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TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED FORMAL MODEL OF FUNDAMENTAL FREQUENCY IN OVERALL DOWNTRENDS¹

Firmin Ahoua and David Reid¹

Abstract

Although there are major differences in the various conceptual models of F_0 scaling, we suggest that the corresponding mathematical formulations may be compatible and that the theoretical differences need not hinder the empirical aspects and practical uses of the theories as demonstrated in speech synthesis. The method follows standard practice in Mathematical Logics: combining and “rounding off” the formalisms of the different models, then allowing for a consistent interpretation of the new unified theory. The approach is applied to two current models of decay in intonation curves. The models and then the conflicts between them are described. These latter were used to construct the integrated model. Our short term objective is to validate the application of our approach by testing and implementing empirical instrumental data obtained independently.

1. Introduction.

While a review of the literature concerning F_0 scaling (see, for example, Ladd 1984) shows a consensus that in most, if not all, languages speakers tend to lower their pitch (or “fundamental frequency F_0 ”) during parts (“utterances”) of declarative sentences, there is no consensus as to which model can best account for this downtrend. When looking for predictability, there is still no agreement as to what part of the F_0 contour declines, with respect to what (pitch accent as opposed to time), what constitutes an utterance, what causes the decline, what kind of mathematical

¹Firmin Ahoua is Professor of Linguistics at the University of Cocody, Ivory Coast.
David Reid is a former Researcher at the Universities of Chicago and Mannheim, U.S.A

formalism to use, what criteria should be used to see if the theory fits the data, or what relation there is between the formalism and the phenomena. It appears worthwhile to look for points of unification or normalisation among the various models and parameters by borrowing some standard concepts of Mathematical Logic.

In general, unless it can be proven that two theories contradict, at least at the formal level as opposed to the conceptual level, one may look for unification or an extension. The modest goal of this paper is to carry out this first step: we indicate one possible approach for showing that two theories are relatively consistent with one another, illustrating this with the two leading models of F_0 scaling, presently at loggerheads. In our exposition we use the word “model” as it is loosely deployed in the literature, namely to refer to a body of explanation for some phenomena. However, we insist on the following important distinctions, which continue throughout the paper. Two separate aspects of each model are considered: its mathematical formalism (formulae, etc.: the model’s theory), on the one hand, and the values assigned to the formalism (the theory’s interpretation) on the other. A theory can have many different valid interpretations which may even contradict one another. However, the central point is that if a theory has at least one interpretation that makes sense, then the theory is consistent. Therefore, to show that two theories are consistent with one another, we combine them into one theory (carefully redefining the domains of relations, renaming variables appropriately, and whenever possible, adjusting the arguments of relations to facilitate comparison) and find a reasonable interpretation. The resulting model, or modified Fujisaki’s model, as we shall for exposition purposes refer to it, exists for the sole purpose of adjusting possible consistent parts of models relative to one another.

In an application of these principles, it behoves us to look at the mathematical bases of established models. Thus the fine points of phonological models do not receive more attention here than is necessary (see Ladd (1984) for discussion); the reader should be warned not to look for extensive discussion of the conceptual differences between the models, nor any discussion of phonological categories and hierarchies.

The two models which we have chosen as the object of our investigation are that of Liberman and Pierrehumbert (1984), and that of 't Hart and Cohen (1973) (further elaborated in 't Hart et al (1982)). (We abbreviate the former model as "LP" and the latter as "'tH", using neutral pronouns to refer to them). Contrary to LP, who use a linear scale, 'tH apply a logarithmic scale. The latter refer to speech movements (instead of speech targets), so that rises and falls occur. The major component of 'tH's theory is declination. This is a global outlook. Declination refers specifically to the trend of the top and bottom lines that define the limits of the local pitch movements. The main construct of this model is the 'hat patterns', the 'pointed hat', and the "flat hat". LP's major component is the downstep factor, a coefficient that lowers the discrete targets.

The organisation of the paper is as follows: in Section 2 we describe these two models as well as sketch some of the elements of model Fujisaki (1981) (henceforth "Fujisaki") relevant for expository reasons. Here we shall assume that the reader is familiar with the mathematical formalism used (primarily elementary operations with logarithms. see also Ahoua 1990). In Section 3 we point out the major points of conflicts between the two models, 'tH and LP. The point of departure in Section 4 is a model in its first stages of development in the literature and known as "resetting". There is not sufficient data or theory of this concept available, but we propose some extensions of it in its present form. In Section 5 we construct our conciliatory model on the basis of the theory of the two warring models considered. Theory is first developed, followed by the interpretation. Section 6 then shows how our model takes into account the difficulties outlined in Section 3.

2. Overall Falls in Phonetic Models.

When the frequencies (F_0) of the voice in an utterance are graphed as a function of time (ignoring long pauses, as in a voice-activated recording), the result often resembles a tilted sinusoidal curve with decreasing amplitude (with the occasional deviation), the tilt being in the sense of a negative slope in most declarative sentences; i.e., when one connects the local maxima (“peaks” or “highs”) in these cases they yield a decay of F_0 with time or as a relation between peaks, as does connecting the local minima (“valleys” or “lows”). (For illustrative graphs see almost any of the articles cited.) In addition, comparing several such graphs of the same speaker shows that there is a frequency below which the speaker never descends in ordinary speech. That much is clear. It is at this point that the divergences mentioned earlier begin.

Ideally one would start with principles already well established. For example, as with any physical action, it is a tautology to say that physiological factors play some kind of role. Indeed, several connections have been established, although how much is cause, and how much is effect, is another matter. In any case, one cannot simply assert that involuntary physiological factors are the major cause of this decay (see Collier, 1975 and Collier & Gelfer, 1984). In the other direction, in attempting to work backwards from the data to the causes, one notices that the decay appears to be exponential, so a natural procedure is to graph the logarithms of the frequencies as a function of time, and regard the result as is done in ‘tH, by expressing the pitch in semitones. That is, if p is a frequency, and m is some fixed base frequency, both in Hertz, then $12 \cdot \log_2(p/m)$ is the equivalent of p in semitones (with respect to m). ‘tH then finds a linear graph on this scale to match his data. ‘tH’s formula is as follows:

$$(1) F(t) = D \cdot t + F(0) \text{ (“} \cdot \text{” signifies multiplication)}$$

whereby t is time (in seconds, minus pauses longer than a quarter of a second); $F(t)$ is the pitch in semitones with respect to a base frequency m , and $F(0)$ the beginning pitch of the utterance. (We have substituted the “ F ” for ‘tH’s “ P ” so as not to confound it with LP’s “ P ”). D is the slope of the lines, and is language-specific. For Dutch, for example, ‘t Hart et al. (1982:143) find :

(2) $D = -11/(1.5\text{sec.} + t_s)$ for $t_s < 5 \text{ sec.}$

$= -8.5/t_s$ for $t_s > 5 \text{ sec.}$

whereby t_s = the length of the utterance in seconds.

The D applies to three lines: a high line connecting the peaks, a low line connecting the valleys, and a middle line where the pitch sometimes rests when changing between these two extremes. (i.e., mathematically speaking, the lines join respectively the relative maxima, the relative minima, and, roughly, the inflection points.) The separation of the lines is language-specific. Since D has a negative slope, 'tH terms this "declination". See appendice 1 for illustration.

One can also see the overall decay of a sentence as being composed of sections, each representing its own autonomous decay. This is the viewpoint of LP, wherein a theory of "downstep" is explained. LP's model has been the most influential theory of intonation over the last decades and is sometimes labeled as the Tone Sequence Model as its primitives are tones that are phonetically interpreted as Fundamental frequency values. LP's model can be understood as a sequence of discrete tonal events that constitute the overall contour. Downstep is the basic component of that model and is a term that is independently motivated in African languages. Its phonetic manifestation is triggered by a certain sequence of tones (HL), and specifically in English by a H-accent followed by a Low tone (H*+L ...!H*). The effect is that a following High tone of an accent syllable will be lowered or downstepped. Notice, however, that the Low tone may be floating and trigger the downstep of the following High tone (H*..*!H) .

To outline this process we must first distinguish between different types of peak accents. The latter correspond to peaks which are pushed higher by emphasis; i.e., higher than those levels achieved in the same utterance spoken with normal accent; "strongest" here refers to the local property of comparative strength. If a stronger accent is considered together with weaker (pitch) accents immediately preceding it, then this is considered an AB pattern; if it is considered together with weaker accents which follow it, then we have a BA pattern. In the latter case, according to LP, the stronger accent governs the fall of the succeeding peak accents; that

is, the influence is hereditary: the first peak accent influences the second, the second the third, etc. Each such pair is termed a “step accent”, since taken together they form a cascading series. Finally, in LP the set of pitch accents is the union of the set of peak accents with the set of step accents. (In ’tH on the other hand, pitch accents consist of only the peak accents.)

LP formulates mathematical relations for this cascading series. We reformulate these a little for purposes of our exposition, but the essence remains the same. For example, LP’s rules cover both AB and BA cases, but here we shall break the two cases up.

The Case of BA Patterns

We consider a series of step accents, where the frequencies are expressed in Hertz, or s-1 . The F_0 value of the initial peak accent is labeled $P(0)$ (or, for simplicity, P_0). $P(i + 1)$ is the F_0 value of the peak accent following the peak corresponding to $P(i)$. Then, according to LP (see Liberman & Pierrehumbert (1984: 193); See also appendix 2):

$$(3) P(i + 1) - r = s*(P(i) - r)$$

s is a speaker-specific “downstep constant”, and r is an utterance-specific “reference value”, calculated by:

$$(4) r = c*(P_0 - b)a + b + d$$

whereby “ b ” is the minimal frequency possible for that speaker, and the other constants are other speaker-specific constants. [We have renamed LP’s constants “ f ” and “ e ”, as “ c ” and “ a ” respectively here, in order to avoid confusion with symbols used elsewhere.]. Translating the recursive formula (3) into polynomial form,

$$(5) P(n) = Sn * (P_0 - r) + r$$

The “reference level” $P_0 = r$ is explained as a non-zero asymptote to which the decaying peaks tend on a graph of frequency vs. “peak number”, i.e., the first, second, third, etc. peak.

We note that we have used “Model 1” from LP. A “Model 2” is also briefly mentioned (see Liberman & Pierrehumbert (1984: 207)); its primary difference to Model 1 is to replace Eq.(5) by:

$$(6) P(n) = hn * P_0 + n * c \text{ whereby } h = (r-b)(1-s), \text{ and } c = (1-h)*b$$

We shall continue, however, to equate Model 1 with LP, since this is the model to which this paper pays primary attention.

The Case of AB Patterns

LP replaces s in Eq.(3) by k (roughly $1/s$), which again is speaker-specific, reading $p(j + 1)$ as the value of the highest peak accent, and $P(j)$ as the pitch of the previous peak accent. Yet another part of LP’s model is “final lowering”. That is, in the last pitch accent of the utterance, the pitch is lower than would be expected by Equations (3) or (5), so that replacing the term sn in equation (3) by the term s^*l , or equivalently the term sn in equation (5) by sn^*l for the last peak accent provides us with that value. l is speaker-specific.

In LP the formulae are based on curve-fitting, though by using phonological criteria and minimal categories. The best model, however, not only assigns a meaning to relations, but to its arguments (the variables and constants) as well, so that the combination of individual meanings matches the meaning of the combination. One such attempt that met with a certain amount of success is presented in Fujisaki (1981). We outline this approach below in order to indicate its compatibility as well to our Integrated Model. For ease of exposition and later development, we have submitted his formulae to quite a bit of renaming of variables and some algebraic manipulation. Therefore the reader may note a contrast with the formulation as originally presented in Fujisaki.

In brief, in Fujisaki the F_0 contour of a sentence is made up by summing up, over the length of the sentence, the non-overlapping F_0 contours of the individual words (his positive accent commands, LP’s High pitch accents as opposed to Low pitch accents). Each of these individual contours is the addition of two component curves, the “phrase command” and an

“accent command”. Each is activated by different signals. The duration between each phrase command signal is assumed equal to the others. In simpler terms, Fujisaki’s model is a kind of overlay or superpositional model that contains a global trend and local F_0 movements. His model is a quantitative model for speech analysis and synthesis. The phrase component is modeled as an impulse response: graphically, it rises rapidly to a peak and then decays exponentially towards an asymptote. The accent component is modelled as a step function, which creates a string of steps up and steps down that represent the local rises and falls of pitch at accented syllables. The step function is smoothed by the addition of a time constant and is then added to the phrase component to create the contour (Ladd 1996:25).

In order to clarify our discussion of Fujisaki, we introduce some definitions and remarks at this point:

a. Let $A(t, i)$ and $B(t, j)$ be functions that vary discretely in time (minus pause) at the i^{th} phrase (or tone) command and the j^{th} word accent, respectively. The values of these functions will then indicate the strength of the respective signals at the beginning of their associated intervals.

b. The accent commands will start later and end earlier than the associated phrase command which forms their base. For a given moment in time t we let:

t^{pb} = the duration since the beginning of the phrase command,

t^{pc} = the duration until the end of the phrase command

t^{ab} = the duration since the beginning of the accent command,

t^{ac} = the duration until the end of the accent command

c. The horizontal axis of Fujisaki’s graphs is time, and the vertical axis is in terms of $\ln(F_0)$. By a minimal amount of algebraic manipulation, his formulae can also be expressed by using $\ln(F_0/b)$ [which is merely equal to the semitones times $\ln 2/12$], and b is the minimum possible frequency,

as above. (The reader has perhaps already guessed that this formulation can help with a comparison with 'tH.)

d. Let $g(t, q)$ and $h(t, r)$ be Fujisaki's exponential expressions in terms of time with parameters q and r respectively, which are speaker-specific constants. More specifically, these are functions, one of whose arguments is the speaker, since the other arguments are unknown and the values are very nearly constant. Fujisaki takes them to be equivalent to speaker-specific parameters, having noted this distinction in his experimental approach as well as his conceptual exposition. The utterance component is the concatenation of the individual components of the utterance considered, each phrase component being expressed by:

$$(7) A(t, i) * [g(t_{pb}, q) - g(t_{pe}, q)]$$

Each accent component is formed by:

$$(8) B(t, j) * [h(t_{ab}, r) - h(t_{ae}, r)]$$

(see Fujisaki (1982: 7).)

To arrive at the Fo contour for the utterance, in terms of $\ln(Fo/b)$ one sums up the phrase components and the accent components over time and individual accents, i.e., summing the two over t , i , and j . The (very flexible) exponential functions g and h [$g(t, q) = q * t * \exp(-q * t)$ and $h(t, r) = (1 - (1 + r * t) * \exp(-r * t))$, resp.] are based partly on curve-fitting, but also partly on certain physiological connections, such as subglottal pressure. This pressure on the lung cavity seems to vary with time *grosso modo* in the same way that frequency does with time, as do certain other physiological mechanisms. This does not necessarily point to a direct cause-and-effect relationship, but rather to the fact that these various mechanisms respond to the same stimuli (such as, perhaps, the larynx). (Besides Fujisaki see also Collier 1975.)

3. Conflicts

Each of models 'tH and LP has its weaknesses and its strengths. These come out most clearly when a strength of one is contrasted with a weakness of the other. Thus, keeping in mind the definitions and formulae of these two models as presented in the last section, we present seven areas of conflict. Doing so will guide us in the development of a model designed to resolve these conflicts.

Conflict 1. Look-ahead.

The Eq.'s (1) and (2) of 'tH depend upon t_g , the length of the utterance. This assumes that, in order to choose the beginning pitch and the slope of declination, the speaker must know the duration of his utterance in advance. This idea, especially for longer or spontaneous utterances, is disputed by LP and others, despite the general impression to the contrary. As Ladd (1996: 29-30) expresses it, agreeing with LP (1984:220 ff.): "This degree of look-ahead may be psycholinguistically implausible, and for speech synthesis models is certainly computationally expensive."

Conflict 2. Reference levels.

Comparing Eq.'s (1) and (2) with Eq.'s (4) and (5) may not immediately show a conflict unless one notes that the value r prevents the decay from proceeding below the asymptote $F_o = r$, the reference level, whereas no such mechanism is present in 'tH. Referring to the line $F_o = b$ as the "baseline", LP remark:

"Among authors who have tried to be explicit about how F_o contours are scales, log transforms are popular. 't Hart and Cohen (1973) propose a model of Dutch intonation. Such models make wrong predictions because they lack any counterpart in our reference level, which changes with overall pitch range while leaving the baseline (seen in the final L(ow) tones) invariant." (Lieberman and Pierrehumbert 1984: 225).

The paper does not elaborate on which kinds of "wrong predictions" are meant, but one possibility is that these refer to predictions obtainable by extrapolation of the curves in order to determine what would happen if the

utterance continued longer than intended. That is, in this case the speaker might be forced to go below the lowest possible frequency: a contradiction. This weakness of 'tH is avoided by LP via the reference value r , but this then points out a weakness of LP: what is the interpretation of r ?

Conflict 3. Ad hoc variables and formulae.

In LP the ad hoc nature of the means of calculating the reference level is admitted:

...perhaps only the portion of P_0 above b should be relevant in determining r . Except for b , which is identified with the speaker's invariant final low F_0 value, none of the parameters in this equation have any clear interpretation. The parameter d is the translation of 'somewhat', while e and f are just a way of getting a curved function with a minimum number of additional parameters (Lieberman and Pierrehumbert 1984: 205).

We may add that the non-linear part of the formula differs from one utterance to another about as much as the value of d , thus emphasizing the ad hoc aspect of this part of the model.

Conflict 4. Pitch range.

Here we repeat the point indirectly made in the quotation cited in Conflict 1: that 'tH does not take into account the pitch range variations. Eq. (4) has already shown us how the reference value depends on the pitch range; also, for LP the pitch range is tied to emphasis, apparently not taken into account in 'tH. (A note of caution when comparing the pitch ranges in the two models: LP measures pitch range from the highest peak, whereas 'tH measures it from the (lower) beginning frequency.)

Conflict 5. Peaks vs time.

In the above equations, even more striking than the difference in vertical axes as treated in the last two conflicts is the difference in horizontal axes: LP referring to peak number, and 'tH using time (minus long pauses). Admittedly, LP thereby avoids the difficulty of "look-ahead" as

explained above, but the idea of eliminating all dependence on time seems a little strange.

Conflict 6. Non-declining patterns.

Despite the differences in axes, some characteristics can be compared. For example, a falling curve will fall in both frames of reference. But whereas for 'tH all declarative sentences decline, for LP this is far from the case: only those sections after a strong accent decay; just beforehand there is an upstep, and otherwise the line connecting the peaks may be flat or v-shaped (two roughly equal pitches with a lower pitch in between) or follow other patterns than declination would allow.

Conflict 7. Final lowering.

In section 2 we remarked that the highs and lows come progressively closer to one another. The precise manner in which this occurs is represented in 'tH by the theory in which the low-line is parallel to (has the same slope D as) the top line when on a logarithmic scale (such as semitones). (A lower line on such a scale will, when converted to a linear scale such as Hertz, descend less rapidly.) The constraint that every utterance ends on this line, i.e. as a low, corresponds in this model to the lowering of pitch which one uses to signal the end of an utterance. LP, on the other hand, pays little attention to patterns of lows other than establishing the minimal frequency b , and making a few speculative comments (these latter in Liberman and Pierrehumbert (1984): 218 - 219). For LP, then, this pitch lowering is to be found in an unusual lowering of the last high. For 'tH the last high follows the same pattern as the others.

4. Resetting

The above conflicts seem at first glance to doom any attempt at a formal or mathematical unification. However, upon closer inspection they turn out to be differences in interpretation, including differences in domains (i.e., sets or classes of possible values for the respective symbols); a unification of theories thus implies a union of their respective domains, and often, as here, a new domain extending this union, although one reasonable extension will serve as well as another to show the compatibility of the

original domains. The extension chosen here, that of greater possibility for variability, including discontinuous variability, is inspired by the requirements posed by the solutions needed for the conflicts enumerated above.

This present section is devoted to those components. The central idea is that of resetting, inspired by techniques already known under that name (see, for example, Ladd (1988) and Ladd (forthcoming)). In our explanation of the term, we shall use “strategy”, by which we mean the activation of motor nerves, based on predictions, allowing one to adjust one’s physiological mechanism to be ready for a longer or shorter utterance. (Of course, if the semantic strategy changes, so do the syntactic and thus the physiological ones, so the term may be a little loose without causing undue confusion.) The motivation is that the curves described by models of decay are dependent upon the strategy of the speaker. Over longer sentences, speakers obviously change strategies as they speak: the curve changes accordingly, not only in shape but also in position (i. e., a different frequency). A function describing this process may very well include arguments of a syntactical nature. For example, Ladd (forthcoming) finds that the amount of resetting is greater for the conjunction “but” than for the conjunction “and”.

Moreover, this research established that if the continuous (i.e., non-reset) pieces of a discontinuous (i.e., reset), F_0 contour are compared, then a difference exists between the corresponding points on each piece (e.g., the beginnings) and the syntactical points of the piece. However, this can be difficult, since the resetting is not always obvious as, for example, in a parenthetical phrase. When the resetting is sufficiently frequent, it may manifest itself as a different decay rate. As an example, Umeda (1982) remarked that declination is different according to whether the text spoken was a read list, a read text, or normal conversation. Investigations by Cooper & Sorenson (1977) were not conclusive as to whether resetting occurred, as is pointed out in the article, even though an interpretation of “local inflections” is preferred there. Obviously, further quantitative research is necessary before adequate mathematical functions describing resetting and declination-of-reset-decays can be established. Nonetheless, we assume that such functions exist. A further complication in searching

for such functions is that each function may be composed of several parts: for example, not only may the pulse within a frame of reference be reset, but the frame of reference, asymptotes, baselines, parameters, may all be subject to resetting, and sometimes these are interconnected; for example, resetting a parameter may change the frame of reference, and vice-versa, although neither direction is automatic. We give some examples of these in the next section, but here we wish to say a few words about frames of reference and related ideas relevant to our later discussion.

By a “frame of reference” is meant a system in which something is expressed. Graphically, the axes, together with the means of graphing, form the frame of reference for a curve. Not every baseline or asymptote forms a new frame of reference. For example, the “guidelines” of the connected highs and lows, respectively, do not form one for the F_0 contour unless the curve is expressed strictly in terms of them. In changing the vertical axis from Hertz to semitones, 'tH has changed the frame of reference; LP could have changed (but didn't) the frame of reference to express the results in “pitch above reference level” ($F_0 - r$). However, these changes of the vertical axes were for convenience of expression, having no correspondence in the interpretations. In Fujisaki, on the other hand, the interpretation seems to be clear that the accent component is based on the utterance component, leading one to feel that the latter forms a new form of reference for the accent component. In this case, however, there is no correspondence for this interpretation in the theory: he combines the function by a simple addition.

5. Proposal for an Integrated Model

In this section we form our model by outlining first the extension of the theories of LP and 'tH and then giving an interpretation. Our integrated model is formed by first defining the symbols, and then the equations, and finally the interpretation. Although this separation requires a bit of patience, we hope that the reader will bear with us. The model is formed as follows:

- (a) We take all the symbols of 'tH and of LP, and rename them appropriately (i.e., if two symbols are to always have the same

interpretation, then they are to be assigned the same symbol, and only then).

(b) Strictly, we should introduce new symbols to distinguish them from those of the other models, while keeping enough similarity in the new symbols to remind us of their connection with the old. For example, we could use m^\wedge rather than m , b^\wedge rather than b , etc. But except for some points below that need to be made explicit, this would be awkward, and so we shall trust the reader to make the necessary distinctions according to the context. As well, we could introduce a function to account for the lack of perfect predictive power of the model due to hidden variables, but this may be left implicit:

- (i) the variables b^\wedge , r^\wedge , m^\wedge , s^\wedge , t^\wedge 's, $F(\hat{\delta})$ and $P\hat{\delta}$, so named as to be associated with the parameters without the hat,
- (ii) the variable symbols “state”, “syntax”, and “Language”, and the function D' (Language, ts),
- (iii) for every variable symbol x , introduce a function symbol fx .

For every discontinuity of this function, define another function equalling fx restricted to a neighbourhood of the discontinuity. The union of these latter functions forms a resetting function equalling fx restricted to neighbourhoods of its discontinuities.

- (iv) for each function $f(x)$ with parameter p being one of those mentioned in (i), introduce the function $f(x, p^\wedge)$.
- (v) for every function f , introduce the set of functions (f_1, f_2, f_3, \dots) so that f may be expressed as their combination (addition, composition, etc...)
- (vi) for every function symbol g , introduce the symbol g^\wedge .
- (viii) for every relation or function symbol R , introduce the symbol $DOMR$. (In discussion the subscript will be left out if the context is clear.)

(c) Introduce the following new relationships:

(i) In equations (1) - (5) replace m , b , r , D , $F(0)$ and Po by m^\wedge , b^\wedge , r^\wedge , s^\wedge , D^\wedge , $F^\wedge(0)$, and $p^\wedge o^\wedge$ respectively, and adjust the function symbols as in (b)(v).

(ii) For each variable x introduce the relation:

$$(9) \quad x^\wedge = \mathbf{fx}(\mathbf{state}, \mathbf{syntax}, \mathbf{Language})$$

(iii) For each application of step (i) transforming an old formula f into a new formula g and transforming y to y^\wedge , both with variable x , solve $g(x, y^\wedge) = f(x)$ for y^\wedge , stating its validity DOM. Example: take Eq. (5) and its transformed version, and we arrive at:

$$(10) \quad s^\wedge = (\mathbf{sn}^*(\mathbf{Po} - \mathbf{r}) + \mathbf{r} - \mathbf{r}^\wedge)/(\mathbf{Po} - \mathbf{r}) \mathbf{01/n}$$

(This can of course then be combined with (ii); i.e., setting the right-hand sides equal when left hand sides are equal.)

(iv) for every function g , introduce the relation:

$$(11) \quad g^\wedge (\mathbf{u}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{state}, \mathbf{syntax})) = \mathbf{u}(g(\mathbf{x}), \mathbf{state}, \mathbf{syntax})$$

The interpretation of the integrated model is formulated as follows (The upper case letters correspond to the lower case ones of the syntax.):

(A) Keep those symbols which already have interpretations in LP and 'tH; the interpretations of the others will be explained below as special cases of new variables.

(B)

(I) b^\wedge is a base frequency below which the speaker could not descend at a given moment (i.e., given conditions) if he wished to lower his frequency. Thus when the interpretation of "syntax" (see below) includes being at the end of a declarative sentence, $b^\wedge = b$.

For the next two variables we assume that, among the characteristics of pitch which the speaker uses to modulate his voice, there are bases to which the speaker compares his voice. Among these there would be a (variable) highest and a (variable) lowest value at any point. These are the interpretations of r^\wedge and m^\wedge , respectively. It is possible that $m^\wedge = b^\wedge$, but this

requires further research. Fujisaki assumes that $m^{\wedge} = b^{\wedge} = b$, assumptions that we are not willing to make. We assume rather the relationships as in (c) (ii) above; that they depend on “state” and “syntax” (subglottal pressure, anger, emphasis, etc., as below). Furthermore, by “bases” is meant an interpretation corresponding to composition of functions in the theory. s^{\wedge} has the same meaning as s , except that it is variable as indicated by Eq.(9). The remaining hatted variables are explained in (B)(IV) below.

(II) “state” is interpreted as the set of relevant measurable physical, physiological, and psychological constraints of the speaker at the time considered. “Syntax” is interpreted as the union of (1) syntactical constraints imposed by the language in the context of the speaker’s state and (2) relevant previous values of “syntax”. (Thus its fuller description would be recursive.)

“Language” is Dutch, English, Japanese, etc. and would include cultural as well as grammatical relations and variables. “Strategy” could also be defined in terms of these three - not necessarily independent - variables.

(III) The replacement of D by D' is necessary since the slope formula is perhaps language-specific or situation-dependent.

(IV) Resetting corresponds to the resetting functions above.

However, we do not use them to define utterances: in the integrated model, an utterance can be any part of a sentence, spoken or intended. Furthermore, f/s is to be interpreted as the duration of an utterance, not necessarily, but possibly of a sentence (the duration of an utterance or possibly a sentence ?). Thus Po^{\wedge} and $F(0)$ correspond to Po and $F(0)$ respectively, but are the beginnings of the utterances considered, of which there can be many in a sentence, and thus are variable.

(V) This definition of new functions is obviously a formal necessity stemming from the use (explained in (C) below) of the newly defined variables.

(VI) The decomposition of functions allows one to take into account that

more than one function at a time may be relevant: that is, more than one strategy can occur at once, so that the end effect is a combination of the individual corresponding functions. This corresponds to the fact that a human thinks in parallel terms rather than serially, even though the end result is required to be a serial representation. The combination may be an addition of weighted values, as in Fujisaki (the functions A and B providing the weights), a composition of functions (as in the changing of frames of reference), or other combinations of operations.

(VII) The formal necessity of g^{\wedge} is made evident in Eq.(11).

(VIII) “DOM” indicates the domains of relations, and thus is used to hold in check any unfounded universality.

(C)

(I) The new interpretations of the equations of LP and 'tH , as formally adjusted, follow automatically from the interpretation of the variables above.

(II) Eq.(9) indicates the dependence of the new variables on more fundamental factors. An example of the use of this equation was already given above in mentioning a constraint on b^{\wedge} .

(III) Eq.'s (1) - (5) we take to be valid in the sense that they yield correct data (within fuzziness) under their respective original domains. Thus we constrain our variables to be equal to the values found for the parameters of these equations. The example of b^{\wedge} was just given; Eq.(10) is an example with s^{\wedge} . In the latter, s^{\wedge} will be equal to s under the original DOM despite the “hatting” of the other quantities; however, under an extension of DOM, there is no reason to expect it to take on the same values elsewhere.

DOM can here be given a wider interpretation, but only very cautiously. Upon an extension of DOM, the original formulae will likely be shown to be approximations to other formulae, so it is dangerous to claim any universality for a formula developed from limited data. To take a simple example: if, for an utterance that began at 119 Hz and lasted 4 seconds, one calculated the middle line in the model of 'tH , then one could just as

well have used the linear formula $F_0 = 119 - 11*t$, coming within 3 Hertz of the values given by the more complicated formulae (1) and (2) above. Only by observing other cases would it become apparent that the linear formula would not suffice. Thus by expanding DOM one also corrects formulae. Another advantage of such an expansion would be to clarify the resetting functions, as can be seen by combining (c)(iii).

(IV) Eq. (11) is a formal necessity, given our previous definitions.

6. Resolution of Conflicts.

With regard to the difference in approaches, we share the outlook of Beckman and Pierrehumbert (1986: 302) that a theory of downstep (renamed “catathesis” in this later work) need not contradict a theory of declination. Indeed, we show how the seven conflicts of Section 3 are to be resolved in the integrated model, thus reinforcing the idea that the theories, if not the interpretations, of LP and 'tH are consistent with one another. The numbering of the seven resolutions below corresponds to that of the conflicts above.

Resolution 1. Look-ahead.

That the declination of the speaker’s voice will vary according to the length of the utterance does not necessarily imply a “look-ahead” strategy, since an alternative interpretation could be that the speaker selects the slope and beginning pitch, thus determining the length of the sentence. However, this latter is somewhat unnatural, so we shall assume the former. The resolution lies rather with our interpretation of “utterance” as any part of a sentence, spoken or only intended. That is, there is no contradiction in assuming that the speaker combines a “look-ahead” strategy with a “see-as-you-go” one in that he makes tentative predictions upon which he acts (speaks) until he makes another one, whereby a “prediction” refers to a physiological and psychological state, not to a conscious calculation. If the speaker changes his strategy, then this would be equivalent to either (1) choosing from a family of states, i.e., dispositions to a new slope and starting frequency, or (2) changing the (physiological, psychological, and

mathematical) frame of reference, and either also changing the slope and frequency, or keeping one or both in the frame. In any case the contour is reset, and the necessity for a correct prediction of utterance duration is avoided.

Resolution 2. Reference levels.

LP praises its reference level as an asymptote for the contour, and criticises ‘tH for not having one. Does ‘tH need one? The straight lines in the graphs of ‘tH are each specifically defined for a limited domain. That is, the slope of the line is defined by the length of the utterance, and not beyond. In other words, a strategy is identified with a slope and, by extension, with a starting frequency, a frame of reference, base line values, and so forth, over the interval of time corresponding to the duration of the (possibly interrupted) strategy. Reasons for changes in strategy and hence the associated values are multiple, including physiological, psychological, and syntactic grounds. Such changes are thus associated with an adjustment, or “resetting”, of these values. Each “reset” then defines a new domain. To talk of extrapolation in this context is inappropriate; asymptotes are unnecessary (an asymptote being a linear extension of an extrapolation to infinity), given proper attention to DOM, to insure that the decay includes the function of “brake” which is performed in LP by the reference level.

Resolution 3. Ad hoc variables and formulae.

A certain amount of curve-fitting is inevitable, but a basic requirement for any model is for the interpretation of the combined symbols to be the same as their combined interpretation. This principle of strict correspondence between theory and interpretation cannot be fulfilled if the individual symbols do not each have an interpretation; however, the workability of the formulae as a whole indicate that with a bit of care, an interpretation could be given to the individual symbols so as to fit this criterion. This was the motivation behind our definitions and interpretations in the integrated model. The interpretations may not be to everyone’s taste, but at least there is a correspondence.

Resolution 4. Pitch range.

We return to LP's assertion that a "reference level" is meritorious because it links pitch range with the type of decay (as is seen by combining Eq.'s (3) and (4) or, equivalently, (4) and (5)). This link is present as well in 'tH . Purely formally, combining Eq.'s (1) and (2) shows that the pitch range varies with the length of the sentence, or, put another way, the length of the sentence varies with the range, until a maximum pitch range is attained. (Although LP does not handle longer utterances, one would presume that it admits the limitations of pitch range.) Even when the pitch range is the same in terms of semitones, it will not be the same in terms of Hertz if the beginning frequencies aren't. Similarly, for the slope, although the semitone scale is actually pushed slightly down by emphasis (emphasis increases utterance duration slightly), the higher beginning frequency would cause a steeper decline on the Hertz scale, as is the case in LP. For 'tH , then, the ability of its graphs to take in differing pitch ranges due to emphasis is clear. (In the integrated model, furthermore, a more subtle distinction is made: it is possible for m^{\wedge} to be reset, altering yet again the relationship between the Hertz and the semitones, just as resetting b^{\wedge} or r^{\wedge} can alter the interpretation of LP's theory. Thus this additional flexibility of the integrated model makes contradiction even more unlikely).

Resolution 5. Peak number vs. time.

We continue our assertion that flexibility regarding one or the other frame of reference resolves many a difficulty. The difference in horizontal axes reflects not only two different attempts to fit data to a curve, but also a difference in outlook regarding phonological phenomena: in considering peak number, LP concentrates on the discrete characteristics, whereas 'tH rather considers the continuous aspect. As both aspects are likely in play during an utterance, our model uses one when considering peak number, and another when considering time. Is there a danger of contradiction here? A direct comparison is impossible due to the discrepancy of axes.

Let us illustrate how the two may be compatible by assuming, for the moment, that both are used to analyse an utterance with the first word

heavily emphasized (the so-called “BA” pattern in LP), and where no resetting occurs. Furthermore we shall, in order to make the demonstration simpler, assume that $b^{\wedge} = b$, $s = s$, etc., as well as leaving out the final lowering for the moment (returning shortly to the latter). Given a fixed pair of beginning frequencies (beginning the utterance and the first accented peak), a fixed speaker, and a fixed peak number, is there a time (within reason) when tH 's value = that of LP ? If the answer is in the affirmative for every n before resetting might occur, then the functions are compatible.

Using the notation of section 2, our above question then becomes whether there is, given fixed values for s , r , b , t_s , $Q(0)$, $P(0)$ and n , a reasonable value of t so that $P(n) = Q(t)$, whereby we let $Q(t)$ mean $F(t)$ converted into Hertz. For the sake of illustration we take the following random possible values:

(12)

$$s = 0.6$$

$$r = 100 \text{ Hz}$$

$$b = 60 \text{ Hz}$$

$$t_s = 4 \text{ sec.}$$

$$Q(0) = 150 \text{ Hz}$$

$$P(0) = 200 \text{ Hz}$$

$$n = 2$$

$$m = 60 \text{ Hz}$$

then, rewriting $Q(0)$ and $P(0)$ as Q_0 and P_0 respectively for legibility, we solve for the equation:

$$(13) \quad t = [\log_2(12 * [sn * (P_0 - r) + r]) - 12 * \log_2(Q_0/m)]/D$$

which is obtained by converting and setting $Q(t) = P(n)$. For these values we get $t = 2.6 \text{ sec}$, a not unreasonable value. (We emphasize, however, the purely illustrative nature of this and other examples in the text. Among other factors, the slope D is language-specific, and English and Dutch do not necessarily share the same slopes.)

LP points out that peaks follow the same rule, no matter how far apart in time they are, and that the same difference should apply for the two peaks being 1 or 3 seconds apart. However, we can take Eq.(10) and easily (if tediously) solve it in terms of a given t , setting some other quantity as a variable: s , P_o , or using Eq.(2), ts . For example, this latter would mean that the longer time between the same peaks would indicate a longer sentence - not surprisingly.

If resetting forms part of the interpretation, introducing the variables with hats, then using at any given moment the adjusted formulae (4) and (14), one could solve for P_o^{\wedge} and D simultaneously, the interpretation being that the speaker resets his pitch and his state as he discovers how quickly or slowly he is speaking (accenting).

Resolution 6. Non-declining patterns.

In reading that downstep exists in the case of emphasis but not in the case of normal accenting, as LP asserts, one is tempted to raise the question as to the exact border between an accent and an emphasis. Since the border is assuredly not precise, and since a smaller pitch range will mean a smaller absolute decrease, they are very likely unrecognised downstep patterns. Nonetheless there are still cases of the upsteps and other non-declining patterns. We show that these fit into the integrated model, by dividing them up into three groups.

(Group I.) Upsteps can be the result of resetting mechanisms. Of these we distinguish two types: (a) a resetting of the pitch from one curve to the next; and (b) the same curve with regard to the frame of reference, but a resetting of the frame of frequency.

