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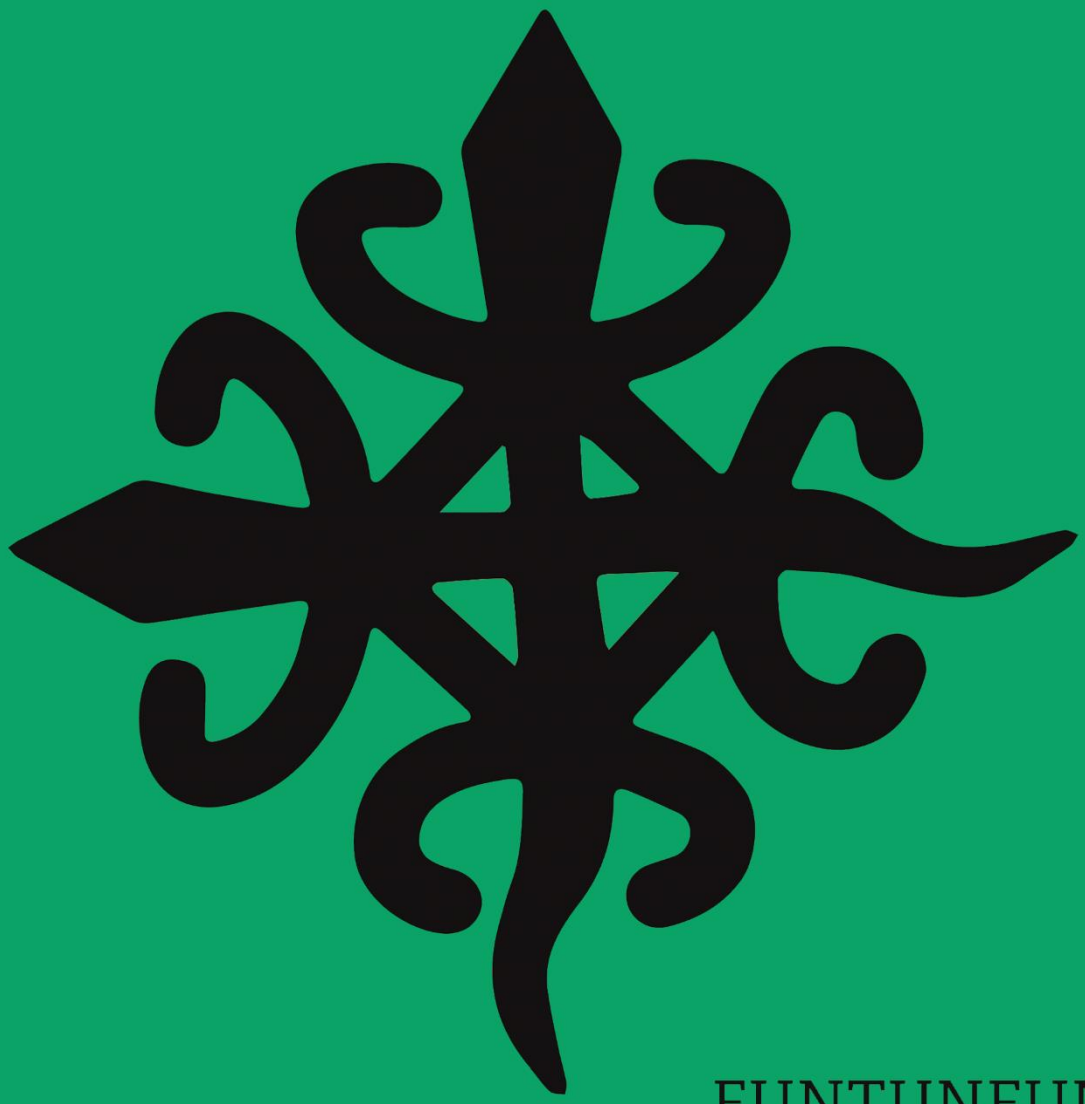

FUNTUNFUNEFU
DENKYEMFUNEFU
unity in diversity

Moja
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Issue Contents

Moja's Adinkra Symbology

FUNTUNFUNEFU-DENKYEMFUNEFU

unity in diversity

MATE MASIE

wisdom and knowledge

Moja is a publication of UNC Asheville's digital publishing program at D. Hiden Ramsey Library.

This third edition includes work by the following scholars and community activists:

- TREY ADCOCK, Ph.D. — *UNC Asheville*
- AMEENA BATADA, Dr.P.H. — *UNC Asheville*
- JEREMIAS ZUNGUZE, Ph.D. — *UNC Asheville*
- AGYA BOAKYE-BOATEN, Ph.D. — *UNC Asheville*
- TAVENGWA GWEKWERERE, Ph.D. — *California State University, Los Angeles*
- SHINGI MAVIMA, Ph.D. — *University of Toledo*
- JIDE AJIDAHUN, Ph.D . — *Adekunle Ajasin University*
- KIMANI NEHUSI, Ph.D. — *Temple University*

We welcome your responses and look forward to your future submissions.

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Moja
An Interdisciplinary Journal of Africana Studies
December 2022 – Volume 3 Issue 1

Introduction

Jeremias Zunguze
Africana Studies, University of North Carolina Asheville

The Fall 2022 issue of *Moja* focuses on the critique of Black (African and African diaspora) humanism. Today, Black humanism, particularly if we define humanism as a value system that prioritizes the well-being of human beings, continues to be complicated by uncertainty, disagreements, and dreams deferred. Although Africans and people of African descent have long struggled to bring about a value system aimed at prioritizing the well-being of Black humanity and humanism, the actualization of these projects, concretely speaking, seem yet to be altogether realized. The synergy of value systems such as decolonization, *ujamaa*, *ubuntu*, communalism, Pan-Africanism, and the civil rights movements–still seem like lofty ideals and promises not yet entirely fulfilled, though they continue to live in the hearts and minds of older generations, in the demands of younger generations, and in the syllabi of African and African diaspora studies in academia. What happened between then–the inception of these values/projects–and now–the consolidation of neoliberalism? Is Black humanism accommodating itself within the house of neoliberalism? What is the future of Black humanism? This issue of *Moja* seeks to respond to some of these questions, mostly critiquing Eurocentrism and the legacies and practices of colonialism by centering decolonization, postcolonialism, Pan-Africanism, and Afrocentrism.

"Decolonial Musings: a conversation with Drs. Trey Adcock, Ameena Batada, Agya Boakye-Boaten, and Jeremias Zunguze" features a conversation on decolonization between fellow academics of color: University of North Carolina Asheville's faculty, Trey Adcock, Ameena Batada, Agya Boakye-Boaten, Jeremias Zunguze, and California State University Los Angeles's Tavengwa Gwekwerere. This discussion stems from the premise that Africans, people of African descent, and Indigenous peoples continue to live under coloniality or the legacies and practices of colonialism–including the control of the economy, polity, knowledge, and subjectivity–founded on race as the organizing principle (Quijano & Ennis, 2000, pp. 533-580; Mignolo, 2011, pp. 8-9). The end of colonialism and slavery in Africa, the Americas, and the Caribbean did not mean the end of colonial legacies and practices in contemporary humanism and knowledge among formerly colonized peoples. As such, Adcock, Batada, Boakye-Boaten, Gwekwerere, and Zunguze argue that decolonization continues to be as relevant as ever for Black and Indigenous liberation, particularly the assertion of Afrocentric, Pan-Africanist; and Indigenous land knowledge and systems of knowing as means to social transformation.

Engaging in epistemic decolonization, Kimani Nehusi centers African agency to critique Eurocentrism in Egyptology, tracing African religion in ancient Egypt and relocating culture in Parts I and II of his series on"The *It Neter* or father of god." Applying Afrocentricity in cultural enunciation (Asante, 1980), Nehusi sees the Eurocentric approach to Egyptology as inadequate to understanding ancient Egypt, particularly the concept of the "social father" (p. 10). While Eurocentrism in Egyptology privileges biology or bloodline in its explanation of social paternity in ancient Egypt, Afrocentrism reveals that the concept of father and its multiple roles was rooted in African tradition; as such, it did not follow a bloodline (p. 10). Nehusi engages in the relocation of African culture, showing the vital

importance of using an Afrocentric approach to studying African epistemology that has tool long been distorted by Eurocentric Egyptologist methodologies.

In “Multilingualism and decolonization in Femi Osofisan’s plays: a post-colonial perspective,” Jide Ajidahun takes a postcolonial theoretical approach to examine multilingualism in the Nigerian playwright Femi Osofisan. According to Ajidahun, Osofisan’s plays stage various characters speaking various languages–standard British English, Nigerian Pidgin English, Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo (pp. 37-38). This multilingualism is an aesthetic strategy to convey the Nigerian postcolonial social reality to reach a larger audience (p. 50). By staging formal British English, Osofisan, says Ajidahun, is ironically representing class consciousness among the Nigerian elites in relation to the ordinary Nigerians who code-switch between Pidgin English and Indigenous languages (p. 37). Also, by staging African languages such as Yoruba, Osofisan also engages in linguistic decolonization. Meanwhile, his concept of decolonization differs slightly from that of Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, who believes that the liberation of Africa from coloniality of language will only be achieved through the complete rejection of European languages (1986). Ojidahun concludes that Osofisan’s multilingualism is a paradox balancing the representation of formal and Pidgin English that “‘transcends all. . . ethnicities’” to create a sense of unity among Nigerians, while the representation of Indigenous languages promotes the preservation of African cultural heritage (pp. 42). Still, one question remains: How can a colonial and imperialist European language like English coexist with other African languages without exercising a coloniality of power?

In “Performing the Third Chimurenga: popular expressions of nationalism in the context of land reform in Zimbabwe,” Shingi Mavima taps into political decolonization, particularly the people’s reclamation of land in postcolonial Zimbabwe. Although the twentieth-century postcolonial Zimbabwean government under the leadership of Robert Mugabe implemented reforms to mitigate the coloniality of land, according to Mavima, the masses have always expressed the reclamation of land even in times when the leadership appeared reluctant (p. 57). People’s land reclamation movement, according to Mavima, has always been found in Zimbabwean popular aesthetics (i.e., song, poetry, and theater), conveying land negotiation in connection to national identity (p. 57). According to Mavima, popular praxis is an important source for understanding the twenty-first-century politics surrounding land in Zimbabwe–beyond Mugabe, who is often credited with such an effort (p. 57). Mavima revisits Fanon’s concept of decolonization: “For a colonized people, the most essential value, because it is the most meaningful, is first and foremost the land: the land, which must provide bread and, naturally, dignity” (2004, p.9). In short, in a setter colony like Zimbabwe, decolonization without reclaiming the land as a platform on which national identity can be self-fashioned is simply an epistemic abstraction.

Finally, in “Justice is dead” and “Thank You Lord for my cross” Ajidahun, through poetry, again, reflects on the Nigerian postcolonial social reality, conveying aesthetics of violence and suffering. In “Justice is dead,” the hopeless poetic voice announces the death of justice the night before, a tragedy followed by a cascade of frightful events, in which “(t)he criminals are back / No more respite for the poor / The hope of the masses is gone . . . (a)nd we are doomed.” Throughout the poem, it is unclear when justice was alive, though the poetic voice expresses shock at “[h]ow are the mighty fallen!” and the nostalgia about Justice that once provided a sense of protection and security: “Your presence was reassuring / But frightening to the intruders / Your barking made them flee” (p. 79). In “Thank You Lord for my cross,” reminiscent of Nigerian songwriter, politicalactivist, and Pan-Africanist Fela Kuti’s song “Shuffering and Shmiling,” Ajidahun coveys an irony, in which the poetic voice, though suffering, is thankful for one's hardship because it is not as bad as that of others: “When I look at the cross of others / I thank you for my own / Even though I sometimes faint carrying it / Some others have died while carrying theirs” (p. 80). The aesthetic of violence, be it state-sanctioned

and/or inter-ethnic, and suffering through poverty are part and parcel of the postcolonial African experience exacerbated by the legacies and practices of colonialism. Africans and people of African descent carry the trauma of colonialism and slavery which often is taken upon the poor masses. Postcolonial Nigeria, despite being one of the most developed nations in Africa–culturally and economically–since independence in 1960, the country has been plagued by corruption, dictatorship, and civil war, having a devastating impact on the poor masses. Aware of these socio-historical conditions, Ajidahun uses poetry to both celebrate and expose the resilience and hardship of everyday postcolonial Nigerians.

The authors, poets, and academics gathered together within this edition of *Moja* speak openly of the fact that Africans and people of African descent are not yet fully liberated–even after colonialism, slavery, and class emancipation within neoliberalism. Each of these writers implicitly and/or explicitly recognize (1) an enslaving logic as the organizing principle of global labor exploitation and (2) racism as the structuring principle of humanism and knowledge that continue to affect Africans and people of African descent. While elite Africans and people of African descent who have attained power, wealth, education, and/or other privileges often view access to resources and class mobility as the key to ultimate liberation, even these Black elites, in fact, continue to occupy a subordinate position in power, because of the racism which continues to control the global polity, economy, knowledge, and subjectivity. And if even the elites' polity, economy, knowledge, and subjectivity in Africa and the African diaspora are heavily controlled by the neoliberal hand, imagine how this control ends up severely affecting the less empowered, less privileged, less resourced Africana masses! All of our contributors in the Fall 2022 edition of *Moja* argue and agree that African and African diaspora liberation will only come through continuous engagement with decolonization and reclamation of Afro-centered and Pan-African value systems.

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Decolonial Musings: a conversation with Drs. Trey Adcock, Ameena Batada, Agya Boakye-Boaten, and Jeremias Zunguze

TREY ADCOCK, Ph.D.
AMEENA BATADA, Dr.P.H.
AGYA BOAKYE-BOATEN, Ph.D.
JEREMIAS ZUNGUZE, Ph.D.
UNC Asheville, North Carolina

TAVENGWA GWEKWERERE, Ph.D.
California State University, Los Angeles

Other credits:
Video & Audio edited by **Erik Calugar,** Sophomore
Transcription by **Emily Herzog,** Admin Asst AFST / IST / ECON
UNC Asheville, North Carolina

Abstract

We are pleased to share with you an enriching conversation with Dr. Agya Boakye-Boaten and Dr. Tavengwa Gwekwerere. This conversation is part of a series of conversations we conducted in the Fall of 2020, as part of an effort we call 'Decolonial Musings.' The purpose of Decolonial Musings is to think about, discuss, and debate about, and through, decolonial matters. We are interested in how different disciplines and folks are thinking about decolonial approaches, and in particular, how they are putting their own conversations and approaches into practice. The conversation you are about to watch took place on Zoom, on November 13th, 2020. The three Decolonial Musings hosts; Trey Adock of UNC Asheville and the Center for Native Health, Jeremias Zunguze of UNC Asheville, and Ameena Batada of UNC Asheville, interviewed two Africana Studies scholars…This conversation touches on so much, from our guests' personal experiences in their personal and professional lives, to how the term 'decolonial' is used, by whom, and for what purposes. This is especially salient right now in the academy, as the term 'decolonial' has become a catch-phrase for so many competing agendas and ideas. It's also important, as we consider how to practically move forward, in our classrooms, and in society at large. The conversation explores concepts of the colonized body and landscapes, of freedom, dignity, and humanity. We are so grateful to our guests for this important, dynamic conversation…In watching, we hope you are as inspired as we were, in listening.

"Can you be free within the same system that colonized you? I don't know."

Keywords: Decolonial v. Postcolonial, Pan-Africanism, Afrocentrism, Black Humanism, Humanity, Liberation, Land, Education, Pedagogy

Video Links:

PART ONE PART TWO PART THREE PART FOUR

Trey Adcock (ᏣᎳᎩᏱ ᎠᏰᎵ, enrolled Cherokee Nation) is an Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies and the Director of American Indian & Indigenous Studies at the University of North Carolina, Asheville. Adcock earned a Bachelor of Arts in history from the University of Florida. He earned a Master of Education in social science education from Armstrong Atlantic University. He was awarded a doctorate in educational studies, with an emphasis in culture, curriculum, and change at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He was recently awarded the Educational Policy Fellowship Program, a nationally recognized fellowship for educators whose work reflects strong leadership in the areas of educational policy and child development. His courses include American Indian and indigenous studies, humanities, and 6-1 social studies methods.

Ameena Batada is a professor in the Health and Wellness Department at the University of North Carolina, Asheville. Batada has been interested in improving child health and education, particularly among disenfranchised populations. Batada works with several community partners to evaluate health and education programs, to conduct research to support policy advocacy, and to implement intervention studies in schools, churches, and other settings.

Agya Boakye-Boaten is the Dean of Social Sciences and Professor of Africana studies, Interdisciplinary and International Studies at the University of North Carolina, Asheville. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in social work/administration and political science from the University of Ghana, Legon. He earned a Master of Arts in political science (international relations), and a master's in international affairs (African studies) from Ohio University. He was also awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree in educational studies, with an emphasis in cultural studies in education at Ohio University. He has taught various interdisciplinary courses including the Contemporary World, African American Experience, and various courses in African and Africana Studies. Boakye-Boaten is an International Scholar as a lifelong member of Phi Beta Delta Honor Society, a seasoned musician, and a master drummer.

Tavengwa Gwekwerere is an Associate professor of pan-African studies at California State University, Los Angeles. He holds a Ph.D. in African languages and literature from the University of South Africa and master's and bachelor's degrees in the same discipline from the University of Zimbabwe. His research interests encompass pan-Africanism, Afrocentricity, Afro triumphalism, African reconstruction, the 21st century Zimbabwean novel and European critical discourse on Zimbabwean literature. He is the founding Shenuti of the Zimbabwe division of Afrocentricity International (AI), and a firm believer in the intelligence of African ancestors, the agency of African people and the possibility of an authentic African Renaissance.

Jeremias Zunguze is an Associate professor of Africana studies and Liberal Arts 378 coordinator at the University of North Carolina, Asheville. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of California Berkeley in Hispanic languages and literatures, specializing in Luso-Brazilian studies and Lusophone African literatures and cultures. His research interests include Africana critical theory and trauma and decolonizing studies. Zunguze teaches various courses in the Africana studies program, the humanities program, and the languages and literatures department (Portuguese and Spanish).

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The It Neter or father of the god: a case study of cultural dislocation and (re)location in Kemet. Part I: The royal court, miscellaneous examples, and Senenmut.[1]

KIMANI S. K. NEHUSI, Ph.D.
Temple University

Abstract

This paper presents the first part of a study of the *It Neter* or "father of the god," a key office in Kemet, ancient Egypt. It combines approaches from history, sociolinguistics, and cultural analysis to interrogate some of the available information. The results demonstrate that the Eurocentric perspective, which is currently predominant in Egyptology, has proven to be very inadequate in scholars' attempts to understand this office. Here, the limitations of Egyptology arise from a failure to understand the concept of father that is alive in the term. It is not a European father in a nuclear family based on blood alone, with a narrow and rigid set of roles. This view has prevented Eurocentric scholars from recognizing a non-blood or social father that is part of Afrikan tradition. In this culture, the concept of father is not confined to an immediate biological ancestor and embraces a larger set of roles than father in the European tradition. *It Neter* describes roles which were previously not understood or fully understood to belong to a single concept, and may be grouped under the title Vizier in ancient Egyptian, and prime minister or mentor in today's terminology. Afrocentric methodology illuminates the concept of father of the god by relocating it within the history and culture of Afrika to which it has always properly belonged. This is the only approach that makes sense, or full sense, of the available information.

Keywords: *It Neter* or 'father of the god,' father, Africology, Afrikan culture, Egyptology, Eurocentrism, the royal court, Senenmut.

[1] An early synopsis of the entire study was published as "The *It Netjer* or Father of the God in Kemet." *Revista de la Sociedad Uruguaya de Egiptología (R.S.U.E n°30, 2013)*. Sociedad Uruguaya de Egiptología, Montivedio. The second part is entitled "The *It Neter* or Father of the God. A Case Study of Cultural Dislocation and (Re)Location in Kemet. Part II: The Temple, Ay and Joseph."

Introduction

Afrikology is the study of Afrikan and other phenomena from Afrikan perspectives without excluding the presence and influence of other cultures wherever necessary. It locates Afrikan people and phenomena within Afrikan history and culture (Asante, 1998; Mazama, 2003). It is where they always belonged. It avoids distortion or worse.

Eurocentrism attempts to universalize the values, standards and perspectives of Europe. The birth of Egyptology during the era of western European colonialism did not permit this academic discipline to escape colonialist values.

The aims of this paper are simple. First, to provide an outline and analysis of the development of Egyptological study of three aspects of the *It Neter* or father of the god, a specific manifestation of Afrikan culture in Kemet, ancient Egypt. Secondly, to inquire whether the relocation of the phenomena studied into the historical and cultural contexts of Kemet clarifies misconceptions resident in the scholarship of Egyptology and provides a better explanation of the information at hand. The results vindicate Afrikology.

In Kemet, notions of ancestor, father, mother, son, daughter, brother and sister were extended beyond blood ties from very early in the development of that civilization. In fact, it is likely that the people who became the ancient Egyptians held these ideas and corresponding practices even before they became the people of Kemet, since the very same concept is general in Afrika. Throughout Afrika, this convention may be witnessed by the deployment of these terms to relations that, while they sometimes may have indeed been blood relations, were not always so and are not exactly those normally described by these familial labels assigned to them in European languages and practice. In Kemet, the greatest clarity is gleaned from information concerning ancient Egyptian royalty, simply because more information is extant about this èlite than about any other group in that society. Dodson and Hilton conclude that "(a)lthough a considerable range of titles could be accredited to them, five basic tags defined the categories of royal relation: king's wife; king's mother; king's son; king's daughter; king's sister; plus a *unique example* of king's father." (Dodson and Hilton, 2010, 25. Emphasis added). There are no cousins, half siblings, "step" or any surrogate, or fictive relations of any kind here. The person(s) on each side of a relationship was valued; no one was devalued. This is entirely consistent with this observation by Théophile Obenga: "*Des mots répondant au français 'cousin' et 'cousine' n'existent pas non plus dans les langues négro-africaines. La distance parentale et sociologique que véhiculent avec eux des termes comme 'cousin' et 'cousine', etc, n'existe pas pour la psychologie sociale africaine."* (Obenga, 1996, 141).[2] In addition, it is known that in the language of the people of Kemet, the word for sovereign is derived from the word for father, that the kingship was founded upon ancestor veneration, and that the kings honored their ancestors in various ways including a specific ritual (Bell, 1996, 56-58; Kusimba, 1996, 59-61). These facts suggest that it is the Afrikan extended family form that was practiced by the royal family. In Kemet the culture of the royal elite was substantially rooted in the culture of the mass of the people.

