African Nebula

Content

Introduction

The passion behind floating a learned journal like this in the 21st century is driven by the need to ensure that research across disciplines, space and time can engage in conversation without borders. This then explains why in producing the surface version of *African Nebula,* the editorial board also decided that the challenge of restricted circulation must be tackled by producing simultaneously an online version on a credible template. The A-rated journal *Nebula: A Journal of Multidisciplinary Scholarship*, a journal residing at the college of Arts at the University of Western Sydney, whose editorial team is led by the journal's founder, Dr Samar Habib, provided the perfect template for *African Nebula*. We are therefore pleased to introduce to you the inaugural issue of *African Nebula*. We would also like to thank our international editorial advisers: Samar Habib, Chris Fleming, Isaac Kamola, Joseph Benjamin Afful and Michael Angelo Tata for agreeing to act as consultants with us about the journal's operations. We thank in the same spirit, the Osun State University and all members of the local editorial board for their encouragement and support in making our dream a reality.

In this maiden edition, there is a range of interesting articles from disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. They explore issues which verge on colonial history, demography, literature and the bourgeoning field of the Nigerian film industry otherwise known as Nollywood. E.O. Ibiloye's paper, "Diplomacy and Emirate Formation" interrogates a tetchy and controversial historical issue about the evolutionary process in the integration of the Igbomina ethnic group into the formation of the Ilorin Emirate in pre-colonial Nigeria. Ibiloye concludes that in spite of the avalanche of accounts on the integration process, there is enough reason to argue that more than anything else, diplomacy accounted in the main for the success of the integration. On his part, Oluwatoyin Oduntan's paper challenges the widely held view about hierarchy, exclusionism and absolute performance of power in pre-colonial Egba society. In driving home his point, the author demonstrates how the flexibility of power structure encouraged the emergence of various elite power structures which challenged and complemented one another. So much so, that the rendition of the transition from a pre-colonial power structure to a modern one can only be understood as a model in gradualism and not a sudden and total displacement of the traditional by the modern.

In a manner that links the past directly with the present, knowing that the present often obtains from the past, Tunde Decker's "Social Welfare Strategy in Colonial Lagos" provides vistas into how the advent of colonialism in Lagos brought with it a recrudescence of poverty. Conversely, much as the colonial government adopted measures to stem the poverty rate emanating from this colonial administration, the strategies adopted proved to be ineffective, thus resulting in an aggravation of poverty. In similar vein, Simeon Maravanyika's and Frans Huijzenveld's paper examines the failure of imperial Britain in colonial Zimbabwe or Southern Rhodesia to establish an adequate and productive white settler population through her exclusionary measure of endorsing the migration of only "good quality" settlers. On account of this, the exclusionary measure resulted in the creation of a flawed labour demography and ultimately made the exclusionary measure adopted between 1890 and 1948 counter-productive. In looking at the economic history of the Nile Valley region, Michael

Ogbeidi centrally locates countries like Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea Sudan and Somalia, tracing the developments from the distant past to present times, concluding that much as the transformation in the economies of these states is evident, there is still "room for accelerated advancement".

Mariusz Krasniewski's paper which underlines the role of literature as historical record is an exploration of the concept of border crossings via the vehicle of literature. His study of Hausa prose fiction is remarkable in its tracing and reconstruction of cultural borders as melting pots of diverse social and life practices. Agatha Ukata joins issue with Nollywood, Nigeria's fast growing cinematic industry, interrogating its representation and portrayal of women in its manifold forms. Meanwhile, Rotimi Fasan's paper follows in both diachronic and synchronic terms the contours of Nigerian Literature as a disciplinary practice, highlighting both the thematic and aesthetic features of the literature from the period predating literacy to contemporary times with its mainstreaming of female writings and concerns.

We therefore, invite prospective readers into the world of *African Nebula* with this inaugural edition.

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Power Politics among Abeokuta Elites in the 19th Century

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Abstract

This paper challenges the idea that pre-colonial Egba society was hierarchical, immutable and stable by pointing to the struggles and contestations among elite identities over power. It challenges the myths of royal absolutism and underscores the fact that power was fluid with elite structures challenging and complementing one another. That power was fluid accounts for the relative ease with which educated Africans found space to carve an ambiguous elite identity and to participate in power. The paper concludes that such complex engagements among elites better explain the political history of Abeokuta than a transition model which sees the modern displacing the traditional.

Introduction

This paper is driven by two broad objectives. First, I intend to show the complex interactions among elite groups as they contested for power in 19th century Abeokuta. Second, I seek to show that Egba society in Abeokuta was formed as a consequence of these contestations and interactions among elite groups. This pursuit challenges assumptions and preconceptions about how African societies were formed and shaped, and the roles of African elites in the process.

Existing writing is dominated by a displacement model which generally posits that modern Africa was shaped by colonial rule and according to European ideals. Central to this model is the notion that African society was pushed from its stable traditional past to an inevitable modern future by which a European-created elite progressively sidelined a traditional elite to inherit power in the post-colonial state. The European intrusion is depicted as destroying (or modernizing) stable hegemonies by displacing elite structures and conventions of power. However, the formation of elite groups and contestations over power predate and transcend European influence and colonisation. Far from stable hegemonies, pre-colonial societies in Nigeria (as elsewhere in Africa), witnessed changes in their politics which were fallouts of ideological discourses and contestations over the form of society and how to rule it. Similarly, the assumptions that colonial elites constituted a category apart, were counter-posed to traditional elites, or that they were exclusively equipped with modernist credentials and thereby easily secured social legitimacy, obscure a complex historical process of elite identity formation and search for power. That process pitched an amorphous educated elite with and against other equally indefinable local elite groups not just to wield power but to define what power was in a new and changing social context.

Abeokuta, the case under study, was a society in the making in the 19th century. Established only in 1830 by refugees escaping from the Yoruba wars, Abeokuta was engaged for much of

this century in securing its borders from external enemies and with constituting relations among the disparate refugee identities. In such a nascent environment of diversity, power had no definite meaning or structure and there was no stable hegemony. Rather, elites and elite groups were being formed and shaped as they struggled to shape society and how it was ruled. This paper revisits the well-worn tracks of Egba and Yoruba historiography to show that traditional and modern elite categories were not differentiated and that the interconnections among them defined the structure and culture of power and ultimately how Egba society was formed during the 19th century.

Identifying the Elites in the African Context

Historians often focus on elites above other groups. Underlying this concentration is the notion that society can best be studied through its leaders. Since leadership cannot be limited to the very pinnacle of the political structure, the study of leadership requires latitude which includes not only formal government officials and bureaucrats but also professionals and other informal agencies of power. Accounting for social change draws scholars to examine the decisions that are made by leaders and the positive and constraining influences that impinge on decision-making. It has been usual to study societies in terms of the actions of dominant and competing elites.

With particular reference to Africa, the study of history has been dependent on the elite as analytical and methodological tools. Not only have the accounts been focused on the activities of leaders, elites are also represented as culture brokers. Anthropologists and historians alike have depended on local elites - headmen, school teachers, religion specialists - as the repositories of local knowledge and the middlemen between local peoples and the wider world. The writings of elites constitute a significant stock of the archive from which historical reconstruction is made. Therefore, elites are not only agents of social change, they are also the sources for its explication. However, despite their centrality to African history, what has been lacking is a model for analyzing elites.

Who then are elites? Marcus (1983:21) observes that the typical public definitions and most academic usages of the term obscure more than they explicate. Conventional usage applies elite to almost any powerful, upper class, wealthy, privileged person, who is also assumed to be more intelligent. Rather than such a wide spectrum, a society's elite is a creation of the relations of power within it. To make it a useful analytical tool, politically significant elite must be clearly distinguished from the social upper caste and the economic upper class. In the same vein, Field *et al* (1990: 49-82) suggest that an *organized* capacity to influence political outcomes regularly and substantially marks the elite from the privileged. To this extent, the elite consists of established leaders and those at the top of the political, social and economic pyramids on one hand, and a counter-elite including the leaders of mass societies who can affect social outcomes by negation or collaboration, on the other. By this measure, many writers limit national elite to a few thousands depending on the size of the nation. These authors reckon that there are fewer than two thousand persons who may qualify as elites for all countries during the early modern historical period and all but the most populous developing countries today.

Therefore, access to and ability to deploy power is critical to identifying elites. Power is an equally elusive concept partly because of its range of conceptual applications. At its simplest meaning, it connotes causal effects by one on another. Most accounts of African political history emphasize the control of the principal over the subaltern. Studies of colonial rule highlight the coercive powers of the state, its military and punitive exercises, its legal institutions and its administrative policies (including the use of local rulers in Indirect Rule) as the important means of social formation. This restricted view limits power to its coercive attributes and conceptualizes elites as those who engage coercion as collaborators or resisters. It leaves out a whole dimension of influences that operates outside of official structures but whose thoughts and activities contribute to the shaping of society.