(Group II.) valleys, peaks, and flat sections on the line connecting the highs then are results of combinations of effects of Group I. To see this, and to show that this is perfectly in accordance with LP's formalism, we first recall our definition of utterance. In our model, a sequence of pitch accents X-Y-Z can yield an utterance of not only XYZ but also the utterances XY and YZ. If XY is an utterance of the "BA type" and YZ an utterance of the "AB" type, or vice-versa, then the end effect is a change by a factor of $k*s$ (using the notation of section 2) which is approximately 1, giving the impression of an utterance XYZ with a v shape or inverted v , respectively, and an impression that XZ is flat.

(Group III.) As with all these analyses, it is possible that there are patterns which were handled by 'tH, and not by LP, and vice-versa. The most obvious differences are the language and cultural differences, but others may be of relevance.

Resolution 7: Final lowering.

On one side, we seem to be on solid ground with the concept of a lowering of frequency to mark the end of a declarative sentence: everyone agrees that this happens, and we even have the basis for a possible representation in a physiological frame of reference, in that there is a clear (physiological) release at the end of the utterance. (See the graphs of Collier, 1975.) That, therefore with respect to the horizontal axis of such a frame of reference, the curve need not show such a strong fall, if at all, would simplify the task of building the integrated model with a clear interpretation and make possible a simpler theory.

On the other side, when looking at the details, the ground seems to become shaky again. Is this phenomenon different from an extension of the pattern from the rest of the sentence? LP says yes, 'tH says no. Is this a direct contradiction? On the formal level, not at all, since the patterns in question are different. The difference may be a matter of formulation, but also perhaps due to a difference in domains. For example, since LP treated only English and 'tH only Dutch, there remains a question: is final lowering a language-specific phenomenon? If yes, then the rate for 1 will be around 0.7 for English -- i.e., for English L will be equal to 1 (small L),

and for Dutch, one may approximate also 1 (one). If no, then the question arises: does final lowering exist? If no, then a bit of adjusting of the various constants in LP will do away with the need for 1 (or, of course, another formula). For example, if $s = 0.6$, $P = 200 \text{ Hz}$, $r = 100\text{Hz}$, and $l = 0.7$, then one can calculate the F_0 decay. One can then describe another decay with the same equations except without a final lowering constant, using $s = 0.54$, $r = 106 \text{ Hz}$. In this case the decays are never more than about 2Hz away from one another! If, however, final lowering does exist, a very slight adjustment in 'tH's equations can also account for it. For this process we diverge for a moment to handle significant figures; this may seem pedantic, but it is important to explain our example.

Given any measurement or results of calculations based on measurements, one assumes that the numbers could have been rounded off; for example, given simply "11", this could have been round off for any number between 10.5 and 11.5. Likewise, a number 1.5 is really some number n , for $1.45 < n < 1.55$. So, the formula (2) above allows us to say that the slope for $t_s < 5 \text{ sec.}$ is given by

$$(14) - 11.5/(t_s + 1.45 \text{ sec.}) < D < - 10.5/(t_s + 1.55 \text{ sec.})$$

For example, if we have an utterance of exactly three seconds, the slope will vary between **-2.6 and -2.3 st/sec.** Using a base of **50Hz**, this can make the difference between the **148 Hz** and the **139 Hz** of the example for a final lowering of subject DWS in LP (compare Figure 21, p. 187 and Table 10, p.202, of Liberman and Pierrehumbert (1984)). Thus final lowering need not be contradictory to the declination of 'tH on the formal level, especially given the use of the 'uncertainty relation u ' as explained previously.

There remains the contradictions on the interpretive level: what is the phonological phenomenon? Does the final peak have a different decay or not? From the preceding explanations, it is clear that the theories are compatible due to the application of the fuzzy function u , so that the integrated formal model could take either 'tH's or LP's interpretation and remain consistent (assuming it was consistent beforehand). However, u 's

interpretation makes such a choice unnecessary: in denying the validity of such precision as appears in these other two models the integrated model differs equally from both; yet the presence of u assures that the predicted values in each are included in the range of predicted values in the integrated model.

7. The Conceptual Differences Again

By developing a formal mathematical model that integrates different properties of the two leading models of F_0 scaling, our purpose is not to overshadow the conceptual differences that underlie these models. We intend in this closing chapter to briefly present the major conceptual differences that need to be empirically tested. We shall also summarize some of the controversial points discussed above.

LP's model is based on level tones or peaks and eliminates the necessity of contour tones or tunes; the IPO model has pitch movements among its primary categories. The 'hat' model is for instance a combination of a rise and a fall. This is phonologically relevant, but may not be inconsistent, viewed from a quantitative perspective. LP's model does the same. The level approach integrates previous approaches that were configurational or contained contour tones. However, this is not to say that the IPO model is only phonetically oriented. As Ladd (1996:14) has stated it: 'The IPO tradition is in many ways the first to make a serious attempt to combine an abstract phonological level of descriptions with a detailed account of the phonetic realisation of the phonological elements.'

LP's model doesn't reject an overall slope dependent on time. According to LP's empirical finding, even among variant speakers, the relationship between two accent peaks is constant, irrespective of the pitch range and of the length of the syllables. A local downstep, respective to a previous one, predicts the location of the next accent peak. Here again the choice between a downstep model and a time oriented model is based on phonology. Downstep is largely motivated by a slope independent on time among many languages, especially African languages. Time is a variable factor, and a continuous factor as opposed to tones that are discrete.

A fundamental conceptual difference with Fujisaki's model is that it is based on positive, High Peak tones (or accent commands) and doesn't take into account the Low (accented) tones. As pointed out by Ladd (1996:285) 'It is possible [emphasis, A&R] to approximate the low-rising contours, but this is inconsistent with the intend function of the phrase component'.

We would like to conclude this paper by quoting Ladd's (1996:285) fundamental remark that "(t)here seems little doubt that an overlay model is the best way to treat [microprosodic phenomena] in generating F_0 for synthetic speech'. If this is true, then we have shown how this type of model can be extended to formally integrate other different formal properties of F_0 -scaling such as final lowering, lowering of successive peak accents and resetting.

8. Conclusion

When comparing two models, the present trend in linguistic F_0 scaling has focussed on the conceptual differences. However, the proponents of one linguistic model do not ignore the fact that even opposing models represent a considerable amount of data, as represented by the formulae as restricted to the conditions of the measurements (i.e., before extrapolation). Since any model should correspond to the tested and the testable, it is the theories which are primary which should form the basis for a unification. To convince the respective proponents and opponents of various theories that such a unification is even possible, one must show that the theories do not contradict one another on the formal level and need not contradict one another on the interpretative level. This is the *raison d'être* of the model presented here. Furthermore we have included in our formal model some elements which should invite the type of further experimentation so necessary to assure a proper correspondence between theory and interpretation.

ENDNOTES

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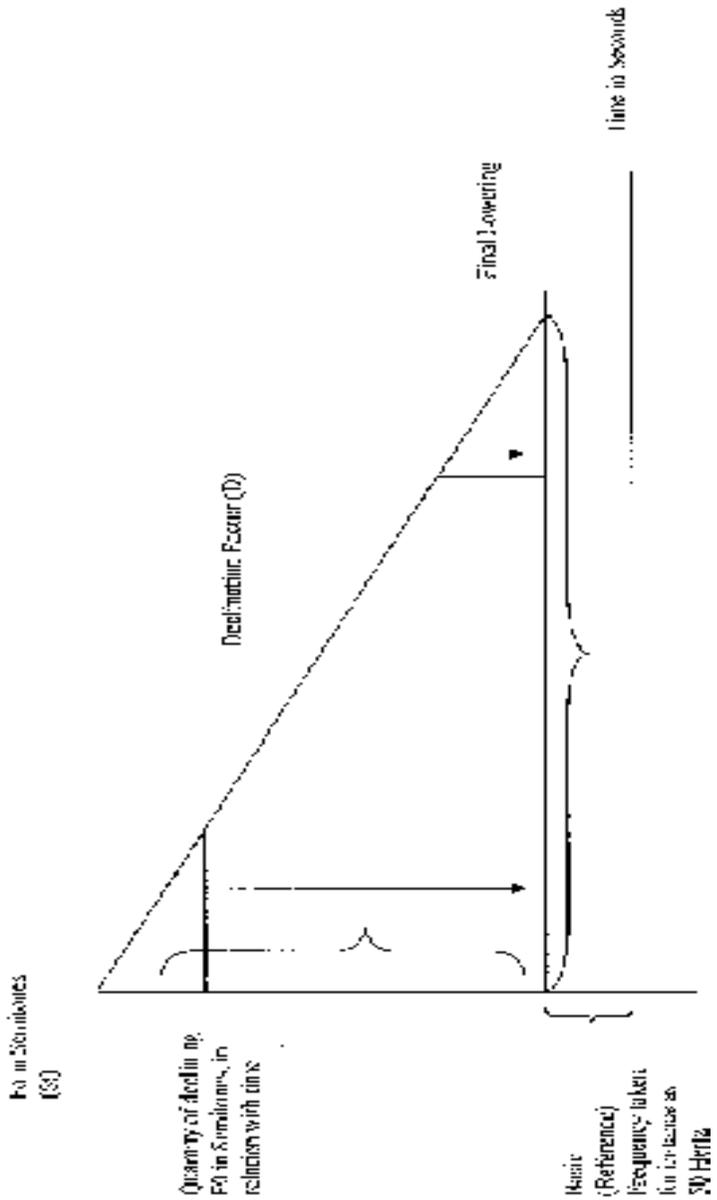
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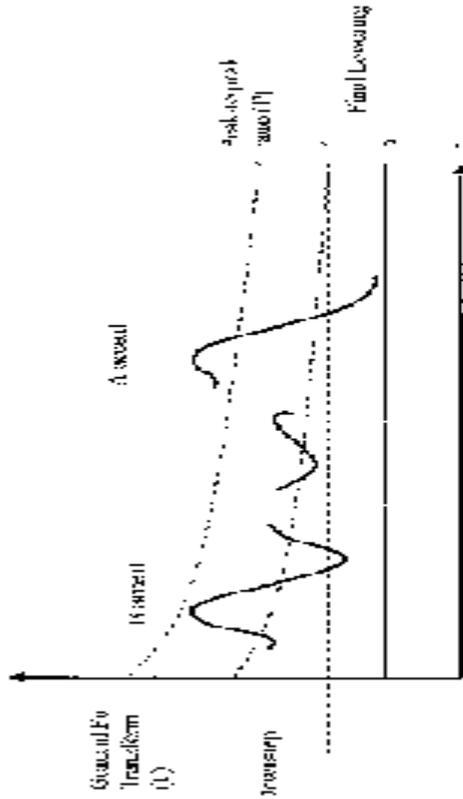
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COMPONENTS OF THE INTONATIONAL MODEL

Q: What about Anna? Who did she come with?
A: Anna came with Merrick.



Back-to-Africa’, ‘Double Consciousness’ and the African Diaspora: Confronting the Myth and the Reality in Ghanaian Fiction

Mawuli Adjei¹

What is Africa to me:

Copper sun or scarlet sea,
Jungle star or jungle track,
Strong bronzed men, or regal black
Women from whose loins I sprang
One three centuries removed
From the scenes his father loved,
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,
What is Africa to me?
Countee Cullen, “Heritage”

Abstract

*One of the most persistent debates about Black consciousness and Pan-Africanism has been on the attitudes of diasporans to Africa and of Africans to (returning) diasporans. This article critically examines the issue of the eternal connections between the continent of Africa and people of African descent in three Ghanaian works of fiction—Kofi Awoonor’s *Comes the Voyager at Last*, David Oddoye’s *The Return* and Ayi Kwei Armah’s *Osiris Rising*—and comes to the conclusion that the (re)connection between continental Africa and the African Diaspora is beset and mediated by formidable geo-political, cultural and historical barriers and, therefore, still in a state of flux.*

¹Mawuli Adjei is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English, University of Ghana.

Introduction

The rhetorical questions posed by the African-American poet, Countee Cullen, in the epigraph above in 1925, echoes of which resonate loudly in the works of Phyllis Wheatley, W.E. B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Alex Haley, Alice Walker, Maya Angelou and others, are as relevant today as they were at the time. These sentiments are encapsulated in DuBois' theory of "double consciousness"— "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (Du Bois 1903:45). How this operates, whether as theory, concept or practice, is what is explored in the fictive universe of the three Ghanaian texts under scrutiny.

According to Berry and Blassingame (1982:398), very early in the history of slavery,

Black Americans retained a strong sentimental and historical nostalgia for Africa. Even while black Americans took pride in the accomplishments of the ancient Egyptians and Ethiopians and insisted they were black, they recognized that the vast majority of Afro-Americans had been transported from the West Africa coast. They exulted in the black kingdoms of Songhay, Mali, and Ghana, which developed in the Sudan, and those of Benin and Zimbabwe... Although one can identify traces of African languages, religious activities, arts and crafts and kinship attitudes in black-American communities, that is less important than the recreation of African ties.

The early twentieth century saw the emergence of men like the Ghanaian Chief Alfred Sam, the Jamaican Marcus Moziah Garvey and W.E.B. Du Bois who stoked renewed interest in Africa. In the case of Du Bois, apart from his numerous writings on Black culture and politics, his actual relocation to Ghana in 1960 marked a watershed in the debate about the place of Africa in the consciousness of the African Diaspora. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, inspiration was drawn from Civil Rights activists such as Malcolm X, Elijah Mohammed and Martin Luther King

Jr., as well as from works including Cheik Anta Diop's *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality?* (1974), Alex Hailey's *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* (1976) and Molefi Kete Asante's *Afrocentricity: The Theory of Social Change* (1980).

A major destination for the African Diaspora is Ghana, due to the concentration on its coastline of the slave forts and castles which were the points of departure for millions of slaves into the New World and other parts of the world (Dantzig 1999). The Cape Coast and Elmina castles, in particular, have become grottos, archives and museums where hundreds of Africans from the Diaspora converge every year to confront their history. Added to this is the annual Pan African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST), a cultural and historical event which since its inception in 1992 has been drawing to Ghana people of African descent across the world.

Conceptualizing the African Diaspora

The term Diaspora was traditionally associated with the Jewish dispersal, but is now used in Cultural Theory to cover a wide range of territorial displacements through force such as indenture or slavery, or voluntary emigration. According to Michael Payne (1988:144),

Recent formulations have stressed not only the complex ties of memory, nostalgia and politics that bind the exile to an original homeland, but also sought to illuminate the lateral axes that link diasporic communities across national boundaries with the multiple other communities of the dispersed population.

The African Diaspora is best defined in the above context because it has taken multiple directions over the last three to four hundred years, configuring into a mutating, fluid and complex historical, political, economic and social process cutting across time, space, geography, race, class and gender. As Di Miao (2000:368) points out, the history of the African Diaspora is quite different from the history of any other diasporan formation; it “does not consist of merely one people, but of several peoples coming from many geographical areas, speaking a variety of languages,

praying to different gods, and belonging to diverse cultures.” His views are shared by Hamilton (1982:394) who notes that as a social formation the African Diaspora is conceptualized as “a global aggregate of actors and subpopulations differentiated in social and geographical space, yet exhibiting a commonality based on shared historical experiences conditioned by and within the world ordering system.” Characteristics identified by Hamilton include the historical dialectic between geographical mobility and the establishment of “roots”; resistance and political assertion which translate into what he terms “creative actions of psychocultural and ideological transformations; social networks and institutional dynamics.”

In Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), the African Diaspora, referred to as the “Black Atlantic,” is an imaginary geography of widely dispersed communities with shared histories of crossing, migration, exile, travel and exploration spawning hybrid cultures. This translates into a new spectrum of displacements, revivals and reconfiguration of identities and traditions that characterize the contemporary global cultural landscape.

Comes the Voyager at Last : Ancestral Faces

When *Comes the Voyager at Last* opens, the central character, MacAndrews, who later renames himself Sheik Lumumba Mandela after converting to Islam, talks about going “home” to Africa and being with “my people” and “touching the motherland” (7) because he seems to be tired of:

the impotent myths of my land of sojourn, the legends of Negrohood, of my flamboyant ancestors who worked the land, tall African giants of unremembered savannas not aware of pain or degradation, men whose only claim to humanity seemed to have been...their signal endurance record under the whip, of men who took refuge in the good book and actually believed that they too, as God’s children, will be given brightly colored robes to cover their nakedness on that glorious judgment day (80).

He recounts his family history, a history that cuts broad swathes into the general history of African-Americans, so that the story of Lumumba Mandela becomes the story of Africa in America. It is a story that encapsulates the struggles of a race which wants, sometimes, to ‘escape’ to the motherland, Africa. Lumumba Mandela’s story begins from the time his ancestors set foot in the New World, through the Civil War in which two of his ancestors fought, via Emancipation and Reconstruction to Freedom. It is a story of a people discriminated against, used, disused, abused and consigned to poverty, disease and unfulfilled dreams. That is why he is irked by the clergyman who constantly reminds them of their duties to Christ and the Church that kept their ancestors alive in a strange land. Looking back at the history of Africa-Americans in America, he wonders where the Christian God was when his people “tottered on the collective verge of annihilation [...] condemned to an eternity of suffering in other people’s vineyard?” (18).

Lumumba’s Pan-Africanist credentials are not in doubt either. He has been involved in the struggles of African-Americans in America. Not only was he present when the Black Civil Rights activist, Malcolm X, was assassinated on February 21, 1965 in Harlem, but also he was one of the members of the original Nation of Islam who split from the group to go along with Malcolm X and the Organization of African-American Unity. His consciousness of Africa certainly has its genesis in the political career of Malcolm X, a major Pan-Africanist icon:

After his famous trip to Africa following the split, Malcolm used to speak about Africa as the true home of all black people, the land of our ancestors which was rising up again. He spoke of how Africans looked like us, how we in America have been “brainwashed by centuries of slavery and the feeling of inferiority” (81).

No wonder Edgar Wright (1996:171) describes him as “a rather unconvincing, inauthentic rendition of the 1950s black American experience—a pot-pourri of Richard Wright, Malcolm X and James Baldwin.”

Once Lumumba sets foot in Africa to fulfil his dreams, we follow him every inch of the way; we listen to the pulses of his inner self and go through the motions of his spiritual reintegration within the African cosmos. It begins with a complementary education on Pan-Africanism from his African hosts. He is given a lecture on Fanonism by one of his Ghanaian friends, a seemingly overzealous scholar whose whole life is consumed by the spirit of Franz Fanon and the African revolution. Lumumba's real initiation into Africa, however, comes in the form of a spiritual and psychic induction. In a night club, the Red Rose, the third narrator, a flimsy disguise for the author, meets Lumumba, who in a brawl stabs several people. To flee from the surging crowd and the law, the narrator takes him to his home village. It is here that the spiritual dimension of the novel unfolds through the enactment of a series of rituals of re-engagement with the past, although the circumstances under which this spiritual reunion happens are a little farcical and initially unconvincing. Obi Maduakor (1994-92) describes the scenarios as magical realism, noting that "Awoonor reconnects Lumumba to his slave past by means of dream and flashback and he uses magic and fantasy to telescope this dance of cosmic harmony," a claim contested by Petro Deandrea (2002:27) on the grounds that:

The magic of Awoonor's novel is too oneiric, mediated and personal to be grouped under such a category. Sheik, for instance, has a recurrent dream about a funeral procession changing into a chain gang, an obvious hint at the unnamed narrator's captive experience [which] occurred centuries earlier. The parallelism is strengthened by some events that they both witness, but there is nothing more to suggest a conspicuous presence of the supernatural next to the real.

Deandrea agrees that the novel "attempts to evoke the collective unconscious of a whole race through its lyrical dimension," but considers the Afa priest's recognition of Lumumba unconvincing. He describes it as an "over-exploited stereotype", perhaps, with reference to Alex Hailey's *Roots* or Maya Angelou's *All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes* (where some market women mistake Maya for someone sold into slavery in Keta long, long ago). What Deandrea fails to appreciate is that the architect of the spiritual reconnection of Lumumba, the narrator's uncle, is an Afa priest. As Afa priest, he is situated between the mortal and

the immortal, between the divine and the temporal, between the tangible and the intangible, between the here-before, the here-and-now and the hereafter. As custodian of the supernatural, he straddles the esoteric realms as visionary, prophet, sage and teacher. In his interaction with mortals, human communication and experience beyond the mundane and secular becomes a synthesis of the real and the magical. It is with this extra-sensory authority that he operates as an Afa priest. Only he and his kind have the trained eyes to see what ordinary mortals cannot see (Bascom 1969; Idowu 1973). In this context, it is not surprising that he sees Lumumba and immediately recognizes him as “one of those people who left us long ago” (112). By virtue of the sacred knowledge only he possesses, he explains the inexplicable through recourse to the parable of the ants in motion:

You see those ants there? You see how they walk in a file, their rank closely knit? But anything can break their ordered march, smash the discipline and the progress of the march. And when that happens, there is chaos, confusion, destruction and death... But another time, one day, the ants will return to the rank, to the discipline of the tribe and the orderliness of the march. That becomes more important than the chaos and the disorder of the earlier times. (112-13).

This parable serves as a prelude to the proclamation of kinship connection between the diviner and Lumumba. With his gaze probing set on Lumumba, he says: “Look at those hands. Look at those eyes. If he had been just a shade darker, I would have told you who he is. And if I meet him in a strange town I’ll call his name, nay the name of his grandfather because he comes from our house.” (p. 113).

At any rate, one must not easily dismiss this “over-exploited stereotype.” Anyidoho (1989:39) tells the story of an African-American woman who, armed with her ancestral family name of Kwei Nortey, managed to trace her roots to Ningo, near Accra, and recalls how when she walked into that original house in Ningo, “she had the uncanny experience of walking into a house full of several dead relatives from the other family back in the United States”, for the faces “bore the unmistakable identity of relatives back in the States.” Going by Lumumba’s experience, we could argue

that Awoonor combines the real with the fantastic by creating a mythical and epical framework in which the diasporan returnee is filtered through a process of exile, conflict, liminality, consciousness, return, rediscovery and reconnection. In the context of that framework, not only are the relics of ancestry or belonging and the scars of separation reconfigured in physical identity, but also they are engraved in the collective unconsciousness. In this realm, trance, dream and fantasy become (sur)real channels for rebirth and reconnection.

Thus, Lumumba's experience at the end of the novel combines the physical with the spiritual dimensions of reconnection. As an ardent witness to the ritual performance of the Afa diviner, the throb of the medicine drums, the songs of women and the accompanying dances celebrating and commemorating his 'return', and as one chosen by a young maid for a husband, he becomes one of them in spirit. It is in this village of people close to nature, steeped in folklore and myths, that Lumumba discovers the real Africa and his kinship and connection to it. The spiritual undercurrent of Lumumba's African experience in a remote village looms large when placed against his other more mundane encounters during his one-year sojourn in Ghana. Apart from telling his life story and a bit of African-American history, it is not clear what exactly he did for the year. Yet his experience in Ghana is enough to redefine his whole being and his sense of place and belonging. This is what he confesses to at the end of his visit:

A year in Africa. And tonight I am going back to America. There is no feeling like the home going feeling that I hear grips people who stray away from their homelands. It doesn't feel like I am going home. Just like returning to a place you used to know very well. Or not very well either. But a place you carry in your memory, a place built into an edifice of joy and sorrow [...] A place where you walked in your own footsteps hearing the footfalls of folks before you, where you ate and drank your meager fares and bitter waters because you had no other choice (7-8).

However, *Comes the Voyager* ends inconclusively; Lumumba does not indicate whether he wishes to return to Ghana or not, let alone relocate there.

The Return: A Tarzan Mentality

The Return tells the story of Prince Nii Kojo Dadensroja who was separated from his future wife, Queen Ensinaa, when he was sold into slavery by his younger brother and shipped to America in the C18th, at the height of the glory of the Azanta Kingdom, a fictional name for the former Asante Kingdom. This story is told over and over again as part of folk memory in the family of the Goldsmiths, an affirmation of the idea that African oral traditions are central to understanding African-American cultural traditions and Black culture (Niane 1982). The protagonist, Jason Goldsmith, is a successful businessman whose company, Goldsmith Industries, specializes in aerospace engineering and computer networking security systems, with subsidiaries in the US, Canada, Europe, Southeast Asia and Australia. On a trip to the Ivory Coast in a bid to expand his business to Africa, his private jet crashes on a wooded mountain somewhere in the forest regions of West Africa. The site of the crash happens, by some coincidence, to be the heart of the age-old Azanta Kingdom which Jason Goldsmith has heard so much about. He and his crew are rescued by the local militia and sent to the court of the King of Azanta. It is here that Jason Goldsmith receives the shock of his life: he is recognized as the old Prince Dadensroja—a replay of Deandrea’s “over-exploited stereotype”. However, unlike Awoonor’s Lumumba, it does not take a diviner’s eyes to recognize Jason as someone from the old stock. A look at his chest reveals the royal sign of Azanta—a revelation that sends Princess Ensinaa, eponymous descendant of Queen Ensinaa, screaming. Consequently,

The guards rushed to Ensinaa’s side. She pointed in shock at Jason’s chest and they went over to look. There, perfectly etched on his chest was the ancient royal sign of Azanta, two threes hovering above each other like a figure of eight lying on its side, called “Gye Nyame” in the Akan language. The guards stood thunderstruck and then as if pushed down by a powerful force, they fell on their faces as one man and prostrated themselves before Jason who had now sat up in consternation (122).

The story is that before Queen Ensinaa died, “she prophesied that Prince Dadensroja would come from the skies to reclaim the throne of Azanta”

(128). Incidentally, Jason possesses the “majesty,” “height” and “physique” (122) of the prophesied messiah. By convention and logic, “as the direct descendant of Prince Dadensroja, and having the birthmark of the Royal House of Azanta, Jason automatically inherits the Golden Stool of Azanta and is the rightful king of Azanta” (127). It also means the end of the rule of the priests who seized power and ruled with an iron fist fearing that Prince Dadensroja would one day put them out of power. This puts Jason on a collision course with the present ruling class. It is a government marked by brutality and blood-letting; a government in which the Chief Priest would sacrifice anyone who challenges or poses a threat to his authority. In its depiction of autocratic rule, as well as in terms of its (time and place) setting, the narrative alludes to Jerry Rawlings’ PNDC military dictatorship, and generally, the many other military governments on the African continent. In this sense, the text’s postmodern and postcolonial inflexions become obvious. Presumably, Jason’s messianic calling entails the overthrow of the old oligarchy.

Oddoye’s Jason Goldsmith falls outside the orbit of the Africa-Diaspora reunion schema. Firstly, he is not the typical African-American who, like Sheik Lumumba Mandela, feels hemmed in by the stranglehold of the American socio-politico-economic system and who wants to escape that bind, if only temporarily. He is a wealthy businessman and part of the American aristocracy, effectively cushioned against the economic travails of his African-American counterparts. Secondly, he finds himself in Azanta purely by chance. Thirdly, in spite of all his initial pretensions Jason, is an expatriate fascinated by the ‘otherness’ of the Azanta jungle and society, as is his brother Jesse and their white companions who appear to be ‘tourists’.

As already stated, he set off for Africa as a businessman looking for new spheres and spaces to expand his business empire and not as a political messiah. He had visited Abidjan several times on business trips but had never developed any connection with this country beyond observing its semblances of an American city with well-appointed bazaars and boulevards. He demonstrates the ignorance of a first-time visitor to Africa and is obsessed with pedestrian Euro-Western perceptions and myths about Africa. Put another way, Jason and his crew come to Africa with

a Tarzan mentality. Their greatest fascination is not with the people and their culture and social organization, but with lizards, worms, monkeys, snakes, crocodiles and lions and the African jungle, defining features etched indelibly in the Western mind. Jason does not feel any sense of belonging because he is not in Africa to reconnect in the first place. The only time he professes his belonging is when he finds himself in danger of being killed, when he says:

This is my ancestral home! [...] My great, great great grandfather, Prince Nii Kojo Dadensroja, was unjustly sold as a slave to America. Today, my brother Jesse and I, his descendants, and our friends through our unfortunate accident, have found ourselves in beautiful Azanta, *a place we never believed existed* [my emphasis]. Shall we be treated as aliens and put to death because we are the unfortunate victims of unfortunate circumstances? The blood of Azanta, your blood, runs through our veins. You must right the wrong done to Prince Dadensroja so long ago by letting us go as free men! (140)

When he talks of Azanta blood running through their veins, the hollowness and insincerity of this claim reverberate across Africa to America: he seems to be merely engaged in a parody of what has been said of his Azanta ancestry. He is not interested in the new royal status conferred on him. All he wants is the freedom to go back to America (as an American citizen) where he *rightly* belongs. This is confirmed when he and his friends finally make their escape to the Ivory Coast: “Slowly, they made their way to the United States Embassy. They had never been happier to see the *emblazoned crest of the Embassy* [my emphasis]” (185-6); “happier,” not because of their escape, but for having touched the soil of America, symbolized by the Embassy.

It is only when, upon their arrival back in America, Jason and Jesse recount their ordeal to their family, that there is a reorientation regarding the full import of their experience in Azanta. Jason and his family decide to return to Africa, to Azanta, to re-enact the spiritual and historical bonds that bind the Goldsmith family to this Kingdom, and also to bridge the gap between the fairy-tale Azanta and the ‘real’ twentieth-century Azanta. But it must be borne in mind that they return as fugitives, aliens

and pretenders whose claims to a blood relationship must of necessity be proved beyond every reasonable doubt. In this case, Jason must prove his citizenship through a contest with the Chief Priest in *Adowa*, *Kpashimo* and *Agbadza*, three well-known traditional Ghanaian dances. The importance of this dance contest is that it signifies some education in and induction into traditional African culture. The three dance forms mentioned are significant not merely as the shuffling of feet to sounds and drums, but as total expressions of cultural literacy. Thus, after much tutoring, Jason “began to know the joy of being in total control of the dance, to be able to express his history, his present, his future and his very being in the totality of the African dance and ... inspire his people with it” (222). Eventually, he masters the dance and wins the contest against Lord Ason. It is only at this point that he is accepted as a citizen and an overlord of Azanta; only then does he feel one with them. His acceptance speech amplifies this new orientation and status:

Chiefs and elders of the people of Azanta [...] my family and I have been deeply touched by the warmth and love shown to us here in Azanta. For us, it is a renewal of life, a straightening out of the tangled but never forgotten web of our ancestry. It is an enduring affirmation of the greatness of our people, and an enriching of the dynamic root of our common heritage. As King of Azanta, I shall do all in my power to protect our cultural and traditional institutions as well as promote the economic progress of our people. Because of my global business interest however, my family and I will not be able to conduct any necessary business that may directly need the King’s attention. I have therefore, on the advice of the council of chiefs, appointed Lord Otu...to act as regent during my absences from Azanta (227).

If the recognition of Lumumba Mandela as an umpteenth generation slave by the old Afa priest in *Comes the Voyager* seems intriguing and implausible and makes sense only because of the interplay of ‘magic’ and realism, the recognition of Jason Goldsmith as the reincarnated Prince Dadensroja of the Azanta Kingdom is even more intriguing, given the fortuitous circumstances surrounding it. In both cases, the recognition and reintegration weigh more on the side of ceremony than substance. Jason’s eventual crowning as the substantive King of Azanta looks more

like the crowning of an *nkosuohene* (Akan) or *ngogbeyifia* (Ewe)—honorary or ceremonial chiefships which have been conferred on a number of diasporans for their charity work in Ghana, including singers Isaac Hayes and Rita Marley.

There are a number of thematic and artistic dissimilarities one can draw between *The Return* and *Comes the Voyager*. The most notable is that, whereas in *The Return* there is an initial hostility towards Jason, in *Comes the Voyager*, Lumumba is embraced without hesitation. In terms of narrative, *The Return* lacks the deep philosophical and psychological texture of *Comes the Voyager*. In the latter, the prose-poem interludes by a faceless and disembodied narrative voice which acts as a psychic and mnemonic backcloth to the text gives it a certain lyricism which also connects the past to the present. As Sackey (2000: 367) rightly observes, the narrative structure of *Comes the Voyager* is modelled on Awoonor's first novel, *This Earth, My Brother...*, which is a “medley of forms and intense, tight sequences of poetic prose alternating with more open stretches of realistic narrative” now and again broken by “shots of running commentary, all moving sometimes forward in time, sometimes backwards or in circles, and, at yet other times, operating outside our accustomed historical time-scale.”

Besides, Awoonor himself is situated in the narrative for he “has never believed in the idea of an author as a recluse”, and therefore, his “prominent presence in the novel...suggests the intimacy between the artist and his community” (Sackey, 2000:369). *The Return*, on the other hand, is modelled on a Hollywood, highbrow, pulp fiction tradition targeted at a Western readership with copious footnotes and explanatory glosses. A major problem with the text is the pre-historic, dreadful, and barbaric picture Oddoye paints of the twenty-first century Azanta Kingdom. It is a state-within-a-state (modern Ghana) located deep within an impenetrable jungle, a totally claustrophobic and xenophobic island barricaded against and untouched by modern civilization, almost frozen in time. Oddoye's Azanta is a law unto itself with the state apparatus being fuelled and driven by institutional bloodlust. It is a typical Tarzan setting. On first encounter, any visitor from the West, even if he has African blood flowing through him, would regard the people as ‘noble savages’.

Thus, *The Return* reads more like an expatriate colonial novel set in Africa, in the manner of Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*, where a 'civilized' Western figure ventures into the infernal African 'darkness' and is either crushed under the pressure of Africa's unaccommodating environment, coupled with the people's 'savagery', or survives due to some Western ingenuity. Jason is, indeed, a replica of Bellow's Henderson who, after all the trouble he goes through in the Ethiopian jungle among 'savages', eventually gets crowned king and flies back triumphantly into the glare and glitter of Western civilization.

Osiris Rising: Africa Betrayed, Dreams Deferred

Osiris Rising, parts of which echo or draw liberally on Asante's "Afrocentricity," is the synthesis of Ayi Kwei Armah's quest for African identity which he introduced in *Two Thousand Seasons* as "the way." The linkage between *Two Thousand Seasons* and *Osiris Rising* is immediately striking. Both are based on African myths; the former on the Akan myth of Anoa (Sekyi-Otu 1987; Wright 1989), the latter on the ancient Egyptian myth of Isis and Osiris (Mensah 1998; Jackson 2000). *Osiris Rising* is the saga of a young African-American woman who embarks on a journey to Africa to learn first-hand the relevance of ancient Egypt to contemporary Africa and the African Diaspora. This quest is epitomized in the 'ankh' (ancient Egyptian symbol of the life force). The odyssey of the protagonist, Ast, begins when she tries to find out from her grandmother the name, import and origin of the 'ankh' symbol. This interchange opens a whole chapter on the Slave Trade which is linked up with the story of a book, *Journey to the Source*. It is a book which, apart from Ast's incisive probes into the history of the Slave Trade and the history of Africa in America, becomes the main motivating factor for Ast's desire to go to Africa, to seek hidden truths about her African origins and what she considers to be the authentic story of Africa.

Ast holds a first degree in World History; for her second degree she "shifted closer home" to Egyptology and for her doctorate she focused on Kemet (ancient Egypt). With her comprehensive grounding in Afro-centric scholarship, by graduation time, "her search for knowledge of self, within

the universe, had led her through a flow of changes... The search had accelerated her decision: return” (8). Like Lumumba, and unlike Jason, Ast imposes on herself a messianic mission to move to Africa, and once in Africa, with the help of kindred intellectuals, to transform Africa into a continent of visionary people committed to casting away their veil of inferiority. But in her own ‘journey to the source,’ Ast, in terms of her motivations, ideological impulses and desires, is like thousands of other seekers of ‘truth’ from America. However, the ‘African reality’ confronts any adventurer in search of history, knowledge, emancipation, fulfilment and release from the frustrations of America. The ‘African reality’ becomes the litmus test for all these seekers, including Ast. The ‘African reality’ is aptly described by Netta, a Ghanaian teacher in the novel:

Foreigners are more vulnerable than people born here. They can be miserable without jobs. Some are elated when offered villas and monthly allowances. A few African-American visitors, I’m afraid, got trapped that way. I know two who came burning to revolutionize the world and start the rule of justice. The security fellows watched them until they got broke. Then they hit them with money...They came wanting so much to escape slavery in America. They ended up joining the slave dealers here. (68)

It remains to be seen if Ast’s dreams will collapse against the full force of this reality. According to her, “I want to work in a society I belong to, with friends moving in directions I can live with” (69), and as far as she is concerned, “It would have to be Africa, because of who we are, who I am.” The reason is that, in America, “I feel like a passenger earnestly walking homeward at five kilometers an hour. It didn’t make sense” (70). Ast’s dream gets the initial jolt when she soon discovers that her vision of Africa is rather idealistic and out of touch with the reality, especially with regard to the African elite, the “friends moving in direction.” These friends include those like Seth who are interested in money and power and the trappings that come with both: “The magic ability to fly above famine, inflation, civil war. The charmed life while the continent burns. Money. Politics. The bureaucratic trip. Local directorship in multinational corporations [...] whatever” (77). First, there is Ras Jomo Cinque Equaino, a character cloned from his historical namesake, Joseph Cinque

(of the ‘Amistad Affair’ fame), from whose portrait we get the ‘Cinque syndrome.’ A fraudster, he typifies the diasporan characters whose return to Africa is a mere Pan-Africanist charade and populist showmanship, subordinated to private gratification. Such characters first of all need a camouflage and the first thing they do is to carve out their African identity by assembling flamboyant, pompous titles and accolades from a constellation of a supposedly Pan-African nomenclature. They must also stay close to the corridors of power and privilege as allies of the new African ruling elite who perpetuate the old master-slave relationship in Africa. In the case of Jomo Cinque, he manages to work himself into the bosom of the tyrannical President Christian Ahmed Utombo.

According to Netta, when Cinque first came to Africa, he did not seem certain what he wanted to do. He looked lost. Then the security people picked him up—he soon got a car, regular money and a retreat on the beach where he set up an orientation centre for Americans seeking African roots. His “Africult” is a mixture of Rasta, Islam and Christianity laced with Negritude (80). Paradoxically, as a young undergraduate in America, Cinque’s life was “a nomadic search for clones to white power” drawing “plenty from an enthusiast’s faith in the American myth of equality shimmying on scaffoldings of inequality” (89). At that time, he was known as Sheldon Tubman. His delusion shattered, exposing the debris of his artificial universe created from an illusion of the real America,

He disappeared. Rumor said he had entered a Trappist monastery in Canada. Some reported having seen him at a Baha’i seminar in Bhutan. He became a Muslim for a spell. Then he joined an Authentic Yoruba Village founded on the principles of Negritude and based in the Mississippi delta (95).

