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## AKANIZATION OF THE HILL GUAN ARTS

*Kwame A. Labi*

### Abstract

The original inhabitants of the Akuapem Hills were predominantly Guan. From the mid-eighteenth century, they experienced fundamental political changes which marked a transition from the rule of priest-chiefs to secular chiefs. This new political order introduced new art forms and regalia. The cultural contact which took place in Akuapem did not result in an even diffusion of elements of Akan art and culture, but has been one of uneven and unbalanced adoption, modification and even rejection of some new art and religious forms.

This article discusses the process of introducing an Akan type political system and its accompanying art in a group of Guan communities on the Akuapem Hills. Art and regalia in Akuapem portray the acceptance of new art forms, yet preserving some Guan traditional art forms amidst major artistic adoptions from the Akan. It therefore analyses whether the Akanization process was partial or complete.

### Introduction

This article examines the impact of Akyem (Akan) rule on the art and regalia of the Guan in Akuapem. Priests, *dede*, or *asɔfo* were the heads of the Guan communities previously called Hill Guan, now known as Akuapem. The Guan were organised militarily and politically under *ɔdede*, or *asɔfo* and *asafohenfo*. The *ɔdede* wielded and exercised legislative, executive and judicial arms of government as well as religious, ceremonial and secular functions. Akyem rule was by invitation of the Hill Guan who allocated them land at the present day Akropong after an earlier site at Amamprobi. The Akyem chief at Akropong then became *Okuapehene*, paramount chief of Akuapem.

In order for the Akyem chief to establish his rule and the Guan also to develop an efficient, unified political and military structure, Akan chieftaincy with its accompanying regalia was introduced to the Guan communities. The Akuapem Hills thereafter became like the social space Mary Louise Pratt terms a “contact zone where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination” (1948: 4). Akuapem became the place where two cultures met, with the dominant minority establishing a new political machinery—chieftaincy. In this process, art and regalia became the visual instrument for expression and differentiation between Guan priests and Akan chiefs. These were in the form of sculptured figures, swords, staffs, umbrellas and colour used in identifying the new political statuses and positions within Akuapem. For example, during a durbar which all Akuapem chiefs were expected to attend, it is only the *Okuapehene* who can use a two-tier umbrella and only wing chiefs are carried in palanquins. Traditionally minor or smaller chiefs were required to walk, but this has changed as several wealthy young men and women are installed chiefs for various contributions and tend to be carried in palanquins if they are able to afford the crowd to carry them and sing their praises. Art and regalia were therefore used to

distinguish the hierarchical structure of chiefs in Akuapem as well as separate Guan priests from Akan type chiefs.

The towns of Akuapem are in the Eastern Region and situated between longitude 0°15 W – 0°00 and latitude 5°45 – 6°00 N (see Map 1). These towns are located on the Akuapem Ridge, which runs northeastwards across the Volta Region and extends further into Togo. The Akuapem community has different ethnic groups living in seventeen towns, namely, Aseseeso, Berekuso, Aburi, Ahwerease, Obosomase, Tutu, Mampong, Amanokrom, Mamfe, Late-Ahenease, Late-Kubease, Akropong, Abiriw, Dawu, Awukugua, Adukrom and Apirede.

The Akuapem people are heterogeneous as the illustration below indicates. They comprise both Akan and Guan communities. The Guan Okere (Abiriw, Dawu, Awukugua, Adukrom and Apirede) who occupy the northern parts of Akuapem speak Kyerepong, whereas Late-Ahenease and Late-Kubease speak Late, all belonging to the larger Volta-Comoe group of languages (Dolphyne and Kropp Dakubu 1988: 77-79). To illustrate this diversity further, the people of Abiriw comprise different ethnic origins among which are former Akan including Akwamu, Denkyira and Asante (Gilbert 1997: 511-512). The Akan in Akuapem who speak Twi are the descendants of the Akyem people who live at Akropong and their relations at Amanokrom. The people of Aburi are also remnants of Akwamu (Akan) and speak Twi but have intermarried with other ethnic groups. The other southern Guan towns of Tutu, Obosomase, Mamfe, Mampong, Aseseeso, Abonse and Abotakyi are predominantly Guan with some Akwamu, who have assimilated different ethnic groups including Ewe and Krobo, who all now speak Twi. There has also been a great deal of inter-marriage with Ga, Shai and former Ewe captives and several others (Gilbert 1997: 504) in the Akuapem towns. This mixed group of people lived in small independent towns ruled by priests until the Akyem arrived and were given the mandate to rule in 1733.

I argue that the introduction of the Akan political system, chieftaincy,<sup>1</sup> in Akuapem and its accompanying art and regalia gradually separated priestly and political roles. These new art and regalia projected the image, power, and glory of chiefship contrary to the priestly regalia which was based on the dictates of the gods. I also argue further that while chieftaincy art and regalia are dynamic, priestly art and regalia are conservative. This article is organised into four themes namely; Guan art and regalia; the Akyem period and introduction of Akan art; the origin and celebration of Akuapem festival of arts—*Odwira*, and lastly the relationship between Guan priestly art and chieftaincy art.

In 1989, I spent about five months studying art and religion in Akuapem. I consulted chiefs and office holders such as linguists and others recommended to me, by some elders, as knowledgeable in Akuapem culture. I visited several priests and priestesses and participated in many state and shrine festivals.<sup>2</sup> Priests and priestesses from the shrines of *Bosomptra*, Abiriw, *Akonnedi*, Late, *Ntoabea*, Aburi, *Damte*, Mampong, *Kwabi*, Adukrom and *Topre*, Mamfe were interviewed. I have crosschecked their oral information with several published works for verification and alternate points of view. With regard to the history of Guan art, I have relied on archaeological evidence as the starting point of artistic production. In 2002, I reviewed the earlier work done in 1989 and developed aspects as a theme for this article. The selection and re-organisation is based on the history of political and religious art in Akuapem. Since Late and Kyerepong languages are unwritten, I have used Twi words in most instances.

### Is There Guan/Akuapem Art?

There is no single word for art in Kyerepong, Late or Twi, (the three dialects spoken in Akuapem). An ironsmith in Late is called *ebirew*<sup>3</sup> and *dade dwumfo* in Twi; the carver is called *oyi ohoni* in Late, and *dua dwumfo* in Twi. A potter is called *kutu elwo* in Late and a piece of



sculpture is called *ohoni* in Twi. However, we may refer to all these branches of creative expression under a single heading as art. These works may be viewed as man-made objects, which exhibit skill and order, and convey meaning. Almost every object of political, religious and social importance is decorated. These decorations are consciously added to an original work, and it is within this context that they can be subjected to aesthetic comment and judgements or be considered as art, since those who create them make comments such as *eye fe*, meaning, "it is beautiful." In effect, these works express the identity and values of the people in the form of religious, social and political works, agricultural implements and military equipment acquired over a period and used for both private and public functions.

Traditional clothing and decorations used for ceremonies are called regalia. The origins of many are either based on myth, or captured war items as trophies, inherited collective property and items created by a reigning chief or official. A collection of these ceremonial military, historical, political and religious art works and objects can be broadly divided into apparel or clothing; insignia or status symbols and, lastly, all-purpose regalia which may not necessarily be used for any particular office or activity. Kyerematen's definition of regalia in his book *Panoply of Ghana* broadens the classification to include a wide range of objects from the most sacred such as the Golden Stool of Asante to precious beads and imported items. Regalia not only serve as symbols of chiefly office but also as chronicles of the early history, and evidence of religious and social organisation of a people (1964: 1). Regalia among the Akan are requisites in creating legal, judicial and political authority for chiefs.

Our knowledge of the early history of Akyem regalia is unclear and based on oral tradition. The origins of an Akyem golden ladder, a golden hoe and a golden crown are all believed to be mythical. Oral tradition says they descended from the sky and came to rest on the laps of two sisters of Kuntunkununku, an Akyem Asona leader around the fourteenth century (Attobrah 1976:1). Addo-Fening agrees with the early phases of information on Akyem Abuakwa as "shrouded in myths of obscurity." He confirms that our knowledge of them is mainly from oral tradition (2001: 1). These myths and mysteries help create and sustain the authority and power of chieftaincy.

Akyem oral traditions about regalia include items inherited from early chiefs. For example, between 1560-1580, Agyekum Adu Oware, in addition to his display of military skills made several symbols of gold amounting to about a thousand. Today, some of these symbols are found on Akyem State umbrellas and swords (Attobrah 1976:5).

Some regalia also originate as war trophies. These captured works are added to the victor's regalia as proof of strength. The Akropong *odosu*, *Odwira apafram*, and the *aburukuwa* drum (see fig. 1) are all war regalia seized from the Asante during the Akatamanso war in 1826 and kept to date by *Okuapehene* as part of his regalia. The Late-Ahenase regalia also comprises of captured war trophies. They are a sword, flywhisk, ritual objects and a war god.

The regalia used by *ɔdede*, priests, in the Nifa division of Akuapem and *asafohenfo*, war leaders or war chiefs, were drums, bells, gongs, beads, necklaces, anklets and sandals. Priests in other parts of Akuapem use almost the same regalia. Before woven fabrics were introduced, the Hill Guan and their priestly leaders wore *dɔw*, a raffia skirt. More recently, the use of white cloth has been introduced. Other art forms expressed on the body are painting, which is still practised by both Guan and Akan. Some herbalists or priests in shrines practise cicatrisation for medicinal purposes. The *asɔfo* depended on art forms to provide abodes for the deities, to commune with them for guidance to rule and to receive blessings and protection for themselves and the state.

The attire of the *ɔdɔde* or *ɔsɔfo* was and still is white cloth. They continue to wear beads on their necks and around their wrists. They abhor blood and therefore have white stools as symbols of authority (Otu 1987: 27). There were other art forms used by priestesses as well as domestic and utilitarian objects by the community for social purposes.

### Guan Art and Regalia

The aim of this section is to demonstrate a vibrant Guan artistic culture, combining archaeological evidence and observations while pointing to current specific and definite religious art. Archaeological evidence of works representing some aspects of Guan art in general has been excavated, testifying to their creativity and relations with other people. Archaeologists have found clay works in sites in Akuapem. Terracotta heads about four hundred years old, dating from the sixteenth century (fig. 2), rare in southern parts of Ghana, were found in a midden in Dawu. Similar ones are found elsewhere in Akan gravesites in Ghana (See Gilbert 1989a: 34-38). This archaeological evidence reveals that some of these works were of foreign origin. This is because the Hill Guan produced no pottery locally. They obtained these from Aduku, a fortified hill top village south east of their settlement in the Eastern Accra plains. This evidence of importation of pottery and other works comes to light in Thurston Shaw's book, *Excavation at Dawu*, 1961. He suggests that the beads found in the midden were of foreign origin and probably transported there from lagoons near the coast.

James Anquandah (an archaeologist) and Michael Kwamena-Poh (a historian) both argue that before the eighteenth century the Hill Guan produced abundant food supply for their neighbours—especially the Shai—with whom they exchanged these supplies for pottery. For example in 1848, Widmann and Dieterle<sup>4</sup> noted that thousands of pots full of palm oil were transported annually from the Hill Guan to the coast (Anquandah 1985: 21; Kwamena-Poh 1973: 96). Anquandah discusses tentative conclusions of test excavations in the Shai Hill sites in Cherekechrete, Hioweyo and Aduku. Much of the pottery found in the sites date c. 1500-1900. Some, exported to urban sites in Akuapem were of the sun-rays motif, the trademark of the Shai potters in about AD 1500-1700 (1985: 19). The engraved decorations on bone combs, ivory bangles and awls were the same as those found in the lower part of the mound excavated at Dawu. The use of engraved decorations in the form of concentric circle and dot design on the combs found at Dawu (fig. 3) may suggest Akan influence or origin (Ozanne 1962: 120). Changes in artistic styles evidenced from the midden showed different kinds of influence from the Akwamu, Shai and Europeans.

Anquandah in discussing Shaw's excavation suggests, on the contrary, that there is evidence that the early development of specialist industries such as textiles, ivory and brass works was not confined to the northern Akan alone. The southern Akan and the Guan living on the Akuapem hills also developed similar industries (1982: 93-94). If the beads, according to Shaw, were of foreign origin, then Anquandah suggests the Hill Guan also produced other art works establishing the fact that they had creative craftsmen. The pottery at the lower part of the midden indicates the possibility of a lively and varied artistic tradition which seemed to become lost with time (Shaw 1961: 87). Kwamena-Poh supports this view and argues that the deterioration in pottery style must have been caused by Akwamu rule, which did not stimulate an environment for creativity (1973: 27). This tradition of use of pottery is seen in several shrines today.

Guan religious practices employed art as a medium to focus on, provide abode for and commune with the ancestors and deities. The Guan state gods, *akpe* (in Kyerepong), are believed to be spirits and therefore no images of them are made. Rather, non-human forms of art works are made as agents through which their assistance is solicited. The stool and *korow*, clay pot (*akorow*, pl.), are used as temporary abodes for the deities. There is a difference between deities localised in pots of water and those enshrined in brass pans. Of those in brass pans, *Atono* are

said to be the oldest. According to Rattray (1923) and Silverman (1987), their source is from the Tano River in the Brong Ahafo Region (in Gilbert 1989b: 41-42). The *korow* is circular in shape. Those placed outside are on top of stands, which are erected out of cement or clay. These stands have square or circular bases. Some *akorow* are placed along side stools. The *Bosomptra* god at Abiriw has no stool in the shrine; instead there are three *akorow*, the biggest being the dwelling place of *Bosomptra* when he visits annually or when his presence is invoked through prayer and the pouring of libation. Other distinctive objects that are in these shrines are brass bowls called *ayowa*.

Guan shrine art varies in composition. Some works consist of objects placed in brass pans or earthenware pots with rainwater. Others take the form of bundles of leaves and some other items, hanging on the wall. In Adukrom, the *korow* in Kwabi shrine contains *nyankonduru*, *onunum*, *obiyimi* leaves and eggs. The pot at Kyenku shrine in Obosomase contains water fetched from river Po Damte amidst prayers. The *korow* at Damte shrine in Mampong contains water from the river called Atwubi, Atwugya or Opirafo, previously known as Opipim (Labi 1989: 120).

Priests and priestesses at the shrines use art works in some practices to identify and protect them from evil forces as well as create abodes for deities. Some *korow* are kept alongside stools. Other shrine objects are *nmena*, flywhisk, *korow*, and *afena*, sword. The *nmena* in Ntoabea's shrine is held together with an *afena* whose handle and blade are painted white. These are works related to the gods and mainly found in shrines (Labi 1989: 119-120).

Some of the shrines have stools as abodes for their gods. The shrines relied on gods who were non-localised until invoked to inhabit the objects intended to be their abodes. Traditional Guan stools did not have any designs in the middle part. They were simple blocks of wood with crescent shaped tops to act as seat with a handle on both sides of it.<sup>5</sup> At the *Kyenku* shrine in Obosomase, it is a taboo to enter with any stool with symbolic or proverbial meaning. The stools found in this shrine have no symbolic designs on them. Only simple four legged stools are permitted in this shrine. These stools are white. They are ritually washed and painted with white clay during annual festivals. *Ntoabea*'s stool in Aburi is believed to have had a bell and a metal chain serving as its handle attached to it when it descended from the sky (Labi 1989: 120).

Private gods are also worshiped. Contrary to the *akpe* or *abosom*, the attributes of private gods and what they perform for their patrons determines their image. For example, a god responsible for giving children may be represented as a human being carrying an *Akuaba*, an Akan fertility doll. Cole and Ross mention a hand pointing to the sky with a snake coiling around it, which was found in a shrine in Late. According to the priestess this carving, which appeared to be in flames underneath a tree at the time, was presented to her by a lunatic she met. The priestess' deity took the staff and kept it in the shrine room. According to Cole and Ross, supplicants had given several other art pieces with most of them showing appreciation for answered requests (Cole and Ross 1977:100-103).

Priestesses, *akɔmfo* at the shrines employ art on their bodies, which function prominently during worship and spirit possession. The *akɔmfo*'s bodies are painted with *hyirew*, white clay, when they are possessed. The bodies of both *asɔfo* and *akɔmfo* become supports for creation and display of art. Some also keep their hair in *densikran*, a low cropped hairstyle, or *mpesei*, long hair strands. Their clothing is primarily white calico or patterned cloth with white background. The *akɔmfo* add a variety of beads and other protective materials to their dressing which identifies them as *akɔmfo*. Beads are used extensively both as decor to ward off evil and as professional identification. In the past, the *akɔmfo* wore *dɔw*, raffia skirts and held *bodua*,

flywhisk in their hands. Today, we may still find some *akɔmfɔ* wearing this. The regalia of the *asɔfo* and *akɔmfɔ* are both kept in traditional mud houses, but currently some are constructed with cement.

There are different types of architecture in Akuapem, including those serving as shrines and residences for the *asɔfo* and deities. These buildings are constructed with swish and roofed with thatch. The introduction of modern technology in building means that building materials now include stone and cement, with aluminium roofs. These buildings may be in linear, semi-compound or compound design. The rooms, sizes and styles vary. The abodes for the deities are either a separate room or in the bedroom of the *asɔfo*. The ancestral stone seats (fig. 4) are kept in some shrines while others are kept in public places such as in the Late-Kubease plaza (Gilbert 1989: 41; Labi 1989). Art and architecture took into consideration requirements of the gods to enable the priestly leadership to perform their functions as both political and spiritual leaders. But in spite of their service to the gods and belief in the supernatural, they became subjects of Akwamu under which they suffered greatly.

### **Invitation of Akyem into Guan Politics as the First Phase of the Akanization Process**

One weakness of the Guan priest-chief rule was its inability to develop an effective war machinery or defensive force. The Guan lived in small independent chiefdoms and this allowed the Akwamu to subject them to harsh rule without the capability to defend themselves. The origins of Akan art in Akuapem started with Akwamu rule over the Hill Guan from 1681 when the Akwamu initiated steps towards an attack on the Ga who lived in Accra and had been controlling trade among the Hill Guan. It was only after the displacement of the Ga from their control of the Hills that Akwamu rule became a reality on the Hills (Kwamena-Poh 1973: 24).

Because of trade interests and the need for expeditious transactions it was necessary for the Guan to speak the same language, Twi. Akwamu oral tradition narrates that accused persons were usually detained until they learned to speak Twi well enough to defend themselves in Akwamu courts. The towns between Aburi and Mamfe constituted the daily route of the Akwamu and in order for these towns to communicate and trade, they learnt to speak Twi and were therefore more affected linguistically. The towns lying to the north such as Abiriw, Dawu, Awukugwa, Apirede and Late in the east were less affected linguistically. The Late language has remained the same because of their location outside the main hills in Akuapem (Kwamena-Poh 1973: 10-11).

Akwamu rule over the Hill Guan did not last long (1681-1730). After a series of wars with some of the Hill Guan communities in the early eighteenth century, another one broke out in September 1729 with Ansah Sasraku, *Akwamuhene*, coming out victorious. This victory compelled the Guan losers to gather at Abotakyi to swear an oath at the *Kyenku* shrine to unite and expel the Akwamu. Furthermore, it moved them to invite the long-standing enemy of Akwamu, Akyem, to join them in the fight against Akwamu (Kwamena-Poh 1973: 34-37). The situation on the hills changed when Ansah Sasraku plunged into war in September 1730 with the Akyem. Within twenty-four hours the Akwamu were defeated. They were hotly pursued and fled across the Volta River to found their present location called Akwamufie (Wilks 1958: 110).

The continued stay of the Akyem after the fall of Akwamu is recounted in two traditions. One tradition narrates that after the expulsion of Akwamu, the Hill Guans feared that the proverb "if you have no master, someone will seize and sell you" might be fulfilled. So, they sent messengers to the Akyem king to appoint someone to rule over them (Kwamena-Poh 1973: 46). They realised the dangers in their loose federation and were prepared to come under a centralised political authority. The second tradition has it that the Akyem were asked to rule the Guan due to their inability to pay off the debt they had incurred by inviting them to assist in the war. The

negotiations went on until 1733 when the Akyem dynasty finally established itself on the hills. The Guan community met at Abotakyi where an oath was administered with a promise that they would never throw off their allegiance to the Akyem or any of their successors (Reindorf 1966: 89-90). The name of the Hill Guans was changed to Akuapem. The etymology means *nkoa-apem*, a thousand slaves, a name that the Akwamu used to refer to the Hill Guan during their rule, or *akuw-apem*, a thousand companies as they called themselves (Kwamena-Poh 1973:34).

The invitation of Akyem to establish political authority over the Hill Guan was a major turning point both politically and artistically. The Akyem set out to establish an Akan political state with accompanying elaborate art and regalia. This was intended to project, enhance, glorify and enforce the image of chiefship in Akuapem. The Akan black stool became the single most important item of regalia, which transformed the political structure and introduced new art forms among the Guan. This has eventually come to run parallel to the stone seats sometimes used by the Guan *ɔdede* or *asɔfo* as their politico-religious seats.

### Akan Art in Akuapem

This section discusses a few Akan regalia and how some Guan towns came to adopt them. Under this process of Akanizing the Guan, art associated with Guan political leadership became secondary. As stated above, the Akan black stool became a central, political and religious art work that led the process of change. Akan stools are made out of wood, often *ɔsese* (*Funtumia africana*), and believed to be a potential abode for spirits to inhabit. Several other objects such as plates, ladles, combs, shoes, bowls and carved figures are made from this tree (Irvine 1961: 621). Stools are made with various symbols in the central part to communicate Akan values and beliefs.

Chiefs are surrounded with attendants and elaborate paraphernalia so much so that, sitting in state, they become a complete exhibition of the arts of their people. Art projects the chiefs' image and several of these symbols and imagery reflect just that. A chief has spokespersons whose insignia are staffs. On these staffs are a variety of symbols ranging from clan totems to proverbs and historical incidents encoded in abstract or symbolic forms. Sandals, jewellery, headbands and umbrellas all became important during ceremonial functions of chieftaincy. Special minor chiefs were created to be in charge of the chiefs' regalia and were responsible for ordering appropriate ones. Gold, multi-colours, wealth, power, and all forms of symbols depicting these became the mark of this new political institution.

I shall briefly explain some examples of Akan art exemplified in the regalia of the *Okuapehene*, a descendant of Akyem, before discussing how some Guan towns adopted them in the latter part of this section.

The most important paraphernalia of *Okuapehene* is *asɔsɛgua* or *egua*, stool. It is his symbol of authority. There are different types of stools; these are ceremonial, ritual and domestic. The *akonwa tuntum*, black stool, is a ritual stool and not displayed in public. These are stools representing the ancestors. A chief, who during his lifetime led a good and upright life according to the ethical and cultural traditions of his society, had his stool blackened after his death. It is a ritual process of smearing the stool with a mixture of human blood, gunpowder and spider's web amidst invocation of ancestral spirits.<sup>6</sup> The other type is the ceremonial stool, which is displayed in public. One of such stools is *sika gua* (fig. 5). This is a stool covered with gold leaf, and paraded during the *Odwira* festival as a demonstration of *Okuapehene's* wealth.