These divergent conceptualisations of power fit precisely into the debate among elite theorists between those who conceive of elites as the "power-elite" and the pluralists who contend for a wider range of elite influences beyond the close confines of government and bureaucracy. If the notion of a "power-elite" is applied to Africa's history through the 19th and 20th centuries, then the educated would not qualify and the theory will be hard-pressed to account for their sudden appearance as leaders in the post-colonial state (Vansina, 1994). In reality, power is not concentrated in official structures only, but it is widely diffused through the society. Scott (1994:37) is of the view that the shaping of society is through a complex interaction of repressive and persuasive power where people are discursively formed into subalterns with or without a direct coercive action on the part of the state. Africa was not simply shaped by colonial power and its complying or resisting local elites. Critical to social formation were the thoughts and activities, persuasive influences and advisement of power-wielding but non-coercive elites.

Therefore, the African elite are much more diverse than the overarching binaries of collaborators and resisters, or traditional and modern, suggest. However, such a diffused conception of power and pluralist elite structure is not common in the scholarly treatment of Africa. For instance, the account of elite formation and roles among the Biu-Mandara of northeastern Nigeria is a typical depiction of African elite structure: the pre-colonial system dominated by *Pabir* rulers is one based on a close-knit elite sustained by hereditary, lineage and an elite subculture. It is "more aristocratic, more closed, less accountable, and less responsive to other than its own needs and support" (Cohen, 1983:74). British conquest and missionary activities created intellectuals who "began teaching school and used their literacy and knowledge of the wider provincial and regional settings to organize opposition" against *Pabir* excesses, making sure to keep "within the (colonial) law so as to remain beyond the reach of the formidable colonial control." By contesting and winning local elections, the intellectuals succeeded in changing the local rules and ultimately in securing leadership as colonialism ended (Cohen;, 1983:78).

Similar imagery informs the treatment of the Tswana in Southern Africa. They describe the colonial encounter between the Tswana and European missionaries beginning from a stable African hegemony under which conventions on cosmology, rituals and customs in pre-colonial times had changed only slightly when there were contestations over succession, rainmaking and lineage power. In the account, the stable *Setswana* ways became complicated

by the intrusion of European modernity (*sekgoa)* to create a colonial situation which the Africans engaged with, resisted and adapted to (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1989, 1991 & 1997).

The notion that the elite structure of pre-colonial African societies was closed, lineage-based, totalitarian and autocratic pervades the literature. Examples such as the Zulu, Dahomey and Asante monarchies readily justify such ideas. Notwithstanding that these were political systems that developed out of the peculiar conditions of the 18th and 19th centuries involving, among other things, the end of the Atlantic slave trade and the rise of new commodity trades, they are taken to define pre-colonial Africa. It follows then that the elite structure of pre-colonial societies with "simple politics" needs only be described and not analysed. This is the claim that Carlton (1996:17) makes by stating that studying elite is more "naturally" and easily possible for earlier societies that had well-established and often unquestioned, hierarchical organisations.

The underlying assumption is that African societies always had stable and unquestioned hegemonies until the complications or sophistication of European modernity. There is however much in the history of the Egba to argue the contrary. The 19th century upheavals did not produce autocratic systems like those of Asante or Dahomey. In this century, power was intensely contested by a mixed variety of elite groups and the interactions among these groups contributed to the shaping of Egba society. These elite groups, including but not limited to the Obas*,* Ogboni, Parakoyi, and Ologun, representing different political traditions and the multiple factions within each of them, operated in a structure that was partly hierarchical and partly pluralistic. The structure and the comparative stability it offered provided European missionaries, liberated slaves and African returnees from Sierra Leone a platform for involvement. The educated elites did not turn an otherwise stable elite structure upside down. Rather they entered into ongoing struggles among elite groups about power and how it was used to shape society.

Elite Categories and Local Politics

The image of a simple, hierarchical and pre-modern traditional system has shaped our understanding of pre-colonial politics. Typically, the system in centralised states is depicted as totalitarian in which local elite groups compete within stable hegemonies for chiefly office and patronage. Such systems are assumed to be largely immutable, and fundamental changes only occur from outside in the form of conquest or powerful cultural intrusions. They are depicted as historical and stable and ideologically uncontested.

Not enough is known about the Egba before their settlement in Abeokuta to give an accurate depiction of their society. Most commentaries have built on the fragmentary accounts of writers, missionaries and explorers and on local histories or oral traditions collected in the 19th and 20th centuries. From these, a synthesis of traditions appears to have been built which situates the Egba as one of the Yoruba subgroups (Biobaku, 1957:19). Most accounts of the Egba past appear as deductions from the more generic Yoruba nationality Peel, 2001; Doortmont, 1991:173). The Egba are assumed to have been organised in ways similar to other Yoruba groups deriving their political institutions from the Yoruba source, Ile-Ife. Thus Sabiru Biobaku notes that "in the organization of their communities the Egba did not

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differ from one another or from the Yoruba in general. The basis of their communal life was the town." Citing Dr. E. C. Irvin, the Christian missionary who passed through the ruins of Egba towns in 1854, Biobaku (1957:5) calculated these towns to be very small indeed. He described the Egba as being organised in a federation of three monarchies: Ake, Oke-Ona and Gbagura, among which the *Alake* (of Ake) was the ultimate judge. Each of these provinces comprised ancestral-kinship towns or villages. The Gbagura comprised "144 towns in the Egba forest," all ruled by a principal monarch, the *Agura* of Gbagura. The author goes on to state that "the head of each town was an *Oba*, who was the ultimate source of justice in the town. He was also the High Priest, but never a despot" (Biobaku, 1957:8).

The power of the *Oba* was checked by the *Ogboni*, an elite council, who were more or less the real rulers of the town. At least in nomenclature, the *Ogboni*, appears to be a peculiar Egba institution. Other indigenous political structures include the *Parakoyi*, chiefs of the organised guilds of traders and craftsmen, and the *ode*, usually made up of hunters but who were also vested with the responsibilities of maintaining law and order. Women were also organised along guild lines and chiefly women were known to be power brokers.

A major weakness of oral tradition as a source of historical reconstruction is that it lacks chronology. Without chronology it becomes difficult for the historians to determine what is traditional or customary. By depicting these political institutions as static and immutable, the process of their formation and transformation is obscured. Indeed, 19th century Egba elites were not limited to those in customary offices. As missionary records show, the axis of power was much more widely diffused. Local chiefs retained their own militias and organised bands of slave raiders, called *Onisunmomi* in local parlance; these chiefs, many of them outside the official structures of power, exercised considerable influence. Local medicine-men, *Babalawo* or *onisegun* and the guild of blacksmiths played leading social and political roles in the uncertain environment of the 19th century. Far from being an immutable and unchanging political system, the elite structure of the Egba was as varied as it was amorphous. Vaughan (2000) has correctly noted that the failure of existing knowledge to capture the transformative capacities of chiefly power accounts for the dilemma over their survival and roles in modern African politics. In the following section, I analyse the main elite categories with a view to laying the basis for a more open and inclusive approach to the study of elites and their roles in the making of Egba society.

The Yoruba *Oba*: "A Power like that of the Gods"

Despite the centrality of the Oba in the political history of the Yoruba, only few studies have interrogated the nature of this sovereign office and the principles of law, politics and administration that surround the office and its functioning. For the most part, writers have focused on describing activities of particular kings and their roles in the historical process. The implication of this approach is that the institution of Obaship is undifferentiated. Its complexities are largely ignored. Indeed, what is most known about Yoruba Oba are the commonalities which they share.

Yoruba Oba usually trace their origins to Ile-Ife, the acclaimed ancestral source of the Yoruba and to the same ancestor. Writers such as Samuel Johnson cite the common bead,

embroidered crowns, similar political institutions and Yoruba conceptions of sacred kingship and social kinship as evidence of the common stock from which the institution derived. However substantial disagreements exist in the literature on the Yoruba Oba. First, there has been no agreement over the number of the original Yoruba princes upon whom the primogenitor ordained crowns. Claims range from seven to sixteen (Ojo, 1967). More significantly, the extent of authority of the Oba remains largely undefined, ranging from claims of semi-divinity to frailty caused by constitutional checks and balances. For instance, Biobaku (1957) describes the Oba as being next to the gods in power, and yet not a despot. The point here is that the traditions upon which the power of the Oba has been construed, including the very identity of the Yoruba, remains problematic. Peel (2001) shows that the Yoruba social and political identity only coalesced during the 19th century. It has also been argued that the claims of a common ancestry and heritage appear to be 19th and 20th centuries traditions to legitimate political innovations. Political considerations have made it expedient for communities to seek inclusion into the Yoruba heritage and construct their histories accordingly (Pemberton and Afolayan, 1996:28).