Then there is Prince Woosen. This fake Ethiopian character and aide-de-camp of Cinque is a big-time Mafia-type drug dealer in New York who relocates to Africa to save his skin after his cartel is busted by the police. Like Cinque, he needs a smokescreen to be able to appear Pan-Africanist and to hide his real sordid identity. Schooled in some flimsy strands of Ethiopianism and Rastafarianism, he lays false claims to Ethiopian royal blood and arrogates to himself due majesty which he flaunts by making

people believe he is an Ethiopian prince. He dresses the part in order to draw the desired attention to his person: “scarlet robe so long its hem swept the tiling every time he took a step...rasta tresses of a rusty brown like his complexion...tight wooden beret of yellow, green, red and black bands” and in his hand “a horsetail fly whisk which at frequent intervals he flicked with studied solemnity” (127). Clearly, he comes to Africa only to cool off. Asked how he finds life away from America, he says: “It’s quiet in this country...You might as well be in Eskimo country” (127).

On the extreme side of the axis, there are other kinds of characters. These are the committed type, “*a few who really dream of changing things*” but who find out “*this is no country but a mess, and it blows their mind*” (my emphasis, 134). They come to stay but they do not come with Cinque’s ‘brotherhood’ stuff. Yet they come up against formidable obstacles. Ast belongs to this category. Ast, together with Asar and other progressives at the University of Manda, initiate a revolution in Afro-centric scholarship by proposing the following:

One, making Africa the center of our studies. Two, shifting from Eurocentric orientations to universalist approaches as far as the rest of the world is concerned. Three, giving our work a serious backing in African history...placing a deliberate, planned and sustained emphasis on the study of Egyptian and Nubian history as matrices of African history... (104).

Ast is by all standards a committed person who wants to be involved in real change and stands solidly by her lover Asar even as the state apparatus plots his death. She has come to stay. Yet given the general field of connectors, some doubt her intentions and she is forced to be constantly on the defensive. Others have seen the shortcomings in her enthusiasm and idealism. Even her lover, Asar, fears that her search for roots and connection is inauthentic. Ast wants to flaunt her zeal and commitment before the Africans, but according to Asar, “Functioning roots can’t bear exposure. What they need is to go on quietly distilling lifestuff from the earth. In the dark [...] I’ve seen Americans search around hoping to dig them up for exhibition. It’s one more way to keep rehearsing our murder” (243).

One problem with Ast is that in her enthusiasm she fails to factor in the

indigenous African social and political terrain. She is in part ignorant, unaware that in Africa “educated people use their intelligence to avoid risk, to accumulate power, money, privilege” (p.71). She should have realized these barriers at the point of entry—the airport—when a security official detained her for carrying what he said was subversive material and subsequently subjected her a harrowing session of state-of-the-art electronic interrogation. Her refusal to tap into this ominous prevarication places her, right from the beginning, on a course of self-delusion.

Her other problem has to do with her association with Asar, the affable but reclusive intellectual who joins the circle of Armah’s lonesome fringe characters who include Baako in *Fragments* and Modin in *Why Are We So Blest?* These characters are idealistic, scrupulous to a fault, fail to weigh rationally the enormity of the social burdens they impose on themselves and end up being destroyed by the social order which they set out to change. Asar is antithetical to Seth. These two characters are the symbolic and allegorical figures whose diametrically opposed ideological positions, vocations, moral timbre and conduct reflect the Osiris and Isis myth on which the novel is constructed. They represent the *revolutionary* and the *reactionary* elements in Africa and may to some extent explain, as Wright (1996:263) remarks, why there is “the tendency of the characters to polarize into principles rather than intensify into individuals.”

In the context of the Osirian myth, Asar, the revolutionary intellectual, represents the enlightened Pharaoh, Osiris, whose reign transformed ancient Egypt into a paradise. Seth represents the destructive Set, brother of Osiris, who placed Osiris in a coffin alive and threw him into the Nile. The blowing up of Asar into fourteen pieces by the Deputy Director of Security, Seth, on trumped-up treason charges, an action which effectively ends Asar’s revolutionary initiatives in concert with the other progressive persons, is an ingenious simulation of the Osiris myth, specifically the discovery of Osiris’ body and its dismemberment into fourteen pieces by Set after it had been retrieved by Isis, their sister. This episode is re-enacted in Armah’s novel when the hail of bullets struck Asar, and “Ast saw Asar totter upright in a flash. . . Then he exploded silently into fourteen starry fragments, and the pieces plunged into the peaceful water” (305).

By her relationship with Asar, not only on a professional level but also in an amorous, conjugal union, Ast becomes the mythical Isis who was pregnant by Osiris at the time of his destruction. By carrying Asar's baby at the time he is destroyed, Ast, like Isis, is a symbol of regeneration. For now, Ast's dreams may be shattered, but through the child she is carrying she remains bonded to Africa and functions as a vital link between the continent and its Diaspora. Her situation more than sums up the dynamics of the reverse crossing of the Middle Passage: such an undertaking is not a one-stop enterprise.

We can only conclude that Ast may be a committed returnee bent on helping forge a new direction for Africa and its Diaspora, but due to her ignorance, idealism and naivete, she, like other diasporans, is not yet prepared for the task. Neither are Africans. This goal remains to be accomplished at some future time. This is what Set, the embodiment of destruction, seems to be saying at the end of it all when he whispers a single message to Ast: "When you're ready, come" (305).

Conclusion

In the context of "the return", all three texts operate at four main levels: (a) as *double consciousness* in a conceptual sense; (b) as *motion*—in a mimetic sense—involving the reverse crossing; (c) as *rupture*—motion hampered and disrupted by irreconcilable cultural and geo-political differences; and (d) as *myth*—lodged within a cross-genealogical historical and collective unconscious. The fourth dimension in particular—myth—

deserves some commentary. The importance of myth in African literature has been stressed by Soyinka (1976), Angmor (1999), Sutherland-Addy (1999) and other African heritage scholars. The filtering of all three texts through African myths is an aesthetic device that makes the narratives ‘authentically’ African, situated between history and fiction. It must, however, be emphasized that as a work of popular fiction Oddoye’s *The Return* does not belong with the two other texts. Its inclusion is intended only to indicate that the phenomenon is captured in both highbrow and popular Ghanaian fiction.

In effect, it is obvious in the three texts that the “back-to-Africa” consciousness is part of an emerging Pan-African nationalist culture still in a state of flux—what Patterson and Kelly (2000) refer to as “unfinished migrations.” This consciousness may not crystallize into any distinct configuration so long as the boundaries of the emerging nation(alism) accommodate everything and reject any centre, and so long as it hangs between the juncture of the symbolic and the concrete. It cannot be located on any one side of the Atlantic in spite of the present criss-crossings. Elliot Skinner (1982:17) puts all these contradictions and the lack of closure in their proper perspective in his observation that:

Relations between peoples in diasporas and their ancestral homelands are complex and full of dialectical contradictions. First, there is anger, bitterness and remorse among the exiles – and often among the people at home – over the weaknesses that permitted the dispersion to occur. Second, there is conflict when the dominant hosts attempt to justify the subordinate status of the exiles... Third, there is often an acrimonious debate among the exiles themselves, and between them and their host and ancestral communities, as to whether the exiles should return to their homelands.

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SUPERNATURALISM AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL CHARACTER OF THE TRADITIONAL AFRICAN THINKER

H.M. Majeed¹

Abstract

Owing to the prevalence of belief in spiritual beings and in the reality of some non-physical events in traditional cultures like those of Africa, the orientation of the people is typically regarded as supernaturalistic. But while some anthropologists and philosophers see belief in the supernatural as irrational, others argue in ways that seem to suggest that supernaturalism limits the rational capacity of the African thinker. This paper rejects the positions held by these scholars and, using Akan traditional wisdom, argues for the possibility of extricating rationality from the domain of cultures – making rationality a matter of conceptual, noncultural objectivity.

Introduction

A traditional culture is typically perceived as a non-Western one (such as the African Azande). It is portrayed as non-scientific or as approving or disapproving of things not on scientific grounds, but for supernatural-related reasons. Conversely, a Western culture is, seen as scientific and rational. Although the propriety of these characterizations is not the focus of this paper, it is right to caution that the characterizations could be misleading. For instance, I do not think that referring to a Western culture as “scientific,” suggests that there cannot be any persons from that culture who engage in rituals. Hence, the description of a culture as rational or irrational needs to be understood in a special sense. It only indicates that in social or intercultural philosophy where predominant views are sometimes used to characterize cultures in traditional-scientific or supernatural-antisupernatural terms, it is also possible to apply or at least learn to apply the concept of rationality in this general context. When E. R. Dodds (1951: 1) classified the supernatural as “irrational” and praised the West for its rational credentials, he was applying the concept

¹H. M. Majeed is a Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Classics, University of Ghana, Ghana.

in this sense. This is because there has never actually been a time when all Westerners were antisupernaturalistic, neither have the Greeks (whose philosophy arguably underpins Western civilization) ever had this kind of situation. Thus, the paper explores the general concept of supernaturalism (as done by its critics), but does not focus on specific instances of the supernatural.

Supernaturalism is sometimes used, as in the case of MacIntyre and others like him, in specific reference to belief in such notions as witchcraft and magic, which are regarded as irrational (although belief in God – Christian, Jewish, or Muslim, also counts as supernatural,, the view of such scholars is that a belief in these religions is not irrational, though this view always remains curiously unstated). In this paper, the belief in witchcraft or magic will be regarded as supernaturalism. In its primal sense therefore, supernaturalism is an orientation or a disposition and, in some sense, a world-view. This paper first identifies the flaws in the arguments advanced for the exclusion of supernaturalistic African thinkers from rationality. While the paper rejects any claim of contradiction between rationality and supernaturalism, it does not argue that anything supernatural should be rational. It contends that having a supernaturalistic orientation does not preclude determining the rationality of issues, and that it is possible to understand rationality as a human attribute but not necessarily as a product of any specific culture.

An action or belief which is rational is one that conforms to logical procedure and is intelligible. For the order that it will bring to the discussion, it is important to be guided also by some distinctions made by Anthony Flew with regard to rationality. He maintains that if a person is said to be rational, the term ‘rational’ could be understood in two senses: as (i) “[o]pposed to irrational,” and (ii) “[o]pposed to non-rational or arational” (1979: 298). Although Flew does not explain at all what he means by the former sense (i), it is most likely applicable to actions or thoughts or beliefs, while the latter is meant to explain rationality as a distinctive feature of a person (i.e., a person “as the rational animal”, as he indicates). The limitation of Flew’s definitions is that they do not indicate that arationality could refer to thoughts and actions as well. For instance, if I need to get to a store that closes in five minutes, it is irrational to take

a long meandering walk and chat with people along the way. If, on the other hand, I just want to go for a walk, meandering and chatting are non-rational behaviours.

To say then that a person (in sense (ii)) is the only creature that is rational is to suggest that he alone has a thinking ability, and a capacity for intelligent behaviour or action. In the former sense, a person is normally said to have behaved or acted rationally when his action or behaviour is seen to have been in line with rational procedure. However, based on the beliefs common in a culture, and on the way the people of that culture go about their activities, a culture – although in actuality we mean its people – is sometimes described as rational, scientific, traditional or primitive. Since, in this paper, (i) the concept of rationality will be discussed in connection with cultures [i.e. whether or not rationality is a cultural construct], and (ii) irrationality is not discussed, the former sense of rationality is the main concern of this essay. Rationality is thus explored in a context where an entire culture is the object of enquiry.

In an attempt to understand alien cultures, philosophers and anthropologists often try as much as possible to spell out both how such cultures' beliefs, practices, and values could be considered to be rational (that is, "intelligible"), and how the cultures can be seen to be using some standards to determine the rationality of beliefs and actions. This paper concerns itself mainly with the issue of standards. Although on a number of occasions it is claimed by some scholars¹ that traditional cultures (such as those of Africa) can determine the "rationality" of actions and beliefs, others disagree. Some, first, have questioned the capacity of such traditional cultures to make judgments of rationality that extend to issues pertaining to a paradigm which is completely different from theirs. Again, there are those who even think that what they refer to as "Western standards of rationality" take precedence over all others, and who are ready to view rationality – in its true sense (?) – through the spectacle of the "rationalistic" Western culture. These two, respectively, are the *impossibility* and *inappropriateness* arguments that are often made against traditional cultures.

Although these views are usually expressed by some who happen to be social scientists, there is evidence of the creeping of such positions into philosophy or, rather, the exploitation of such positions by philosophers. In this essay, I do not intend to discuss the often-cited exclusion of Africa in Hegel's philosophy of history from the historical races of the world, neither do I intend to look at views expressed earlier by Hume and Kant about Africans. "Hume, Kant and Hegel, under the euphoria of the Enlightenment and in various ways, believed that the history of the Western world was the incarnation of Reason as such, and characterized non-European forms of life as 'irrational'" (Eze 1993: 16). I will rather focus on arguments that have been made more recently, often subtly but with far-reaching philosophical implications for Africa. Throughout this essay, the term "Africa" stands for present-day sub-Saharan Africa whose cultures are not monolithic but still largely similar.

For a systematic discussion, the rest of the paper is divided into three sections. In the first two sections, it rebuts separately the inappropriateness and impossibility arguments. The last section presents an African (specifically, Akan) alternative to these arguments.

The Inappropriateness Argument

One philosopher who rejects, and will not accept any judgment of rationality that is not consistent with the "scientific" Western perspective is Alasdair MacIntyre (1977: 67-71). He discloses this stance in a reaction to Peter Winch and, earlier on, to Evans-Pritchard who argued for the thesis that one can accept that traditional cultures do hold, and can indeed determine by certain criteria, what is rational and what is not. MacIntyre denies this claim and asserts, in relation to traditional cultures, that "...beliefs and concepts are not merely to be evaluated by the criteria implicit in the practice of those who hold and use them." Consequently, he declares, "to make a belief and the concepts which it embodies intelligible I cannot help invoking my own criteria, or rather the established criteria of my own society...[but, I admit that] I cannot do this until I have already grasped the criteria governing belief and behaviour in the society which is the object of enquiry."

One commendable aspect of MacIntyre's criterion is that he makes attempts, successfully or not, to understand the Other's criteria before determining the rationality of issues that relate to that Other. It cannot also be inferred from the above that he rejects the supernatural. However, his heavy reliance on Western standards and his unwillingness to accept any traditional culture's justifications for its own beliefs raise two main concerns: first, his idea that a culture's (in this case, Western) standard can determine rationality, and secondly, his insistence on using Western standards to judge traditional cultures even after learning about the standards of the latter. (A response to the first concern is found in the next section.) One can however remark, with regard to the second concern, that if MacIntyre cannot help invoking his own culture's criteria to determine whether or not African beliefs, concepts, behaviour and criteria of rationality governing belief and behavior are truly rationally acceptable, then he implies that a person may not avoid the influence of his culture when judging the rationality of issues. The correctness of this exposition is confirmed in the summary of MacIntyre's thesis, made by Winch (1977: 97) as follows: "The explanation of why, in culture S, certain actions are taken to be rational, has got to be an explanation for us; so it must be in concepts intelligible to us. If then, in the explanation, we say that in fact those criteria are rational, we must be using the word '*rational*' in our sense."

MacIntyre (op cit: 67) does not seem to exalt Western "standards" merely because he belongs to that culture, but mainly because he thinks the West has superior standards. For instance, in addition to his view that the Westerner must detect incoherence in standards of intelligibility in non-Western cultures, his reflection on the statement: "the Azande believe that the performance of certain rites in due form affects their common welfare," leads him to the erroneous conclusion that "...one could only hold the belief of the Azande rationally *in the absence of* any practice of science and technology..." which, he would say, is undeniably identifiable with the West.

As MacIntyre's "perspectival" view on rationality develops, however, his seemingly pitiful state of dilemma begins to give way to his affirmation of Western criteria. One could understand the difficulty he finds himself

in, having to realize that in the study of what he sees as a completely alien culture, understanding is “both necessary and impossible.” But this apparent dilemma does not seem to hold when the basis for its construction is carefully examined. The main reason, we may argue, is the issue of “perspective”, the Western perspective which alone he recognizes. For instance, since, as he implies, Western “anthropologists and sociologists” must form their judgments based on “the established criteria” of their scientific culture, their understanding of traditional cultures becomes at once impossible. This, he notes, is the case in spite of the claim by “anthropologists and sociologists ...to understand concepts which they do not share” (1977: 64). Claiming to understand what one does not share appears to MacIntyre to be tantamount to claiming falsely that two completely distinct paradigms are similar. The impossibility aspect of the apparent dilemma is, therefore, founded on the supposition that one cannot understand concepts that one does not share (ibid: 63, 64). This point is noteworthy.

Even when MacIntyre comes to make some sense of the practices of traditional cultures, he still holds that the people cannot be taken to be doing what is right and sensible. He asserts, “what I am quarrelling with ultimately is the suggestion that agreement in following a rule is sufficient to guarantee making sense” (ibid: 68). This statement is conceptually true. The only problem here is that MacIntyre expresses it only in connection with cultures he views as non-scientific. He fails to notice that the assertion applies as well to scientific cultures and, also, he does not assess the impact of the statement on the conclusions that he draws in his work. By this remark, I do not mean that we are guaranteed any “sense making” if we adopt scientific rules as a means of explaining metaphysical events (or vice versa), but that it is possible for some explanations purported to be based on science not to make sense. Indeed, the majority of people in a culture who hold a rule or engage in a practice based on the rule could be wrong, especially when the rule itself is flawed. And this applies to the rule, *science is the sole determinant of reality*.

Two crucial questions relating to understanding still remain. Is understanding the Other really impossible? And, must a person necessarily adopt what his culture offers him in the form of standards? With regard

to the first – which we noted of MacIntyre above – I would make just one point. It appears quite possible that one can understand the Other (or his explanations), if by the verb “understand” it is meant to gain some insight into or knowledge of the practices or beliefs of the Other. This, in any case, should be what it means to “understand” the Other. It is a different thing, I concede, to say that one shares the belief or practice explained. For instance, one might not share the belief that there are “ancestral” spirits, but one can still *understand* a people who address the dead in present and personal terms as holding the notion of human survival. For, they could be said to conceive of those spirits as being alive, in some form, even though their bodies have been buried. Yet it is also worthy of note that the issues of sharing and convincing explanations are problematic even intra-culturally, although it is often suggested that such problems only arise in cross-cultural relations. Intra-culturally, we do not always share each other’s beliefs, neither do we always find each other’s explanations convincing. Thus, if these problems were insuperable, then, it is not only cross-cultural understanding that would be impossible, but also several aspects of intra-cultural encounters.

Understanding the Other becomes impossible only when “understanding” is interchanged with “sharing”, as Lévy-Bruhl did in the past. In his *Les Fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*, he seemed to have equated understanding with the capacity to share a concept. But with the meaning I attribute above to the word “understand”, a person is able to present or assess fairly the worldview of the Other, without either sharing them or imposing his own beliefs. Based on this line of reasoning, it is plausible to argue that Lévy-Bruhl’s approach was wrong. From his erroneous position, he made some claims about traditional cultures which need to be mentioned here, even if briefly. Bent on showing the radical alterity between traditional ways of life and those of the “rationalistic” West, Lévy-Bruhl singled out language for analysis. His preference for language was strategic because the reasons behind what a people do, the sense or pointlessness of their practices are mainly expressed through their language. If their language is not able to convey their beliefs in a relevant manner, we cannot claim to share their beliefs. Thus, he wrote, “although we can describe what primitives say, we cannot grasp their

concepts. For they do not possess concepts in the sense of recognizing that some uses of expression conform to and others break with rules for the use of such expressions” (quoted in MacIntyre, *ibid.*, 64). What Lévy-Bruhl sought to do was to make difficult any chance of understanding the primitives in a serious sense, lest any of their practices or beliefs could be deemed rational. This way, any talk of “understanding” them would make sense in a derisive way, so that “we might by a kind of empathy imagine ourselves to be primitives and in this sense ‘understand’; but we might equally understand by imaginative sympathy what it is to be a bear or a squirrel” (*ibid.*: 64).

Several philosophers, including MacIntyre, have criticized this view in the past. But one more point can be made. The fundamental mistake regarding the view is that, granted for the sake of argumentation that there was no possible way of knowing what reasons were offered by traditional cultures for their practices, it would not be fruitful to play down the fact that traditional peoples, unlike bears and squirrels, have language. The claim that no rules govern the use of expressions in traditional language is not even supported by empirical evidence. The claim that the (spoken) languages of traditional peoples lack rules could not have been true given, for instance, the successful centuries-old translation of the Bible into these languages. Again, as Winch rightly notes, rationality “is a concept necessary to the existence of any language: to say of a society that it has a language is also to say that it has a concept of rationality” (1977: 99). Therefore, what is expected of a researcher of language is at least to find out the aspects of rationality conveyed through the use of language by the people studied. But the success of any such researcher in this exercise, especially if he or she is from a culture different from the one studied, would certainly depend on the depth of probing and accurate portrayal of the specific worldview of the culture studied. These points did not reflect clearly in Lévy-Bruhl’s position.

Now, to the second crucial question relating to understanding: MacIntyre makes certain remarks that appear to imply that one must necessarily accept what pertains in one’s culture even after one has come into contact with other cultures. For instance, he states of traditional cultures that we cannot expect that their standards “will always be internally coherent...

But in detecting incoherence of this kind we have already invoked our standards. [And] since we cannot avoid doing this it is better to do it self-consciously” (ibid: 71).

MacIntyre once again seems to be in a dilemma here. He cannot help but invoke his own standards, so he would do so self-consciously. Here too, the self-consciousness aspect is refreshing. But first, the desideratum to maintain Western standards suffers the same fate as his similar pursuit earlier on. Secondly, his view that “we cannot avoid” using “our own standard” to judge the rationality of actions is questionable, if by “our own standard” he means what we are culturally accustomed to. It is always possible to question or even abandon one’s cultural perspective, and develop personal principles or adopt the perspective of another. Since, for instance, one’s perspective cannot be said to have changed if one does not move away from an earlier position, it is to be expected that the perspectives of some people who grew up with the notion of the divine right of kings to rule actually changed at the dawn of modern democracy. In the same way, the views of some brought up to support the then massive (almost unbridled) exploitation of natural resources that accompanied the industrial revolution in Europe did, conceivably, gradually change in favour of environmentally friendlier technologies. We can say the same of traditional cultures. For instance, the Dipo festival which is celebrated by the Krobo people of Ghana marks the transition of girls into adulthood. Previously, the girls went through the rites bare-chested; but that is now beginning to change. Currently, the exposure of their breasts is regarded as indecent by some of the people – including elderly women (initiators) who themselves were paraded bare-chested in their adolescent days. Breasts are now sometimes covered during initiations.

As a result of MacIntyre’s inability to see that one does not necessarily have to judge the Other through the prism of one’s own culture, he was faced with the self-imposed option of affirming only his. If he had not done so, it would have meant, to his displeasure, that he had no concept of rationality or that he did not know the meaning of the term “rationality” at all. With this posture, the question of rationality wrongly took on the form of “we against the other(s)”. The fact, then, that something was identifiable with “us” appeared somehow enough to guarantee its rationality. For

instance, in his attempt to reject Winch's notion of the "conceptual self-sufficiency" of primitive ways of life, MacIntyre declares what must inform his rejection of Winch's position. He states, even without supplying any reason why that must be right, that "we do want to reject magic, and we want to reject it ... as illogical because it fails to come up to our criteria of rationality" (ibid: 67).

In sum, MacIntyre's interpretation of rationality seemed to misidentify (perhaps inadvertently) "differences of perspective" of rationality as "differences of standard" of rationality. This led him to uphold just one perspective (or, to him, "standard") of rationality, and classify others as unacceptable or inappropriate. I know, for instance, that any standards that are internally incoherent cannot be rational. Thus, if what traditional African cultures take to be their "standards" of intelligibility (or rationality) themselves could be expected by MacIntyre to be incoherent, then, wherein lies their capacity to truly determine rationality? Can anybody, thus, have any point in challenging MacIntyre's earlier view that the rationality of beliefs and concepts of traditional cultures is not to be evaluated *merely* by the criteria existent in those cultures? And, will MacIntyre not be right to claim that Western thinkers are to detect with *their* "standards" of rationality the incoherence of what Africans can only see as intelligible, the incoherence of the African standards of intelligibility? As I will explain, there is just one concept of rationality, and that rationality is not for any culture to determine exclusively.

The Impossibility Argument

The impossibility argument seeks to establish that traditional cultures cannot determine the rationality of actions that pertain to scientific cultures. It is suggested that belief in the supernatural limits the rational capacity of the (traditional) African thinker. A little background to this view is appropriate: in showing why the Azande people of Africa apparently "do not see that their oracles tell them nothing", Evans-Pritchard (1937: 338) explained that it was due to "...the fact that their intellectual ingenuity and experimental keenness [were] conditioned by patterns of ritual behaviour and mystical belief. Within the limits set by these patterns, they [showed] great intelligence, but it [could not] operate beyond [those] limits." Or as

deduced by Horton (1977: 154), “they [reasoned] excellently in the idiom of their beliefs, but they [could not] reason outside, or against their beliefs because they [had] no other idiom in which to express their thoughts.”

There appear to be traces of this position of Evans-Pritchard’s in African philosophy. To buttress my point, let me explain how Horton (ibid: 154) appears to profit from the expressed opinion of Evans-Pritchard in the development of his philosophy of culture. In contrasting Western and traditional African cultures, Horton argues that in the latter, the “absence of any awareness of alternatives makes for an absolute acceptance of the established theoretical tenets and removes any possibility of questioning them.” These tenets, he adds, “invest the believer with a compelling force. It is this force which we refer to when we talk of such tenets as sacred.” His view is an example of how anthropology creeps into philosophy. That view cannot be right because within all cultural boundaries (or within the context of “bounded reasoning”, to borrow Ramose’s words²), there are some who are trapped in their preconceptions, and others who break free from them. Besides, the same person can be trapped in some preconceptions but freed from others. Therefore it would be incorrect to presume that it was mostly African thinkers who were trapped and that Westerners were not.

Quite recently, Gyekye (1995: 3, 7) has rightly criticized Horton for urging “a distinction between philosophy and traditional African thought”. Gyekye points out that “thought” (as a generic term) and philosophy are not mutually exclusive. He adds that by allowing the traditional culture a *thought system* and *restricting philosophy* – understood narrowly by Horton to consist in epistemology – to the West, Horton cannot be said to have proven the absence of philosophy in traditional thought because metaphysics is not just the core of philosophy in general, but also it “lies at the heart of African thought.” Thus, one can observe, belief in the supernatural or the metaphysical is neither a hindrance nor antithetical to the art of philosophizing.

Even though Hountondji (1983: 60) does not quite argue that the traditional African thinker has rational limitation, he has also affirmed the notion of “collective thought” in the African culture, and thus characterized

traditional thought as “ethno-philosophy”, but not as “philosophy.” In Africa, he notes, there is “...merely a collective world-view, an implicit, spontaneous, perhaps even unconscious system of beliefs to which all Africans are supposed to adhere”. This implies that “everybody always agrees with everybody else.” “It follows,” he argues “that in such cultures there can never be individual beliefs ...but only collective systems of belief.” While not denying the visibility of general, cultural world-views in the traditional system, it is not right even on factual grounds (such as on the evidence of anthropology) to say that “there can never be individual beliefs.” But Appiah (1992: 146) rightly points out that anthropologists and missionaries have met many traditional thinkers who have rejected widely held beliefs.

Horton’s theses of “absolute acceptance” and “sacredness” of traditional beliefs, and Hountondji’s idea of communal group-think cannot be right because contrary to the homogeneous, pro-supernaturalism outlook often ascribed to traditional African thinkers, the critical individuals are also visible. Among the Akans of Ghana, “one not infrequently encounters variations in belief among the branches of the Akan tribe and sometimes even among the inhabitants of a single village,” but “if one talks with the real philosophers among our traditional elders ... one is soon impressed with their capacity to dissent from received conceptions and to break new ground” (Wiredu 1983: 114). A good example is the Akan traditional elder, Nana Boafo-Ansah who “thought that Onyame (Supreme Being, God), the ancestors, and the *abosom* (lesser spirits) were all ‘figments of the imagination’...” (Gyekye 1995: 48).

The existence of people with dissenting views, or more appropriately, of thinkers with the capacity to make critical analysis from non-supernaturalistic points of view in traditional cultures, unknits all arguments that make uncritical attitude an inescapable characteristic of the denizens of traditional African cultures. And, since “uncriticality” seems to be the right conclusion to be drawn from the perception that the traditional thinker exhibits intelligence only within his generally-held supernatural beliefs, attention has now been drawn to the fact that, indeed, the African sage is capable of advancing and defending antisupernaturalistic views. However, if such antisupernaturalistic views

could be said to be expressive of an attitude which falls outside what would normally be considered as consistent with the “African idiom” or “African pattern of belief,” but with that of the scientific, then, the corollaries are that:

- (i) the traditional African intellectual community has always been receptive of, and included, critics of widely-held beliefs, indicating the presence of alternative patterns of thought;
- (ii) the traditional African thinker can function intelligently or reason beyond the sphere of mystical belief, because he is capable of analyzing, advancing and defending arguments from both natural and supernatural outlooks; and, thus,
- (iii) he is not only capable of criticizing the Western culture, should the need arise, but also is in a position to judge the rationality of Western beliefs and practices.

Objective Rationality: The Traditional Akan Position

Following the shortcomings of the inappropriateness and impossibility arguments about the nature of rationality, the next alternative – especially to the perspectival frame of MacIntyre – would normally be a suggestion that rationality should be relative. But, relativism (which is not the focus of this paper) would also be problematic because, as we are about to see, it is quite inconsistent with some African positions on rationality. It is therefore appropriate that we attempt to go beyond these usual conceptions of rationality. In this direction, some basic ideas of Akan cultural philosophy would be useful.

In traditional Akan thought, that which is rational to do or believe in is not necessarily determined by the fact that one lives in a specific culture, nor is it seen as reasonable to some human minds (but not to others). It is neither culture-specific nor relative. When the reasons for a belief or action are coherent (and thus rational), the traditional Akan thinker expects every mind to comprehend it as such. Therefore, rationality is conceived of as not just a natural requirement of every human mind, but as determinable by every mind. The reason seems to be that the human mind, using the principles of logic, would affirm the truth or reasonableness of a concept,

irrespective of the person or culture whose concept it is. The Akan maxim *nokware ye baako* (literally, “there is only one truth”) underscores this point. This maxim may also be taken to imply that the truth or logical acceptability of a concept or proposition determined in one culture should not metamorphose into falsehood when it is being considered in a different human setting³.

Philosophical Implications of the Traditional Akan Position

- (i) If it is assumed, for instance, that cultures in which supernaturalism is widespread would rationalize ritual practices, while cultures in which antisupernaturalism is prevalent rationalize laboratory investigations, the Akan position would deem it wrong to claim that rationality is made *relative* here. The truth, the traditional Akan thinker would argue, is that: (i) either a ritual practice – and to some extent, supernaturalism – is rationalizable or it is not; and, (ii) either a laboratory investigation is capable of being rational or it is not. Thus, if a particular ritual practice and a laboratory investigation are said to be rational, it should not be just because the cultures which engage in them claim they are, but because these actions are performed for reasons that conform to the dictates of the logical mind. One such dictate is the coherence of the methods or beliefs underlying the practices.
- (ii) The Akan concept is similar to the Platonic “forms” (or ideas), according to which theory the truth or “real nature” of things lies beyond the physical world, and is rather grasped by the human mind.⁴ In our case also, cultural peculiarities of the physical world do not determine rationality; rather, that which is rational is expected to be appealing to, and recognized as such by every logical mind. In terms of rationality, then, traditional arguments and practices related to belief in spirits can be assessed by any human being, without subjecting them to the popular opinions of one’s culture.
- (iii) Therefore, rationality is not a cultural construct as such, for the mind is capable of grasping that which is logical and reasonable without necessarily resorting to cultural biases. Consequently, the question of rationality, according to the Akan position, can be addressed from non-cultural points of view, making rationality conceptually objective.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the concepts of supernaturalism and rationality mainly from a practical point of view. As a result of the perception of some philosophers and social scientists that supernaturalism and rationality are opposite concepts, belief in the supernatural is used by such scholars to characterize traditional cultures as irrational – i.e., as lacking the capacity to determine rationality properly – or as limited in terms of rational capacity. However, these positions (respectively named the inappropriateness and impossibility arguments) have been shown to be flawed in several respects. Using the traditional Akan position, rationality has been explained to be not just a noncultural concept, but also one that is capable of being exhibited or determined by any individual of any culture.

Notes

1. Peter Winch (1977: 99) is one of such philosophers. He, however, argues from a relativistic angle.
2. He uses this expression in the essay ‘The Question of Identity in Intercultural Philosophy.’
3. Some might suppose that the Akan position “*nokware ye baako*” is a culturally specific belief in absolute truth, and then claim that relativism recognizes such truths, except that it regards them as false. But this only means that relativism is still not accommodative of the Akan perspective that some truths are noncultural.
4. *Meno* (82b-85b). As Cloete also observes, Plato recognizes that “the ‘logical’ element” is “foundational to the possibility of “making sense” of our heterogeneous experiences in the world” (2011: 10).

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A GRAMMAR OF NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL LANGUAGE: THE COMPLEX SENTENCE

John Franklin Wiredu¹

Abstract

This study sets out to examine what linguistic choices are made at the level of the sentence in selected English Language editorials in a particular newspaper in Ghana – the Daily Graphic. Data for the study consists of 338 selected sentences from 22 editorials of the Daily Graphic published in January 2008. We have limited ourselves to the complex sentence, and specifically, to the dependent clause as it occurs in these editorials. At the end of the analysis, we identified the following patterns: (a) only declarative sentences were used, (b) there was overwhelming reliance on complex sentences and (c) most of the complex sentences consisted of multiple rankshifted structures.

1. Introduction

A newspaper offers its readers a variety of materials to read. It carries articles of an extremely diverse nature and has thus become an important tool for providing the information we need to understand the world. Through news and sports reports, advertisements and feature articles, the newspaper provides much diverse information that is aimed at addressing the different concerns of its perceived readership (Grossberg et al, 1998).

Another equally important function which a newspaper serves is *correlation*, which involves the explanation and eventual interpretation of the news events and issues in the society. It is this function that the editorial is expected to perform (Burton, 2002). Most print publications feature an editorial page usually written by the editor or publisher. Such a page is meant to present the ideology of the paper. An editorial, accordingly, may be seen as an article in a newspaper expressing the opinion of the newspaper on a topic or news item of public concern (Sinclair, 1995). This point is also expressed eloquently in the statement below:

¹John Franklin Wiredu is Associate Professor in the Department of English, University of Ghana.

An editorial is characterised as a rather subjective and, at the same time, persuasive type of writing. The chief editor or a group of famous columnists, comments, i.e. expresses his/her opinion, on current issues of general importance, gets involved in a certain political or ethical discussion. Events are criticised, praised, or denounced (Buitkiene, 2008: 13).

An editorial has the primary goal of influencing the attitudes, beliefs, or behaviour of the readers (Katajamaki and Koskela, 2006). Through its editorial, a newspaper tries to convince readers that its point of view about a topic is the correct one to accept. In this regard, editorials act as advocates for a newspaper. This is because their purpose is to recommend a particular decision either for or against a defined course of action. Indeed, according to Sebranek and Kemper (1990), editorials build on an argument and try to persuade readers to think the same way as the paper does. In essence, an editorial is meant to:

- a) influence public opinion
- b) promote critical thinking
- c) cause people to take a specific action on an issue

It is, in effect, communication intended to influence. As Jaworski and Galasinski (2002) have put it, the newspapers now interpret the news as well as construct reality from a particular point of view. This has become necessary considering the avalanche of information that the modern reader is faced with. Reader look at the editorial for possible guidance in interpreting the material they are confronted with daily.

The purpose of the editorial, therefore, is to stimulate readers into action. To achieve its goals, the editorial explains or interprets an idea, an event or an action by either praising or criticising it. It is clear, therefore, that the process of persuasion is an important consideration for the editorial writer. Persuasion is a means by which one person can cause another to want to believe, to think or to do something in a suggested way. But, in the words of Gibson and Hanna (1992:354),

Persuasion implies change. The change can be observable as in a decision to purchase, followed by the act of purchasing, something. The change can also be mental, such as a change in attitudes, beliefs, or values.

However, we must stress that there is no coercion in persuasion. As O'Connor (1988) observes, persuasive efforts are made in situations in which two or more points of view about a topic compete for attention. Thus, in persuasion, an opportunity is given the reader to make a choice. But, persuasion involves specific strategies. As a result, using communication to persuade may involve targeted choices of language use – grammatical, lexical, phonological, discursal, etc. According to Sornig (1989), verbal persuasive communication depends more on how the information is linguistically structured than on the truth-value of the communicated information.

Since the editorial is intended to win over the readership to its standpoint, it relies on specific strategies to achieve this persuasive intent. Indeed, some writers have argued that persuasion in editorials involves writing which gives the reader the opportunity or ability to choose or make inferences, and to take decisions based on information and ideas. To achieve this goal, the editorial relies principally on providing large amounts of information as a means of persuading the reader. However, we must add that this information is couched in language that is meant to aid this persuasive goal. Thus, there is a link between language choices in the editorial and its intended function of persuading a targeted audience.

As Larson (1983) puts it, language use is very important in persuasion. For, in the main, the persuader must be attuned to the language preference of the audience. Indeed, in the view of Kress and Hodge (1979), the reality of our world is shaped by language, an instrument of control as well as an instrument of communication. For Bolivar (1994), language is used in editorials to induce change in attitudes toward issues of public concern. And language use implies choices of specific linguistic units to achieve intended goals (Hawes and Thomas, 1995).

Accordingly, this study aims to answer the following questions:

- (a) What types of dependent clauses are prevalent in the editorials under study?
- (b) In what way(s) do these clause types contribute to achieving the intended objectives of the editorials?

By implication, we are limiting our analysis to the linguistic processes which operate at the unit of sentence, as recognized in Systemic-Functional Grammar. This means that we shall not be concerned with processes at the units below the sentence.