The *afena*, sword, is also an important item in *Okuapehene's* regalia. The blade is made out of iron and the handle carved out of *ɔsese*. There are three types of swords for *Okuapehene*, namely, *mpomponso*, a ritual sword, *afena*, ceremonial sword and *akofena*, war sword. The ritual sword is kept beside the *akonwa tuntum* in the stool room. The stool room is a sacred place within a palace or a special room where blackened stools of previous chiefs are kept. The rooms are visited periodically especially on *Awukudae* and *Akwasidae* to venerate the ancestors through the stools. The *Okuapehene's* ritual sword is a war relic captured from the Asante in 1826. The sword (fig. 6) is given further spiritual impetus by being kept in the hide of a leopard. It is believed that the leopard is a fearful and brave animal and its skin possesses some aspects of this. Swords also represent those used by the ancestors: some during war, while others are potential abodes for war gods, ancestors and other deities to inhabit. Because of its believed spiritual powers, the blade is never pointed towards a chief when subordinates come to swear oaths of allegiance to him. Ceremonial swords are usually plated in gold or covered in gold leaf and used by a chief during public functions such as *Odwira*. Ceremonial swords carry proverbial messages in the symbols engraved or cut out of the blades. *Okuapehene* may use *akofena* on special occasion, which have reference to war. This is usually accompanied with the wearing of wardress.

*Akyeampoma*, linguist staff, is the official insignia of the *ɔkyeame*, linguist, as well as a symbol of the *ɔkyeame's* status as spokesperson, counsellor and advisor to *Okuapehene*. The office of *ɔkyeame* is ascended to by inheritance, with a few exceptional persons attaining it on personal merit. He is expected to modify and present the messages of the *Okuapehene* and elders in public. He is the visible intermediary between the *Okuapehene* and those who wish to speak to him. *Dabehene* or *Nfoahene*, a minor chief responsible for the *Okuapehene's* regalia, orders the *akyeampoma*. There is a vast array of *akyeampoma*. Some are used for rituals and others for ceremony. An example of *Okuapehene's* ritual *akyeampoma* in Akropong is called *asempa ye tia*, meaning, "truth is brief" (fig. 7). It is believed to be the abode of the spirits of ancestors who used to be linguists. This can be taken to the stool room because tradition maintains that gold is not permitted in rituals for ancestors. It has a dark appearance which is either painted or the result of accumulated residue of sacrificial blood after years of use in ancestor veneration.

The ceremonial *akyeampoma* carry proverbial motifs and are often covered with geometric designs and gold leaf. These *akyeampoma* announce in non-verbal form the arrival of a chief. The bearer of *akyeampoma* need not always speak, for the symbols on the *akyeampoma* are intended to communicate. These carry a minimum degree of spiritual power as compared to the *asempa ye tia*. These staffs are intended to "envelope" and enhance the institution and ceremonial aspect of chiefship as well as a chief's aesthetic appearance. For example, a chief may choose to be represented as omnipotent by the benue bird called *sankofa*, meaning, "going back to the past." This bird can bend its head to touch its back. It is used to represent the chief's ability to perceive things that happen in his absence. Another interpretation to this is the chief's ability to tap into ancient wisdom. Other examples of symbols on linguist staffs are an elephant standing on a trap meaning "a chief's undefeatable position." A hand holding an egg with a finger pointing to the sky expresses the concept of authority, powerful, yet so delicate it must be handled with great care. A linguist staff, *ɔmaa ɔmee* (fig. 8) shows the resourcefulness and responsibility of the Queenmother to feed her people.

*Abotiri*, headbands, are used as part of a chief's accessories in dressing. These are a rich source of aesthetic decoration and proverbial communication. In addition to Akan symbols, animal skin and bones may be added to *abotiri*. These are usually added during funerals and ritual ceremonies. *Akokyew*, war hats, may have the skin of a lion or a leopard attached to it. This is usually worn together with a *batakari*, smock. *Asafohenfo*, military leaders, and *abrafo*, executioners, wear hats. *Okuapehene* has an *ntakrakyew*, feather hat (fig. 9) called *ɔhɔaman* worn by his *ɔkra*, soul, represented by a virgin boy who sits in front of him. It is a composite hat

made up of male eagle feathers, gold-covered ram horns and a human skull wrapped in leopard skin (Gilbert 1989a: 75). It also compares the strength of the chief to an eagle.

Sandals, *mpaboa*, (fig. 10) worn by the *Okuapehene* bear symbolic works expressive of his status. They are worn primarily to protect the chief's feet from touching the ground. *Mpaboahene* is the official in charge of the different sandals worn by the *Okuapehene*. It is his duty to select the appropriate sandals accompanying the chief's cloth. Sandals with cocoa beans worn by *Okuapehene* represent the wealth of the state, which is derived from cocoa. Similarly, snail symbolises contentment; *apése*, hedgehog symbolises "a feeling of total ownership," and a snail and tortoise symbolise peace. These Akan-type regalia were over a period adopted by Guan towns as the *Okuapehene* set out to create a unified Akuapem state.

Two examples cited below from Abiriw and Late, both Guan towns, demonstrate the Akanization process. The Guan accepted the new political structure, and the need to separate priesthood from chiefship. They made political appointments that eventually used Akan regalia and adopted the black stool as their new source of political authority. This marked the separation of the *asɔfo*'s role and the complete loss of *madafo*'s judicial powers to the newly created positions of chiefs. While the chiefs dealt with political matters, the *asɔfo* focused on spiritual concerns.

Otu even dates the Akanization process earlier and argues that Late was the first Guan town to adopt a blackened stool during the Akwamu period in the mid-seventeenth century. This suggests that the process of Akanization began before the Akyem arrived on the Hills in 1733 (Otu 1987: 37-38). At the beginning of Akyem rule, they positioned representatives in some Guan towns, who were called either *Kurontihene* or *Mankrado*, to influence the Guan and ensure the success of Akyem rule.<sup>7</sup> Blier cites a somewhat similar situation in the Dahomey and Kuba Kingdoms where kings sent potential family rivals to distant territories. These exiles helped to disseminate royal authority and art through the display of courtly regalia (Blier 1998: 29). Similarly in Akuapem, these Akyem representatives provided the Akan style of political leadership to the Guan towns with its art and regalia from which they could copy. The Late *asɔfo* relinquished their political roles and nominated new leaders to assume new political status known as chief who adopted black stools as their source of political power. These new chiefs adopted some regalia from the Akyem representatives in Late. It is said that the Late-Ahenease stool room has a black stool and a brass pan—all adopted from the Akyem while the sword and arrow are war trophies. Late linguist staffs originated from the Akyem rulers (fig 11). Today, Late Kubease and Ahenease chiefs have both ritual and ceremonial staffs. These staffs identify a chief. They precede the chief and are supposed to cast evil spirits away. The Late black and ritual linguist staffs can be taken anywhere and its presence is usually an indication of a problem which needs to be resolved. The ritual staff is called *sunsumakyeampoma*, spiritual staff, because of the sacrificial human or animal blood poured on it. This means the spirit of the dead man have been transformed into the staff.

A Guan chief may have several staffs with various designs referring to proverbs. Examples from Late are as follows: *Wo fro dua pa a na wo pia wo*, means "if you climb a good tree you will be pushed", *akoko batan na onim nia ne mma bede* means "it is the hen which knows what its chicks will eat", and *tu koro nkɔ agyina* means, "two heads are better than one." These are all popular Akan proverbs adopted as symbols on Late linguist staffs. Other regalia which Late adopted were ceremonial stools, palanquins, umbrellas and elaborate dressing with accessories to make the chief the best dressed person present, and a retinue of attendants. Today, Late chiefs possess almost all the stool paraphernalia of an Akan chief. They include state swords (fig. 12),



headgear, bracelets, gold necklaces and finger rings, ankle bangles and musical instruments such as *fontomfrom*, *atumpan*, *twenesin* and horns including *nmentia*. The creation of several Akan-type chiefs in Guan towns introduced new sources of power, namely ancestral stools and their accompanying regalia, as seen in Late and Abiriw.

The Akan political system was adopted in Abiriw in about 1843 (Otu 1987: 31). Prior to this, Abiriw priests from the patrilineal clans sat in a circle on stones to administer justice under the leadership of the Bosompra priest. The Akan who had earlier migrated and joined them with black stools had to put them aside. Gilbert confirms Otu's view that it was only in the mid-nineteenth century that the powers of the Bosompra priest and the Abiriw chief were separated. Since then there has been an increase in the number of chiefs created with black stools. Gilbert gives detailed background to the introduction of black stools in Abiriw. She admits that the "*madefo*, who originally governed the town, while not eliminated in the new political order, have had their political functions usurped; they have become subordinate to Akan-type chiefs with Akan paraphernalia such as black stool, linguist staffs, palanquins and umbrellas" (Gilbert 1997:511-513).

An Abiriw elder says that:

Before, all we knew was judgement of the gods, and this judgement was sometimes quick, sometimes slow and always costly: it cost lives and much money. Akuropon people brought a revolution to our society. They told us we should let them settle it civilly with less cost (Gilbert 1997: 509).

Abiriw reformed their political system and accepted Akan chiefship with its accompanying judicial powers. Between 1846 and 1866, one of the Bosompra *asɔfo* nominated his son, Kwadwo Bosompra, to be his successor while he assumed the position of *Ohene* of Abiriw (Otu 1987: 32). Similar situations and changes occurred in all the Guan towns.

It cannot be said that the introduction of Akan art and regalia was an imposition, as some Guan chiefs enjoyed this new political structure. In 1867, the *Benkumhene*, who is from Late arrived in Akropong in magnificent attire. He rode in a palanquin, wore a black silk cap and was shielded by an umbrella (Otu 1987: 7). This supports the acceptance of the new art forms and institution. Furthermore, the protracted dispute between chief Akrofi of Late and *Okuapehene*, Nana Kwasi Akuffo, over the title "King of Larteh," inscribed over a medallion given to him by the colonial government in 1885 is another case of some chiefs wanting to elevate themselves within this new political structure to paramountcy. In July 1885, chief Akrofi even signed a letter as "Frederick Akrofi, King of Larteh." The inscription was later changed to chief of Larteh in 1898 following a long dispute after which the British replaced the medallion (Brokensha 1964: 12-17). Several such disputes of allegiance have plagued Akuapem till today.

In addition to the elaborate regalia and display of wealth, in constitutional terms real power (political, religious, judicial and administrative) was combined with military command in times of war (Kwamena-Poh 1973: 46). These powers were vested in the Akyem chief at Akropong. This centralised authority completely overshadowed the non-centralised Guan priestly political system headed by *ɔdede*, *asɔfo*, *madefo* and *asafohenfo* and their regalia, namely white cloth with beads and bangles. In many instances, there was a complete separation of powers between worship of the gods by the priests and ancestor veneration practised by the chiefs.

The traditional Guan art associated with the priests was not integrated in the new political regalia dominated by gold, symbolic imagery and black stools. In fact, it was and still is a taboo for the priests to use gold, which is a mark of wealth and glory frequently displayed in many of the new Akan political ceremonies. They also abhor the use of black stools. The blood used on the stools is a taboo to the *ɔdede* or *asɔfo*. Hence, the Guan priests, for religious reasons passed on this responsibility to the *asafohenfo* or other leader. The wearing of war regalia in the form



of smocks, hats and the use of swords and knives contradicted the sacredness and sanctity of the position of priesthood. The new chiefs swore allegiance to *Okuapehene* and paid homage annually during the *Odwira* festival whose origins date from the second decade of the nineteenth century. This further cemented the Akanisation process.

### The Second Phase of Akanization: Akuapem Captures Asante *Odwira* *suman*

The second stage of the Akanization process began with the Akuapem war with Asante. In the early nineteenth century the Akuapem and Akyem, who were usually allies, went into an alliance with some coastal states, and were supported by the English and Danes and fought the Asante at Nsamankow and Akatamanso in 1824 and 1826 respectively. During the Akatamanso war, the Akuapem captured the Asante war god, *Odwira Apafram*, and the stool regalia connected with the celebration of the *Odwira* festival. The accompanying *odosu*, war deity or magico-religious objects which provide abode for spiritual entities to inhabit when invoked, was also captured from the Asante. This gave the Akuapem the spiritual authority to celebrate the *Odwira* festival. Since then, during the month of September or October every year the Akuapem have been celebrating the *Odwira* festival climaxing in a five-day series of rituals and ceremonies with several small scale pre and post *Odwira* activities.

This second phase of the Akanization process underscores the importance of the *Odwira* festival which brings all Akuapem chiefs together in Akropong to celebrate before they each in turn celebrate their own festivals in their respective towns.

The Akuapem *Odwira* festival is reflective of a community experience made visible through its art. Hence, in the week of the main celebration, all major art works made and acquired throughout their history are displayed. *Odwira* is celebrated to cleanse and purify Akropong and the entire Akuapem State from evil and defilement while venerating the ancestors. It is also to propitiate the stools and ensure that members of the state congregate in joyful fellowship through sacrifice and the eating of a communal meal. During the period, Akuapem chiefs also come to pay homage to the *Okuapehene*. The Sunday preceding the ninth *Awukudae*,<sup>8</sup> the Akuapem sacred day celebrated every forty-two days which always falls on Wednesday, is when all the stool occupants assemble to celebrate *Odwira*.

The festival begins on Monday, *Akwammo*, clearing of the path to Amamprobi, the royal cemetery. This is to enable the ancestors to be invited for the festival. Libation is poured in the morning to seek permission from the ancestors to lift the ban on drumming which has been imposed six weeks earlier called *adae butuw*, in preparation for the *Odwira*. *Adumfo*, security officers, *Banmufu*, custodians of the royal mausoleum and *Asenfo* pour this libation. This facilitates the invitation of the ancestors to join them in celebrating the festival. The *Akyeamehene* hands over a cutlass to *Banmuhene* who then strikes the ground on both his left and right sides three times each signifying the commencement of weeding of the path to Amamprobi.

At *odum anim*, a site believed to be the spot where one *Okuapehene* died, and also a place for the execution of people in the olden days, the elders prepare the grounds thoroughly for the mat-spreading ritual amidst the sounding of the *nkrawiri*, executioner's drum. They spread *odwen haban* (*Baphia nitida*), also known as camwood leaves on a raised wooden platform with sticks across it to prevent the offering from touching the ground. On this they place, *sapow pa*, plantain fibre sponge used as a towel, *sawee*, chewing sponge, *aburow a watoto*, roasted corn, *mankani a watoto*, roasted cocoayam, *ankaa*, lime, *kwadu*, banana, *abe*, palm fruits and *brɔde*, plantain, on

the *odwen haban*. After this, they seek permission to enter the sacred grove. They return to the chief's palace and are then given some palm wine to quench their thirst.

Tuesday morning marks outdoorings of new yam. It is after the ceremony on Tuesday that new yam, banned six weeks earlier, is officially brought into the town and eaten. Early in the morning the *Okuapehene's* white stools are washed and lined up in the palace for a while (fig. 13). Later on in the morning, there is procession with sacrificial offerings to Amamprobi led by *Banmuhene*, *Adumhene*, the chief responsible for the security of the person of *Okuapehene* as well as head of *abrafo*, executioners, *Nkowasuafohene*, chief of stool carriers, *Ankobeahene*, chief of traditional counsellors and *Osodohene*, chief cook in the stool house or palace. The dress is a dark smock, a battle dress or dark coloured clothing to signify the importance of the ceremony. *Banmuhene* presents sheep, food and drinks to the ancestors on behalf of the *Omanhene*, and a concoction of sheep blood and herbs is used to mark the forehead of participants during the rituals at Amamprobi. On their way back they are met by a delegation of the *Omanhene* led by the *Akyeamehene* on the outskirts of Akropong to pour libation with water, palm wine and schnapps. When they arrive in the palace, a cloth is wrapped round the *Omanhene* in order for him to secretly receive the *odosu*, war religious items, used to provide physical strength and war strategies to fight and the spiritual strength and authority to celebrate the festival. The *Banmuhene* hands this over to him by marking his forehead with ointment prepared at Amamprobi. The *Omanhene* is dressed in the black cloth traditionally used during mourning. There is a small gathering in the palace later in the evening for the *Omanhene* to perform *dapaa tu*, preparation and announcements for the celebration of *adae kese* or the ninth *adae*, big *adae* and *adae bue*, lifting of the ban on drumming, dancing and noise making imposed six weeks earlier.

Wednesday is the ninth *Awukudae*, a day for mourning the dead. The traditional dressing is black cloth or dark brown, red or other dark patterned cloths. Families cry and mourn their dead relatives of the past year. It is also devoted to feeding the ancestors in the stool room, a sacred indoor rite. *Omanhene* sits in the palace to perform *adae kese*. The linguists pour libation and the *Omanhene* offers drink, which he pours on his left and right hand side. Appeals for funds and donations are made for development projects in the year. Later during the day the *Okuapehene* dresses in war regalia – a smock with amulets and talismans and a war hat, and is paraded through the town joining in the mourning. Some of the oldest forms of art, such as carved stools dating from ca. 1850 (Cole 1975: 17) are brought out and ritually cleansed. During this sacred rite, a curfew is imposed and the public is strictly warned to stay indoors. On Wednesday night, the blackened stools of past *Okuapehenfo*, namely: Sabori, Kwapong Kyerefo, Obuobi Atiemo, Kwame Fori I, Asa Krofa and Kwadede I are taken to the Adami river by the *Adumfo* and *Abrafo* to be cleansed and guns are fired at Nsorem.

During the early hours of the following morning, Thursday, the *Adumfo* light a fire to roast some new yam. It is also the day when the *Asona* clan<sup>9</sup> eat yam, and stool occupants offer food and drinks to the ancestors at Nsorem, the original site of Akropong. The colour of clothing changes from black, red or dark brown used in mourning and worn during the first three days of the festival to colours such as greens, blues, yellows and white to mark the festive mood. This is a day of celebration and the predominant colour of clothing worn is white, meaning joy and peace. The black stools are placed upright and fed with pieces of meat and mashed yam. The *Omanhene* also performs rites for the *Odwira suman* at *Banmuhene's* house, after which the public may consult *Banmuhene* for a ritual bath with a concoction of sacred water and herbs. At the end of the day, the *Omanhene* receives the various groups from Nsorem, with the *Banmuhene* presenting the *Omanhene's* empty food container by placing the container three times on the laps of the *Omanhene* and then taken away to the stool room. After this, the carrier of the food is also placed three times on the lap of the *Omanhene*. The last activity for the day is *Sesadompe* during which leaves and other sacrificial items on the *odosu* are removed and deposited at Nsorem under

the cover of darkness. This rite is finalised with three resounding gunshots (see also Gilbert 1994: 99-108). There is strict curfew and lights are supposed to be turned off. In recent past and during the 2002 *Odwira* festival the Electricity Company turned off the lights but I am unable to ascertain whether it was because of traditional demand or pure coincidence.

Friday is a state durbar to which all the chiefs in the remaining sixteen towns are invited to pay homage to *Okuapehene*. Prior to this the *Asonahene*, head of the *Asona* clan in the morning sends his food, mashed yam and water to Nsorem before the durbar commences. All the communities, their chiefs as well as government officials and well-wishers join in the celebration.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the ritual, military, social and political aspects, it is also a display of elaborate art forms. By the fifth day, the dark coloured clothing, military attire and seriousness attached to the festival has changed to that of bright colours and the use of gold and silver and wearing of elaborate ornaments.

There are a variety of art forms displayed during the *Odwira* durbar because repetitions are avoided and variations encouraged. For example, no chief should wear the same attire, or dress more elaborately than, the *Omanhene*. If a subordinate chief wears the same cloth or dresses with similar regalia to that of a superior chief, the subordinate is advised or encouraged to change the dressing. In the scheme of things no two chiefs dress or embellish themselves identically nor should their entourages have the same number of people (Cole 1975: 22). Each chief sets himself distinctly apart to show that he is the only one possessing that specific regalia. Cole's article summarises the *Odwira* festival as bringing together the various art works and compares their display to a pointillist painting where each minor unit contributes to the impact of the whole (1975: 60). According to Cole, the "artistic impact of the festival stems not from isolated artistic forms of actions but from formally orchestrated interaction of all the aesthetic resources of the community" (1975:61). Each of these art works used during the festival has a specific historical and cultural meaning which creates good reasons for the community to come together and share in the display, values, hope, peace and prosperity of Akuapem.

Gilbert perceives Akuapem art as "deliberately and metaphorically exposed in royal rituals in the politics of chieftaincy affairs and in regalia" (1993: 123). The *Odwira* festival provides an appropriate occasion for the display of art in a ritual and royal setting intended to project the image and status of the *Okuapehene*. She argues that Akropong regalia form an external envelope for the person of the body politic of the *Okuapehene*. Those who provide this external envelope are the various attendants, divisional chiefs, minor chiefs, and the host of art and regalia they use. They are all centred on paying homage to the *Okuapehene*. These historical and cultural works epitomise the artistic life of the Akuapem people as a whole. Art and regalia of the *Okuapehene* and other Akuapem chiefs are summed up as "public representations of the secret power that lies within and behind kingship and the power that holds it together" (Gilbert 1993: 131). Indeed these are more than public presentations of what holds kingship together. They are also representations of the history of art in Akuapem.

The Akropong *Odwira* festival is a great drama, which embraces all the Akan arts in Akuapem. It is an occasion when the spiritual power of the chief is re-charged. It is a celebration of the highest and total expression of culture as horn blowers, drummers, linguists and various state officials display art and regalia. All the wing chiefs in Akuapem have over the years acquired Akan regalia such as palanquins, umbrellas, swords, multi-coloured and patterned cloths, gold plated sandals, linguists staffs with proverbial icons and jewellery made or covered with gold leaf, and come with these to pay homage to the *Okuapehene*. This is perhaps the most significant occasion for the display of art. *Drow* and other body arts reveal distinctions, changes in status and temporary display of roles as well as personal preferences and affiliations.

During the Akatamanso war, other Akuapem towns also captured war gods and regalia from the Asante. Therefore, Late also celebrates the *Odwira* festival because of the gods and trophies they captured. It also involves the clearing of path to their ancestral home to bring the *Odwira*. It is a festival of purification from war through rituals performed with the *odwira odosu*, cleansing from defilement, evil, and a time when the Late feed and venerate their ancestors. The Late celebration is also associated with rites to make the eating of new yam healthy so that people do not suffer stomach ache and other ailments from eating new yam. In addition to the religious celebration, it is also an artistic display, exhibiting the totality of Akuapem art.

The process of Akanisation separated the Guan priests from participating in the Akropong *Odwira* festival. No gods are worshipped during this festival, rather, it is ancestor veneration. Because of this distinction, priests and priestesses do not participate in it. Their non-participation in chieftaincy is also because of their abhorrence of black stools, gold and works which bear symbols on them, which are emphasised in Akan regalia.