Let us begin with the assertions that king's father is the same office as father of the god and so the two titles, if they are indeed different from each other, refer to the same group of roles and functions and the same functionary in whom they were vested. Thus the only thing which may be unique in the example mentioned by Dodson and Hilton may lie in the fact that it was the most visible and powerful instance of the transfer of notions of father to figures that were not rendered *ipso facto* biological fathers by this terminology and were indeed not usually so.

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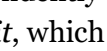
[2] "The words that correspond to French 'cousin' do not exist in Black African languages. The sociological and parental distance that is established by the terms 'cousin', etc. does not exist in the African social psychology."

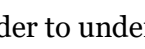
It is the contention here that the notions of father that were transferred, often to figures completely outside of the biological family, include those roles and functions normally described under the rubric of mentor in the world of today. It is further contended that these were archetypical roles and functions which were originally located inside the family and discharged by the blood father. Even further, that the same is to be said for the other familial relations thus identified, in so far as the terms deployed to identify them do not always describe blood relations, but always describe roles and functions that were originally vested in blood relations that had been originally located within the family, or roles derived from these original ones, and that in Kemet and the rest of Afrika, have always been conveyed by these kinship, that is, 'blood' or familial terminologies.

Here we see that social relations were expanded beyond biology; however, the terminology used to describe those relations remained unchanged; the terms deployed to describe the new relationships are rooted in the old terms for the earliest or archetypical blood relationships. They are the same familial terms. They remained rooted in biology. The reason for this continuity in lexical items is the preservation and continuity, within these new relationships, of the intimate social ethos of the family, the psychological closeness implied above by Obenga, and the resulting quality of relationships, which have always defined traditional Afrikan society. The only thing different about these new non-blood relationships was neither their quality nor the mutually binding rights and obligations imposed by tradition and accepted by all, but their location outside of the Afrikan family. Such quality human relationships were not fundamentally new to the Afrikan experience, so new words were not necessary to describe and convey them. It is therefore these old familial terms, based on blood or biology at their very earliest manifestations, that are mostly preserved in the languages of Afrika, including Ancient Egyptian, to describe social relations.

When viewed from the perspective of the culture in which it evolved, this example of king's father is therefore perfectly normal. It is entirely consistent with each of the other categories of royal relations given by Dodson and Hilton. There is nothing unique in this "unique example," either conceptually (i.e. in form and function) or in the terminology deployed to describe it. The title king's father becomes unique only when it is viewed from the perspective of European culture, in which a father is almost always a biological or blood father, and his location and roles are restricted to the ambit of the nuclear family.

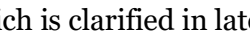
Some linguistic considerations

The "god" restricts our concern mainly to the office as performed to the pharaoh by priests and by certain other persons who were his political mentors — the two categories of 'father' referred to in the title 'Father of the God.' The term  , with its variants , , , , , etc., exist in the *Medew Neter* (Allen 2000, 66, 455; Gardiner, 1988, 502, 555, 612, 576; Erman & Grapow I, 1982, 141, 142; Faulkner, 1962, 32; Ranke, 1935, 58-49; Budge, 1920 I, 96, 98, *et al*), to use the name its creators actually bestowed upon this writing system, which is usually termed 'hieroglyphs' in the currently dominant ideology. There are two basic meanings provided by the texts. These are god's father and *priestertitel* (Erman & Grapow I, 1982, 142), this latter being the name of a class of *elder* priests (Gardiner, 1988, 555 and 612. Emphasis added). The term itself is composed of two distinct morphemes, each of which exists independently as a word in the language of the people of Kemet. The first of these words is  *it*, which means 'father'. The second is : *neter*, which means 'god.'

In order to understand the composite term  *It Neter* or father of the god[3] it is necessary to recognize the grammatical functions of each of these two morphemes.  *ỉt* = father is the descriptor, the real active and potent word here. It gives the possibilities of the functions of the father in Kemet, for it is these different and differing roles of the father in that society which hold the key to our understanding of the entire term. : *Neter* or 'god' here is merely the object described. Grammatically it is a static particle. Yet, the god here is a referent to the pharaoh, by far the most important and influential office in the land. Because of this tremendous importance, it does in practice exert a great enhancing influence on the roles performed by the father when the god is the recipient of the fatherly attention. Therefore, in this specific instance of the father of the god, the importance of the pharaoh provides greater opportunity for clarification of the construction of fatherhood, which was already a tremendous force in the shaping of some of the leading institutions in the society of Kemet, including that of the sovereign itself. Much the same is to be asserted for the parallel office of  *Mut Neter* or mother of the god.

The direct genitive formed by the juxtaposition of the two items completes the linguistic analysis in this section. In Afrikan languages, two morphemes may be placed together to indicate possession or connection, which may not be otherwise stated. In the construction under consideration here, "of the" must be read after father and before god to obtain a full reading of the term. Hence, father (of the) god.

Within the royal court

It is entirely likely that the title *It Neter* could have evolved from the ancient title  : *ỉt Mn* = 'father of (the God) min' which is clarified in later writings such as  *ỉt-Ntr Mn* (Gardiner 1947 I, 52). However, though it is attested in the Old Kingdom, for example in the *Sebayat* or Instructions[4] of Ptahhotep, the title may have become fully established in the royal court only in the First Intermediate Period (FIP), when a number of bearers are attested and it is applied comparatively frequently. In fact, Habachi says "the title god's father … seems to have been given in the First Intermediate Period (FIP) to persons who played quite an important role in the history of Egypt, especially in establishing new dynasties." (Habachi 1958, 171-2). The term became established as a title for priests towards the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty (Janssen & Janssen, 1990, 128), hence not long before 1295 Before the Common Era (BCE). As explained below, this year is significant for marking the beginning of the era of the more obvious manifestation of the office under consideration.

It is imperative to read the plurality in the notion of establishing new dynasties as reflective of the rather unsettled context of the FIP, when many of the centralizing conventions and tendencies established in the Old Kingdom were questioned, disrupted and even overturned in some instances. It therefore appears to be with considerable caution the *It Neter* or the *Sebayat* — or anything else except perhaps decentralization — may be assumed as being

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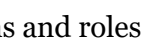
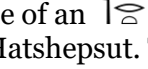
[3] A certain feature of the *Medew Neter* should be noted here. Without doubt a practice instructed by spirituality, it is the changing the word order in certain written expressions to indicate reverence of divinity and of important personages in general. The words denoting the revered are written first, even though in the spoken language they are pronounced later. Hence here, in the word *It Neter* , the morpheme , *Neter* = 'god', has been written first, though in speech it is pronounced last. This convention has been termed honorific transposition or honorific inversion by Egyptologists and ought to be differentiated from graphic transposition, which is also some reversal or change of the written word order, but for aesthetic purposes.

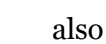
[4] 'Written teachings' or 'Instructions' (Gardiner 1988, 588, 616, 626) in which a much-accomplished person, usually a vizier, passes on the wisdom he has acquired in public service. The recipients are his "sons," usually relatively inexperienced successors.

established in this period. It is possible to speak with greater certainty of the following period, known as the Middle Kingdom, in which the *Sebayat* is clearly established (Assmann, 1996, 106-127; Janssen & Janssen ,1996, 81), becoming even more frequent in the New Kingdom (Janssen & Janssen, 1990, 128; Gardiner, 1947 I, 51). Perhaps a key part in this explanation is Assmann's observation that, following developments initiated in the First Intermediate Period, the *Sebayat* became established in the Middle Kingdom (Assmann, 1996, 125- 134). This points a finger firmly in the direction of the expanded meaning of the term father (and therefore as well as that of son), which is integral to the very notion of the *Sebayat*. The meaning of father transcended blood ties from very early in the social history of Kemet. The *Sebayat*, as well as the *It Neter*, are therefore very clear demonstrations of the operationalization of the expanded or non-blood or socially constructed meaning of the term *it* or father and the (re)location of this expanded concept to institutions outside the family, that is, in the wider society.

Details in the sources affirm these observations, for we shall see below that while the Father of the God was also known in the Old Kingdom, it became established only in the Middle Kingdom. Positing a link between the *Sebayat* and the father of the god may therefore be not as illogical as may appear upon the surface. Both belonged to the specific context of the royal court. In fact, it is more than likely that many a *Sebayat* was issued by a father of the god, as in the known examples from the Old Kingdom of Imhotep, who was vizier or father to djoser (third dynasty, about 2800 BCE), Kagemni, father to Snefrou (fourth dynasty) and Ptahhotep, father to Isesi (fifth dynasty, about 2600 BCE). Thus, the available evidence, though incomplete, does appear sufficient to indicate a trend. Further, such a trend invites informed speculation about whether there was a tradition of each father of the god issuing a *sebayet*, or even if it was the duty of each one of them to do so. The known examples of the listing of the duties of the vizier do not include this task (Davies 1973, 88-94). But this need not mean that a vizier was not expected to issue a *Sebayet* at some strategic moment in his career, most probably towards the end or just after. The known examples tell us that he may have issued one if he chose to do so; however, scholars are uncertain whether what may have been begun as an unwritten convention later acquired the force of tradition.

We may be more certain that the popularity and institutionalization of the *Sebayat* reinforced the extended meanings of father and son which had been certainly carried in the language from the inception of its written form, and most probably before then, and doubtless in popular usage also.

The records show specific actions and roles of the  *It nṯr: It Neter* or father of the god at various points in the long history of the state of Kemet. Inhabitants of this office include Ptahhotep, Kagemni, Kuya and Ay, as well as a significant number of others examined by Janssen and Janssen, some of which shall presently receive close attention in this text. It is very important to include the unique example of an  *It Ntrt*: father to the goddess, played by Senenmut to Neferura, daughter of Hatshepsut. The title god or goddess was usually reserved for a reigning female; however, along with *ḥmt-nṯr*: god's wife, it was bestowed upon Neferura, more than likely because from her early years she had been designated to arrive on the throne (Gardiner, 1947 I, 53), a clear comment upon the use of political power in the somewhat unusual reign of her mother. There is a gender difference here from the other examples in this essay: the referent is a female; however, the roles are still those of a father. They do not vary from those of a normal father in Afrikan culture and vary from the other examples here only in so far as the recipient is feminine.

A specific example of the parallel office of *Mwt Nṯr*: gottesmutter or mother of the god (Erman & Grapow II, 1982, 54), that is, a woman mentoring a pharaoh, here played by the sixth dynasty Queen Ankhnespepy, will also be examined. But this title, mother of the god, is also well represented throughout the history of Kemet (the late period writing is  and  : Lesko & Lesko I, 2002, 254), so it must be noted *en passant* that there are numerous other examples to be uncovered and interrogated. The existence of this title and the roles covered by it help to attest the often different but complementary roles of men and women in Kemet. Such information may also inform scholars about gender balance and equity in that society.

Cultural determinism, uncertainty and speculation

> In 1947, Gardiner published a significant hypothetical definition of the father of the god:
>
> *...iṯ-nṯr*[5] ... is applied to royal and non-royal persons alike; the one common factor is that the word *nṯr* always signifies the living king, to whom the holder of the title stands in the relation of father, whether actual or by marriage (father-in-law) or by virtue of high station, advanced age, outstanding wisdom or some such attribute. (Gardiner 1947 I, 51).

Gardiner relies here upon an accumulation of accurate details, not cultural analysis, to arrive at this rather precise description of the term. But it is not a definition. His 'provisional hypothesis' (Gardiner, 1947 I, 47), though relying mainly on description, is insightful. But until now it has remained unproven. For instead of following up upon Gardiner's notion of a non-biological father, which was implied but not demonstrated, it has become standard for Egyptologists to interpret the father of the god first as a class of priests and secondly as some combination of blood relations and functions, such as a royal or non-royal father of the reigning pharaoh, the father-in-law of the reigning pharaoh, an elder statesman to the pharaoh and someone who was instrumental in establishing a new dynasty. In this second instance a blood relationship has traditionally been postulated as the major explanation of this most important national office of Kemet, though in some recent studies and comments this has also been supplemented by the role of tutor (Dodson & Hilton, 2010, 40; Grajetzki, 2009; Janssen & Janssen, 1996, 78-86; Davies, 1994, 96, Note 164; Schaden, 1977, 77-220, *passim*; Desroches-Noblecourt, 1965, *passim*; Habachi, 1958, 167-190; Aldred, 1957, 30-41; Newberry, 1932, 50-52). Essam El-Banna's article falls wholly outside of this ambit. It focuses exclusively on the title father of the god in the realm of the divinities and does not appear to countenance any application of this concept to the spiritual and political locations within the society of Kemet that are identified in the majority of studies on this topic. Father of the god(s) in this instance remains restricted to a badge of rank, an indicator of seniority among the divinities of Kemet (El-Banna, 1986, 151-170).

It has been shown above that in the *Medew Neter* the term  contains the morpheme  which translates into English as father. This morpheme, father, is the more active and potent aspect in the term father of the god. Hence, it is imperative that scholarship understands this morpheme — in addition to the morpheme "god" upon which most attention has been so far focused in Eurocentric academic enquiry — if a viable understanding and explanation of the entire concept is to be obtained. It is not possible to really know that a particular term is understood if there remains any ignorance or confusion or uncertainty about the meaning of one of its constituents. Janssen & Janssen typify Egyptology's occupation with descriptors, the continuing inattention to the nature of the concept of fatherhood conveyed by the morpheme, and the consequent disaggregation of this single idea of father of the god.

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5 The sign *ṯ* in this term is now usually written t, a change that is suggested in the work of Gardiner himself, among others. (Gardiner 1988, 28). In this passage Gardiner employs the previous transliteration of this sign.

Until now this dismemberment has been a permanent result of scholarly enquiry into the meaning of the concept, rather than a stage in the process of obtaining a full understanding of it. The result has been a failure to advance scholars' understanding of this important figure in the social history of Kemet:

> It will be evident that 'god's father' could refer to several quite different positions and functions during the long period of Egyptian history. Yet, the word 'father' retained throughout the notion of veneration, whether it referred to a real father (-in law) of the reigning king, to a wise advisor of the sovereign, or merely to a priest who was initiated into the secrets of the god. (Janssen & Janssen 1996, 86).

Apart from Gardiner, Egyptology's lack of descriptive validity for the term under discussion is underlined by these two scholars' notion that it 'could refer to several quite different positions and functions during … Egyptian history.' (Janssen & Janssen, 1996). It will be demonstrated later in this study that although the position of father of the god was located in two distinct aspects of the state, the royal court (Part I) and the temple (Part II), both the court official and the priest concerned performed the same function of father or adviser to the god or pharaoh, and that such an arrangement is perfectly normal and entirely consistent with the meaning of father in Afrikan culture from the earliest known times to the present.

Miscellaneous examples

The dominant worldview among western scholars, and the consequent biases that colored their study of the family in Kemet, including of course the institution of fatherhood, are, naturally, reflected in their scholarship on the *It Neter* or father of the god. The early Egyptologist, E. A. Wallis Budge, supplies, respectively, father of the god, i.e. a kind of priest and father of the god, which he explains as title of a priest, or father-in-law of the king (Budge, 1920, 96, 98). Today, a century after his contribution, the understanding of this figure in Egyptology has not advanced much beyond Budge. Christiane Desroches-Noblecourt, writing in the early 1960s, is somewhat ambivalent about the correct reading of this term, which she predominantly styles divine father (Desroches-Noblecourt, 1965, 42, 76, 77, 84, 90-91, 97, 109, 120, 144) and divine father or father of the god, thus only once deploying the now standard translation father of the god, an error still recorded recently (Lesko & Lesko Vol. I, 2002, 50) who supply both god's father and divine father despite old and new rejections of divine father (Gardiner ,1947 I, 47; Janssen & Janssen, 1996, 78). Dodson and Hilton supply a junior priest and "a person closely related to the king, on occasion his father or father-in-law." (2010, 40). These are typical descriptions — not definitions — that occupy the normal categories of the priesthood and some close but not clearly and comprehensively defined relationship to the pharaoh. Significantly, no underlying connection is demonstrated between these two manifestations of the concept.

There has been much uncertainty and a lack of clarity about the exact meaning of this title. Dodson and Hilton (2010, 35) find it "one of the most problematic" of the titles designating royal spouses and (their) offspring. This latter construction indicates the nuclear view of the family held by these two scholars, which in the context of this discussion, is very significant as an indicator of cultural determinism and, as a consequence, the danger of misrepresentation. Grajetzki opines that "one can only guess about this family relationship" purported between the god's father and the royal family of Kemet (Grajetzki, 2009, 48) and concludes that the title "could have had several meanings" (Grajetzki, 2009, 148). Egyptology is therefore certain that this figure had some relationship with the ruling pharaoh. But beyond that, there is uncertainty and speculation. Egyptologists will not move beyond these surface level descriptions unless they locate Kemet in its Afrikan context, as Afrikology logically insists. (Asante, 1998; Mazama, 2003; *et al*). It is only then that there could be an end to much uncertainty and speculation about the fundamentals of this title.

The work of Rosalind M. Janssen and Jac J. Janssen (1996, 78-86) is one of the most recent as well as one of the fullest available studies of the father of the god. It is also largely representative of the scholarship of Egyptology on this subject. For these reasons, it offers a convenient lens through which to examine Egyptology's vision of this and by extension other aspects of the ancient society that is the major focus of its attention.

In dynasty six (2345-2181 BCE) in the reign of Pharaoh Pepi I, Khuy, Pepi's father-in-law twice over on account of his two daughters being married to Pepi, was called god's father, god's beloved because he had strong ties to the monarchy. Janssen and Janssen assert that in this instance, "The title can simply be interpreted as father-in-law to the king." (Janssen & Janssen 1996, 78). The reality that Janssen and Janssen are examining is not that simple. The family under investigation is the Afrikan 'extended' family, as has been asserted in the scholarship of a significant number of scholars who recognize Afrikans as active agents in their own culture. (Examples include Troy Allen, 1998; Obenga, 1996; Monges, 1997, 125-154; Diop, 1989; Amadiume, 1987; Diop, 1974, 142-145; Mbiti, 1988, 106-109). It is not to be confused with the nuclear family of Europe. Here, blood is not the only tie and roles are different from and more in number than the roles in a European nuclear family. Yet it is the latter which is the model against which Janssen and Janssen have interpreted the information they uncovered. That they provide no statement of any criteria for such assessment is indicative of just how deeply held within them is the view that the institution and society they are examining conform to European cultural norms. Janssen and Janssen further point to the existence of several other persons in the history of Kemet with this title, "but for what reason we do not know. That they were all related to the Pharaoh is unlikely. That is only the case with some of them." (Janssen & Janssen 1996, 78).

Clearly, these two Egyptologists have a major investment in blood relations, to which they limit their vision of the office under investigation, and therefore encounter difficulty in understanding the phenomenon before them. They view the information through European cultural lenses, which do not permit them to recognize an Afrikan family in operation, so they do not comprehend that the concept of fatherhood in this instance is not merely a matter of blood relationship, but much more than that. The relationship these different men had with the pharaoh they served was exactly that articulated in the title father of the god, but here the idea of father is far grander than that envisaged by Egyptologists. It encompasses each of the specific roles identified by Janssen and Janssen as well as surpasses them all. For in the construction of the father in Afrikan tradition, the sociological whole is far greater than its original biological base. It is the same for each of the collection of roles grouped under 'blood' terminology of the family, irrespective of whether those roles remained inside the family, or were migrated to offices and institutions in the wider society.

In the First Intermediate Period (FIP), Shemay was a father of the god. Janssen and Janssen identified him as an official married to a princess called Nebet and speculate that he was vested with this title for that reason. (Janssen & Janssen 1996, 78). The same designation was bestowed upon the son of this couple. Here the title was held by people who were not the fathers-in-law but the son-in-law and the grandson of the reigning Pharaoh. (Janssen & Janssen 1996, 79). Our two scholars assert a "distinct change in meaning" of this title later in the FIP, in the early part of dynasty 11 (ca 2130-1991 BCE), where the title "designates the (non-royal) father of a king." (Janssen & Janssen). It is clear that this purported change in meaning of the title is but a difference in the initial relationship of the office holder to the king. It is a change which may occasion further illumination of the meaning of the office itself, but only if viewed through a culturally appropriate lens. The only way a son-in-law and a grandson could be fathers of a king is when fatherhood is beyond blood ties. In this specific instance, relationship to the pharaoh, as son-in-law and grandson, would be expected to be a factor in their appointment; however, that both post holders were obviously younger than the king may further

complicate the issue and perplex the observer who is armed only with a pair of Eurocentric spectacles and so constrained to a search for blood ties. Though age is important to the point of virtually assuring reverence in the culture of Kemet, wisdom is even more valued. Hence it is almost certain that the possession of wisdom, or the extensive or even critical knowledge upon which wisdom is often predicated, is likely to have been a comparatively more important criterion than age in the appointment of each of these two men to the office in question. This much is also illustrated in the biblical story of Joseph, which is located in Kemet and examined in Part II of this study.