Also, we must point out that throughout this study, there has been one important assumption – that there is a link between the patterns of dependent clauses used in the editorials and the intended objective of these editorials. This corroborates the view expressed by Tomasello (1998) that functions are embodied in the structural patterns selected for a communicative activity. He states that “All language structures are symbolic instruments that serve to convey meaning, from the smallest morphemes to the most complex constructions” (Tomasello, 1998: xi). Our view is also supported by Thomas (1996), who observes that any written discourse represents a dialogue between the writer and the potential reader, a dialogue which is firmly controlled by the writer because of the optional linguistic choices he/she consciously makes. It is evident from the discussion that we accept the view that linguistic choices are important in the construction and dissemination of ideas in communication – in this case, editorial communication.

As an extension of this view, this study works on the principle that linguistic choices within each language are tied to the purpose of a particular discourse, and that in expressing particular ideas, users of a language have linguistic alternatives to choose from. As a result, they make conscious, if not necessarily deliberate, choices of specific linguistic patterns – phonetic, phonological, syntactic, semantic, etc. for the simple reason that there are different ways of expressing any particular idea. In other words, there are always alternative linguistic structures available for use. How the language is used and what choices are made are decisions

consciously made according to the type of discourse event and the goal of the communicative event.

We must mention that all the editorials used in the study were selected from the *Daily Graphic*, a widely read and respected daily newspaper in Ghana. In all, 22 editorials were studied for this work. All of them were published in January, 2008.

2. Theoretical Frame of the Study

Because of their social orientation to textual analysis, the approaches adopted in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) are considered appropriate in this study. The major reasons for selecting these two theories are:

- a) they both view language as functional, and
- b) they consider linguistic choices as socially and, therefore, contextually determined.

In our view, then, these two theories provide a proper basis for systematic analysis of the language of editorials. They offer suitable linguistic methods by which we can analyse these editorial texts.

The theory of CDA explains how language choice in social interaction is determined by discourse functions. The goal of CDA is to discover the power relations within a text, because it sees textual language as a social enterprise with strong ideological undertones. According to Fairclough (2003), for example, a text is a combination of production and interpretation. Therefore, any textual analysis must capture these two processes.

The CDA recognizes three dimensions in any discourse event:

- i) the text,
- ii) the processes of its production and interpretation, and
- iii) the social conditions surrounding these processes.

In analysing any discourse, then, there are three stages which correspond to these dimensions:

- i) the description of the text,
- ii) the interpretation of the text, and
- iii) the explanation of the discourse as a social activity.

The implication is that the analysis of any text should start with an analysis of its structure and the linguistic choices the writer has made. Next, the analysis should involve the study of the process of interpretation by the reader of the text. Finally, the analysis should examine the social factors that have shaped the text.

For our purpose in this work, only the first two of these stages will be studied, i.e. *description* and *interpretation*. The third stage – *explanation* – falls outside our scope. CDA goes beyond the text to offer ideological interpretation of texts. As Van Dijk (1998) sees it, ideological considerations influence the language choices we make in a discourse event. However, our interest in this study of editorials is principally linguistic. We are, therefore, not concerned with this aspect of the theory in our study of editorials.

At the *description* stage of analysis, the formal linguistic properties of the text are examined for the lexical and grammatical patterns in it. It is at this stage of the analysis that Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) becomes an appropriate method of analysis. Like CDA, SFG sees language as a system for social interaction. In the view of Bloor and Bloor (1995), people use language to express meaning. SFG is functional because it analyzes language in use in specific contexts (Martin, 2001).

We consider SFG very appropriate to use in this analysis because, according to the proponents, every structure in language can be interpreted only in relation to its role within the social context, and every linguistic choice serves a purpose in a communicative environment. SFG analysis involves an analysis of the grammatical choices made in the text and what functions these choices are meant to serve. SFG sees texts as expressing three metafunctions:

- i) the *Ideational function* – this deals with how language is used to represent the world;
- ii) the *Interpersonal function* – this concerns how language reflects the attitude of the writer; and
- iii) the *Textual function* – this deals with how words and sentences are organized to make the text.

What this means is that, in this theory, texts are analysed at the clausal level according to these three metafunctions. The ideational metafunction examines the processes in the text to identify the relationships and/or the events between the participants and how this representation influences the world of the audience. In this study, however, we will not be concerned with the ideational function. This is not our goal. The second function – the interpersonal - involves communication between the participants and how they express their attitudes towards one another; other words, the way they relate to other people as they interact. This is, also, not our concern. The textual function is concerned with the actual organization of the text itself – the channel one selects in communication. This function is in line with our goal in this study – to examine what types of dependent clauses are used and how they contribute to the function of editorial communication.

We believe that these two theoretical frames – the CDA and the SFG - are appropriate for our purpose because, as Lagonikos (2005: 55) has put it:

Halliday’s approach to analysing language entails a microanalysis of the choices made in the grammar of language to interpret the meaning of a text and what functions these choices serve for the language user.

3. Sentence Types

As we have already stated, we are examining the dependent clause forms in the editorials along the lines of the Systemic Functional Grammar. This means that we accept the following major theoretical concepts that flow from the SFG view of language as a social semiotic (Halliday, 1978); that is, that we can learn about how language works only if we consider the way it is used in particular social contexts. Thus, for this study, our

assumptions are that:

- (a) language is a behaviour potential, and
- (b) language construes meaning.

The implication is that using language involves making choices from linguistic possibilities in line with the specific task at hand (Teich, 1999). In the words of Halliday (1985: xiii):

Every text unfolds in some context of use; furthermore, it is the uses of language that ... have shaped the system. Language has evolved to satisfy human needs; and the way it is organized is functional with respect to these needs – it is not arbitrary.

What this statement implies is that language choices are made deliberately to reflect the purposes for which the communication is taking place. This idea ties in with our assumption in this work – that grammatical patterns identified in this analysis have been purposive.

4. Functional Types

In analysing the sentences in the selected editorials, the first distinction has been made between functional types and structural types. The results are as follows:

<u>Functional Types</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
a) Declarative	338	100
b) Interrogative	-	-
c) Directive	-	-
d) Exclamative	-	-
TOTAL	338	100

From the results above, it is evident that only declarative sentences are used in these editorials. This is not surprising, given the functions associated with declaratives.

SFG considers the sentence as the smallest grammatical unit which can do things. Sentences, for example, can ask questions, while clauses, groups, etc. cannot. In other words, sentences can make statements, ask questions, give commands or utter exclamations. To each of these sentence functions, there is an expected response or acknowledgement:

- a) a statement merely expects one to listen
- b) a question expects a verbal response
- c) a command expects an action response
- d) an exclamation expects an acknowledgement

Each of these functions has a corresponding sentence pattern:

- a) the declarative form is used to make a statement
- b) the interrogative form is used to ask a question
- c) the directive form is used to issue commands
- d) the exclamative form is used to express attitudinal information.

As we have noted, editorials rely on providing information to persuade readers. Accordingly, the declarative choices made in these editorials appear consistent with their primary goal. Detailed information in the editorials is provided in the form of statements, not in the interrogative or directive forms. As a result, it is only the declarative sentence we find being used in the editorials, since it is this sentence type which aids in the dissemination of information.

In discussing the implications of this preference for the declarative sentence, we may look at the structural pattern of the editorials. Using a modified version of the structure used by Bonyadi (2010), we observe that most of the editorials under study have more or less a structural pattern similar to the following outline (we shall use, as illustration, the editorial titled “JUDGES MUST HEED CJ’S WARNING” published on January 31, 2007):

i. Introduction

This is usually the section which raises the issue discussed in the editorial. It consists of two sub-sections - the *problem statement* and the *orientation*.

a) The problem statement

The success of every democratic government rests on a fair and firm justice system in which the rule of law is respected by both the government and the governed.

This is why one of the cardinal bench marks of an effective justice system declares that nobody is declared guilty until a court of competent jurisdiction has found him/her guilty of the offence.

In these sentences, we are introduced to the problem which has generated editorial interest. This section serves to indicate that there is a problem that needs to be discussed, to be addressed and to be resolved.

b) The orientation

This section provides information that identifies the specific incident(s) which has (have) triggered this problem. In many cases, the editorial consists of a narration of events.

In this context, the admonition by the Chief Justice to judges not to turn themselves into little tigers in the course of the discharge of their duties is appropriate.

Over the years, well-meaning people have complained about the way the judicial system works.

These sentences serve to provide background information for the reader to appreciate the context within which the issue is being discussed. In effect, it is to set the scene for the topic of discussion.

ii. The Body

This section provides the avenue for the editorial to raise its arguments for or against the issue. There are two sub-sections here: *the position* of the editorial on the issue and the *reasons* that have informed this position.

a) The editorial position

The DAILY GRAPHIC does not doubt the fact that the problems we have, as a country, with mob justice are traceable to the ineffective justice system, even though we frown on those evil practices in no uncertain terms.

Though the Constitution states clearly that justice emanates from the people and, therefore, every legal system must promote the security of the individual, most people are afraid to take their cases to the courts.

The reader learns in these sentences what the position of the newspaper is as regards the issue of discussion.

b) The reasons

This is where the paper proffers its arguments for its stand.

The reasons for this state of affairs are not far-fetched. Justice has become expensive, time-consuming and cumbersome.

Sometimes, members of the bench and the bar frustrate litigants with technicalities and unnecessary adjournments of cases.

Moreover, the court setting itself and processes are intimidating.

iii. The Coda

This section contains the concluding arguments in the editorial. The first part of this section sets out suggested solutions to the problem, while the second section deals with the specific actions that can be implemented.

a) Suggested Solutions

At a certain stage in our history, the idea of a panel system was introduced at the tribunal level so that some lay people could determine the guilt or otherwise of their peers.

It is heart-warming, however, that the Chief Justice recognized some challenges in the judicial system when she reminded judges that “people in court are in distress.”

The DAILY GRAPHIC is aware of the efforts of Mrs. Justice Wood to purge and clean the system to make it workable, although we concede that any reform process will come up against obstacles because of entrenched interests, conventions, usages, and traditions in the system.

The above suggestions are put forward in the editorial as answers to the problem highlighted earlier.

b) Suggested Specific Actions

We remind our judiciary to be responsive to the needs of the time, since our desire to establish a just society rests on the effectiveness of the judiciary which will serve as a bulwark against dictatorship, injustice, and corrupt practices by public office holders.

We plead with the Chief Justice to make the judiciary user-friendly, so that people in distress, who want to seek redress at the courts, will have the confidence in the justice delivery system.

We plead with members of the bench to live above reproach, since, as people who determine the fate of their fellow men, they must, like Caesar’s wife, be above suspicion.

These are the specific ways by which the DAILY GRAPHIC believes the problem highlighted in the editorial can be solved.

The point we are driving at is that, in all these structures, the information is presented using the declarative sentence. What this implies for us is that the information intended for the reader is best captured in this form. Even in the Coda, where specific recommendations for action are suggested, the editorial selects the declarative sentence form, rather than the directive form – which is the grammatical form usually associated with action requests.

We can, therefore, conclude that the declarative sentence dominates because it is found suitable for the dissemination of information. It is this sentence type which apparently facilitates the provision of information to the reader who relies on such information to form an opinion about the issue or societal problem the editorial seeks to address.

5. Structural Types

With regard to the structural types of sentence, we have the following trends:

<u>Structural Types</u>	<u>No. of Sentences</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Simple Sentence	30	8.88
Non-Simple Sentence		
- Complex	270	79.88
- Compound-Complex	23	6.80
- Compound	15	4.44
TOTAL	338	100.00

It is clear from these results that non-simple sentences are preferred in the editorials. A possible reason for this preference is that this form enables the writer to include much more information than a simple sentence will allow. In other words, the more non-simple sentences there are, the more information one can include in an editorial. This is because the non-simple sentence enables one to keep piling up ideas in the editorial.

In addition, we note that the complex sentence is the most frequent

sentence type. The figures in the table above indicate that the other two types – the compound and the compound-complex—are insignificant. Accordingly, we shall devote our attention in this study to the complex sentence as it occurs in the editorials.

To begin with, it is accepted that, in a complex sentence, there can be only one independent clause, no matter how many dependent clauses are found in such a sentence. Indeed, in our study, we observe that there are varying numbers of dependent clauses (ranging from one to nine dependent clauses within a single sentence). This could be an indication of the importance attached to the dependent clause. It also implies that the editorial sentences are filled with large amounts of information.

The table below provides the figures:

No. of Dependent Clauses Per Sentence

	Frequency	Percentage
1 Clause in a sentence	150	29.58
2 Clauses in a sentence	168	33.20
3 Clauses in a sentence	112	22.13
4 Clauses in a sentence	43	8.50
5 Clauses in a sentence	17	3.36
6 Clauses in a sentence	8	1.56
7 Clauses in a sentence	6	1.19
9 Clauses in a sentence	2	0.40
TOTAL	506	100.00

It is clear to us that the complex sentences in the editorials differ in the number of dependent clauses they contain. This is an indication that there does not seem to be a limit to the number of dependent clauses that the writers can squeeze into a single sentence—a situation that is not entirely surprising, given that the editorial relies on information to persuade the reader. It is not uncommon, as a result, to read in an editorial, a sentence like the example below:

At this juncture, we can only hope that last Monday's power outage has not already given us a bad press in the international media, since, so far, the generality of Ghanaians have demonstrated the best aspects of the legendary Ghanaian hospitality and conduct to ensure that our august visitors enjoy their stay here.

This sentence is typical of the sentence patterns prevalent in the editorials under study in this work, the denseness of the sentence made possible by piling up dependent clauses.

The choice of complex sentences, also, is significant. Complex sentences involve a hierarchical clause structure in a sentence. Therefore, by implication, using complex sentences indicates a hierarchical organization of information in the sentence – some ideas may be subordinated to some others. What we see in such sentences is that each independent clause may include one or more dependent clauses, each of which may in itself include another subordinate clause. This process of subordination means that the ideas are arranged in order of importance, with the main idea expressed in the independent clause, while the dependent clause expresses a minor idea.

The choice of the complex sentence ensures that, within a sentence, the main idea – expressed in the independent clause - is set apart from the supporting ideas – often expressed in the dependent clause(s). As a result, the reader is able to distinguish the important ideas from the supporting/extra ideas in a sentence.

For example, in the sentence below:

Whenever any disagreements have come up, the Electoral Commission has used dialogue for a consensus, without compromising its mandate as a truly independent body charged with the conduct of elections in Ghana.

we see that the most important idea in the sentence is expressed in the independent clause:

the Electoral Commission has used dialogue for a consensus

while the dependent clauses below provide supporting or additional information about the main idea:

whenever any disagreements have come up without compromising its mandate as a truly independent body charged with the conduct of elections in Ghana

This is what we mean when we say that sentence types selected are meant to aid tight package of information in a sentence.

In addition, the hierarchical relationship implied in this grammatical process of subordination enables the reader to rank the ideas in terms of their relative importance. We will use the following sentence to illustrate this point:

The Secretary-General of the Trades Union Congress meant well when he told participants at the Annual New Year School at Legon that, to help sanitize industrial relations practice in the country, there was the need to insist on the application of the laws and procedures of the National Labour Commission.

The most important idea is expressed in the independent clause:

The Secretary-General of the Trades Union Congress meant well

The next in rank in terms of importance is the idea expressed in the dependent clause:

when he told participants at the Annual New Year School at Legon

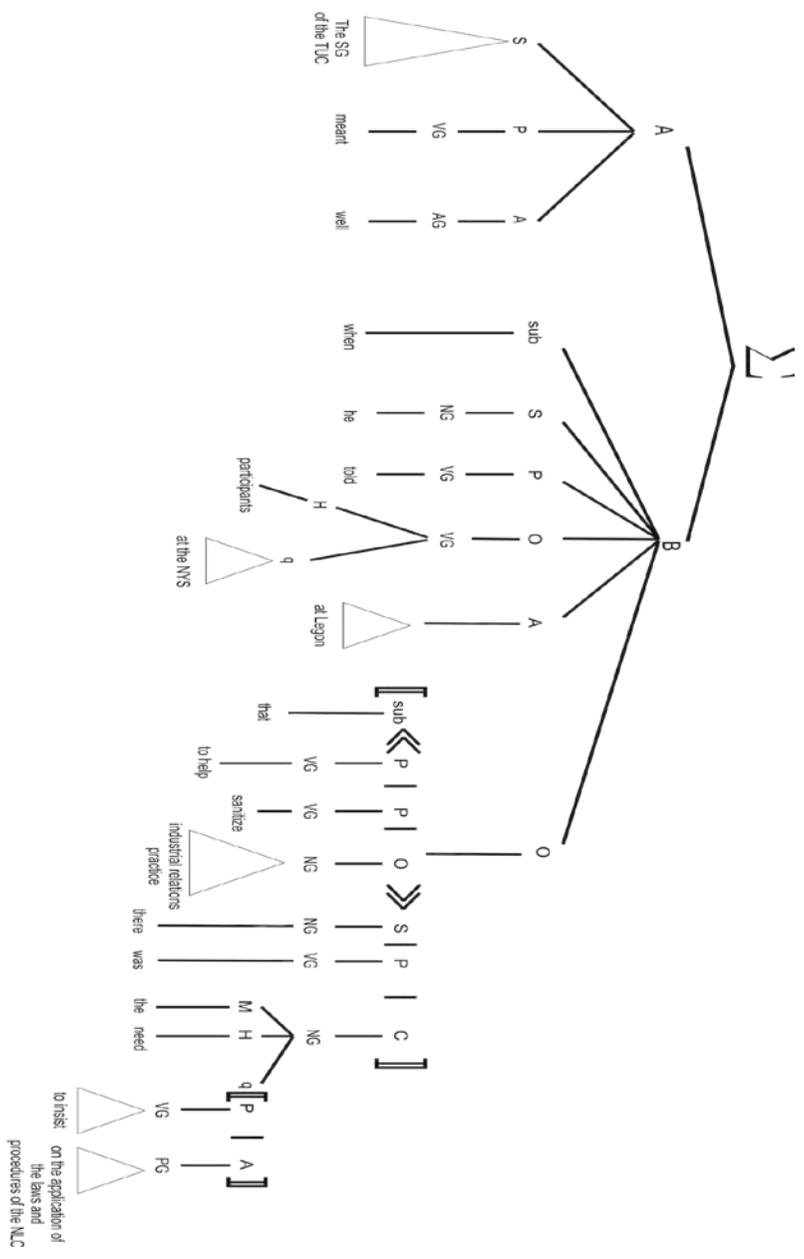
This clause provides information about the time the event stated in the main clause occurred. Ranking next below the above dependent clause, it provides information which is itself dependent on the information in the above cited dependent clause – it informs the reader about what the Secretary-General actually “told the participants at the Annual New Year School at Legon”

that . . . there was the need to insist on the application of the laws and procedures of the National Labour Commission

Finally, the clause below is itself dependent on the clause above since this latter clause tells the reader the purpose for the action suggested this earlier clause:

to help sanitize industrial relations practice in the country

These multiple dependency relationships are illustrated in the following diagram:



Using the letters of the alphabet to indicate this ranking of ideas (from the most important to the least important), the dependent clauses in the sentences will be identified as follows:

Clause A: *The Secretary-General of the Trades Union Congress meant well*

Clause B: *when he told participants at the Annual New Year School at Legon*

Clause C: *that. . .there was the need. . .*

Clause D: *to help sanitize industrial relations practice in the country*

Clause E: *to insist on the application of the laws and procedures of the National Labour Commission*

The important advantage about using structures with such multiple dependencies is that it enables the reader to recognize the degree of importance attached to each piece of information, a necessary procedure if the reader is to appreciate the import of each set of information. We find such a process repeated wherever there are multiple hierarchical dependencies in a sentence. It is manifested in the example below:

It is our hope that fans were also aware that the players they had vilified with extreme bitterness earlier were the same players they hailed as heroes in the all-night parties that hit most streets in the country yesterday.

Using the same alphabetical listing to indicate their relative hierarchical structure, we identify the relevant multiple dependencies as follows:

Clause A: *It is our hope*

Clause B: *that fans were also aware*

Clause C: *that the players . . . were the same players. . .*

Clause D₁: *they had vilified with extreme bitterness earlier*

Clause D₂: *they had hailed as heroes in the all-night parties*

Clause E: *that hit most streets in the country yesterday*

6. Patterns of Subordination

In grammatical studies, it is well-known that coordination and subordination are two principal means by which two structures are joined together. In our study, accordingly, we find examples of coordinated dependent clauses in the complex sentences below:

The DAILY GRAPHIC, while thanking Cadbury for its foresight and praising the company for its goodwill towards the country's

farmers, would plead with the administrators of the fund to disburse the money judiciously so that the target group – the farmers - will benefit from it.

Not only has it increased the producer price for farmers and regularly paid bonuses to farmers during the off-season, it has also sprayed their farms...

In the first example, we have the coordinated dependent clauses:

while thanking Cadbury for its foresight and praising the company for its goodwill towards the country's farmers

In the second sentence, we have the clauses:

Not only has it increased the producer price for farmers and regularly paid bonuses to farmers during the off-season

It must be mentioned, however, that sentences of this nature are rare in the editorials. This means that coordination is not a preferred process for joining clauses in the editorials. (This should not come as a surprise because, as we have pointed out, coordination even among independent clauses is not as popular). Sentence expansion using subordination among the dependent clauses is more common. These clause types are used to expand the information content within the sentence. In the choice of

dependent clauses, we note that there are two patterns of subordination - *adjunction* and *complementation*.

Adjunction involves adding circumstantial information about an event, i.e. time, reason, condition, etc. We find examples of clauses involving the use of adjunction subordination in the sentences below:

If we are not careful, the crisis could set the clock of progress backwards.

Though it is well below the minimum operating level, we are compelled to generate power from the dam.

On the other hand, complementation enables one to add information which seeks to explain, specify, define or identify an element in the sentence. Examples are found in the sentences below:

The other unintended concomitant could be an increase in imports which will, in the end, undermine local production.

We take consolation for the fact that, despite this initial problem of power, the impediment will be removed through a combination factors including the use of coal which could be imported from some African countries as a source of power.

From the examples cited above, we note that non-rankshifted clauses serve as adjuncts. Thus, we have the following clauses which are linked through the adjunction process:

If we are not careful Though it is well below the operating level

while rankshifted clauses serve as complements of certain elements in the complex sentence, examples of which we find below:

which will, in the end, undermine local production

that, despite this initial problem of power, the impediment will be removed through a combination of factors

which could be imported from some African countries as a source of power.

We can, thus, say that most sentences in the editorials are made up of configurations of rankshifted and non-rankshifted clauses.

Accordingly, in the data, we find the following forms of complex sentence:

1. a sentence in which there is one independent clause and only one non-rankshifted dependent clause:

But the legal framework can't guarantee law and order in society if members of the bench are not prepared to dispense justice without fear or favour.

Ever since Tetteh Quarshie brought the crop into the country as an economic commodity, many good things have flowed from it to the well-being of the country and its people.

2. a sentence which is made up of an independent clause and one rankshifted dependent clause:

The package which is in partnership with the COCOBOD will begin with the investment of \$600,000 into the cocoa sector this year.

We believe that every democratically-minded and peace-loving Ghanaian can feel relieved with this assurance.

3. a sentence in which we find an independent clause and more than one non-rankshifted clause only:

Because we are mindful of the huge benefits of the scheme, we have been wary about criticisms and we have exercised restraints whenever we have been compelled to comment on the implementation of the exercise.

Certainly, if we want to become self-sufficient in rice production, it is not beyond us, provided that it is made a principal objective for our farmers.

4. a sentence which is made up of an independent clause and more than one rankshifted clause only:

We therefore commend the President and his government for upholding the rule of law and respect for human rights to the extent that we can boldly say that despite whatever weaknesses or failures of government machinery in delivering on their promises, Ghanaians feel more comfortable and reassured.

Political leaders and their followers should remember that what they *should give to the people is rapid growth in all sectors of the economy.*

5. a sentence in which there is a combination of non-rankshifted and rankshifted clauses:

Having taken the presidential advice very seriously and having raised their game to a higher level yesterday, the Stars must have learnt the additional lesson that the same fans who stirred anger in certain quarters

by their criticism were the same fans who danced with them at the stadium and in the streets in their great and well-deserved victory over Morocco.

The non-rankshifted dependent clauses are:

having taken the presidential advice very seriously

having raised their game to a higher level yesterday

while the rankshifted dependent clauses are listed below:

that the same fans. . . were the same fans who stirred anger in certain quarters by their criticism who danced with them at the stadium and in the streets in their great and well-deserved victory over Morocco.

The table below presents figures for the above patterns of occurrence of the rankshifted and the non-rankshifted dependent types in the complex sentences:

6. Patterns of Subordination in Editorials

Sentence Type	Frequency	Percentage
Sentences with only one non-rankshifted clause	40	12.96
Sentences with only one rankshifted clause	69	22.22
Sentences with more than one non-rankshifted clause only	23	7.41
Sentences with more than one rankshifted clause only	103	33.33
Sentence with both non-rankshifted and rankshifted clauses	74	24.08
TOTAL	308	100.00

Based on these results, we can make the following observations:

- a) most of the complex sentences we find in the editorials have rankshifted clauses
- b) only a small number of non-rankshifted clauses occur in the editorials

There appears to be a conscious effort to create complex sentence forms. The implication of this observation is that the sentence of choice in editorial writing is the complex sentence which has multiple rankshifted dependent clauses. This deduction is supported by the fact that sentences made up of only rankshifted clauses constitute 55.55% of the choices. If we add the fact that there are, also, sentences with both rankshifted and non-rankshifted clauses (24.08%), then we can see that complementation (rather than adjunction) is the dominant subordination pattern.

In addition, since rankshifting enables a writer to pack details of identification, elaboration, definition, description, etc. into a single sentence, we can conclude this section by stating that

- a) the information in the editorials is highly packed,
- b) the information is tightly integrated, and

- c) there is a slant towards information density in this variety of English.

We must bear in mind that editorials rely on information to persuade. Thus, it is believed that the more detailed an editorial’s information content is, the more likely it is to achieve its objective. Thus, the assumption is: the more informative, the better. It seems, then, that the overall goal of language choices in the editorial has been to enable the writer to pack many ideas in each sentence. From the discussion above, this has been achieved, even if it has been done at a cost to comprehensibility and message absorption.

7. Types of Dependent Clause

Another important aspect of dependent clauses that we need to consider is the type of dependent clause that usually occurs in the sentence. In this study, we find that the whole range of dependent clauses can be found in the editorials under study, even though they occur in varying frequencies:

i. Dependent Clause Types

<u>Clause Types</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Relative Clauses	169	33.45
Nominal Clauses	143	28.26
Adverbial Clauses	125	24.71
Non-Finite Clauses	69	13.58
TOTAL	506	100.00

We note that the only clause type that exhibits adjunction subordination is the adverbial clause (24.71%). This means that there is a preponderant

preference for clauses which display complementation subordination (75.29%). This is an indication of the need to achieve information integration and information density, a goal which the other three clauses – relative, nominal, non-finite – are used to achieve in grammar.

Also, from the above figures, it is evident that three main types of clauses are of significant value in the choices that are made in the editorials. These are the relative, the nominal, and the adverbial clause types (which together constitute 86.42%). Thus, the discussion here will concentrate on these clauses. But, before then, we will briefly talk about the non-finite forms as they occur in the data.

ii. The Non-Finite Clause

To begin with, the editorials use two forms of non-finite clauses – the infinitival and the participial:

Types of Non-Finite Clause	Frequency	Percentage
Infinitival Clause	42	60.27
Participial Clause	27	39.73
TOTAL	69	100.00

As regards the infinitival forms, we note that they occur under three structural conditions. First, they may occur as qualifier to the Head within a Nominal Group:

Rice has become a staple for Ghanaians and any attempt *to increase its production locally* should be encouraged.

Since the EC has demonstrated enough capacity *to fulfil this mandate without fear or favour*. . .

In both examples, each infinitival clause is rankshifted within an NG as qualifier to the Head of the Group as follows:

In both examples, the infinitival clauses serve as Complement in their respective matrix clauses.

The use of these infinitival clauses has reinforced our observation that there is a strong preference for strategies that allow for the tight packaging of information in editorials in Ghana. As Chafe (1982) has remarked, the infinitival form is one device which is used if one wants to achieve information integration. This is because it allows for idea-unit expansion, which is similar to the function rankshifted nominal dependent clauses perform. The infinitival clause does at the group level what the nominal clause does at the clausal level. For, as we have seen from the discussion, these infinitival clauses serve as complements to nouns or adjectives and as elements in clauses structure. In all cases, the effect is to expand information in a single sentence.

The other non-finite clause type in the editorials is the participial clause. There are two structural contexts within which it occurs. In the first instance, the participial clause occurs as complement of the preposition in a PG which is itself rankshifted as qualifier in the NG:

We join the President to ask Cadbury to consider the possibility

of venturing into the processing of the beans in Ghana

The DAILY GRAPHIC finds it rather unfortunate . . . in our attempt at

bringing ourselves in tune with best practices in the management of facilities in the country.

The relevant rankshifted participial clauses are found in the structures below:

the possibility of venturing into the processing of the beans in Ghana

our attempt at bringing ourselves in tune with best practices in the management of facilities in the country.

Like the infinitival clause, this use of the participial clause has a defining function. It defines what the writer means by the use of the nouns possibility and attempt.

There is a second occurrence of the participial clause which is different from what we have discussed. Here, the participial clauses function as detached clauses (Thompson, 1983). The following are the only examples found in the data:

Having taken the presidential advice seriously and having raised their game to a higher level yesterday, the Stars must have learnt the additional lesson that. . .

Having done that, they looked for the resources to ensure that everyone worked towards the achievement of the vision.

Looking back on the past 50 years, we can see that . . . we should have attained greater achievement which we would be proud of.

Looking at the euphoria that has gripped Ghanaians . . . we can only hope that we have a sense of appreciation of what independence should mean.

In the end, we can say that all these non-finite clauses are additional devices used to enable the writer pack ideas into a single sentence. They allow us to expand, explain or define the information content in a discourse. Also, their use enables the writer to arrange ideas in a hierarchy. Since there are so many ideas, it is important to organise them in such a manner that the reader can appreciate their relative importance. The non-finite forms contribute to the realization of this goal.

iii. The Relative Clause

As we have pointed out in an earlier table, the relative clause is the most frequently used dependent clause in the editorials. It is the most preferred clausal device for idea-expansion. This is not surprising, if one remembers that the emphasis in this discourse-type is to give the reader as much information as possible as a persuasive technique.

Yet, according to Beaman (1984), there is a basis for this choice of the relative clause. It is a clause usually used for purposes of identification as well as to provide additional information about the noun it modifies. It must be noted, however, that the relative clause is not the only grammatical device for nominal post-modification – there are other structures like appositives, non-finite clauses, PGs, etc. But, for a more specific nominal reference, identification and/or expansion, it is the most preferred option in written discourse (Biber, 1986).

Not surprisingly, therefore, we find in our study that the full range of relative forms is used for the expansion and elaboration of information in the NG. We present this information in the table below:

<u>Relative Clause Types</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
WH – Relative Clause	109	64.87
WHIZ – relative Clause	23	14.19
THAT – Relative Clause	21	12.16
Pied Piping Relative Clause	15	8.78
TOTAL	169	100.00

With regard to the WH-relative clause in the study, we observe that we have the WH - pronouns occurring more frequently at subject position than at object position:

	Frequency	Percentage
Pronoun at Subject Position	87	79.44
Pronoun at Object Position	22	20.56
TOTAL	109	100.00

This means that a relative clause like what we find in the sentences below:

Apart from these, the crop has indirectly produced national edifices which are benefitting every Ghanaian who gets to them.

However, there are many social and critical practices which have conspired against their development

is more prevalent than what we find in the following examples

Also, the countries did not hesitate to borrow technology which they *considered critical towards accomplishing their objectives.*

There is the ordeal of Female Genital Mutilation *which young girls have to undergo.*

The two main types of WHIZ clauses are illustrated in the following examples:

. . .most of the people working in most homes as house-helps or *domestic assistants* qualify a children. . .

It appears that those *entrusted with the responsibility.* . .do not appreciate the obligation. . .

These reduced relative clause forms are not as many as the WH-relative clauses. But, just like the WH-relative clauses, they are used for expansion

of information about the H in the NG. As a result, they are often used in supplying further information and, therefore, can be said to contribute to the abstract and compactly packed nature of the editorial discourse. They contribute greatly to information integration within a sentence.

The third type of relative structure found in the data is the THAT-relative clause. We have the following examples:

We believe that the Government should establish a system
*that demands high standards in performance from all
public
office holders.*

Socially, the feeling of nationalism *that the tournament has
engendered among our compatriots. . .*

It is clear from the findings that this relative clause type is not commonly used in the editorial. A possible reason one can offer is that it does not appear as formal as the WH-forms. Indeed, even the pied piping relative structures (though fewer in number in the data) appear more formal than the THAT- forms. For example, the pied piping forms below:

*We should have national objectives around which our
compatriots will rally. . .*

*We remind the players to consider the near-capacity
stadium in which they played . . .*

sound more formal than the structures in the following versions of the same sentences:

We should have national objectives *our compatriots will
rally around . . .*

We remind the players to consider the near-capacity stadium
they played in. . .

The obvious conclusion then is that the pied piping clauses are used in abstract and formal texts like editorials.

Before ending this discussion of the relative structures, we must point out the fact that there is no single occurrence of sentence relatives. Usually,

these relative forms function as comment clauses. They do not perform any identification role as all the other relative types do. For this reason, we think they have no place in an informational text as formal as the editorial. Therefore, they are, in our view, properly excluded from the data.

iv. The Nominal Clause

The nominal nature of editorial language is further reinforced by the profuse use of nominal clauses in the editorial texts we studied. From the texts, we identify two main types of nominal clauses. These are (a) nominal THAT-clauses and (b) WH- clauses. The frequency of their respective occurrence in the editorial texts is shown as follows:

Nominal Clauses in Editorials

	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
THAT-clauses	115	80.42
WH-clauses	28	19.58
TOTAL	143	100.00

Examples of THAT-clauses are found in the sentences below:

The fact that one does not share the same political agenda with another person does not make him one's enemy.

We have maintained that the problem of energy must be tackled with all seriousness

WH-clauses are found in the following examples:

We wonder why a machine as vital as the MRI could be installed

without a stabilizer for its protection against power fluctuation

That unfortunate omission is what has caused us this embarrassment

It is clear from the examples above that the preference in this discourse is for THAT-clauses. In the texts, these clauses serve as verbal, nominal, and adjectival complements – distributed as follows:

Types of THAT-clause

	Frequency	Percentage
Verbal Complements	70	60.87
Nominal Complements	27	23.48
Adjectival Complements	18	15.65
TOTAL	115	100.00

To begin with, we observe that clauses which serve as verbal complements dominate in the texts. That is, THAT-clauses occur more frequently after verbs than they do after nouns or adjectives. We have examples of such verbal complement clauses in the following sentences:

Without any fear of contradiction, *we can say that cocoa is the backbone of the Ghanaian economy. . .*

The DAILY GRAPHIC concedes *that some house-helpers. . . have broken the vicious cycle of poverty, disease and squalor*

In both cases, the dependent clauses act as object to the verb in the sentence.

It is important to state that using a clause in place of a Nominal Group is a device to expand the information content of the sentence. That is, the verbs which take such clausal complements are transitive and therefore can be followed by a Nominal Group as Object. For example, in the examples below:

The man has admitted *his guilt*

The man has admitted *that he actually stole the fowl*

In the first sentence, the NG- *his guilt* – serves as the object of the verb admitted. But in this sentence we do not know what constitutes *his guilt*. This means that in a sense the information is not quite ‘complete.’ However, if we select the nominal clause – *that he actually stole the fowl* – as the object of the verb, then this information is more complete, more detailed and more specific for the reader. This is precisely what is happening in the editorial texts. The preference for THAT-clauses (rather than NGs) is meant to achieve this goal of feeding the reader with detailed information as a means of persuading him/her.

In addition, we note that there are very few verbs which select the clausal complement and they fall into two subclasses:

a) **Verbs of assertion:** these are verbs which are used to make declarations or statements or propositions:

argue	establish	reveal
concede	indicate	say
convince	maintain	state
demonstrate	remind	tell

b) **Verbs of cognition:** these verbs describe internal mental processes:

believe	note
find out	realize
hope	recall
know	recognize
mean	remember
Mean	think

The verbs listed above all take THAT-clauses which function at object position. The clauses are used instead of an NG. In these cases, as a result, the clauses provide information which is more expansive and explanatory. With regard to THAT-clauses which function as complements in the Nominal Group, we have examples like the following sentences:

The DAILY GRAPHIC does not doubt the fact *that the problems we have, as a country, with mob justice are traceable to the ineffective justice system*

Fortunately, there are indications *that the economic fortunes of the country are better now*

As in the cases earlier cited, the nominal clause expands the information in the noun. Thus, for instance, the clause:

that the problems we have, as a country, with mob justice are traceable to the ineffective justice system

is an answer to the question - what fact does the DAILY GRAPHIC *not doubt?*

Similarly, the clause:

that the economic fortunes of the country are better now
answers the question – *what are the indications?*

In addition, we notice that, in relative terms, there are very few nouns which function this way in the editorials. These nouns may be sub-classified as follows:

a) Nouns which denote the mental frame of the writer

anticipation	hope
assurance	impression
determination	spirit
expectation	stance

b) Nouns which reflect emotional states

belief	feeling
desire	joy
doubt	

c) Nouns which describe

background	news
conclusion	pledge
fact	proposition
indication	suggestion

We will end this discussion of the nominal clause by remarking that, while both relative and these nominal clauses function as qualifiers in their respective NGs, there is a difference in their discourse functions. Information in the relative clause is identificational, but, in these nominal clauses information is elaborative.

From the data, we have Adjectival Groups in which THAT-clauses function as complements to the adjective:

Today, we are fortunate *that we are enjoying economic and political stability*.

It is important *that, as a nation, we take bold critical steps on our energy*.

The following types of adjectives occur in the data:

a) Adjectives which allow extraposition:

clear	important
encouraging	sad
good	true
heart-warming	

b) Adjectives which do not allow extraposition:

aware

fortunate

proud

sure

Just as we pointed out in our discussion of the Noun complements, these adjectival complements provide detailed explanatory information about the adjectives they qualify.

With regard to WH-interrogative clauses which perform the nominal functions of subject, object, complement, etc., we observe that they are all rankshifted as elements within the independent clause:

Socially, the feeling of nationalism that the tournament has engendered among our compatriots surpasses *what our participation in the 2006 World Cup in Germany brought up*.

What is important is that we may agree to disagree.