The introduction of the new Akan regalia was only for political reasons, as the Guan were left to practise their beliefs during which the *ɔdede*, *asɔfo* and *akɔmfo* continue to worship their gods and celebrate their festivals. Despite the separation of religious roles from political and judicial functions, there still exists some collaboration between the chiefs and the *ɔdede*, *asɔfo*, *nmedefo* and *akɔmfo* in certain aspects of Guan communal life. For example, in some Guan towns such as Adukrom, Amanokrom, Obosomase and Late-Ahenease, gods are attached to the black stools and the periods for propitiating and feeding these gods are part of the festivals involving chiefs. In Late-Ahenease the god Konkon, which is regarded as male, because it appears as a man with half body and resides in a cemented shrine is worshipped on Tuesdays, Fridays and during the *Ohum* and *Odwira* festivals. In fact, the Konkon *asɔfo* is the *nmedefo kyeame*, and during these festivals, should there be any rituals and rites to be performed it then becomes his responsibility to do so. In Late, the following Wednesday after the *Odwira*, the priests and priestesses of the shrines gather to cook, offer food to the gods and dance. In the night, every house that has a god lights a fire and the head priest goes round to roast a piece of yam in it and throw it to the ground for the gods.

It is evident that Guan priesthood is still active in the Guan communities, going by the number of shrines in Akuapem. During my fieldwork in 1988, I documented as many as ninety-one shrines in Akuapem, though the number may be higher. These communities maintain their altars and still adhere to the traditional regalia and art forms and celebrate their independent festivals (fig 14). They also train priestesses from other towns. The popularity of shrines may be illustrated with the Akonmedi shrine. During the *Asuo Gyebi* festival at the Akonmedi shrine, past trainees of the shrine come from other towns in Ghana and the United States to worship this deity and celebrate the festival.

In Akuapem today, all seventeen towns celebrate annual festivals with Akan regalia during which many of the chiefs are carried in palanquins and paraded through the principal streets on the last day of the festival, culminating in a grand durbar. During the Mamfe *Ohum* for example, the *asɔfo* and other traditional leaders perform traditional rites including the drinking of *asafosa* and the women enact *awɔrebe*, a ceremony of sweeping and cleansing the town, prior to the durbar, which climaxes the celebration on Saturday afternoon with Akan type regalia.

The Akuapem *Odwira*, Abiriw *Akpe Odwe*, Mamfe *Ohum*, Mampong *Odwira* and Late *Ohum* and *Odwira* are all festivals celebrated in Akuapem in which chiefs display regalia of Akan origin. The new art works introduced in Akuapem articulate new Akan values. These were the use of gold and the display of power, pomp and pageantry. Today all Akuapem chiefs display Akan art. Political and social importance are placed on regalia and reflect the values of the

people of Akuapem as a whole.

Whereas these Akan influences tend to overshadow Guan priestly art a typical Guan religious festival, such as *Asuo Gyebi* of *Akonnedi* shrine and the celebration a week after Late *Odwira* of the priests and priestesses including *Konkon* and *Tshawe* is more a display of various rituals, spirit possession and dance. The priestesses wear white cloths, beads on their necks, wrists, knees and ankles and smear their bodies with white clay. During the *Asuo Gyebi* festival, which I observed in January 1989, the late Nana Oparebea, the then priestess of *Akonnedi* shrine had a special stool on which she sat. The emphasis is on the religious appropriateness, symbolism and suitability for the gods rather than the aesthetics of colour, as well as the projection of the personhood and power of the priest or priestess of the shrine. Some Guan religious festivals are celebrated alongside the state festivals such as *Ohum*, and Akan festivals such as *Awukudae* and *Akwasiidae*. The process of introducing a new political order did not entirely wipe out the Guan priestly art and way of relating to and celebrating the gods.

### Conclusion

I have argued in this article that Guan politico-religious art and regalia are different from the political regalia the Akyem (Akan) came with. The fundamental differences of positions regarding blood; what constitutes taboos and abhorrence of black stool and symbolic imagery; and the separation of ancestor veneration from worship of gods, detached the art of these two leadership types in the Akanization process. Therefore the Guan who were appointed chiefs use Akan type regalia while the priests maintain their traditional Guan art and regalia without adding any Akan art and regalia. In this concluding section, I recount some of the main differences between Akan and Guan art and regalia as well as areas of co-existence.

Some comparisons may therefore be drawn between the art of the *asɔfo* and *ahenfo* after over two centuries of the Akanization process. The *ahenfo* derived their source of power from blackened stools whereas the *asɔfo* derived their politico-religious position and authority from the principal gods in the communities, sometimes represented through white stools or with *korow* being receptacles for their abodes. In Akuapem today, both blackened and white stools exist. While chiefs use black stools, linguist staffs and other elaborate regalia and colours, priests and priestesses use white stools, *korow*, *ayowa* and other composite objects. Chiefs perform rituals in venerating the ancestors while the *asɔfo* worship state gods and are consulted on social, religious, health and domestic issues.

There is a clear distinction between the attire of the *asɔfo* and *ahenfo*. Whereas the dressing of the *asɔfo* is conservative and resistant to change, i.e. white cloth, beads and flywhisks, chieftaincy regalia is dynamic. Chiefs use multi-coloured clothing including gold, and jewellery, which are taboo to priests. Chiefly regalia are aimed at enhancing the image of the chief and projecting his wealth and power. Therefore, anything including historical and contemporary regalia are used. Wealthier chiefs and queen mothers are able to acquire more regalia for their stools. While all *asɔfo* may wear white cloth at a function, among the chiefs the wearing of a similar cloth by a subordinate chief can be interpreted as insinuation or insubordination, leading to possible sanctions.

Akan influence was only political, with its accompanying regalia. Chiefship and priesthood have been kept separate but co-exist in promoting the interest and development of the community. While the Late-Abenease chief follows some key elements of the Akropong *Odwira* such as path clearing, bringing the *Odwira*, mourning the flood and a durbar with display of gold

plated regalia and other bright colours, the priests and priestesses gather the following Wednesday to offer yam to the gods. The Guan communities maintain the religious art and regalia used by the *asɔfo* and *akɔmfo*. Their annual festivals are still celebrated with the display of art and regalia associated with priesthood. Some *asɔfo* and *madefo* continue to play important roles in the Akan system of government based on chiefship as in Late. The impact of the Akanization process extends largely to the political domain as the Guan have maintained several aspects of their art associated with priest chiefs.

Today, traditional art forms in Akuapem are primarily from two ethnic groups, Guan and Akan, which are used to sustain both the political and religious needs of the people. Though the Akyem were invited to rule the Guan and introduced several aspects of Akan chiefship and its accompanying regalia, the process did not affect Guan religious beliefs as we find that there is a continued and strong presence of Guan art in the shrines and during some festivals. Guan arts are still upheld to maintain cultural, spiritual unity, and identification within the Guan communities. The Akanization process can therefore not be said to be complete, but partial.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Chieftaincy includes both chiefs and queen mothers. Since their art and regalia are essentially the same, I shall use the word chief or chieftaincy to refer to both chiefs and queen mothers.

<sup>2</sup> I acknowledge the kind support and information from *Okuapehene*, Nana Addo Dankwah III, who granted me private interviews at his residence in Osu, Accra, and at his palace in Akropong. Mr. Yeboah Dankwah, a retired Senior Research Fellow of the University of Ghana and a citizen of Abiriw spent several days with me in his office at the Language Centre and provided me useful information on Guan culture. I was the guest of the late Nana Birikorang, *Apesemakahene*, Chief of Protocol, Akropong, in his Accra office and he took several hours and days educating me on Akropong and Akuapem culture and art. I am also indebted to the late *Okyeame* Bofofo Akuffo, *Ahenemmahene*, chief of all children of chiefs in Akropong and State Linguist. The late Mr. D. A. Attrams, Secretary to the Guan Research Centre, Late, Ankobea Asante of Mamfe and Mr. Lawrence Opare, Benkum Secondary School all need mention for their contribution to the primary material from which this article has been written. I am grateful for their deep insights on the subject, which they shared with me between 1988 and 1989 during my field work gathering material for my Master of Philosophy thesis in African Studies. In writing this article I have also consulted *Teacher Okyeame Darko of Late* for further insight into Late art.

<sup>3</sup> The Late words have been spelt as I heard them. *E* is pronounced as in elephant.

<sup>4</sup> Widman and Dieterle, 1948, Basel Mission archives cited in Anquandah, 1985.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with *Okyeame Teacher Darko of Late*, September 2002.

<sup>6</sup> For details of the blackening ceremony, see Kyerematen (1964: 15-21); Sarpong (1971: 36-59); and Labi (1993: 371-376). Gilbert gives specific details on the blackening process in Akropong in Gilbert (1989: 59-90).

<sup>7</sup> Interview with *Okyeame Teacher Darko of Late*, 2002.

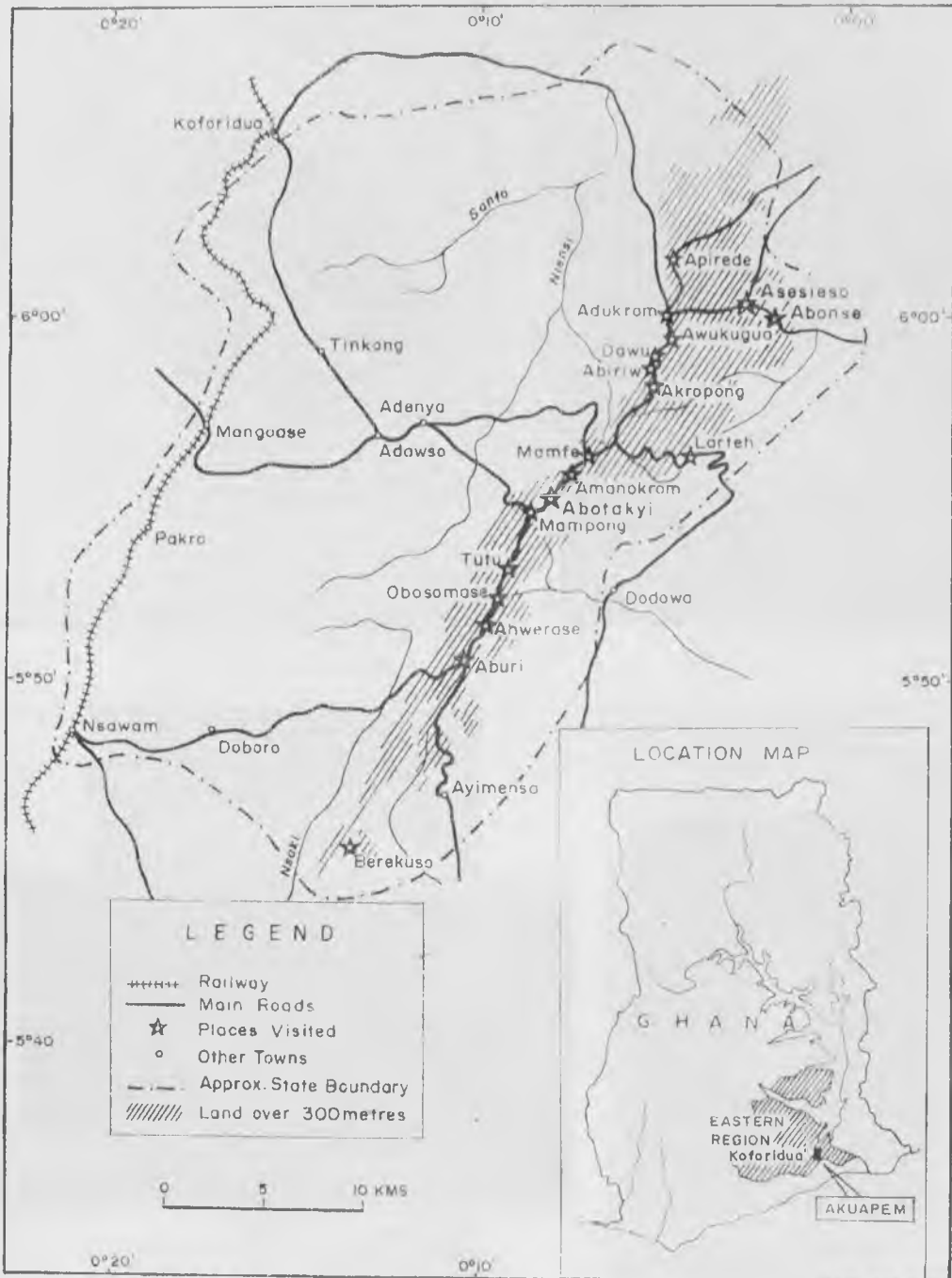
<sup>8</sup> This is a forty-two day cycle of computing the Akan calendar year. Nine cycles complete a year. In Akuapem, this cycle fell on Wednesday called *Awukudae* and Sunday called *Akwasidae*. This *Akwasidae* celebration was changed in the mid-nineteenth century to *Awukudae* because of an agreement between the *Okuapehene* and the Christian missionaries to allow Christians to worship on Sundays. Today *Akwasidae* is now celebrated again in addition to *Awukudae*.

<sup>9</sup> *Asona* is one of the seven Akan matrilineal exogamous clans. Every Akan belongs to one. Clan members consider themselves as blood relations and therefore do not marry. The Akyem royals who came to rule at Akropong are from the *Asona* clan.

<sup>10</sup> Herbert M. Cole's article, "The Art of Festival in Ghana," discusses the *Odwira* festival in detail as well. He says that many festivals in Ghana are total works of art. Cole translates the entire festival into a schematic diagram of the energy flow during the five-day celebration (Cole 1975: 12-15).

MAP I

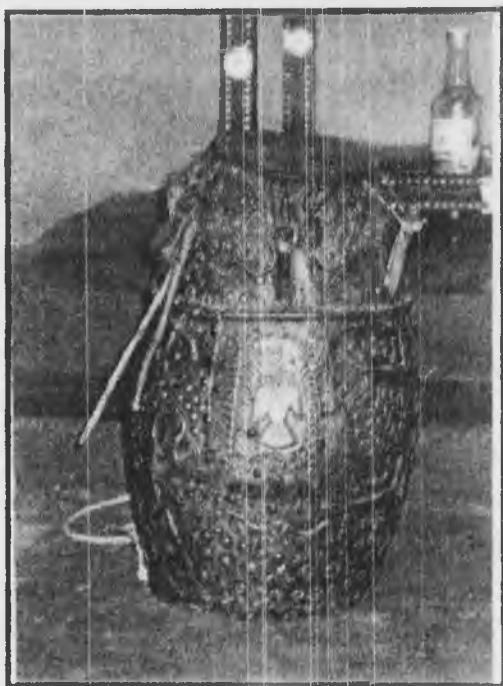
AKUAPEM TRADITIONAL AREA



SOURCE Field Sheets 14 B & 18, 1:250 000 series, and Fieldwork

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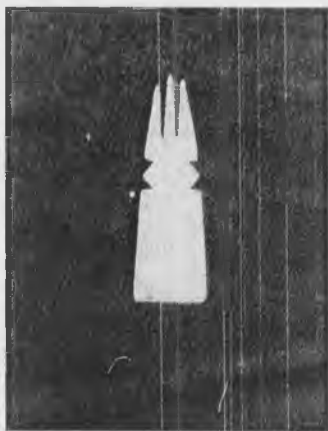




*Fig 1 Aburikuwa drum captured from the Asante during the Akatamanso war in 1826. Photograph taken during the 2002 Akropong Odwira festival.*



*Fig. 2. Funerary terra cotta from Dawu, about sixteenth century. Photograph taken from Ghana National Museum, 1989.*

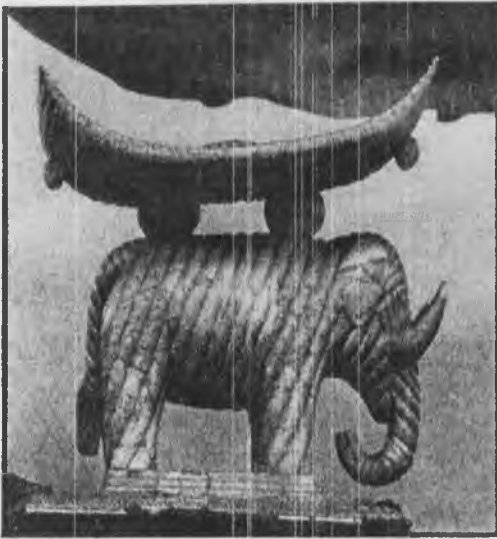


*Fig. 3. Decorated ivory comb with circle and dot design, about sixteenth century. Photograph taken from Ghana National Museum, Accra, 1989.*



*Fig 4. Late-Kubease ancestral stone seats in the Plaza. Photograph taken in 1989.*





*Fig. 5. Sikagna, golden stool, of Akuapem. Photographed 1989 at the Odwira festival, Akropong.*



*Fig. 6. A sword encased in leopard skin. Photographed from Akropong during the 1989*



*Fig. 7. Asempa ye tia, truth is brief, linguist staff. Photograph taken during the 1989 Odwira festival, Akropong.*



*Fig. 8. ɔmaa ɔmee, meaning the queenmother feeds her people adequately. Akropong Akuapem, 1989*



*Fig. 9. Ntakrakyew, feather hat of Okuapenhene of Akuapem. Photograph taken in 1989 during the Odwira*



*Fig. 10. Gold leaf sandals belonging to a chief in Akuapem. Photographed from Akropong, 1989.*



*Fig. 11. Linguist staffs of Late-Ahenease chief. Photographed in 2002 during Late Odwira durbar.*



*Fig. 12 Sword bearers of Late-Ahenease chief seated in front of him during the Late Odwira durbar*



*Fig 13 Adonnua (white) stools of past Okuapenhene*



*Fig. 14. The late Osofo Agyekum, a priest of Late Akonnedi Shrine. Photographed in 1989, Late Kubease.*

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## NIGERIA'S POPULATION POLICY AND FUTURE FERTILITY DECLINE

*Chuks J. Mba*

### Abstract

The government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, promulgated its first explicit population policy in 1988, in response to the soaring population growth rate that impedes developmental efforts. The policy document has stipulated a number of quantitative demographic targets. Paramount among these is the intention to reduce total fertility rate (TFR) to 4, raise the use of family planning methods to 80 per cent, and raise mean age at first marriage to 18 years, by the year 2000. However, a macrosimulation analysis of changes in the proximate determinants of fertility as enshrined in the policy document reveals that Nigeria's TFR will fall from about 6 to 2 instead of 4, which is far beyond the government's expectations. It is, therefore, needful to revisit the demographic targets of the population policy of Nigeria.

Key Words: Nigeria, Population policy, macrosimulation, fertility, proximate determinants.

### Introduction

An important distinguishing feature between the developed and developing countries is that fertility (measured by total fertility rate) is low in the former but high in the latter, with a difference of about 2 births for the 1990s (United Nations 1995). The latest United Nations inquiry among governments designed to monitor their perceptions and policies on demographic trends and levels in relation to development shows that 47 percent of the Member States, comprising 59 countries, including Nigeria, view their present fertility levels as unsatisfactorily high (United Nations 1995). This has led to the evolution of population policies in these countries aimed at reaching some demographic goals. Fifty-eight percent of these governments have policies bordering on modification of their fertility levels so as to reduce population growth and improve family well-being. In fact, 36 percent of the national governments have specified quantitative targets for their future fertility levels, with an overwhelming majority stipulating the year 2000 as the target year for attaining their desired fertility levels.

Nigeria, with a population of about 114 million and a population growth rate in the neighbourhood of 3 per cent per annum, is Africa's population giant and the tenth largest country in the world (United Nations 2001a; 1994a).

Consequent upon the recognition of the negative effects of rapid population growth, the government promulgated the 1988 Population Policy of Nigeria (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1988).

One major component of the policy document is the specification of a set of targets, which demonstrates a strong interest of the government to fundamentally change the reproductive behaviour of Nigerians. In particular, the targets of the policy document include:

For the protection of the health of mother and child, to reduce the proportion of women who get married before the age of 18 years by 50 per cent by 1995 and by 80 per cent by the year 2000; To reduce the proportion of women bearing more than four children by 50 per cent by 1995 and by 80 per cent by the year 2000; To extend the coverage of family planning service to 50 per cent of women of childbearing age by 1995 and 80 per cent by year 2000; To reduce the number of children a

woman is likely to have during her lifetime, now over 6, to 4 per woman by year 2000 and reduce the present rate of population growth from about 3.3 per cent per year to 2.5 per cent by 1995 and 2.0 per cent by the year 2000 (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1988: 13-14).

From the policy document, it is clear that the government expected, *inter alia*, the total fertility rate (TFR) to fall to 4 live births per woman, mean age at first marriage (MAFM) to rise to 18 years, and the percentage of currently married women within the reproductive age category using contraceptive methods to shoot up to 80 per cent, all by the year 2000. Evidently, the 1988 policy document is aimed at improving the quality of life of the average Nigerian, with particular emphasis on reducing fertility through the provision of affordable and high quality family planning services throughout the country. However, it is very doubtful whether Nigeria's TFR will fall from 6 to only 4 if the proximate determinants of fertility, especially, contraception, are altered according to the government's declaration. Moreover, as we have already passed the year 2000, there is nothing to suggest the fact that there is any reproductive or contraceptive revolution in Nigeria at present. The latest nationally representative sample survey in the country, the 1999 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (National Population Commission, 2000) reveals that Nigeria's current TFR is 5.2, while use of modern contraceptive technology is only 8.6 percent for currently married women. As a result, Nigeria's population growth rate has remained at an unacceptably high level<sup>1</sup>. This phenomenon acts as a serious impediment to Nigeria's march toward economic self-reliance, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty.

It is, however, conceded that the reasons why Nigeria's fertility has remained high and contraceptive use so low are complex and diverse. Nevertheless, it is imperative that a policy document aimed at decelerating the country's fertility and growth rates should be pragmatic, unambiguous, and realistic. This contention is confirmed by the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), which acknowledged that population factors played a decisive role in all human endeavours, especially in pursuing sustainable development. Thus, it is saying the obvious that population policies and programmes aimed at integrating population into development strategies and meeting the rapidly increasing demand for reproductive health information and services must be attainable and current (Mba 2002; United Nations 1998; Sadik 1991). Unfortunately, as highlighted in the foregoing discussion, some of the quantitative demographic targets of the 1988 Population Policy of Nigeria seem to be unattainable and unrealistic in the light of the country's demographic profile. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to conduct a macrosimulation analysis of the determinants of future fertility decline in Nigeria on the basis of the policy targets, to furnish the empirical basis for arguing the plausibility or otherwise of certain aspects of the demographic targets of the population policy of Nigeria.

### **Materials and Methods**

Generally, the data for the study are from the two nationally representative sample surveys conducted in Nigeria. These are the 1981/82 Nigeria Fertility Survey (NFS) and 1990 Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS). It should be noted that the NDHS findings parallel those of the Post Enumeration Survey of 1991 (National Population Commission, 1998). Use will also be made of the information emanating from the population policy document of Nigeria.

In an attempt to unearth the quantitative effects on fertility of changes in its proximate determinants, the REPMOD reproductive macrosimulation model is used (Bongaarts 1977, Bongaarts and Potter, 1983). The changes in the proximate determinants are based upon the demographic targets of the population policy of Nigeria enunciated in order to achieve lower fertility regimes. REPMOD is an acronym for REProductive MODel.