Janssen and Janssen assert the same non-royal meaning of the term is attested in dynasty 18, where the god's father senusret is indeed senusret, the non-royal biological father of Pharaoh Amenemhat I, the founder of dynasty 12. But this name and this designation are part of a listing of kings revered in later ages. (Janssen & Janssen, 80). Hence, it ought to be clear that in addition to the role of wise advisor to his blood son who was initiating a new line of pharaohs, senusret is quite likely also viewed as a revered progenitor — hence emphasizing another role of a father in the Afrikan cultural universe. This very role of father as revered founder also eludes Janssen and Janssen in their analysis of Antef, blood father of Pharaoh Montuhotep II. Antef was never a pharaoh of Upper and Lower Kemet and "(t)herefore … was theoretically not the predecessor (= the father) of Montuhotep (in his role as pharaoh)." Yet, these scholars acknowledge Antef as the biological father of the initiator of the 11th dynasty. (Janssen & Janssen, 80-81). The exact blood relation is identified between the brothers Khasekhemre Neferhotep and Khaneferre Sobekhotep, two of the foremost pharaohs of dynasty 13 in the late Middle Kingdom, and their non-royal father, Haankhef.

In these instances, even though these scholars imply a meaning of father that is restricted to father as predecessor of a pharaoh, and thus hint at one of the extended meanings of the term in its Afrikan context, they fail to recognize that in the particular examples before them the term must also mean father as genetic progenitor of the pharaoh, a blood relation which announces the expectation of both reverence and respect on the side of the pharaoh as biological son, as well as the biological father's duty to mentor his son, in this instance in the discharge of Pharaonic power and influence, but clearly rooted in the more traditional fatherly duties that were once housed exclusively within the family. It is significant for our understanding of the roles of this office that both Senusret and Antef were blood fathers of pharaohs who initiated new dynasties. The specific circumstances of their office, that is, father to the spiritual, political, economic and social head of the nation, would have therefore vested them with and emphasized the roles and authority of father in the senses of blood father and so revered progenitor and, additionally, trusted or even chief advisor: the supreme operational definition of mentor.

Janssen and Janssen argue that in dynasty 18 (ca 1560- ca 1295 BCE) there was "a fundamental change in the meaning of the title, many important persons now being called *it-netjer*, with the implication of adviser of the sovereign or elder statesman." (Janssen & Janssen, 81). The examples they supply are interesting: a number of high priests of Amun, viziers and viceroys of Nubia, one of whom, Usersatet, was a childhood companion of Pharaoh Amenhotep II (Janssen & Janssen). It seems clear that at that historical juncture the office was becoming more formalized, and more persons are appointed to it; the office is operationally regularized. The circle from which *It Neters* are recruited is now wider. Such a conclusion is entirely consistent with the known economic and political situation of the time, which was characterized chiefly by an increasingly wealthy elite and an expanding state. While Janssen and Janssen do not supply any other relationship to the ruling pharaoh, it is important and logical to recognize that ability, achievement and/or connections, as well as the status which arose from these, would have been instrumental in the attainment of this post. In turn, such status would have, as a fact in itself, recommended the holder as a knowledgeable and wise advisor to the pharaoh, an

it-neter in that particular sense of the term, even if he were not already, or subsequently became, a trusted advisor or even the chief one or *It Neter*. The fact Usersatet was a childhood companion to Amenhotep indicates a close relationship based on trust and suggests solidarity and even camaraderie. Such a relationship would have been nurtured by initiation into the system of age grades that developed bonding among members of the same sex and age group, as well as contemporaneous initiation into and experience of the Kap, a royal college which was known to cultivate social capital and corresponding influence and patronage: what today, in some aspects of society, would be termed the old school tie effect**.** Again, our two scholars grasp only that aspect of the office that was plainly visible to them when looking through Eurocentric lenses. They do not link what they know from this example to other aspects which are visible in other known examples of the office. Nor do they come up with those roles that would have been logically and easily inferred once the phenomenon was located in its correct cultural context. They therefore emerge with only a partial description and analysis of the office in question — and an incomplete and limited understanding of the information at their disposal.

Senenmut

Nowhere in the surviving literature is the various roles of the *It Neter* more clearly illustrated than in the example of the political life of Senenmut, a senior official who performed this office to Neferura, daughter of Hatshepsut. Such clarity is due entirely to the fact that the surviving account covers all or almost all of the very lengthy and evolving relationship between these two. Here can be seen the different roles undertaken by Senenmut reflected in the changing titles, in this context virtual job descriptions, which outline his career path in service to the young princess as she grows up, matures and herself undertakes new roles and responsibilities in her trajectory toward the pinnacle of power in Kemet. This is a symbiotic relationship, for the evolution of Senenmut's career is outlined by his changing job descriptions, which also reflect the rise of Neferura. He is listed as a foremost embodiment of the *It-Neter* in the role of tutor to the crown prince (or princess). (Janssen & Janssen 1996, 81). It is clear, even in this specific example, that this is but one of the roles of this office, since Senenmut gives his roles at various times as father and (male) nurse, steward of the estate of Princess Neferure[6] and father of the goddess. These titles and roles indicate progression in the career of the growing royal personage and corresponding acquisitions and/or changes of emphasis in Senenmut's duties that eventually lead to the acquisition of the title and roles of the father of the goddess. With this latter title, Senenmut had arrived at the pinnacle of his professional career in service to the princess. It is significant that Janssen and Janssen remark that the title father of the goddess probably dates from a later stage of Senenmut's career, when his charge "needed not so much a 'nurse' as a mentor." (Janssen & Janssen). It is the latter term that is all encompassing and through which, for historical reasons**,** these roles have come to be known and articulated in western European society (Colley, 2003, 1; Roberts, 1999; Barondess, 1997, 347; Barondess, 1995, 3-6). It is quite likely that these two scholars do not apprehend that in supplying that latter term they have finally given a more precise identification of an office they have found to be so elusive.

Janssen and Janssen also mention Heqareshu, a dignitary in dynasty 18, whose titles included (male) nurse of the king's eldest son and god's father. They also mention his son, Heqaerneheh, who held the same positions. Here we again encounter evidence of an evolving relationship marked by differing emphases in the role of the father of the god, or perhaps the roles performed by the person who would become father of the god. We see suggested by the examples of Senenmut, Heqareshu, Heqaerneheh and others, the considerable probability that the same person was once tutor to a school-aged prince or princess, then nurse to the royal

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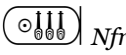
[6] Neferura and Neferure are variations in the rendering of the same name:  *Nfrwra*, which translates as 'Perfections (or Beauties) [of the Divinity] Ra.' Note the honorific transposition mentioned in note 3.

person later on, and eventually father even later, when the royal mentee attained the status of god/goddess.

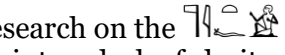
After Kemet

The titles of Ifi Amadiume's book, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands,* and Nwande Achebe's *The Female King in Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe*, provide an insight into the continuation of this sociological system in later Afrika. In the title of Amadiume's text, the terms male and female are strictly biological. They state the sex of the individuals. Daughters and husbands supply the social roles and therefore the gender performed by each of these two groups of persons thus identified. In Achebe's book, female is the biology; king the social roles and so gender. Again, this grammar is not possible in a European cultural context. These facts also indicate the relationship between ancient Egypt and traditional Afrika.

"The Woman King," a recently released film written by Maria Bello and Dana Stevens, directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood and starring Lashana Lynch, Viola Davis and Hero Fiennes Tiffin, preserves this grammar. Here, woman is the biology of the referent and king is the distinctive and related collection of roles she performs in society.

The term you(r) big sister brother, recently (2015) deployed by an Afrikan Guyanese in a village along the coast of that country, illustrates the continuation of this Afrikan grammar in the Diaspora. Here the term you(r) refers to the person addressed; big indicates that the referent is older that the person addressed; sister indicated the gender of the person in question, and'brother indicated that person's sex or biology. The referent is the gay elder brother of the addressee. With the lexical items elder and sister placed before the nouns they modify, the word order in this extract is certainly dominated by the English language. The concept of gender which is represented in sister is one not determined by biology; it is a group of social roles that is indicated by this term. This grammar is very Afrikan.

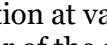
Conclusion

In Egyptology, the sum of the research on the  or father of the god since Gardiner has been characterized by much uncertainty, a lack of clarity, speculation arising from an aggregation of descriptions of conceptually disjointed roles attached to this title, a consequent disaggregation of the concept and disconnection and balkanization into its various examples, roles and the other rather more easily visible but partial manifestations available to scholars in search of blood ties. But there has been no identification and explanation of the invisible ties that bind together these, until now, apparently disparate aspects of the office into the single, full and coherent concept developed and operationalized in the social history of Kemet. The office of mother of the god has received even less scholarly attention.

But in order to recover the entire concept of father of the god, the scholar must do more than merely disinter various parts of its dismembered body that are accessible from the incomplete records available today or view them from Eurocentric cultural assumptions with which scholarship has begun its search for the meaning of this figure. An Afrocentric approach is inescapable if sense, or full sense, is to be made of this information. For it is necessary to relocate those rescued pieces of information into the specific conceptual framework that bound them together, animated them into a distinct entity that was larger than any or even the mechanistic summation of all these constituent parts, gave to them form, function and meaning and thus provided them with a distinctive identity within the cultural and historical context in which this entity existed. Armed with this cultural construct, scholarship may also be able to discern further details and so fill gaps in humanity's knowledge and understanding of this office. We must accept Fu-Kiau's challenge to do more than what this wise ancestor observed as "an academic exercise which, usually, consists of transferring bones from one graveyard to another."

(Fu-Kiau, 2001, 14). It is fortunate that in the study of this concept, there is now available a more meaningful reconstruction of the living relations that provided the immediate context in which it existed, as well as a fuller understanding of each of the two linguistic components of which the term representing it is comprised, and the paradigm of Afrocentricity to guide our positioning and understanding of the information at our disposal.

The incoherence, inconclusiveness, lack of clarity — and even perplexity — of Eurocentric scholarship appear to be influenced, in the very least, by the fact that such scholarship has failed to locate Kemet, and more specifically for this essay, the positioning and roles of the father of the god, within the Afrikan cultural context to which these entities have always belonged. Here it is imperative that we note that the concept of family under consideration is an early statement of the Afrikan extended or consanguineal family. The differing roles and emphases observed by the Egyptologists amount to statements of the various roles of this functionary, including various emphases to suit specific circumstances and challenges that confronted the office at different points in its evolution within the very long history of Kemet. Most European scholars examining this phenomenon have grasped only isolated aspects of the multi-roled office of guardian of the would-be or reigning pharaoh's many interests. It is necessary to consider the office as a whole, its entire integrity, instead of as a number of dismembered aspects which, in this view, appear as unconnected roles and functions; that is, as separate entities. The Eurocentric approach does not and cannot provide a fuller and more accurate picture of the office because it does not consider the cultural values which, conceptually and in practice, provide the context, connectivity, unity and rational explanation of what have otherwise proved to be disparate pieces of an insoluble puzzle.

The term  : *It Neter* or father of the god articulates a specific relationship, that is, a fatherly relationship, to the pharaoh. It includes a number of roles which, in Kemet and the rest of Afrika, are implied by and associated with that relationship. Historically, in the evolution of this office, as for any office, emphasis upon various roles varied according to circumstances, that is, specific aspects of the relationship were emphasized or deemphasized in response to the exigencies of particular situations. But as in any relationship this was not a one-sided association. The term also articulates, from the side of the pharaoh, trust, respect and a willingness to rely upon advice from this chief adviser. It is located in the royal court because this is the first location, after the popular family, in which modern scholarship sees the role of the figure we now term mentor developed so significantly — undoubtedly to meet the multiple demands on the leadership of a vastly expanded and infinitely more sophisticated state; however, in the development of society in Kemet the role of the  *It* or father had already been expanded to accommodate both the nature of the Afrikan extended or consanguineal family and the increasing demands for guidance, leadership, education and socialization of the younger generation at various levels of organization: family, clan, state and nation. The  *It Neter* or father of the god was the specific institutional response to the pharaoh's need for such guidance, that is, the expression of the need at the level of the national state. Further, it is entirely logical that such a response is totally consistent with the prevailing cultural values, tradition and organizational format of the people of Kemet. In fact, no other cultural response is logical and therefore possible. That is why any interpretation of this term which is instructed by a different cultural tradition is very likely to be incomplete, inadequate, confusing and misleading.

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Kimani Nehusi currently teaches in the Department of Afrikology at Temple University. His scholarship is distinguished by strong interests in the holistic study of the Afrikan world from ancient times to the future, the Caribbean and Guyana. His perspective is an Afrocentric one in which Afrikan phenomena are simultaneously accessible from approaches that are usually termed language and linguistics, history and culture through a robust research methodology.

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The It Neter or father of the god: A case study of cultural dislocation and (re)location in Kemet. Part II: The temple, Ay and Joseph[7]

KIMANI S. K. NEHUSI, Ph.D.
Temple University

Abstract

This paper presents the second part of a study of the *It Neter* or 'father of the god,' a key office in Kemet, ancient Egypt. It combines approaches from history, sociolinguistics, and cultural analysis to interrogate some of the available information. The results demonstrate that the Eurocentric perspective currently predominant in Egyptology has proven to be very inadequate in scholars' attempts to understand this office. Here, the limitations of Egyptology arise from a failure to understand the concept of 'father' that is alive in the term. This is not a European father in a nuclear family based on blood alone, with a narrow and rigid set of roles. Insistence upon this erroneous view has prevented Eurocentric scholars from recognizing a non-blood or social father that is part of Afrikan tradition. In this culture, the concept of father is not confined to an immediate biological ancestor. *It Neter* describes a set of roles that is larger than what is usually obtained in the European model of the father, and which may be grouped under the title Vizier in ancient Egyptian, and prime minister or mentor in today's terminology. Afrocentric methodology illuminates the concept of 'father of the god' by relocating it within the history and culture of Afrika to which it has always properly belonged. This is the only approach that makes sense, or full sense, of the available information.

Keywords: *It Neter* or 'father of the god,' father, Africology, Afrikan culture, Egyptology, Eurocentrism, the temple, Ay, Joseph.

[7]An early synopsis of the entire study was published as **"**The *It Netjer* or father of the god in Kemet." *Revista de la Sociedad Uruguaya de Egiptología (R.S.U.E n°30, 2013*). Sociedad Uruguaya de Egiptología, Montivedio. Part I of the full study, is entitled "The *It Neter* or father of the god: A case study of cultural dislocation and (re)location in Kemet. Part I: The royal court, miscellaneous examples, and Senenmut."

Introduction

A very significant factor in the conception, birth and evolution of Egyptology has been Europe's project to colonize other parts of the world. Intellectual violence was invariably an accomplice in the military violence that was usually Europe's entry into other peoples' lands and lives**.** (Nehusi, 2019; Elkins, 2022; Elkins, 2005; Tharoor, 2016; Hochschild, 1998). It is not at all co-incidental that when Alexander conquered Egypt, he had Aristotle with him, and that the latter obtained much of the work later accredited to him from Afrikans in Kemet (James, 1985, 1-2; 14, 17-19, 45-53, etc), or that this symbiotic relationship between European military violence and European intellectual violence was mirrored, on a grander scale, when Napoleon embarked upon the military conquest of Egypt. His army of soldiers and sailors was 'accompanied by a corps of (French) scholars' (Barb, 1988, 141; See also Assmann, 1999, 143). British and French colonialism was a determining factor in the birth of Egyptology. The new area of academic engagement did not escape its nefarious origins. European colonial attitudes were imposed upon the information about ancient Egypt and upon the interpretation of that information (Nehusi, 2011; Asante & Mazama, 2002). Egypt has not been exempted from the widespread looting of artifacts from plundered lands by western Europeans. A few items have been returned recently, but there is a continued refusal to return most of them to their rightful owners around the colonized world (Hicks, 2020; Brown, 2021; Hickley, 2021). The entire western European project has been summed up by Molefi Asante and Ama Mazama: "Along with the European physical and political incursions into the realms of others went intellectual colonization to the degree that information was structured to support European hegemony." (Asante & Mazama 2002, 1). Eurocentrism, which is the attempt of Europeans to universalize their values, standards and views, is the systemization of perception, thought, action and reality that has resulted from this hierarchical, racist, sexist and otherwise decadent vision of humanity.

One consequence of this origin has been Egyptology's attempt to appropriate the identity of ancient Egypt and a corresponding silence upon, obfuscation and often outright denial of the Afrikan origins and identity of its subject for most of the very long history of that country (Diop, 1974; Browder, 1992; Asante, 2002; Keita, 2022). Many Egyptologists approach their subject from the unproved (and unprovable) assumption that the facts they examine belong to European culture. The figure known as the  *It Neter* or father of the god provides an illuminating case study. This paper adopts an Afrocentric approach to the study of instances of language and ideology, as well as one important location of this office and two personages, one semi-historical and the other historical, who performed its roles. Interrogation of this figure from these vantage locations shows that Egyptology has so far failed to provide it with an adequate analysis and explanation. It argues that this is because the facts do not fit into a European cultural paradigm, and it demonstrates that those facts cannot fit into such a paradigm. It also shows, on the other hand, that it is only by returning those facts to the Afrikan cultural and historical context, of which Kemet, Ancient Egypt, is a distinctive aspect, that scholarship can make sense, or full sense, of the information about this important figure in the ancient Egyptian state and society.

Part I of this study demonstrated these conclusions by studying some important linguistic issues relating to this office, the operationalization of the office itself in its most important location of the royal court, some miscellaneous examples in its evolution and development, and the partial biography of Senenmut, an important official who discharged the functions of the office. Here, Part II focuses attention on some significant aspects of language, on how the office functioned in the temple, which was without doubt its second most important location, and on the relevant information concerning Ay and Joseph, one historical figure and one semi-historical figure, who are rendered significant for our purpose because they were occupants of this office.

Language

It is entirely appropriate to recall here that a people's language is a record of and a witness to that language community's perception of reality (cosmology, cosmogony, philosophy, epistemology, ontology) and their progress through space and time. The people of Kemet themselves sometimes made distinctions between biological definitions of persons and their socially defined roles and personages. In the *Medew Neter*, there is a clear distinction between *sꜣ n ḫt.f* , literally 'son of his body' or a biological son, and *sꜣ n ỉb.f*, literally 'son of his heart,' a social son. There are records of *sꜣt nsw n tḫt.f*: 'king's daughter of his body.' The records also preserve a distinction between a biological and a spiritual mother (Naguib, 1998, 443). It is a formulation that clearly calls into existence a construction that represents a biological mother. This is almost tautological. Other obvious examples exist in the sons in the Sebayat[8] and the son in son of Ra**,** a royal title that was ubiquitous after the 12th dynasty.

More research is needed on this aspect of language and the social environment of Kemet; however, it seems instructive that the Egyptians used these corresponding terms interchangeably. In the case of Ay, examined below, terms for biological and non-biological son carry the same social and legal weight. Perhaps it is a distinction only of origin, not one of function and meaning. When placed in its true cultural context, the semantic domain is clarified. There are numerous examples.

The father of the god falls into and is indeed totally consistent with this pattern. Further, as we shall shortly see again, there can be no doubt about the real meaning of a socially constructed father in these powerful examples examined here, irrespective of whether he is built upon a base of blood relations, or friendship or some other occasion that stands at the beginning of the relationship.

Amenhotep III: Afrikan fatherhood and Eurocentric arrogance

A very interesting example of the use of the term *It*: 'father' to mean ideological/political father is found in an inscription on a red granite lion from the temple of Soleb in Egypt. Here the term is deployed to describe the relationship between Amenhotep III and Tutankhamon. A biological relationship is rendered impossible by the advanced ages of both Amenhotep and Queen Tiy, the would-be parents if it was indeed a blood relationship that this usage described. It seems certain that the term in this context could refer only to Tut's return to, and continuation of, specific characteristics of Amenhotep's ideological project after the disruption represented by Akhenaton's own unique departures from fundamental ideological norms. It is largely this sense of difference arising out of breaching the ideological norms and therefore not belonging to the ideological family in the consequent political project of managing the nation's affairs, which has caused some pharaohs to be excluded from some of the 'king lists.' These lists are based not only or at all on blood relations but on membership of this ideological project.

Peter Clayton's view that the term *It Neter* "was used very loosely" to describe Tut's relationship to Amenhotep (Clayton, 1994, 130), cannot therefore be sustained by the evidence. The ancient Egyptians were much too aware of meaning and much too precise in their diction to consistently apply this term "loosely" in this and similar contexts. Such consistency in usage by the ancient Egyptians do not amount to any defect in these contemporary expert witnesses' understanding and practice of their own language. In fact, it demonstrates a meaning that is quite different from the one Clayton appears to insist upon, and an ideological standpoint that

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[8] 'Written teachings' or 'Instructions' (Gardiner, 1988, 588, 616,626) in which a much-accomplished person, usually a vizier, passes on the wisdom he has acquired in public service. The recipients are his 'sons', usually relatively inexperienced successors. See 'Within the royal court' in Part I for explanation.

very clearly leads this important scholar into a regrettable disregard of the cultural context of his concern and the agency of the human actors he contradicts.

The bias of some Egyptologists has prevented them from observing the ancient Egyptians through the latter's own cultural lens and delayed the full and proper understanding of this society. The impatience of another scholar with cultural difference, or perhaps a failure to recognize that difference, is evident even when the scholar in question recognized the confusion that reigned in early Egyptology over the meanings of these terms:

> The paucity of Egyptian kinship terminology (father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter being the only terms used), and the tendency to apply these terms rather loosely so that 'sister' could be used to describe a sibling, a wife or a lover, confused many early Egyptologists." (Tyldesley 2006, 17).