In the first sentence, for instance, the nominal clause functions as the object of the verb surpasses, while the WH-clause in the second example functions as the subject in the matrix verb is. Thus, instead of NGs, we rather have clauses performing these grammatical roles. There are different types of such clauses in the data. These are clauses which begin with the interrogators *what, why, where, how* and *whether*.

That unfortunate omission is *what has caused us this embarrassment*. . .

This explains *why we are happy to learn that Cadbury International . . . has announced a package*. . .

They set themselves the vision and mission to indicate *where they wanted to be at specific periods*.

The time has come for us to strategize carefully *on how to achieve this noble objective*.

We wonder *whether the cost of flying Paintsil to Nigeria . . . could not have catered for the purchase or repair of the parts . . .*

We shall end this discussion of the nominal clauses by observing that it is evident from the analysis that nominalizing processes dominate in the editorials. As we have seen, they occur in the non-finite clauses – infinitival and participial – as well as in the finite clauses (relatives, nominal- THAT and WH forms). All these dependent clauses have been selected because they have proved to be efficient devices for the expansion, explanation and integration of information within sentences.

We can, therefore, conclude that the language of these editorials is extremely nominal, as a result of the high frequency of nominal grammatical processes we have discussed here. Indeed, there is altogether the impression of a high abstract and informational denseness in this discourse.

v. Adverbial Clauses

These clauses are used as devices for relating circumstantial information in the texts. They provide information about the complex logical relations within a sentence – time, reason, purpose, etc. The distribution of the adverbial clauses in the data is as follows:

<u>Types</u>	Adverbial Clause Types	
	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Clause of Time	38	30.40
Clause of Purpose	27	21.60
Clause of Condition	23	18.40
Clause of Reason	22	17.60
Clause of Concession	09	7.20
Clause of Manner	04	3.20
Clause of Place	02	1.60
TOTAL	125	100.00

It is noted from the table above that the time adverbial clause is the most preferred in the editorials. It is the most common of the adverbial clauses in the texts. More significantly, however, there is a spread in the sub-types of time adverbial clauses. We note that there are clauses which use different time subordinators: *when, while, since, until* and *as*.

We can earn a lot from them and also create employment avenues for the teeming youth, only *when we add value to our primary produce*.

Some of these domestic servants are subjected to all forms of abuse – rape, defilement, long hours of work at home, *while some may provide extra support at such commercial joints as “chop bars” and drinking spots*.

Since the government of President Kufuor came into power in 2001, it has done a lot for the cocoa industry

However, because of the power problem, VALCO has been compelled to send many of the 700 employees home, *until it completes plans to generate its own energy*.

The need for calmness, mutual respect and positive support is even more crucial now *as the competition cruises into the knock-out stage*.

We must state, however, that the above clause sub-types do not occur in the same frequencies, as the table below shows:

Sub-Types of Time Adverbial Clauses

<u>Clause-Types</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>%</u>
Clauses with the subordinator when	17	44.74
Clauses with the subordinator while	10	26.32
Clauses with the subordinator since	05	13.16

Clauses with the subordinator until	03	7.90
Clauses with the subordinator as	03	7.90
TOTAL	38	100.02

As the evidence has shown, the next most frequent adverbial clause in the editorials is the clause of purpose:

We also join the President to ask Cadbury to consider the possibility of venturing into the processing of the beans in Ghana, *so that we can add value to the produce to enhance our development*

They monitored and evaluated all the programmes which had been instituted *in order to see whether everything was moving smoothly.*

There are only two subordinators that signal purposive grammatical relations: *in order to, so that.*

Sub-Types of Purpose Adverbial Clauses

Clauses with the subordinator <i>in order to</i>	17	62.96
Clauses with the subordinator <i>so that</i>	10	37.04
TOTAL	27	100.00

The clauses of condition have the following forms:

But the legal framework cannot guarantee law and order in society *if members of the bench are not prepared to dispense justice without fear or favour.*

The cocoa industry will receive a further boost if Ghanaians will patronize cocoa products such as chocolate on the National Chocolate Day.

Usually, such clauses of condition reflect the view of a person about a possible outcome – a conviction that something will most likely occur if a condition is fulfilled. The examples here all express open conditions which, unlike hypothetical conditions, do not convey one way or the

other whether the condition will be fulfilled or not. Indeed, as regards the hypothetical condition, this is what Quirk and others (1985: 1091) say:

A hypothetical condition, on the other hand, conveys the speaker's belief that the condition will not be fulfilled (for future condition), is not fulfilled (for present condition), or was not fulfilled (for past conditions), and hence the probable or certain falsity of the proposition expressed by the matrix clause.

This conditional stance of the writer (of a hopeful fulfilment) is usual in a persuasive effort. Thus, given that editorials are attempts at persuasion, it is not surprising that these types of conditional clauses – the likely condition - are selected, rather than the hypothetical or the impossible conditional types. This type of conditional clause is a marker of a belief in a specific course of action, provided a condition can be fulfilled.

There are, in addition, clauses of reason which are marked by the subordinators because and since:

In some cultures, because it is the man who pays the dowry, he sometimes tends to think he has absolute control over the woman.

Since we pride ourselves as an agricultural country, there is no earthly reason why we should not be able to feed ourselves.

The distribution of these subordinators is as follows:

Sub-Types of Reason Adverbial Clauses

Clauses with the subordinator since	12	54.55
Clauses with the subordinator because	10	45.45
TOTAL	22	100.00

It is important to remark that there are other adverbial clauses which occur in the editorials - clauses of concession, manner and place. But these types occur in insignificant numbers.

We will end the discussion of dependent clause-types by reiterating that subordination allows for expansion of information. Thus, we can say that editorial language uses this grammatical device as a means to pack as much additional information as possible for the reader. In the process, different types of dependent clauses are used to avoid tedium. For instance, we find, in the sentence below,

Those who have, at all times, found fault with the company's use of energy will talk about the repercussions of the closure and, for once, will realize that, apart from being a Ghanaian company, VALCO plays a vital role in the national economy.

- a) a relative clause which is a defining statement about the H- those:

who have, at all times, found fault with the company's use of energy

- b) a nominal clause as the object of the verb – *realize*, the clause gives the reader information about whatever it is people “will realise”:

that. . . VALCO plays a vital role in the national economy

- c) a participial clause which is actually serving as a comment clause rankshifted within a PG:

apart from *being a Ghanaian company*

It is clear that each dependent clause serves as an avenue for the expansion of important information. In addition, we observe that in the expansion process each dependent clause provides different types of information within the clause – addition, identification, definition, explanation or exemplification. We note, therefore, that the information one dependent clause may give will differ from what is given by another clause. This explains the choice of the different dependent clause types that we find in editorials. It is this process which enables the writer to squeeze, within a single sentence, a lot of information.

Conclusion

It is evident from this analysis that to writers of editorials the desire to influence opinions of readers through the use of information as a ‘weapon’ of persuasion is paramount. This has apparently necessitated the various processes we have just described which enable the pile-up of ideas in a single sentence. However, we need to point out that, in the attempt to include detailed information in a sentence, the reader’s comprehension and absorption of the message is neglected. As Glenn and Gray (2007) have noted, too much detail within a single sentence is likely to hinder a reader’s apprehension of the message. For, most likely, the reader may lose sight of the point of the editorial. We can see evidence of this observation in the sentence below:

It is against this ominous background that we find the assurance by the Electoral Commission that its resolve to ensure clean and incident-free elections will not be impeded by financial constraints very heart-warming.

Indeed, the hierarchical structure of the dependent clauses in the sentence above can be cumbersome and, ultimately, impede comprehension. The difficulty has arisen because (a) the nominal clause below

*that we find the assurance by the Electoral Commission. .
. very
heart-warming*

has been interrupted by two other dependent clauses – a nominal and an infinitival –

that its resolve . . . will not be impeded by financial constraints

and

to ensure clean and incident-free elections

The multiple dependency relations expressed in the rankshifts above have to be resolved first if there is to be any meaningful interpretation of the sentence. Indeed, the clause

to ensure clean and incident-free elections

can make some sense only if it is realised that it is embedded in the subject of the next higher-ranked clause as follows:

that its resolve \llbracket to ensure clean and incident-free elections \rrbracket
will not be impeded by financial constraints

Next, the above combination must be embedded in the following clause
*that we find the assurance by the Electoral Commission. . . very
heart-warming*

This will now produce the following:

that we find the assurance by the Electoral Commission \llbracket ₂*that its
resolve* \llbracket ₃*to ensure clean and incident-free elections* \rrbracket ₃ *will not
be impeded by financial constraints*₂ \rrbracket *very heart-warming*₁ \rrbracket

Lastly, we place the above structure as a rankshifted element in the independent clause:

It is against this ominous background

This will give us the final sentence:

It is against this ominous background \llbracket ₁*that we find
the assurance by the Electoral Commission* \llbracket ₂*that its
resolve* \llbracket ₃*to ensure clean and incident-free elections*
 \llbracket ₃*will not be impeded by financial constraints* \rrbracket ₂ \rrbracket *very
heart-warming*₁ \rrbracket

Given this tortuous process in unravelling these intricate relationships within one sentence, it is a wonder if anybody can be encouraged to read the editorial, much less be persuaded by its message. Not surprisingly, therefore, not many Ghanaian readers of newspapers bother to read the editorial column. For it is clear that as more information is stacked into a sentence, the language becomes increasingly complex, dense and difficult to understand. Expectedly, many readers have found the language of editorials quite heavy-laden and unwieldy.

We can surmise from the discussion of these editorials that there are two principal goals which have guided the linguistic choices made in the texts - expansion of ideas and compression (or compactness) of information. These two basic goals have been achieved through the grammatical processes of complementation and adjunction in the dependent clauses we have analyzed. Complementation involves subordination and rankshifting. Thus, in the study, we observe that there are several instances of complementation, because it allows for not only expansion but also compactness. As a result, the study has revealed that rankshifting occurs quite frequently in the nominal structures. We find rankshifted clauses in the choice of the relative clause, the appositive clause, and the non-finite clause types which all serve as complements to their respective Head-words or as elements at nominal positions within the clause. There are, as a result, a lot of rankshifted structures in the texts, an indication of efforts to elaborate on idea units and, at the same time, compress information in a tight manner. These nominalization processes have made texts extremely nominal in nature.

Adjunction involves only subordination. It is not a rankshifting process. Thus, the relationship is not as tight as it is with rankshifting. This is why Radford (1988) has pointed out that complements are closer to their Head-words than adjuncts are. But, adjunction is a unit-expanding process, so we find it in the selection of the adverbial and conditional clauses in the texts. It is evident, then, that the more complementation processes there are in a sentence, the more compact the information packaging is. But as has been stated, the reader is likely to find the information quite complex, abstract and unwieldy.

We wish to end this study with the observation that there is little doubt that a Ghanaian variety of English is very much part of the expanded community of English users worldwide. Indeed, it is clear from studies of New Englishes that there is ‘a richness of sociological indices within these variations.’ Ghanaian English, as a living language, displays such variations just as well as other varieties of the language do. It is our view that these variety indices in the Ghanaian dialect have not been fully investigated. We hope, therefore, that this work will stimulate enough linguistic interest to explore them and study Ghanaian English in more detail. We agree with Schneider (2003: 233), when he states that the English Language in the world is

...currently growing roots in a great many countries and communities around the world, being appropriated by local speakers and, in that process, it is diversifying and developing new dialects.

Ghanaian English is one of such newly developing dialects, and it is through studies of this nature that it can take its place on the linguistic map of World Englishes.

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Yorùbá Proverbs and Musicality

Michael Olutayo Olatunji¹

Abstract

This paper attempted to establish some links between traditional Yorùbá instrumental music and instrumentation or performance with proverbs. Eleven Yorùbá proverbs that reflect either vocal or instrumental performance were collected, categorized and analysed according to their respective functionalities among members of this ethnic group. The analyses revealed that, among other things, Yorùbá proverbs could be used to emphasise the importance of collaboration of music with other performing arts, express a relationship between the musical instrument combination and the concept of family co-existence, uphold the use of musical instruments as a communicative and panegyric tool, and emphasize the universality of Yorùbá aesthetic value on speech and music.

Introduction

Just like in many other Nigerian ethnic groups, music is as vital to the Yorùbá people as air is vital to life. As a matter of fact, music is used in everyday activities of the Yorùbá people, either individually or collectively. Music is a vital tool in the day-to-day living of a Yorùbá man. Although scholars have always emphasised two major functions of music among African peoples, that is, entertainment and information, the roles and uses of music among Africans are too numerous to mention (Delano, 1987; Euba, 1988; Owomoyela, 2005; and Kosemani, 2010). Among the Yorùbá people, for example, music is used to educate (especially the young ones) about almost all the facets of culture and traditions. It is used to praise, entertain and communicate (both in the physical and metaphysical realms). Music is also used extensively in worship and as therapy for the drudgery of routines or to identify the members of a particular occupation or association. Also, like most ethnic groups in Nigeria, the two media through which the sound of music is performed among the Yorùbá people are the musical instruments and the human voice.

¹Michael Olutayo Olatunji is a Lecturer in the Department of Music, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

However, there seems to be no clear-cut boundary between vocal and instrumental music in African culture. This is corroborated by Hornbostel (1928:62), who succinctly states that “African music is not conceived without dancing nor African rhythm without drumming, nor the forms of African song without antiphony”. In his analysis of the music performances of some repertoires of the people of central Africa, Akpabot (1975:5) asserts that

...in effect, the vocal performance was a song with words and the xylophonist’s (instrumental) solo a song without words, and since the songs are derived from speech patterns, it is easy to see how the xylophone music could be used to transmit messages.

Therefore, any attempt to conceptualize or analyze Yoruba instrumental music purely as musical sound would amount to belittling its functions. This is because words and music have to be viewed in one context in order for the totality of the musician’s performance to be appreciated.

Apart from those who are found in the Kogi and Kwara states of Nigeria and in some parts of the Republic of Benin, the largest concentration of the Yorùbá people is found in the South-western geo-political zone of Nigeria. This geographical region covers both the African forest and Savannah zones of the West African sub-region. This location is mainly responsible for the inequalities in the distribution of types of musical instruments among the Yorùbá people. While there is an avalanche of both the membranophonic and idiophonic instruments, as a result of the types of animals and trees found therein, chordophones and aerophones are almost scarcely present. These last two categories are usually found in negligible quantities and, in most cases, they are sparsely distributed among certain Yorùbá sub-groups.

In his argument regarding why many black African peoples have no precise noun for music, Francis Bebey (1975:12) asserts *inter alia* that the art of music is so inherent in black African people that it becomes almost superfluous to have a particular noun for it. However, this does not disprove the fact that most African cultures have words to define specific forms such as song, chant, and dance. In the light of this argument,

although the Yorùbá word *eré* could be used for music, it has a wider meaning to cover all aspects of entertainment, which include drama, poetry, masking and dance. This situation notwithstanding, some scholars have tried to coin some words to represent music. Some of these coinages include *ilù àt'orin*, which literally means drumming and singing, *t'ìlù-t'ìfon* (meaning drumming and blowing), and so forth. The inadequacies of all these coinages are obvious.

This study partially agrees with Bebey's argument that no definite noun exists to define the concept of music among among ethnic groups in Africa, including the Yorùbá people. However, it could also be argued that the almost over-distribution of membranophones is, to a large extent, responsible for the use of the generic terminology *ilù* (drum) for most performances of music and *lù* (beat), which in most cases is used as the verb "play" among the Yorùbá people. This argument becomes the framework upon which the combination of the structure, design and approach used in this study is anchored.

Musical Instruments and Instrumentation in Yorùbá Proverbs

The proverb could be defined as a varied oral literary form of expression. It could also be in the form of aphorisms, wise sayings, and axioms. Therefore, it is not out of place to assert that the cumulative realism of daily experiences is expressed through proverbs. Yorùbá proverbs are usually made of short sentences, loaded with deep words of wisdom, and borne out of the experiences of the elders in the society. Hidden in these short sentences are deep meanings which demand some knowledge of the oral tradition to decode and comprehend. Yorùbá proverbs can be mono-clausal, bi-clausal or multi-clausal in structure. Among other things, proverbs are used to facilitate an easy comprehension of the cogent points and ideas in a speech.

Most Yorùbá proverbs are predicated on the past experiences of the elders with regard to the relationships between friends, husbands and wives as well as between parents and children. Some proverbs also reflect the lives and behavioral patterns among animals such as mammals, birds, fishes and insects. Yet others are derived from folktales and oracle verses

(*ese ifá*). This experiential concept of proverbs ensures that they are held in high esteem among the Yorùbá to the extent that such sayings are generally believed to be the property of the elders. Indeed, it is believed that regardless of the high level of wisdom or intelligence attained by a young person – even if comparable to that of an elderly person – his experiences cannot match those of the elders. This is reflected in the Yorùbá proverb that says:

Bómodé bá láso bí àgbà
Kò lè lákùsà bí àgbà.

Even though a lad has the same number of “clothes” as an elderly person,

The number of his “rags” will not be the same as that which pertains to the elderly man.

Here, the use of both clothes and rags is symbolic: while the former represents intelligence, the latter stands for experience. Clearly, the Yorùbá strongly believe that experience is superior to intelligence; in fact, experience is considered as the “elder brother” of intelligence.

Be that as it may, whenever any young person is identified to be able to use a wide range of proverbs, he is usually accorded respect by both old and young members of his family and community. However, it is considered a great insult and an act of disrespect for a young person to use proverbs in his speech without paying homage to the elders. The homage may come either before or after a proverb or a chain of proverbs is said. If a person chooses to pay homage before saying any proverb, he will start with a short phrase like:

Èyìn àgbàlagbà le máa n so pé...

It is you elders that do say that...

Even in a situation where the speaker considers himself to be among the oldest people in that particular gathering, he is still expected to pay

homage to the fore-fathers by saying:

Àwon baba wa ni wón máa n so wípé...

Our fathers would always say that...

When the homage comes after the proverb(s), the speaker can say:

Kí òwe jé ti èyin àgbà o

You elders, proverbs are your property

Or he may choose to say:

Tótó, ó se bí òwe o

I pay homage for using proverbs

Or

N kò tó òwe pa níwájú èyin àgbà o

You elders, I'm not worthy to use proverbs in your presence.

Tradition demands that the elders around acknowledge the speaker's homage by saying:

Wà á pa òmiràn/Wà á rí òmiràn pa.

You will have another opportunity.

Analysis of Findings

As already stated, this paper attempts to examine some Yorùbá proverbs, and also through analysis, establish some links between traditional Yorùbá instrumental music and instrumentation or performance with proverbs. We shall begin with an analysis of a proverb that reflects the Yorùbá concept of performance of music, which in most cases include dancing:

(i) *Ìròmi tí n jó lójú omi,*

Onílù rè wà nísàlè odò.

A water insect that dances on the water surface
has its musicians located on the river bed.

This proverb substantiates Hornbostel's claim, which is corroborated by Akpabot, that there is strictly speaking no absolute music. Rather, in most cases, the ensemble performance of music is usually accompanied with dancing, and sometimes singing. However, the use of the singular noun for the drummer in the Yorùbá text does not suggest a solo performance. Rather, this proverb emphasises the idea that a musical group is identified and called by the name of its leader. Hence, we hear such statements as "we are inviting Odòlayé Àrèmu to come and perform" or "Ògúndàre Fóyánmu played for them last week".

The proverb in (i) above is used on an occasion when someone who ordinarily could not achieve any feat on his own is boasting or challenging a more powerful fellow to a duel just because he has support from elsewhere. In most cases, the powerful person or group that sponsors the "weak" person is un-identified or concealed from the general public and is only known to the person who is being sponsored.

The next set of four proverbs reflects the relationship between the combination of Yorùbá musical instruments for performance (instrumentation) and the concept of family co-existence.

(ii) *Akorin-i-ni-elégbè, bí eni tí n jó àsán kan ilù ni ó rí.*

A singer without people to chorus in response

is like somebody who dances to a single drum (Dáramólá
2004:30).

Musically speaking, the summation of divergent sonorities of various instruments often culminates in a unique "orchestra colour" of any instrumental ensemble among the Yorùbá people. Also, the co-ordination of multilateral rhythmic ostinati and improvisation often produce a complex result, which leads, guides, and guards the dancer's steps during performance.

This proverb brings into focus the Yorùbá concept of instrumentation during performance which on many occasions include dancing. It is believed that no single drum is capable of providing a complete focus or direction for the dancer. According to Dáramólá, “during performance, one drum means nothing without the others”. Hence, the drum is perceived as a reflection of the concept of *ebí* or *àjobí* (family) among the Yorùbá people. Collective responsibility forms the basis for co-existence among members of any family. Therefore, the proverb is used to encourage teamwork among members of a family or community. It is also used to promote the concept of division of labour as well as leadership and followership among members.

(iii) *Bilù bá pé igba, agogo ni í borí won.*

In the midst of several drums, the sound of *Agogo* is very prominently audible.

Agogo, a metallic gong, has a high carrying power which is considered even stronger than the combination of that of the other drums in an ensemble. This is so because of *Agogo*'s strong numerous overtones. This proverb emphasises the concept of leadership and followership in any Yorùbá community life. It also captures the concept of division of labour, which is very vital to mutual co-existence among members of a community.

(iv) *Orí alu-opón kì í gún*

Esè alu-iyá-ilù kì í tólè.

The head of an *Opón* player is always bowed,

The legs of a (*dùndún*) master drummer are always crooked.

This proverb reveals the effects of the differences in both the age and the areas of concentration between the players of the two instruments mentioned above. It is believed that playing in a *Dùndún* ensemble starts from the *Opón*, which is also known as *Gúdúgúdú*. This graduation from playing the *Opón* to performing in a *Dùndún* ensemble vividly reflects the different priorities and interests between a mother and her child (*iyá n ronú, omo n rokà*). Therefore, in most cases, the youngest and the least experienced drummer plays the *Opón*. In fact, an *Opón* player is always

placed in front of the master drummer or any other highly experienced drummer of the group who constantly corrects the novice anytime he misses his rhythmic lines. Such correction is effected by striking him on the head with the beater (*Kòngó*).

This arduous task of maintaining a faultless rhythmic ostinato is responsible for the *Opón* player constantly keeping his eyes on the membrane surface of his drum. To exacerbate his situation, this surface is demarcated into two parts (to produce two separate pitches) by a wax. Therefore, in keeping his eyes on the membrane, the *Opón* player's head is bowed almost throughout the period of performance. On the other hand, the master-drummer is the one saddled with the responsibility of reciting poetry, *oríkì* or *oríkì-orílè*, pertaining to individuals or the community, respectively. This task requires him to pull the tensioning thongs (*osán*) surrounding his drums more often. It also requires the support of his legs in order to achieve "a perfect voice of the drum". In trying to achieve all these, the master-drummer's legs, apart from being constantly on the move, always assume a limping position.

However, just as the above argument is true when considering ensemble performance, we also need to state here that, among the Yorùbá people, some occasions do call for the performance of a solo instrument. But it bears mentioning that the latter occasions do not call for dancing; they are like other contexts where a poet specialist in any of the chant modes of the Yorùbá (*ìjálá*, *ìyèrè-ìfá*, *èsà*, *ràrà*, and *ekún-ìyàwó*) performs a *capella* in praise of a member or a group of people in the society. Similarly, an instrumentalist can use any instrument that is capable of being used as a speech surrogate to render a solo performance. Such a performance can be in the form of a recitation of individuals' *oríkì* (praise or genealogy) or the transmission of messages to a group of individuals or the entire community and even beyond. Among the Yorùbá, only instruments in three categories (idiophones, membranophones, and chordophones) are capable of playing this communicative role. Common examples include the village or town crier's gong (*Agogo*), the *Ògìdìgbó* (war) drum, and the *Ekùtù* (a kind of flute found mostly among hunters). For acoustic reasons, the chordophone, despite its dearth among the Yorùbá people, may not be fit for this crucial role of an open-air transmission of signals and messages

which most often requires a high level carrying power to cover a radius of several kilometres.

The next set of three proverbs under consideration deals with the Yorùbá concept of using a musical instrument either as a communicative or panegyric tool.

(v) *Ajá tí yóó sonù, kì í gbó fèrè ode.*

A dog that is bound to get lost will not hearken to the hunter's whistle.

When hunting for game, hunters do communicate with one another or with their dogs, either by whistling or by playing the *Ekùtù*, an aerophonic instrument. It is believed that any trained hunter or dog should be capable of discerning the meaning of any call or signal conveyed at such a time. But should a dog get immersed in its pursuit of game when a signal is transmitted to end the endeavour and for every hunter and dog to come together to return home, such a dog will eventually lose its way in the bush and will not be able to return home.

This proverb is used when someone is identified as taking the wrong step in dealing with an issue. Tradition demands that such a member should be warned severally by other members of the family or the entire community, especially the elders, who are the carriers of culture. But in a situation where the person is intransigent, in spite of all the efforts of other members, he should be responsible for a calamity that is bound to befall him afterwards.

(vi) *Olè tó gbé kàkàkí oba,
níbo ni yóó gbé fon ón?*

The thief that steals the king's bugle

Where is he going to blow it? (Dáramólá 2004: 32)

Kàkàkí, a long valveless fanfare trumpet, probably a borrowed instrument from the Hausa/Fulani musical culture, has now formed part of some Yorùbá Obas' (kings') paraphernalia, especially the traditional rulers of Òyó-Yorùbá descent. Because of the royal dignity which this instrument carries, it would be inappropriate for anyone who steals it to play it either for himself or for another person who is not an Oba. The implication here

is that the instrument is useless if it is not played for an Oba. This proverb is used to discourage anyone who is trying to obtain something, or who has aspires to a position to which, ordinarily, he is not entitled. According to Dáramólá, the proverb is also used “as a warrant for people to desist from embarking on unprofitable ventures” because “the gold is not useful for the pigs”.

(vii) *Bí òwe bí òwe là n lùlù ògidigbó,*

Ológbón ní í jó o

Òmòrán ní í mò ón.

Ògidigbó drum is cryptically played like a proverb

It is wise men that dance to it

It is informed men that discern it (Olátúnjí, 1984:170)

Ògidigbó is a drum of war, which is played to send signals and calls to warriors at the battlefield. The ability of any warrior to discern or decode the meaning of the signals of this instrument is very vital to his tactical approach and maneuvers in warfare. This proverb brings into focus the importance of interjecting conversations with proverbs among the Yorùbá people. It is also used to warn the audience to be very attentive in order to get the import of the conversation. It is therefore implied that those who are versed in proverbs are usually endowed with wisdom and understanding, especially in verbal communication (Dáramólá 2004:29).

Although the next two Yorùbá proverbs have the same meaning and implications, they are presented differently. While the first one represents the usual or direct way of deploying the proverb in speech by an average Yorùbá person, the second one suggests some level of embellishment or vocal aesthetics – as discussed earlier in this study. The three aesthetic elements (puns, heteronyms, and onomatopoeias) utilized in Yoruba poetry are present in the second proverb.

(viii) *Tí Bàtá bá n dún ládùúnjù,*

Yíya ní í ya.

When a Bàtá drum is played continuously at its highest pitch,

The tearing of its membrane is imminent.

(ix) *Tó bá ti pé tí Bàtá tí n pelá, tí n pelá,
Ó ti setán tí yóó pe gbègìrì.*

When a Bàtá calls *ilá* for too long a time,
Very soon it will call *gbègìrì*.

Ilá (okro) is one of the draw-soups (*obèyò*) in Yorùbá delicacies. One of the characteristics of any obeeyo is to facilitate a smooth transference of morsels or lumps of principal food (such as *iyán, èbà, àmàlà and fufú*) from the mouth through the throat to the stomach for easy digestion by the appropriate enzymes. Also, there seems to be an interesting curling movement of the hand after scooping the obeeyo with a morsel of food. Although *gbègìrì* (beans) soup could also go with any of the meals mentioned above, it does not make for as smooth a swallow as does *obèyò*. Moreover, *gbègìrì* (beans) soup does not call for the characteristic gesture of “wrapping” the morsel with the soup..

The Yoruba believe that the Bata drum, as well as some other drum ensembles such as the *Gbèdu* and the *Ògidìgbó*, are limited in their ability to act as speech surrogates when compared with some other instruments such as the *Dùndún*. Indeed, the Yorùbá usually refer to the *Bàtá* drum as *akólòlò* (stammerer) because no member of the *Bàtá* ensemble is capable of saying a complete sentence accurately. However, this limitation is a result of the design of the instrument. The construction of the *Bàtá* is different from that of the *Dùndún*, which is built in such a way that pressure is exerted on the thongs (*osán*) to increase the tension of the membrane and thus raise the pitch of the drum note. But the *Bàtá*'s “tensioning thongs” are bound to the body of the drum by leather straps, thus giving each of the two membranes both a constant tension and a note of the fixed pitch (King 1961: 2). Therefore, in order to make up for this lapse, the hocket technique is employed by *Bàtá* players whereby the syllables in a sentence are shared appropriately among the members of the ensemble. The expertise for doing this is gained through the oral tradition of drum playing.

Yorùbá orthography identifies three major tone marks, namely the low

(usually called *doh* and represented by \, the middle (referred to as *re* and represented by -), and the high (referred to as *me* and represented by /) tones. These are, invariably, the first three pitches of a major scale of solfa notation in music. The limitation of the *Bàtá* becomes glaring in its inability to sound or “pronounce” the low tone (*doh*) perfectly. Therefore, it stays on the two other pitches (*re* and *me*) most often. If we are careful enough to look critically at the construction of the sentence of the second proverb, we will notice that, apart from the first syllable in the *Bàtá* (which is aligned with the low tone) and the three syllables of *gbègìrì* (beans soup), which symbolise the sound of a broken membrane of the drum, every other syllable depicts the *Bàtá* sound mentioned above, that is, an interchange of the middle (*re*) and the high (*me*) tones. Also, the repetition of the phrase, *tí n pelá* is a reflection of the African (and indeed Yorùbá) musical concept of utilizing ostinati in a bid to construct a virile multilineal rhythmic and melodic phrase.

The argument here can be approached musically and aesthetically. Musically speaking, the sound dimension is often given much prominence in any discourse of music. In fact, one of the several definitions of music is that “it is a play with sound”. But music is not an all-sound endeavour. Rather, music is a combination of both sound and silence. Any student of the Rudiments of Music knows that, in terms of value, a note (the symbol used to represent sound) has a corresponding rest (the symbol used to represent silence), with which it shares the same value. Therefore, just as a no-sound endeavour is not music, so also will an all-sound endeavour be inconceivable and artistically deficient.

The aesthetic judgement of any Yorùbá traditional music is predicated on two major criteria: fidelity to (oral) tradition and improvisation. A situation where one of these criteria is absent will result in either “good music but bad performance” or vice versa. Therefore, when a *Bàtá* player decides to go for either an all-sound endeavour, which, by implication, means sticking to the traditional (*ponlá ponlá* or *pelá pelá*) sound of *Bàtá* in a continuous rapidity, there is bound to be a rise in temperature on the surface of the membrane which will eventually lead to its breakage.

This proverb is always used to check excesses and simultaneously to

encourage and promote moderation in any human endeavour. It is also used to warn any individual or a group of individuals against oppressive and tyrannical tendencies, the end result of which is believed to be self-destruction or extinction.

The last set of two proverbs strongly emphasises the Yoruba concept of mutual co-existence within a nuclear or extended family setting as well as among other members of the community.

(x) *Sèkèrè kò se é fòpá lù,*

Jagunjugun kò se é foba mú.

Just as *Sèkèrè* is not played with a wand,

a war commander cannot be forcefully arrested.

Sèkèrè, a gourd rattle musical instrument of the Yorùbá people, is played by shaking the instrument or by beating it with one hand while holding it with the other. Since it is made from a gourd surrounded by nets of beads, any attempt to beat it with a strong object such as a wand or a metallic object would cause the gourd and the beads to break. The implication is that this would cause disharmony in the otherwise peaceful co-existence between the gourd and the beads surrounding it. In the same manner, any attempt to forcefully arrest a war commander would lead to chaos or pandemonium and, sometimes anarchy in the community. This is because unless there is a breakdown of law and order, no warrior will obey any order to arrest his commander. Even if the warriors' camp has been polarised, a situation which often leads to factionalisation, an outbreak of civil war is very likely if the commander is to be captured and arrested.

This proverb is used to discourage those who are trying to embark on missions or tasks that the society believes to be impossible. It is also used to discourage a misplacement of priorities by any individual or group. However, the proverb could be used to encourage people to show respect for those in positions of authority to ensure a continuous harmonious co-existence.

(xi) *Òtá n lùlù ibàjé*

Olórun oba ni kò jé kó dún.

The enemy is always playing derogatory music,
It is the Almighty God that dissipates the sound.

This proverb is used mostly to address colleagues and counterparts that are fond of running other people down or tarnishing other people's reputation. Such treacherous people are sometimes referred to as "friends like enemies" (*òré bí òtá*) or "enemies like friends" (*òtá bí òré*). The text of the proverb makes it emphatically clear that attempts by detractors or opponents, often faceless or anonymous persons who engage in blackmail and defamation of character, will always prove abortive, if their would-be victims depend on the greater power of God. This conceptualization also emphasises the belief of the Yorùbá people in the supernatural ability of the Almighty God, the creator of the universe, to save and deliver the just from the hands of oppressors.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to analyse some Yorùbá proverbs that are predicated on either the functionalities or combination of musical instruments. The study has also attempted to account for the significant instances of the lexemes of music, as well as levels of musicality or musicianship in/of Yoruba proverbs. This combination, among other things, is employed to guard and guide the dancers during any performance. The veracity of Akpabot's (1975:5) claim that to Africans, there is no clear-cut boundary between instrumental and vocal music is also confirmed. This point is predicated upon the fact that the medium of transmission notwithstanding, the raw material for music in the two media is song. While the Yorùbá consider their vocal music as songs with words, they consider their instrumental music as songs without words.

It is also revealed that some Yorùbá proverbs may be presented in two forms, that is, either in a direct or in an embellished form. Also, proverbs may be presented by an instrument either in an ensemble or as an instrumental solo performance. While the latter is almost an exclusive characteristic of most Yorùbá aerophones, only those membranophones that are capable of producing several pitches through tensioning can

achieve this task. The generality of the membranophones depend heavily on the use of the technique of hocketing – a technique by which the syllables in a proverb are distributed among some or all the instruments in a particular ensemble.

We need to state here that very little scholarship exists on music and proverbs. Therefore, it is strongly suggested that more research should be carried out in this area in order to generate a rich scholarship in several other specialised areas of music.

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The Concept of African Pianism

Emmanuel Boamah¹

Abstract

African Pianism is a style of piano music which employs techniques and styles used in the performance of African instrumental traditional songs and African popular music. The percussive and melodic capabilities of the piano make it an ideal medium for expressing the rhythmic and percussive features of African music. Deploying African traditional idioms in compositions using the concept of African pianism is however only one aspect of creating an art based on the fundamental principles which are essential to its well being. The paper discusses the various techniques and styles composers employ in composing music using the concept of African Pianism.

Definition and Scope

African Pianism describes the approach of composition that combines African elements and western elements for the piano. A composition can therefore be based on African traditional vocal music or instrumental music. The concept also deals with the keyboard music of African art composers. Works by art music composers who are not Africans, but who have learnt to use idioms in African music can be included in African Pianism. The need to write African music for the piano arises in view of evidence that the piano is a more developed musical instrument and offers greater opportunity to the composer than was realised. The percussive and melodic capabilities of the piano make it a most ideal medium for expressing the rhythmic and percussive features of African music.

Akin Euba, who coined this concept African Pianism in an article entitled “Traditional Elements as the basis of New African Art Music”, writes:

¹Emmanuel Boamah is Lecturer and Head of the Department of Music, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana.

For those composers interested in cross-cultural musical synthesis, this writer sees a possibility of evolution in the use of western pianoforte in combination with African drums and other instruments of percussion. The piano already displays certain affinities with African music and by creating a type of African pianism to blend with African instruments; it should be possible to achieve a successful fusion.

In his introduction to the proceedings of an international symposium and festival held at the University of Pittsburgh in October 1999, on the theme, “Towards an African Pianism” Euba tries to propose a definition, scope and methodology for African Pianism. Tracing the history of the use of Western keyboard instruments in Africa to date, he says:

Western keyboard instruments were introduced to Africa by Christian missionaries (dating from the mid-nineteenth century in West Africa) and therefore disseminate through trade and other agents of culture contact ... Today, they are among the most common western instruments in Africa and (in their electronic forms) have been widely adopted by pop musicians (5).

Euba (1989:151) further states that techniques used in the performance of African instrumental music in general would form a good basis for an African pianistic style. The ingredients of an African pianism include (a) thematic repetition, (b) direct borrowings of thematic material (rhythm and tonal) from African traditional sources, and (c) percussive treatment of the piano. He later added another feature, which is making the piano behave like an African instrument. Nketia, one of the African composers who endorsed the concept of African Pianism, provides further insight into the theory of this concept. In the preface (piii) of his *African Pianism: Twelve Pedagogical Pieces*, Nketia writes:

African pianism refers to a style of piano music which derives its characteristic idiom from the procedures of African percussion music as exemplified in bell patterns, drumming, xylophones and mbira music. It may use

simple or extended rhythmic motifs or the lyricism of traditional songs and even those of African popular music as the basis of its rhythmic phrases. It is open ended as far as the use of the tonal materials is concerned, except that it may draw on the modal and cadential characteristic of traditional music. Its harmonic idiom may be tonal, atonal, consonant or dissonant in whole or in part, depending on the preferences of the composer, the mood or impressions he wishes to create to heighten or soften the jaggedness of successive percussive attacks. In this respect, the African composer does not have to tie himself down to any particular school of writing, if his primary aim is to explore the potential of African and tonal usages.

From Euba's and Nketia's observations on the definition and scope of African Pianism, we understand that compositions in African pianism can employ techniques and styles used in the performance of African instruments like the xylophone, thumb piano and drum music. The idea is to let the piano act like an African instrument. There can also be the use of traditional songs or African popular music, arranged to suit the capabilities of the piano. The harmonic idiom may be tonal or atonal. The process of appropriation of local material may range from as little as a germ of ideas to a whole section of the local material.

In his article, "Is African Pianism possible?" (1999), Kofi Agawu examines the concept from various angles. He argues that for musicians from Africa to compose for the piano, they need to study very well rhythm in African music. He suggests four pieces of music by Nketia ("The Volta Fantasy"), Bankole ("Oiyaka Konga"), Euba ("Scenes from Traditional Life") and Joshua Uzoigwe ("Igbo Folk Songs Arranged for Piano") as models to be studied. He finally acknowledges that if one were to accept the notion that there could exist a body of music called "African Piano Music", then perhaps African Pianism was not an impossible concept.