The basic operation of the model is summarized in the reproductive states through which women progress from birth to the end of reproductive career, in the absence of mortality, sterility or marital disruption. When a woman is born, she enters the unmarried state. While at this state, she is at the risk of marrying. The probability of first marriage at each age is derived from a first-marriage distribution which equals zero until about age 15. Subsequent to marriage, the woman is in the fecundable state, that is, she is at the risk of conceiving. This risk is small if contraception is employed and vice versa. After a random interval of time she becomes pregnant. Her pregnancy ends either in a live birth or abortion (spontaneous or induced). If her gestation period ends in an abortion, then she enters a state of temporary non-susceptibility for the duration of the aborted pregnancy plus the associated post-abortion infecundable period before she returns to the fecundable state. If, however, her pregnancy terminates with a live birth, then the nine months full-term pregnancy is followed by a postpartum infecundable period. Finally, at the end of this period of non-susceptibility to conception the return of ovulation signals the commencement of a new fecundable interval.

The foregoing progression through reproductive states is continued until menopause is attained. If marital disruption intervenes, the only way a divorced or widowed woman can return to the reproductive process is through remarriage because childbearing outside marriage is not allowed in the model. If sterility occurs, the approach adopted in the model is to first of all complete the simulation of the entire sequence of reproductive events without sterility and thereafter eliminate those events that would not have occurred if sterility were in fact present<sup>2</sup>. It should be noted further that the probability of spontaneous abortion or intrauterine mortality (including still births) varies with age in a J-shaped distribution. Also, the pregnancy plus postabortion non-susceptible period associated with a foetal loss follows a geometric distribution with a mean of 2.5 months.

The use of REPMOD procedure requires the specification of values for seven basic variables, to wit, (i) fecundability; (ii) spontaneous abortion; (iii) postpartum infecundability; (iv) age at menarche; (v) earliest (first) age at marriage; (vi) mean age at marriage; and (vii) proportion ever married.

There are various methods of estimating fecundability or the monthly probability of conception. The various methods call for various and sometimes stringent data requirements. The use of different techniques of estimation has resulted in different estimates of fecundability (Golden and Millman 1993). Owing to paucity of data, the methodology adopted is an approximation that, it is believed, will capture Nigeria's experience with the available empirical evidence. From the NDHS data set it is estimated that there are 1,742 births occurring twelve months after first union, and there are a total of 5,977 first births subsequent to first union. The ratio of the former to the latter yields  $1742/5977 = 0.2915$ . Applying this ratio to the standard table proposed by Bongaarts (1975, p.654) shows that Nigeria's fecundability plateau mean is about 0.15.

Information bearing on non-induced intrauterine death or miscarriage in Nigeria is rare, fragmentary, and ambiguous. This is because Makinwa-Adebusoye (1991) for example, has reported a pregnancy termination of 14.8 percent in her study of five Nigerian cities. But her investigation was confined to teenagers (boys and girls) between 12 and 19 years of which 80 percent of the girls were still single at the time of her study. Also, the Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (PPFN) has projected a national pregnancy wastage of 20 percent for 1994 - 1996 period (PPFN 1993). Pregnancy wastage is a combination of spontaneous and induced abortions and still births. It is not known whether these three factors were taken into account before arriving at the estimate or that the organization is only referring to one or two of the variables. Since no other empirical evidence with national representativeness is presently available on spontaneous abortion in Nigeria, recourse is hereby made to the PPFN finding on



the assumption that it reflects Nigerian women's spontaneous abortion experience. This assumption is within acceptable and conventional limits because the frequency of recognized pregnancies that spontaneously abort, based on different types of studies and data analyses, varies from 10 percent to 25 percent (Kalter 1987). Thus, it is postulated that since induced abortion is still outlawed<sup>3</sup> in Nigeria, the PPFN reported pregnancy wastage of 20 percent is indicative of the spontaneous abortion experience of Nigerian women.

Both postpartum amenorrhoea and postpartum abstinence influence the duration of postpartum infecundability or postpartum nonsusceptibility, which is the time after a live birth during which the woman is not at risk of conceiving. The mean value of the postpartum infecundability as estimated from the NDHS for Nigeria is 21.6 months.

The age at menarche is the age at first menstruation of a woman, which is actually a physiological event that heralds the beginning of her fecund life. The NDHS provides no information on this parameter but the NFS does. All the women interviewed in the NFS programme were asked: 'How old were you when you had your first menstrual period?' The distribution of the responses of the ever-married women is presented in Table 1. The table indicates that at age 12 one out of every five Nigerian women attains menarche. But by age 14 more than half of the women reach menarche, and almost all the women should have had their first menstrual period by age 16. The mean age at menarche is thus 14 years for the nation.

From the NDHS results, some women reported entering into first marital relationship when they were 10 years old. Hence the information establishes the incidence of early child betrothal in Nigeria and further confirms the pronatalist tendencies of that society because by just age 13, a fifth of the women have married.

The mean age at first marriage and proportion ever marrying as required for the running of REPMOD as estimated from the NDHS data set are respectively 16.5 years and 0.998 because about 99.8 per cent of Nigerian women marry before attaining menopause.

## Results

### Validation of the REPMOD Simulation Programme

Having thus estimated the values of the seven parameters necessary for the execution of REPMOD macrosimulation model, it is important to examine the proximity or otherwise to reality of the results of the technique before further analysis can be attempted. This is because before one can have confidence in the adequacy of a model, the model should, of necessity, be tested. To this end, attempt is made to fit the REPMOD procedure to data from both the NDHS and NFS data sets since a test of the validity of a model is provided by comparing the characteristics estimated by a model with those observed in a population for which the required model input data are available. Moreover, carrying out initial experimentation with the basic unadjusted input data is germane to determining the standard upon which future input variations can be compared.

Using, therefore, the computed values specified above for the operationalization of REPMOD, a simulation experiment is carried out, and the results are presented in Table 2, along with the observed NDHS and NFS distributions. It is both striking and reassuring that the simulated values almost parallel the observed ones, especially, those from the NDHS. This may be because majority of the input values are culled from that data set. Since the NDHS and NFS results reflect the demographic profile of the Nigerian society, it can then be argued that the close agreement between the observed and simulated distributions suggests that the basic REPMOD macrosimulation model adequately represents the family building process in Nigeria.



To test the goodness of fit of the data, the  $\chi^2$  (chi-square test) is applied. The  $\chi^2$  is a statistic that gives a measure of the discrepancy existing between observed and expected distributions. The step-by-step application of this technique is shown in Table 3.

The results indicate that 
$$\chi^2_a = \sum_{i=1}^7 \frac{(a_i - s_i)^2}{s_i} = 9.007,$$

and 
$$\chi^2_b = \sum_{i=1}^7 \frac{(b_i - s_i)^2}{s_i} = 11.674.$$
 These represent the computed  $\chi^2$

values. Next, we obtain the tabulated  $\chi^2$  values at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance for 6 degrees of freedom, which respectively yield 12.6 and 16.8.

By comparing the calculated with the tabulated  $\chi^2$  values, a lack (or presence) of significance which indicates a close fit (or otherwise) will be found. In the current case, the differences between the simulated model functions and the observed data are not significant at both the 0.05 and 0.01 levels because  $\chi^2_{0.05} = 12.6$  is greater than  $\chi^2_a = 9.0$  and  $\chi^2_b = 11.7$ ; and  $\chi^2_{0.01} = 16.8$  is greater than  $\chi^2_a = 9.0$  and  $\chi^2_b = 11.7$ . Thus, we may conclude that the model provides a good fit to the data.

Consequently, the simulated values presented in Table 3 furnish a good standard against which all future simulations can be compared.

### Possible Scenario Options

The population policy of Nigeria has stipulated various quantitative targets congruent with the deceleration of Nigeria's fertility. As far as REPMOD can permit, attention is focused here on investigating the effects on fertility of changes in those variables in a manner consistent with the Government's goals and aspirations.

In conducting the REPMOD macrosimulation analysis, the following possible scenario options, depicted in Table 4 have been considered. It is conceded that a number of simulation options can be postulated for examination. But brevity requirements preclude an exhaustive treatment of all possible scenario options. Nevertheless, the hypothesized simulation options indicated in the table are the ones the present study deems practical and plausible.

The Nigerian government advocates a mean age at first marriage (MAFM) of 18 years. This informs why the reported MAFM of 16.5 years is raised to 18.0 years in 14 out of the 19 scenario options.

Given the proposed socio-economic and demographic transformations ambitiously envisaged in Nigeria by the government (barring her present socio-economic realities) it can be argued that the age at menarche cannot remain the same in future as its presently constituted value. This is because medical science has established that socio-economic development influences age at menarche, so that improvement and better living conditions (occasioned by better health care, nutrition, etc) depress age at menarche (Derman et al. 1995). This perhaps explains why much of the developed world has lower age at menarche than the developing one. Thus, in anticipation of this development in Nigeria, the age at menarche is varied from 13 to 14 in 6 out of the 19 scenario options.

Since the evidence presented in the preceding discussion signifies that first age at first marriage (FAFM) is lower than both age at menarche (10 versus 14) and MAFM (10 versus 17) in Nigeria, the effect of variation in FAFM is plausibly assumed to be negligible. This reasoning is the basic rationale underlying the unalteration of the FAFM value as shown in Table 4.

It is assumed that the persistence of Nigeria's economic turnaround will ultimately affect the proportion marrying. Hence, a reduction in proportion marrying from 0.998 to 0.907 is postulated in 6 out of the 19 scenario options.

Concerning postpartum infecundability (PPI), two broad options are considered as revealed by Table 4. The first relates to raising PPI from 21.6 to 24.0 since the population policy recommends a spacing pattern of at least 2 years (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1988). The second option is a reduction in PPI from 21.6 to 19.6 by the same percentage point (9.09 percent) used in raising MAFM from 16.5 to 18.0 as desired by the government. This option is necessary because worldwide the duration and intensity of breastfeeding is decreasing in response to modernization and technological breakthrough (Rodriguez and Diaz 1993). This has a direct bearing on amenorrhoea and therefore PPI. Hence, it is assumed that the "development, unity, progress and self-reliance" Nigeria envisions will affect PPI.

Table 4 shows that 3 scenario options are postulated in case of fecundability. The population policy document stipulates 80 percent and 50 percent coverage in respect of contraceptive use. It has already been derived that the fecundability mean for Nigeria is 0.15. The current contraceptive prevalence rate as reported in the NDHS programme is 6 percent. Since 6 per cent use of contraception has yielded a fecundability of 0.15, and since contraceptive use depresses the monthly chance of conception (fecundability), it follows, therefore, that the envisaged massive contraceptive uptake in Nigeria will have a corresponding inverse relationship with fecundability. Also, in attempting to estimate future levels of fecundability from the base natural one, it is important to take into account the use effectiveness of contraceptive methods. In this respect, the United Nations (1986) has suggested some method-specific effectiveness levels, to wit Pill = 90 per cent; IUD = 95 per cent; Injectable = 98 per cent; Condom = 70 per cent; and Traditional = 70 per cent. Since the NDHS findings reveal that Pill, IUD, Injectable, and Withdrawal (Traditional) are the most popular methods, it is assumed that the aggregate effectiveness level for Nigeria is the average of these most popular methods, which is 88 per cent. Consequently, the improvisation adopted for the purposes of this paper is to apply the assumption that the extent of the dampening effect on fecundability by the anticipated contraceptive uptake is the same as the extent to which it is raised at the prevailing level of contraceptive effectiveness, and that contraception is used for the purposes of limiting births only. In this respect, 88 per cent of 80 per cent is 70.4 per cent. Then 70.4 per cent of 0.15 is 0.11. Then by simply taking the difference between 0.15 and 0.11 yields 0.04. Thus the government's proposed 80 percent target level of contraceptive use coverage will plummet fecundability to 0.04. By similar procedure it can be deduced that the proposed 50 percent target level of contraceptive use coverage will depress fecundability to 0.08. The third option is predicated on the assumption that there will be just 100 percent increase from the present observed contraceptive level of 6 percent. In other words, it is assumed that coverage of family planning services will rise from 6 percent to 12 percent. Thus, by applying 12 percent to 0.15 in a similar manner yields a fecundability mean of 0.13.

Because of paucity of empirical information on spontaneous abortion in Nigeria, the changes anticipated in relation to this variable follow a plausible guess. It is posited that owing to improvements in health and related social services, the rate of spontaneous abortion will reduce by about 10 percent in future.

## REPMOD Macrosimulation Findings

Having thus postulated a set of 19 plausible scenario options which Nigeria's future fertility experience may follow, the next step is to examine the effects of changes in the intermediate fertility variables. Table 5 gives the quantitative effect on the national fertility (measured by age specific fertility rates and total fertility rates) likely to occur when the relevant proximate determinants are varied in accordance with the government's aspirations. The table shows that when the mean age at first marriage (MAFM) is raised from 17 to 18 years as desired by Nigeria, with the other reproductive parameters remaining constant, then the total fertility rate (TFR) will drop from its present value of 6.01 to 5.57, representing a decrease of 7 percent. The policy implication of this option (Option A-2) is that programmes aimed at increasing the MAFM alone will have a mild dampening effect on Nigeria's future fertility.

However, in real life situations, increases in MAFM are a product of many factors, paramount among which is the quest for higher educational attainments. Increases in educational opportunities in turn lead to greater exposure and enlightenment, as well as greater awareness of technological innovations, including the use of modern contraceptive methods. Hence Options A-3, A-4 and A-5 present results based on simultaneous increases in MAFM and contraceptive use while controlling for other parameters (that is, the third, fourth and fifth rows respectively of Table 5).

The findings suggest that if MAFM rose by one year and contraceptive use was increased to 50 per cent (that is, reducing fecundability from 0.15 to 0.08), 80 per cent, (reducing fecundability from 0.15 to 0.04, and to 12 per cent (reducing fecundability from 0.15 to 0.13), then TFR would have respectively decreased by 22 per cent (from 6.06 to 4.66), 54 per cent (from 6.06 to 2.81), and 9 per cent (from 6.06 to 5.54). This means, as expected, a substantial reduction in Nigeria's fertility, even beyond the government's optimistic aspiration (of TFR of 4), might have been attained by simultaneously raising MAFM from 17 to 18 and contraceptive use to 80 percent.

If Nigeria had experienced a dramatic socioeconomic transformation, it would undoubtedly have affected fecundability and spontaneous abortion for reasons already advanced. Accepting this proposition and hypothesizing that these proximate fertility determinants would change as opined in options A-6 to A-8 (see Table 4), then Nigeria's fertility would also change. The analysis indicates, as depicted in Table 5 (sixth to eighth rows), that when the MAFM was raised to 18 years, menarche was reduced by one year, proportion ever marrying was reduced by 10 percent, PPI was reduced by 9 per cent, and spontaneous abortion was reduced by 10 per cent, then by increasing contraceptive use to 12 per cent, 50 per cent, and 80 per cent respectively yielded TFR of 5.40, 4.45, and 2.26. The results show that Nigeria's fertility target of attaining a TFR of 4 might have been achieved if scenario Option A-7 were adopted.

The next task is to examine how Nigeria's fertility would have fared if the strategy were an exclusive focus on the large-scale adoption of contraceptive technology, on the assumption that all the other intermediate fertility variables remained unaltered. Options A-9 to A-11 provide results of the analysis. As presented in Table 5, fertility would decrease by 8 per cent, 19 per cent, and 51 per cent respectively by contraceptive uptake of 6 per cent, 50 per cent and 80 per cent.

Then, too, if attention was focused on promoting long duration and intensity of breastfeeding alone, then Option A-12 reveals that if PPI was increased by 10 per cent then the nation's fertility would have reduced by 10 per cent only, implying that it might not have been a viable option.

If the MAFM and PPI were both increased in accordance with government's aspirations while other variables remained constant, TFR would have decreased by about 1 birth (Option A-13).

Then, if in addition to altering MAFM and PPI alone, a 6 per cent uptake of contraception was allowed, the results show that the TFR would similarly have decreased by about 1 birth (option A-14). However, when the MAFM and PPI were varied in concert with 50 per cent and 80 per cent uptake of contraception, the TFR would reduce by 2 births (Option A-15) and 3 births (Option A-16) respectively.

Finally, if all the proximate fertility determinants were varied in a manner consistent with those of option A-8, with the exception of increasing the PPI (rather than reducing it), the findings are indicated in the last 3 columns of Table 5. Here the TFR would fall by 1 birth (Option A-17), 2 births (Option A-18), and 4 births (Option A-19), representing the highest fertility reducing scenario option.

### Discussion

A notable finding from the analysis is that in all the postulated options, the peak of childbearing must lie in the 20-29 age group in order to make fertility reduction feasible. Additionally, the age specific fertility rates should be expected to be considerably lower for the older women because they will be approaching the end of their childbearing.

Overall, one fundamental inference deriving from the analysis is that the quest for fertility reduction from TFR of 6 to 4 might have been attained in Nigeria by the adoption of Options A-7 or A-15 or A-18. In other words, massive contraceptive uptake is crucial to the achievement of the fertility reduction target of the population policy of Nigeria, and the expected TFR of 4 was likely to have been reached if contraceptive prevalence rate rose to 50 per cent instead of 80 per cent proposed by the government. However, it should be stated that if all the proximate determinants of fertility were changed with a massive rise in contraception (peaking at 80 per cent) as desired by the government. TFR would not have fallen from 6 to 4; rather it would have drastically reduced from 6 to 2 which is the replacement level fertility.

It is a good thing that the government of Nigeria promulgated its population policy in 1988. Some of the basic principles and goals the policy set out to achieve are still valid and relevant. However, time is not on the side of the document. This is because, in the first instance, as the foregoing analysis has shown, there are major inadequacies in the specification of some the quantitative demographic targets. The targets should reflect reality and be devoid of ambiguities. For example, "To extend the coverage of family planning service to 50 per cent of women of childbearing age" as stipulated in the policy document is, strictly speaking, not the same as "to extend the coverage of family planning methods to 50 per cent of women of childbearing age" because family planning methods are but a component of family planning service. The final target date of the year 2000 in the existing document has already been reached and passed without any remarkable contraceptive and hence reproductive change in Nigeria.

Nigeria's population policy should be revised to reflect the significant aspects of both the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development and the 1995 Beijing International Conference on Women and Development (UNFPA 1999). This is because development that is both sustained and sustainable will certainly include close attention to the social dimension, what is now called human development. Among these, population interventions will be most essential. The experience of many countries shows that population policies and programmes, as well as other interventions in human development, especially investments which make women more equal partners in development, interact in powerful ways (United Nations 1998; Sadik 1991). The results reveal themselves in smaller, healthier and better

educated families, and in a generation of women and men who can think for themselves, decide for themselves and take their full part in family, community and national life. In this respect, the policy should stress on reproductive health and rights, reducing maternal death and morbidity, coupled with meeting the unmet needs for contraceptive choices, and access to reproductive health information and services for all groups of the Nigerian population. In particular, innovative strategies should be developed to provide adolescents with reproductive health information to promote gender equality and responsible sexual behaviour. This is because early child-bearing entails much higher health risks since complications in pregnancy and childbirth are much more common before age 18 (World Health Organization 2001; Makinwa-Adebusoye 1991). The Nigerian government should therefore emphasize the fact that early pregnancy is a threat to the health and the life of both the young mother and her infant, and the programme of action should be designed and implemented in a manner appropriate to its culture and conditions.

It should be noted that the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of their political, social, economic, and health status is a highly important end in itself. In addition, it is essential for the achievement of sustainable development. Consequently, Nigeria's new population policy should stress the full participation and partnership of both men and women, which is required in productive and reproductive life, including shared responsibilities for the care and nurturing of children and maintenance of the household.

Meeting the basic human needs of growing populations is dependent on a healthy environment. These human dimensions need to be given attention in developing a comprehensive population policy for sustainable development in the context of population growth in Nigeria.

Additionally, there are certain fundamental phenomena affecting most societies that are conspicuously absent in the present document. In the first instance, population ageing that is rapidly gaining prominence in national population agendas (United Nations 2001b; Mbamaonyeukwu 2001; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 1999; United Nations, 1994) is not mentioned at all in the existing document.

Moreover, there is a growing body of literature to support the fact that the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), is rising at alarming proportions in parts of Africa, (World Health Organization 2001; United Nations 2001b; Dorrington et al. 2001; Mbamaonyeukwu 2001b; UNAIDS 2000). In fact, according to the latest UNAIDS Report, 42 million people now carry HIV, while each year 5 million people are newly infected and 3 million die of the disease (UNAIDS 2002). The Sub-Saharan African Region is the worst hit as it contains more than two-thirds of the 42 million people living with the HIV virus throughout the world. But HIV/AIDS is also not reflected in the present population policy of Nigeria. It is important, therefore that a revision of the policy should also focus on tackling the spread of HIV/AIDS, especially among the youth. The new policy should specify the urgent need for the development of more relevant information, education and communication (IEC) programmes to build knowledge, motivation and skills, based on a full understanding of the individual and the broader socio-economic factors that influence individual, institutional and group behaviour. In particular, the IEC programmes should focus on fostering health and responsible behaviour to increase male responsibility in pregnancy and the prevention of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections, as well as to promote informed reproductive health choices, especially for young women.

Furthermore, female genital mutilation (FGM) or female circumcision, which involves the excision of the clitoris and the cutting or removal of other genital parts, is still performed in many parts of Africa, including Nigeria, especially in the rural areas. In most of those settings where FGM is performed, the operation is usually done without anaesthesia on the female infants, young children or adolescents, and involves the use of crude instruments in unsanitary

conditions. This often results in lifetime discomfort and makes women unable to function sexually in a normal manner, in addition to making them highly vulnerable to infection (Toubia 1994). About 100 million women in Africa have been circumcised and about 1 million girls undergo this operation every year. For example, the 1995 Eritrea Demographic and Health Survey reported that 95 percent of the female respondents have been circumcised in Eritrea (National Statistics Office and Macro International Inc. 1997). The situation may be the same in some other countries. It should be noted that some muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, do not practice FGM and some Islamic scholars argue that the practice is not sanctioned by the Koran (Gilbert 1992/1993). Therefore, in the new population policy, the Nigerian government should spell out the adverse consequences of the FGM and launch effective IEC programmes with a view to disabusing people's minds about the FGM. This is because some people, particularly in the rural areas, view the campaign against FGM as an attempt by outsiders to undermine a country's cultural heritage and impose foreign values (French 1997). The new policy should stress the elimination of FGM and removal of other harmful practices against women.

**TABLE 1**  
PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF EVER-MARRIED ACCORDING TO AGE AT MENARCHE

Age at Menarche	Current -----												Mean	
Number of													(Months)	Women
Age	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
15	2.4	7.4	17.7	30.1	33.4	8.9	-	-	-	-	-	13.1	145	
16	3.2	8.8	16.6	24.2	26.1	17.2	3.9	-	-	-	-	13.3	124	
17	0.7	3.0	15.7	20.6	30.7	23.9	5.3	0.1	-	-	-	13.7	193	
18	1.9	6.0	20.7	20.7	21.3	22.1	6.7	0.4	-	-	-	13.5	223	
19	4.9	5.5	16.3	14.4	21.2	23.6	11.8	0.7	1.6	-	-	13.7	159	
20-24	3.5	3.4	15.1	17.5	22.9	23.0	9.2	3.2	1.6	0.5	0.2	13.9	1,436	
25-29	2.8	3.3	15.2	17.7	22.9	26.6	5.9	2.7	1.6	0.6	0.7	13.9	1,706	
30-34	1.6	4.0	14.6	15.7	21.3	25.7	8.4	5.2	2.3	0.4	0.7	14.1	1,525	
35-39	1.0	1.9	15.4	17.7	22.2	27.7	8.2	2.7	2.2	0.4	0.5	14.1	1,094	
40-44	1.2	1.3	12.8	13.9	19.6	29.6	8.6	5.3	4.6	1.6	1.5	14.5	887	
45-49	2.0	1.3	12.7	12.4	18.1	31.8	8.6	6.4	3.8	1.0	1.8	14.5	579	
All	2.2	3.2	14.9	16.9	22.1	25.9	7.8	3.6	2.2	0.6	0.6	14.0	8,071	
Cum %	2.2	5.4	20.3	37.2	59.3	85.2	93.0	96.6	98.8	99.4		100.0		

Source: NFS 1981\1982

Note: Mean Age at Menarche = 14.0 months.