The strange notion that the ancient Egyptian scribes, after years of rigorous training, were consistently "loose" in writing their own language is therefore not limited to the example of Peter Clayton. Such a conclusion is much the same as insisting that English professors consistently misuse some key term in their own language, with the implication that they do not really know and understand the meaning of the particular term, but that some other person, an observer from a different culture and a different age, does. The fact that there is unanimous and consistent agreement among indigenous authorities of Kemet upon a specific usage, ought to warn any observer that such experts knew and understood exactly what they intended to convey. The disagreement of Clayton and Tyldesley with ancient Egyptian authorities appears to suggest more about the mindset of some modern observers than about the alleged or implied linguistic incompetence — in their own language and field of specialization — of these ancient Afrikan people of outstanding achievement in numerous fields.

The casual disregard of ancient Afrikan authorities by these two scholars is a manifestation of the Eurocentrism that is referred to above, in the Introduction to this paper. The result of such action, especially because they belong to a syndrome that is both widespread and systematized, is the reduction or erasure of the agency of Afrikan people. Michael Tillotson defines such threats to the well-being of Afrikan American people as Agency Reduction Formations (ARF), but the threat is to Afrikan people everywhere. Tillotson defines ARF as "Any system of thought that distracts, neutralizes, or reduces the need and desire for assertive collective agency by African Americans." (Tillotson, 2011, 60). The challenge of western European colonial values and colonial attitudes did not disappear with the removal of western European physical control over colonized lands and people.

The error of these two scholars illustrates a general failure of Eurocentric scholarship to locate Afrikan phenomena within the historical and cultural contexts of Afrika. The same mindset and the same result are repeatedly demonstrated in Egyptology's attempts to understand the figure of the father of the god.

Inside the temple

Apart from the royal court studied in Part I, another distinctly different location in which these same roles evolved under the same title was the temple. Davies defines and elaborates this example of the office as "a class of the priesthood; here the term 'God' refers to the living King on whose behalf the priests act out their divine functions. The priest's relationship with his sovereign is usually based on a close filial union." (Davies, 1994, 96, note 164). It is difficult to see how, in a real-life context that seems to be implied here, "a close filial union" was simultaneously attainable between the king and each of this relatively large number of priests who operated in widely different geographical locations throughout the land. As shown below, it

seems necessary to conclude that this was a mentoring service provided by the priests upon the demand or request by the pharaoh.

We are told that the title '*Vater der Götter'* (father of the gods), (Erman & Grapow, 1982 I, 141) and the singular '*Vater des Gottes*' (Erman & Grapow, 1982, 142) was the title of a class of priests, more precisely, the 'name of a class of elder priests' (Gardiner, 1988, 555). It is significant that Gardiner stipulates that these were elder priests. It is a reiteration of a point he made in his oft quoted article on this subject, which is that in the Middle and early New Kingdoms "only the very highest priests," that is, "any priest of sufficient age and standing for him to expect the Pharaoh to adopt a filial attitude towards him" could become a father of the god, remembering of course that the pharaoh was (at least in theory) the chief priest of each temple, that is, of Amun, of Baset, of Ptah, and so on (Gardiner, 1947 I, 51).

Gardiner's focus here upon age and standing is especially significant because of the role of elders in general, and fathers in particular, in the cultural milieu of Kemet. The idea of seniority based upon age and status is further emphasized as the basis of the hierarchical structure within this group of priests, for they were graded into first god's father, second god's father, third god's father, fourth god's father and so on, according to these criteria (Gardiner, 1947 I, 48-49). It is this context that clarifies a mentoring role to the pharaoh of the priests who were fathers of the god, though it would be inconceivable that younger priests within the temple were not also mentored by these fathers (of the god), because of the collectivist nature of ancient Egyptian society. Here the expanded meaning of fatherhood is deployed in the temple to indicate the roles of a particular set of priests who were older than their charges, who comprised the king (theoretically) in the first instance and most likely also the younger priests. Again, this fact of being elder is amplified and clarified once the concept of elder is located within the cultural context in which it occurred. An elder in Kemet carries influence, meanings and expectations of roles which include those of mentor to anyone who is younger and in need. It is the same in contemporary Afrika, including some communities in the Diaspora, for example among the Dagara (Somé, 1999, 121-138), Igbo (Ogbaa, 1992, 67-70), Yoruba (Karenga, 1999, 37, 43, 86, 97, 132, 133, 166), Akan (Wiredu, 1996, 67-68), Minianka in Mali (Diallo & Hall, 1989 25-26, 44-47) and in the generality of the Afrikan world (Golden, 2015, 398-399; Nobles, 2009, 236-238). In this specific instance of the temple the recipients of the father's attention are the pharaoh and quite possibly the younger priests.

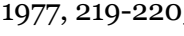
A possible difficulty with the foregoing interpretation ought to be pointed out. How could elderly priests in each temple of the land simultaneously be "fathers," really mentors, to the pharaoh? It appears that this arrangement may have been one of availability upon demand, or purely theoretical, as in the idea of the pharaoh being the chief priest of each temple. Perhaps it constitutes evidence of the evolution of this aspect of the office, for at an early stage in the development of the institutions of Kemet, it is conceivable that a senior priest of the leading temple acted as father to the pharaoh, at least in spiritual matters, including pharaoh's duties in this domain. Expansion of the pharaoh's office to cover the entire land necessitated a show of unity that in this case may have been fulfilled only by the theoretical arrangement pointed out above, as it was physically impossible for the pharaoh to be simultaneously in effective contact with all his (spiritual) fathers who were distributed over such a comparatively vast area. The ritual visitation of each pharaoh to temples in localities throughout the land, which occurred between the time of his assumption of power and the time of his actual coronation, confirms his theoretical headship of each temple. We must note that in both the *It Ntr* in the royal circle and the *'It Ntr* in the temple, it is the identical idea of fatherhood that is represented. The sole difference is the location of the person who discharged this mentoring role, though for obvious reasons it would be expected that the priests' attention would have been more on spiritual matters.

There is another potential contradiction which ought to receive our attention here. This is, as Gardiner pointed out, "the paradox of one and the same person being at once the servant and the father of the god." (Gardiner, 1947 I, 51-52). We can confirm Gardiner's hypothesis, mentioned above, that the resolution lies in the recognition that the term father of the god in a temple meant a priest who had obtained sufficient age and status that the pharaoh could be a son to him and he a father to the pharaoh. This information clarifies this definition as being beyond age to that of only status, that is, despite age. This clarification also renders the interpretation that restricts this office to a junior priest (See Dodson & Hilton, 2010, 40) to be misleading. It must be said also that such a contradiction would have occurred only to someone viewing the information from a standpoint which does not recognize the extension of the role of father beyond blood ties. That is a Eurocentric standpoint. Again, it is this specific Afrikan cultural construction of fatherhood which resolves the apparent contradiction.

Egyptology sources tend to suggest different meanings to the title father of the god, depending upon the predominant role(s) of the office visible to the scholar observing specific manifestation(s) of the office in a particular location and point in time, most especially whether the post holder resided in the royal court or in the temple. The reality is that it does not matter much where the post was located or which of its aspects was visible to the observer. Each of these is an indicator of something greater than itself. The royal court was obviously much busier and an *It Neter* stationed there would be much closer to the god in question and so tended to generate more references. But conceptually it was really the same title with the same roles and same meaning. The official performed the same functions, and the pharaoh was always the recipient of this particular example of mentoring.

Ay

The outline of the career of Senenmut was presented in Part I of this study. It was shown that his career started at a lower level in the state administration and that as he progressed toward the pinnacle he achieved in the office of father of the goddess, he acquired several titles that together illustrated his rise. Yet, as outstanding as Senenmut obviously was, the most striking example of this evolution to the very pinnacle of power in Kemet is of course Ay. He was of non-royal birth, became tutor to Akhenaton and Tutankhamon and eventually *It Neter* or father to Tutankhamon, before himself becoming Pharaoh by performing the rites of a son, including the Opening of the Mouth Ritual, at Tutankhamon's funerary rituals. It was because he performed these rites of a son to Tut that Ay inherited Tut's office of Pharaoh, for the performance of the rights of the son of Tut rendered him the son of Tut. Here it was plainly his social role that was decisive; it was not his biology, for Ay was not the biological son of Tut. That was quite impossible, since he was older (and by far) than Tut.

Ay's career progression, like that of Senenmut, is outlined by his acquisition of titles. His *shenu* or cartouche is significant because of his incorporation of the non-royal title *It Neter*, his favorite among his titles, into his nomen. This, according to Schaden, was against the tradition of Kemet (Schaden 1977, 219-220). His cartouche reads  , that is:  = father of the god' +  = 'Ay'. At one stage he referred to Tutankhamon as his son (Schaden, 1977, 77, 150, 185, 190), a fact which Schaden speculates was for 'propaganda purposes' (Schaden, 1977, 190).

This attribution is interesting for two reasons. First, Schaden appears to downplay or ignore the powerful influence of the role of son in Ay becoming pharaoh. Secondly, Schaden, regarding Ay, wrote that "it is likely that anyone chosen to fill a 'fatherly' position with regard to the young prince (i.e. Akhenaton) would be someone advanced in years, training and experience." (Schaden 1977, 97). It seems that this scholar was unaware that he had thus outlined the indicators of eligibility for this office, for this is a virtual statement of the person's specifications for the job of fathering that was based not on blood but on the ability to deliver a

quality mentoring service. In the eyes of the ancient Egyptians, it is an office that was best represented by a father's roles and therefore by the terminology in their language which best indicates that distinctive collection of roles. Here, the failure of Schaden is identical to that of Janssen and Janssen and some other scholars of Egyptology, as pointed out in Part I of this study. It is a failure to locate an Afrikan phenomenon within the Afrikan cultural context to which such phenomenon logically belongs. Once again, the logic and significance of Afrikology must be noted.

Ay's career progression is unusual in many respects. He was a commoner who became king. Before then he was a father of the god who became a god. His political trajectory inverted the more normal progression from god to father of the god, if and when the old pharaoh, or someone who acted as such, retreated from office in favor of pharaoh's biological son. This was normally through the institution of regency or co-regency. Its primary purpose was to secure an orderly transition of the office of pharaoh.

Ay is the only known example of a god's father who himself became a son to the god of whom he was previously the Father, before becoming a god himself. If this preceding sentence appears confusing, it is only because the kinship terms employed describe a reality that is viewed from the perspective of blood relations and not from the perspectives of the political and social roles such terms actually convey in the cultural context of Kemet. The same individual inhabited those socially constructed roles at different stages in his life and career. Here again, in each instance, it was not a biologically determined relationship but a socially constructed one that is conveyed by the terms "father" and "son." Here the social roles of both father and son are separated from their archetypical biological roots, although the terminology remains instructed by the latter.

Perhaps one should not leave the example of Ay without pointing out how the roles of father and son both invoked mutual rights and expectations for each party in the relationship and how these rights and expectations were socially understood and accepted throughout the society of Kemet. When Ay was Tut's father, he played the roles of chief advisor and mentor, and we must believe that Tut was responsive in the way he should have been — with respect, consideration and appreciation. When Ay became Tut's son later on, he also performed the role of son. This is partly visible in his performance at the funerary rituals for Tut. That was Ay's right and duty as Tut's son. Since a son must also inherit from his father, Ay inherited the kingship from Tut. It was the highest prize in the land. Such were the rules in Kemet. They were rigorously followed by both Tut and Ay.

This example of Ay also permits us to recognize how, certainly in these specific instances of the performance of the roles of father and son, the royalty in Kemet functioned on principles that were rooted in the culture of the general population. These rules were widespread among the people of Kemet but were perhaps modified to suit the purposes of the state, which was erected upon a concentration of military, economic and political power in the hands of the royal elite.

Many other kinship terms in Kemet privileged sociology over biology (Allen, 2009, 53-55; Allen, 1998), a convention that is shared with other Afrikan societies. Consider the example of Ahmose-Nefertari, who held the title daughter of the king during the reign of her biological son, Amenhotep I, (Troy 1986, 107; Tyldesley 1995, 198). Here we see notions of kinship in both their restricted or blood (biological) sense and the expanded or non-blood (sociological) sense. The notion of fatherhood indicated here is clearly that of her son the king in his role of father or leader of the nation. Because she was one of his subjects, a citizen of the nation he led, Ahmose-Nefertari was her blood son's daughter in this civic sense. This is not a relationship, far less terminology, that makes any sense from a European cultural standpoint. The only way in which this information makes any sense is when it is restored to the Afrikan cultural context to which

it always belonged. The paradox of the same person being simultaneously both servant and father of the same god, pointed out by Gardiner and discussed above, falls into the same category and could also be resolved only by relocation of the information into its natural and historical and cultural context of Afrika.

Joseph

We may detain ourselves with one further example of the father of the god as a wise adviser or mentor to Pharaoh. The bible is a non-Egyptian source that is usually very hostile to ancient Egypt. Further, there is a multitude of very well-founded exposures of inaccuracies, anti-Afrikan racism and other objections to this document and traditional interpretations of it. Objections have arisen from within both Afrikology and the currently dominant western narrative **(**Assmann, 1997; Freud, 1990, 239-386), including extensive textual borrowings and other influences (Browder, 1992, 86-98; Ben-Jochannan, 1988; Greenburg, 1999) that are usually unacknowledged in the epistemology of the western world. The story of Joseph in the Bible occupies Genesis chapters 37-50 and has been the subject of much interest to scholars of Egyptology and aligned fields of inquiry. (Examples include Binder, 2011, 44-64; Zuhdi, 1997, 69-78 and Redford, 1992, 422-29). Redford has declared that there is no reason to believe in a factual basis of this story (1992, 29); however, a significant number of details in the text virtually assures the opposite.

The text deploys references to the term father in both its biological and its extended or non-biological or social meanings. At Genesis 37:26–28, 30-year-old Joseph, the Hebrew, is sold by his own blood brothers to the Ishmaelites or Midianites for 20 pieces of silver, to the grief of his blood father. He is taken to Egypt by the Ishmaelites. Genesis 37: 36 claims that Joseph was sold to Potiphar, the captain of pharaoh's guard. At Genesis 41:39–44 Joseph, through good luck and reputed wisdom, is made second in command over Egypt: Vizier to Pharaoh.

It is significant that Joseph was pharaoh's deputy or Vizier. This office was simultaneously occupied by a number of fathers of the god. In Joseph's own words, he had become "father to pharaoh" (Genesis 45:8). As noted by Zuhdi: "This is a faithful translation of the Egyptian *it nṯr*: 'father of the god,'" though this scholar's characterization of the title as one "often accorded to trusted royal ministers" (Zuhdi, 1997, 73) is much too imprecise for what is now known. In fact, in the context of this story, "father to pharaoh" is an exact rendition of the ancient Egyptian term father of the god in terminology, in qualification (here Joseph's wisdom, even though he is comparatively young chronologically speaking), in roles (Mentor and Vizier) and in the recipient of the fatherly duties: the pharaoh.

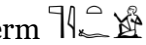
Despite the substantial difficulties presented in accepting the Bible as an authentic source of history, the evidence suggests that aspects of the Joseph story seem to possess some historical validity. It appears that this is effectively an independent eyewitness attestation of the existence of the office, a verification of the standard terminology employed to describe it, and a verification of its roles. This is a testament by an outsider who, in unusual circumstances, became an appointee to the office and a participant in its roles. Joseph was an outsider who gained insider knowledge and experience of the office and its functioning. He may therefore be regarded as an expert eyewitness, a very knowledgeable participant observer in this matter.

Conclusion

These examples repeatedly demonstrate the basic qualifications for the roles of the *It Neter*. These are the fundamental importance of age, with its assumptions of experience, knowledge and wisdom; the widely acknowledged duty of passing wisdom on to the next generation and the duty of inheritors (traditionally available in the practice of family in Kemet

and most publicly articulated in the role of father on the occasion of the *Sebayat*), as well as proximity to the royal circle, which implies trustworthiness. We see here also the roles of this official as tutor, adviser, guide, counselor, and motivator to the pharaoh. In the view of the western-dominated world, these are the basic qualifications of mentor and mentors. In the Afrikan world view, these roles are best described by the term father — whether or not this indicates a blood relationship. Even though blood was important as the primary basis or beginning of such a relationship, it was neither the only one nor the most important consideration. Rather, it was the quality of the relationship, which was itself reinforced by the mutually binding and widely understood rights and obligations implied by such an arrangement, articulated by this term, and operationalized in its practice. This is demonstrated above.

It is therefore of the greatest significance that within Egyptology this term father of the god is not normally interpreted even in the limited context of the Afrikan family. None of the scholars of Egyptology studied this office in the context of the family and/or the notion of fatherhood elaborated by the people of Kemet in the literature of Kemet, i. e., of themselves. Conversely, in Egyptology, none of the studies of the family mentioned this office or focused upon it or arrived at anything approaching a viable conclusion based upon the meanings conveyed by it. Eurocentric scholarship on the father of the god has therefore so far deprived the people of Kemet of cultural agency in their own affairs. Irrespective of whether or not this consequence is intentional, it contributes to the western European project of colonial domination over large sections of humanity and their spiritual and material inheritances and other possessions.

There can be no doubt that the term  always defined a relationship with the pharaoh that was close and therefore influential, at times even critical. This was the central fact of the office. The single factor that unites all these apparently disparate origins, roles and functions of the office described by the term is the concept and practice of fatherhood in its extended — that is, its non-biological or sociological meaning, which is Afrikan. This realization illustrates the great importance of locating phenomena on Kemet within Afrikan history and the Afrikan cultural universe.

The academic and intellectual investigation reflected in parts I and II of this study illustrates some of the weaknesses of Eurocentrism and demonstrates the correctness of Afrocentrism. It shows that unless the study of Afrikan phenomena is conducted from Afrocentric perspectives and center Afrikan people as knowing agents in their own stories and in their own history, culture and environment, the study of humanity (art and human sciences) will continue to be distorted because of the deep flaws in the dominant narrative about the very first humans and the very first civilizations: the very foundation of humanity.

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Kimani Nehusi currently teaches in the Department of Afrikology at Temple University. His scholarship is distinguished by strong interests in the holistic study of the Afrikan world from ancient times to the future, the Caribbean and Guyana. His perspective is an Afrocentric one in which Afrikan phenomena are simultaneously accessible from approaches that are usually termed language and linguistics, history and culture through a robust research methodology.

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Multilingualism and decolonization in Femi Osofisan's plays: A postcolonial perspective

JIDE AJIDAHUN, Ph.D.
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper examines the multilingual nature of Osofisan's plays as copiously shown in the languages, dialects and registers used by his characters as the playwright's noble attempt at decolonising African drama. The paper adopts the postcolonial theory as its theoretical framework to give the paper a solid conceptual foundation. It also examines the use of the standard British English used by the characters depicted as English men and the Nigerian English variety spoken by the main characters representing the Nigerian elite. The use of Nigerian Pidgin English by servants, messengers, attendants in the plays is also discussed in addition to the code mixing of English with the indigenous Nigerian languages and their functions. The utilization of these varieties of English by the playwright is also a reflection of one of the unavoidable, realistic, albeit, colonial legacies bequeathed to Africans which must be harnessed to our advantage without compromising the African heritage. The coexistence of Nigerian languages and English in Osofisan's plays reflects the African local colour and makes his plays accessible to a wide audience without compromising standard and intelligibility and without any prejudice and linguistic chauvinism.

Keywords: decolonisation, drama, Femi Osofisan, language, multilingualism.

Introduction

Nigeria is a heterogeneous and multi-ethnic nation with over 500 languages and dialects being spoken across the country (Adegbite, 2010; Ayeomoni, 2012; Emenanjo, 2019). English is the official language, while Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo are the dominant indigenous languages. To enhance the growth and development of these indigenous languages, the Federal Republic of Nigeria's *National policy on education* (2004) makes them the media of instruction in the first three years of primary education in the immediate environments in which they are spoken. English is then used both as a school subject and as the language of instruction from the fourth year. Even at the secondary school level, students are to offer one of the indigenous languages as a compulsory subject at the school certificate level. In addition, French is regarded as the second official language in Nigeria. Consequently, it is supposed to be a compulsory subject in the primary and junior secondary school and a non-vocational elective at the senior secondary school.

Generally, Nigerian drama reflects this multifaceted linguistic structure. This is in tandem with the observation made by Ogundeji (2004) that "it is in drama more than in other literary forms, that the complexity of the Nigerian multilingual situation is best appreciated because of its mimetic form" (670). Olanipekun, Onabanjo and Olayemi, (2016) show that the 21st century African writers have domesticated the English language in African fiction. Similarly, Epoge (2015) confirms the domestication of the language through proverbial discourse in the English of the Akoose in Cameroon. Adegbite (2010) has shown that Afolayan (1968), Adeniran (1977), Banjo (1969), Adesanoye (1973) and Goke-Pariola, (1987) were concerned majorly with the negative interferences of English on indigenous Nigerian languages while Achebe (1975) and Bamgbose (1995, 2004) focused on the domestication, *nativisation* or indigenisation of English. Recent studies by Otor (2015), Olarewaju (2016), Osoba (2016), Banjo (2016), Dossoumou (2017), Emenanjo (2019) and others are essentially preoccupied with the influence of English on the indigenous languages. They address issues of code-mixing, code-switching, Standard and non-standard English, and Pidgin English.

Therefore, this paper will explore the languages used in Femi Osofisan's plays. It will examine the use of the standard English (Nigerian and British). The use of Nigerian Pidgin English and the indigenous Nigerian languages and their functions will also be discussed.