Therefore, the notion of a pre-existent Yoruba prototype Obaship institution obscures the significant variety in Yoruba kingships and the transformations of each over time. To study the Oba as an elite category requires a more particularistic and socially contextual analysis than the generalised conceptions of sacred kingships and ancestral kinships. It is in this context that we must examine Egba Oba as an elite category by transcending the notion that Yoruba Oba are undifferentiated and socially stable or that their conduct is predictable and their legitimacy unquestioned.

It is conceptually useful to revisit the historical accounts upon which the identity and powers of Egba Oba are conceived. A number of gaps in these accounts make this worthwhile. First, the Egba are not counted among the original descendants of the Yoruba primogenitor, Oduduwa. Samuel Johnson and other historians after him needed to account for the ascendancy of Abeokuta as a leading Yoruba state during the 19th century and fittingly accorded a second generation descent to the Egba. This does not suggest that the Egba were not Yoruba, it only indicates that their kingship was a later development. The tradition which posits that the mother of Yoruba kings resided at Ake is as implausible as the claim by Egba and their historians to an Ile-Ife heritage which makes them appear even more legitimate than the original seven or fourteen descendants of Oduduwa. In the same vein, the claim that Egba kingships had antecedents before the19th century cannot be sustained by the available evidence. In the first instance, it is inconceivable that there were more than 200 kings with the authority, rituals and paraphernalia of sacred kingship in the Egba homeland, a cumulative territory of less than 100 square kilometres. If the Ife tradition holds, then Yoruba kingships were always a select few. Also, to justify that the size of these settlements were extensive, Biobaku (1957:4) cites Irving's travel on horseback through the ruins of Egba towns. However, an average distance covered in "brisk" fifteen minutes horse strides across ruins of the largest town does not speak of extensive settlements, such that could produce and sustain such a kingship structure.

It is therefore more plausible that prior to settlement in Abeokuta, the Egbas lived in scattered settlements (more likely villages) north of Abeokuta. It is likely that the larger ones

among these settlements - Iddo, Ake and Oko - grew to become cultural centres and the centres from which collective resistance against Imperial Oyo was organised in the 18th century, and from which kingly institutions may have grown. Even then, there is little to sustain the claim that a significant Yoruba prototype kingship, one other Egba settlement recognised as sovereign, developed among the Egba prior to their settlement in Abeokuta (Lloyd, 1960: 221-237).

Events in 19th century Abeokuta suggest that the notions of pre-existent Egba Oba might well be constructions of many stumbling historical claims. What marked Abeokuta out in the first half of the 19th century and at the most momentous periods of its history was the absence of an Oba; and when they did have kings, these were very weak. That there was no king did not seem an abominable situation. However, as the importance attached to monarchies increased during the 19th century, it became necessary for interested parties to advance historical claims to royal stools. One claim made in these contests - that the Egbas confronted calamity because of their failure to properly bury their previous king in the homeland - was promoted in the 1850s by the party interested in creating a monarchy. It speaks more to the politics of mobilising support than a real sense of retributive loss that well over twenty years passed before Egba elites thought it was critical to rebury their dead king.

It is evident that the monarchy acquired increased importance in the 19th century owing to certain prevailing factors. First, in the environment of warfare and insecurity, scattered settlement sought inclusion into larger communities and the defence and imperial advantages such inclusions offered. Monarchies in other Yoruba towns like Ijesha, Ekiti and Ife were either created or strengthened in these war times. Similar consolidation of kingships in Lagos and Badagry was aided by the centralisation of trade patterns. The collapse of Oyo following the Fulani invasion enhanced the stature of the monarchy in two ways. First it resulted in the scattering of the Oyo who sought to recreate their visions of imperial kingship where they could and generally promoted the idea that a flamboyant monarchy was the most prestigious political system. Also, the military progress of the Fulani was construed as an alien attack on and domination of all the Yoruba. Resisting the Fulani became a Yoruba "national" cause for which the institutions of the Alaafin, king of Oyo had to be enhanced (even though it had no effective power to muster) because it was the only symbolic rallying point of Yoruba identity. Smith records that the Alaafin gave titles to war generals, some of who translated their offices to kingships. We may also trace the ideas of absolutism to this merger of the political and military offices, especially against the background that in Old Oyo these offices were separated and the political structure was one of checks and struggles between the imperial monarchy, war chiefs and the *Oyo Mesi*, council of elders. By and large, it became important and prestigious to have kings in 19th century Yorubaland. As a nascent multi-cultural settlement, it was also expedient for the Egba to buy into these larger constructions of their identity and of the relevance of the Oba.

However, it is simplistic to assume that the process of absolutism was not intensely contested. Most existing accounts (including and especially oral traditions) highlight the powers of war-era monarchy and generalship without a corresponding attention to obvious evidence of the internal instabilities the enhanced powers of these rulers produced. The

internal schisms between imperial monarchy and a growing commercial class which Austin (1998:67) describes among contemporary Asante is curiously absent in the Yoruba historiography where it is made to appear that a political order subsisted despite growing transformations in social structure, group and individual economic statuses. A similar case can be made for the 19th century in Abeokuta where a growing economic class was not silent and uninterested in power and neither did they always conform to some traditions. My study shows that the title and powers of an Oba were never uncontested. As an elite category, the terms were not as stable as existing studies suggest and their roles and conduct were not fixed. On the contrary, Egba kingship evolved in a historical process. Far from a definite custom, its roles, powers and claims to traditions were instruments and outcomes of complex struggles for power and control.

Darker than Nights: The Ogboni as an Elite Category

Where African monarchies can claim universal similarities, the Ogboni has been the quintessential depiction of what is peculiarly African in pre-colonial politics. Chanock (1985) has promoted the ideas of pre-kingly (pre-dynastic) lineage heads as the "real rulers of the people" and the effective check to royal absolutism. In similar ways, the notion of a mystical, dark, sinister, irrational and conceptually ungraspable yet ineluctable entity pervades the scholarly and public conceptions of the Ogboni. Much of what was considered repugnant to "modernity" – including trial by ordeal, witchcraft, juju, etc. – has been associated with the council (Ibhawor, 2007:59). Partly because of its acclaimed cultic secrecy and in spite of its looming presence in the socio-cultural worldview and political history of the Yoruba, the Ogboni has not been subjected to any rigorous research beyond accounts of its actions, religious roles and arts (Akere, 1980; Morton-Williams, 1960).

Shed of its mysteries, the Ogboni was a political council responsible for law and order. A society of the most powerful, wealthy and influential men and women, its members met every seventeen days to adjudicate civil disputes, deal with criminal cases and conduct other such political and ritual functions as were necessary. According to Biobaku (1957), the Ogboni constituted at once the civic court, the town council, and the Electoral College for the selection of the Oba. They served as the intermediary between the king and his subjects to ensure the subordination of the latter and to prevent the former from becoming a despot. As a civic council, membership of the Ogboni included sectional and lineage heads, war leaders, leaders of trade and craft guilds, women chiefs and priests. Therefore, "the real rulers of the town were the Ogboni." However, it is for the powers and rituals of the inner caucus of six (or more), the *Iwarefa*, that the Ogboni was most feared and respected. Members were sworn to oaths of secrecy. They met at night and in secret and conducted communal rituals. The *Oro* (a policing agency) was the main instrument of the Ogboni to secure their mysteries and achieve social conformity.

It is necessary to divest the Ogboni of some of its folkloric ascriptions before its identity and roles as an elite group can be understood. One implication of not doing so is that this all-important council of elites appear as a unified and undifferentiated entity, when the historical records suggest intense competition and rivalry among the members and ever-present limitations of its powers and privileges. Furthermore, failing to study the Ogboni secures the

notion that people were historically subdued by its assumed veil of darkness and metaphysical presence when there is considerable evidence to show that the people of Abeokuta were never cowed or subdued but rather willing to challenge such claims. Also, the notions of absolute secrecy need to be analysed. Onadeko (2007) likens the secrecy of the Ogboni to the Vatican idiom: "We don't lie at the Vatican, but we don't always tell." In the Yoruba case, there could only be a minute component of social discourse that was not already public knowledge. As a civic or town council, the Ogboni debated publicly; the leaders of the Council, including the *Iwarefa*, were publicly known; the meeting place, *Ita Ogboni*, was a public square; and the ritual sites, including the sacred places and groove, *Igbo Oro*, were known though inaccessible. The myths and mysteries of the Ogboni need to be re-evaluated as a construction of power by an elite category to secure their positions and promote their interests in the society. Those interests need to be analysed with the object of deciphering the interplay of political ideas upon which society is formed and operates.