**TABLE 2**  
OBSERVED AND SIMULATED (STANDARD) AGE SPECIFIC AND CUMULATIVE FERTILITY RATES FOR NIGERIA

NDHS	NFS	SIMULATED		Age Group	ASFR	ASFR	ASFR
15-19	.146	.173	.155	20-24	.258	.284	.271
25-29	.263	.274	.257				
30-34	.220	.231	.228				
35-39	.159	.147	.166				
40-44	.029	.100	.089				
45-49	.064	.060	.046				
TFR	6.01	6.34	6.06				

TABLE 3

TESTS OF GOODNESS OF FIT OF MODEL ESTIMATES WITH  
OBSERVED FERTILITY FUNCTIONS OF NIGERIA

Age Group	Observed NDHS	Observed NFS	Simulated ASFR	$\frac{(a-s_i)^2}{s_i}$	$\frac{(b-s_i)^2}{s_i}$	ASFR (a <sub>i</sub> )	ASFR (b <sub>i</sub> ) (s <sub>i</sub> )
15-19	146	173	155	0.523	2.090		
20-24	258	284	271	0.624	0.624		
25-29	263	274	257	0.140	1.125		
30-34	220	231	228	0.281	0.039		
35-39	159	147	166	2.295	2.175		
40-44	92	100	89	0.101	1.360		
45-49	64	60	46	7.043	4.261		
Total				9.007	11.674		

TABLE 4

POSTULATED PLAUSIBLE REPMOD MACROSIMULATION OPTIONS  
(PROXIMATE FERTILITY DETERMINANTS VALUES)

MAFM	Menarche	FAFM Marrying	Prop.	PPI	Fecund Abort	Spont. Name	Scenario
16.5	14.0	10.0	0.998	21.6	0.15	0.20	Option A-1
18.0	14.0	10.0	0.998	21.6	0.15	0.20	Option A-2
18.0	14.0	10.0	0.998	21.6	0.08	0.20	Option A-3
18.0	14.0	10.0	0.998	21.6	0.03	0.20	Option A-4
18.0	14.0	10.0	0.998	21.6	0.13	0.20	Option A-5
18.0	12.7	10.0	0.907	19.6	0.13	0.18	Option A-6
18.0	12.7	10.0	0.907	19.6	0.08	0.18	Option A-7
18.0	12.7	10.0	0.907	19.6	0.04	0.18	Option A-8
16.5	14.0	10.0	0.998	21.6	0.13	0.20	Option A-9
16.5	14.0	10.0	0.998	21.6	0.08	0.20	Option A-10
16.5	14.0	10.0	0.998	21.6	0.04	0.20	Option A-11
16.5	14.0	10.0	0.998	24.0	0.15	0.20	Option A-12
18.0	14.0	10.0	0.998	24.0	0.15	0.20	Option A-13
18.0	14.0	10.0	0.998	24.0	0.13	0.20	Option A-14
18.0	14.0	10.0	0.998	24.0	0.08	0.20	Option A-15
18.0	14.0	10.0	0.998	24.0	0.04	0.20	Option A-16
18.0	12.7	10.0	0.907	24.0	0.13	0.18	Option A-17
18.0	12.7	10.0	0.907	24.0	0.08	0.18	Option A-18
18.0	12.7	10.0	0.907	24.0	0.04	0.18	Option A-19

Note: 1. MAFM=Mean Age at First Marriage; FAFM=First Age at First Marriage; PPI = Postpartum infecundability.

2. Values in Option A-1 are based on observed demographic profile of Nigeria (dubbed 'Standard').

Values in options A-2 to A-19 are based on the population policy requirements.



**TABLE 5**  
NATIONAL REPMOD MACROSIMULATION RESULTS

Scenario	Age Specific Fertility Rate			TFR				
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	15-49
Observed	.146	.258	.263	.220	.159	.029	.064	6.01
Option A-1	.168	.237	.257	.229	.180	.093	.015	6.08
Option A-2	.134	.251	.250	.227	.179	.066	.007	5.57
Option A-3	.097	.208	.209	.190	.147	.070	.010	4.66
Option A-4	.049	.127	.132	.121	.090	.038	.005	2.81
Option A-5	.130	.247	.264	.223	.176	.091	.014	5.64
Option A-6	.129	.223	.234	.213	.169	.088	.014	5.40
Option A-7	.097	.195	.198	.181	.141	.068	.010	4.45
Option A-8	.049	.118	.123	.114	.068	.037	.005	2.26
Option A-9	.163	.268	.253	.225	.176	.091	.014	5.95
Option A-10	.122	.226	.215	.192	.147	.070	.010	4.91
Option A-11	.061	.139	.136	.122	.091	.038	.005	2.96
Option A-12	.160	.246	.229	.203	.159	.083	.013	5.47
Option A-13	.129	.228	.224	.201	.159	.083	.013	5.19
Option A-14	.125	.224	.221	.199	.156	.081	.013	5.10
Option A-15	.095	.192	.190	.172	.132	.064	.009	4.27
Option A-16	.048	.122	.124	.113	.084	.036	.004	2.66
Option A-17	.121	.204	.200	.181	.143	.076	.012	4.69
Option A-18	.093	.174	.173	.157	.122	.060	.009	3.94
Option A-19	.048	.111	.113	.104	.078	.034	.004	2.46

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Nigeria's high population growth rate of 2.8 percent per annum National Population Commission (1998) is the result of a combination of sustained high birth rates and declining death rates (particularly infant and child mortality rates). Success in reducing death rates is attributable to several factors notably improvements in public health (water and sanitation) and in medical technology (vaccines and antibiotics), coupled with gains in educational attainment.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, if the age-specific fertility rate in the absence of sterility is  $f(t)$  and the proportion of all women that are sterile by age  $t$  (in months) is  $s(t)$ , then the actual age-specific fertility rate is simply  $f(t) \times [1 - s(t-9)]$ . In REPMOD, fecundability is zero until menarche, then rises linearly until age 20, remains at a plateau until age 35, and declines again linearly to zero at age 49.

<sup>3</sup> Although abortion is illegal in Nigeria, however, the current law permits abortion to save a woman's life, and to preserve a woman's physical and mental health.

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## INCIDENCE OF PHYSICAL SPOUSE ABUSE IN NIGERIA: A PILOT STUDY

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### Abstract

This exploratory study of the incidence of physical spouse abuse in Nigeria reveals that women are the primary victims. The study further reveals that early marriages, length of marriage, number and ages of children, size of household, amount of household income and the reluctance of the police to intervene in familial affairs affect the incidence of spouse abuse in Nigeria. Based on these findings, the author suggests that laws making all forms of domestic violence a crime be passed, victims be encouraged to take legal actions against perpetrators, and that the criminal justice system arrests, prosecutes, and punishes violators.

### Statement of the Problem

The social organization of marital relationships and the differing expectations, responsibilities, and obligations of men and women in their respective positions as husbands and wives suggest that marital relationships are fertile grounds for conflicts because such expectations, responsibilities, and obligations are not based on competence or interest but on sex alone (Besharov 1990; Buzawa and Buzawa 1990; Dobash and Dobash 1998). As a result, most altercations that occur between married couples begin with arguments about issues that are mostly meaningful to the individual men and women in the relationship. Studies of the sources of marital conflicts have identified four problematic areas: a. men's possessiveness, jealousy, and expectation of sexual exclusivity (Gelles 1972; Thorman 1980; Gelles 1997, Dobash and Dobash 1998; Mills 1998). b. disagreements and expectations concerning domestic service and responsibilities (Gelles 1972; Alexander 1975; Steinmetz 1977; Davis 1998; Dobash and Dobash 1998; Mills 1998). c. men's assumed right to control women and punish them for perceived wrongdoings (Alexander 1975; Gelles and Cornell 1983; Ohlin and Tonry 1989; Davis 1998). d. the importance to men of asserting their power and authority over their wives (Gelles 1972; Steinmetz 1977; Leslie 1979; Gelles and Cornell 1983; Ohlin and Tonry 1989; Buzawa and Buzawa 1990; Ammerman and Hersen 1991; Gelles 1997; Davis 1998).

Since the social positioning of marital partners allows husbands to control and dominate their wives by various means including the use of force, it is not surprising then, that, in America, women are six times more likely than men to experience violence committed by an intimate (Neubauer 1999). Also, 3 out of 4 victims of intimate murder are women (Greenfeld 1998) and 85% of the victims of intimate violence in 1998 were women (Rennison and Welchans 2000). It is also not surprising that over 8 million women are victims of spouse abuse each year and that 35% of emergency room admissions are women seeking help for injuries they sustained at the hands of men (Roberts 1998). As Hotaling and Sugerman (1986) have pointed out, couples who have high levels of marital conflict also have high incidence of physical abuse, and as the incidence of physical altercations increase the severity of injuries sustained also increases. It is evident from the above that physical spouse abuse is a major social problem and women are the primary victims.

### History of Spouse Abuse

Spouse abuse has a long history as a deep-seated social phenomenon. Societally sanctioned violence against women has persisted since biblical times (Leslie 1979). The Bible explains and condones

violence against women on the basis of women being the source of all evil (Buzawa and Buzawa p. 22) and the unwholesome tempters of men (Leslie p. 166). The origin of these views dates back to the time of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when, according to the Bible, Eve caused Adam to sin. According to the Christian interpretation of what happened between Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the aggressive sexuality of men and responsibility for carnal desires are placed upon women because all women are considered tainted with the sin of Eve (Leslie p. 166). According to this view, women are evil and as such, must be controlled through the use of physical punishment. Genesis 3:16 specifically gives men the authority to punish women for Eve's transgression (Gelles p. 22). According to Thorman (1980:160), the status of women in the church was so degraded during the Middle Ages that Amen were exhorted from the pulpit to beat their wives and wives to kiss the rod that beat them. So, the curse God placed on all women after Eve caused Adam to fall out of favor with Him is the earliest example of the negative definition of women which makes them legitimate targets of antagonism.

Secular laws have more vividly affirmed a male-dominated family structure in which the patriarch has the right to enforce male standards of feminine behavior through whatever means necessary, including the use of force. For example, under Roman law, a husband reserved the right to kill his wife if she committed a variety of offenses, particularly, adultery (Buzawa and Buzawa 1990; Stacey, Hazlewood and Shupe 1994; Gelles 1995; Dobash and Dobash 1998). The English Common Law which also gave men absolute authority over all members of their household later limited male-directed punishment to beating their wives rather than taking their lives (Stacey et al. p. 16). This theory of moderate chastisement was predicated upon the assumption that the only means to enforce male standards of feminine behavior was force (Gelles p. 452; Buzawa and Buzawa p. 22). The legendary but infamous rule of thumb which restricted the instrument of wife beating to a stick no larger than the man's thumb reflected this idea of restraint (Ammerman and Hersen 1991: 273; Stith and Straus 1995; Gelles 452). Following in the spirit of the Common Law, one eighteenth-century law limited the husband's right to discipline his wife to blows, thumps, kicks, or punches in the back where no marks would be easily visible (Dobash and Dobash 1979). The moderate chastisement laws notwithstanding, excessive abuses of women have persisted and continue to be a major problem in contemporary society (Buzawa and Buzawa 23).

### **Spouse Abuse in Nigeria**

The extent of spouse abuse in Nigeria is unknown and may never be known. But, the following excerpts show that it is a problem worth investigating. In "Our Wives Strike Back", Abati (1997) reports about the brutality, violence, and humiliation an American woman who followed her Nigerian born husband to Nigeria experienced. According to him, spouse abuse occurs in Nigeria because the Nigerian society has a set of unwritten norms that guide marital relationships and the responsibilities of the men and women in those relationships. Violation of such norms, he says, could spell death for a woman.

While spouse abuse may be a universal phenomenon, the reasons why it occurs vary from one society to another and from one couple to another. While Ejerebe (1998) feels that spouse abuse occurs in Nigeria due to the social disorganization of the family, the Women's International Network (1998) blames the traditional value system which treats women as property that could be inherited. Further, Agbango (1997), remarks that domestic violence is high in Nigeria because the government, individuals, and groups use violence to redress societal wrongs and to initiate change in society, while Gelles and Cornell (1983: 9) feel that spouse abuse occurs in Africa because of cultural values that legitimize and encourage men to abuse their wives. According to Gelles and Cornell, men in most parts of Africa have orthodox views that reduce the roles of women to bearing and raising children, farming, cooking, and general care of the entire family. Failure to fulfill these expectations, they say, may have deadly consequences for a woman (op. cit. 144).

Further, during a recent public campaign of enlightenment against domestic violence and spouse abuse in Lagos, Nigeria, Akumadu (1999) called on the federal government and the criminal justice system to arrest and punish perpetrators of such violence which she says has been on the increase. The call was made after the death of a 34 year old woman who was burnt to death with acid by her husband. Commenting about spouse violence in Nigeria, Chukwuma (1998; 23), states that since the first incident of acid attack in 1990 in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, several women have been burnt to death with acid by either their boyfriends, husbands, or in-laws. Oyibo (1999) adds that this form of barbaric behavior has been on the increase in Nigeria, particularly, within the last three years.

With reference to the above, this study makes the following assumptions: 1. Spouse abuse is rampant in Nigeria 2. Women are the primary victims. 3. Women in polygynous marriages experience more abuse than those in monogamous relationships. 4. Full time housewives experience higher incidence of abuse than married women who are employed. 5. Couples who are college educated have less incidence of spouse abuse than those who have high school diploma or less education. 6. Incidence of spouse abuse is higher among couples in the low economic class than among those in either middle or upper classes.

### **Theories of Spouse Abuse**

Spouse abuse is a form of violence that occurs between people who are in an intimate relationship. Violence of any kind carried out against another human being is difficult to comprehend and like other forms of complex human behavior, is even more difficult to explain. Theories of the causes of spouse abuse provide a framework for understanding and responding to this phenomenon. Different theories point to particular variables that might alert researchers and policy makers to the potential for spouse abuse in an intimate relationship. The theories fall into three broad categories (Jasinski and Williams 1998: 1) socio-cultural theories which include the cultural theory, resource theory, role theory, structural theory, and the feminist theory; (2) intra-individual theories which include general systems theory, pathological theory, and symbolic interactionist perspective; (3) social-psychological theories which include social learning theory, the circle of violence theory, and attribution theory.

#### **Socio-cultural Theories**

Socio-cultural theories of spouse abuse focus on the influence of social norms, values, beliefs and practices on the incidence of spouse abuse. According to these theories, societies that have cultural norms and values that approve of the use of force to achieve specific objectives will have high incidence of spouse abuse (Ohlin and Tonry 1989:67; Gelles 1995: 469; Stith and Straus 1995:8; Wallace 1996:10) and that since men have greater access to societal resources, they are in a position to control the behaviors of other members of the household (Steinmetz 1977:17; Hasselt, Morrison, Bellack and Hersen 1988: 60; Ohlin and Tonry p. 68; Gelles 1995:468; Stith and Straus p. 8; Wallace p. 13; Gelles 1997:129). These theories also point out that because assignment of family roles is not based on abilities, training, or interest but on sex alone, a husband who is criticized for inability to fulfill the responsibilities inherent in his multiple statuses may resort to violence to preserve the dominant position society prescribed for him (Dallos and McLaughlin 1993:22; Klein and White 1996:104-105; Gelles 1997:129).

Further, socio-cultural explanations of spouse abuse also maintain that patriarchal societies have rules and practices that implicitly or explicitly subjugate women to the authority of men. According to this view, societies that permit polygyny sexualize aggression toward women and by so doing promote their victimization and exploitation (Hasselt, Morrison, Bellack and Hersen p. 72; Ohlin and Tonry, p. 67;

Dallos and McLaughlin p. 22; Gelles 1995:469; Stith and Straus p. 55; Wallace p. 13). Socio-cultural explanations of spouse abuse also maintain that partner violence is one of many historically institutionalized methods of oppression and subjugation of women by men (Stith and Straus p. 8; Klein and White 1996:198). As a result, the brutalization of an individual wife by an individual husband is not an individual or family problem but simply one manifestation of a male-dominated social structure and socialization practices that teach men and women gender-specific roles (Dallos and McLaughlin p. 22; Hasselt, Morrison, Bellack and Hersen, 1988:79; Klein and White p. 1996).

### **Intra-individual Theories**

Intra-individual theories of spouse abuse emphasize the role of alcohol and other drugs, psychological traits such as low self esteem and anti-social personality disorder (Roy 1977), biological and neurological factors such as childhood attention deficit disorder or head injuries (Elliott 1988), the characteristics of each family unit, and the interactional patterns of the couple (Stith and Straus p. 55; Stacey, Hazlewood and Shupe 1994:1) in the spouse abuse equation. According to this view, the rules that govern marital relationships are implicitly or explicitly made by both partners because such rules emerge from the characteristics of the family unit itself and the interactional patterns of the couple. Consequently, it is argued, spouse abuse is not a situation where one family member (the husband) victimizes another (the wife) but a sign of interactive dysfunction between husbands and wives who are both equally involved as perpetrators and provocateurs (Ammerman and Hersen 1991:274). Intra-individual theories of spouse abuse also suggest that there are significant differences between people who abuse their spouses and those who do not and between people who are abused and those who are not (Dallos and McLaughlin p. 17).

### **Socio-psychological Theories**

Socio-psychological theories take the position that spouse abuse is learned in much the same way other forms of complex human behaviors are learned (Stacey et al. p. 35). According to this view, abusive behavior can be learned by direct experience or by observing the behaviors of others (Hasselt et al. 1988:51; Stith and Straus p. 8) and once learned, can be bequeathed from one generation to the next (Gelles 1995: 466; Wallace p. 15). Applied to the family, this theory posits that the family serves as a training ground for violence by providing both exemplars for imitation and role modeling and contingencies of reinforcement and punishment that often unintentionally encourage violence (Ohlin and Tonry p. 65). These theories also hold that children who are victims of child abuse or who witness violent aggression by one spouse against the other will grow up and react to their children or spouses in the same manner thereby perpetuating the circle of violence (Gelles 1995: 467; Wallace p. 15). Socio-psychological theories also call attention to the processes used by individual family members to impute motivations to the actions of other members. According to this view, the structure of family relationships is such that there is a high probability of malevolent intent being attributed to the actions of other family members. When this happens, it is argued, it can set in motion an escalating cycle of resentment and aggression (Ohlin and Tonry p. 66) which if left uncontrolled, could lead to spouse abuse.

### **Methodology**

The following is an exploratory study of physical spouse abuse in Southeastern Nigeria. Because very little has been published on the subject of physical spouse abuse in Nigeria, informal/unstructured interviews were used to collect data from a convenient sample of 84 participants (50 females and 34 males) who agreed to participate in the study. Most of the participants were husbands and wives but there were instances when only one spouse supplied information because the other spouse either could



not be reached or was unwilling to participate. And because violence within the family is not discussed openly or publicly in Nigeria, it was necessary not to restrict the scope and content of the questions asked or to constrain the nature of the data to be collected by asking uniform questions that required specific answers. Further, because of the sensitivity of the subject matter, open-ended questions were used to make it easier for the participants to respond to the questions and to allow the author to probe certain responses and to focus on the contexts in which abuses occur.

**Analysis of Data and Discussion of Findings**  
**TABLE 1: Age and Number of Years Married**

Age at time of study	19 years old or less (6 or 7%)	20 to 29 years old (39 or 46%)	30 to 39 years old (22 or 26%)	40 years old and above (17 or 20%)
Age at marriage	17 years old or less (4 or 5%)	18 to 20 years old (23 or 27%)	21 to 24 years old (31 or 37%)	25 years old and above (26 or 31%)
Number of years married	2 years or less (17 or 20%)	3 to 5 years (32 or 38%)	6 to 9 years (17 or 20%)	10 years or more (18 or 21%)

The above table shows that 67 or about 80% of the participants are less than 40 years old. Examination of the data revealed that the highest incidence of abuse occurred among participants who were less than thirty years old at the time of the study. For instance, whereas participants who were twenty-nine years old or younger reported an average of almost 11 incidents of abuse within the last 12 months preceding the study those who were thirty years of age or older reported an average of less than 8 incidents within the same period. Table one also indicates that 66 or more than 78% of the participants have been married for less than ten years. Analysis of the data also revealed that the longer a couple is married, the lower the number of incidents of physical spouse abuse experienced by the couple. For example, of the 66 participants who have been married for less than ten years, the highest incidence of abuse occurred among those who have been married for five years or less. Whereas those who have been married for five years or less reported an average of 10 incidents of abuse within the last 12 months preceding the study, those who have been married longer experienced an average of about 7 incidents within the same period. The table further shows that 58 or 69% of the participants got married at or before their twenty-fourth birthday. Incidence of abuse is higher among participants who got married at or before their twenty-fourth birthday than among those who got married when they were at least twenty-five years old. For example, whereas those who got married at twenty-four years of age or younger reported an average of about 11 incidents of abuse within the last 12 months preceding the study, those who were twenty-five years of age or older before they got married reported an average of about 8 incidents within the same period. From the above, it could be said that there is an inverse relationship between age at the time of marriage and length of marriage and physical spouse abuse. That is, the current study provides further support (see Ammerman and Hersen 1991:44-45; Dalos and McLaughlin 1993: 12; Klein and White 1996; Dobash and Dobash 1998: 216; Greenfeld 1998) that those who get married at age twenty-four or younger and those who have been married for five years or less have higher incidence of physical abuse than those who get married when they are 25 years of age and older and those who have been married for longer period of time.

**TABLE 2: Household Characteristics of Participants**

Number of children	0 to 2 (19 or 23)	3 to 4 (34 or 41%)	5 to 6 (25 or 30%)	7 or more (6 or 7%)
Ages of children	0 to 6 years old (36 or 43%)	7 to 12 years old (26 or 31%)	13 to 16 years old (15 or 18%)	17 years of age and above (7 or 8%)
Number of people living in the household	2 to 4 (14 or 17%)	5 to 7 (44 or 52)	8 to 10 (22 or 26%)	11 and above (4 or 5%)

The above table indicates that 62 or about 74% of the participants have children between the ages of 0-12 and that 65 or more than 77% of the participants have 3 or more children at the time of the study. The table also shows that 70 or more than 83% of the participants have 5 or more people living in the same household. Examination of the data revealed that the incidence of spouse abuse is higher among participants who have three or more children than among those who have two or less children. For example, while women who have two or less children reported an average of about 6 incidents of physical abuse within the last 12 months preceding the study, those who have three or more children reported an average of more than 9 incidents within the same period. The data also revealed that women who have children between the ages of 0 and 12 reported more incidents of abuse than those whose children are between the ages of 13 and 16. Those whose children are 17 years of age and older reported the lowest incidence of abuse. For example, while women who have children between the ages of 0 and 12 experienced an average of about 11 incidents of abuse within the last 12 months preceding the study, those whose children are between the ages of 13 and 16 reported an average of about 6 incidents whereas those whose children are 17 years of age or older reported an average of about 3 incidents during the same period. These findings are consistent with studies done by Stith and Straus (1995) concerning the relationship between spouse abuse and number of children and by Rennison and Welchans (2000) concerning the relationship between spouse abuse and age of children but does not support the claim that the more people in a household, the higher the incidence of physical spouse abuse. Instead, participants who live in households with five or more people reported higher incidence of violence among siblings.