Review of Literature

Hart (2020) defines multilingualism as the presence of linguistic diversity in a speech community while Lin and Lei (2020) define it as the use of three or more languages. Also, Azum (2013) defines multilingualism as the promotion of multiple languages in a community and multiculturalism is the belief in the peaceful coexistence of different cultures in a single community. Moawad and El Shoura (2017) opine that "multiculturalism recognizes … the presence of all diverse groups in a society, their socio-cultural differences and their contributions within a society" (802). Similarly, Chahur and Adzer (2017) use multilingualism interchangeably with plurilingualism and describe Nigeria as a multilingual speech community having, as already indicated, about 500 languages and dialects. They, therefore, define "multilingualism as a situation where a number of languages exist in a speech community" (165). According to Gardner-Chloros and Weston (2015), the functions of multilingualism in literature are "to mark out different parts of the text; to represent a mixed speech mode which characterizes the community; or to bring in different registers or sets of allusions" (186). Peterson (2011) in her study on literary polyglossia observes that multilingualism is a prominent and flowering feature of South Indian drama. Gardner-Chloros and Weston (2015), Adams, Swain and Janse (2002), Mullen (2011) and Mullen and James (2012) have all studied various aspects of literary multilingualism, although only the studies of Euba (1981), Ogundeji (2014), Ilo (2006) and Uwadinma-Idemudia (2010) are concerned about the African situation.

The plays of Osofisan, which are multilingual, perform all these functions because of the multilingual and multicultural nature of Nigeria. The emergence of Pidgin English, which is dominant in the drama of Femi Osofisan, is one of the realities of postcolonial times in which English is now the official language of most independent African nations formerly colonized by Britain. The existence of the English side by side with indigenous languages has such sociolinguistic implications as language interference, the agitation for the decolonization of the African literature as championed by wa Thiong'o (1992) and the emergence of local varieties of the English, which reflect copiously in the plays of Femi Osofisan. wa Thiong'o's *Decolonizing the mind* (1992) is a revolutionary postcolonial discourse that campaigns vigorously for the total rejection of the English language as the language of African literature. That is why Osofisan (1992) says, "I have reached a point of crisis. I don't know whether it is worth any longer writing in English" (26).

Theoretical Framework

The paper's theoretical framework is based on the postcolonial literary theory ingrained in the history of imperialism. So, it is therefore, impossible to separate the concerns of postcolonial critics from the colonial trajectory. According to Habib (2011), postcolonial theory is concerned with a re-evaluation and reappraisal of the account of colonialism from the perception of the colonized and the impact of imperialism on the colonized peoples. Besides, it is involved in the decolonization process. Its purpose is to liberate the literature, culture and the economy of the Third World countries now known in the decolonized parlance as *tricontinent*. Abrams and Harpham (2012) are also of the view that "the postcolonial agenda is to disestablish Eurocentric norms of literary and artistic values." (307). This is in line with the submission of Arnold in Habib (2011) that the purpose of literature is "promote sympathy and fellow feeling among all classes, 'to educate citizens as to their duties, to inculcate national pride and moral values" (273). Ngugi Wa Thiong'o in his *Decolonizing the Mind* is a revolutionary postcolonial discourse that campaigns vigorously for the total rejection of the English language as the language of African literature. He wonders how the colonised nations will continue to use the language of the colonial masters to capture adequately the African essence.

Wali (1963), Obumselu (1966), Chakaipa (1966) and wa Thiong'o (1992) are of the view that for African nations to develop, African literature must be decolonized by rejecting English language and by embracing indigenous languages; however, Ilo (2006), Fashina (2008), Okara (1963), Achebe (1975), Adegbija (2004) and other writers embrace a hybrid of English and indigenous languages in African literature. They support the indigenization and nativization of the English language as a good strategy for decolonising African literature (Dia & Saint Louis, 2014). According to Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike (2016), the purpose of decolonization is to destroy "all encrustations of colonial mentality… and map out new foundations for an African modernity" (245-246). This view seems to inform the attitude of Femi Osofisan in reflecting the multilingual nature of his drama. This textual analysis will show the linguistic varieties which constitute the aesthetics of Osofisan's drama. It is against this background that the theory becomes relevant to this study.

Textual Analysis

1. The Use of Standard English

The standard British English, as used here, according to *The American Heritage Guide to Contemporary Usage and Style*, "refers to both an actual variety of language and an idealized norm of English acceptable in many social situations" (2005, xiv). This is because there are many different varieties of English spoken in about 80 countries in the world and each variety has its own standard (Laperre, 2020). The English used in the plays of Osofisan refers to the standard British English variety which is restricted to characters of high socio-economic and

educational background. In *The Oriki of a grasshopper* (1986, 19-33), Claudius and Imaro speak the standard British English variety. This is because Imaro is a university lecturer and Claudius, an educated businessman. Both express their past experiences in the following statements:

Imaro: And they continue to sell our people. Once it was for mirrors, for cheap jewelry, for cowries. The rich men raided the poor, captured them, and sold them off to the slave ships. Then came the age of palm oil, of cocoa, timber and of cotton. The rich men made their slaves work on their plantations, carting off the products of their labour into the white ships. Always into the white ships. Then came the age of mineral ore, of tin, marble, and gold dust. And the rich now have policemen. They have soldiers, with numbers and uniforms. They make their numerous Luckys go down into the mines and bring out the ore. And then straight into the white ships. Always, always into the white ships. Into the insatiable white ships. While they send us their second-rate experts, their second-rate machines, their mind-destroying music, their corrupting culture, their consoling bible (19-20).

Claudius: It's all a game, a riddle, and it has a formula. Every contractor knows it. Poverty is like that, it has fenced our lives round with so many riddles of deceit. And you cannot advance past them without the right response. But it's not hard to learn… (33)

Similarly, Governor Carter-Ross and Captain Allan Jones in *Tegonni: An African Antigone* (1999, 130-131) speak the Standard British English variety. This is shown in the conversation between Allan Jones and Governor.

Jones: She came to me for refuge. At the beginning that's all it was. A terrified woman, trying to affirm her independence against an unreasonable tradition. They were going to have her fingers burnt out, as they treat witches. So she ran to me, and when I listened to her, I decided to offer her our protection. I helped her to build her workshop and got some tools for her from Lagos. And, then I began to see the products of her work (130).

Governor: I am an old warrior. I grew up in an age when certain things were taken for granted. We did not need to write the rules down, everybody knew what you had to do, and the options were simple. You came with the gun in one hand, and the whip in the other. You barked out orders, and you punished, summarily. You knew you were right, because you were white, and you believed in the cross and in the Empire. You hammered the Union Jack down their throats, and made them sing "God save the Queen"! For if you didn't do that, they would quickly resort to barbarism, to cannibalism, to living like apes. That's why we have endured to stay here, in spite of the heavy toll we pay, we ourselves, in human lives! Against the fearsome fevers, the murderous dysentery, the foul and fetid air! (130-131)

Osofisan uses the speech of the Governor, an English man to arrest the attention of his audience and cause them to stay on in the theatre through his profound use of the formal English variety.

Osofisan, in an interview with Morosetti (2013), explains why he uses the standard English variety in his plays: "… if we want to find a language that transcends all the ethnicities, it is English. This English which, paradoxically, our former colonisers gave us, but which is the only language that unites us. This is why I use English like most of my fellow writers" (234). Although this may sound like a contradiction to Osofisan's postcolonial stance, the playwright, believes that the English language, "which transcends all the ethnicities", must be used for tackling national problems such as poverty, ethnicity, injustice and oppression. Poverty, for instance, is not an ethnic problem; it is a national issue. So, it cannot be tackled or eradicated through the use of the indigenous languages. We need a unifying language like English and not the indigenous languages that are divisive to address poverty and other national problems caused by the "fundamental flaws in the structure of the state." (Morosetti, 2013, 234).

2. The Use of Indigenous Languages

To give weight to the multilingual nature of his drama, Osofisan's plays are replete with African and Yoruba imagery, proverbs, maxims, axioms, incantations, and riddles. Some examples are taken from *Yungba-Yungba and the Dance Contest*:

Aperin: As Yeye herself will tell you, my daughters, Igbin, the snail, has no horns. No, it did not even have the good fortune to be at home on the day the lord of creation was going round, distributing teeth to others to protect themselves. But still, my daughter, the snail knows what it must do to survive in a land full of skillful hunters and hungry men (38).

Iyerin: A snake has many colours, but how many heads, Aro? Just one! And when the head is severed? So, Aro, why are you our channel in Osugbo? (62)

Akosin: Not at all! For the crab, as they say, may not have much to project itself. But it has its eyes, and has put them where it believes they will be most effective-on its forehead! (89)

We also have similar examples in *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen (*1992):

Ba Nonhun: True, the child boasts of fine clothes, more numerous than his father's. But suppose it is rags that are needed? How many can he count? (18)

KANS: Greetings my friends! When you see the elephant, do not say, ah, I felt a whiff of wind! The king of the forest takes the forest itself along, whenever he travels! (39)

Bale: It's too late for that! When you drop something in the communal pot and say it is a spice you must prove it by first licking the stew! (50)

In *A Restless Run of Locusts* (1975), the speech made by the elders who are sent by Kabiyesi to Sanda is full of Yoruba proverbs and idioms:

1st Elder: That's enough! You're not in a classroom castigating school children. You're before your elders and you have climbed your tree past the highest leaf. Beware; you are on the edge of tumbling down. The bird which flew too close to the sun got

himself burnt. You throw stones at the throne. Have you a place to hide when it starts throwing curses back? (29)

The use of proverbs by the playwright is to promote and preserve the African cultural heritage. In the confrontation between Alafin Abiodun and Latoye in *The Chattering and the Song* (1976, pp. 39-44), there are exchanges of incantations and a display of magical charms and spells. Such incantations contain proverbs and axioms:

Abiodun: Shall the scorpion sting, and claim youth as an excuse? He wants to die, let him!

Latoye: Look at my muscles ripple with life. The blood pulses in them like chattering birds. But your time is up. The death that is coming is for you. Yes! Because the earth, fouled with your contagion, cries for cleansing! Your fat buttocks are the rotten weight of plague choking the neck of the nation and your smirking lips are full of the breath of germs and contamination... Nonsense! When the wind changes direction, all the branches bend with it! Ha! Ha! Alafin, you forget, I am the whetstone on which many of your men sharpened their swords of valour... The sapling which tries to halt the passage of the elephant will be plucked from its roots! Whenever the storm starts on a journey, not all the branches in the forest can bar its way! If the hill will not yield to the flow of the river, it will have its bosom furrowed! And now I say wind! And I am wind! I say river! I say elephant! Let all your forces melt before me! Freeze! (The guards freeze.)

Abiodun: Ah! The toad puffs its belly, and boasts of growing fatter! Will self-deception hide the festering sore in Edun's arse? Latoye, you bushrat, you have challenged the king of the forests to combat, now watch the lion gobble his prey!

Alafin: Animals! Spiteful rodents! You talk of the king's demanding, but will the leopard feed on grass? You complain of toiling, but when the land withers in a season of white spots, and Obaluwaye thirsts for blood, whose voice will pronounce the message, whose hand wield the knife that will spill the vital fluid? Answer me! When the season insists that Bata drums be unleashed like hunting dogs, and Sango roams the land with his double-headed axe, whose body will revive the ancient dance to calm the fiery eyes, stay the menace of thunder? Answer! When the new moon summons into chorus the sixteen voices of Igbin, and the earth lays open for its ritual of cleansing, tell me, who will chant Orisanla's sacred incantation?

Also, Aafaa in *Once Upon Four Robbers* (1980) teaches the robbers the following incantations that will help them to rob people successfully. The verse is rendered in Yoruba:

Omo Enire
Omo Enire
Omo enikan saka bi agbon
Ifa ka rele o
Ewi nle Ado
Orisa ni Deta
Erinmi lode Owo
Ifa ka rele o
Gbolajoko, omo Okinkin
Tii merin fon
Ifa ka rele o
Omo opolopo imo
Titi tu jijia wodo
Omo asese yo ogomo
Tii fun nigin nigin
Omo ejo meji
Tii sare ganranganran lori irawe
Omo ina joko mo jeeluju
Ifa ka rele o. (22)

It is also translated into English in the glossary of the play:

Son of Enire
Son of Enire
Of those who strike sudden and sharp
Ifa, we invite you home!
Ewi of Ado
Orisa of Deta
Erinmi of Owo
Ifa, we beckon you here!
Gbolajoko, who seats wealth
On sedate throne,
Offspring of elephant
With ivory trumpets
Ifa, hearken to our call!
Source of grateful palm fronds
Which dance and hum by the river
Ifa, we invite you home!
Shoot of tender palm fronds
So fresh and frail and young
Offspring of two snakes
Which slide so fast on trees
Offspring of bush fire
Which spares the Oorun branches
You offspring of bush fire
Which skirts the heart of forest
Ifa, hearken to our call! (78-79)

These incantations contain some African mythical metaphors and names of some Yoruba legendary figures. The incantations also contain certain Yoruba and African concepts that have to do with African and Yoruba world views. For instance, *Ifa* is one of the African divinities endowed with knowledge and riches. That is why he is referred to as *Gbolajoko*, the one whose seat is wealth. A call on him is a call on wealth. According to Awodiya (2010), "Orunmila is the Yoruba god of wisdom and divination who must be consulted by the people before they can take important decisions concerning their lives" (68).

Osofisan in Awodiya (1993) explains why he uses the Ifa mythology in his plays and says: "I decided to go for Ifa…It is a symbol that represents the intellectual, humanizing ideal" (70). Such mythical and philosophical concepts that are embedded in Yoruba culture and tradition cannot be easily decoded by a non-Nigerian or non-Yoruba. The use of incantations helps to deepen the knowledge of African culture. It also depicts the potency of African magical power contrary to the view of the former colonial masters that Africa never had any culture before their arrival on the continent. Osofisan (1993) justifies the use of oral literature and indigenous languages in his drama when he says that "I want to emphasise that cultural aspect of our being, that we are Africans. And that, particularly, in this present world, where I see the American imperialism marching so strongly, we must resist in order to keep our identity" (97).

3. The Use of Pidgin English

Another medium that Osofisan uses is Nigerian pidgin which is "an English-based contact language." It is popular in the media and entertainment industry as the language of comedy; even regular broadcasts are made on the radio and television in pidgin to show its gradual growth and potential to compete with English in some formal spheres (Agbo & Plag, 2020, 4). According to Igboanusi (2008), Nigerian pidgin is not acquired through formal education and its orthography has not been developed, yet it has become the language of some sectional groups in Nigeria.

Pidgin is spoken often, most especially, by low level characters: messengers and servants although according to Agbo and Plag (2018) and Jowitt (2019) when used in informal settings, it is spoken by more than half of the Nigerian population, mostly students in higher institutions. Pidgin English is used by the thugs of Chief Kuti, a political opponent of Sanda in *A Restless Run of Locusts* (1975) to show their level of brutality and violence:

1st Thug;	All done, Chief
Chief Kuti:	You got him?
1st Thug:	Sure!
2nd Thug:	Him an' three other bastards
1st Thug;	Yes, And his brother too
Chief Kuti:	You mean, Sanda?
1st Thug:	Yes, Sah! An' the house too, we finish am.
Chief Kuti;	Sure there was no mistake?
1st Thug:	No worry, ogah. We sabi our job well. See?
2nd Thug:	We break the house so-tay people go say na tief
1st Thug:	Only thing be say we no find money. (12)

In the excerpt above, **ogah** in Pidgin language is the equivalent of **boss** in standard English**,** while **sabi** means **understand** in standard English. S**o-tay** in pidgin means **to the extent/that,** while **sah** means **sir** in standard English. Pidgin is also used by the soldiers in *Tegonni: An African Antigone* (1999) to comment on the arrest and detention of Tegonni and her friends on the order of the Governor:

1st Sol: How now? You don watch woman tire?
3rd Sol: Shorrop your mouth?
2nd Sol: See? Solid! Even the Queen of England go want to die here?
3rd Sol: Go bring am quick, come shoot am! Idiot Soldier! Queen of England indeed! She be rebel like de girls wey you tie up there?

2nd Sol: But wetin? Before-before, you no want talk to anybody. Now dat you open your mouth, na to curse person.

4th Sol: Wetin dey bite you self? Abi you swallow scorpion last night?

3rd Sol: Na your mama swallow scorpion. Plus cobra. And lizard.

1st Sol.: Abi you want marry one of de womans? Like the D.O.?

2nd Sol.: For where? Yeye person like him go fit find dowry to pay?

1st Sol: E no matter sha. By dis afternoon Gomina for don kill all of dem.

4th Sol. Womans! I no dey understand dem at all-at all! Too too strong head. Instead of dem to beg de Gov'nor! Do men put dem here, to watch de stake as we dey build am. He want do thing to frighten dem, for dem to begin to shake, but see.

3rd : You see! Na dis kind work a person wey get sense dey do? No self – respect at all. "Build stake!... Go kill dat one!... And dat odder one, arrest am!... Slap woman!... Bully small pickin!... Break him leg!" useless soldiers.

2nd Sol: Who tell you say, me too, I like am? But since na Antigone give us de role for dis play, wetin we go

3rd Sol: We fit refuse. Me I no want to be soldier again (Throws down his gun)

2nd Sol: (Doing the same). Me too, He don tire me too true-true!

1st Sol: (following suit). All of us don! Me too, I no want de role again. (71-73)

Soldier 1: Well, I am tired of these last-minute orders. I can just picture the Sergeant calling his wife one day. Darring!...

Soldier 2: Yessaaah!'
Soldier 1: Darrrring mi!'
Soldier 2: 'Yes, di' yah! I'm here'
Soldier 1: "How many pickin we get?
Soldier 2: 'Pardon?'
Soldier 1: 'Picking, we pickin. How many we get now?'
Soldier 2: 'Hm, which kin' question be that? Why you dey axe me? You know say na two I born;
Soldier 1: 'Na this tax form here. E say tht if we get three children, we go qualify for rebate'.

Soldier 2: 'I no tell you before? You see yourself now!'
Soldier 1: 'Shrurrup! By this time tomorrow, you hear?
Soldier 2: 'Hen-hen?'
Soldier 1: 'By this time tomorrow, I order you to born anodder picking!' (43-44)

Also, in the excerpt above, **You don** in Pidgin language means **You have (present tense, perfective aspect)** in the standard English**;** while **shorrop** means **shut up** in the standard English. Also**, wetin** in pidgin language means **what?** or **what is it?** in standard English language. The word **Gomina** spoken by the 1st Soldier and the word **Gov'nor** show the variants of the word **Governo**r by the users of Pidgin English. Polycap, the houseboy of the Chairman Local Government Council in *Who's afraid of Solarin*? (1978) talks to Isola Orievo in Pidgin on why the Chairman and his councillors are afraid of him:

Isola: But tell me, why do you think I can do it? Why are they afraid of me?

Polycap: Ah everybody here don hear of you sah, the way you dey hammerall those people for Ibadan and Lagos! Nor to you be Mrs. Solarin, the Commissioner of Complaint.

Isola: Ah! How did you know?
Polycarp: We don see your anthem for radio. My pickens dey sing as sotay! 'For dis corner, you dey there… for dat corner, you dey there!" Ah, Master, you no go die! You know, all dis morning, my Master and him friends, Councillor Abeni and Kaokudi, Chief Force is Force, the Dokita and the Judge, they meet and begin to halla because they hear say you dey come. Ha ha, they no know say you don arrive already! You too cunning sha! The Pastor too, he begin to shake because of the church money we lost last month. Ah sah, you too terrible. The fear wey you give everybody! And all because they don hear say you no dey take bribery and corruption from nobody – ah, that remind me. Take caresah. They go try to bribe you (49).

The use of Pidgin by Polycapreveals the playwright's deployment of humour as a satiric tool. Bicycle, a hotel assistant in *Midnight Hotel* (1986), also speaks Pidgin. For instance, when Bicycle appears in the foyer and discovers a chain broken by Suuru, he expresses his fear and uneasiness in pidgin to Awero:

Bicycle: Whetin! No be de chair for room 6 I see so? Broken! Na who day break chair for dis place again since I commot? Small time now, dem go say na me broke am. I beg sah! Madam! I beg, make una no vex. Na chair I see for corridor, and… and … (23)

In the above excerpt, the Pidgin English spoken by Bicycle shows the language of the masses.Osofisan deliberately allows this in order to make his drama accessible to the common man on the street in a multilingual environment like Nigeria.That is why Awodiya (2010) says that "Osofisan is an advocate of accessible diction" (244).

4. Code-Mixing

Multilingualism in the drama of Femi Osofisan involves the use of several languages within a text. Generally, this can take the form of code switching or code-mixing. Code switching is the swapping from one language to another to create different linguistic and literary effects, while code mixing, which is the common mode in Ososifan's plays, is the mixing of two or more languages together within a text. Kim (2006) citing Bhatia and Ritchie (2004) defines code-mixing as "the mixing of various linguistic units (morphemes, words, modifiers, phrases, clauses and sentences) primarily from two participating grammatical systems within a sentence" (45). Banjo (2016) also defines code mixing, which he also refers to language mixing, as a convergence phenomenon in which elements of the two languages co-occur within a sentence. Osofisan's plays are replete with instances of code-mixing. He often spices English with Yoruba, Hausa, Arabic, Igbo, French and Latin expressions. In the following examples where English is mixed with Yoruba expressions, the underlined phrases are in Yoruba:

1. *Moruntodun* (1983, 63)

   Mama Kayode: So hand it over at... yeee-pah! **Ori mi o**! (63)

   Mama Kayode:We have no electric and we still drink **tanwiji** from the stream (65).