Lloyds (1960) considers the Ogboni the principal organ of Egba government in Abeokuta. Indeed in the absence of a monarchy, governance was conducted by this council of leading influential members. However, it was a much more complex history than the assumption of a smoothly run traditional systems in which roles were well imbided and respected. In the first instance, given the patterns of settlement and the efforts at managing the complex federation, there had to have been councils for each of the settling groups. Early missionary accounts emphasise that the hierarchy of authority was not well defined and that there were struggles among the leading persons. Bashorun Sodeke, the leader of the Egba Ogboni (c.1830-1844) could only claim a moral leadership based on his age and military experience. Until the middle of the 19th century, power was so widely diffused beyond the Ogboni, that one principal actor stated that "he who owns the power, rules the city," underscoring that there was no absolute hegemonic stability or ideological unity (CMS, 1847).

The case is sustainable that power was more diffused in the Yoruba world than the assumptions of stable political structures and peaceful lineage fraternity allow. The Yoruba worldview from which conceptions of a sacred kingship and notions of a mysterious Ogboni derive contained many facilities of power which could not be limited to a definitive elite structure and which were available to able and aspiring individuals and groups. The earth (*orisha*) cult of which the Oba is acclaimed as sacred and the Ogboni its leading worshippers also had priests, mediums and other adherents with varying capacity to claim and deploy its power (Ojo, 1967: 97). In other words, ecclesiastical authority cannot be singular or hierarchical in a polytheistic cosmology. A semblance of how widely diffused power was within polytheistic cosmologies can be found in Peires (1989) account of the Xhosa cattle-killing movement of 1856-7 in Cape Colony. In this case, a sixteen year old tells a culturally plausible story and with her uncle exercises considerable influence on chiefs and priests over a wide region. In the Yoruba accounts, migrations, wars and heroic deeds are usually credited to some divination by local priests who are not necessarily Ogboni. Missionaries record the existence of powerful individuals, known for their charms and power and who were not chiefs. Divination and priestly admonitions were very common in the political discourse in Abeokuta during this period. Therefore, to suggest that the Ogboni "six" was always the most ineluctably powerful and feared factor in the social system or that this

institution constituted a cultic unity hides the variety of ideas that contested Ogboni issues. There was in fact a wide continuum of power; the council was only an axis of power relations in fluid collaboration and contestation with other power blocs. Part of the story of the Ogboni in Abeokuta was their struggle to retain power and social relevance against other contesting ideas and institutions. It needs be mentioned early on that in this struggle from the mid 19th century, the Ogboni did not constitute a traditional alternative, but they deployed what may be termed modernist resources.

The 19th century was particularly turbulent for the Yoruba. Civil war in Oyo and a Fulani invasion led to the sacking of the empire, massive population displacements and internecine struggles among successor states to Oyo (Ajayi and Smith, 1971:11). Smith has argued that improvisation and expedience, rather than customs or traditions, were the engines that drove societies in times of instability. It can be argued that the uncertainties of the 19th century rendered customary conventions inapplicable; they created new dynamics by which power is defined. It was in this environment that Abeokuta was settled by refugees from these conflicts. The new settlement soon engaged in its own wars, to secure itself against powerful enemies (Ibadan, Ijebu, Dahomey and the Lagos colony) and assert enough influence to partake in and control a share of the Atlantic trade. Domestically, this led to the rise of a powerful military class and a struggle by a civil authority to control it. As an elite category, the *Ologun* (war) chieftaincies may be a 19th century creation among the Egba. Traditions suggest that before this period there were no offices particularly devoted to war or those offices had become disused on account of the imperial rule of Oyo in the 18th century. The rendition of Egba's most remembered "national war of independence" against Oyo rule supports the absence of any organised form of military activities. The Lisabi legend is the account of a farmer who mobilised, organised and led a successful resistance against Oyo. Biobaku (1957: 13) further notes that the Egba may have adopted the military titles of other Yoruba armies at Ibadan. More local variants and a refinement of titles were to occur in the 19th century as Abeokuta fought its own wars. Yet military titles and leadership were important forms of political power. Contrary to views that the Yoruba did not have a standing army but mobilised as required, that their wars were primitive forays for slaves and booty, and that they practised neither strategy nor tactics, Ajayi and Smith (1971: 54) show that by the early 19th century, the Yoruba had developed a complex and flexible military system which could adapt to the changes occasioned by available firearms.

Captain Arthur Jones, an officer of the British regiment stationed in Sierra-Leone, wrote a report on the military capabilities of the Egba during his visit to Egba war camps in May, 1861. In this report, Jones pointed to the roles of war chiefs in public decision-making. According to him, the political constitution was a federation of sectional chiefs and influential citizens. The decision to go to war was taken at the convocation of the Ogboni in which leading chiefs and influential men and women could express their opinions. Once the decision had been taken in favour of war, chiefs enlarged their small band of warriors (which they kept in times of peace) by conscripting the farming population. Military titles were therefore important because they generally overlapped with political roles. A war leader would conceivably also be a chief of sorts in his section, would be able to exercise control over traders and priests and be a member of the *Ogboni*. The leading chiefs in 19th century Abeokuta were also war leaders.

Important as war chiefs were in this era of confusion, they did not constitute an undifferentiated elite category and their control of social resources even in times of war was often tenuous. That a decision to go to war had to be taken at a public meeting of the *Ogboni* afforded anti-war interests an opportunity for dissent. Wars had to be justified as national and necessary to co-opt all the sections, especially because of the network of connections with other Yoruba groups that different sections of Abeokuta shared. Even in the event of a collectively agreed campaign, public support for and enlistment in the wars could not be taken for granted. Indeed, there is much evidence to show that mobilising farmers for war was always a challenge to military and political leaders. Military chiefs were also very limited in their capacity to exercise power and control for other reasons.

Given that there were many chiefs, many wealthy persons who kept their own guards and many *Onisunmomi* (bands of warriors who lived on slavery), this elite category had to have been fluid. The warrior as an elite category crossed a wide latitude in itself and it was deeply connected to other elite groups. In other words, not only was candidature to these offices open to many able individuals, the same individuals could circulate in all elite categories. In any case, as British intervention and colonialism put a stop to warfare in the region, military offices ran out of practical functions. It is a mark of its fluidity and adaptability as an elite category that local military offices retained their status into the 20th century and are still being filled up to this date. Like the Ogboni or the monarchy, it is analytically obstructive to cast military chieftaincies as independent actors without an aggregation of the multiple and diverse identities and interests at play.

My assessment of the local politics and its elite actors is that elite categories were tenuous and interconnected. Not only were the offices including the monarchy and Ogboni open to many able individuals, the same individuals could circulate in all elite categories. In the case of the monarchy, the conception of national kinship and widespread polygamy progressively widened the number of claimants to royalty; by the end of the 19th century there were at least five monarchs in Abeokuta, each with at least four ruling houses from which the king could be chosen. The constant requirements for membership of the Ogboni or the Ologun appear to have been wealth and influence, age, experience and military success – in that order. None of the offices was directly hereditary and there were no cases of pre-ordination. Elites were always contesting among themselves for all political offices. It is in this sense that Peel suggests that the dominant pursuit of the average Yoruba in the 19th century was power. If power was well structured, as the view of stable pre-colonial hegemony suggests, then the terms of its acquisition would be very clear. Peel shows through missionary records that Yorubas were always searching for new resources to build social stability and mobility, and interpreting and reinventing existing ones. What defined Egba elites was not just a place on the political hierarchy but the skills and capacity to deploy resources in staking claims to pre-eminence.

From Slaves to Lords: The Educated as an Elite Category

It was a diffused elite structure that educated Africans entered into and developed within during 19th century, which partly accounts for their early rise as culture and power brokers

in Abeokuta. The dominant writings on the African educated elite depict their entrance into assumedly stable African hegemonies as momentous and revolutionary, and their identity and creed as directly opposed to pre-existing African worldviews. Much has been written within this framework of how educated elites were harbingers of modernity, helping to spread Christianity, challenging "obnoxious" traditional practices, and transforming Africans from the past towards a future. What has been lacking in many accounts is that sense of a process by which the "new" Africans invented their elite status and how they were so recognised by what has been tagged the traditional structure. From the purview of the local, how did new Christians, who were former slaves become elites? If African elite structures were static and inflexible this process should be more cataclysmic than the historical reality suggests. On the contrary, a diffused elite structure of unsure hegemonic values, intensely contested ideologies and an open competitive political structure is a better explanation for the entry and rise of educated elites in the complex elite politics.