Composers

Some of the composers whose works exemplify the concept of African Pianism include Akin Euba, Ayo Bankole and Joshua Uzoigwe from Nigeria; J. H. Nketia, Kenn Kafui and Gyimah Labi from Ghana; Gamal Abdel-Rahim from Egypt; and Victor Kasawu and Edward Ninna from South Africa. Examples of some of the works in African Pianism are: “The Volta Fantasy” by J.H. Nketia, “The Pentanata” by Kenn Kafui, “The Dialects” by Gyimah Labi, and “The African Scene” by Edward Ninna.

An examination of some of the works of these composers reveals deep and meaningful attempts to change African traditional music structure. They demonstrate the ways in which modern composers are trying to make the old traditions relevant today, and to bring traditional African music up to date with the society. It must be noted that composers have their preferred styles and traits in the selection of African traditional material for the piano. With regard to the musical elements (harmony, melody, form, texture and rhythm), composers also have their individual ways of dealing with the musical elements. In most of the compositions one finds that the harmonic vocabulary is based on Western and African harmonic principles. Among the African harmonic principles are:

1. homophonic parallelism in seconds, thirds, fourths, fifths and Polarity
2. polyphony of a contrapuntal nature
3. Ostinato accompaniment to a melody
4. notes occurring together at overlapping of call and response phrases
5. melodic decoration with sporadic division during unison passages

Among the western harmonic principles are:-

1. chromaticism
2. primary and secondary chords, used sometimes with their sevenths
3. twentieth century tonal vocabulary in the form of:

- a. tone clusters, which add some color to the harmony
- b. chords built on super imposed thirds
- c. parallelism in 2^{nds} , 3^{rds} , 4^{ths} , 5^{ths} , and 6^{ths}
- d. non harmonic materials such as passing tones, suspensions, changing notes, pedal points and unprepared suspensions with delayed resolutions.
- e. polychords
- f. atonality

Notable rhythms are:

- 1. the cross rhythm used especially in African percussion music
- 2. hemiola
- 3. shifted accents and rapid meter changes
- 4. asymmetric divisions and meters
- 5. principle of repetition and variation or improvisation which helps in achieving rhythmic variety
- 6. isorhythms
- 7. polyrhythms
- 8. non-accentual rhythms
- 9. additive rhythms
- 10. traditional rhythmic patterns

With regard to texture, most compositions reveal the alternation of different textures. Horizontal and vertical occurrence of motifs is a common trait of some composers, as is variation of the density of texture by cutting down the number of voices at certain points. In addition, dissonant textures under an almost continuous string of changing melodies, homophonic parallelism, teaming up two parts and assigning them a thematic material against those of another team, the fragmentation of motifs, transfer of theme to a different register of the piano, the expansion and compression

of melodic and harmonic intervals, and the change of chords over a fixed textural phrase, are all kinds of textures composers employ.

Both Western and African forms are employed by composers. The form of an African song is derived partly from the contexts in which it is used and partly from the form of the verbal texts on which the melody is based. There is always room for extemporization and for rearrangement of the order of verses. The actual shape of a song therefore grows out of the situation in which it is sung. Some composers pay attention to the basic forms like the call and response, basic melodic patterns and phrase lengths, resultant forms and patterns as used in African music.

Composers try to do more than state the problems in using African elements. They try to fuse traditional African musical elements in such a way that closely reflects the value system of the culture. In a continent like Africa, which is experiencing fundamental alterations of its basic structure, the role of the creative artist is not only very important but also one that requires much research into African music. Certain aspects of some of the compositions in African pianism indicate transition and change of a major order; not a slow natural evolution, but a deliberate quick turn toward a particular direction (African pianism). Composers make a good attempt to expand the expressive possibilities of the piano. At the same time, the compositions place greater emphasis on the composer as a unique personality, as an individual with a personal statement to make.

The Piano Style

The piano offers a great opportunity to the composer that seeks boundlessness. The piano, we should note, has its own style, and therefore any composer writing for it, whether in the African or western idiom, should know its style. It is not just a matter of transferring African music to the piano; the composition should be pianistic. The following are some of the styles used:

1. scalic passages, in ascending or descending order
2. appoggios and broken chords

3. octaves
4. chromaticism
5. compound intervals and skips
6. concord and dissonant harmonies involving five or more notes

Problems

When the composer adopts a syncretic approach in his compositions as regards idiom, some of the problems that arise include:

- 1) the conflict of theories, that is, theories of consecutive octaves and fifths under Western conventional rules as against the principles of homophonic parallelism.
- 2) the presence of modulation in Western music and its absence in traditional African music. The imperfect cadence progressing from a second inversion of the tonic chord to the dominant has been changed to the dominant seventh due to the constraints of text.
- 3). the need for a composer using the syncretic approach in his compositions to master the fundamentals of African melody, harmony and rhythm so that he can create typical African tunes based on any of the varieties of heptatonic, hexatonic and pentatonic scales used in African societies. When he is able to do this, he needs not always borrow tunes from the traditional repertoire, for he can create tunes that would be true to the traditional idiom.
- 4) the question of how to make Western harmony less obtrusive in new African music that adopts the syncretic approach, that is, balancing or bringing out the African elements more than the Western elements in composition
- 5). perceptions of the syncretic approach by consumers or audiences. Because the African grows up with a musical language of his home culture, the typical African music lover is often unaware that there are other languages of music. If, therefore, a piece of music in a foreign idiom does not appeal to him instantly, he assumes it is because the music is not good. He does not consider the possibility

that he might have failed to understand the music, since he assumes music to be a universal language.

- 6). challenges to performers: the syncretic nature of compositions in African pianism poses challenges not only to composers who make meaningful creative use of African traditions and developments in form and harmony, but also to performers who need to expand their orientation and interpretative skills, particularly where such music embodies concepts and expectancies to which they are not accustomed because their performance background is in Western music. A vibrant musical life can only be sustained if there is a good pool of competent performers who interpret the works of composers to an appreciative audience. For performers who are interested in works in African pianism, there is the need for them to familiarize themselves with melody, harmony, rhythm, texture and form in African music in order to interpret such pieces properly.
- 7) the problems that mastering the style of the piano sometimes creates for the composer.
- 8) the issue of aesthetics: while aesthetics is quite difficult to handle within one's own culture, cross culturally it becomes impossible, as too many factors exist that are largely inaccessible to the outsider. Nonetheless, the aesthetic criterion is the one which I find to be at least partially valid. In this respect several points need to be stressed. First, one does not expect a stylistic innovator to be the same person who perfects that style, particularly when the composer is moving from a long established and sophisticated oral tradition into a fledgling written tradition. Second, modern composers are trying to reach an all-African audience who do not share the feeling for and knowledge of the cumulative meanings of traditional African music. Finally, an aesthetic criterion that subsumes all other criteria is itself an innovation and is to some extent Western.

In a traditional society in which music is closely linked to religion and ritual, beauty is always subordinate to efficacy, and meaningfulness, relevance and simple usefulness are infinitely more important than the creation of sensually delightful sound patterns. In the best of all possible music systems, meaning and beauty coincide. A form of music universal to all Africa would probably be used more for contemplation than to

serve as accompaniment for social events. There is already a clear need among Africans for a new form of music which would serve a function roughly identical to that for which Westerners use their art music. African musicians who have been exposed to Western music have attempted to supply from this need by devising compositions which are essentially based on Western idioms. These composers sometimes employ a few elements of African music in their works in the hope of creating a new idiom of African music. When such composers write a symphony, for example, they use African folk tunes for their thematic material in the belief that this is sufficient to produce an African symphony. Yet not only do the folk tunes sound more European than African, but also the rest of the work is usually conceived, instrumentally and stylistically, in accordance with principles of European symphonic practice, and the resultant composition must be regarded merely as a variant of the Western musical idiom.

It is possible to create a kind of African symphony in which the notion of symphony is constructed to mean no more than an intellectual work of great depth and dimension. In order for such a work to be truly African, it must use the stylistic and instrumental materials of African music. African musicians who are seeking to create a new idiom of African music which is designed primarily for aesthetic listening, and who see the means to this end in some kind of fusion of African and Western styles, have apparently decided that African traditional music is so limited in scope that it cannot furnish the elements necessary for the creation of the new idiom. On the contrary, my own exposure to western and other foreign idioms of music has made me realize that there are abundant possibilities in the traditional music of Africa to develop a new African art music which makes little or no reference to foreign idioms.

The basic elements for this kind of music certainly exist in African traditional music even though African musicians, in their preoccupation with the use of music as a part of social functions, have not exploited them for this purpose. Within the limits of tribal music alone it is possible to devise new sound combinations with sufficient variety for extended listening. But by drawing upon the totality of African musical idioms, the modern African composer will not only broaden the scope of his music, but will also be able to create a language of music which can be

understood by all Africans.

African composers in the Western idiom often lament the lack of performers to interpret their works and the absence of an audience to appreciate them on the continent. They are therefore forced to go to Europe to seek both. These composers, it would appear, have not made much impact in Europe either, partly because they are too few and partly because their works are often written in a style which is no longer fashionable in Europe. Thus, these artists must be regarded, at least for the time being, as constituting a marginal group whose work may never really take hold in Africa, and as artists who may never command much influence in Europe until their music is able to compete successfully with what is being produced by contemporary European composers. But by working towards the development of a style of African music which can serve as a common musical language for the whole of the African continent, African composers will have a wide audience for the performance of their music. Africans should not be discouraged from acquiring foreign musical idioms either, since it is an advantage to be able to communicate with non-African audiences.

African traditional music lays emphasis on repetition, but practitioners of new art should be less concerned with repetition and more with variation. In other words, they should aim at creating a musical idiom which would be suitable for contemplation. The new music should be a re-combination of the elements of traditional music and should be a realization of the stylistic potentialities of those elements. Crafting compositions using African materials entails mastery of the elements that constitute the hallmark of African music as well as the principles of composition. To prepare a student for such an undertaking, there must be a worked out curriculum that progressively leads to the mastery of both Western and African instruments. The objective of such a program would be to produce excellent practical musicians who would be bi-culturally literate. A comprehensive program in African music should address morphological as well as practical concerns. It should also aim at exposing the student to a wide body of African music which must be introduced at appropriate points in the curriculum.

The process of idiomatic writing entails the rewriting of one's African musical thought process in an appropriate manner for conventional Western instruments like the piano. The budding composer has to acquaint himself with structures in African music. Matters such as meter, tempo, time line, rhythmic, harmonic and melodic characteristics, as well as instrumental organization become important in identifying African musical types.

The issue of form would also have to be addressed. Doing so entails acknowledging the basic notion that a piece is structured with elements that function like a living organism. This is not to say that folk music lacks this quality. To obtain a meaningful formal structure, one must have a coherent syntax. Idea must be found, presented and worked out upon relationship. The relative importance and function of the elements would determine the nature of the construction. An appropriate subject must be found, one that would enable the vision of an entire composition. To aid this process, the student should be exposed to as large a body of folk material as possible. Through a sifting process, the appropriate subject may be obtained. After obtaining the characteristic features of the musical types, the composer would have had to study analytically, the greater body of mater pieces in the greater music literature.

The future African composer may consider techniques such as the hocket, stratification and improvisation, among others, for organizing his work on African lines. There are also a host of rich timbral resources as well as the structural aspects of the diversified musical genres of our continent which may be judiciously used. The various ways of handling form, harmonic and rhythmic structures, generation of motion, tensions and resolutions, coherence of syntax etc, would be quickly understood through the study of various masterpieces. However, the composer must understand that it is in the adaptation and expression of the universal compositional principles in African terms that the challenge lies.

From the African perspective, the interrelationship between melody, harmony, polyphony, the time line and other instrumental supporting units must be clearly understood. The law of comprehension should reign supreme. Coherence and authenticity should also be the decisive factors

in creativity. Every composer cannot expect to have a universal message, but he may reasonably expect to have a special message for his own people. Many young composers however make the mistake of imagining that they can be universal without at first being local. Is it not reasonable to suppose that those who share our life, our history, our customs, our climate, even our food, should have some secret to impart to us which the foreign composer, though he may be perhaps more imaginative, more powerful, more technically equipped, is not able to give us? This is the secret of the African composer.

The young composer must not shut himself up and think about art; he must live with his fellow artists and make his art an expression of the whole life of the community. Young composers should learn how to use traditional idioms in their compositions. Most of the best compositions in modern music come from composers who have kept close to their several native traditions and whose individual genius has enabled them to extend their music in directions undreamt of by their predecessors. In addition, in order to encourage budding African composers to become interested in the establishment of the new music, several workshops should be set up in each African country. In these workshops, young musicians could be made familiar with African music from various parts of the continent and taught to use this music as the basis of their own original work. Exercises in creative writing should always be preceded by exercises in which the students are required to imitate existing styles of African music. To achieve this goal, performance workshops should be established in which the participants learn to play traditional music from different parts of Africa, and which could be used as laboratories for the development of new performance techniques. This kind of experience would make a strong foundation for producing the new breed of performing artist needed to interpret the new African music.

Recommendations and Conclusion

For a form like African Pianism to thrive, cultural institutions may have to upgrade their interests to promote the style of their art music and place it on an equal footing with its rival styles, that is, the popular and the traditional. Competitions may be instituted not only in choral music, but

also in other spheres like composing for the piano and the orchestra and performances for boosting the standards in both African and Western instrumental music. Firms, corporations and individuals can complement the efforts of the National Commission on Culture to organize such competitions which will promote art music. The planning and the implementation of the music curriculum by the Ministry of Education must be aimed at lifting art music from its present state.

Music history, theory and compositional techniques are very important in promoting African Pianism. The study of music history may include the history of Ghanaian art music, while questions in theory and compositional techniques may involve styles associated with our Ghanaian or Nigerian composers, for instance, the solo and piano style of Nketia, or the orchestral or harmonic style of Gyimah Labi. More theoretical studies should be conducted on traditional music of Ghana on topics such as multipart organization among the Akan or Southern Ewe. Such work would aid future theorists and composers of art music of our country. Future composers may also have to make exhaustive use of the different scales that can be abstracted from Ghanaian traditional music, for example, in poly-modal or tonal devices. They could also borrow compositional techniques from Debussy and Schoenberg but use locally available scales. Music programmes should intensify and continue to ensure accuracy in rhythmic transcriptions. There is a wealth of rhythms hidden in our traditional dances which are yet to be tapped and used in future works.

The growth of a music is assured as long as the practitioners of that music continue to find new modes of expression for it. The vitality and potential of African Pianism, viewed in the light of dynamic changes which are currently taking place in African culture, indicate that we are on the threshold of a new and exciting period of African music. The message to composers is that everybody should contribute his quota towards refining, preserving and developing the African art musical style into a stronger and enviable tradition.

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VOWEL RAISING IN AKAN REDUPLICATION

Kwesi Adomako¹

Abstract

This paper examines vowel raising in reduplication in Akan, a Niger-Congo (Kwa) language, focusing on the Asante-Twi dialect. It has been generally observed in Akan that in reduplicating CV stems, the stem [+low] vowels are pre-specified with [+high] the reduplicant (RED). However, it has been claimed that raising to the mid vowel in disyllabic REDs is idiosyncratic to the Fante dialect. I show that the phenomenon is attested in Asante and that stem CV_1V_2 , where V_2 is [+low], raises to a corresponding [-high, -low] vowel in the RED, and not [+high]. I account for this within the Optimality Theory framework.

1. Introduction

Vowel raising has been a phenomenon that has received some scholarship in Akan phonology in general over the years and particularly in the domain of reduplication. Reduplication, in turn, has been one of the areas of research which have contributed immensely to our understanding of phonology and its theorization. Akan has been one of the languages that have contributed substantially over the past years in this regard. Among the notable authors who have made such contributions are Christaller (1875), Welmers (1946), Schachter & Fromkin (1968), Wilbur (1973), Marantz (1982), Lieber (1987), Dolphyne (1988), McCarthy & Prince (1993b, 1995), Raimy (2000, 2000b) and Abakah (2004, ms). However, these scholars seem to disagree on the height to which the stem low vowels raise in the reduplicant. Two major schools of thought have emerged as a result of this, the first one being spearheaded by Schachter and Fromkin's (1968) funded project on the study of Akan phonology. The preliminary report of this project has become a major source of reference for some succeeding works on Akan reduplication by researchers such as Marantz (1982),

¹Kwasi Adomako is a Lecturer at the University of Education, Winneba.

Lieber (1987) and Dolphyne (1988). Later on McCarthy and Prince (1994, 1995a), Kager (1999) and Raimy (2000) based their analysis of the phenomenon in Akan primarily on these succeeding works. The original claim by Schachter and Fromkin (idem) on vowel raising patterns in Akan reduplication has been that in all the three major dialects of Akan, in reduplicating CV verbal stems such as ka ‘to bite’, the low vowel raises to a high front vowel in the reduplicants, resulting in the reduplicated form kIka ‘to bite repeatedly’. Based on this example, a general statement was later made about the CV verbal stem reduplication in Akan that a low vowel in a CV stem is always ‘pre-specified’ with the feature [+high] in the reduplicant (cf. McCarthy and Prince 1994, 1995, Kager 1999, Raimy 2000, among others)ⁱ. On the reduplication of disyllabic stems such as CV₁CV₂ or CV₁V₂, where in both cases the V₂ is a [+low] vowel, it raises to a front mid vowel [e] in the Fante dialect, but only assumes an advanced tongue root feature [+ATR] as in [æ] in the reduplicant in the Twi (Akuapem and Asante) dialects. So, for instance, the verbal stem munə ‘to frown’ reduplicates as munæ.munə in the Twi dialects.

The second school of thought, which strongly counters the previous one, revolves around Abakah’s (ms) claim that the longstanding postulation of *a-raising* to [I] in Akan (referring to all the three major dialects) reduplication in general is nothing but, as he puts it, “...misleading to the core” and also “...counterintuitive” (Abakah, ms: 5), a claim which he suspects is merely influenced by orthography. He rather bases his argument on the observation of the raising pattern of /a/ in the general phonology of Akan and posits that the stem /a/ does not raise at all in both monosyllabic and disyllabic verbal roots/stems but instead, it is replaced with an epenthetic schwa [ə] in the reduplicant. He further explains that it is (only) the stem mid vowel that raises to a high vowel in the reduplicant. This is in sharp contrast to the earlier claim by the first school of thought. We reproduce some of the examples Abakah (idem: 4) cited to buttress his claim in (1) and (2) below.

1) Monosyllabic Class I Verbs

	Verb	Gloss	RED
a.	má	to give	məmá
b.	ká	to bite	kəká
c.	pá	to skim	pəpá
d.	tá	to fart	tətá

2) Disyllabic Class I Verbs

	Verb	Gloss	RED
a.	fám	to attach	fəm-fám
b.	pán	to prune	pən-pán
c.	sáw	to collect	səw-sáw
d.	tár	to paste	tətár

From the above, Abakah (idem) posits epenthesis (of /ə/) rather than raising as the phonological process that applies in reduplicating verbal stems in Akan. He explains that in both (1) and (2), there is no vowel raising in the reduplicant as is commonly claimed in the literature. However, the reduplicant instead copies only the consonantal melodies of the root/stem (at the initial stage), which results in consonant clusters (between the only consonant copied and the stem initial consonant), in the case of (2). He further explains that as a repair mechanism for such illegal clusters, the language then resorts to epenthesizing /ə/ to repair these clusters at the final stage (Abakah, idem: 4-5). In this paper, we provide an alternative analysis to these earlier claims by the two schools of thought regarding the copying of stem vowels in Akan reduplication.

The central aim of this paper is, therefore, to re-examine some claims in the literature regarding vowel raising in Akan reduplication, particularly

those by Schachter & Fromkin (1968) on the one hand, and Abakah (ms), on the other hand. We claim in this paper that the verbal root/stem [+low] vocalic melody in all syllable structures such as monosyllabic CV or disyllabic CVN, CVCV, etc. is susceptible to raising in the reduplicants depending on the tongue height configuration of the neighbouring vocalic segment in the stem. While we support the claim for the pre-specification of the CV and CVN verbal stems [+low] vowel with the feature value [+high] in the reduplicant (cf. Schachter & Fromkin 1968, Marantz 1982, McCarthy & Prince 1995, etc.), we hypothesise that the raising of the same vowel in the CV₁CV₂ verbal stem to the [-high, -low] vowel in the reduplicant results from the language's high-ranking of some well-formedness constraints such as OCP(+high). The high-ranking of the OCP(+high) will ban adjacent high vowels from co-occurring in successive syllables, hence, the stem low vowel truncating at the mid vowels in the reduplicant templatesⁱⁱ. This is particularly so when the stem V₁ has the feature specification [+high]. The same explanation holds for reduplicating a CV₁CV₂ verbal root/stem where the V₂ is a [-high, -low] vowel and the adjacent V₁ is specified with [+high]. To avoid violating the high-ranking OCP constraint, the exact segmental melodies are copied into the reduplicant template, resulting in *no-raising* of the stem-final mid vowel.

This paper is organized as follows: Section 1 is the general introduction to the paper where the focus of the paper is spelt out. The background of Akan is also briefly discussed in this section. Section 2 discusses some claims made about vowel raising in Akan reduplication, while in section 3, I present the Akan data and make generalisations about the data presented. Section 4 presents the analysis of the data within the Optimality Theory (OT) framework. Section 5 concludes all the discussions made in this paper.

1.1 Background

Akan is a Niger-Congo language of the Kwa language family, which is spoken mainly in Ghana and some parts of la Côte d'Ivoire, both in West Africa. The three major dialects of the Akan language are Akuapem, Asante and Fante. The first two dialects together constitute the Twi group.

Together with its non-L1 speakers, it is estimated that far more than half of Ghana's over 20 million populationⁱⁱⁱ either speak or understand the Akan language (O'Keefe 2003). This obviously makes the Akan language the most widely used language in Ghana today. Akan, like many other languages, resorts to reduplication of items of different lexical classes to expand its vocabulary. Some of the categories that can be reduplicated in Akan include verbs (virtually all), adjectives and nouns. In this paper, we will discuss the reduplication of only verb stems of different syllable structures including CV, CVV, CVN and CVCV.

2. Claims about Vowel Raising in Akan

In the literature, particularly in Schachter & Fromkin (1968:156), it has been claimed that the [+low] vowel in a CV verb stem is always pre-specified in the reduplicant with the feature value [+high] and no other feature specification for all the three major dialects of Akan. This pre-specificational statement on CV reduplicants is overwhelmingly attested in all the three major dialects of Akan. However, their further claim that a disyllabic stem-final [+low] vowel in, say, CVa does not raise in the reduplicant in the Twi (i.e. Akuapem and Asante) dialects calls for some re-examination, and that is what this current paper attempts to do. Even though there have been works on Akan reduplication responding to this claim in diverse ways which have somehow implicitly disagreed with this claim, it is so far McCarthy & Prince's (1995a) work, citing earlier works by Marantz (1982) and Lieber (1987), which has explicitly 'questioned' this pre-specificational generalization. Even so, McCarthy & Prince merely ask why the low vowel does raise to mid vowels as well, without providing any counter evidence to challenge the claim (McCarthy & Prince, 1995a:83).

Though Dolphyne (1988) earlier on also provided data which counter Schachter & Fromkin's (1968) *no-raising* claim regarding CVV (disyllabic reduplicants) in Akuapem and Asante, a claim that was made without any phonological argument for the presence of such height raising, she made no direct reference to that claim in her book, which is understandably, largely descriptive in approach. In an ongoing project, Abakah et al have also made general comments on certain claims by Schachter & Fromkin

about raising in the Fante dialect. In this current paper, we provide an alternative analysis to this overgeneralized claim by providing data from the Twi (Asante) dialect to argue for the presence and productivity of the raising of both the low and the mid vowels within diverse phonological contexts. In these contexts, the stem/base-final low vowel /a/ in the CVa structure, more often than not, raises to the mid front vowels in the reduplicants in Twi reduplication as it does in the Fante dialect. This results in the feature specification for the CVV reduplicant-final as [-high, -low, -back]^{iv}. This process is contrary to earlier claims in the literature, particular by Schachter & Fromkin (1968:175-177) who assert that the process is predominant in the Fante dialect, but absent in the other two major dialects of Akuapem and Asante. They explain that in disyllabic reduplicants, a stem-final /ə/ is replaced with [æ] in the Akuapem and Asante dialects when followed by a [+Tense] vowel, but with [e] in the Fante dialect.

For the raising process in the Fante dialect, their assertion is that verbal root /A/ changes to [E] in the surface representation due to some vowel-gemination rule that applies, as in the examples below adapted from Schachter & Fromkin (1968:175).

3) Before vowel gemination Gloss After vowel gemination
Surface form

- a. [pàápàì] break [pàápàì] → [pàápèì]
- b. [dzàádzàì] cease [dzèédzàì] → [dzèédzèì]

We provide evidence in section 3 to show that low vowel raising to the mid vowels in disyllabic reduplicants is well attested in the Twi dialects as it is in the Fante dialect, as captured in earlier works by Dolphyne (1988), Obeng (1989), and recently Abakah (2004, ms), among others.

I propose a reanalysis of the pattern of Akan reduplication which will be done within the framework of the Optimality Theory (OT), focusing on vowel copying in the reduplicants. This has become necessary because of the limitation of similar earlier OT analyses of vowel raising in Akan

reduplication, particularly by McCarthy & Prince (1995a) and Kager (1999), to only CV RED forms. By this reanalysis, extension would be made to account for reduplicating disyllabic stems in which raising to two different vowel heights, that is, high and mid, is observed.

3. Akan vowel Raising: Data and Generalisations

The raising process usually occurs in both simple open monosyllabic CV structures, as has been analyzed in the literature (particularly Schachter & Fromkin 1968), and in closed disyllabic CVN structures. In both cases the V is a [+low] vowel which usually raises to a high vowel in the reduplicant. In this paper, I focus much attention on the height to which a stem-final [+Low] V raises in the reduplicant in open disyllabic CVV forms. Schachter & Fromkin (1968) provided a brief discussion of raising in this structure in which they concluded that vowel raising in disyllabic CVV is predominant in the Fante dialect, but absent in the Twi dialects. In this section, I provide data below from the Asante dialect of reduplicated verbs of CVV reduplicants showing a raising of the final V to a mid vowel to argue that the phenomenon is as productive in the other major dialects, particularly the Asante dialect, as it is in the Fante dialect. The vowel raising takes into cognizance two harmonies in Akan: Advanced Tongue Root (ATR) harmony and rounding harmony. Accordingly, the high vowel in the reduplicative prefix always agrees with the vowel in the stem in terms of the feature specifications: [α ATR], [β back], and usually [nasal] according to Schachter & Fromkin (1968:156-157). Therefore, for instance, a mid front vowel in the stem will raise to a high front vowel in the reduplicant. Similarly, the low vowel /a/ in the stem/base will usually raise to a front high vowel /I/ in the reduplicant. In 3.1 are some examples of verb stems vowel raising processes observed in Akan. For the purpose of comparison between raising in closed syllable (i.e. syllable with nasal coda in the reduplicant) and nasal deletion in non-raising verb stems, I provide examples of the former structures in (4), (5), and (8). Again, I provide examples of verb stems with low vowel that raise to mid (not high) vowel in the reduplicant, to demonstrate the existence of such raising in Akan and Akuapem and perhaps more importantly, to trigger further research into the earlier claims made about the process in Akan.

3.1 Vowel Raising in Reduplication

This subsection discusses the general vowel raising pattern observed in Akan reduplication. The discussions will be subdivided into reduplicating simple CV/CVN stems and other polysyllabic verb stems such as CVV/CVVN. It is worth noting here that all the verbs discussed in this paper are in their habitual state. As a practice in this paper, all the stem/base forms represent the underlying forms, while those under the reduplicated form represent the phonetic representation of the language.

3.1.1 Vowel Raising in CV/CVN Reduplicants

In both CV and CVN syllable reduplicants, similar height raising is observed since both stems contain the same number and quality of vowels that raise. Syllable weight does not make any difference here regarding the height a stem vowel raises to in the reduplicant, as seen in (4) and (6) below.

4) /a/ raises to [ɪ]

	Base/Stem	Gloss	Reduplicated form
a.	dáʔ	sleep	dì.dáʔ
b.	mǎ ʔ	give	mĩ .mǎ ʔ
c.	sáʔ	scoop	sì.sáʔ
d.	kán	read	kìṅ.kán
e.	tám	lift	tìṅ.tám
f.	bám	embrace	bìṅ.bám
g.	pám	sew	pìṅ.pám

From (4) above, the observation made about the pattern of raising can be expressed in a simple context-free phonological rule as in (5) below.

5) Context-free raising rule: /a/ raises to [ɪ]

[+low] → [+high]

This rule states that root or stem /a/ raises to [ɪ] in the reduplicant. It is not only the low vowel that raises in the reduplicant in Akan reduplication. In (6) below, we see examples of the stem mid vowels raise to corresponding high vowels in terms of frontness. This raising takes into cognisance the roundness of the stem vowel.

6) /ɔ/ raises to [ʊ]

	Stem/base	Gloss	Reduplicated form
a.	ɔ̃	mend	sɔ̃.sɔ̃ʔ
b.	dɔʔ	weed	dɔ̃.dɔʔ
c.	pɔ́n	close	pɔ̃n.pɔ́n
d.	tɔʔ	buy	tɔ̃.tɔʔ
e.	pɔ́ʔ	to bark	pɔ̃.pɔ́ʔ
f.	tɛ́éʔ	share	tɛ̃i.tɛ́éʔ
g.	ɛɔ́éʔ	look at	ɛ̃ɔ̃i.ɛɔ́éʔ

From (6) above, both mid back vowels (a-e) and mid front vowels (f-g) raise to the high back and high front vowels respectively in the reduplicant, thereby obeying the rounding harmony rule in the language. Like (4), example (6) can be expressed in another context-free rule in (7) below.

7) Context-free raising rule: /E/ raises to [I].

[-high, -low] → [+high].

The rule in (7) is also context-free, though the reduplicant vowel always harmonises with the stem vowel in terms of its roundness and ATR values. Our representation of the vowels in the rule in archiphonemes /E/ for front mid vowels and /I/ for front high vowels in this context stems from the fact that it is the ATR value of the stem mid vowel that determines the ATR value of the corresponding reduplicant high vowel.

McCarthy & Prince (1995a), in their analysis of the Akan reduplication data from Schachter & Fromkin (1968), question the pre-specification of the reduplicative prefix vowel with only the feature [+high] and not the mid-vowel. It is my suspicion that perhaps the inaccurate overgeneralization of the tongue height to which reduplicant vowels can raise was instigated by an earlier conclusion by previous authors on Akan reduplication that the reduplicant low vowels raise to mid vowels in data for reduplication in Akan. Particularly in Schachter & Fromkin (1968), the data on reduplication did not include those on raising to the mid vowels. All data were limited to those with raising to the high vowels in CV/CVN verb stems, that is, low vowel raising to high vowel and mid-vowel raising to high vowel. I provide below some examples of reduplicative prefixes in Akan where a low vowel also raises to the mid [not high] vowel, which is therefore specified for the feature [-high, -low], as in (6) below. Based on these examples, demonstrate that this phenomenon exists in the language, though it is perhaps not as productive as the simple CV structure raising to the high vowel as already discussed in the literature. In the following examples in (8), the low vowel in the stem can raise to the mid vowel in the reduplicant in the identified syllable structures.

3.1.2 Vowel Raising in CVV Reduplicants

Now turning our attention to stems with two vowels as in CV₁V₂ verb stems where the V₂ is a [+low], we observe that the V₂, which is [+low], raises to a mid [-low,-high] vowel in the reduplicant and not [+high] as was observed in (4) and (6) above. We provide examples in (8) below for illustration.

8) /a/ raises to [e]

Base/Root	Gloss	Reduplicated form
a. sùíá	imitate	sùíé.sùíà
b. pjiá	push	pjié.pjià
c. tjiá	step on	tjié.tjià
d. tuiá	block	tuié.tuià
e. duiá	sow	duié.duià
f. tejiá	make crooked	tejié.tejià
g. bjiá	make marks	bjié.bjià
h. tjĩ ǎ	shout at	tjĩ ɛ̃.tjĩ ǎ
i. pʷúá	force sth. on sb.	pʷúé.pʷúà
j. euĩ ǎ	smell/sniff	euĩ ɛ̃ . euĩ ǎ
k. mjĩ ǎ	squeeze	mjĩ ɛ̃ .mjĩ ǎ
l. eíá	meet	eíé.eíà
m. dzàí	stop	dzéí. dzàr̃~ dzéé. dzàì

In (8m), we see a deletion of the stem-final [+high] vowel in the reduplicant and a subsequent spreading of the [-high, -low] feature to fill the empty slot resulting from the deletion of the stem-final high vowel in the reduplicant.

In (9), (10) and (11) below, we see more examples of a-raising to mid vowels in the reduplicants of stems of different syllable structures. What this tells us is that /a/ raising to the mid vowel in reduplication in Twi (Asante) is as common as Abakah (ms) strongly asserts.

3.1.3 Vowel Raising in CVSV Reduplicants

9) /a/ raises to [e] in CVSV

	Base/Root	Gloss	Reduplicated form
a.	ɛírá	bless	ɛ̀é.ɛ̀à
b.	ɹ̀úná	scare	ɹ̀úné. ɹ̀únà
c.	ɖɹ̀àrí	bathe	ɖɹ̀éé.ɖɹ̀àrí
d.	ɛ̀àní	peel off	ɛ̀éé.ɛ̀ànì
e.	s̀àní	descend	s̀éé.s̀ànì
f.	ɖ̀íná	stop	ɖ̀iné.ɖ̀ínà
g.	f̀írá	drape	f̀ré.f̀rà
h.	t̀íná	sit	t̀iné.t̀ínà
i.	ẁùrá	enter	ɹ̀é. ɹ̀à
j.	k̀ùrá	hold	k̀ré.k̀rà
k.	p̀írá	hurt/injure	p̀iré.p̀irà
l.	ɖɹ̀àrí	bathe	ɖɹ̀éé. ɖɹ̀àrí

Unlike in the CV/CVN stems, a-raising in these examples is environmentally conditioned. In all the examples above, it is either preceded or followed by a [+high] vocalic segment in the stems.

3.1.4 Vowel Raising in CVVN Reduplicants

10) /a/ raises to [e] in CVCV stem.

	Base/Root	Gloss	Reduplicated form
a.	ɛɔ̀àní	‘peel off’	ɛɔ̀éé. ɛɔ̀á nĩ
b.	màní	‘turn’	mèè. mà nĩ ~ mèè. mà ì
c.	dʒɔ̀àní	‘run away’	dʒɔ̀éé. dʒɔ̀á nĩ

3.1.5 Vowel Raising in CVSVN Reduplicant

11) /a/ raises to [e] in CVSVN reduplicants.

	Base/Root	Gloss	Reduplicated form
a.	hìrám	‘to yawn’	hìèñhìrám
b.	tìrám	‘be choked (by sth)’	tìrén. tìrám

The examples show that a-raising is not restricted to a particular syllable structure of the stem, but can occur in any syllable at all. In all these a [+low] vowel co-occurring with a stem high vowel’s raising can be stated in one rule as in (12) below.

12) Stem-final /a/ raising to [e] rule.

$$/a/ \rightarrow [-\text{high}, -\text{low}, \alpha\text{ATR}] / [+high, +\text{son}, \alpha\text{ATR}] .$$

The phonological rule in (12) states that a stem or root /a/ raises to [e] when it co-occurs with a [+high] vowel. The position of /a/ in relation to the neighbouring vowels is not specified in the rule because it can either precede or follow the neighbouring vocalic segments. For instance, in (8m), (9e) and (10b), the stem low vowel precedes the neighbouring high vowels.

It is not only in reduplication that we observe this raising process in Akan. Boadi (ms, 2009) observes this raising pattern in some morphemes, particularly in the Fante dialect of Akan. He attributes this process within the lexical item to a neutralisation of height contrast within the Kwa languages' vowel harmony system. We briefly discuss this in 2.2 below.

3.2 *A-Raising in the Verbal Root*

With regard to the low vowel /a/ which is usually the vowel that is targeted for raising, Boadi (ms) explains that synchronically, the contrast between the [-Exp] /a/ and the [+Exp] /æ/ has been neutralized in root-final position in the Asante and Akuapem Twi dialects of Akan as well as other Niger-Congo (Kwa) languages, with the Fante dialect still maintaining the contrast. On the raising of the [+Exp] variant of the low vowel, Boadi (idem) continues that it usually raises to the nearest [+Exp] front vowel which in this case is /e/ in the Fante dialect but is maintained in the Twi dialect of Akan. The following are some of the examples adapted from Boadi (ms:3):

13)	Root	Twi	Fante	Gloss
a.	/ani/	[æni]	[enyi]	eye
b.	/asiedu/	[æsiedu]	[esiedu]	male name
c.	/boadu/	[bwædu]	[bwedu]	male name

This raising pattern has already been observed in the Twi dialects in reduplication as well where the final [+low] vowel of non-monosyllabic stem raises to a [-low,-high, +ATR] vowel in the reduplicant. A similar observation about raising to the mid vowel has also been made by Dolphyne (2006:130-131). This raises the question as to whether the neutralization of the two low vowels is resisted only in the Fante dialect as Boadi (ms) claims. If the claim is that the [+Exp] /æ/ does not raise only in root/stem words in the Twi dialect, then that is acceptable, but if this claim extends to the phonology of the language in general, then it raises questions as evidence from some reduplicated forms prove otherwise. Examples in

(14), largely a repetition of (8), are from Dolphyne (2006:130) and illustrate the low vowel to mid vowel raising in reduplication argument.