2. *Another raft* (1989)

   Ekuroola: You too! **O ma se o**! What do they say? (27)

3. *Many colours Make the thunder-king* (1999)

   Oya: Oya I'm your **Iyaale**! But my life is nothing but misery! (p. 189)

   Oya: Yeepah! **Eewo**! My husband! Your son, our son is gone! (226)

4. *The chattering and the song* (1976)

   Sontri: Then Answer me! **IworiOtura** (2)
   Sontri: Ah never! **DidunnileOloyin** (6)
   Funlola: Affection intrudes, **abi?** (10)

5. *Once Upon Four Robbers* (1980)

   Alhaja: Lagbejino o! Hot steaming corn! (47)
   Alhaja: Slim, so slim they called her **opelenge** (52)
   Robbers: **E ma jo-ooo**! Dance! (71)

6. *Twingle-Twangle: A Twynningtayle* (1995)

   Baba IbejiThat's right! **We-e-ere** (1)

   Taye: My people! **Eyineniyan me!Ore Gbogbo!** (77)

   Citizen: Forgive us, **Ore wa** (77).

In the excerpts above, **tanwiji, Iyaale, opelenge, iworiotura** are Yoruba expressions that cannot be adequately rendered in the English without committing some semantic blunders.

Tanwiji is the lava stage in the life cycle of mosquitos. When the Yoruba say that they are drinking **tanwiji** water, it means that they do not have access to pipe-borne water. **Tanwiji** would be unintelligible to people without a Yoruba background. **Iyaale** is a Yoruba word for first wife. Other wives never refer to her by her first name. O**pelenge** is a Yoruba word for a slim person. **IworiOtura** is the mythical parlance by the worshippers of *Ifa*, an oracle that is widely worshipped by some Yoruba people and other Africans in the diaspora. Code mixing, as a sociological phenomenon according to Kim (2006), is used when there is no suitable translation for the words or expressions in the language being used. In addition Banjo (2016) is of the view that code mixing indicates familiarity between the two interlocutors.

In the following examples, Hausa is mixed with English, as the underlined expressions show:

1. *Altine's wrath* (1986)

Alhaji:	Ink pad! **Wallahi,** Mr.Jatau, you don't mean your wife, that she can't... (76)
Lawal:	Come here will you! **So mana!**(76)

2. *Aringindin and the nightwatchmen* (1992)

Gbadegesin:	*Wallahi* And death is its accomplice! (5)

3. *Morountodun* (1983)

Alhaja:	Ah **Allah**, what on earth could she have done? (19)

Wallahi means **'**I swear;' s**o mana '**come here;' and **Allah '**God.' These Hausa expressions reveal the identities of Alhaji, Lawal and Gbadegesin as Hausa characters. Osofisan (2001) refers to this kind of mixing in his plays and those of his colleagues such as Ogunyemi's *Langbodo* (1979) and Rotimi's *Hopes of the living dead* (1998) as "... multicultural and experimental attempts to construct a national identity" (81).

Also, in the following examples, the underlined expressions are in Arabic:

1. *Midnight hotel* (1986)

Asibong: I see. **Alhamidulilai!** Darkness doesn't frighten me (10)

Asibong;	I see. Ah, **bissimilahi** (11)

2. *Morountodun* (1983)

Buraimoh: Hear that! **Allah-akbar**! Where do you think you are? (50)

3. *Once upon four robbers* (1980)

Aafa:	**Robinajiniwahaalimimoyahamalum!... Walahuhairuhafizan,wauwaarihamurohimin!** (11-12)
Alhaja:	**Sallualaanbiyyikarim!** (12)

Aafa: **Sa ilalahualayhiwasalam**. I see you have been able to pick up a few things from your lovers (12)

Aafa: **Alhamidulilai**. Your husband was it? (13)

Aafia: **Allah akbar!** Grey hair is not sold in the market (14)

4. *The engagement* (1997)

Elemude: The fact is, you see…**bissimilai!** (2)

Elemude: Ah my dear sir! My dear sir! I mean … **bissimilai** (9).

We see here, again, the mixture of English and Arabic expressions such as **Alhamidulilai! (**Praise be to God!**), bissimilahi (**In the name of God**), (Allah-akbar**! (God is greater), **Robinajiniwahaalimimoyahamalum!… Walahuhairuhafizan, wauwaarihamurohimin!, Sallualaanbiyyikarim! (**Quranic chants during prayers**)** in the identified plays to reflect the local language and the religion of the characters.

In addition, Osofisan also spices English with Igbo lexical items and expressions. In *The Album of the Midnight Blackout* (1994)*,* the underlined phrases in the following examples are Igbo expressions*:*

Juokwu: When I saw you storming in like that, **Eziokwu**!… I'm sure the story must be going round the campus now (p. 8)

Juokwu: You do! **Igwekala**! (11)

Juokwu: **Ihukwalameshi-shi**! My God! (11)

Chinwe: **Anwualam!** So Prof. knows!… It's true Sir, I confess… (20)

Juokwu: **Ezeeli-igwe**, my wife! She's awake (61)

Iberibe: Play **ncholokoto**! At this hour? (71)

Just as Osofisan mixes English with Yoruba and Hausa expressions in his plays, he also mixes English with Igbo language expressions such as **Eziokwu**! (**truly/honestly)**, **Igwekala**! (Heaven greater than earth), **Ihukwalameshi-shi**! (an exclamation for expressing a sense of wonder or bewilderment), **Anwualam! (**I am dead!**), Ezeeli-igwe,** (King of Heaven) and **ncholokoto**! (a game) to make his drama a complete reflection of all the three major indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria: Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. Besides, the Igbo expressions are apt for Osofisan's characters in *The Album of the Midnight Blackout* whose names such as Juokwu, Chinwe and Iberibe are truly Igbo. This is why Osofisan (2001) says that

> It is clear therefore that, in writing dialogue for our plays, we are also un/consciously creating a national language, a Nigerian version of English in search of itself, and whose advantage will be, not only that it enables us to communicate across ethnic borders, but that also internationally, across national and continental frontiers (80).

It is in *Twingle-Twangle: A twynningtayle* (1995) that we find the mixture of English code with Latin phrases and expressions by Professor, one of the suitors of Tinuade, the princess of Oba Elenon:

Professor:	Friends, Erekoans, gentlemen, **De gustibus non estdisputandum**!... What you lay men vulgarly refer to as stew in fact, is more properly known in learned circles as **corchorusolitorius, Celosia Argentea**, or **VernoniaAmygdalana**. And it is particularly irresistible when accompanied by **orisasativa**. You follow me? Its origin, a veritable **bello gallico**, is a mystery only to illiterates. **Cui bono?** You place a receptacle on an ignis, and add, **mutatis mutandi**. Some **aqua vitae.** This you quickly follow with a coalition of **allium cepa, citrullus vulgaris**, and **Zingiberofficinale**, plus some **granum salis**. Then... (35-36)
Voices:	(Shouting). The stew! Drink the stew! (36)
Professor:	Patience, patience, **mesamis, Da, mihi locum standi, et mundummovelos.** (36)

Here are the glosses for the Latin expressions: **De gustibus non estdisputandum** (There is no disputing about tastes); **corchorusolitorius (**leafy vegetable**)**; **Celosia Argentea (**cockscomb or silver cock's comb plant); **VernoniaAmygdalana (**bitter leaf**)**; **orisasativa** (rice); **bello gallico (**handsome garlic**)**; **Cui bono (**to whom is it a benefit?); **Mutatis mutandis** (with things changed that should be changed); **aqua vitae (**water of life**)**; **allium cepa (**onion**)**; **citrullus vulgaris (**water melon**)**; **Zingiberofficinale (**ginger**)**; **granum salis (**grain of salt**)**; **mesamis (**my friends**)**; **Da (**gives**)**; **mihi locum standi (**me, the place to stand); **et mendummovelos (**and the worldmóvel).

In the excerpt above, Osofisan mixes English with Latin phrases and the botanical names of some plants to reflect the educational status of Professor, who is usually verbose and grandiloquent in any language. According to Efakponana (2009), "the speech of Professor in the play is an imitation of Mark Anthony's speech in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and it is altercated with French and Latin expressions" (90). The bombastic nature of Professor's speech shows the humorous nature of the play to justify the playwright's belief that drama should entertain the audience (Awodiya, 1993).

In *Nkrumah-ni... Africa-ni*! (1999), we find the mixture of English and French expressions:

Toure:	It's the Americans **mon President**!... We are going to reply in equal force! (46)
Andree:	**Maisnon, Tonton**!: Surely you can't support Sekou! (46)
Toure:	Andree and the kids! **Andree, et les gosses**! (108)

The mixture ofEnglish code with French expressions such as **mon President**! (my president) **Maisnon, Tonton**! (But no, uncle) and **Andree, et les gosses**! (Andree and the kids) in Osofisan's plays, as shown above, is to further show the multilingual nature of his drama. Osofisan carefully chooses French characters such as Toure and Andree and gives them French names.

5. The Use of Slang

The use of slang is also a feature of Osofisan's texts. Such slangs are used among members of particular groups. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English,* slang is defined as "very informal words and expressions that are more common in spoken language, especially used by a particular group of people, for example, children, criminals, soldiers, etc." For instance, in *Once upon four robber*s (1980), the robbers have certain registers that are peculiar to them as the examples below show:

Major:	**Lamilami, Sir Love**, **De NiggerNigger** (9)
Hasan:	**Ebiti** (9)
Major:	**Sago**, **Bente**, **Mada** (10)
Soldier 3:	For the **Baba Ke!** (45)

Such slang items as **Sir Love (**an indirect way of calling a bad person**), De Nigger Nigger (**People of African descent or a Black man**), Ebiti (**trap or a dangerous person**), Lamilami (**dragonfly or a predator**), Baba Ke! (**A godfather**)** are part of the idiolect of the armed robbers who communicate in codes.

In addition, there is a deliberate corruption of the English language, especially in *Morountodun* (1983) where Mama Kayode says:

Mama Kayode:	**Shorrup! Concobility!** ... this dirty smoky, cob-infested **jagbajantis!**... Queen versus Baba Alabi, alias Titus, nineteen **gbongbonrongbon.** (62-63)

These underlined expressions are markers of illiteracy. **Shorrop**is a corruption of the English phrase "Shut up" while **concobility** is an abusive word that is often used by the uneducated people, but which is non-existent in the English lexicon. "**Jagbajantis** is a Yoruba equivalent of "nonsense" in English while **gbongbonrongbon** means infiniteness or endlessness.**Shorrup!, Concobility!, jagbajantis!, gbongbonrongbon,** are words used by the playwright to show the linguistic background of the speakers as Yoruba (Adegbija 2004). The playwright also wants to show that coinage of new words is one of the manifestations of language interference which is common among the second users of English language like Nigerians. For instance, the illiterate Yoruba speaker tries to pronounce **shut up** as **shorrup.**

Conclusion

This study has shown that Femi Osofisan's plays promote the indigenous Nigerian and African culture. The study, which looks at the various linguistic registers that predominate in his plays, reveals the playwright communicates with his audience, which is primarily the Africans, through the deployment of standard British English, which is spoken by English men and the Nigerian elite. The study further shows that Pidgin English is spoken by the lower class in the plays examined although it is generally spoken by the elite also in society. Besides, code mixing is one of the common aesthetic features of Osofisan's plays used copiously to depict the multilingual nature of his drama and his attempt at decolonising the English language. The cohabitation of some major Nigerian languages such as Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo with English in Osofisan's plays makes his drama reach a wider audience as a truly multilingual literature. The style also adds beauty and flavour to his drama and makes it proudly African.

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Jide Ajidahun is a professor of comparative literature and dramatic literature at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. He teaches in the Department of English Studies of the same institution. He was formerly head of the Department of Performing Arts, Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria. He is a poet and also a playwright. He is the current editor of the Literary Scholars Association of Nigeria's journal; member of the English Scholars' Association of Nigeria (ESAN); member, West African Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (WAACLALS), and a member of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) among others. He is also an alumnus of the Galilee International Management Institute, Israel.

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Performing the Third Chimurenga: Popular expressions of nationalism in the context of land reform in Zimbabwe

SHINGI MAVIMA, Ph.D.
University of Toledo, Ohio

Abstract

At the turn of the 20th century, the Zimbabwean government implemented a land redistribution program to rectify colonial-era disparities. Despite being remembered as a hallmark of the decolonial efforts spearheaded by President Robert Mugabe, this article argues the land question in Zimbabwe has always been and steered by the masses in their various constituencies — even when the government appeared reluctant toward reform. This is best represented through popular post-independence cultural expressions, including song, literature, poetry, and theater that have centered land in their negotiations of what it means to be Zimbabwean. In this article, I argue these artistic-cultural spaces are instructive in reconfiguring and recentering the popular roots of land reform in post-2000 Zimbabwe at a time when most of the scholarship tends to simplistically conflate land reform with Mugabeism.

Keywords: Zimbabwe; decolonization, Third Chimurenga; cultural expressions; land redistribution; Mugabeism

Introduction

> *"To our Zimbabwean African society, nothing is more important than the land"* (Mugabe, 2001, p.179).

Scholars of nationalism have emphasized the symbiotic relationship between nationalism and cultural expression (Fanon, 1963; Campbell, 1987; Ngugi, 1986.) On one hand, culture is the bedrock upon which nations stand, as Amilcar Cabral argued when he said, "Culture is simultaneously the fruit of a people's history, by the positive or negative influences which it exerts on the evolution of the relationship between man and his environment, among men or groups of men within a society, as well as different societies" (1970). Culture determines how members of a community relate with each other, outsiders, and space: All relationships which are central to our understanding of nation. On the other hand, the nation itself also stands as a facilitator of culture, as Fanon explains: "It is the fight for national existence which sets culture moving and opens to it the doors of creation" (2004, p. 172). As the opening quote from long-serving president and apparent architect of land reform in postcolonial Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, asserts, the innate importance of land to the nation cannot be understated. The national question in Zimbabwe has long been defined by the struggle for land ownership. As a settler colony, the very nature of the imperial condition under which the country found itself depended on the displacement of indigenous communities by the British colonialists. The essence of the liberation struggle rested heavily on the reclaiming of land lost in the colonial conquest, and independence was only agreed upon when a plan had been put in place to redress colonial-era disparities in land ownership (Mtisi et al., 2009, p. 165). The land redistribution program of the late 1990s has, indeed, impacted all other tenets of the country's national question in the 21st century thus far. Given the culture-nation symbiosis established above, it follows that the national question involving land has both inspired and been inspired by critical cultural expressions.

This article draws on evidence from a study conducted in Zimbabwe to illustrate the influence of popular cultural expression in the conceptualization of national ideals on land and the politics surrounding it in the post-colonial era. The study sought to address the following questions: how did Zimbabweans — in various constituents — make sense of land redistribution efforts after independence, given the purported importance thereof in the liberation struggle? What cultural expressions were employed in response to land redistribution? How have these expressions changed in the two decades since the beginning of the program? Ultimately, the study considers how Zimbabweans have made, and continuously make, sense of the land issue as a proxy for nationalism and national identity through such cultural production as song, theater, literature, and poetry. The article demonstrates how the landless peasantry have been the drivers behind the embrace of land as a symbol of Zimbabwean nationalism. While the government of Zimbabwe went on to make land reform the cornerstone of their postcolonial national project, the findings of this study show how the struggle for land has always been waged through cultural production for and by the masses, even when the government has been lethargic and indecisive in addressing landlessness.

Much has been written about Zimbabwe's land reform program, particularly by agrarian studies scholars (Moyo, 1995, 2000, 2013; Matondi, 2012; Mkodzongi, 2013, 2016), cultural and literary critics (Mpondi, 2018; Gwekwerere, Mutasa and Chitofiri, 2018; Nyambi, 2021; Manase, 2011, 2016) and historians/development studies scholars (Marongwe, 2011, Hanlon et al., 2013; Raftopoulos, 2009). As such, this article does not seek to retell that story or regurgitate the arguments about the merits thereof: rather, I set out to explore the ways in which the people of Zimbabwe asserted agency and amplified their voice by way of artistic-cultural expression surrounding land contestation. I begin the article by describing my sites of analyses and methods of research, before delving into a truncated colonial era historicization of the land

question in Zimbabwe. Thereafter, I transition to a chronological look into the artistic-cultural production surrounding the land question, beginning with the immediate post-independence era, into the 2000s during which the land redistribution program was implemented and, finally, into the aftermath thereof. I conclude the article by looking briefly at the land question in the post-Mugabe era thus far, and the ways in which cultural producers continue to make sense of it.

Research design

I employ an interdisciplinary African centered approach that combines a diversity of qualitative methods including analytic theory induction, ethnographic and literary interrogation, and on-site interviews. The use of the African-centered approach, defined by Keto as "a framework for the centering of knowledge about Africans, at home and abroad, on the experience of Africans as subjects of history" (Keto, 2001, p. 51) is particularly relevant to this study, as land contestation in Zimbabwe has manifested itself along colonial, often racial lines. That is to say, the struggle for land in Zimbabwe has been one of challenging the Eurocentric, colonial ideals of land ownership by the indigenous African peoples. Thus, even accounting for the well-documented shortcomings of the land redistribution at the turn of the 21st century, critical narratives from the West have tended to be devoid of necessary nuance in their demonization of the process and those behind it. The African-centered approach allows for the interrogation of the ways in which African communities and African voices make sense of the land as an African question. For specific content analysis, I have also leaned on the literary pan-Africanist paradigm, designed to guide the "proper explanation of the content, form, and function of African literary creations" (Temple, 2005, p. 4). This paradigm is meant to ensure that African works are "placed in proper historical context and evaluated based on their practical relevance" (McDougal, 2014, p. 41). While the sonic and performative elements of the cultural works explored in this study are also closely interrogated, it is to their literary elements[9] that closest attention is paid.

The analytical crux of the study is the select songs, plays, and other forms of artistic expression that make either literal or analogous reference to the relationship between the people, nation, and the land. These artistic expressions are drawn from throughout the independence era and, although far from conclusive, represent critical narratives to emerge within the specified temporal and spatial moment out of which they emerged. The analytical findings here are further buoyed by insights gathered from interviews conducted with 11 Zimbabweans—seven men and four women— between 2015 and 2019. By their own identification, the eleven include artists, civil leaders, small scale farmers, and entrepreneurs. The subjects responded to questions regarding their sense of connection to the nation and various national projects, how they self-identify within the nation and, among other things, their understanding and sentiments of land and the land reform program as a national project in Zimbabwe.

Although the study aspires to highlight popular expressions of national identity representative of the country's diversity, the data points used overwhelmingly skew toward expressions created by men and presented in Shona[10] and, to a lesser extent, English and Ndebele. While these shortcomings are partially a result of the author's own linguistic and access to personnel limitations, they also represent the real gendered and ethnicized reality determining whose voices are heard — and how loud they can be. Nevertheless, I attempt to interrogate these dynamics where relevant and accessible.

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9 i.e., the lyrics

10 Itself a colonially constructed conglomeration of several albeit mutually intelligible ethnic groups, but not without their schisms and political hierarchies to contend with, as will be discussed later in the paper.

"Minda Ipe Mbesa!" Land as a mationalistic symbol in independent Zimbabwe

Across the colonized world, the notion of land ownership ubiquitously manifested itself as the metaphor for decoloniality and liberation; however, in Zimbabwe, as in other settler colonies, land was less a metaphor and more the very essence of the anticolonial struggle. The Rhodesian Land Appointment Act of 1930 designated 51% of the country's land (which consisted of 80% of the arable land) for the White settlers who made up 5% of the population, while only 30% — which included much of the poorer land — was given to the 95% Black populace (Hanlon et al., p. 2013). These disparities were a major impetus behind the anticolonial fight.

Resolving the land disparity was so critical to the nationalists' vision of postcolonial Zimbabwe that disagreements around the topic almost derailed the 1979 Lancaster House[11] meetings, which ushered in the end of the colonial era. African nationalist leaders Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, standing together as the Patriotic Front (PF), refused for the negotiations to continue until a land redistribution agenda was put in motion (Mtisi et al., 2009, 165). The agreed-upon resolution would see 162,000 Black families resettled in the first 10 years, during which the government would acquire land from the white settlers on a willing buyer, willing seller basis, with the British and American governments agreeing to fund the bulk of the process (Mtisi et al., 2009, p. 165). The stage was thus set for the rebirth of an independent African state for whom land would be the basis of the national project.

After independence, the incumbent Zimbabwean government continued to tout the importance of land and agriculture to the fledgling nation. The centrality of land and the adjacent agrarian culture to the notion of the Zimbabwean nation was codified when, in 1994, *"Simudzai Mureza"* was chosen after a nationwide competition to replace "Ishe Komborera"[12] as the country's national anthem. Only three verses long, the second is dedicated to invoking the bounty of the land:

> *Mvura ngainaye, minda ipe mbesa*
> Let the rain fall, and the land bring forth crops
> *Vashandi vatuswe, ruzhinji rugutswe*
> So that the workers may be strengthened, and the masses fed

It would appear, then, that the vigor for land redistribution that had inspired the Chimurengas and been a sticking point at Lancaster House had not waned post-independence. The sentiment permeated into popular music, as evidenced by popular Chimurenga artist Zexie Manatsa's 1983 *"Baba Tipeiwo Ndege"* The song, a castigation of former Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) militants accused of murders and instigating social upheaval in protest of their marginalization by the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government in the immediate aftermath of independence, goes:

> *"Ko imi muri vanhui ko, vanoteura ropa vachisiya kurima?*
> What type of people are you, who spill blood instead of farming?
> *Handei paguva raChaminuka[13], tonotaura zvatakatadza, mvura inonaya*
> Let us go to Chaminuka's grave, and confess our sins, it will rain
> *Handei paguva raNehanda, tonotaura zvatakatadza, mvura inonaya*
> Let us go to Nehanda's grave, and confess our sins, it will rain
> *Ndookuti nzara ipere*
> That's how we end the famine!"

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[11]Signed in 1979 in the UK, the Lancaster House Agreement declared a ceasefire and ended the Second Chimurenga, leading to the independence and recognition of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

[12]The Shona version (also sung in Ndebele) version of Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika, the Xhosa anthem that would go on to be prominent in the struggle for independence and national anthem in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia etc.

[13]Revered Shona prophet who, along with Nehanda Charwe, was a leader in the First Chimurenga.