**TABLE 3: Socio-Economic Status of Participants**

Level of education	Less than secondary education (8 or 10%) 2 males; 6 females	Secondary education (44 or 52%) 14 males; 30 females	College education (20 or 24%) 10 males; 10 females	Graduate education (12 or 14%) 8 males 4 females
Employment status	Unemployed (29 or 35%) 7 males; 22 females	Homemaker (16 or 19%) 16 females	Employed (32 or 38%) 22 males; 10 females	Self-employed (7 or 8%) 5 males; 2 females
Annual household income in naira	19,999 or less (15 or 18%)	20,000 to 39,999 (45 or 54%)	40,000 to 59,999 (21 or 25%)	60,000 and above (3 or 3.6%)

As this table indicates, 8 or about 10% of the participants have less than high school education. Women make up 75% of this sub-group. Only 14 of the 32 participants who have college education or

higher are women. This means that only 28% of the 50 female participants have college education whereas about 53% of the 34 male participants are college educated. This disparity could mean that the education of women in Nigeria is not viewed to be as important as that of men and partly explains why incidence of physical spouse abuse is high among the participants because as Steinmetz (1977:126) notes, couples who are more educated use discussion rather than physical violence to handle marital conflicts more often than those who are less educated. The table also shows that only 12 or 24% of the 50 female participants were employed at the time of the study, whereas 27 or more than 79% of the 34 male participants were employed. Conversely, 38 or 76% of the female participants were unemployed whereas 7 or about 21% of the male participants were unemployed at the time of the study. The reasons for the high rate of unemployment among women in Nigeria are illuminated below by the Women's International Network (1998:12) which states:

Women experience discrimination in employment because the government tolerates customary and religious practices that adversely affect them; women remain under-represented in the formal sector; under some customary land tenure system, only men can own land; many customary practices do not recognize a woman's right to even inherit her husband's property; in some areas, a woman is considered part of her husband's property and she too may be inherited by his family; polygamy continues to be practiced among both Christian and Islamic communities; the testimony of women is not equal to that of men in Sharia courts; girls are sold into marriage at a very young age.

The above statements indicate that there is institutionalized discrimination against women in Nigeria in social, economic, and political spheres of life. And as long as the above practices continue, incidence of physical spouse abuse would probably remain high.

Table 3 also shows that 60 or more than 71% of the participants live in households that make a total annual household income of less than 40,000 Naira, which was equivalent to about four hundred U.S. dollars at the time of the study. Although cost of living in Nigeria is relative to income, it is becoming more difficult for married couples with children to make ends meet especially since monthly salaries are not paid regularly. One of the participants had this to say about irregular payment of salaries and the hardship this puts on people who have family.

An annual salary has been increased for teachers but the major problem is that you are not sure when the money will be paid. Sometimes you will not be paid for three months at a time and when the money comes, they may pay you only one or two months salary. The money is not enough for people who have children. It is extremely hard these days to make ends meet especially people who have children.

From the above, it is obvious that not only is unemployment high in Nigeria, those who are employed are not sure they will be paid at the end of the month.

**TABLE 4: Participants Who Experienced Abuse**

Occurrence	Pushing/Shoving/Grabbing	
	(Minor Abuse)	(Serious Abuse)
Slapping/Kicking/Punching		
Within the last month	7 (all females)	1 (female)
Within the last 6 months	27 (3 males; 24 females)	11 (all females)
Within the last 12 months	49 (7 males; 42 females)	16 (2males; 14 females)

As Table 4 indicates, 42 or 84% of the female participants have been pushed, shoved, grabbed or otherwise threatened in some way (minor abuse) within the last 12 months preceding the study whereas 7

or about 20% of the male participants reported having similar experiences during the same period. The table also shows that of the 16 participants who said they have been slapped, kicked, and/or punched (serious abuse) by their spouse within the last 12 months preceding the study, 14 or more than 87% are females. These findings supports the claim that women are the primary victims of spouse abuse and the assertion that whatever female aggression that exists, is in response to male violence.

**TABLE 5: Most Frequent Causes of Physical Spouse Abuse**

**Under what circumstances is your husband most likely to use violence against you?**

<b>Causes</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. Not following his instructions	50	100%
2. Talking back at him	50	100%
3. Food not ready on time	50	100%
4. Going out without his permission	41	82%
5. Going out for too long	39	78%
6. Retaliation	7	14%

As can be seen from the table above, all of the 50 female participants stated that their husbands are most likely to use physical force against them for not following his instructions, talking back at him, and not having food ready on time whereas 41 and 39 of them stated that going out without their husbands permission and going out for too long could make their husbands resort to violence against them respectively. As can be seen, these specific causes of marital violence in Nigeria emanate from the differing social expectations and responsibilities of men and women in their respective positions as husbands and wives. Since the Nigerian society expects women to be responsible for most domestic duties, servicing the mans needs could easily lead to arguments that could result in the use of violence as Dobash and Dobash (1998: 146) point out:

Some men are particularly concerned about household work, especially when tasks are associated with serving their personal needs. The content, preparation, and timing of meals constitute a particularly sensitive area for criticisms and verbal confrontations that sometimes end in violent attacks on women.

Further, the patriarchal nature of marital relationships in Nigeria puts husbands in super-ordinate positions over their wives and as a result, a wife who does not follow her husband’s instructions or who talks back at her husband becomes a victim of physical violence because Nigerian men do not believe that their wives have the same right as they to argue, negotiate, and/or debate. Arguing with ones husband is seen as a sign of disrespect and a challenge to his authority and violence could be used to silence debate, to reassert authority, and to maintain unquestioned respect. Once violence is used, it facilitates the men’s ability to control their wives through various forms of intimidating behaviors as well as through subsequent acts of violence.

The fourth and fifth frequently stated causes of physical spouse abuse by the female participants are going out without their husband’s permission and staying out longer than they expect them to respectively. It is important to note that these “causes of violence” reflect the traditional view of husband/wife relationship in Nigeria where women are expected to follow the instructions of their husbands without query and not to go anywhere without their husbands approval. Even when such permission is sought and granted, not coming back when expected to would require an acceptable explanation otherwise violence could result. It is also important to note that these causes of abuse are not mutually exclusive. The probability that a woman will be beaten by her husband increases if two or

more of the above factors are present. For example, a woman who disregards her husbands instructions not to attend a specific activity in the town will be guilty of not following instructions, going out without permission, and probably not having dinner ready on time. The more factors that are present in a situation, the more likely it is that violence will result and the more violence is used in one situation to achieve specific behavioral expectations, the more likely it is that it will be used in the future in the same or similar situations (Gelles 1972:73; Gelles 1997:127; Dobash and Dobash 1998:164). Further, the more violence is used to achieve conformity to specific behavioral expectations, the more volatile subsequent applications of violence could become, more so, if the woman attempts to fight back.

Even if 7 or 14% of the female participants stated that their husbands are likely to use violence against them in response to their own acts of aggression, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that women are the overwhelming victims of both minor and serious spouse abuse in Nigeria. The size and superior strength of men leave even the provocative woman no chance. Although a number of researchers (Gelles 1972; Steinmetz 1977; Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz 1980; Stacey, Hazlewood, and Shupe 1994; Cook 1997; and Gelles, 1997) have argued for what has been termed the mutuality of violence between men and women, the small percentage of women in this study that are aggressive toward their husbands questions such assertion. But, at the same time, it does indicate that in order to fully understand the problem of physical spouse abuse in Nigeria, attention must also be paid to women aggression. If both men and women take responsibility for their own aggressive behavior, both can be helped to find alternative ways of conflict resolution.

### **Other Contributing Factors**

8 or more than 9% of the participants said that their spouses were chosen directly or indirectly by parents, relatives, or others in the community. This could mean that about 10% of marriages in the area surveyed do not involve pre-marital dating. Also, 21 (9 females and 12 males) or 25% of the subjects agreed that other people should get involved in the choice of marriage partners. While those who support this practice cited tradition/custom as their main reason, those who disapprove of it stated that marriage is a private affair and should be based on mutual affection. It is important to note that while 12 or more than 35% of the male participants support this practice only 9 or 18% of the female participants support it. This could mean that men are more likely to support this practice because it subjugates women to male dominance. It is also important to note that 11 or more than 64% of the participants who were 40 years of age or older at the time of the study were men. It could therefore be argued that men are more likely to support the involvement of other people in the choice of marital partners because through this practice they get to marry young women who are sometime, young enough to be their daughters. From the above, it could be argued that the high incidence of abuse among the participants is partly a function of the age difference between husbands and wives because as Dobash and Dobash (1998: 219) have pointed out, a young wife is more likely to be abused or even killed by her husband if he is much older than she is.

Also, marriages in Nigeria involve the payment of dowries or bride prices by the groom to the family of the bride (Okereke 1991). The traditional wisdom behind the payment of bride prices is to strengthen the bond between the couple and to challenge them to make the marriage work (pp. 94-95). But as the Womens International Network (1998) points out, economic austerity has made this custom obsolete because young girls are forced into early marriages to men twice their age by their parents and relatives who may need the bride amount to take care of other family problems (p. 12). From the above, it could be said that the higher the bride price, the more indebted the brides family is to the groom and the less likely her family will be to support her if she wants to leave him even when abuse exists, because if she leaves, her family would be expected to return the bride price. This indebtedness of the family of the bride to the groom, therefore, is partly responsible for the occurrence of spouse abuse in Nigeria because

it forces women to remain in abusive relationships as noted below by this respondent:

He beat me all the time for many years but nobody will listen to me. After I had a miscarriage three years ago due to him beating me, I wanted to leave him but my parents refused because he paid a big bride price to them and he is nice to them. If I can pay back this money, I will leave him.

**TABLE 6: Prevention of Spouse Abuse**

**What would you do to prevent future abuse against you?**

<b>Strategy to prevent abuse</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1. Do what he says	50	100%
2. Let him do whatever he wants	47	94%
3. Get family involved	44	88%
4. Fight back	11	22%
5. Leave him	7	14%
6. Get him arrested	4	8%

As this table indicates, all 50 female respondents stated that by doing what their husbands want them to do physical violence could be avoided whereas 47 or 94% stated that letting their husbands do whatever they want will keep conflict at a minimum. If abuses start, 44 or 88% of the female participants stated that the way to prevent further violence is to get other family members involved by first complaining to the oldest male in the compound or to another close male relative who will advise the couple. If the abuse continues, other close relatives could be informed and the abuser could be fined. This informal process is the only means of settling domestic issues (including spouse abuse) that is approved by local customs. Most of those who feel that abuse could be reduced by being submissive, loyal, and obedient to their husbands stated that it is traditionally expected that they do so and believe that marriage is a family affair and as such, family problems (including spouse abuse) should be handled within the family. One idea implicit in this belief is the assumption that the abuse will stop, but as Gelles (1979); Lloyd (1990); Herbert, Silver, and Ellard (1991); and Browne and Herbert (1997) have pointed out, being passive in an abusive relationship does not end the abuse but has the propensity of increasing its frequency and severity.

Further, it is interesting to note that only 4 or 8% of the women in the study felt that incidents of abuse should be reported to the police. In other words, 46 or 92% said they would not report incidents of abuse to the police because: 1. The police would not or could do anything about the abuse. 2. The issue would eventually be withdrawn by his family and settled according to local customs. 3. Family issues (including spouse abuse) are outside the jurisdiction of the police. 4. Fear of retaliation by their husbands, family, and/or other relatives. 5. Reporting family matters to the police is against tradition. 6. Concern for the long term consequences of such action on the perpetrator and/or the family. Not only that, the police in Nigeria are reluctant to get involved in family issues. This unwillingness partly stems from the fact that it is generally believed that familial matters are best settled according to local customs. One of the female participants said that this idea is so widely accepted that “even when the incident is reported to the police, another member of the family, usually another male, can still go and withdraw the complaint because it is believed that such issues are best settled according to tradition.” This belief and practice coupled with the fact that the Nigerian Penal Code permits husbands to use physical means to chastise their wives partly explains police reluctance to get involved in familial conflicts except where there is grievous harm, which is defined as loss of sight, hearing, power of speech, facial disfigurement or other life-endangering injuries (Womens International Network p. 13). It is also important to note that

only 11 or 22% of the female participants said the way to prevent abuse by their husbands is to fight back whereas only 7 or 14% said they will leave the abuser. This unwillingness to fight back or to leave the abuser points to the economic discrimination experienced by women in Nigeria.

When the male participants were asked how domestic violence could be prevented, they stated that the women should: 1. Do what they are told. 2. Know their roles. 3. Respect their husbands. 4. Know and follow customs and tradition. 5. Not talk back at their husbands. These answers indicate that the men expect total obedience and respect from their wives including not questioning whatever they do. In Nigeria, women are socialized to be submissive to their husbands. This practice subjugates women to the authority of their husbands and since this custom favors men, they are more likely to invoke its tenets whenever necessary.

### **Conclusion**

This study indicates that physical spouse abuse is rampant in Nigeria and that women are the primary victims. The incidence of abuse is highest among those who get married before their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday and those who have more than two minor children. It also reveals that unemployed housewives who have a high school diploma or less education and families that earn less than 40,000 Naira (\$400.00 at the time data was collected) annually experience a higher incidence of abuse than married women who are employed, college educated, or live in households that earn 40,000 Naira or more a year. Information collected from the two female participants who were in polygynous marriages suggests that women in these relationships experience less incidence of physical spouse abuse but are more likely to experience economic, emotional, sexual, and/or mental abuse than those in monogamous marriages. Further, the highly patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society encourages men to dominate, control, and even exploit women; marriage in Nigeria gives men authority over their wives and the right to expect domestic service, sexual exclusivity, and absolute obedience and control. It can therefore be argued that the high incidence of abuse against women in Nigeria is a product of the traditional value system, the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society, and the result of a breakdown in the social and economic infrastructure of the entire society rather than an indication of individual pathology.

### **Suggestions**

With reference to the above, the author suggests that the cultural norms that subjugate women to the authority of their husbands and the customary and religious beliefs and practices that limit women's rights to own or inherit property or that otherwise limit what women can or cannot do should be abandoned. The author would also like to point out that sex-role socialization exacerbates violence against women. Women should be socialized to be independent and to pursue higher education, professional careers, and paid employment. The author believes that if the economic conditions of women in Nigeria are improved, women-directed violence would decrease because some of the female participants stated that they stayed in abusive relationships because there is widespread discrimination against them in employment and that divorcees are stigmatized and treated like social outcasts. As a result of such attitude toward divorcees, the rate of remarriage is much higher for men than for women. The author also proposes that marriage should be a matter of individual choice for both men and women and that the cultural norms, values, and practices that guide marriage and family relationships as well as the practice of allowing young girls to get into early marriages should be changed.

Further, this study reveals that some of the customs governing the marriage process including the payment of bride price have become problematic and need to be abandoned because inability to repay such bride price is forcing women to remain in abusive marriages. Finally, the author suggests



that the policy of governmental noninterference in familial matters be replaced with a law that would provide for a warrantless, probable cause arrest, prosecution, conviction, and punishment of perpetrators of spouse abuse. Such a law should also provide for shelters for abused women and spell out what the police and the judicial system should do when cases of abuse are brought to the attention of the criminal justice system. The new law should also make it illegal for any agency or individual to discriminate against a potential employee on the basis of sex, religion, or creed. Additionally, the government should launch a campaign against domestic violence in general and encourage the public to report incidents of such violence to the police. The author believes that once the public is sensitized to the effects of family violence on the members of the family and society in general, attitudes toward this behavior would begin to change because as Felson and Tedeschi (1993: 210) state: A domestic violence (or spouse abuse) does not occur unless the social context in which family members find themselves encourages or allows it.

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## STUDENT PIDGIN (SP): THE LANGUAGE OF THE EDUCATED MALE ELITE

*Kari Dako*

### Introduction

This essay is about a language that apparently does not exist. It was spawned about thirty years ago and has developed into an extended pidgin, which will be referred to as Student Pidgin (SP), and which is spoken by male university students in Ghana's five universities and used nearly exclusively for their out-of-classroom communicative needs. Outside the educational institutions, WAP<sup>1</sup> or GhaPE<sup>2</sup> (Magnus Huber's term) plays a very minor role in Ghana's linguistic repertoire. SP is a WAP and therefore a variety of GhaPE. Huber's suggestion that it be regarded as the acrolectal manifestation of GhaPE will be accepted for the purposes of this paper – especially since it exhibits the same distinct features as GhaPE where the latter differs from the other WAPs. The completive *don*, for example, is not found in GhaPE nor in SP, nor is the copulative *na* found in either. In this paper GhaPE refers to pidgin that is spoken in town as opposed to SP, which is spoken primarily by male students on the secondary and tertiary campuses and also by the male products of these institutions (Dako: 1999).

When the census was taken in Ghana in 2000, questions concerning 'language', i.e. L1(s) and additional languages spoken, were included. This was the first time information on language had been sought in a census in Ghana since 1960. Yet when students were subsequently asked whether they had given Pidgin as one of their languages, the response was an embarrassed NO. Several students could tell, however, that they had actually spoken Pidgin with the census officials who interviewed them. It can be estimated that possibly 80 – 90 % of Ghanaian males below the age of 50 with secondary or tertiary education speak a code which they refer to as Pidgin and which this paper refers to as SP. This pidgin marks itself as different from GhaPE.

### The Ghanaian Language Scene

The language scene in Ghana is the typical post-colonial New English Second Language scenario, in which English is the official language. In addition, according to how one defines a language or which criteria one uses to isolate a language, it is generally estimated that there are between 42-55 languages in Ghana. Six of these are given air time in the public broadcasting system and are used in official, written communications: Akan, Ewe, Ga, Dagbani, Hausa and Nzema. Of these, two can be described as lingua francas: Twi (Akan) and Hausa. It has unfortunately not been possible to elicit any information from the Statistical Service who conducted the 2000 census on language distribution in Ghana. The 1960 figures are thus the only ones available, but it can be assumed that the influence of Hausa has declined considerably over the last decades due to increased access to education (Hausa is associated with illiterate segments of the population), the general economic decline, and the 1969 Aliens Compliance Order that expelled large numbers of non-Ghanaians who did not have the requisite residence papers.<sup>3</sup> It can also be assumed that more than 64% (1960 figure) of Ghanaians can use an Akan language.

Contrary to the situation in other Anglophone West African countries such as Nigeria or Cameroon, Pidgin has never played any significant role in the linguistic repertoire of Ghana. Magnus Huber's work on what he calls GhaPE is the first in-depth study of Pidgin in Ghana.

Pidgin has always been considered an alien phenomenon that came with immigrants from predominantly Liberia (Kru Brofo [Kru English]) and Nigeria (Abongo Brofo [Barracks Pidgin]), and Pidgin as spoken by the Nsumfo (People of the Water) – Nigerians who were traders in Ghana up till 1969 (Aliens Compliance Order) and hailed predominantly from the riverine areas of Nigeria, e.g. Itsekiri, Urhobo and Ijaw, and more recently (1982), the million+ Ghanaians expelled from Nigeria.<sup>4</sup> Whatever its origins, and this discussion will not be entered into here, Pidgin has always been a low prestige, marginal language associated with illiteracy and the deprived multi-ethnic urban areas of the coastal towns. Today GhaPE is losing out to Twi, as Twi is assuming an increasingly important role as the lingua franca of Ghana.

### The Emergence of Student Pidgin

In the late 1960s and the early 1970s,<sup>5</sup> a pidgin began to be heard in the high-prestige multi-ethnic coastal secondary schools and from there followed its speakers into the tertiary institutions. It emerged partly as a reaction against the predominance of English in the school system, a 'foreign' language that was no longer adequately taught, a language the students could not identify with and a language whose informal registers the students did not master. It was also a reflection of acculturation. By being isolated in boarding schools and later university campuses, removed from traditional, i.e. family and cultural influences, the students assumed behavioural aspects of 'marginal-deviant groups' (Stoller 1979: 72). These groups included the military as described below and also the more aggressive behavioural tendencies of their urban colleagues. The phenomenon of SP started in the prestigious, coastal male secondary schools, and a considerable percentage of the pupils in these schools came from the political/ administrative upper middle class that was in formation in the immediate post-independence years. In addition, in the late 1960s and again in the early 1970s, Ghana was under military rule. Soldiers were very visible on the streets, they openly and aggressively displayed their power, *and they spoke Pidgin*. Student Pidgin developed in this environment. The code connoted power, 'macho' behaviour, (Dadzie (1985) and also Goyvaerts (1998) on the Swahili hybrid Indoubil), and eluded performance pressure. According to Tawiah (1998), out of 50 males randomly selected from the University of Ghana's Halls of Residence, 47 said they spoke pidgin, i.e. SP. Of the 3 respondents who claimed not to speak pidgin, 2 were older 'mature' students who had not gone through the normal secondary education system and had thus not been in an environment where SP was spoken. The third was a 'born again' Christian who claimed he could not speak it and who expressed the view that SP deflected from serious academic studies; he considered it a purposeless frivolity. Out of 50 female students randomly selected, only 3 admitted knowledge of SP. Student Pidgin is thus gender specific (Dako 1999).

### What is SP?

Defining Student Pidgin is problematic.

- First of all, the majority of students in Ghanaian universities have at least two languages in common: Standard English, and it is estimated that between 80-90% also have knowledge of Twi. Students of the same ethnic group use SP when speaking to each other. SP did not therefore evolve from a communicative need, even though a Ghanaian university is a melting pot of so to speak all ethnic groups in the country.
- SP is also a language of neutrality, for there is no doubt that there is some uneasiness in the country about what at times is referred to as 'Akan linguistic imperialism'.
- Among male students Twi is also perceived as polite and decorous and therefore not a suitable vehicle for the discourse of male peer groups.
- P also reflects a dilemma of identity. Both Forson and Huber mention SP's function as peer group cohesive.
- SP is today an important lingua franca and a social leveller.

- SP is definitely sociolectal in nature, see also Blommert and Gysels, (1990) on Campus Kiswahili. It marks itself as distinct from GhaPE (as spoken in town). The speaker is recognised as having attended secondary school or higher institutions of learning.
- Magnus Huber suggests a cline of Pidgin in Ghana – a post-basic continuum and views SP as the acrolectal manifestation.
- No direct link from Kru Brofo or Abongo Brofo to Student Pidgin has been established.