Educated elites were themselves not a single undifferentiated unit and their interests and conduct were not altogether defined by their acquired western identities and aspirations. The influx into Abeokuta of liberated slaves from Sierra-Leone, Brazil and Cuba from 1839 included many who had acquired a European-style education, Christianity and western ways. Ayandele (1966) estimates that there may have been as many as 5000 Saros in Abeokuta by 1860. Missionary presence in Abeokuta resulted in the establishment of schools, churches, a printing press and newspaper among many other western forms. These were established to cater for the resettlers lest they reverted to heathen ways and as part of the evangelistic project of the Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS). Three distinct sub-groups of the educated can be identified: namely the "Aku," their children or Saro, and the natives. The Aku were former slave or children of slaves, rescued by British naval anti-slavery patrols and resettled in Sierra-Leone. It was in Sierra-Leone that they became so named on account of their cultural peculiarities, especially their language and greeting style. Their return to Abeokuta was partly to re-establish themselves among their kith and kin. Those among them newly sold into slavery and not extensively de-cultured of their Yoruba worldview found it easy to integrate into the local structures.

A major concern of the missionaries was the number of resettlers who were going "native." This group, then, contested the meanings of their new Christian faith against the expediencies of living as Yoruba in Abeokuta (CMS, 1847). They tended more towards an indigenous strategy to transform Abeokuta in line with their visions of modernity. On the other hand, those who were less instilled in the Egba ways found themselves critical of Egba politics and culture. Of this type, the "Saro" must be differentiated from their "Aku" parents. Mostly Protestant missionaries, clerks, teachers and traders, usually bearing "foreign" names like Johnson, Titcombe, Vaughan, Crowder, Lawson etc., they were culturally closer to the European missionaries and merchants and were soon to form the core of the critics who challenged the local elite system. When the missionaries were expelled by a local uprising in 1867, many of the Saros moved to Ebute Metta, near Lagos. Because they had already acquired a measure of Egbaness, they retained claims to Egba citizenship. They were also deeply involved in the Victorian society that had developed in Lagos and soon became leading professionals and socialites. This crop of Egba leaders played significant roles in using missionary resources and the colonial government to push the Egba towards their

vision of modernity. They were particularly active through their associations including the Abeokuta Patriotic Association (1893) and the Egba National Council (1898). They were usually disposed to being used by the Egba establishment in pursuit of national goals. They keep a foot each in Abeokuta and Lagos.

It was not long before an indigenous educated elite group developed from the products of mission schools. These were initially recruited from among the children of chiefs and slaves who were redeemed by the missionaries, but their numbers grew as public consciousness of the social values of education grew. Lacking the wider connections of the Saro, this group sought careers in the local public service of the Egba governments. A significant number of them were local letter writers and interpreters. This group did not become significantly powerful until the 20th century when they constituted an opposition to the Lagos-based Egbas' visions of modernity. Unlike the Saros, they claimed more sectional identity than the Egba collective and were therefore in the heart of the discourse of what it meant to be Egba.

Thus, while the educated constituted an elite category with clear differences from other groups and the wider society, this elite was not fixed or undifferentiated. Its members shared similar ideas of a modern society, but they differed on meanings of that modernity and the strategies to achieve it. Contrary to the dominant views that the educated elites were predominantly concerned with matters of Atlantic discourse - racism, colonialism, nationalism and pan-Africanism - a considerable part of the interests and activities of elites were devoted to more locally germane issues. These issues - including chieftaincy, marriage, witchcraft etc. - were critical to the definition of meanings and the resolution of confusions that pervaded colonised Egba society in the 19th and 20th centuries. Similarly, in much contrast to the assumption that the intellectual thought and production of the educated were in monolingual and monocultural forms, usually in the coloniser's language and within a conception of European modernity, it is obvious that educated Africans thought in and expressed themselves in local worldviews. They navigated multiple spatial and cultural terrains, expressed themselves in local languages and idioms and thought in terms of local cosmologies and convictions as they engaged in local discourses. Their entry into and development within these societies was significant but not earth-shaking and it took time within the complex inter-elite struggles and social contestations for meanings before they became recognised elites and power brokers.

Missionaries and the Christian Elite

Perhaps the greatest marker of how fluid and flexible the Egba political system was can be found in the roles played by missionaries and European agents in the formation of Egba society. The conventional treatment of the missionary roles has focused on the constructivist capacities of European culture and power to transform Africans. In this framework, European missionaries are depicted as having created a new elite which colonial agents were empowered to battle obnoxious African regimes and cultures. For the most part, missionaries are assumed to be agents external to the dynamic processes by which African societies were transformed by European cultural and colonial power. However, the historical evidence does not suggest that European missionaries sought to be or were separated from these societies.

They were conscious that evangelistic results could not be achieved by their very presence alone and generally sought to work within local systems to relay their message and the benefits of conversion. So involved were missionaries in the Egba case that they soon constituted a European sub-elite of an African power system.

A convergence of interests and exigencies made Abeokuta suitable for the goals of missionaries and abolitionists in the 19th century. The willingness of its leaders to accept European and Christian settlement where neighbouring kingdoms were very sceptical, the prospects of its cotton production and its increasing Christian and "civilized" population, created for Abeokuta an image of a "Sunshine in the Tropics" which fitted well to the "Buxton principle," the abolitionist idea of a Christian foothold from which the light of salvation and civilization could spread to the "dark continent". To achieve their goals, missionaries attempted to shape local politics. Indeed, Henry Townsend of the CMS exercised so considerable an influence over the Ogboni, that he was thought to have "gone native" by his fellow Europeans (Biobaku, 1957: 47). In reality, missionary and European power became resources which were contested over in the interplay of elite politics. Progressively, European missionaries with their Christian adherents constituted an elite group and a political party, the Christian Party, through which they tried to influence politics including succession, boundary delineation, and sectional advantages. It is partly due to the involvement of Europeans in Abeokuta that the Egba were able to secure their state until 1914, despite British colonial acquisition of what later became Nigeria.

Missions necessarily became involved in the sectional politics of Abeokuta. Whereas the CMS was the predominant mission of the Ake section, other sections attracted missions of their own: Baptists were prominent in Owu and the Catholics held sway among the Gbagura. Therefore, there was considerable competition among the missions borne not only out of doctrinal differences but also from the political interests of their sectional hosts and benefactors. Missions competed to secure the patronage of leading Egba chiefs. It was advantageous to have a chief as a member (if not a convert) because this guaranteed security and a high turn-out at church services. As such while local chiefs contested over who should host a missionary or on whose land the mission should be located, missionaries struggled over which leading chiefs would attend their church or open-air services. Moreover, since church attendance was the only outward evidence of conversion, it was always difficult to determine genuine African converts. Some among the early settlers contested the doctrines with the missionaries especially on matters such as polygamy, slavery and pawnship. Leading Ogboni chiefs attended church regularly and the state itself soon created Christian chieftaincies. In 1890, missionaries and leading Christians formed the Reformed Ogboni movement with a view partly to parallel the social power and privileges of the authentic organ and partly to create a cultural alternative for their members. Soon enough there was little difference between the "dark, evil Ogboni" and the modern one; some will say between the so-called traditional and the so-called modern.

Conclusion

To suggest that missionaries and indeed every elite category acted in definite and independent ways obscures the complex interests and intricate processes by which Egba

society was shaped. Elite categories are arenas of individual and subgroup interest and each represents the modicum of agreeable conditions around which its members cohere. A society's elite politics must be interpreted, not as the performance of its political structures and representative elites, but as a complex interplay of interests, with actors claiming and appropriating diffused and undifferentiated identities.

The dominant framework from which African history is written has privileged educated Africans over other elite groups by writing the history of modern Africa around them. These Africans are presented as though they are apart from other Africans, specially equipped with the tools of modernisation with which they displaced traditional elite groups to inherit power in the post-colonial state. Part of the disappointment with contemporary African leadership derives from the assumption that they should know better, being better equipped. This paper has shown that the dominant historiography is a misrepresentation of the historical process by which post-colonial African leadership is produced. African leaders are not the products of European engineering and their identity and concerns transcend the European brand of modernity. Rather, they were produced in that complex historical process in which ideas, interests, groups and individuals struggled to make sense of life and society amidst the revolutionary changes of the 19th century. Power was central to these struggles; securing it to pursue interests and project visions of how society should be, pitched individuals and groups in fluid elite formations with and against one another.

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A Failed neo-Britain: Demography and the Labour Question in Colonial Zimbabwe c.1890 – 1948

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Abstract

Cecil John Rhodes, Southern Rhodesia's founding father, and early settlers envisaged the creation of a country that mirrored the image of Britain in terms of its demographic composition and good economic health. Because of this, the colony invested in attracting 'good quality' settlers from Britain, and tried to shut the door on settlers from a 'bad class'. Against this backdrop, this paper argues that this dream never materialised as the exclusionist approach to immigration shut out many potential candidates from other destinations. Indeed, on the economic front labour shortage was endemic and the colony was never able to acquire adequate labour in the period under review.