The upheaval, which marked the beginning stages of what would be the genocidal massacres of citizens in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces by the Mugabe-commissioned Fifth Brigade, coincided with a vicious drought in the 1982-83 agricultural season (Cowell, 1982.) In many African communities, the advent of drought has traditionally been seen as a disruption in the natural order caused by injustices within the community. As such, Manatsa points the finger at the ZIPRA dissidents for this disruption. The song not only shows early enduring sympathies to the Mugabe government as naturally ordained custodians of Zimbabwean independence, but it also highlights the importance of land and agriculture to the nation. Not only were the dissidents' actions preventing them from farming as they should have been in an independent Zimbabwe, but they were also stopping the rains from falling all together. To farm was to appreciate the land and the struggle that went into it, to appreciate the struggle was to be proudly Zimbabwean, and to be proudly Zimbabwean was to stand in solidarity with the government, which itself centered the postcolonial project on the land.

Yet despite the Lancaster House provisions and the rhetorical centrality of land as national project, redistribution proved to be slow and fell far beneath the targets set for the first two decades. The government, seemingly content with the economic "miracle" of post-colonial Zimbabwe, buoyed in large part by the contributions of the white large scale commercial farmers who had retained the land, appeared lethargic in the pursuit of the comprehensive land redistribution for which they had vehemently fought. This suited white commercial farmers as well. Soon, the landless peasantry began to express frustrations at the betrayal of the nation's post-colonial imaginary that rested heavily on the land. Popular theatrical productions, such as *Tseu Yaamai* (mother's piece of land) performed by Chembira Women's Theatre in 1994, lamented the continued plight of landlessness in an independent Zimbabwe (Zenenga, 2008).

The absence of comprehensive agricultural reform became a metaphor for the perceived ineptness and a lack of commitment to the revolutionary ideals and post-colonial reforms that the government had promised. Renowned Zimbabwean musician Thomas Mapfumo's 1991 hit song, *"Maiti Kurima Hamubvire"* (You said you were excellent at farming) castigates the rulers of the land for how, after a decade in power, they had failed to deliver on their promises:

kwapera makore mangani vakuru woye
How many years have passed, oh elders!
hona takamirira zvamakavimbisa
While we still wait for what you promised us
maiti kurima inyore
You said that farming was easy
maiti kurima hakunetse
You said that farming was not difficult
maiti mombe hamushaye
You said you would find the cows
muchiti gejo munaro
And that you had the plows!

That this elaborate and drawn-out land metaphor to critique the lack of post-independence progress came from Mapfumo, who had been influential in defining the Chimurenga music genre during the war, made it a particularly scathing indictment. Other artists employed similar agrarian metaphors to lament the state of governance in the nation, including Sungura[14] Star System Tazvida's 1994 song "Foromani" (Foreman), in which he croons:

[14]Arguably the most popular music genre in Zimbabwe, Sungura is a guitar heavy sound that blends elements from Rhumba and other regional genres with those indigenous to Zimbabwe.

Vaforomani ndimi maondonga purazi
Mr. Foreman, you have destroyed the farm
Gadzirisai mitemo yenyu vanhu vashande
Fix your laws, and let the people work!

With the farm foreman, a familiar symbol of leadership — especially among the agrarian communities in peri-urban and rural areas — serving as a thinly-veiled reference to the government, Tazvida bemoans the rising poverty and unemployment levels, and continued landlessness compounded by the implementation of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund-mandated Economic Structural Adjustment Plans (ESAP) in the early 1990s. These adjustments resulted in a decline in economic growth from 4% to 0.9% in 1991, recovering only slightly to 2.9% by 1998, while factories were closed and thousands of workers were retrenched (Muzondidya ,2009, p. 188.)

As economic frustrations grew, the decade culminated in the definitive popular expression of frustration surrounding the coloniality of land. In 1997, villagers led by veterans of the Second Chimurenga—the armed struggle waged by Zimbabweans against Rhodesian rule — colloquially known as the 'War Vets,' began occupying unused and underutilized land — the enduring colonial excesses of the white farmers. Although dozens of occupations would take place between then and the turn of the century, the 1998 invasion of farms in Svosve and Chikwaka, both in Mashonaland East, elevated the discourse surrounding occupations to a national level. While the mainstream historical narrative suggests that the land reform was the brainchild and sole initiative of the Mugabe government, it is critical to recognize its birth as a grassroots movement. If anything, the government was opposed to these initial occupations, with the police arresting leaders of the occupation movements and then vice president, Simon Mzenda, being deployed to negotiate the villagers' withdrawal from the farms. While many of these first-wave occupiers conceded and withdrew from the farms, the people had spoken and the "first salvo by a land of hungry and increasingly restless peasantry had however been fired" (Utete, 2003, p. 15).

The growing frustrations of the landless peasantry were captured in Simon Chimbetu's 1996 song, *"Zuva Raenda"* (The sun has set) in which he employs the metaphor of pending dusk and, thus, the need for dinner to be served, to implore the government to redistribute the land as promised. While throughout the song, he chants *"Rongai nyama, zuva raenda*" (literally "serve the meat, the sun is setting") he sneaks in *"govai minda, zuva raenda"* almost under his breath, which translates to "share the land, it's getting late" (Pfukwa, 2019, p. 92). The imploring here is particularly powerful coming from Simon Chimbetu, himself a veteran of the Second Chimurenga and whose songs had been anthems of Zimbabwean and Pan-African nationalism since before the advent of independence.

Chimbetu's sentiments would be reiterated in Reggae artist Man Soul Jah's (2000) song, "Mr. Government Man" in which he sings, among other things:

"*Vene vedzino nyika vachauya… tinoda isu, nyika yamadzibaba iyi….*
The owners of this land shall come…we want this land of our forefathers…[15]
when subjugation came, and humiliation knocked at the door
didn't we rise, with blood, sweat and tears, to set ourselves free?
now we're living like squatters, in the land of our heritage…
Mr. Government Man! Give us Jah land right now!"

[15]First line translated from Shona; the rest of the quoted verse is sung in English.

Man Soul Jah's song articulates the land-centric impetus behind the struggle for liberation, as well as the socio-economic collapse precipitated in large part due to the government's reticence to reform within the first 20 years of independence. Much like the people of Svosve and Chikwaka, Man Soul Jah places upon the government the onus of revisiting and delivering the promise of the Chimurenga.

While the 1998 Mashonaland East farm invasions incontrovertibly put into motion the series of events culminating in land redistribution, it is critical to also acknowledge the different communities around the country, often dubbed 'squatters' for their perceived illegal settlement on land as a way of protesting the government's sluggish distribution of land. These communities had continuously advocated for land reform, with their cries often falling on deaf government ears. As early as 1985, for example, 'squatters' at the Killarney squatter camp in Bulawayo, consisting of three villages[16] and at one time comprising 4000 families, refused to be resettled unless "the Government will resettle us (on arable land) so that we revert to what we know best: farming" (Mpofu, 2019, p. 52). That the overwhelmingly accepted genesis for the land invasions is not only in Mashonaland but places the war veterans — traditionally sympathetic to ZANU PF — at the center of the narrative, is consistent with the top-down, ethnocentric selective articulation of history definitive of Mugabeism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). While the place of the war veterans in Zimbabwean society vacillates between that of the common man and the political elite, the undisputable yet marginalized voice of the landless peasantry cannot be understated.

All 11 Zimbabwean respondents in this study agreed to the basic premise that Zimbabwe's post-independence resource disparities were unsustainable and unjust and land redistribution had been inevitable. Law student JC (personal communication, May 2017) argued, "We cannot deny that was very crucial because that was one of the main motives that led to the Chimurenga." Mzee, a 29-year-old entrepreneur, went a step further and argued African ownership of the land was a primordial right, saying "land really belongs to us as Black people. It's our land" (personal communication, July 2017). Hence, despite the later co-optation of land reform as a definitive pillar of Mugabeism, the call for redistribution was most loudly uttered by the poor and landless, and its theoretical importance is widely appreciated outside the scope of the government and formal politics.

"Siyalima" — Government cooptation of the struggle for land

There are three critical sets of events at the end of the 20th century through which the previously lethargic Mugabe government was thrust into synonymy with land redistribution. The first, alluded to in the previous section, was the increasing political pressure leveled by the landless masses and war veterans who were feeling the despair of worsening economic conditions in the aftermath of the ESAP era. The financial compensation given out in 1997 by the government after relentless lobbying from the war veterans had set a precedent that would haunt Mugabe until he left power (Muzondidya, 2009, p. 198). The second, closely tied to the first, was the founding of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as an opposition political party in 1999. With roots in trade union and student politics, and capitalizing on growing socio-economic concerns in the country, MDC immediately became the biggest political challenge Mugabe and ZANU PF had thus far encountered. The threat to ZANU PF was on full display the following year, when 54% of the Zimbabwean electorate voted 'no' in a referendum put forth by the ruling party to amend the constitution in ways that would consolidate their rule.

[16]Xotsha, Tshaka and Two Stamp camps

The MDC and allied organizations had led the charge against voting 'yes' to the new constitution (Raftopoulos, 2014, p.210). It was the first time that any party had come close to defeating the Mugabe regime by the vote (referendum or otherwise); let alone actually defeat them. The administration was shaken.

The final sequence was the reneging of the UK and USA on the Lancaster House commitment to fund land redistribution in an independent Zimbabwe. Mugabe and fellow revolutionary leader Joshua Nkomo, who would become the first vice-president of independent Zimbabwe, had famously refused to proceed with the 1979 negotiations until a roadmap for land redistribution was agreed upon, and the agreement was only reached when the British and American governments conceded to providing financial support to the Zimbabwean government to compensate the farmers. As the 21st century beckoned, the government had fallen well under its intended redistribution targets and attempts to expedite the process with the help of the promise from the Western powers were stonewalled. In a now historic communique, British Secretary of State for International Development Clare Short retorted to attempts at further conversation:

> I should make clear we do not accept that Britain has a special responsibility to meet the costs of land purchase in Zim (sic). We are a new government from diverse backgrounds without links to former colonial interests. My own origins are Irish and, as you know, we were colonized, not colonizers. (Utete, 2003, p. 15).

Unrelenting ire toward the Western powers combined with the growing urgency of land reform to quickly manifest into the enduring hallmarks of Mugabeism. The government sought to appeal to the popular memory of the sacrifices of the armed struggle and the inherent enmity of whites at home or abroad. The Fast Track Land Redistribution Program (FTLRP), implemented beginning in July 2000 to resettle thousands, was dubbed the "Third Chimurenga." The moniker inherently militarized the process and situated it in the same continuum as the First and Second Chimurenga — the resistance efforts of the late 19th century and 1960s-'70s respectively that had ultimately resulted in independence from colonialism. Any ambiguity by the government had ended by November 2000 when they ran newspaper advertisements saying, "This land is your land. Don't let them (white farmers) use the courts and constitution against the masses" (Hanlon et al., 2013, p. 76).

The Third Chimurenga was sustained in the popular psyche by a series of incessant jingles and songs, mostly borrowed from wartime archives and curated by Jonathan Moyo, who was then the minister of information. The campaign is remembered within the public consciousness as *Hondo Yeminda* (The land revolution), a phrase commonplace in music and discourse surrounding the land redistribution. Under Moyo, the propaganda jingles, such as *"Rambai Makashinga"* by Tambaoga, played every hour on all public radio and television stations (which were all that was accessible to the masses):

> *Piwai minda murambe makashinga imi!*
> Get the land, and stay resolute!
> *Shingirirai, Gadzirirai, ivhu rava redu*
> Persevere, prepare, the land is now ours
> *Tave kutonga, ivhu zvarauya!*
> Now we are really liberated, the land is finally here!

The jingles, often carrying the celebratory tone of wartime *Pungwe*[17] choruses were complemented by original songs from an array of popular artists. Dickson Chingaira, popularly known by his *nom de guerre* Comrade "Cde" Chinx, reprised his role as the voice of

[17] All-night wartime rallies that would bring guerrilla fighters and villagers together.

Chimurenga, during which he had been the lead chanter of the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA)[18] choir. He updated several of his wartime songs to include land reappropriation as the new phase of anti-imperialism. In "*Hondo Yeminda,"* the title track to the 2001 government-funded propaganda album meant to be the soundtrack for the Third Chimurenga, Chinx sings "*Hondo yakura muZimbabwe, hondo yeminda*!" (The revolution is raging in Zimbabwe, the land revolution!). Chinx's government-commissioned songs adopted a racialized tone that reiterated the enmity of the white farmers and whites as a whole, a tone whose radical departure from the conciliatory one of 1980s anthems such as Ilanga's "*Makomborero,*"[19] which mirrors that of the Mugabe administration in the 2000s. Chinx goes on to sing.

> *Panguva yaana Mbuya Nehanda, vanamai naanababa vairobwa*
> Back in the days of Nehanda, mothers and fathers were beaten
> *Havaiswera vose vaivhimwa, vakomana navasikana vaitsvakwa*
> They didn't spend days together, they were hunted, Boys and girls were sought
> *Nepamusana pekuti vairamba kudzvanyirirwa (*2)*
> Because they refused to be oppressed

Nehanda Charwe, most colloquially referred to as 'Mbuya Nehanda' (Grandmother Nehanda), was a spirit medium who emerged as one of the leaders of the Shona-Ndebele resistance to colonialism in the 1890s also known as the First Chimurenga. By connecting the Third Chimurenga to the struggle of Nehanda in the First Chimurenga, Chinx established a revolutionary continuity in the struggle for land. In doing so, Chinx is, in essence, addressing the so-called 'Born-Frees' (those born after independence), challenging them to question how "our ancestors fought, and our parents liberated us and what should we do? Return to thralldom?" (Gonye & Moyo, 2012, p.96). As they stand on the precipice of adulthood, the gauntlet is laid for the youth to assume the reins of the revolution.

Because of the co-optation of their Chimurenga narrative, embracing stewardship of the age-old struggle meant embracing Mugabe and ZANU PF. Because the MDC had not only emerged as the anti-ZANU PF party but had done so with the internal support of the displaced white farmers and that of western governments externally, the party was depicted as being anti-revolutionary and under the puppeteering hand of the whites (Nyawo 2012, 63). Therefore, popular songs that made it to the heavily censored airwaves derided MDC as a party of "sell-outs" (Nyawo, 2012, p. 63). ZANU PF lawmaker and popular musician Elliott Manyika's "*Usazokanganwa*" (Never Forget) warned the opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai by name, saying:

> *Morgan, usatengesa nyika kumabhunhu*
> Morgan, don't sell the land to the Whites[20]
> *Usazokanganwa, ZANU yakakurera ukakura!*
> Never forget, ZANU raised you into a man!

While the likes of Chinx and Manyika had overt affiliations to the ZANU-PF government and thus their support of the land reform may have been expected, a myriad of other songs pointing to both the centrality of farming and the importance of land reform in Zimbabwe emerged. "Siyalima" by Andy Brown, from his 2001 album *More Fire*, is one of several

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[18] ZANU's military wing.

[19] Ilanga was a multiracial band, ironically fronted by Cde. Chinx himself

[20] Literally "Boer", a term adopted from Apartheid South Africa to mean colonialists in the Zimbabwean contexts-despite their predominantly British background.

Ndebele songs produced during the era of the Third Chimurenga, strategically encouraged by the propaganda machine to disrupt the assumption of Shona hegemony synonymous with ZANU PF.

With both Mugabe and ZANU-PF asserting themselves as stewards of enduring anti-imperialism on the continent, the *Hondo Yeminda* campaign inevitably had pan-African overtones. *"Kutapira"* by Andy Brown, also from *More Fire* serves as both a celebration of Zimbabwe's land redistribution and a cautionary tale to the rest of the continent to safeguard the legacy that is land. Laced over an upbeat rendition of a traditional Shona harvest song, Brown sings:

> *South Africa, uchakamirirei ko kurima mumunda mako?*
> South Africa, why are you still waiting to farm in your fields?
> *Mozambique, usambofa wakatengesa ivhu rako!*
> Mozambique, don't ever sell your land!
> *Zimbabwe iwe kutapira kunoita kurima,*
> Zimbabwe, how sweet it is to farm,
> *Africa, usafa wakanyengerwa*
> Africa, don't ever be tricked!

Assuming a didactic positionality based on embarking on the consummate African nationalist endeavor that is land redistribution, the song challenges South Africa, a few years into its post-Apartheid era, to embark on comprehensive Black empowerment. The song also references Zambia, Namibia, and Mozambique in an ode to regionalism, before leveling out a challenge to the entire continent.

Simon Chimbetu's 2004 ode to land redistribution, *"Hoko"* in some ways, signified the end of the high point of the Third Chimurenga: complementary songs and other expressions included. Not only had much land been redistributed then, but much of the fallout now synonymous with the era was firmly underway. Zimbabwe had left the British Commonwealth in 2003 amidst ostracization by the Global West, and the economic collapse that has defined the country in the early stages of the 21st century was now unmistakable. The Shona song, whose title translates to peg or yardstick — a traditional instrument to demarcate claimed land — is punctuated with bold declarations of resistance spoken in English in a voice described as "solemn, baritone, and oozing with authority" (Pfukwa, 2019, p. 93). The voice proclaims, as the song opens, that:

> "The Third Chimurenga has already begun
> And the *hoko* has already been pegged
> The *hoko* with blood
> Because of the lot of blood that was spilled,
> No one is allowed to ever temper with the *hoko*."

The choice of language here is significant. Making the poetic declaration in English, at this advanced stage of the land distribution program, can be seen as a direct challenge to the Western world and, in particular, the British with whom the largest fallout had been. The assertive rhetoric herein mirrors that regularly deployed by Robert Mugabe in this era, most famously at the Johannesburg Earth Summit of 2002 when he admonished Tony Blair (then British prime minister) to "keep your England and let me keep my Zimbabwe" (Mlambo & Chitando, 2015, p. 8). Equally significant is how the word "*Hoko*" is not translated into English. The implication here is that the significance of the *hoko,* the sacred signifier of claimed land, cannot possibly have a translatable equal in the lexicon of the colonizer as it does among the indigenous Zimbabweans. In a bit of unintended irony, the unyielding defiance of the song

would be Chimbetu's own parting word after more than three decades of nationalistic crooning, as he passed on just one year later.

Even as we acknowledge the weight of the propaganda machine in co-opting the once-people's movement and turning it into a definitive pillar of Mugabeism, artists outside of that machine continued to reiterate the centrality of the land and farming to the Zimbabwean people as well as advocating equitable land redistribution. Oliver Mtukudzi, venerated as the conscience of the nation,[21] anthemized this idea in 2001's *"Murimi Munhu"* (The farmer is humanity personified):

Murimiwe-e tora kapadza urime
Dear farmer pick your hoe and work
Mvura nevhu zvayanana babawe-e
Let rain and earth build in camaraderie
Kuva muvhimi muimbi kana musori
Whether you be a hunter, singer, or spy
Kudya zvemurimi
It is because of the farmer's produce

Sung at a time when any artist creating works aligned with land reform was assumed to be on the government payroll, Tuku's statement was particularly poignant because it appears on *Bvuma/Tolerance*, the same album as the Mugabe-admonishing "*Wasakara*." In fact, Zimbabwean music historian Fred Zindi would later say he believed "*Wasakara*," taken by many to be critical of the aging president's unrelenting hold to power, was the reason why the University of Zimbabwe had refused to confer an honorary doctorate on Mtukudzi[22] in the early 2000s (Chaya, 2016.) That the songs appeared side-by-side on the album is a literal representation of the veneration of land existing outside the celebration of Mugabe and Mugabeism.

Whether by virtue of being on the government's payroll, opportunistically jumping aboard the land reform train for publicity, or a genuine effort to expedite the redistribution of land in Zimbabwe, pro-land reform expressions adopted several modes and platforms. It is also clear that, at least retrospectively, Zimbabweans across the political, socio-economic and generational spectrum feel the land reform was necessary. This in no way implies that support for the land reform among the masses, as reflected by cultural creation, has been unanimous; it has been anything but.

Where Shall We Go? Responses to the shortcomings of the FTLRP

We have thus far established, as evidenced in music and other culturally expressive productions, that the land issue was paramount for different communities in Zimbabwe — even when the government appeared to have forgotten that precept of the armed struggle and independence negotiations. When the government sought to monopolize agency in land redistribution to the soundtrack of the *Hondo Yeminda* campaign, other voices still stood in solidarity with — what was in theory — a noble and long overdue national project.

Despite the popular, grassroots genesis of the push toward land redistribution, public sentiment had prominently shifted by the mid-2000s. By then, not only had rhetoric around the

[21] Albeit less incendiary and radical than Thomas Mapfumo, a peer with whom he is usually contrasted (much in similar vein to the "Martin Luther King vs Malcolm X" dichotomy.)

[22] Mtukudzi did go on to receive an honorary degree from Great Zimbabwe University in 2014.

movement been usurped by the government and made synonymous with Mugabeism, but the movement also itself had been tainted by the violence and seeming incompetence that surrounded it. Furthermore, the rapidly dilapidating economy had led to pronounced human suffering and had disproportionately impacted the common man and woman in the urban areas for whom any socio-economic gains of land redistribution were not readily available. As stated earlier, the purpose of this paper is not to regurgitate these evaluations of the program, as this has been done extensively already; however, it is critical to evoke these effects of land redistribution in as much as they roused responses in the form of cultural expression.

The turn toward lawlessness was in large part due to the growing frustration of war veterans and the poverty-stricken masses in peri-urban and rural areas, the stiff resistance put up by the farmers, and the government's polarity as they rhetorically supported land reform and yet struggled to enforce it and provide support for the potential and new landowners. With the war vets led by the ominously nicknamed Chenjerai "Hitler" Hunzvi, FTLRP farm takeovers became more violent, earning the colloquial moniker "*jambanja,*" which translates to 'spontaneous violence" in Shona. The violence coincided with a surge in political violence as well, as ZANU PF responded to the unprecedented political threat posed by the MDC in the 2000 and 2002 elections. In many recollections of the violence of the era, then, narratives often speak of the two symbiotically, and criticisms thereof have appeared accordingly.