Where did it come from? Information gleaned from discussion with colleagues who were in secondary school in the late 60s and early 70s suggests that SP started as an attempt at reproduction of Pidgin as they heard it in town – especially from the soldiers. SP in its incipient stage could therefore be considered ‘a pidgin sound-alike’. It was from the beginning a daring attempt at deviancy – a flouting of the school rules that prohibited the use of local languages. It then stabilised over the years as Pidgin gained prominence at every coup juncture: 1972, 1979, 1981 and then finally from the expelled illegal emigrants from Nigeria in 1983.

### Lexis

1. SP marks itself as different from GhaPE by not using distinctive Pidgin vocabulary:

GhaPE: pikin	SP: kiddi
GhaPE: sabe	SP: know
GhaPE: thief (v)	SP: steal

2. Because speakers of SP can draw on other common languages to supplement their vocabulary and also their structures, SP exhibits a different vocabulary from GhaPE, and code switching is much more noticeable, embedding both SE and (predominantly) Twi and Ga vocabulary and structures.<sup>6</sup> Singler (1983) argues that the more homogeneous the substratal, the more noticeable its influence. Yet SP falls within the categorisation WAP and the same can thus be said of SP as Givon (1979:12) said of Krio, “The bulk of the vocabulary comes from English. But the bulk of grammar is unmistakably Kwa.”

### Code Switching

The following conversation taken from Nettey (2001: 37-38) reproduces a conversation that switches between SP, Ga, Fanti and SE:<sup>7</sup>

[Key: SP= italics, Ga: italics underlined, SE: bold, Fanti: bold italics]

- A: *Jú brɔ́dás, jú hé wat de go ɔn fɔ de skúɔl insáid?*  
You brothers, have you heard what is going on in the school?
- B: *Wát bi dát?* What is it?
- C: *Álì Bába im mata?* Ali Baba’s case?
- A: *Jɛ – ba de mã nó trai.* Yes, but that is a bad thing that he did.
- A: *Asɔmua: júɔ ní.*  
Apparently [English loanward <assume> in Ga] he is a thief).
- C: *Bɛ dané: kɔjɔ kɛɔ?* Doesn’t Kojo always say so?
- A: **But** *ené lɛ: bad.* But this is bad.

- A: *Ba ju no go tok som fo ju man?*  
But are you not going to defend your friend?
- B: *Wat a get tok? If i go sti:l den i bi fulif boy.*  
What have I got to say? If what he wants to do is steal, then he is a foolish boy.
- D: *Ju pipel sef wat? If Ali Baba go sti:l, wei i bi Kwame im padi, I bi Kwame go sti:l?*  
Why are you bothering him? If Ali Baba has gone to steal something and he is Kwame's friend, does this mean that Kwame is also a thief?
- D: *Nyejea jeme- jee wofee wo naanyo ni?*  
You people should get away. Isn't he a friend to all of us all?
- B: *Go wei ju – ba ma buk no fu maadzi ma mi.*  
Go away – but my book – give my thing to me (Fanti).

SE vocabulary from domains not usually associated with Pidgin and salient use of English function words are observed in the following exchange:

- A: *Ju liv in hegemony wei ju no no.*  
You live in hegemony, and you don't know it.
- B: *Wi no de tok about hegemony fo he, wi de tok about corrupt political leaders who are amassing wealth.*
- C: **See how Eli de tok som authority. Meanwhile ju de folow di:s piple on dema wild goose chase.**  
Listen to the way Eli speaks, like some authority. Meanwhile you follow these people on their wild goose chase.

## Structure

Huber (1999:276) lists several aspects where SP differs from GhaPE. (The examples used to demonstrate usage are mine)

1) Whereas in GhaPE, the possessive 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural are *dua* (*wi*) and *dea* (*dem. de*) respectively, SP, uses *wana* for the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural and *dema* for the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural possessive:

*ba wana ri:din rum i bi ekon*  
but our reading room is air-conditioned

*o:l de seim Commonwealth dema dis ting i no bi bad*  
all the same, what Commonwealth Hall is doing isn't bad.

2) The negative-completive function of *neva* is virtually non-existent in GhaP, but is a prominent feature in SP:

<i>a neva go foget</i>	I'll not forget
<i>i neva bi i sista</i>	she is definitely not his sister.

3) Whereas a genitive relationship is expressed in GhaP as N+N:

*Kofi sista*    Kofi's sister

SP has the sequence: N+Pron. +N:

*Kofi in sista*    Kofi's sister

*mumi im [i] food bi de best*                      mother's food is the best.

4) Locative constructions with *insai* and *autsai* in post NP position. This is not as prominent a feature of SP as Huber suggests. My data shows evidence of it, but my informants claim it is in fact rarely used and might be less frequent in SP than in GhaP. My data show no example of *autsai*, and my informants claim it is not used.

*if ju wan kontinju wid de English fo de sekond jea insai die I mi:ns se ju...*  
if you want to continue with English in the second year, it means that you...

*if ju wan kontinju plas English fo second jea*  
if you continue with English in your second year

*ju brodas, ju he: wat de go on fo de skul insai*  
brothers, have you heard what has happened in school?

Note: *I de de ru:m* it is in the room (no *insaid*).

5) Huber states: "the use of the copula *bi* as a topicaliser, e.g. in *som komandos bi* (police) commandos"; *bi* is not a copula here, it is an Akan post-positioned indefinite pronoun and thus a reiteration of the pronoun *som*:

*ju de pei som laik som fifti (bi bi) regulaly bi*  
you pay something like fifty regularly

*I swolow som bon bi*  
he swallowed a bone  
(Heard in SP – though probably more common in 'town'. Actually reduplication of the pronoun 'some')

6) Use of 3rd person plural *dem* (they) rather than the GhaP *dei*.

*den do dem wan, wan, wan*  
then do them one at a time.

7) Preference for *tfali* (Charlie)<sup>8</sup> [also in GhaP],

*o tfali i ha:d o:*  
Charlie – times are really hard.

8) Huber lists the following items as typical for the student variety. These need to be considered in detail:

a) *den* 'and' is used when listing persons and objects and when not very disparate things are linked:

*Ama den Abena den Kofi*  
Ama and Abena and Kofi

Otherwise *wei* is used as copula in linking longer structures. *Wei* would thus normally have been used in the following:

*i ask am den [wei] i de tel mi se de ting go bi ova su:n*  
I asked him and he told me that it was going to be over soon.

b) Huber lists *huk* as 'hold' in SP, but *huk* indicates an aggressive hold – *hold* is the common

*ai huk am*

I held him in an aggressive manner and was about to fight him

*ai si: Kofi den i huk in gel*

I saw Kofi with his arm around his girl (connotes possessiveness)

*ai si: Kofi den i hould in gel*

I saw Kofi embrace her/ hold her hand (connotes fondness)

c) In GhaPE: *plas* means 'and', whereas in SP *plas* means 'with':

*if ju wan konyinju plas lɛŋɡlɪʃ fo sekɔn je:*

if you continue with English in the second year

d) *wikit* as 'serious'; *brutal* as 'nice'; *bad* as 'good'; *ref* (rough) as 'impressive' etc.

i.e. the use of adjectival antonyms. This is typical university/ secondary school slang and does not identify SP. The tendency also found in London Jamaican and BEV.

The following features, that are typical of SP but not listed in Huber, will be added to this list:

9) Use of the Akan contrastive *die*:

*if ino bi so die I bi wi no se wi go de sufa*

if that isn't the case, we are the ones who will suffer.

10) The use of the Akan negative emphatic to suggest something inexcusable: *kura*: (at all).

*20K die I no gud kura:*

twenty thousand, isn't good at all

11) The use of the Akan post-determiner *nɔ̃* in post nominal (noun and pronoun) position:

*i bi ma buk nɔ̃*

it is my book

*i bi de haus nɔ̃ bi dat*

this is the house [I told you about]

(Note also the English pre-determiner *de* in pre-nominal position, [Det.+N+Det.] is a very common NP structure i.e. in SP)

12) Use of *nɔ̃ɔ̃* (Ga), that anticipates 'an unexpected situation' 'immediately':

*we de de rum nɔ̃ɔ̃ wei we he se sombodi de skri.m*

We were there in the room and [unexpectedly] we heard that somebody was screaming

NB: When *nɔ̃ɔ̃* appears in post-nominal position it could easily be confounded with the post-determiner *nɔ̃*, but the former is accentuated, carries high tone and the nasalised vowel is lengthened.

13) Use of the contrastive *bɛ* (Ga) or *sɛ* (Twi) (depending on the language more spoken) to introduce questions that require or expect an affirmative response. This is not considered polite in either speech community, as somehow anticipating disagreement.

*bɛ ai teik giv ju*

I gave it to you didn't I

*sɛ ai teik give ju*

(rare among non-Akan speakers)

14) Akan intensifiers: *ɔ:*, *pa:*, *a:*

*i tru ɔ: man dɛ taia ɔ:*

it is true, one gets tired.

*Yeboah i plei som ɔ:*

Yeboah did play (unfortunately without much success; sympathetic).

*i tru pa:*

it is very true

*Yeboah i plei som pa:*

Yeboah really played – and with success

*pipɛl dilei ɪ mɛridj plans pa:*

people delayed his marriage plans

*ai trai a: ba a no dɛ get am*

I put in a lot of effort but did not succeed

*Yeboah i plei som a::*

Yeboah played, but it was not so good.

15) Lower frequency of reduplication. Post intensification is preferred. If reduplication occurs it tends to involve longer sequences:

*wana PE masta i bi him, i bi him no* (Akan post-det)

it was our PE master, it was really him

*wana PE masta i hi him, i bi him nɔ:* (Ga emph)

it was our PE master, he suddenly appeared.

16) Plural noun forms tend to be kept in SP:

*postpone al ɪ programs*

postpone all his programmes

*i hav plenti hausis*

he has plenty houses



*ju brodas, ju hé wat de go ón...*  
you brothers, have you heard what is going on?

17) SP uses the pronominal determiner *de*:

*i bi laik de Linguistics Department*  
as in the case of the Linguistics Department

*de ting die dei fo do*  
the things they do!

18) Akan post-determiner *pe* 'only':

*wei I bi laik todei pe wei de go*  
they went only today

*todei sef pe wi get am*  
we only got it today.

19) More varied use of function words: both from SE and from Twi and Ga as demonstrated above and more use of structures that have been calqued from predominantly Akan and Ga.

The following examples demonstrate sequences in SP that are calqued from Twi and Ga. These would not be heard in GhaPE.

SE: Give it to me  
Twi: Fa ma me  
SP: *Teik giv me*

SE: I've had my fill  
Twi: Mâ mè  
SP: *A sàti*

SE: I am not going with you, am I?  
Twi: Se enye me ni wu na eko?  
Ga: Be jee mi ke bo yaa?  
SP: *Be i nõ bi mi den ju de gò?*

SE: It has all been broken.  
Twi: Ninyinaa ebubu  
SP: *Al brek brek*

SE: When I went today I was told.  
Twi: Me koo ene na wo kae  
SP: *A go todei wei dei tel mi*

SE: Take care of my books for me.  
Twi: Hwe me books no so ma me  
SE: *Luk ma buks top giv mi*

SE: I am in trouble  
Twi: Mi hu akyin me  
SP: *Ma bodi katsh mi*

SE: The time is 3 o'clock  
Twi: A bɔ 3 o'clock  
SP: *I nɔk 3 o'clock*

SE: You have some money with me  
Twi: Wo sika bɛ wɔ me hɔ  
SP: *Som ju moni de ma de:*

SE: They found the drugs on him  
Twi: Wo unu eduro no wo no hu  
SP: *Dei si: de dɔɛg fɔ ɛn bɔdi.*

SE: I went home to see  
Twi: Mekɔ fie hɔ kɔ hwɛ  
SP: *A gò de haus de: gò si:*

SE: She's gone to do her hair  
Twi: O kɔ ye ni ti  
SP: *I de gò do ɛn he:*

SE: I intentionally went by his house to see if Kofi was there  
Twi: Me hyɛɛ da kɔ faa Kofi fie sɛ mehu sɛ wo ho anaa  
SP: *A sheda go pas in haus si: if Kofi de de*

### Concluding Remarks

SP is today a stabilised pidgin. It exhibits structural and lexical possibilities that go far beyond GhaPE. Because it is spoken by the most influential groups in the country, it will most likely extend its influence to be spoken in more and more domains. Interestingly enough, Pidgin is never heard on any phone-in on any of Ghana's numerous FM stations. This is most likely because pidgin speakers in Ghana, the speakers of SP that is, speak SE, and would chose this code in formal discourse – other Ghanaians would chose a Ghanaian language. One does therefore hear a lot of Twi and Hausa, and in Accra, Ga, on these stations. Pidgin appears, on the other hand, to be increasingly used in advertising and public education programmes, and is for example being used in the drive against AIDS in which the young male population is targeted.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> West African Pidgin.

<sup>2</sup> Ghanaian Pidgin English.

<sup>3</sup> The Aliens' Compliance Order of 1969 expelled non-Ghanaians from neighbouring states who did not have the right residence papers and work-permits. Some expatriate families who had lived in Ghana for generations were affected.

<sup>4</sup> In 1982 Nigeria expelled all Ghanaians illegally resident in Nigeria. It is estimated that well over one million, possibly close to two million Ghanaians returned to Ghana upon this expulsion. As those were Ghanaians with relatively low levels of education, they had acquired Pidgin in Nigeria and since most of the 'returnees' congregated in urban areas, this gave the use of Pidgin an additional impetus in Ghana.

<sup>5</sup> Dadzie (1985) drawing on his experience as a pupil at St. Augustine's at Cape Coast, claims it started earlier, but this cannot be substantiated by surveys conducted among his contemporaries at this and other secondary schools.

<sup>6</sup> Even though Akan (Twi) is the largest language in Ghana today, Ga has always had a peculiar role in the schools in the country. Since it is traditionally the language of the capital, Accra, it has come to connote, on the one hand sophistication, but on the other hand male aggression. Twi, on the other hand, is associated with decorum and traditional values. It is clear from surveys that students feel they have more license for profanity when speaking Ga than would be the case with Twi. 'There are certain things you cannot say in Twi', as one student put it.

<sup>7</sup> In some cases an approximate phonetic transcription has been attempted – in others, current orthography has been used.

<sup>8</sup> Ghanaian English. *Charlie* is the appellation used by young men in informal discourse.

## PRESERVING CULTURE THROUGH NEW ARTISTIC FORMS: THE CASE OF DURO LADIPO'S FOLKLORIC THEATRE

*Foluke Ogunleye*

### Abstract

This study has asserted that art does not only exist for the mere titillation of the senses, but rather, it performs a functional role, its main objective being to affect man. The popular tradition of drama in West Africa by the traveling theatre troupes, and which they are still dominating through the television and film media, is one of the new permanent forms through which the mythical repertory is transfused with new life and vigour and stored for posterity. These forms also serve as propaganda machineries through which traditional cultural practices are disseminated to the world at large. This study examines some of Duro Ladipo's folkloric plays and how they disseminate a message of moral re-armament and cultural renaissance in 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria. The African mythical repertoires, which are important manifestations of the African culture, have been used as source materials for these plays. Newer artistic forms such as writing and television production have been used to bring the myths alive and make them available to a wider audience. Relevant themes presented in the plays include patriotism, the womanist ideal as extant in the traditional African society, the African moralistic ideal revealed through the presentation of religion as an indispensable part of the Yoruba existence, etc. Duro Ladipo's plays have sought to catch up with the dynamics of Nigerian life and have attempted to establish the relevance of the mythical repertory to the Nigerian condition.

### Introduction

In the early societies, religion, through its doctrines embodied in the myths and rituals, served as a force of socialization and social control. This is achieved through informing the people about social structure and expected social behaviour. The gods are portrayed as ever present on the periphery of human affairs to ensure compliance with moral, social, and religious laws and meting out punitive measures against rebels and defaulters. However, the pressures of modern life have eroded the moral and religious sensibilities of people, thereby culminating in a situation of anomie. The situation can however be rectified with a re-introduction of cultural and moral values. The African mythical repertory becomes useful in this respect. There is a need for a moral and cultural re-armament to prevent a total collapse of the modern world into a state of anomie worse than that experienced by Europe during the dark ages. Concerning the African myths, which are important manifestations of the African culture, Osofisan sounds a note of warning. According to him, the total disappearance of the mythical repertory is only a matter of time, if conscious efforts are not made by succeeding generations to adapt such myths into *new artistic forms* – forms that would be more permanent and relevant to modern society (Osofisan 1973: 137). The New Artistic Forms in this regard can be seen as art forms that can be used to present the mythical repertoire in a more permanent and less ephemeral structure. Such forms include the written/published form and recordings (radio, film, television, etc.). Such new forms also make the dissemination of knowledge about the mythical repertory easier. Books, tapes and film reels can be distributed widely, both locally and internationally. Also, people who would never attend live performances of the traditional presentations for various reasons would have the opportunity of enjoying such recorded versions.

The popular tradition of drama in West Africa by the traveling theatre troupes, and which they are still dominating through the television and film media, is one of the novel and permanent forms which Osofisan is advocating. Through live performances, play texts, film and television recordings, the mythical repertory is transfused with new life and vigour and stored for posterity. These forms also serve as propaganda machineries through which traditional cultural practices are disseminated to the world at large. Such plays also succeed in illustrating and simplifying the message of the myth and showing how relevant they are to modern life. According to Adedeji,

Folkloricism... explains why and how the contemporary African creative artist relates traditional beliefs, folkways and mores to present consciousness. It is seen as a lifeline of man in his dynamic relationship with the element of being and becoming (Adedeji 1985: 54).

This emphasizes the fact that the dramatist is definitely a product of his historical background as well as his current socio-political milieu. The elements and materials from his background constitute the pivot on which his work is built.

In the early days of the traveling theatre in Nigeria, the focus of many of the troupes was on the utilization of traditional folklores, consequently; they became known as folk-theatres. The idioms of their performance resemble those which are observable during traditional performances such as festivals and story-telling sessions. The myths and legends which they borrowed from are those which have grown out of the fertile cultural humus of their society. Examples of the folk theatre plays include *Moremi* and *Oba M'oro* by Duro Ladipo. According to Osofisan,

This theatre... has all the ingredients of the epic stage, with much colour, and movement and agitation... the idioms of the grandiose; we see the splendour of courts... with the brouhaha of courtiers, courtesans and musicians... the towering figure of the hero himself. The playwright takes the figures of extant legends or myths and brings them on stage, mostly to revive a tradition, identity with a glorious past and reclaim a heritage (Osofisan 1973: 354-355).

The playwright brings together traditional and cultural ideas, packaging them through the medium of African aesthetic ideals—these comprise materials which bring out the creative genius of the people. They include:

The verbal arts ( proverbs, riddles, folktales, epigrams, etc) the fine arts (carving, painting, etc). The performing arts (dancing, singing, drumming and dramatizations). These are the basis of socialization and social control. But the theatre utilizes all three categories in synthesis (Adededeji 1969: 49).

Indeed, this synthesis is manifest in the works of the folk theatre artists, both on stage and on screen. Every aspect of life in the African society is reflected within the ambience of this folk theatre performance.

### Duro Ladipo's Folk Theatre

Duro Ladipo (1931- 1978) was one of the most prolific theatre artists that Nigeria has ever produced. His forte was the promotion of the Yoruba culture. He was born into the Christian family of a catechist, but from a very early age, he cultivated the habit of following masquerades and being a very attentive member of the audience at various festival performances. This imbued him with a determination to promote the beauty of Yoruba culture and this became his focus when he turned out to be a theatre artist. His plays include, among others, *Oba Koso*, *Oba M'oro*, *Moremi*, *Ajagun Nla*, *Obatala*, *Oba W'aja* and *Oluweri*. All these plays can be described as historical plays. Ladipo cited the following as the reasons for his plays:

I wrote these plays for the following crucial reasons: first, to ensure that Yoruba folklore and traditional stories are never forgotten; secondly, to amply demonstrate the richness and uniqueness of Yoruba culture... thirdly, to ensure that the dances, the music and the splendour of Yoruba as a language never become things of the past... (Ogunbiyi 1981: 340).

His primary source of information was Samuel Johnson's significant book, *The History of the Yorubas*. After reading the history from this book, Duro Ladipo would then go to the towns and villages where the stories occurred to ascertain the veracity or otherwise of such stories and also, to source for more information. After all these, he would then interpret the stories artistically and creatively in writing his plays.

Duro Ladipo traveled widely in his short career. In 1964, he took his group to the Berlin Festival in Germany and his play won the first position at the festival. In 1965, they also performed at the Commonwealth festival in Britain, also touring in that year, Brazil, Australia and Germany. In 1973, he was at the Festival Mondial in France, in 1974, he performed at the Yoruba Festival in Zurich, in 1975, he toured Brazil again, in 1976, he performed at the Theatre Festival in the United States of America, and in 1977 he performed in Paris. He also won much acclaim both at home and abroad. He became the first African to bag the National Arts Trophy in Western Germany. He also won the Model for Outstanding Performance for *Oba Koso* at the Commonwealth Festival. At home, the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1965 awarded him the national honour, Member of the Order of the Niger (MON) in recognition of his outstanding effort in promoting Nigerian culture. In 1962, he opened a cultural center at *Osogbo* named Mbari - Mbayo. There, his first full-length play, *Oba M'oro*, was premiered. It became a very important center for cultural performances. The hallmark of Ladipo's theatre can be described as "the dexterous use of traditional musical instruments, chants and dance steps" (Ogunbiyi 1981: 339). Before his death, Duro Ladipo took up a research appointment at the Institute of African studies, at the University of Ibadan. There, he engaged in research work on Yoruba mythologies and history. He also began to explore avenues to record his works on celluloid. However, this was not to materialize before his demise in 1978. His only venture into cinematography was his participation in two feature films titled *Ajani Ogun* (the first Yoruba film) by Afrocult films and *Ija Ominira*, an adaptation of Bayo Faleti's *Omo Olokun Esin* directed by renown director, Ola Balogun. Some of his plays were however recorded by the first television station in Africa, the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV), Ibadan, later known as Nigerian Television Authority, Ibadan. Columbia Broadcasting Corporation (CBS) also recorded *Oba Koso* during Ladipo's U.S tour, and the production still enjoys quarterly revivals (Ogunbiyi 1981: 352).

### Moremi

One example of a play braided from the tradition and culture of the African universe is *Moremi* by Duro Ladipo. The play is based on the popular Ife Moremi myth. The setting of the play is pre-colonial Ile-Ife. Moremi (Ladipo 1971), the Queen of late king Oranmiyan has just been conferred with a chieftancy title in appreciation of her outstanding achievements as a trader and because of her concern for the welfare of the generality of the Ife people. The town is however going through a rough time with incessant attacks from the Igbo (a tribe from the eastern part of Nigeria) raiders. This embattled city bears an uncanny resemblance to modern day Nigeria with her diverse socio-political problems, especially the excessive incidence of armed violence. Moremi heroically surrenders herself to be captured by the Igbo invaders in order to discover the secret behind their success in war. She marries the Igbo king and tricks the diviner, Dibia, into giving her the Igbo's secret. She returns to Ife and helps her people to overcome the invaders.

