had no *poetic* presence." In the west, we don't usually think of cities having a poetic presence; true, poets often write *about* cities, but London, for example, wasn't constructed so that it "gave off" some kind of mysterious poetic emissions. Screech explains that there have always been places in Japan known as "poetic pillows," which meant that they had a meaning outside their mere physicality. Various emperors even commissioned anthologies of the best *waka* (courtly verses) about these actual places. As an example, Screech gives us a place that has a lot of cherry-trees, which stand for spring, and therefore happiness as well—Mount Yoshino, he tells us, "became the premier 'pillow' because *yoshi* means 'joy' (*no* is a plain)." The place becomes, as well as a physical location, a manifestation of a feeling or emotion, but this was thought to be missing from Edo. One ancient literary work (dating from about 900), the *Tales of Ise*, mentions the Sumida river, which runs through Edo, although when the tales were written there was no town there. The unnamed hero makes a "descent to the East", and as he does so he composes poetry. This was seen by later readers to somehow prefigure the importance of the location in the future, and thus provide a poetic reference to what would eventually become Edo, so it began to appear frequently in paintings and poetry.

> The 'descent' was, accordingly, repeatedly invoked after the creation of the Tokugawa shogunate ... the *Tale of Ise* had always been read, but only in the Edo period was it turned into the paramount literary text, above all other...

which meant that Edo now had its poetic validation, at least in the minds of these later readers and the shogun's propagandists. In this chapter Timon Screech has given us Edo as we have never seen it before, revealing its soul as well as its physicality. The buildings he tells us about demonstrate the power, but the magic is, perhaps, the most interesting

part of Edo's story, reminding us that in some places, what is not actually seen is often what actually remains.

—John Butler

Independent Scholar

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Essays should range between 15 and 25 pages of double-spaced text in Word, and all images (JPEG) and source citations. Longer and shorter submissions also will be considered. Bibliographic citation should be the standard disciplinary format.

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the quint thanks Dan Smith, Kim Laycock, and Rebecca and Stuart Matheson for their generous support of this project.