14) Asante-Twi dialect^v

	Base form	Gloss	Reduplicated form.	Ill-forms
a.	sɔ́iá	imitate	sɔ́ié-sɔ́ià	?sɔ́iá-sɔ́ià
b.	pɔ́iá	push	pɔ́ié-pɔ́ià	?pɔ́iá.pɔ́ià
c.	ɔ́iá	steal	ɔ́ié-ɔ́ià	?ɔ́iá.ɔ́ià
d.	d͡zɪ́nà	stop	d͡zɪ́né-d͡zɪ́nã	?d͡zɪ́nã .d͡zɪ́nã
e.	kʷùsá	turn over	kʷùsé-kʷùsà	?kʷùsá.kʷùsã
f.	bʰisá	ask	bʰisé-bʰisà	?bʰisá.bʰisà

Having discussed stem/base final low vowel raising in the reduplicant, I now turn my attention to discussing how the mid vowel is also copied to the reduplicant in CV1V2 template, where the V2 is a [-high, -low] vowel preceded by a [+high] vowel. The question is, what about stem/base final mid vowel /e/? Does it also raise in the reduplicant as the low vowel does, or does it maintain its height in the reduplicant? Judging from the behavioural pattern of both the mid and low vowels in monosyllabic reduplicants in Akan regarding raising, it could be predicted from hindsight that the reduplicant final mid vowel in disyllabic forms would raise to the high vowel as it does in monosyllabic reduplicants. We will soon see that a disyllabic stem-final mid vowel does not raise in the reduplicant as a low vowel does in a similar context.

The disyllabic stem-final /e/ undergoes complete copying into the reduplicant template. Therefore, reduplicants of CVV and CrV verbal stems maintain the vowel quality of all the stem vowels when copying. The following are some examples.

15) Stem/base	Gloss	Reduplicated form.	Ill-forms
a. tié	listen	tʰié-tʰiè	*tʰíí.tʰièvi
b. sié	bury	sʰié-sʰiè	*sʰíí.sʰiè
c. pùé	go out	pʰié-pʰiè	*pʰíí.pʰiè
d. qié	finish	qié-qiè	*qíí.qiè
e. sʰié	to put down a load	sʰiè-sʰiè	*sʰíí.sʰiè
f. qiré	scratch surface	qiré-qirè	*qíí.qirè
g. firé	call	firé-firè	*fíí.firè
h. siré	beg (for alms)	siré-sirè	*sírí.sirè
i. piré	touch	piré-pirè	*pírí.pirè

The *no-raising* of stem vowel pattern we observe of post-high mid vowels can be expressed in the rule formulation in (16) below. Let us note that the reduplicated forms from (15f-i) have a high vowel in the first syllable in the phonemic representation as shown in stem/base forms. They usually surface in emphatic or slow speeches.

16) Stem-final /e/ no-raising rule.

/e/ → [-high, -low, αATR] / [+high, +son, αATR] ____.

In the next section I formalise the raising processes observed within the framework of the Optimality Theory.

4. Analysis of Vowel Raising in Akan Reduplication

In my analysis of vowel raising in this paper, I adopt McCarthy & Prince's (1995) Correspondence Theory, which according to them, "extends the reduplicative copying relation of McCarthy & Prince (1993a) to the domain of input output faithfulness, and indeed to any domain where identity relations are imposed on pairs of related representations" (McCarthy & Prince 1995: 4). The full theory of reduplication involves correspondence between stem and base, between base and reduplicant, and between stem and reduplicant. It postulates that the relationship between participants in reduplication is the base and the reduplicant (BR identity) or input-output identity (IO identity) (McCarthy & Prince 1995:94).

In ranking vowel raising to mid-vowels there should be two important markedness constraints: OCP and *[-high]. For the former constraint, I refer to the height-specific OBLIGATORY CONTOUR PRINCIPLE constraint that militates against high vowels occurring together in two successive syllables (McCarthy & Prince 1995).

17) OCP(+high)

There should not be adjacent identical *elements* (+high vowels) in two successive syllables.

This constraint will ensure that a stem low vowel does not raise to high (the same height as an adjacent vowel in CVV) vowel in the reduplicant. The constraint should not be ranked above *[+Low]. It should be dominated by that constraint.

18) *[-high]

Vowels must not be non-high. There should not be vowels in forms (either stem or reduplicant) that are nonhigh.

Faithfulness (B-R Identity) constraints:

19) IDENT-BR:

Base and Reduplicant should mirror each other closely

20) IDENT-IO(high):

Input and Output should share correspondence in terms of the Feature $[\pm\alpha \text{ high}]$

There is correspondence between segments in the input and those in the output in terms of vowel height. The feature value of the vocalic segment is not specified, implying that the value of the input vowel determines what that of the output should be for the conforming output forms.

In this paper, the target for constraints analysis is the reduplicant as a unit, but not the stem/root. Again, unlike in McCarthy & Prince's (1994) analysis, the focus of the discussion in this paper is the behaviour of vocalic melodies in reduplicants; therefore, less attention will be paid to the patterning of consonantal segments.

4.1 Analysis of CV Stem Reduplication

In this subsection, we will briefly analyse the reduplication of the CV reduplicative prefix. We will not elaborate further here since similar work has been done already in the literature, especially on why the reduplicant back consonant fails to palatalise when followed by a high front vowel as would have been expected in the general phonology of Akan. The marked difference between what I am doing here and what has already been done is that, I will focus on the behaviour of the reduplicant vowels in the process.

Tableau 1 presents an analysis of /a/ → [ɪ] raising in CV/CVN reduplicants.

/RED-ka/	IDENT-IO(high)	*[-high]	IDENT-BR	OCP (+high)
a. ka-ka		**!		
b. tɛɪ-ka		*	**!	
c. kɪ-ka		*	*	
d. kɪ-kɪ	*!			*

21) Ranking: IDENT-IO(high) >> *[-high] >> IDENT-BR, OCP (+high)

While the reduplicant of candidate (b) undergoes the phonological process of palatalisation, which is well observed in the general phonology of Akan, candidate (d), also a suboptimal output, undergoes what we can term *partial overapplication*. There is a raising of vowel height in the reduplicant as is expected, but this raising process back-effects the stem vowel which is immune from such a process in Akan CV reduplication, therefore making it the worst output which is indicated by its violation of the highest ranked constraint in this tableau. In the most harmonic candidate, (c), we observe an underapplication of palatalisation, though the requirement for high vowel raising in the reduplicant is satisfied. Though candidate (a) also violates only one constraint, as does candidate (c), it falls out of the competition due to its violation of the highest-ranked constraint, IDENT-IO (high).

It is important to note that as Abakah (2004) has noted about Akan reduplicated forms, the V₁ of a disyllabic reduplicant, where the V₂ is a low vowel, is almost always a [+high] vowel with an unspecified feature value for its backness property. This might account for or help explain why the language would always want to go for a nonhigh final vowel in the reduplicant. This also could be informed by the language's desire to avoid violating the OCP family of constraints that bars co-occurrence of two identical segments, be they vocalic or consonantal.

In tableau 2, we present an account of /ɔ/ → [ʊ] raising in CVN reduplicants.

/RED-pɔn/	IDENT-IO(high)	*[-high]	IDENT-BR	OCP (+high)
a. p ^w ɔn - p ^w ɔn		**!		
b. p ^ɛ m - p ^w ɔn		**!	*	
c. p ^w ɔm - p ^w ɔn		*	*	
d. p ^w ɔm - p ^w ɔn	*!			*

22) Ranking: IDENT-IO(high) >> *[-high] >> IDENT-BR, OCP (+high)

In tableau (2), candidate (d), which satisfactorily exhibits low vowel raising in the reduplicant, becomes the least harmonic candidate because it fatally fails to satisfy the highest-ranking constraint, IDENT-IO(high), though this is the only constraint it violates. The violation results from the candidate’s ‘overapplication’ of the raising process. In that candidate, we observe that the reduplicant vowel, after it has been raised to high, spreads back to the stem vowel, so there is rightward spreading of vowel (height) quality after the raising process has applied—that is, from the reduplicant to the stem. Candidate (b) also becomes suboptimal because it fails to apply the raising rule in CV/CVN reduplicants where we would expect a [-high] vowel in the stem to raise to a [+high] vowel in the reduplicant. This failure results in the violation of the crucially ranked constraint, *[-high] that indiscriminately bans all nonhigh vowels from occurring in both the stem and the reduplicant. This constraint has to be dominated by IDENT-IO(high), other than that, a suboptimal candidate that over applies the raising rule such as candidate (d) will emerge as the surface form. The candidate violates the dominated IDENT-BR only once, i.e., through the change of the feature [+round] in the stem to the value [-round] in the reduplicant^{vii}. Candidate (a) is similar to candidate (b) to a large extent. Though it commits violations of the least number of constraints and also has its reduplicant corresponding faithfully to the base, it becomes suboptimal for fatally violating the crucially-ranked *[-high] on two occasions. The mid vowel in both the reduplicant and

the base makes it violate that constraint twice. It is relatively better than candidate (b) on the grounds that it does not violate IDENT-BR, which candidate (b) does. Candidate (c) is the optimal output form, though it violates one extra constraint more than candidate (b) does. It wins the competition for optimality on the grounds of its incurrance of the *[-high] constraint once in addition to violating IDENT-BR once under the same circumstance as candidate (b). There is no ranking between IDENT-BR and OCP(+high), as their ranking would not participate in deciding the optimal candidate in the tableau analysis.

4.2 Analysis of Disyllabic CVV/CVCV Stem Reduplication

We observed in the data in 3.1.2 that in reduplicating CV₁V₂ where V₁ is a [+high] vowel and V₂, a [+low] vowel, V₂ raises to mid vowels, but not to high vowels as would be expected. Here, we will have to do some changes to our working constraints and subsequently our constraint ranking. In order to minimise the amount of violation we expect the output forms to incur, we will still need the markedness constraint on vowel height; this time not *[-high], but with a replacement that punishes candidates that surface with lows, *[+low]:

Markedness constraint on vowel height

23) *[+Low]

There should not be a low vowel.

This constraint is to ensure the low vowel does not remain *in situ* in the reduplicant in terms of height as in the stem, though a satisfaction of this constraint would result in a necessary and relatively less costly violation of a relatively lower-ranked BR Identity in order to satisfy the highly-ranking markedness constraint, *[+Low]. It is crucial for us to note that low vowel raising to mid vowel in the reduplicant will not violate this constraint. This will yield a suboptimal candidate for CV stem verb reduplication since we have already noticed that a stem-final low vowel is pre-specified for a high vowel in the reduplicant, but not a mid vowel.

Secondly, since in CVV reduplication the stem-final low vowel does not raise up to a high vowel when preceded by a high vowel, there is the need to rank the constraint that will punish any output form that raises the stem-final low to high within that context, hence, our higher ranking of OCP (+high) in relation to IDENT-BR. What this re-ranking implies is that avoiding the co-occurrence of an adjacent high vowel is more important than complete copying, whereby the reduplicant will map the base in terms of equality in number and quality of segments.

Tableau 3 is an analysis of /a/ → [e] raising in CVV reduplicants.

/RED-mia/	IDENT-IO (high)	OCP(+high)	*[+low]	IDENT-BR
a. m ^h ia-m ^h ia			**!	
b. m ^h ii-m ^h ia		*!	*	*
c. m ^h ie-m ^h ia			*	*
d. m ^h ie-m ^h ie	*!			

24) Ranking: IDENT-IO(high) >> OCP(+high), *[+low] >, IDENT-BR

The tableau in (3) accounts for post-high low vowel raising in disyllabic reduplicants. In the tableau, candidate (d), which ‘over applies’ the raising process, is the worst output form and for that matter, the first casualty due to its fatal violation of the high-ranking IDENT-IO (high) constraint. Though its reduplicant resembles the harmonic reduplicant output form in that it raises the stem-final [+low] to a [-high, -low] vowel in the reduplicant when it occurs after a high vowel, it extends this raising process to the stem form which makes the stem lose total correspondence with the input form. Though it fares better than the other candidates by satisfying the next highly-ranked constraint, *[+low], which all the others violate, being the sole violator of the highest-ranked constraint makes it the least harmonic. Candidate (a) on the other hand, copies faithfully every segment in the

stem into the reduplicant template. However, because of its violation of the relatively high ranking of the markedness constraint, * $[+low]$ on two occasions, it also fatally falls out of the competition for optimality, though that is the only constraint it violates. Candidate (b) would have ‘perfectly’ satisfied what is popularly described in some literature on Akan reduplication as the stem low vowel’s “prespecification” with the feature $[+high]$ in the reduplicant (cf. Marantz 1982, McCarthy & Prince 1995, Kager 1999) as it raises a stem-final low vowel to a high vowel in the reduplicant, though it follows another high vowel in the adjacent syllable.

4.3 The Implications of Schachter & Fromkin’s Raising in Twi Claim

The following are some of the implications of Schachter & Fromkin’s (1968) Twi claim about Akan reduplication, especially the Twi dialects, to our analysis so far. The claim is that for Twi disyllabic stems, a final low vowel does not raise at all even when it is preceded by a high, an environment we have demonstrated conditions this raising to the mid vowels. So in the regular reduplication of an Akan (Twi) CV_1CV_2 stem, where V_1 is a $[+high]$ while V_2 is a $[-high]$ vowel, we would expect the stem final vowel to raise to a mid vowel as we saw in the data presented above. Using the constraint set we have been using for the analysis of the preceding tableaux

Tableau 4 analyses /a/ to $[æ]$ raising in CV_1CV_2 reduplicant.

/RED-bisa/	IDENT-IO (high)	OCP(+high)	* $[+low]$	IDENT-BR
a. b ^h isa-b ^h isa	*!	*	**!	
b. b ^h isæ-b ^h isaviii			**!	
c. ɛ b ^h ise-b ^h isa			*	*
d. b ^h ise-b ^h ise	*!			
e. b ^h isi-b ^h isa		*!	*	*

25) Ranking IDENT-IO(high) \gg * $[+low]$ \gg OCP (+high), IDENT-BR

For candidate (b), which is what Schachter & Fromkin’s (1968) claim would predict to emerge as the actual surface form, we would have to re-rank the

constraints above and also introduce some additional constraint on vowel harmony (e.g., ATR). This will ensure that base-final /a/ does not raise, but changes its ATR value from [-ATR] to [+ATR] in the reduplicant. The constraint I shall employ is Bakovic's (2003) constraint on ATR, which is defined as follows:

26) *[+low, -ATR]:

Segments may not be simultaneously [+low] and [-ATR].

In tableau 5 is an analysis of /a/ to [æ] raising in CVCV reduplicant.

/RED-bisa/	IDENT-IO (high)	IDENT-BR			
(high)	OCP(+high)	*[+low]	*[+low,		
-ATR]					
a. b̥isa-b̥isa				**	**!
b. ^h b̥isæ-b̥isa				**	*
c. b̥ise-b̥isa		*!		*	*
d. b̥ise-b̥ise	*!				
e. b̥ise-b̥isa		*!		*	*

27) Ranking: IDENT-IO (high) >>IDENT-BR(high) >>OCP (+high) >> *[+low, -ATR]

With this set of constraints ranking, all the output forms of CV₁V₂ or CV₁CV₂ structures in contexts where the V₂ is [+low] will never emerge as the most harmonic output in the reduplicant in the language. This would not be the true reflection of what the speakers actually produce when reduplicating stem verbs of those structures. By this ranking too, the targeted optimal candidate, that is, candidate (c) is even less harmonic than candidate (a) which faithfully reduplicates the stem in the reduplicant template. It incurs violation of the same constraints as candidate (e) with respect to the number of constraints and the frequency of violation, though it fares better than candidate (d), and is the least harmonic in this tableau.

The competition for optimality therefore falls to candidates (a) and (b). Both violate the same constraints; however, candidate (b) outranks (a) just on gradient violation marking grounds. While the former violates the last constraint once, the latter incurs the violation of the same constraint twice.

In the next subsection, I propose a common constraint set and a tableau to account for the raising processes observed in the different syllable structures so far discussed

4.4 Proposed Common Constraint Ranking for Vowel Raising in Akan Reduplication

In tableau 6 below, I propose a common tableau and a constraint ranking for the general low vowel raising pattern observed in different syllable structures discussed. We have been able to account for low vowel raising in CV stem verbs in which the [+low] vowel is pre-specified with [+high] in the reduplicant as well as in CV₁V₂ verbal stems where the post-high [+low] (i.e. V₂) raises to [-high, -low] in the reduplicant in tableau 6.

Tableau 6 presents an analysis of vowel raising in both monosyllabic and disyllabic reduplicants.

a. /RED-fa/	IDENT-IO (high)	*[+low]	OCP(+high)	IDENT-BR	*[-high]
i. fa-fa		**!			**
ii. f'e-fa		*		*	**!
iii. φ f _I -fa		*		*	*
iv. f _I -f _I	*!		*		
b. /RED- p ^w ua/					
i. p ^w ua-p ^w ua		**!			**
ii. φ p ^w ue-p ^w ua		*		*	**
iii. p ^w ui-p ^w ua		*	*!	*	*
iv. p ^w ue-p ^w ue	*!				**
v. p ^w ui-p ^w ui	*!		**		

28) Ranking: IDENT-IO (high) >>*[+low] >> OCP (+high) >> IDENT-BR >>*[-high]

The reduplicative pattern observed in tableau (6a) is very similar to what we saw in tableau (1) with the only difference being the change in the input CV form and a modification of the ranking of the constraints. Nevertheless, we still realise the expected output form in candidate (c) in the end. With the same set and the same ranking of constraints as used for reduplicating CV verbal stems in Akan, we are also able to account for reduplication of disyllabic verb stems of structures such as CVV and CVCV, as shown in the tableau (6b) above. A similar optimal output form that emerged in our analysis of reduplicating CV stems in tableau (3) surfaces as the winner candidate in tableau (6b) in candidate (6ii.b). We have introduced candidate (e) with regard to the fact that it is possible for the Gen(erator) function of the OT architecture to produce this kind of candidate. This candidate may only result from *overapplication* of low vowel raising, just like candidate (d).

3. Conclusion

This paper has discussed vowel (low) raising processes observed in the domain of Akan reduplication, particularly the Twi (Asante) dialect. We have seen that the stem vowel /a/ is almost always bound for raising in the reduplicant. We found out that a stem [+low] vowel raises to two main tongue heights in the reduplicant template depending on the configuration of the neighbouring vocalic melodies: (a) it raises to a high vowel (front) when it occurs in monosyllabic stems, (b) it raises to a mid vowel when it co-occurs with a [+high] vowel in disyllabic stems. It has also been shown in this paper that the earlier claims in the literature on Akan reduplication that a verbal stem final [+low] vowel does not raise in reduplicants in Asante and Akuapem Twi (as Abakah (ms) claims about CV stems and Schachter and Fromkin (1968) about CVV/CVCV stems) are not supported by the evidence that abounds in the language. I have shown, in this paper, that it is not only in CV structures that stem-final low vowel raises in the reduplicants, but also in disyllabic reduplicants, the same vowel raises to either [+high] or [-high, -low] depending on the height specification of the neighbouring vocalic segment. That is, when the surrounding vowel

is of the feature value [+high], the low vowel, most often than not, raises to [-high, -low] in the reduplicant. This variation in the height to which a reduplicant low vowel raises, I have explained, occurs as a result of the language's relatively high ranking of the OCP(+high) constraint that prohibits the co-occurrence of two high vowels in successive syllables. To satisfy this high-ranked constraint in particular, the optimal output form has to terminate its raised stem low vowel at the mid vowel whenever there is a surrounding high vowel in disyllabic verbal stem reduplication. This explains why reduplicated forms such as *bⁱisi-bⁱisa, *mⁱii-mⁱia, etc. are ill-formed in the Twi dialect of Akan. We have proposed a common constraints ranking and tableau to account for and also to show the parallelism that exists in all forms of raising in Akan (Asante Twi) verbal reduplication.

Endnotes

- i It is worth noting that the primary interest of analysis most of these works was the behavior of velar or back consonants before high front vowels in the reduplicant. This is where palatalisation fails to apply in a sequence of velar consonant + high front vowel in reduplication as would be expected in the general phonology of Akan. This phenomenon has been termed in the literature as “Underapplication” (after initial use by Marantz 1982).
- ii As we shall see in this paper, Anee and Iguae, two subdialects of Fante would rank this markedness constraint lower in order for outputs with adjacent high vowels to emerge in the surface representation.
- iii Recently conducted Population and Housing Census now estimates Ghana’s population at 24 million. This implies that the number could shoot up significantly.
- iv The third place feature and value [-Back] is redundantly stated just to emphasize the point that raising to the mid-vowel in the reduplicant is most often to the front, though Schachter & Fromkin (1968) assert that sometimes the low vowel can surface as a [+high] back.
- v It is worthy to note that the original source of the data has been slightly modified in this paper by way of transcription.
- vi The forms under ‘Ill-forms’ are not completely ungrammatical in the entire language, but are in fact, well-formed in both Anee and Iguae, two subdialects of the Fante dialect of Akan according to Abakah (2004:193-199). This was later reiterated upon personal conversation I had with Prof. E.N. Abakah as well as Dr. Charles Owu-Ewie, both native speakers of the Fante dialect of Akan, later on after I presented this paper at the Faculty of Languages Education, University of Education, Winneba faculty seminar in 2010. My profound appreciations to them.
- vii The change of the stem-final alveolar nasal to bilabial nasal in the reduplicant does not count as a violation of IDENT-BR because according to McCarthy & Prince (1994a:7fn), “Correspondence turns out to hold between elements that miss perfect identity for principled reasons”. So we can argue that the reduplicant-final m corresponds to the stem-final n in that, the former has only assimilated place to the following labial consonant.
- viii In tableau 4, our focus in assigning violation marks is on the vowel height specification and not ATR or tenseness specification. This is why candidate (b) does not violate IDENT-BR constraint.

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PROBLEMS WITH WIREDU'S EMPIRICISM

Martin Odei Ajei¹

Abstract

In his “Empiricism: The Empirical Character of an African Philosophy”, Kwasi Wiredu sets out to reject some logical and epistemological categorical distinctions that can be deployed as instruments for misunderstanding and denigrating African modes of thought. Towards this end, he enunciates a doctrine he calls ‘empiricism’, which he considers is conclusively characteristic of Akan philosophy. In doing so, Wiredu ascribes some ideas to Akan metaphysics that I consider disputable. This paper aims at contesting those ascriptions. I begin with Wiredu’s thesis and arguments in favour of empiricism, and proceed to formulate and discuss what I perceive to be the major problems with the doctrine. The paper ends by offering suggestions on how the problems engendered by Wiredu’s empiricism may be resolved, and by surveying the prospects of the doctrine for African philosophy.

1. Introduction:

In his “Empiricism: The Empirical Character of an African Philosophy”¹, Kwasi Wiredu sets out to reject some logical and epistemological categorical distinctions that can be deployed as instruments for misunderstanding and denigrating African modes of thought. Prominent among these are the analytic versus synthetic and the *a priori* versus *a posteriori* distinctions. Two other dichotomies that he refutes are those between empirically and metaphysically oriented modes of thinking and between concrete and abstract modes of thinking.

¹Martin Odei Ajei is a Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy and Classics, University of Ghana.

In rejecting these dichotomies, Wiredu enunciates a doctrine he calls ‘empiricalism’, which he considers inspired by both Akan thought regarding the character of human knowledge, and some tenets of empiricism (Wiredu 2011: 33). In his insistence that empiricalism conclusively characterizes Akan philosophy, Wiredu ascribes some ideas to Akan metaphysics that I consider disputable. This paper aims at disputing those ascriptions. I begin with Wiredu’s thesis and arguments in favour of empiricalism. I will then formulate what I perceive to be the major problems with the doctrine and offer systematic accounts of concepts in Akan metaphysics and epistemology which refute Wiredu’s views on them. I hope by this effort to show that Wiredu’s invocation of Akan thought as the foundation of his doctrine is less justified than he admits. The paper ends by surveying the prospects of empiricalism for African philosophy.

2. Empiricalism and Empirical Metaphysics

Wiredu proclaims empiricalism as characterizing a system of thought that is essentially empiricalⁱⁱ in its conceptual constitution. As such, its cognitive imperative is “do not admit any existents or categories of existents unless they are supportable by empirical evidence or empirically based conceptual reflection (Wiredu 2011: 31). Empiricalism embraces some of the imperatives of empiricism and rejects its excessive reliance on sensation as the basis of knowledge: it shares with empiricism the belief that all our knowledge of the external world as well as our concepts are derived from experience, but rejects empiricism’s construal of experience as a process in which objects of the mind are ideas or impressions, where an idea or an impression is a sensation (Wiredu, 2011: 31-33).

The claim that empiricalism is empirical in its conceptual constitution means that it is secured by an empirical metaphysical system. Such a system is one in which all propositions are ultimately “constructed out of empirical raw materials” (Wiredu 2011: 23). What this means is that the system may contain propositions which are non-empirical with respect to their truth-value, but all its constituent propositions will be empirical with respect to their conceptual constitution (Wiredu 2011: 22). To say that concepts are empirically constituted conceptually is to say that they

are either derivable from experience or refer to an aspect or mode of experience. Accordingly, such concepts can refer only to realms of reality within the reach of actual or possible experience, and have as conditions of their intelligibility actual or possible experience (Wiredu 2011: 23).

Wiredu substantiates his denial of the stated polarities by showing, among others, that an empirical metaphysical system contains both empirical and metaphysical propositions as well as propositions of different logical (analytic and synthetic) and epistemological (a priori and a posteriori) types. He does this by inviting us to consider the proposition: “all brothers are male”, and demonstrating the analyticity and a *priority* of the proposition by pointing out that its truth value can be determined simply by analyzing the relationship among its constitutive concepts. The concepts ‘brother’ and ‘male’ are empirical in the sense that they can only be formed through experience. Even the quantificational concepts “all” and “are” are likewise derived from experience, as “they refer to modes of experiencing and to modes of reflecting upon our experiences and their objects” (ibid.). Hence, on his terms, they are empirical.

Central to Wiredu’s arguments is his insistence that an empirical metaphysic characterizes Akan thought. This would mean Akan thought considers experience - both actual and possible - as the only condition of intelligibility of its postulates. For this reason, Wiredu denies to Akan metaphysics the intelligibility of transcendental concepts, which he defines as “concepts referring to entities, beings, processes, relations that are, in principle, not conceivable through possible experience” (Wiredu 2011: 27). On this view, concepts such as God, Time and Space can be intelligible in Akan metaphysics only if they are irreducibly empirical.

I think that such a view implies that the only admissible doctrine that Akan metaphysics espouses is a thoroughgoing physicalism that conceives of everything in existence as ultimately physical. Wiredu seems to base his empiricalism on such a totalistic metaphysical doctrine. Empiricalism, then, is a version of materialism. However, I argue from Sections four to six that both philosophical and linguistic considerations in Akan render such a position quite mistaken. Before then, let us consider some conceptual challenges to Wiredu’s empirical notions of space and time.

3. Empirical Notions of Space and Time

According to Wiredu the only way to conceive of space “is through the notions of location or place and of infinite extendibility, both of which are empirical” (Wiredu 2011: 28). He asserts that such a conception is influenced by Akan thought (ibid.). In my opinion the contents of an empirical metaphysical system must ultimately constitute objects of possible empirical experience. If so, then it is doubtful if Wiredu’s understanding of the notions of space and time can cohere well with other concepts in an empirical metaphysical system which, as indicated, must refer only to existents within the reach of actual or possible experience. As such, empirical concepts can only be understood by generalization or extension from particular instances. Given this, it is doubtful whether Wiredu’s notion of “infinite extendibility” can stand without amendment in an empirical metaphysical system.

Furthermore, I agree with Wiredu that the terms ‘location’ and ‘place’ in the Akan language signify ‘space’. However, it is doubtful whether the notion of infinite extension can be easily attributable to Akan thought. Such an idea will be rendered in the language as “*bɛɛbi a enni ewiee*”, i.e; “a place/location that has no bounds” or “an endless place/location”. It is doubtful whether such a concept will be admitted as intelligible in the language. Even if it is, it is doubtful whether such a concept would be admitted by the users of the language as empirical in its conceptual constitution in the sense that it is derivable from experience or refers to an aspect or mode of experience. These doubts arise from the sort of association that Wiredu makes between the concepts of ‘infinity’ and ‘empirical’. It seems to me that these two notions are antithetical in such a manner as to make them cohere only in constant tension with each other. My reasons for saying this are that the conceptual idea of space as extendible location is irreducibly locative. As such, it can only yield the idea of space as a series of places. If so, then two problems arise. First, it is difficult to conceive an infinity of it; and second, even if we succeed in doing so, it becomes difficult to understand how we can experience such an infinity. The question then becomes: what will the actual or potential experience of such an infinitely extendible location be like?

In my view, if we can only experience space as a place of limited instances, then we cannot experience it as infinitely extendible series of locations. Such an idea of space cannot be accessible to experience. It will appear that Wiredu has associated the two notions in such a way as to suppose a transition from the finite to the infinite, the concrete to the immeasurable, without outlining the mechanism of their association. The idea of “unboundedly extendible location” is even more accessible empirically than the idea of “infinitely extendible location”. This is because the notion of ‘unbounded’ is more amenable to experience than that of ‘infinity’. “Unbounded” also suggests a more stringent commitment to an empiricist metaphysic than the notion of infinity does. However, the idea of ‘unboundedly extendible location’ translates into the patently absurd idea of ‘an unbounded series of bounded locations’. Yet, in my view, it is conceptually less problematic than the idea of infinitely bound space. These considerations lead to two suggestions. The first is that by employing infinity to define space in the manner he does, Wiredu may have subscribed to a metaphysical commitment usually identified with transcendental conceptsⁱⁱⁱ, which he claims are not intelligible in Akan thought. However, Wiredu cannot subscribe to a transcendental concept without violating the structure of his empiricalism. The secondly is that it is doubtful whether his empiricalism can be attributed to Akan thought, because the Akan conceptual scheme contains transcendental concepts that are definitely intelligible in that scheme. These objections to Wiredu’s definition of space apply likewise and in exact measure to his proposed definition of time as a series of events “inevitably or immediately to occur and those of the infinite future of whatever metaphysical status” (Wiredu 2011: 30).

4. Quasi-materiality and the Empirical Concept of God

It would be difficult to maintain a reasoned belief in a transcendental concept of God in Akan thought on Wiredu’s definition of transcendentalism and his empirical metaphysics. Besides his pronouncements in his essay that have formed the basis of the discussion so far, this conclusion lies well-argued on the surface of his ontology of God in his *Cultural Universals* and *Particulars*. In this book, he confirms the view widely held by Akan philosophers^{iv} that Akan ontology espouses a hierarchy of beings

at the apex of which is the Supreme Being (God). He then asserts that “everything that exists in [the ontology] exists in exactly the same sense as everything else. And this sense is empirical” (Wiredu 1996: 49). This is another utterance of empirical metaphysics, asserted in the context of the thoroughgoing physicalism that I alluded to in Section One. For this reason, I consider *Cultural Universals and Particulars* and “Empiricism: The Empirical Character of an African Philosophy” organically linked, and will therefore draw on Wiredu’s views in the former to illustrate my objections to his views in the latter.

Existence, in this metaphysics, belongs only to fully material and quasi-material beings; and a quasi-material being is “any being or entity conceived as spatial but lacking some of the properties of material objects” (Wiredu 1996: 53). All existing entities cannot sustain their existence in some realm other than that governed by the laws of physics (Wiredu 1996: 50). Therefore, the existence of a transcendent God^v is not only false but also incomprehensible in Akan thought (Wiredu 1996: 40-50). The same conclusion applies to notions like “spiritual” and “supernatural” if these refer to entities that sustain their existence in some realm other than that governed by the laws of physics. As we have seen, the ontological status of Wiredu’s quasi-material beings is central to the structure of his empirical metaphysical system. It will therefore not be amiss to consider this category of being in some detail in a bid to illuminate my point that quasi-physicalism ultimately reduces to physicalism.

Besides Wiredu, Safro Kwame is the only philosopher I know who explicitly affirms the plausibility of this category of being. Since he identifies his version of the category with Wiredu’s, it will be meaningful to bring his views into this discussion. In Safro Kwame’s view, quasi-physicalism is “a limited version of physicalism” (Safro-Kwame 2004: 346) characterized by three mutually reinforcing attributes. Firstly, it admits the possibility of the existence of objects belonging to a category between those that obey the known laws of physics and those that do not. Secondly, it rejects any claims of the existence of spiritual or immaterial objects on the grounds that such claims are conceptually confused, unclear and in breach of Ockam’s razor. And, thirdly, it “stretches the limits of matter or materialism as far as is compatible with what we know or do not know, without embracing dualism” (ibid.).

Kwame denies that adhering to quasi-physicalism implies acceptance of physicalism^{vi}. His foremost reason for this denial is that in the philosophy of mind, physicalism necessarily reduces to the mind-brain identity thesis^{vii}. Yet it provides insufficient evidence in support of this reduction as there exists compelling conclusions on the limitations of science to justify the reduction of all mental events to physiological states (Safro Kwame: 344-345). Therefore, even though he assumes as obvious the existence of physical objects, he finds no compelling reason for endorsing physicalism rather than quasi-physicalism.

However, this ostensible distinction between the quasi-physical and the physical, attributed to epistemic modesty, dissolves into full-blown materialism on closer inspection. The mechanism of this dissolution is the allure of scientific knowledge and evidence. Thus, according to Safro Kwame, the progress of scientific knowledge is likely to render the “the quasi-physicalism of today” as “the materialism or physicalism of tomorrow” (Safro Kwame: 1996: 346). On this view, all current quasi-physical beings are but, in fact, physical-to-be beings. It is for this reason that I think the distinction between the quasi-physical and physical is vacuous^{viii}.

Other indications of Safro Kwame’s full-blown physicalism disguised as quasi-physicalism reveal themselves in the normative judgment implied in his dismissal of claims of the existence of non-material entities as conceptually unclear. It is easily inferred from the tenor of his arguments that conceptual clarity is best established by the conceptual tools employed in scientific investigation of entities comprising “atoms, fields, energies, sets, and numbers” (ibid). From this, the conclusion that a non-materialist concept of God in Akan thought is conceptually unclear can be drawn without difficulty. Gyekye has criticized Wiredu’s category of the quasi-physical in the context of their debate on the metaphysical constituents of a person in Akan thought. He objects to the idea of quasi-physical entities^{ix} on the grounds that it is obscure, and mistaken when applied to the Akan concept of *okra* (Gyekye 1987: 86)^x. As seen, Wiredu’s physicalist metaphysics, which admits only of material and quasi-material beings, yields the same conclusion on the nature of God as the conclusion we drew in the previous paragraph from Safro Kwame’s work. Gyekye’s

objections gain more credence in the discussion of the nature and attributes of God because if the quasi-physical entities of Wiredu's metaphysics are granted, then God and all other beings postulated in Akan ontology will fully assume the attributes of material objects. However, it is doubtful that such characterization of the nature of the Akan God would be correct.

It is important to reiterate at this juncture in our deliberations that counter-examples to a physicalist/materialist and non-transcendentalist conception of God abound in the Akan language and philosophical thinking. If we admit the idea of infinity as a transcendental concept, then a long tradition in Akan philosophy suggests, along with J. B. Danquah, that we cannot insist that the only intelligible concept of God in Akan thought is a non-transcendental one. Among the names and appellations that Danquah assigns to the Supreme Being in *Akan Doctrine of God is Odomankoma*. According to him, "Odomankoma corresponds to a conception of the Godhead as the Interminable or Infinite Being" (Danquah 1944: 30). Further to this, the term also yields the meaning of an "eternal, inexhaustible, undimensional" being (Danquah 1944: *ibid.*).

It is worth observing how Danquah makes a special effort to specify his meaning of *Odomankoma*. According to him, the various meanings of the word "are not to be understood in simple plurality or severalty senses. There are several words available in the language to express those ideas, such as *bebree* (many); *pui* (plentiful); *peewa* (copious), etc., and when *Odomankoma* is used in the sense of manifold it must be understood in the deeper sense of infinitely manifolding" (Danquah 1944: 59). The concepts that Danquah contrasts with the "infinitely manifolding" are empirical ones. This compels the conclusion that he distinguishes his meaning of *Odomankoma* from any empirically derived ones. Accordingly, Danquah admits a transcendental concept of God.

Gyekye accepts Danquah's insights on the subject, and adds to them with the claim that "Onyame^{xi} is the Absolute Reality, the origin of all things.Absolute Reality is beyond and independent of the categories of time, space, and cause" (Gyekye 1987: 70). We can gather from these views that credible conceptions of infinite space and time, and of a transcendental God can be made in Akan philosophy which definitely

admits the reality of a realm beyond experience. Hence Wiredu cannot claim that his empirical metaphysic represents, without qualification, Akan philosophical thinking.

5. A Nuanced Ontology

An argument may be advanced in favour of the empirical concept of God in Wiredu's empirical metaphysics. The attributes of such a God will not merely be theoretic or nominally empirical, as belief in Him can be considered to imply and generate a causal effect on the behavior of the believer. And if one does x because one believes God wills one to do x, then since the behavioural manifestation of such belief is experiential, the source of the belief may arguably be considered to be involved in the empirical^{xiii}. Attractive as this argument is, it is doubtful whether it can be deployed in favour of Wiredu. At least three reasons will count against such support.

Firstly, it is not at all certain that empirical behavior should manifest a belief. Even if it does, it is not clear why the fact that it does means that the object of the belief is part-empirical. Secondly, it has been argued that Akans hold a transcendental concept of God. As seen in Section One, Wiredu defines transcendental concepts as referring to entities etc. that cannot be conceived, even in principle, through actual or possible experience. This is inconsistent with the hypothetical argument above. Thirdly, the conclusion of the said argument is severely undermined by Wiredu's assertion that "the belief in *Nyame* has no essential role in the conduct of Akan life" (Wiredu 1996: 57), in that if this belief were absent from Akan consciousness, absolutely nothing would be lost "in terms of sustenance of any institutions or procedures of practical life" (Wiredu 1996: *ibid.*). These claims vitiate the strength of any appeal to an empirical concept of God. Besides this, they are as mistaken as the idea of attributing an ontologically homogeneous materiality to Akan thought. Besides Danquah's philosophy of God and Gyekye's patent agreement with the idea of a transcendent God, numerous examples can be found to show that *Nyame* plays an essential role in the conduct of life in Akanland in the sustenance of institutional processes and thereby refute the two quotations above.

In the first place, even though the source and justification of Akan morality is not divine (Wiredu 1992: 194; Gyekye 1987: 146; Asamoah 2000: 23), the Akan language and the attitudes of many Akans assign a significant role to God in moral deliberations. For instance, when a person (x) suffers an injury at the hands of another (y), and where x sees no practical resort to reparation for the injury suffered, and yet considers reparation as necessary or deserving, but does not consider retribution as an option, x would resort to the intervention of God for remedy by saying “*Nyame betua wo ka!*”, meaning “God will pay you back”. Similarly, when many Akans consider that they have avoided some calamity without any rational or empirical cause of that avoidance, they may say: “*anka nyame ampata a.....*”, which means, “had God not intervened.....”. What these statements show is that the belief in God by some Akans affects their conduct. Now, if God can also be conceived of as a transcendental being, as argued in Section 4.0, then these two examples have two implications for our discussion. They show, first of all, that the belief in *Nyame* has a role to play in Akan life because it affects the conduct of some Akan people, and secondly that there is obvious tension between Wiredu’s statement of an empirical metaphysic which does not allow for a transcendental God, and these statements which allow for a transcendental God that influences the world empirically.