As a result of this shift in public opinion, many artists who had overtly supported the Third Chimurenga in their works, often performing at government-sponsored events, were subject to public backlash. In one instance in 2006, concert attendees, mostly Zimbabwean immigrants to South Africa, walked out of Andy Brown's concert in Johannesburg. The Zimbabwe Refugee Forum, responsible for calling for the boycott of shows by artists who had supported the land reform, argued: "Supporting them (the artists) is the same as sponsoring the ZANU (PF) regime" (Dube, 2006.) Until his passing in 2012, Brown remained unrepentant in his support for both Mugabe and land reform, saying after the 2006 walk-out, "My support for ZANU (PF) and Robert Mugabe has nothing to do with my music. As you witnessed, we are good at what we do, Mugabe doesn't play guitars for us, but I am not saying I don't support Mugabe" (Dube, 2006). Two years earlier, he had defended his stance on land reform by saying, "If the white settler fast tracked himself on our land, why not us? We have to fast track the program and sort out everything after that" (Eyre, 2004, p. 104).

The FTLRP's violent turn instantly polarized even those sympathetic to the cause of land redistribution. Theatrical productions such as Amakhosi's *Witnesses and Victims* and the University of Zimbabwe's *Tinoendepi/Where Shall We Go?* (both from 2000) brought to the forefront the victimization of not only the white farmers (many of whom had the economic means to absorb their losses), but also the Black masses meant to be benefiting from the process (Zenenga, 2008, p. 73). Such plays, as well as documentaries and other media critical of the violence fell under heavy censorship in the country, but other media have explored this reality away from Zimbabwe's borders. NoViolet Bulawayo's 2013 award-winning novel, *We Need New Names,* details a fictional farm invasion over the course of 15 pages which culminates with an old white couple being force-marched into the forest by axe-wielding 'invaders' led by an assistant police commissioner. The climax of the scene is perhaps the philosophical identity debate that continues to galvanize the community to this day:.

> This is Black-man country, and the Black man is in charge now. Africa for Africans, the Boss (leader of the invasion) says to thunderous applause… I am an African he (the white farmer) says. This is my fucking country too, my father was born here, just like you! (Bulawayo, 2013, p. 121).

The conversation captured here begs the fundamental post-colonial question: Who, indeed, has a right for inclusion in the nation? Mugabe's Independence Day conciliatory proclamations of a multiracial Zimbabwe appear to be at fundamental odds with the spirit of anti-colonial African nationalism, which centered on the Garveyist mantra of "Africa for Africans." Although fictional, the scene is a culmination of many stories that seeped into the public consciousness from the heavily censored walls of the Mugabe regime. Respondents not only repudiated the violence as a moral or civil matter, but because the narrative of human rights abuses tainted the already controversial FTLRP and became the justification for the country's marginalization by the global community. It was in response to this violence that the USA, European Union and Australia placed sanctions on Zimbabwe in 2002 and 2003, further sending the country's economy into a downward spiral (Hanlon et al., 2013). Twenty-seven-year-old Nyasha (personal communication, June 2017) lamented the violence:

> The land reform program was a great idea. The idea of giving land back to the indigenous owners; or at least making sure the land was shared. But the way it was administered, was a disaster. It was done in a way that bordered on reckless and inhumane, and the economy took a big hit as a result. We should have done better as a country.

Harkening back to Thomas Mapfumo's seemingly prophetic refrain from 1991, *"Maiti kurima inyore!"* (You thought farming was easy), another recurrent criticism of the land reform has been it handed the crucial industry to people who were severely underprepared for the task at hand. The contemporaneous economic collapse that accompanied the FLTRP is often cited as evidence of a cataclysmic misstep on the part of the government. A 2006 land audit revealed 44% of all the new farmers who had received land as part of the land reform were either under-utilizing it or not utilizing it at all (Hanlon et al., 2013, p. 144). Closely tied to this criticism are accusations the distribution of land had fallen victim to cronyism, with government officials and those associated with the regime disproportionately benefitting from the program. These disparities are the subject of the play, *Ivhu versus the State* (1999), which features the following conversation:

> Troy: We are losing millions right here at home
> Reward: But now affirmative action affirms the chosen few. Indigenous business is business for a few who are more indigenous than others.
> Troy: It's like rats in a cage — as the food keeps coming, they get fatter and fatter and then you turn off the food and they start eating each other (Glorstad, 2013, p.116).

While referencing indigenized businesses in general, the consummate indigenized industry benefiting from affirmative action[23] as the play debuted at the turn of the century was farming via FTLRP. The implication of "a few who are more indigenous than others" is that, even after navigating the claim by the white farmers that they too are African and Zimbabwean, there is still a caste among the indigenous granted preferential treatment and access to wealth. Ndlovu-Gatsheni argued this caste of the 'more indigenous' has been defined by the ZANU PF elites in party and cultural-nativist terms as those who "embraced the national liberation struggle, participating actively in it or supporting it" as well as being "patriotic…belonging politically to ZANU PF" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009, p. 93).

On account of its reach and accessibility, song is often the cultural expression that best encapsulates the essence of popular sentiments; and the lamentation of the unfulfilled promise of the FTLRP was no exception. In Hosiah Chipanga's 2011 "*Ivhu Redu Nderipi*?" ('Where is our land?'), the singer, famous for challenging socio-political convention, implores:

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[23] Policies meant to elevate indigenous communities previously disadvantaged by an unjust colonial system. In the case of Zimbabwe, indigenization has meant—at least in principle—ensuring that companies have at least 51% indigenous ownership, among other things

"Ivhu ratakatora nderipi ko, nhai Mbuya Nehanda?
Where is the land that we took, Oh Nehanda?
Kuroja kudai, kushaya pekugara…
Here we squat, with no place to live…"

Chipanga's protest evokes two important symbols meant to represent Zimbabweans yet now co-opted exclusively by the government. The first one is, of course, the land that "we" as the people are said to have taken back, yet from which the common man has not benefited. The second symbol is Mbuya Nehanda, long regarded as the maternal spirit of the nation, but now co-opted as part of the Mugabeist ZANU-PF mythos (Mavima, 2019, p. 122). By lamenting to her, Chipanga is wrestling away the apparent monopoly of the government over Zimbabwe — land and other symbols included.

The chorus of artists protesting the excesses and ineptitude of the government in the aftermath of the land redistribution program has recently been joined by Tambaoga, whose nationalist jingles such as '*Rambai Makashinga*' and '*Sendekera'* played incessantly on national airwaves during the early years of the Third Chimurenga. In 2020, Tambaoga asked for public forgiveness for his early support of ZANU-PF saying, "As much as I appreciate that it was and is my role as a patriotic cadre to render support to government initiatives and programs such as land reform, I have got this feeling that I was exploited somehow if not duped of a lot of money by the government then" (Ndlovu, 2020.) He has also released new music lamenting governmental corruption and, in the case of 2020's "*Mutirongo,*" even calls for the incarceration of government officials. While other government-aligned artists of the era, such as Andy Brown and Simon Chimbetu, had decades of other work under their belt upon which fans displeased by their political music could fall back, Tambaoga made his name as a Third Chimurenga artists, hence the need to distance himself from his earlier work. Furthermore, while Brown, Chimbetu, as well other prominent pro-government and land reform crooners such as Elliot Manyika and Cde Chinx have since passed on and are all buried with varying degrees of official hero status from the government, Tambaoga finds himself outside of the government and party structures to lament the socio-economic hardships of the nation with the rest of the laymen.

A growing cohort of millennial musicians, coming of age in the aftermath of the FTLRP and economic collapse, have been more overtly critical of the cronyism-induced disparities in their songs. One such artist is rapper Junior Brown, who laments in his 2016 single, "Tongogara":

> *Vatora chingwa chese vobva vatifonyora brain/ wosiya tichirwira mafufu zvekutorovana nemheni (*They've taken all the bread and played mind games with us/ left us scrambling for scraps enough to put curses on each other.)

Particularly telling here is the othering use of the word "they" as the subject of corruption and cronyism. Who are "they" as opposed to the "us" that Junior Brown represents here? While the obvious answer may be the government and its allies against the masses, there is also a generational element at play. Described by some scholars as "the lost generation," the same 'born-frees' that Chinx addresses in his *Hondo Yeminda* anthems are now living through the second full decade in a cataclysmic socio-political and economic collapse that had taken them from hopeful children to despairing adults (Ndlovu, 2012, p.252). The "they" then represents the older generation, who are viewed as having betrayed their stewardship of the nation on behalf of their children. The despair of youth, juxtaposed with the excesses of the elites, is often communicated in the urban genres of Dancehall and Hip-Hop, and has been reiterated in Winky D's "Twenty-Five" (2016), Synik's "Greed" (2016), and Magikkal's "Maya" (2017) among others.

Land discourse in the Second Republic

The removal of Mugabe from power by Emmerson Mnangagwa in November 2017, although widely celebrated initially, wrought uncertainty onto the overall national project. Mnangagwa faced the paradoxical task of guaranteeing both a disruption and continuity from the Mugabe era. On one hand, his administration had to show sufficient departure from the Mugabe regime to justify his removal as a change in national course. This was particularly important because the new leadership, most prominently Mnangagwa himself, had been part of Mugabe's inner circle and, in many ways, the architects of Mugabeism. On the other hand, there had to be some ideological continuity from the outgoing regime. Not only did Mugabe and, indeed, key tenets of Mugabeism such as the land reform and supposedly unwavering anti-imperialism remain popular within the party and across segments of society, it also would have been blatant disingenuity for Mnangagwa to disavow everything he had been instrumental in building since the 1960s. These two, oft-dueling, stances are best embodied in two slogans of Mnangagwa's young regime: "The gains of the land redistribution program are irreversible" on one hand, and "Zimbabwe is open for business" on the other; the latter a declaration of return to socio-economic normalcy meant to appeal to investors and the rest of the international community.

As early as December 2017, mere weeks after his ascent to power — and thus at the peak of his charm offensive to the international community — Mnangagwa declared that the land reform was irreversible, a stance he has reiterated on several occasions since then (Reuters, 2017). Yet, while Mugabe was, by the end, unabashed in his antagonism toward the white ownership of any Zimbabwean land, the Mnangagwa administration has gone back significantly on this platform. By the beginning of 2018, members of the government had traveled to Zambia, where many displaced white farmers had settled, in a bid to woo them back on the promise of 99-year leases (Tobias & Duri, 2020, p. 209). In July of the same year, Mnangagwa addressed white Zimbabweans at a campaign rally for the 2018 presidential elections and proclaimed, "Land grabs belong to the past. We are grateful to the white farmers who remained in Zimbabwe, and you must be given ninety-nine-year leases. Everyone is equal" (Ana, 2018.)

Nothing epitomizes this about-turn in Mugabeist policy than the July 2020 announcement that 4,000 displaced farmers would be compensated a combined total of $3.5 billion, not for the land itself, but for their investments on the land (Mutsaka, 2020). The news proved largely unpopular among segments of the Zimbabwean population, with the obvious exception of the signatories to the deal. Those partial to the land reform felt this was, indeed, the reversal that Mnangagwa continued to speak against. Many among the urban youth felt this was an irresponsible allocation of funds, especially during a global pandemic (Mavhunga, 2020). The masses especially worried that the burden of funding the process would fall largely on them by way of it being funded, in significant part, by tax dollars.

The uncertainty surrounding land has not only manifested in the direction of policy, but through inconsistent yields as well. The 2017-2018 agricultural season saw a quadrupling of the previous year's maize production, numbers which represented a return to pre-land reform harvest levels (Chikowore & Banda, 2018). The following two seasons were hampered by drought, which cut the annual yield to less than half of the required level. The 2020-2021 season is predicted to quadruple that of the previous year, thus exceeding the required annual yield by more than one million tons (Reuters, 2021) Yet even these apparent improvements are accompanied by continued economic instability. A World Bank report (2022) showed, among other things, that around 40% of the Zimbabwean population was food insecure, while the percentage of the population living in extreme poverty had gone up from 30% in 2017 to 40% in 2022.

So where does this leave the populace, who long clamored for the rectification of colonial and neocolonial land disparities as a means of economic uplift? As the 21st century progresses, there seems to be a bitter resignation that, in taking the land, and despite the populist rhetoric surrounding the process, the government and those allied with it may have been more interested in power retention and self-enrichment than equitable redistribution. In 2018, news broke that "as many as 12 500 families faced evictions from their ancestral homes" to make way for a lucerne grass-growing project by dairy conglomerate Dendairy, amidst threats from government officials to "cooperate with the new investors" (Ndhlovu, 2022, p 49.) There are similar, if not more dire, concerns within smaller indigenous groups whose voice is often relegated to the very margins of national discourse — if not muted all together. Mwatwara and Mujere have written about the plight of the Shangaan and Dinde communities, both ethnic minority groups within Matabeleland, whose ancestral homes have been desecrated despite their protestations, as the government gives rights to the land to the highest foreign bidders, and the locals are often arrested for protesting (2022, p.58.) Studies have shown that even when the land has been redistributed to the indigenous groups, the Ndau of Manicaland, an ethnic group often included under the Shona supra-ethnic umbrella, were underrepresented in land regarded as top tier, while the Karanga and Zezuru — the Shona ethnic groups most associated with national governmental power since independence — were overrepresented[24] (Musanga, 2022, p.8.) Women across the country, and particularly in rural areas where they are often relegated to dependents and not landholders, have told of how authorities have demanded sex in exchange for land (Ndhlovu, 2019.) These instances illustrate a replication of colonial era-style marginalization of groups deemed peripheral: the very historical injustice that land redistribution was meant to rectify.

Fanon foretold this phenomenon, among other "pitfalls of nationalism," when he explained: "For the bourgeoisie, nationalization signified very precisely the transfer into indigenous hands of privileges inherited from the colonial period" (2004, p. 100). The false dawn of the repossession of a natural resource celebrated as key to national economic revival before being sealed off for the exclusive aggrandization of the state and its allies was mirrored in the aftermath of the 2006 discovery of alluvial diamonds in Marange in the Manicaland province. As many unemployed young men and women, already enduring an unprecedented economic downturn, made their way to Marange as artisanal miners, the government initially regulated the trade with the promise of distributing the gains, before descending violently upon those who resisted. Nyamunda and Mukwambo (2012, p. 165) describe the exasperation surrounding the affair thus:

> The story of contestation around this informal economy concluded when the gwejas[25] and buyers were violently expelled by the state. Although it has been some time since the 'discovery' of diamonds in the country and the violent 'take over' by the state, the diamonds, which were expected to provide a huge windfall for the economy, have not yet led to any apparent improvement in the country's finances. Instead, the institutions that supposedly controlled diamond mining have been implicated in scandal.

As such, the cultural production over the past decade, culminating in the post-Mugabe era, reckons with this reality. As opposed to earlier rhetoric aimed at taking back the land and compelling the authorities to fulfill the last remaining part of the promise of liberation, sentiments now expressed betray a resignation to the unwavering might of the state and pleads to their mercies for their suffering to be recognized. Thus, with its early euphoria waning, the reign of the New Dispensation has been punctuated by a series of songs from various artists

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[24] The colonial government demarcated the land into seven regions, with region one having the best farming land, and region seven having the most arid. The study referenced here showed the Karanga and Zezuru heavily represented in regions one and two after redistribution, while the Ndau were given land in regions three and four.

[25] Informal miners.

lamenting the contemporary state of Zimbabwe in general, and urban Zimbabwe in particular. One such song is the reggae-infused tune, "*Vanhu Vatema*" by Gary Tight, in which he sings:

> *Ndati ndironge musika ku Copacabana*
> When I decide to set up a market at Copacabana[26]
> *Dhimoni rekanzuru rabva rabata*
> The city council's demons get a hold of them!
> *Ndati ndifayise madhiri kuMbare,*
> If I decide to make deals in Mbare
> *Babylon rabva rakanya*
> The cops are there to mess it up!"

Tight describes the desperation of the urban youth in a struggling economy in which the authorities themselves prove an obstacle to their enterprise. The song is especially poignant as it samples '*Vanhu Vatema*,' a 1994 song by Thomas Mapfumo, whose earlier songs were the soundtrack of the Second Chimurenga, and his later ones among the first and most confrontational criticism of corruption within the ZANU-PF government. These sentiments lamenting the excesses of the political elite are reiterated in several other recordings, including the 2020 song "Already" by Karizma, in which he raps:

> "Why aren't the doctors getting paid already/
> When ministers are getting cars, new Range already…
> Why is Hopewell getting jailed already/
> When he's the one doing the work coz you failed already?"

The common thread running through these more recent artistic expressions is the recognition that, even as the colonial legacies of wealth disparity and ownership continue to be dismantled, the wealth and means to getting it — chief among them land — is now firmly in the hands of the political elite with little hope of it trickling down to the masses.

Conclusion

> *"Land reform is something that I agree with… I think it could have been done better, but that's a cheap shot- we all can say that."*
>
> — King Isaac[27] (Personal communication, March 2018).

Land redistribution in Zimbabwe will forever be tied to the legacy of Mugabe and Mugabeism. The FTLRP, under the spiritual monikers of *Hondo Yeminda* and the *Third Chimurenga*, not only defined the legacy of Mugabe's regime, but of the nation. Yet this widely accepted narrative undermines the important role of the larger community in advocating for the rectification of the colonial-era disparities in land ownership. Mass movements, punctuated by song, poetry, literature, and theater, vocally pushed for redistribution in the 1990s at a time when the government appeared set on maintaining the status quo. Even after the government had co-opted land reform, it was still accompanied by a definitive anthology of artistic cultural expression, both advocating for the process and confronting its inefficiencies, corruption, and subsequent violence.

Yet four decades removed from the date of independence, and two from the FTLRP, economic disparities still exist and, by some measures, are widening. The Born-Frees have now given way to those born during or after land redistribution and the subsequent economic collapse as the newest generation of voters and cultural creators. For these generations, the

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[26] Popular bus terminal and informal market in downtown Harare.

[27] Zimbabwean Reggae Artist.

tyranny and excesses most recognizable to them are not those of the colonial era, but of the post-colonial government and the indigenous bourgeoisie. The music and other contemporary cultural productions, particularly among the urban youth, thus reflect this shift. This does not mean cultural artistic expression in Zimbabwe is no longer concerned with the process of decoloniality, but it has shifted central focus away from blatant colonialism and its vestiges, such as the whites-favoring land disparities, toward the neo-colonial governance as represented by the excesses of the political elites and the continued marginalization of individuals and communities along the lines of gender and indigenous ethnicity.

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Shingi Mavima, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of history at the University of Toledo. He specializes in contemporary Southern African history with a focus on the colonial and postcolonial eras and with additional interests in African literature and popular culture. His peer-reviewed publications have focused on a wide range of subjects, from Afro-based traditions in battle rap to the use of literature as a revolutionary tool in the Second Chimurenga.

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Poems

JIDE AJIDAHUN, Ph.D.;
Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba, Nigeria

Justice is Dead

Justice died last night
In the cold weather
In the lonely night
In his kennel
And the rodents entered freely
How are the mighty fallen!
The criminals are back
No more respite for the poor
The hope of the masses is gone
We are naked
And we are doomed
Your teeth were soothing on my body
But deadly on the scoundrels
Your claws were calmly on my hands
But lethal on the criminals
You caressed me with your tongue daily
And tortured my adversaries with the same
Your presence was reassuring
But frightening to the intruders
Your barking made them flee

But your barking ushered me in like a king
The hunter has been hunted
Justice is gone!
Your furs were fluffy
But now you are gone forever
No more wagging of your tail
Who will now eat the bones?
Justice died without a single child
To succeed you in the Ministry of Justice
My warrior, defender and companion.
My friend!
Good bye!

Thank You Lord For My Cross

Thank you, Lord for the cross that you gave to me to carry.
When I look at the cross of others
I thank you for my own
Even though I carry mine with tears
Others have no more strength to cry about theirs
Thank you, Lord I still can cry.

Thank you, Lord for the cross that you gave to me to carry
When I look at the cross of others
I thank you for my own
Even though I sometimes faint carrying it
Some others have died while carrying theirs
Thank you, Lord I am still alive to carry mine.

Thank you, Lord for the cross that you gave to me to carry
When I look at the cross of others
I thank you for my own
Even though my bed is wet every night with my tears
Others have no bed to soak their tears
Thank you, Lord for my bed is big enough to hold my tears

Thank you, Lord for the cross that you gave to me to carry
When I look at the cross of others
I thank you for my own
Even though you comfort me when I am weary
Others have no one to comfort them
When they are discouraged.

Thank you, Lord for the cross that you gave to me to carry
When I look at the cross of others
I thank you for my own
While others are lonely carrying theirs
You are always by my side
Even though I do not see you

Thank you, Lord for giving me a big cross to carry
And a big head to lift it

Thank you, Lord for giving me a black cross to carry
And a black skin to match it

Thank you, Lord for giving me a long cross to carry
And a long arm to embrace it

Thank you, Lord for giving me a heavy cross to carry
And a strong spine to raise it.

Jide Ajidahun is a professor of comparative literature and dramatic literature at Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria. He teaches in the Department of English Studies of the same institution. He was formerly head of the Department of Performing Arts, Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria. He is a poet and also a playwright. He is the current editor of the Literary Scholars Association of Nigeria's journal; member of the English Scholars' Association of Nigeria (ESAN); member, West African Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (WAACLALS), and a member of the Society of Nigeria Theatre Artists (SONTA) among others. He is also an alumnus of the Galilee International Management Institute, Israel.


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