## Theme

The overriding theme of the play is Patriotism. This is shown in Moremi's desire for the continued existence of Ife as a polity. She risks her life to discover the secrets of the enemies so that Ife would be able to triumph over them. This theme is of utmost relevance to modern African society, which is bedeviled by mercenaries of all sorts, and they are only interested in what they can milk from the country without giving anything in return. Moremi's selfless patriotism is a direct challenge.

Another important theme in the play is the celebration of *womanhood*, putting paid to the fallacious misconception that the African woman is nothing but a second class citizen in society, a slave to her husband and nothing better than a baby-making machine. We see Moremi as a force to be reckoned with on the economic front as she mobilizes the women to ensure better sales in the market. Also, we see the celebration of *motherhood* in her desire to ensure that the *children* of Ife are no longer taken into captivity. To achieve this, she selflessly gives up her only son for the good of the general populace. This emphasizes the fact that the womanist ideal is not a strange phenomenon in the traditional African society.

The play also stresses the human dependence upon the gods in their daily activities. Moremi and her women pray to the gods of the market for good sales, Moremi depends on Esinmirin (the river goddess) for guidance and protection. Also, *Oba Igbo* (The Igbo King) depends on his *Dibia* (Diviner) to reveal the future and what the gods are saying. So, the gods are presented as an indispensable part of the Yoruba existence.

## Characterization

The most outstanding character in the play is Moremi. On an extra-textual level, Moremi is a Yoruba goddess but on the textual level, we see her apotheosis, the process of her becoming a goddess. In the Yoruba setting, when great heroes and heroines die, they become deified so that their great deeds would continuously be remembered and appreciated. In the television version, the difference between Moremi and all other women in the play is first established through her costumes and hair-do. She is an *Olori* (Queen) and the head of Ife Women, so she dresses in brightly coloured traditional woven materials, while the other women wear more subdued colours. On formal occasions, she wears a head-tie while the other women's head remain bare. When she leaves her hair uncovered, she has an elaborate hair-do, woven with beads while the other women's hair-do is the simple traditional *suku*.

The most striking element of her character is her intense patriotism. The first sign of this is seen when the Ooni and his chiefs are looking for a woman to be the head of the women. The choice unanimously falls on Moremi because of her past activities in the town. Her crowning efforts at patriotism are reflected in her willingness to go to Igboland as a slave, consenting to marry the Igbo king whom she does not love and finally, giving her only son, Oluorogbo as a sacrifice for the redemption of Ife. She puts aside personal feelings and inconveniences to save the town of Ile-Ife from extinction.

Moremi is also portrayed as a courageous woman who shows her toughness in the face of male inertia. The Ooni and his chiefs were wining and dining while the first Igbo attack in the play occurs. Though, Moremi is a new chief, she entertains no fear or timidity in the presence of the Ooni and senior chiefs. She storms into the palace and with heavy sarcasm and annoyance shouts:

You are dancing, you are happy and drinking. War has taken all Ife into captivity...The world is in ruins, in your presence and you say it is getting better. (p.12)

She does not fear that she may be relieved of her post. Her courage is also seen in her daring to wait for the Igbo invaders. They ask her how she dares to wait for them, but she expresses her defiance by insulting them, not caring whether she would be killed. When she tells the state council about her plan, she admits that death is a possibility on her mission, but remains undaunted. She says,

When I go, don't mourn for me. Take care of my only son, Oluorogbo. This is enough for me, even if I do not return. Whoever leaves a child on earth is the one that is the real parent. (p.16)

Her only concern is for her son to be properly taken care of. Moremi is also described as one of the few "old women" who has spiritual authority to speak with the goddess. We however have every cause to believe that Moremi is not an old woman. It is a combination of her youth and beauty that attracts Oba Igbo to her. So, hers must be an exceptional case of spiritual ability and courage. When she goes to give her son to Esinmirin, all the other town people do not have the courage to go near the river, they stand a long way off. Moremi loves to praise herself as a courageous woman. She chants her own praise many times in the play, "I, Moremi Ajaroro (lover of war). I prepare for war when others prepare for dance". This shows her courageous nature and her love for intrigues. Moremi is also well versed in the art of blackmail. She blackmails the Ooni and chiefs to support her suicidal but patriotic mission. She asks them what the difference between a man and a woman is and that if they as men have failed to protect Ife, she as a woman should be given a chance to try (pp. 16-17). She also blackmails the Dibia when, like the biblical Portipha she threatens to accuse him of attempted rape if he refuses to give her the Igbo's magic formula.

Moremi possesses a very strong sense of purpose, which manifests in her attitude that 'the end justifies the means'. During the Edi festival (the festival in honour of Moremi) in Ile-Ife in 1986, a court attendant (Emese) described Moremi as one who overcomes crisis through the use of her female organ (Afolabi 1983: 125). This results from Moremi's use of female wiles and caprices in seducing Oba Igbo and extracting valuable information from him. She also behaves in a way quite alien for an African mother in giving her only child as a sacrifice. When she was going to Igbo-land, she boasts that she has a child that will keep her memory alive, but a short while later, she gives up the same son to Esinmirin. This shows that when she makes up her mind about an issue, she allows nothing to serve as a stumbling block. Her sacrificial attitude, reflected in the forfeiture of virtue and her child, proves her undying love for her people. Consequently as far as the people are concerned, these are the attributes of a god, and she is deified so that she would continue taking care of them even after leaving the terrestrial plane.

Another important character in the play is the Dibia. Dibia is a slave carried away from Ife and who became a trusted Ifa priest for the Igbo chieftain. He even takes an Igbo name because Dibia is an Igbo word meaning 'Diviner'. He is a very faithful servitor who refuses to take the various opportunities that must have been open to him to escape and flee back to Ife. He is the custodian of all Igbo secrets and he wouldn't have divulged these secrets to Moremi if not for the fear of his master's displeasure at an allegation of attempting to rape his beloved wife. He eventually kills himself because he feels that death is better than disgrace.

Dibia is a faithful Ifa priest and this is manifest in his disclosure of what the future holds for Igbo people at the expense of his own native Ife. He warns Oba Igbo not to marry Moremi because the gods are against it. He laments in the long run, "Oh my king... what a pity, you disregard my advice and make me an instrument of your fall" (p. 38). There is however an incongruity in the portrayal of the character of Dibia. One wonders how somebody who has refused to desert his master would take the bribe of a mere bead, no matter how expensive this is, when Moremi offers it so that he would tell him the name of the last leaf necessary for the concoction that would give the Ife people victory over the Igbo. This is merely an attempt at giving a dog a bad name so as to hang it. In the television



version, Dibia actually asks for the bribe. This is not in keeping with the faithfulness earlier exhibited. This however, can be equated with current happenings on the Nigerian scene where bribery is the order of the day. Corruption is at such a high level that it has captured even international attention. The moral here is that bribery is evil and destructive. The discrepancy in the character of the Dibia in the television version might not be unconnected with the fact that the recording was made at a time when the 'bribery' problem was becoming a major concern in the Nigerian society.

In the play text, Dibia kills himself after Moremi's escape. This, according to Yoruba custom is a noble way out of a mess and so; Dibia ends his life as a honourable man. But in the television version, Moremi tries the efficacy of the magic he taught her upon him to ensure that she has not been tricked. This leads to Dibia's death. So, the textual Dibia (without the bead bribe) is a noble and faithful character, while the television version is a crook that sells his master's confidence and one feels he deserves the kind of fate that terminates his life. In both versions, his faithfulness to the gods in transmitting their message to Oba Igbo is evident. However, divulging their secrets to Moremi whether willingly or otherwise annoys the gods who allow him to die.

The character of Oba Igbo shows the effect of disobedience to the commands of the gods. He remains successful as long as he allows Dibia to be his eye and ears into the spirit world. His downfall only comes about due to his disobedience to the voice of the gods. His men's incessant and successful raids on Ife show that the gods smiled on him in his war faring career. His downfall shows the evil of moral laxity, the irresponsibility of allowing oneself to be carried away by the lust for beauty at the expense of one's duty. At the end of the day, Oba Igbo ends up ignominiously by being captured by his former inferiors in war. He lives out the rest of his days being under tutelage in an obscure quarter in Ife. This wouldn't have happened if he hadn't succumbed to the lust of the flesh. This implies that for a man to be successful, he must possess a sound respect for the moral laws of the society as constituted by the gods. Oba Igbo laments, "Moremi has betrayed me, but it is my fault, I disobeyed my gods" (p.52). This shows that the fault does not belong to the gods, but lies squarely at the feet of the undisciplined human.

### Techniques of the Play

Ladipo makes use of two main media- the stage and the electronic medium of television. Not surprisingly, his plays appear more convincing on television because of the cinematic devices utilized. Natural locations like forests, rivers, etc. lend credence to the television version of the plays, which the stage version lacks. All his plays were originally written for the stage. However, with the opportunity for audiovisual recording came the opportunity to execute the action in life-like locales. This enhanced the verisimilitude of the productions. Sound and visual effects were utilized to the utmost, e.g., thunder and lightning effects were effectively utilized in the *Oba Koso* production. However, whether presented on stage or screen, there are some basic elements that remain constant in Ladipo's plays and they shall be discussed forthwith.

One technique that runs through most of Ladipo's plays is the festival structure. The plays always open on a festive note- dancing and singing. There is a general mood of celebration in which everyone is involved. This is reminiscent of traditional African festivals. *Moremi* opens with Ife songs and praises chants of the Ooni; finally proceeding to Moremi songs. This technique is utilized to induce audience participation as obtains in live festival performances. This festival atmosphere is fostered through the use of poetic chants in praise of God, gods, heroes and heroines. It tells of their special attributes, spectacular achievements, likes, dislikes, and a lot of other laudable characteristics. Through such chants, the audiences become acquainted with such characters and are impressed or repulsed by their characteristics, depending on what the ultimate goal of the dramatist may be.

The music in the play performs various functions. It establishes the mood of the play whether *light-hearted*, as in the maidens' Moremi dance after Moremi commands that nobody should be sad after Oluorogbo's sacrifice, or *sad*, as in the scene where Moremi departs for Igbo-land, or *worship* as in the scene after Oluorogbo is sacrificed to Esinmirin. War drums are also used to herald the arrival of the Igbo, and also, during battle scenes. Music thus helps to create the appropriate dramatic and theatrical signals necessary for the various scenes. The second function of music is seen in its use as dialogue in the plays. Beier and Graham- White have described the structural progression of Ladipo's performances as lyrical rather than dramatic (Jeyifo 1981: 16). This is a result of influence from two traditions-the festival drama, where there are no spoken dialogue' Ladipo was exposed to this tradition as he followed masquerade about in his early life. The other tradition is the church cantatas and the native air opera comprised mainly of lyrical narratives. The native air opera according to Egun Clark is a type of performance where the performers stand on the stage, swaying from side to side, singing continuously to the accompaniment of drums or the organ, resembling the tradition of the English Oratorio (Clark 1979: 7). These influences are reflected in Ladipo's religious and historical drama, which have been described as operas or musical plays. This is due to his minimal use of the spoken dialogue.

We also witness the visual spectacle of swirling movement and extravagant coloration manifest in the dance, rich costumes of traditional woven clothes and beads worn by actors and actresses. Ladipo utilized the popular Agbor dancers in the premier production of *Moremi* at Osogbo in 1966. According to a critic, this performance

... enriched his drama with new dances, new rhythms and new tunes. ... Only a very skillful composer could blend the Agbor calabash horn with Igbin drums of Ife ... the first performance ... was carried off with great aplomb (A Critic 1966: 157).

This blend of the Eastern (Agbor calabash horn) and the Western (Igbin drums of Ife) parts of Nigeria is in the true spirit of nationalism. Nigeria is a pluralistic society and this plurality sparks off controversy in every sphere of national life. However, through cultural motifs inherent in performances, a fusion of culture, and a new understanding, which breed tribal tolerance is engendered. This symbiosis has seen Nigeria through a deadly civil war, and despite all odds, Nigeria today still remains one polity of diverse ethnic groups. Cultural performances continue to be used as fora for emphasizing this unity in diversity.

Costumes are also used to create appropriate effects, both on the natural and symbolic levels. This is utilized to the utmost in the television version. For instance, the Oba Igbo wears the traditional costume of the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria- George wrapper round his waist and draped over one shoulder, he sports a feathered headpiece; he also carries an ostrich feather fan to show his royal status. The Igbo warriors wear raffia outfits. Some of them are masked while others paint their faces with chalk and charcoal. This is to instill terror into the hearts of the opponents and make them believe they are spirit beings. The Dibia is dressed in Orunmila's favorite colour- the indigo- dark traditional woven material. This is only a large wrapper, which goes over one shoulder and leaves the other bare. He wears the floppy earned traditional cap, (*abeti aja*). This emphasizes the ascetic life of the true Ifa priest. According to Ogundeji,

The colour of the garment and the simplicity of the dressing are meta-symbolic of the deep knowledge, sagacity and simplicity of Orunmila (Ogundeji 1982: 13).

Other paraphernalia of office that sets him out as a diviner are his *opele*, the divining chain, and his *apo ifa*, the bag in which he keeps other accoutrements of his trade. At the beginning of the play, Oluorogbo wears a *dansiki* (jumper), and a pair of trousers made of high quality woven traditional materials. He also holds a horsetail, these signifies that he is a high- born prince. However, in the

sacrifice scene, he wears a skirt made of 'tie and die' material. This is to show how he has been humble from his princely status to a mere servant for the goddess.

### The 'Deus Ex Machina' Factor

Boughedir has worked out some principal tendencies of the African film, one of which is the cultural tendency. Films in this category seek a cultural re-evaluation. According to him,

In these films, it is not a question of idealizing folklore but of restoring with the greatest authenticity the way of life and thought of the African popular masses. Nor is it a question of producing this description with complacency or paternalism. Among the film makers of this tendency, the critique of ill-fated tradition is often accompanied by a truly accurate gauging of the actual aspirations of these popular masses (Ekwuazi 1991: 58).

These sentiments are clearly evident in many Nigerian films. Examples are, *Efunsetan Aniwura*, *Aye*, *Jaiyesinmi*, *Ija-Ominira* and a host of others. These films contribute their own quota in helping to maintain the cultural and moral equilibrium within the society. It endeavours to raise collective consciousness in the areas of social, cultural, economic and political problems (Okome 1993: 71).

In the early days of the European theatre, there was a phenomenon known as the *deus ex machina* whereby technical contraptions would be used to bring, as it were, a 'god' from heaven to solve knotty problems that may defy human solutions. This, in a way, is escapism. The best approach in a society like ours is a theatre that proffers empirical solutions. However, the folk theatre and film seem to thrive on the metaphysical, with the implication that human beings are mere pawns in the hands of supernatural beings without any power to determine their destiny in life. For example, in *Aye* and *Jaiyesinmi*, the battle is between the evil forces, the witches, and the benevolent power of the priest, Osetura. Pragmatic solutions cannot be arrived at in such a setting where the battle has to be fought and won on the extra-terrestrial level. If the 'metaphysical' continues to be the major preoccupation of our folk theatre and film, it will definitely not be to an advantage, rather, it will be to the detriment of our folk theatre and its ideological evaluation. According to Osundare,

One of the flaws the problem of presenting the supernatural cinematographically... is (the) pandering to the clamorous but misguided call for the exotic in culture, a facile glamorization of our disappearing past. The Nigerian film has yet to catch up with the dynamics of Nigerian life and establish its relevance to the Nigerian condition (Okome 1993: 72).

This indeed is a failing of the folk theatre tradition. It is not enough to show elements of our tradition and happenings of a glorious or inglorious past. There is a need to relate such to present society. Culture is dynamic. Any attempt to maintain an ambiguous, romantic and moribund romanticism and rigidity, especially in the area of portrayal of metaphysical materials will result in nothing but monotony and ridiculous predictability. Modern society will not forever be bamboozled by 'deus ex machina' resolutions, hence the need to offer of suggestions that will move society forward.

The area of signification of the folk theatre and film cover the whole vista of culture- the thematic concern, dialogue, action, music, costumes, make-up, etc. However, according to Okome, the folk theatre and cinema scene is yet to be associated with any firm socio-political ideology, which can be utilized for the re-orientation of its target audience. He however stresses that this does not mean that these works are totally devoid of any ideological base. He supports this assertion with the fact that the simple moralistic stories of *Ayanmo* and *Jaiyesinmi*, both made by Hubert Ogunde, carry significant levels of ideological awareness. Be that as it may, the ideological content should not be

merely perfunctory; there should be a concerted purpose and design to it. The emphasis should not be on mere escapist and illusionist entertainment.

### Conclusion

This study has asserted that art does not only exist for the mere titillation of the senses, but rather, it performs a functional role, its main objective being to affect man. This corroborates Ermash's position that art's purpose is not just to accumulate observation, but rather, art cognizes life with intent of influencing man (Uji 1989: 437). When art influences a man, it also affects society because society is made up of individuals. Goodlad has expressed that there are three principal features of the sociological theme in drama. Firstly, the plays inform the audience about social structure and moral rules, which are necessary for the smooth running of the society. Also, such plays express emotions through social arguments on issues where individual desires clash with the good of the society. Lastly, conflicts present in real life are presented in the plays so that the audience may learn from the way such conflicts are resolved (Goodlad 1971: 179). We shall conclude by reiterating Sekou Toure's position that, there is no place outside of the fight for the artist or for the intellectual who is both himself concerned with and completely at one with the people in the great battle of Africa and suffering humanity (Sekou 1986). Art and the artist will continue to be indispensably relevant in the preservation of our culture and our society.

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## BOOK REVIEW

S.B. AHMAD, *Narrator as Interpreter: Stability and Variation in Hausa Tales*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited (2002) paper back, 249 pages. ISBN 9780291032. Distributed by African Book Collective Ltd. Price: £14.95 / \$24.95.

West African fictional narratives, often referred to as folktales, have featured in many an anthology, some dating from the nineteenth century. One of the most well known collections of Hausa tales is Rattray's 1913 omnibus collection of *Hausa Folk-lore, Customs, Proverbs, etc., collected and transliterated with English Translations and Notes*. The translation of these tales has been further subjected to particular editorial bias. Rattray in his introduction was concerned that some of the language in which the stories were originally told was not fit for nursery children. This kind of bias has persisted, as versions of traditional tales are more and more frequently being rendered as written texts for children. An interesting manifestation of this phenomenon is the insistence that there shall be a moral at the end of the tale, even though many tales end with some ambiguity within the indigenous tradition.

Thus, while Ananse, Gizo, and Ijapa (the Akan, Hausa, and Yoruba trickster figures respectively) may have become well known in West Africa and around the world, scholars interested in tales have recognized that there is far more to the tale than one particular version of the plot and that the traditional fictional narrative exists within the complex context of its telling. A range of interesting approaches have been taken. Many of them involve the identification of the narrator, details about the audience and their participation in the story telling event, the retention of the narrators' words even in translation as well as the provision of the original language version of the text. The contributions of Finnegan, Kilson, Kropp Dakubu, Pepper Clark, Okpewho, Owusu Sarpong, Yahaya and Yankah to scholarship on traditional fictional narrative in West Africa is notable in this regard.

S.B. Ahmad's work is an important addition to the above scholarly efforts. Of Hausa origin himself, he offers important insights from within the culture. He reminds us that unlike other cultures, Hausa society, Islamized since the fourteenth century does not accord *tatsuniya* a high status as an art form. It has essentially been relegated to the realms of the irreligious, only fit for the privacy of the home and the flighty entertainment of women and children. However through his study of one hundred and fifty tales and the context of their telling, he reveals that narration actually remains an art form of some complexity, particularly through the agency of the narrators.

Though essentially interested in the important phenomenon of stability and variation, the author provides a comprehensive background to the nature of the Hausa fictional narrative, its status and the tale-telling process. Two interesting features of the introduction to the book are the brief bio-data of the narrators involved in the study and the literature review. There are two 'house wives' (one literate and in a monogamous relationship), a teenager, a mature university student and a professional performer. The care taken by Ahmad in the selection of performers yields a fascinating selection of tales revealed in the ensuing chapters of the book and a convincing exposé on his main area of interest, being variation and stability.

By the time one gets through the brief literature review on Hausa tales, the importance of *Narrator and Interpreter* as a published text becomes quite patent, for, although there are some interesting studies almost all of them are unpublished endeavors prepared in pursuit of academic laurels.

Chapters five and six carry the main thrust of Ahmad's thesis. They are however preceded by three chapters in which he provides first a social context for tale telling in Hausa society,

followed by a thematic and then a structural classification of these tales. Chapter five concentrates on the application of the thematic and structural analyses to the notions of stability and variation. By comparing different versions of particular tales, the author shows that tales with apparently different characters and scenarios may have the same underlying structure and vice versa. He also amply demonstrates how both the Islamic and colonial experiences of Hausa society have introduced elements of variability into tales told in that society.

In chapter six, Ahmad moves on to demonstrate the many subtle ways in which the performer's personality and life trajectory can shape each tale and make it unique. To establish his case, he provides a background to the telling of a tale by each narrator, followed by a summary of the tale and an analysis of his/her narrative techniques.

Now, a few remarks about the organization of the book. Each chapter is divided into distinct sections and ends with helpful concluding remarks. It is sometimes difficult, however to follow the logic for placing certain pieces of information and analysis. Section 1.5.1 which highlights introductory and closing formulae, takes away from the fascinating introduction of the narrators. There is also that ever so slight whiff of an academic thesis about the text which this book could have easily done without. Table 1 on page 31 is a case in point, particularly because the classification criteria are reproduced uncritically by Ahmad even though the very thrust of his book indicates that these criteria have been superseded by a more trenchant analysis.

While summaries of tales are provided as appropriate, within the body of the book, the appendixes contain a delightful collection of twenty Hausa tales in both English and the original Hausa, presented with useful contextual information about the narrator and audience. The challenges posed by translation are nonetheless present. The language in which the stories are narrated is vibrant and organic. There is a tantalizing lyricism to the narrative which comes across graphically even for non Hausa speakers and reminds one of what one is missing in translation. Ahmad's translations are more literal and functional than literary. In one case, confronted with the ribald language in which some of the dialogue is rendered, he retreats into the footnotes to provide the literal translation. Thus, while he explains in footnote 13 that the narrator uses the abusive term *bura uba* - 'the penis of your father' liberally in the story 'The World is but a Well', he considers it 'gutter language' and substitutes the insipid 'you idiot' in the text. The moral of the tale? Thank God for footnotes.

The value of the book would also have been greatly enhanced by an updated bibliography featuring more recent references. For comparative purposes, studies and publications by other African folk tale scholars such as Wanjuki Warimu and Ciaruni Chesaina of Kenya or Kwesi Yankah of Ghana for example, taken in conjunction to Yahaya's reflections are likely to offer the reader an idea of the discourse that is developing on the continent around the changing shape of the art of story telling.

Clearly, there are far too few book-length scholarly publications about West African fictional narratives by indigenous scholars. *Narrator as Interpreter* by S.B. Ahmad contributes to contemporary debate around issues not only specifically in the area of narrative but also more broadly around issues relevant contemporary issues such as stability and change in Africa. It is worth repeating however that the book contains a real treasury of tales that should be a true delight to read.

Esi Sutherland-Addy

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