Introduction

Alois Mlambo (2000) has argued that Cecil John Rhodes and successive colonial governments in Southern Rhodesia (hereinafter, colonial Zimbabwe) had a dream to mould the colony into a white man's, particularly British, country. This dream was not realised as the colony was never able to attract the preferred calibre of settlers in adequate numbers. Most settlers with skills and resources elected to emigrate to better established territories in other parts of the world such as Australia and New Zealand. David Hughes (2006:269) has characterised colonial Zimbabwe as a "failed neo-Europe". This, according to him, is because the white population in the colony never exceeded five percent of the national total, making it different from places that successfully became "neo-Europes" such as the United States of America where the issue of belonging dissipated over the years as white people there attained demographic, political and economic dominance over indigenous people.

The Labour Question was another critical factor in the colony. Political and economic success could not be on any other basis other than demographic dominance and increased control of the economy and its productivity, especially considering that the colony's neighbor in the north, the Union of South Africa, was ahead both in terms of its white population and the size of its economy. This is especially true after the discovery of diamonds at Kimberly in 1867 and gold at Witwatersrand in 1886. Colonial Zimbabwe was never able in the period under review to elevate itself to the standard of South Africa which, because of the profitable mines, managed to draw

extra-territorial labour from much of the sub-continent. This paper examines the two major problems the colony grappled with in its first fifty years: white demography and labour shortage. These two factors played a major role in hindering the colony's development to the intended neo-Britain.

Context: White Immigration and Black Labour

White immigration was one of the major cornerstones of colonial Zimbabwe. Both the British Imperial government and the colonial state, during both the British South Africa Company (BSAC) period (1890–1923) and the Responsible Government period (1923-1953), played a significant role in facilitating such migration. White immigration, particularly from Britain, was, in fact, advocated throughout the entire colonial period. It was only on this basis that the country could develop purely as a white man's country. This dream had two problematic elements to it, which in a way made it a terrible nightmare. First was the notion that white people of British extraction could actually take over the country and establish dominance in demographic, political and economic terms as had been the case in other places such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America (Mlambo 1998).

This idea was so entrenched in the colonial mindset to the extent that at one time it was actually thought to be possible to populate the colony till white people out-numbered Africans. This was a bad dream that never came true. Hughes (2006) and Kennedy (1987:2-3) sum it up concisely; "Having conquered the territory in the 1890s and alienated the fertile Highveld in ensuing decades, whites never approached demographic superiority vis-à-vis native peoples. Neither – given that race is socially constructed – did they reconstruct it in a more multiplex fashion. Europeans married Europeans, breeding 'whites' whose population never exceeded five percent of the national total." A 'Britain' was thus never achieved or built in any way imaginable. On the contrary, it appears in all settler colonies white people were never totally 'at home' as, being a minority, they always had to superintend over the majority, with the use or threat of force and other coercive devices such as imposition of taxes and hindering African competition on agricultural markets to drive locals into the colonial labour system. This meant the colony was sitting on the ticking time-bomb of African resistance and possible rebellion from the outset. As Wagner (1994:171) describes it, in reference to South Africa, white people also always had an "emotional and moral unease with the fruits of conquest."

The second problem was that the preferred settler was British. Colonial history has in many instances emphasised the discrimination the colonised black majority faced in the hands of the colonial system, without unpacking relations between the 'European' class. Mlambo (2000) has noted that white groups in Zimbabwe were not only violently antagonistic, but were also highly suspicious of one another. Settlers originally from Britain not only perceived the Portuguese, Greek, Polish and Boers, among others, as 'foreigners', but also as of a lower calibre. With such a state of affairs there were concerted efforts to keep such people out of the colony. According to Kosmin (1977) the first line of defense to meet this objective was immigration laws.

The labour question was another foundational element to the quest to make colonial Zimbabwe succeed as a neo-Britain. There was always labour shortage in the period under review, and this was of great concern in all sectors of the colonial economy, especially agriculture. W. J Barber (1961), in his analysis of Northern Rhodesia (hereinafter, Zambia), colonial Zimbabwe and

Nyasaland's (hereinafter, Malawi) transition from a traditional to a capitalist mode of production, suggested that the supply of labour at low cost to farms and mines was achieved using market forces as Africans left their traditional economic activities, opting for more rewarding jobs in terms of remuneration in the capitalist sector. This view has been strongly criticised by Giovanni Arrighi (1954) who has shown the extent to which non-market forces were utilised by the colonial administrations. Arrighi argues that in the case of colonial Zimbabwe, coercion and economic pressure were employed to ensure that Africans joined the wage-labour system until the 1920s, when the peasant sector went into irreversible decline. The colonial state thus used its political muscle to undermine the peasant sector, in the process creating labour for its economic sectors. Market mechanisms only assumed dominance in the 1920s, thirty years after the colony had been pacified.

There is no agreement as to when the peasant sector began to decline. Palmer (1977) argues that this happened around the time a white agricultural policy was launched in 1908, while Mosley (1983) and Phimister (1986) subscribe to the view that the African peasant sector prospered in some parts of the country till the 1920s. Johnson (1992), however, argues that coercion remained a critical factor in making labour available into the 1940s and beyond. He further argues that the colonial administration did not succeed in restructuring the African peasant sector to a point where there was an abundance of labour. Ranger (1978) shares this school of thought. Using the Makoni district as an example, while acknowledging that a good number of Africans was coerced in diverse ways to join the capitalist sector, he argues that some African peasants survived the depression in the 1930s, and continued with their own mode of production with relative success well into the 1970s.

Arrighi (1970:207) has noted that the establishment and expansion of the mining industry in the absence of an accompanying white farming sector prior to 1908 that resulted in favourable market opportunities for a significant proportion of the local peasantry. The Masvingo (then Victoria) province is an example of an area where some peasants were doing well agriculturally in the 1890s. Because of this prosperity, many men chose not to offer their labour to the farms. The settlers in line with their perception of indigenous people at the time felt that only a very small proportion of indigenous men were engaged in meaningful employment. Indeed, one colonial official remarked: "They are a contemptible race of men, weak, cowardly and indolent, relying on their wives to till their fields, gather their crops and earn for them the hut tax which they are too lazy to earn for themselves" (Phimister 1974:226). However, the opening of the Gwelo-Salisbury railway line in 1902 undermined peasant production as it became possible to send grain to the Selukwe mines by rail from Salisbury and the Charter district. This had the effect that by 1907 the price of grain had dropped by 50 percent.

This situation did not, however, obtain in all areas. Proletarianization across the country did not take place at a pace as fast as settler farmers wanted. In Bubi for example, the number of ploughs used by peasant farmers doubled between 1912 and 1915, prompting the Native Commissioner for the area to report in 1916 that the economic conditions of the natives yearly improve to the extent that there are very few kraals, no matter how small, which do not possess small herds of cattle and small stock of clothing. Implements and household utensils of European manufacture were also widely used. In another area, Bulilima-Mangwe, "1 000 ploughs were purchased in a single year at the enhanced price of fully 100 percent" by cattle owners who benefitted from war-time prices during the First World War. In Mazowe, in spite of

the fact that settler farmers by 1910 owned 90 percent of the district's land, resulting in large scale competition from the large scale farmers, peasants still produced everything the mines needed, "beans, monkey nuts…and even kaffir tobacco" (Phimister 1988:79).

One thing is clear though, that the capitalist economy, especially the commercial farming and mining sectors, were never able to quench their thirst for labour on the local market, in spite of the use of coercive and non-market interventions to impoverish locals and make them wage labourers. The colonial state had to enter into agreements with administrations of neighbouring countries such as Zambia and Malawi to acquire extra-territorial labour. A major stumbling block to this arrangement was that Africans from these territories preferred to work in South Africa where the mines offered better wages. Colonial Zimbabwe was forced by this situation to enter into an agreement with the Union of South Africa in a bid to slow the flow of labour from the colony.

Building a Second Britain

White people in colonial Zimbabwe did not view themselves as invaders. Their view was aptly summarised by a Rhodesian settler in 1949: "Don't regard the country as a Black Man's country, where the white man is the intruder, an exploiter of Black labour, a superior; look at it as an empty country (which it practically is for what are 1 750 000 millions in a country three times the size of England?) to be settled with (a) white population ...." (Mlambo 1998:131). Such sentiments were expressed even in the high echelons of the government. Premier Coghlan, for example, told the all-settler legislative assembly in 1927, "This is essentially a country where the white man has come and desires to stay, and he can only be certain of doing so if he has certain portions of the colony made his exclusively" (Machingaidze 1991:559). This position was further echoed by the *Committee of Enquiry into the Economic Position of the Agricultural Industry* (1934:1), which had been appointed in 1933 to investigate the impact of the depression on agriculture. The Committee reported that it would not be possible to "build up a white colony on any basis other than a white agricultural population." It is in this context that the creation of Native Reserves must be understood to ensure an abundance of land and labour for the projected huge number of white settlers.