Why could Wiredu not reply that the makers of these statements that exemplify the ordinary usage of the Akan language are conceptually confused, and therefore misuse Akan concepts? This appeal to conceptual confusion will fail, and the reason becomes clear when we consider Wiredu’s claim that God plays no role in sustaining Akan institutions. In response to this claim, I wish to point out that virtually every formal ceremony in both the public and private spheres of Akan life, regardless of its importance, begins with the pouring of libation, and every Akan libation begins by summoning *Nyame*. What this suggests is that the attributes of a transcendently conceived God do not necessarily have to be exclusively theoretic and non-empirical either. Assigning some empirical attributes to God is quite compatible with the idea of Him as a being that transcends the empirical world.

We cannot escape the fact that the Akan doctrine of God, as well as its ontology of non-material existence, is very nuanced. As Wiredu himself admits, spatial imagery and symbolization are employed very often in talking about “extra-human beings and powers, even including God” (Wiredu 1996: 52) in Akan discourses. He confirms this while refuting the strict polarity of theoretical and practical modes of thought by stating that “frequently, a theoretical reflection would be couched in a practical phraseology.... Generally, the ascent from practical vocabulary to theoretical thought will be via metaphor” (Wiredu 2011: 19). In fact, the dexterous employment and interpretation of metaphors have resonance and are very revered in Akan discourse. For this reason, we can accept the soundness of representing attributes of God in physical imagery as metaphorical reflections of the ontological nuances that do not preclude his conception as a being that essentially transcends the space-time scheme. Thus the appeal to conceptual confusion fails.

6. God the Invisible and invincible Father

These nuances are well captured in discussions on Akan thought regarding the relationship of God to the universe of being. Wiredu has distinguished the notion of ‘the world’ from ‘the universe’, and asserted that as creator of ‘the world’, God cannot be part of it. However, “we might then reserve the word “universe” for the totality of absolutely all existents. In this sense, God would be part of the universe” (Wiredu 1996: 50). He translates ‘the world’ in Akan as ‘*abodee*’, but provides no translation for ‘the universe’. I disagree with his translation of *abodee* as ‘the world’, as I do his claim that God must be part of the universe, if this implies his non-transcendence of it.

In my view, the concept “*abodee*”, which literally translates into English as “created thing(s)”, is the widest of God’s creations, and constitutes ‘nature’ at large^{xiii}. As such, it includes the idea of “the universe” in English, which I understand as the totality of everything that exists in space-time, including all physical space, time, matter and energy, the planets, stars, galaxies, and the contents of intergalactic space” (Wikipedia.org). Then there is “*ewiase*”, which is a narrower concept, and whose etymology provides a good guide to its understanding. It is a contraction of two

words: “*ewi*” and “*ase*”. “*Ewi*” connotes the English expressions “the skies above”, “the heavens”. It can therefore be understood to refer to everything that lies some distance above the surface of Earth, including the atmosphere and the rest of outer space. Thus interpreted, “*ewi*” would seem to refer to all celestial bodies and the void that exists between them. However, this would hardly be distinguishable from “*abodee*”. If we grant that such ambiguity would hardly be intended, then “*ewi*” is better interpreted to refer strictly to the sun together with its planetary system. One reason why this interpretation is plausible is that the Akan word for the “sun” is “*ewia*”, which is clearly derived from the root “*wi*”. This is given credence by the fact that the Akan expression “*ewi mu adjo*” means, “the sun has gone down”.

The term “*ase*”, on the other hand means “under” or below”. Accordingly, “*ewiase*” can be held to refer to the atmosphere in the solar system. According to my interpretation, then, “*abode*” is a wider concept than “*ewiase*” in the sense that it alludes to the existence of other planetary systems and can include existing things of which we may have no knowledge. If my distinction between *ewiase* and *abodee* is correct, then Wiredu’s claim that *Onyame* is part of the universe (“*abode*”) can hardly be sustained in Akan ontology, a basic postulate of which is that God exists, as do all other entities which He has created, on a continuum of existence. I subscribe to the view that this continuum of existence comprises visible and invisible, as well as immanent and transcendental realms which multiple categories of existents inhabit and conduct their being in accordance with the potency of the sunsum encoded in them (Gyekye 1987: 73; Minkus 1977: 114). All existents share in *sunsum*, a non-material power that links them and distinguishes their place on the continuum. In a nutshell, the level of the *sunsum* of a being determines its place on the hierarchy of existence, and place on the hierarchy differentiates different kinds of beings.

Therefore, the continuum does not have to be conceived as entirely susceptible to space-time coordinates. It does not have to represent an ontologically homogeneous materiality. There is thus no strict and diametrically opposed distinction between the two realms of existence, so the various categories in them can freely relate to, and influence

each other. Thus Wiredu is right in insisting (Wiredu 1996: 55) that the Cartesian notion of ‘spiritual’ as ‘fully immaterial’ is not rightfully attributed to Akan philosophy as Gyekye does (Gyekye 1987: 87). But this rejection of Cartesian dualism should not imply an exclusive endorsement of full-blown material monism. In my view, Akan thought allows for freely asserting the reality of spirits and immaterial beings in the universe without insisting that these kinds of beings are fundamentally quasi-physical, a term which, as we have argued, reduces to “ultimately physical”.

7. Logic is not a Gift from Heaven

Regarding the metaphysics of the person Engmann observes, correctly, I think, that the differences between Gyekye and Wiredu reduce to one question, i.e., “What is the nature of that being which, when it is physically observed, is *sunsum*, and when it is not observed, is *sunsum*? Are we to say that it is physical or non-physical?” (Engmann 1992: 171). When applied to our discussion about God, this question can be reframed thus: “what is the nature of that being which, when empirically felt, is God, and when not empirically felt, is God?” Are we to say that it is spiritual/immaterial or not spiritual/immaterial?

However, we must note that bifurcated as it is, Engmann’s question is not well framed. What is indeed one question becomes two, with two distinct objectives. The first question interrogates the nature of God, and the second prescribes two possible answers to the first. But taking into consideration the context in which the question arises, I think the only legitimate question is the first one. It is the one with enough vigour and direction to challenge us toward a useful answer. The second question erodes the interrogative force of the first question by reducing the range of possible answers to it to only two. Consequently, this second question suggests that there are only two possible and opposite answers to the first question, and pretends that the solution to this problem lies necessarily in the laws of traditional logic, as if we have on our hands a riddle whose resolution must be “either/or”.

Such a resolution may have sufficed had the reality of God or *sunsum*

been experienced by Akans as inextricably locked under the key of logical rules. But it cannot be decided beforehand that logic and its fundamental rules provide the best standard for resolving the question about the nature of being as such. In connection with this insight, it may be useful to ponder Heidegger's pronouncement on the role that logic has played in generating and sustaining a crisis of ontology in Western philosophy: "perhaps the whole body of logic as it is known to us, perhaps all the logic that we treat as a gift from heaven, is grounded in a very definite answer to the question about the essent; perhaps in consequence all thinking which solely follows the laws of thought prescribed by traditional logic is incapable from the very start of even understanding the question about the essent by its own resources; let alone actually unfolding the question and guiding it towards an answer" (Heidegger 1987: 25).

Let us note that the 'definite answer' that Heidegger alludes to in the passage is the essent's assumed definition and full absorption by the Law of Identity^{xiv}, which predominates over the law of the excluded middle^{xv}. In consonance with this definition, I believe that a metaphysical conception of a Supreme Being as a spirit that both transcends and influences events in the empirical world is both intelligible and well founded within philosophical framework that is not exclusively regulated by these laws. The Akan conceptual scheme may be one such idea. The rigorous distinctions between matter/spirit, transcendence/immanence, metaphysical/empirical would then be subject to nullification in some aspects of Akan philosophical thinking. That this may be the case is exemplified by the range of attributes some Akan philosophers, like Danquah, ascribe to God. This range of attributes suggests that one can reserve the right to preclude the law of excluded middle in determining the validity of the claim that God concurrently transcends and is the subject of experience in the physical world. And this position conforms fully to modern systems of logic which reject the Law of Identity and its cognates^{xvi}.

The annulment of the laws of formal logic in thinking about the nature and attributes of God can be justified, among others means, by appealing to a mode of reasoning that conceives categories polarized by formal logical rules as mutually inclusive classes of entities that are capable of

fusing in a way that sustains their original features. By admitting a God that is inherently both transcendent and immanent, Danquah's philosophy of God seems to appeal to this kind of reasoning.

Perhaps this interpretation I am giving to Danquah's concept of God and to Akan ontology in general can derive some support from Nkrumah's 'categorical conversion', which espouses a synthesis of the metaphysical concepts of 'mind' and 'matter' in a way that de-emphasizes the Law of Identity. The conversion is enabled by Nkrumah's materialist perspective which proceeds from the metaphysical assumption that matter is the primary but not the sole reality of the universe, and constitutes "a plenum of forces which are in antithesis with each other" (Nkrumah 1970: 79). These material forces are "perpetually active" (Nkrumah 1970: 20), and thus "endowed with powers of self-motion" (Nkrumah 1970: 79).

However, consciousness^{xviii} is also part of the furniture of the universe of Nkrumah's materialism, as is energy and matter. To resolve the logical problem of the interaction of consciousness and matter without incurring the categorical absurdity inherent in the mind-body problem, Nkrumah proposes categorical conversion as the process that enables "the emergence of self-consciousness from that which is not self-conscious; such a thing as the emergence of mind from matter, of quality from quantity" (Nkrumah 1970: 20). In Nkrumah's system, the independence of mind and matter is axiomatic (Nkrumah 1970: 19). Yet, in his view, "both in metaphysics and in theory of knowledge, [the difference] does not become fundamental and irreducible" (Nkrumah 1970: 23). As suggested earlier, Akan ontology proscribes such a reduction by insisting that the categories can interact without annexing the other. It does so by positing two distinct but mutually inclusive and dependent categories. Likewise, Nkrumah resolves the problem by positing matter as a fundamental principle with a permanent potential and capability to transform itself into mind and consciousness.

8. Conclusions

According to Wiredu, an empirical metaphysics, which rejects transcendental realities, characterizes Akan metaphysics and sustains empiricism. I have tried to argue that the plausibility of such a metaphysical system characterizing the Akan conceptual scheme is vitiated by the views of other philosophers and other Akans of conceptual facility. Therefore the weak foundation upon which empiricism rests in Akan thought cannot suffice to justify the denial of the rationality and coherence of transcendental concepts in Akan philosophy. I have suggested that Wiredu's definition of such metaphysical concepts as space, time and God must be broadened to include the viability of their non-empirical ascriptions if he wishes to identify his definitions with Akan philosophical thinking. Without such inclusion, the admissibility of those definitions will remain in doubt from the point of view of Akan philosophy and many African indigenous knowledge systems.

Notes

- i In Lauer, H., et al (eds.), 2011, *Identity Meets Nationality: Voices from the Humanities*, Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, pp. 18 – 34
- ii An empirical proposition is given its usual meaning as one whose truth or falsity can be known only through experience, by Wiredu.
- iii I am indebted to Dr. Carlton Simpson of the Department of Philosophy, University of Ghana, for his role in clarifying some of these ideas during my presentation of a version of this paper at a seminar in the Department in May 2011.
- iv Wiredu, K., 1996, *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 46
- v On Wiredu's terms, this means a God that is in fact and in principle not subject to experience.
- vi Defined as the thesis that only physical objects exist, or that if anything exists then that thing can be accounted for by the language and laws of physics.
- vii The thesis that if mental states and events exist apart from brain states, then they can be described in solely physical terms.
- viii This prediction about the future of science, which projects a reduction of all the sciences to physics, represents what is usually called "the thesis of the unity of science". The thesis is precisely as Saforo Kwame states it: that with sufficient knowledge about the nature of the human psyche, it will be evident that the human psychological system can be fully described and explained with the theoretical tools of physics. For a fuller discussion of this "thesis", see Rosenthal, D. M., 2000, "Introduction", in (ed), Rosenthal, D. M, *Materialism and the Mind-Body Problem*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Hackett Publishing, pp. 5-6
- ix And by implication the agency of any such entity
- x Here, Gyekye specifies that the okra is devoid of any physical attributes. It is a speck of the nature of the Supreme Being, and functions as the principle of life and the bearer of a human being's destiny. Because it partakes of the nature of the Supreme Being, therefore it cannot have physical attributes.

- xi Another of the epitaphs assigned to God
- xii I am indebted to Professor Kofi Ackah for his criticisms during the presentation of this paper at a seminar in the Department of Philosophy and Classics, University of Ghana, which illuminated some of my misperceptions regarding this point and helped me to construct this argument in its present state.
- xiii The qualification 'at large' is meant to indicate that this is not the post-enlightenment and scientific understanding of nature as the physical or material world.
- xiv This law states that an object is equal to itself: $X = X$.
- xv The principle that for any given P, either P is true, or its negation is true.
- xvi One such system is autoepistemic logic, which replaces the law of excluded middle with the concept of negation as failure which proposes a third possibility: the truth of a proposition is unknown. Other systems allow for the assertion of the law of the excluded middle as a true fact but not as an *a priori* condition for truth.
- xvii Conceived as a feature of the metaphysical notion of Mind or Spirit.

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War and Absurdity: Reading the Manifestations of Trauma in Uwem Akpan's "Luxurious Hearses"

H. Oby Okolocha¹

Abstract

This essay examines the circumstances of Jubril, Chief Ukongo and Colonel Usenetok, three casualties of Sharia war fleeing to safety in Uwem Akpan's short story, "Luxurious Hearses" in her collection, Say You're One of Them (2008). The paper particularly identifies the loss of personhood that afflicts these individuals as a result of war; that loss of self that manifests itself in absurdity. Akpan paints poignant and convincing pictures of the horrors of war, of the physical and mental dislocation of individuals in a war situation. This paper finds that for those caught up in the throes of war or conflict, life has one basic meaning – physical survival.

Introduction

Nigerian "war literature" has almost become a genre of its own, yet Chimalum Nwankwo maintains that depictions of war in African literature have not been taken seriously enough because "war is Africa's muted index." He however goes on to say that "muted as it is, one could read beyond simply trying to capture the regular zeitgeist which good national literatures capture. The index could guide the insightful reader towards the foundation of Africa's numerous perennial or still unfolding tragedies" (13). Nwankwo alleges that most of Africa's problems can be traced to a long and turbulent history of wars and their unsavory consequences (13). The considerable corpus of war literature depicts the numerous situations associated with war—the loss of lives and property, the senseless cruelty and destruction, the physical dislocation and deprivation, the tense excitement, mystery and suspense, and the trauma of living through such trying times. However, the dire consequences of war on the psyche of the individual, the dislocation of the mind are the subject of Uwem Akpan's

H. Oby Okolocha teaches in the Department of English and Literature, University of Benin, Nigeria.

attention in “Luxurious Hearses” (2008). Akpan demonstrates that while the tangible physical costs of war are huge, the loss of humanity that occurs in war situations is worse.

The purpose of this paper is to look at some of the ways in which war trauma manifests as absurd behaviour in the personalities of the characters we have selected for study and illustrate that the loss of personhood that occurs in war situations has terrible implications for society. That war is central to Nigeria’s history and has contributed to shaping the Nigeria of today is evident in the corpus of war literature that we have. In *Burma Boy* (2007), Biyi Bandele recreates the experiences of Nigerian soldiers in World War II. Onukaogu and Onyerionwu assert that Bandele’s novel sketches the “chequered contours of the Nigerian soul excited by the closeness to gruesome death in a setting where the essential dignity of man and respect for life are at zero level” (123). War stories also abound in poetry. Obi Nwakanma, in *Horseman and Other Poems* (2007), pays tribute to valiant Nigerian soldiers. A solitary female voice in Nigerian war poetry, Catherine Acholonu presents a woman’s point of view about war. Her *Nigeria in the Year 1999* (1985), is filled with images of rape and collective pain suffered by women in times of war. She provides poetic evidence that women suffer cruel abuses in war time. Onyebuchi Nwosu’s dramatic depiction of a Biafran family disintegrated by war in *Bleeding Scars* (2005) particularly points out that even when a war is over, the physical and psychological scars still “bleed” profusely. That these psychological scars bleed so much more than physical scars is amply demonstrated in Akpan’s “Luxurious Hearses” – hence the presentation of a war scenario in which people have been completely robbed of illusions—a situation that reveals itself in different absurd behaviour.

Akpan presents the physical and psychological experiences of the individuals affected by the sharia war in Khamfi during a period that must have been the 1980s because the book situates the particular incident in the period when the military had just left power and ECOMOG forces were in service in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s treatment of the Nigerian Biafran war in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Akpan’s focus is not on the physical war itself but on its effects on the

minds of individuals. This essay analyzes three of the motley assemblage of persons in the luxurious bus carrying Christians away from the Muslim town of Khamfi where they are being mindlessly killed. The fragile existence of Chief Ukongo, Jubril and Colonel Usenetok and their relationships with other persons in the bus reveal that for these individuals whose lives have been shattered by war and conflict, the losses they suffer go deeper than physical dislocation and deprivation. They suffer different degrees of loss of self and the inability to hold their minds together which manifests in absurd behaviour. We witness that for these persons, life has only one basic meaning – physical survival. All they seek in this text is the physical removal from closeness to death; they do not have any aspirations, ambitions or plans for their relocation to the safety of the south. They do not think beyond the immediate present and escape. The essay also examines the absurdity of human relationships in conflict situations.

Absurdity

Absurdity can be described as something that defies logic; something that seems irrational or that cannot be reasonably explained. The concept of absurdity in this paper is taken from Martin Esslin – a drama critic whose writings about the theatre of the absurd have come to be the accepted terms that describe literature that shows the world as “an incomprehensible place” (1266). Particularly concerned with drama and theatre, Esslin posits that while “happenings in absurdist plays might be absurd, they remain recognizable as somehow related to real life with its absurdity, so that eventually, the spectators are brought face to face with the irrational side of their existence. Thus, the absurd and fantastic goings on of ‘The Theatre of the Absurd’ will, in the end, be found to reveal the irrationality of the human condition and the illusion of what we thought was its apparent logical structure” (1266). The part of Esslin’s absurdist theory that is particularly applicable to our purpose in “Luxurious Hearses” is his insistence that the Second World War has brought with it “... the discovery of vast areas of irrational and unconscious forces within the human psyche, the loss of a sense of control over rational human development in an age of totalitarianism and weapons of mass destruction, all have contributed to the erosion of the basis for a dramatic convention

in which the action proceeds within a fixed and self evident framework of generally accepted values” (1267). This irrationality identified by Esslin provides an explanation for man’s lack of a conscience, the thirst for blood and the meaninglessness of human life evident in the war situation in “Luxurious Hearses”.

Albert Camus’ existential philosophy further explains the inherent absurdity of human life illustrated in Akpan’s text. Camus conceives of the world as:

possessing no inherent truth, value or meaning; and to represent human life – in its fruitless search for purpose and significance, as it moves from the nothingness whence it came toward the nothingness where it must end- as an existence that is both anguished and absurd. (qtd. in Abrams 1)

The anguished and meaningless existence of man on earth is captured in Camus’ *Myth of Sisyphus* in which Sisyphus is condemned for eternity to the futile job of rolling to the top of a steep hill a stone that always rolled back again (Encarta). A world without truth, meaning or purpose would be predisposed to the bestiality that is visible in war.

Camus’ contention that human existence is inherently absurd aligns with Esslin’s recognition that wars are often illogical and war situations provide the enabling atmosphere for the release of the irrational in the human psyche. The two theorists imply that the perception of the world as having a logical structure is only an illusion. The imperative therefore, is to rise up to the challenge of presenting the realities of war and its aftermath in their works. This implies that an honest representation of life must include the presentation of irrational realities such as the tangible and intangible absurdities of war and its aftermath. Akpan does this successfully in “Luxurious Hearses”.

The three characters chosen for study in this paper stand out in their manifestation of traumatized absurd behaviour. They are Jubril, a young boy from whose lenses we view the situation, Chief Ukongo, a self-glorifying traditional ruler and Colonel Usenetok, an Ecomog

soldier whose mind is in shreds. Jubril is just a teenager but his life is like the country Nigeria: multi-religious, multi-ethnic and a hybrid of cultures and languages. Akpan describes the multi-linguistic situation of Nigeria as ‘a babel of languages’(191), emphasizing the confusion of lack of understanding and alluding to a similarity to the confusion in the biblical tower of Babel. Jubril is a Christian and a Muslim; he is also a southerner and a northerner. This is indeed an irrational, absurd situation for any individual in a country “where ethnic and religious hate simmered beneath every national issue...” (Nnolim, 213).The irrationality of Jubril’s young life begins from the absurdity of the peculiar circumstances of his birth. We witness that he is aggrieved that “his personal story was not as straightforward as he would have wanted. Over the years, he did everything he could, not to remember the parts he knew” (243). The shame of his dual ethnicity and dual religion is the beginning of his traumatized life. Jubril’s feels shame about having a Christian southern father and a Northern Muslim mother because the ethnic and religious division is so entrenched that children grow into it without conscious effort – hence he equates southerner with “infidel” and tries hard to groom his northern identity (244).

That ethnic and religious dogmatism are indeed irrational is seen in the enmity between Jubril and his brother Yesuf resulting from their conflicting religious and cultural choices; enmity so severe that it defies logic. Jubril actually watches in support as his Muslim brethren stone his biological brother to death for professing the Christianity instead of the Islam and he feels nothing but righteousness. The greatest absurdity of this religious scenario is that he would have liked to join in killing his brother to “protect the honour of his family, neighbourhood and Islamic faith” (216). Only a total loss of sensibility can make it possible for a young man to have preferred to join others to kill his brother for nothing more than the latter’s belonging to another religious faith. It is testimony to a terrible loss of humanity resulting from conflict that has become innate. The paradox is that other Muslims hold up Jubril “as a true Muslim for not allowing family loyalties to come between him and his religion when Yesuf was given his just deserts...” (217). Religion that should unite people in love or at least teach tolerance is the weapon of opposition, division, hate and pain.

In “Luxurious Hearses”, the word ‘Christian’ or ‘Muslim’ confers on the individual a life or death sentence in just seconds. The fraternity Jubril was enjoying in the bus disappeared the second the stump of his right wrist identified him as a Muslim; this identification amounted to an immediate and irreversible death sentence. Jubril’s attempt to convey the mangled story of his religious identity meant nothing to them, “Their murderous looks told him it was useless. These were not the stares of Catholics or born-again or ancestral worshippers..., their stares reminded him of his fundamentalist Muslim friends, Musa and Lukeman” (321). In identifying an enemy that must die for professing a different faith, both Muslims and Christians are the same; illogical, unreasoning and unyielding. Musa and Lukeman discard in a heartbeat, a shared childhood of friendship and brotherhood in Islamic attitudes as they try to kill Jubril in religious zeal and frenzy because he is tainted with Christian blood. Similarly, Tega, Ijeoma, Emeka, Madam Aniema, and Chief Ukongo do not hesitate to slit Jubril’s throat at the realization that he is Muslim. None of them would even give him the benefit of a hearing; the friendship they shared in the bus means nothing in the face of a conflicting religious identity. Both Muslims and Christians presented in this text appear to be incapable of any deep-seated feelings of attachment, affection or love in any meaningful way—it’s all about religious identity.

Jacques Lacan’s theory of alienation helps to explain the attitudes and behavior of characters in “Luxurious Hearses” and free them from the abstraction of absurdity. Lacan, a psychiatrist and a disciple of Sigmund Freud, identifies what he describes as “a fundamental alienation in the individual’s sense of self” (450). Michael P. Clark (1994) explains that Lacan’s sense of self is oriented in the direction of ‘an other’ who is perceived as “omnipotent and thus a potential rival to the self, the ego that emerges from this stage inevitably bears within it a hostility or “aggressivity” that threatens the very stability attributed to it” (450). He summarizes Lacan’s theory of alienation as follows: “Lacan therefore concluded that the human identity is formed only within an intersubjective context in which alienation and aggressivity are the norm rather than aberrations” (450). This idea of innate aggression and alienation aligns with the attitudes of Akpan’s characters and explains why Jubril’s

childhood friends and comrades in the bus are able to turn into deadly enemies instantly. Lacan's theory sheds some light on the total absence of affection between Jubril and his brother, Yusuf. In addition, it positions their isolation from each other within the realm of normal behaviour.

This inordinate hold onto religion at the expense of family, friendship and altruism also leads to the conclusion that war situations will easily destroy even close filial relationships. This alienation from feelings, or the insulation of sensibilities, is the consequence of violent emotional injuries such as witnessing too much cruelty. Psychologists might argue that this 'shutting down' of emotions is a method of self-preservation, an unconscious effort to preserve one's sanity in what Emenyonu describes as "unique human conditions brought about by war" (xii). Clearly, loss of humanity, absurdities in individual psyches, actions and relationships are very visible consequences of conflict and war in this text.

We also note that none of the occupants of the bus has any ambition or plans for tomorrow. Jubril does not even know where he is heading, neither do Ukongo and Usenetok. Jubril holds on to a tattered piece of paper and the name of his father's village, on which hinges his hopes for an identity that will keep him alive. This tattered piece of paper is "like an energy boost" (209). Akpan does not provide for his characters any hope or possibility for gathering what Nnolim describes as "the splintered shards of their broken lives" (148). We get the impression of people suspended in time and space, a bleak picture of hopeless traumatized existence.

Trauma

Trauma describes experiences that are physically and emotionally damaging and painful. Physical trauma is damage to the physical body which may be caused by accidents such as gunshots, burns, electric shocks, bone fractures and birth stress. On the other hand, emotional or psychological trauma is severe damage or injury to the mind and emotions that has lasting psychic effects. In the introductory chapter of her book, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence--From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (1992), the American psychiatrist, Judith Herman, posits that psychological trauma is a disordered behavioural state that one

is left in after terrifying and stressful events. Herman maintains that “traumatic events are extraordinary, not because they occur rarely but rather because they overwhelm in ordinary human adaptation to life” (31).

Similarly, Maureen A. Allwood et al (2002) point out the adverse effects of violence and deprivation during wars which ‘overwhelm’ the coping skills of individuals, especially children, making them vulnerable to externalized and internalized adjustment difficulties (450-457). Both Herman and Allwood are particular about the fact that traumatic experiences ‘overwhelm’ the individual and hinder adaptation and integration into society. We can deduce that a natural consequence of these adaptation difficulties must be alienation. These psychiatric studies also cite catastrophic war experiences, as well as witnessing horrific killings, violent and malicious attacks as causes of psychological trauma. The varied victims of war assembled in the “luxurious bus” in this text act out attitudes which illustrate the postulations of Herman and Allwood. For Akpan, in the war situation presented in the novel, buses such as this one are more appropriately means for carrying corpses than transportation for humans because people and corpses occupy spaces side by side. Some of these buses are so filled up with corpses of war casualties being ferried home for burial that there are only a few spaces left for living persons. They are really ‘luxurious hearses’.

Akpan’s x-ray of the characters in interaction in this particular bus reveals that they are all traumatized and violated by war and they manifest different absurdities in behaviour. Jubril, for instance, suffers both physical and psychological trauma. He suffers from the terrible physical pain of having his wrist violently chopped off as religious punishment for petty theft; at the same time, emotionally he contends with a permanent crisis of identity. His peculiar circumstances have resulted in Jubril’s alienation from everything and everyone. He is unable to identify with his mother who is a Muslim, like him, or his brother who is Christian, as their father was. His sense of isolation is such that in this “between life and death scenario”, in the bus, where it should have been easy to bond with others in similar dire straits, he is unable to fit in. “He could not feel anything for these Muslims (who had disowned him), nor for the Christians with whom he was fleeing” to safety (218). The reason is that Jubril has always

been a victim of conflict. Even before this Khamfi war, he had lived his entire life in war situations; war between his two conflicting ethnicities, between two opposing religions, and among different cultural attitudes and languages. It would be difficult to expect ‘normal’ behavior from anyone in Jubril’s situation.

The trauma of the ‘wars’ in Jubril’s psyche is also seen in his absurd reactions to the women and television in the bus. As a Muslim, he would have preferred to trek a thousand miles on foot rather than sit in the same vehicle with a woman. The paradox is that he is also fascinated by women: he watches them closely, vacillating between liking them and hating them. He compares their hairdos, nails etc. “He was like a person addicted, the more women he counted or watched, the more he needed to assuage his TV anxieties” (202). The psychological dislocation of his mind shows in the effect that watching TV has on him: it makes him feel as if “he is pushing himself into a bottomless pit of temptation and sin” (201) ,for he had heard of the incredible power of TV to corrupt and tarnish the soul. Ironically, watching women, which formerly was the ultimate sin, becomes safe when he faces the greater evil of TV. These absurd attitudes result from the physical and psychological wars that afflict him.

Chief Ukongo is an aging, displaced self-acclaimed traditional ruler. We are introduced to him when he occupies the young Jubril’s seat and refuses to leave. He is aggrieved that fellow passengers do not recognize or acknowledge his exalted status as a royal father. . .a royal father should at the very least have the liberty of taking over another’s paid seat. Educating them on the appropriate way to treat a royal father, he says: “to let a royal father take the better seat is nothing compared to what we actually deserve” (274). He intimidates Jubril to the extent that the boy begins to feel guilty for demanding his seat and to think that giving up his seat to a chief is the only decent thing to do. Ironically, a few minutes later Chief Ukongo turns around and tries to help Jubril take over the Soldier’s seat (289). In response to the request to produce a bus ticket, Ukongo replies, “Soldier, do you know that I am not even supposed to be on this bus? Do you know that I am supposed to be helping the government solve this national crisis... not being insulted by a madman!” (280). He blissfully ignores the issue and calmly turns his attention to his preferred

subject— his importance. His fixed attention on his beads, the manner in which he strokes and clacks them together against each other “with measured alacrity” (279) and the manner in which the chief wallows in his laments about his lost glories, all point to a mind that has snapped.

Ukongo’s personality is disintegrated, or at the very least, unstable. At the point where the passengers appear to have settled down in the bus, he continues to be restless. We are told that “the momentary peace that pervaded the bus had evaded this man. Every now and then, some indiscernible angst brought tears to the gullies of the chief’s eyes” (269). We see him take out his identity, look at it and cry for no visible explanation. His constant shifts between their present reality as displaced war victims, grand ideas of his own importance and a non-existent possibility of restored grandeur, are pathetic and absurd and like Jubril’s attitudes, almost border on insanity.

The soldier, Colonel Usenetok, appears to be the most traumatized. He has a head full of rotten dreadlocks with an army beret sitting “like a crown of disgrace” (278) over them. In appearance, he is like a madman and in behavior, he is not much better. He carries a sickly looking dog ever so gently “as if it were a two-day old baby” (278). Soon we realize that the sickly, smelly blood-vomiting dog is the focus of his existence. He prays for his dog: “the gods of our ancestors will not allow you, Nduese, to die!” (282). It is clear that this unnatural attachment to the dog is his tenuous hold on illusions of love and family. His is a mind in disarray, yet Usenetok retains some rationality and a convoluted sense of self-worth. He is outraged that Chief Ukongo refers to him as a madman, and asks; “you are insulting me after all I have done for this country?” (280). He promptly produces his identity card to validate his worth, and with a sense of self importance he announces to them, “Colonel Silas Usenetok... ECOMOG Special Forces!” (280). Usenetok vacillates between attitudes of honour, logical reasoning and meaningless logic. The other occupants of the bus mock his wretchedness, they are amazed that he reached the rank of Colonel in the army without amassing wealth by whatever means. He tells them that he “fought in Sierra Leone without pay. Government still hasn’t paid me for a year now... I didn’t steal your money!” (284). Monica is particularly blunt and scathing; she asks him: “And you dey

call yourself army Colonel?...You be yeye man o! Why you no steal? You no be good Colonel at all...you tell us soldierman, wetin you dey retire to now?" Usenetok replies "To dignity and conscience" (284). His talk about dignity and conscience is impressive and takes one by surprise; it is an aberration, coming from an almost insane soldier in ragged camouflage uniform. At the same time, he shouts at the top of his lungs, telling the bus about the rebels of Liberia and the child soldiers of Sierra Leone. Incoherently but with boundless energy, he rattles on endlessly about how he killed many of them and imbibed cocaine to be able to "march at the pace of cocaine madness exhibited by the child soldiers" (289). Other occupants of the bus exhibit varied absurd behavior. For instance, we see that at the other end of the bus, Emeka is out of control too, trembling like a sick man, speaking without catching his breath, flinging himself out of the window every now and then ...his (Emeka's) is a different type of absurdity. Usenetok on the other hand displays "the madness of the war front", a mind that has snapped fighting savagery in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Jubril, Chief Ukongo and Colonel Usenetok act out attitudes that illustrate that the cost of war is both palpable and impalpable; that every situation of war comes with damage that goes deeper than merely the physical and the tangible. Wars take their toll on the human mind, and the extent of this toll is seen in the reactions of the refugees to the turmoil around them. Akpan presents a religious war so fierce that "madness whipped up the red dust of Khamfi" (239). The Khamfi the passengers watched on TV was "the corpse capital of the world. Churches, homes, and shops were being torched...the unblinking eyes of the news camera poured its images into the darkening bus, zeroed in on charred corpses sizzling in electric-blue flames " (235). Only a total loss of sensibility (self) would permit the bestiality that makes possible the magnitude of the destruction they watch on the TV. The loss of humanity seen on TV is also evident in the lukewarm feelings/reactions of the refugees. We note that they show only a passive fury regarding all the terrible sights they see on TV. It is amazing that the strongest reaction they show to the gory sights being televised is to spur on the winning side in the conflict.

While their sensibilities are so shredded and hardened that these gory sights produce only lukewarm reactions, it is remarkable that the sight of free fuel wasted in the hands of almajeris provokes them to an active show of anger. Akpan states:

The refugees rose to their feet at the sight of hungry looking almajeris running around with fuel and matches, setting things and people afire.....It was not really the sight of corpses burning-or businesses of their southern compatriots being leveled by the fire bombs, or the gore when some of the kids were fried in gas before they had a chance to use it that roused the refugees. All over the country, people had developed a tolerance of such common sights; decades of military rule, and its many terrorist plots directed at the populace, had hardened them. What riled them was the sight of free fuel in the hands of almajeris (235).

We are confronted with a dearth of sensibility that makes fuel wastage more important than the death of people; fuel has more value than homes and corpses burning.

Thus the characters' lives are aberrations and their sensibilities are shredded to the point of loss – the loss of self that enables bestiality, a hardening of minds and souls that makes it possible to sit with corpses and feel nothing but resentment for the spaces the corpses occupy. They are people from whom joy has been removed, leaving only an isolation from humanity. What should have been sorrow translates into absurdity and irrationality; it is a strange world of strange reactions. The town is the same as the people—in varying stages of destruction; we see people and neighbourhoods burning senselessly. We are reminded of Jeebleh's reflections on the destruction and senseless slaughter of persons in the Somalian war in Nurrudin Farah's *Links* (2003). Jeebleh describes the war torn Somalian city as a place of sorrow:

Many houses had no roofs and bullets scarred nearly every wall.... The streets were eerily, ominously quiet. They saw no pedestrians on the roads, and met no other vehicles. Jeebleh felt a tremor, imagining that the residents had been slaughtered "in one another's

blood”, ... He would like to know whether in this civil war, both those violated and the violators suffered from a huge deficiency—the inability to remain in touch with their inner selves or to remember who they were before the slaughter began. Could this be the case in Rwanda or Liberia? Not that one could make sense of this war on an intellectual level (70).

What Farah’s *Jeebleh* describes and reflects on here is the absurdity of war situations, as we find it in Akpan’s “Luxurious Hearses”. Akpan’s concern with the loss of personhood caused by war is also echoed in Farah’s novel, hence Jeebleh points out the huge psychological deficiency that all parties involved suffer in war—the loss of sensibility that makes it possible for people to slaughter one another in cold blood.

An appropriate summary of the characters and situations in “Luxurious Hearses” is captured in Camus’ description of absurdity. He maintains that absurdity is the presentation of man in “a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile... this divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of absurdity” (qtd. in Abrams 1). This means that absurdity in life and literature embraces the manifestation and depiction of arbitrary, illogical, irrational characters, thought processes, behaviours, situations and places. Akpan depicts the absurdity of human life in war, the discovery of what Esslin describes as ‘the vast areas of irrational and unconscious forces within the human psyche, the loss of a sense of control’ and the loss of personhood that manifests in war circumstances.

Conclusion

Charles Nnolim points out that 20th century African literature was about what Europeans enslavers, imperialists and apartheid operators have inflicted on Africans, but modern African war literature depicts what fellow Africans are inflicting on their brothers and sisters (148-149). Akpan’s “Luxurious Hearses” is quite detailed in its illustration of what Nigerians are doing to their brothers and sisters under the guise of religion. This depiction of the experiences of southern Nigerian Christians fleeing

from the Sharia (Muslim) massacre of non-Muslims in the Northern part of Nigeria reveals how their psychological energies have been disintegrated and shredded to snapping point as a result of the horrors they experience. The author exposes the reader to varied manifestations of trauma in the minds of these dislocated individuals which emerges in the form of different absurd attitudes. Akpan illustrates the effects of war on the human psyche, the psychological erosion of self and humanity, the hardening of heart and the bestiality that can easily take over the human mind, and the impact on human relationships. Like the absurdities we find in the characters of Jubril, Chief Ukongo and Colonel Usenetok, the human relationships Akpan presents are also absurd. We find that those affected and violated by war suffer a huge deficiency or loss of personhood that results in depravity and absurd behaviour.

Akpan also reflects on the paradox of religion as an instrument of love and hate. He questions the relativity of truth as regards the fanatical issue of religious identity, the inability of human beings to reach a compromise or understand a different point of view, and above all, the insensitivity to the palpable and impalpable injuries of war that could have been avoided. War is clearly presented as illogical and absurd and those affected by war manifest this absurdity in thought processes and behaviour. Akpan depicts, with an insight that only literature can provide, how the impact of war goes beyond the tangible, and he brings out clearly the absurdity of this religious war.

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