The state publicised opportunities available in the colony in Britain, offered "safe passages to immigrants, provided land at cheap prices and put in place legislation to ensure that Africans were shut out of the capitalist economy" (Mlambo 1998:132). This on one hand increased chances of settler success in agriculture as African competition was reduced, and on the other hand ensured the availability of cheap manual labour on the farms. The Rhodesia Immigration and Information Office was established in London in 1906 and in Glasgow in 1908 to publicise the colony. Agents were also created in South Africa. In 1908 the Estates Department was set up to promote colonisation, and to deal with issues pertaining to allocation of land to new settlers. The conditions in the early period were very attractive: new settlers had twenty years to pay for their farms, free medical and hospital fees for ten years, free arms and a Rhodes Pioneer pension or early settler pension after the age of 60 (Mlambo 1998).

Other initiatives were put in place in the 1920s to bring immigrants from Britain. These initiatives became known as the three Empire Settlement Schemes and they came into being after the enactment of the Empire Settlement Act in Britain (Machingaidze 1980). The state

tried to secure agriculturally competent people. This was meant to avoid the predicament of the early period when, according to Victor Machingaidze (1980:45), most of the settlers on the land were not of the "right stamp" as both their capital possession and their agricultural knowledge were inadequate. Even the few farmers with experience had to battle with a climate vastly different from the temperate climate of Britain. To remedy this situation, the State had embarked on a programme to create key institutions to train white farmers. The Salisbury and Gwebi agricultural research stations were established in 1909, the Rhodes, Inyanga and Matopos Estates were created in 1917 and the Land Bank was established in 1912 to provide finance for settler agriculture (Kwashirai 2006).

In June 1938 the Rhodesian government entered into a Tripartite Agreement with the Dominions Office and the 1820 Memorial Settlers Association for cooperation in promoting migration to the colony from the United Kingdom and Ireland. The colony never got adequate numbers of settlers, though. This was because the colony was not willing to take all whites who were able to buy land in the colony. The intention of the administration was to build a "British White man's country" (Mlambo 1998:141). Given this preference, the majority of immigrants who settled in the colony were of British stock. In 1921, 31 years after the establishment of the colony, non-British immigrants, "including Greeks, Italians, Russians, Americans, Germans, Swiss, French and Poles remained very few…(accounting) for less than 5 percent of the white population" (Mlambo 1998: 144).

Memmi's (1965:76) notions on colonial relations deserve consideration. According to him colonial relations were not just about two distinct groups; the coloniser and the colonised. Minority white groups were 'colonials', as opposed to colonisers. He argued: "A colonial is a European living in a colony but having no privileges, whose living conditions are not higher than those of a colonised person of equivalent economic position and social status…a colonial is a benevolent European who does not have the coloniser's attitude toward the colonised…" Needless to say, though Memmi makes the important point that non-British Europeans were considered second class, it is not accurate to say that they had different attitudes towards locals. All white people in colonial Zimbabwe were privileged in one way or another, and as such a colonial as defined as above never existed. Non-British whites, in most cases, sought to elevate themselves to the level of settlers from Britain.

The story of one immigrant from Turkey is a good example of this attempt at gaining social mobility. In 1907, the BSAC government brought fourteen Hellenes from Thrace and Anatolia in Turkey, in pursuit of a programme to promote Turkish tobacco in the colony. The BSAC apologised for bringing in these settlers, arguing that it was only done because they had been "unable to obtain responsible Europeans." Because of the enormous segregation against them, one of them, Kiriaco, is reported to have become determined that his children would not suffer the same fate, and thus had to be taught to become 'Englishmen.' He bought the English newspaper daily to learn English and to teach it to his wife and three children "until they could speak English without an accent" (Venables 2003:111,115)

Dutch speaking South Africans are worth mentioning as they were subjected to a lot of xenophobia in colonial Zimbabwe (Clements 1969). Hodder-Williams (1974) has argued that the hate of Afrikaners was for a number of reasons: politically there was a fear that they would dominate the country if they were allowed to enter the colony in huge numbers. This was because there was a large number of Afrikaners in neighboring South Africa. This was a

justifiable fear as this was after the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 which was perceived in colonial Zimbabwe to have been a war fought to prevent Afrikaner domination of British settlers in South Africa. Migration to Southern Rhodesia was thus suspected to be a ploy by Afrikaner leaders to settle a significant number of Afrikaners in the territory with the motive of dominating it over time. Culturally Afrikaners were seen as inferior. As early as 1903, the Rhodesian Surveyor –General wrote that he opposed a situation where any white person who had financial resources to purchase land in the colony was afforded the opportunity as this would attract "a number of undesirables like the 'bywoner' class, who would form a compact, bigoted and non-progressive class" (Mlambo 2000).

As early as 1904 there was a policy that "Greeks, Hindoos and Chinamen" were a "danger" to the economy and security of the infantile territory and therefore should not be granted trading licenses (Kosmin 1997:46). It was British settlers that were preferred. As Jollie (1921:10-12), the only female member of the Legislative Council put it in 1921, "the average-born Rhodesian feels that this is essentially a white man's country, pioneered, bought and developed by British people, and he wants to keep it so." Because of this, for the few immigrants who were not of British origin "gaining acceptance into the community was difficult, if not impossible" (Venables 2003:109).

The desire to have people of British stock dominate the colony was, however, difficult to accomplish because of the gender imbalance, as a situation obtained where more men came to the colony than young women. Many young British men trekked to South Africa to find wives, as they did not have adequate resources to travel to Britain for this purpose. There were however attempts to get British women from Britain, especially in the first quarter of the 20th century. Per every 1 000 men in 1904 there were 406 women. The number rose to 515 in 1911 and 796 in 1926 (Mlambo 1998).

One British woman, Elizabeth Jane, who was based in South Africa, wrote a letter to the Rhodesian Prime Minister, Godfrey Huggins, in 1938 expressing her concern. "Will you please use your influence at Home in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland," she wrote, "to bring out young women as wives for these young British men…You fill these places with men of British nationality, but they must come to the Union to get wives, the majority with Dutch blood in their veins. They can never be British stock. There are thousands of women today in England who would be only too glad to come out…to get husbands and men are only human, they must have wives" (Mlambo 1998:129). The Rhodesian Immigration Committee and The Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women among others, with the cooperation of the colonial government, however, tried to redress this gender imbalance. Assisted passages were organised for single women and widows who agreed to be placed in employment upon arrival as domestic helps, children's nurses, school matrons, hospital nurses, governesses, among other duties, depending on their qualifications and abilities. The numbers they sent to the colony were however, few.

The major reason for white people's failure to form a little Britain in Zimbabwe is that most of the settlers who came to the colony treated it as some half-way station where they could settle for a short while and move to other more attractive places. Mlambo (1998:124) has argued that Rhodesians "were really a society of immigrants and transients, most of whom did not stay long

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enough to establish roots in the country." According to Roberts (1979:55), "for every hundred migrants arriving, between sixty and eighty were always leaving." The 1969 census documented that approximately 60 percent of the white population, half of whom were under the age of 15, had been born outside the country. Rhodesian-born whites constituted 25 percent of the adult white population. Over 55 percent of settlers born outside the country had come to the colony after the second world war (Kay 1976:43). The white population thus grew slowly from 1890. In 1891, a year after colonisation, only 1 500 settlers permanently resided in the colony. By 1948, the population stood at around 72 000.

The Labour Question c. 1890s-1948.

Hand in glove with the demography dilemma was the Labour Question. Most settlers who migrated to colonial Zimbabwe ventured into farming, a sector that faced a gigantic labour deficit. From the early days of colonial encroachment integrating Africans into the capitalist mode of production was a major challenge for the colonial administration. A number of factors impacted on labour supplies between 1890 and the enactment of the Land Apportionment Act in 1930. First was what has been termed by Palmer (1977) the "era of peasant prosperity." Many African farmers considerably benefitted from supplying the food requirements of the new establishments such as mines in the early colonial period. This had negative implications on labour supplies. Again, African livestock had steadily recovered from the rinderpest outbreak of the 1890s and for many peasants the stock trade was an easier way of meeting their financial needs, such as payment of taxes in comparison with offering their labour on the farms and on mines.

The second factor is that most Africans who decided to sell their labour to settler establishments kept one foot firmly maintained in the traditional economy, selling their labour only to meet particular needs and targets. As Grier (1994:34) puts it, "regular supply of labour was hampered by seasonal and annual fluctuations in the number of adult African males who turned out to work, the short periods for which the men were willing to work (and) widespread desertion." The settler agricultural sector was to rely more and more on alien labour as a result of it being more stable than local labour. The distance between the alien worker's home and the farms of the colony was big, and many workers established a home away from home on the farms, and with time labour was raised on the farm as the workers parented.

Remuneration was also a huge factor in labour supply. Wages on the mines and on farms were low, and as a result offered no attractive incentive to most Africans. This, coupled with the fact that mining and agricultural work is intensive in nature, made cheap labour difficult to find. Hand in glove with this was the use of pre-capitalist methods in settler agriculture such as labour tenancy. Labour tenancy was a relation of production that emerged as result of the fact that many white farmers did not have adequate resources to invest in farming and for wages. While land was plentiful, capital was scarce for the majority of white farmers (Rennie 1978). Most farmers were also technically and managerially unskilled (Machingaidze 1980).

When the farmers took over land from local agricultural people, they would in many cases thus not evict them. Rather they took control of the people and the land, as in some cases locals did not want to relocate and leave behind their homes, fields and graves of their departed loved ones (Rennie 1978). Tenancy was a coping mechanism in the face of the unprecedented tsunami of white land takeovers. The Moodie Trek in the early 1890s provides a good example of how both

the land needs of indigenous people were disregarded, and the extent to which the sequestration went. The trek, composed of Afrikaners, was one of the first immigrant groups to alienate land and to settle on the densely settled highland between the Sabi River and the Mozambican border. The BSAC authorised Moodie to partition the land in the area into 6 000 acre farms. In 1898 there were only 300 settlers in the area, yet virtually the entire highland had been alienated, leaving indigenous Africans with the difficult choice of choosing between migrating to areas they were unaccustomed to, becoming "squatters" or tenants or giving their labour to the farmers (Roder 1964).

This system had several benefits to the farmers. To start with, they benefited from labour that had already been invested on the land prior to their arrival by taking over cleared pieces of land (Rennie 1978). They could also extract rent, either in cash or labour. In most cases rent tenancy and share-cropping was practised by absentee landlords. Many individuals and companies speculated on land, without getting into production in the early colonial period (Hodder-Williams 1983). Share-cropping was a profitable enterprise for white farmers because of the presence of a cornered market for them, protected from African competition. The settler farmer had better access to markets in terms of transport, and he could access local, urban and international markets. Share-cropping was premised on disrupting local farmers' ability to market their produce. This meant that many locals were able to meet their tax responsibility without partaking in the emerging capitalist economy.

Tenancy arrangements also benefitted the farmers because it made the use of family labour possible. The use of family labour involved use of children. The poorly capitalised farmers were, according to Rennie (1978) "unable or unwilling to pay for wage labour if they could avoid it. They might pay their transport riders and skilled workers, but for seasonal and unskilled work – road making, planting, weeding, reaping, herding, making irrigation channels, putting up grain stores and the like – they found it convenient and profitable to use labour tenants." The High Commissioner's Proclamation No. 19 of 1896 and the Private Locations Ordinance of 1908 gave legal backing to the practice. Child labour was permitted by colonial legislation, in particular the Masters and Servants Ordinance of 1899. The Ordinance which "primarily dealt with written contracts between adult workers and employers, contained provisions for the signing of contracts of service between employers and the parents or guardians of children under the age of sixteen. No age minimum was mentioned by the Act so that children well below the age of sixteen could be contracted out…If a child was "destitute", that is, found without parent or guardian, a magistrate, acting as guardian ex officio, could apprentice the child (Grier 1994:36). The use of child labour was a common feature in the early colonial period.

Taxation was used to coerce Africans into the labour system. In 1894 the Hut Tax Ordinance was proclaimed, requiring every adult male to pay a hut tax of 10 shillings per year. The Ordinance was amended in 1901 to catch African males who were evading paying tax, for example where many adult African males decided to stay together in the same hut to evade payment. The amendment required payment in coin only for every hut used, not in kind (Keppel-Jones 1884:616). The Native Tax Ordinance of 1904 replaced the Hut tax with a head tax of 20 shillings, payable by every adult African male. The Ordinance was accompanied by the Native Passes Ordinance of 1904 which reduced the age of compulsory registration from 18 years to 14. This had the effect of encouraging child labour as even boys below the age of 14 paid the tax so

they could get passes to work. As one legislator reported in 1925, "I know that even before they become 14 years old these piccanins wish to have a registration certificate so that they can call themselves men" (The Native Education Commission Report 1925:88). African men had to go to mines and farms to offer their labour to pay the required taxes.

With the launch of a white agricultural policy in 1908, and the consequent increase of white people migrating to the colony and taking up farming, the demand for labour at the cheapest possible cost increased. Cost minimisation was considered essential for the colonial economy in the first three decades of colonial rule as the mining sector, which the British South Africa Company (BSAC) had expected to be the foundation upon which the colony would be anchored, continued to be plagued by low profitability. The collapse in 1903 of the London market for Rhodesian mining shares and the discovery that the colony's quartz reefs were not as deep as those in the rand, and therefore could not bear huge capital overheads, among other factors, all weighed heavily on the mining sector, prompting restructuring by the BSAC government in 1903 (Phimister 1976:468).

Reconstruction included, among other measures, initiatives to ensure the abundance of cheap labour. The colony's Auditor-General noted in 1927, "in Western Australia, where there is no native labour, mines which are of higher grade than ours cannot be worked at a profit though ours, the lower grades, produce profits. The inference is clear. Our mines are profitable only because of the native labour available" (Phimister 1976:481). Labour was thus an important cornerstone to the colonial economy. The Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (RNLB) was formed in 1903 as a recruiting agency, mostly for Southern Rhodesian mines. Its mandate included recruiting alien labour for the mines, and later this was widened to cover the farms. The RNLB had agents at entry points into the colony such as Mount Darwin, and in Zambia and Malawi (Mtisi 1994). Workers were recruited from neighbouring colonies of Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. These colonies were the source of more than half of the African workforce in colonial Zimbabwean mines in the 1920s (Grier 1994:38). The RNLB used coercive tactics in its quest to recruit more labour. The RNLB ceased its activities in 1933 mainly due to the vagaries of the Great Depression (Clarke 1973). The agency was never able to satisfy the labour needs of the agrarian sector.

In the agricultural sector, the majority of settler farmers in the early period were undercapitalised, and they lacked requisite agricultural knowledge. The need for labour remained one of the biggest grievances of the settlers. The farmers blamed the BSAC for not coming up with policies that would ensure an abundance of labour, with the result that the popularity of the Company administration declined among farmers. At the beginning of the 1911 – 12 farming season, for example, farmers, particularly those in Mashonaland, called for the withdrawal of all advertisements in Britain and in South Africa that sought to attract settlers to the colony. "Under existing labour conditions such advertisements", they argued, "amounted to false representations…leading not only to untold hardships but in many cases to bankruptcy and total ruin (Phimister 1988). In the face of such opposition the Company was forced to put in place measures to attract African labour to mines and farms. Farmers became even more desperate for labour in the 1920s because of the profitable market that existed for maize and tobacco.

By the mid 1930s, when the colony began to recover from the impacts of the Great Depression, colonial Zimbabwe found itself in a number of problems relating to the acquisition of labour from Zambia and Malawi. To start with, the Colonial Office, which was responsible for the administration of Malawi, was worried about the adverse effects labour migration was having on

the territory. A Committee that had been set up to enquire into migrant labour from Malawi reported in 1935, "We must confess that, six months ago, there was not one of us who realized the seriousness of the situation: as our investigations proceeded we became more and more aware that this uncontrolled and growing emigration brought misery and poverty to hundreds and thousands of families and that the waste of life, happiness, health and wealth was colossal….Something must be done at once to remedy a state of affairs which, viewed from any standpoint, constitutes a fragrant breach of that ideal of trusteeship of native races" (Johnson 1992). This concern was the last thing the Huggins government needed at a time when demand for expatriate labour was peeking.

The second challenge was that though colonial Zimbabwe entered into the Tripartite Agreement with Zambia and Malawi in 1936 with the hope of limiting competition from South African mines, this did not achieve its intended objective. The agreement was signed on 21 August 1936. The agreement was amended in 1942 and 1947. There was nothing particularly ground breaking about this agreement. A number of agreements had been signed before like the 1909 Modus Vivendi, the 1913 Tete Agreement and the 1934 Agreement between colonial Zimbabwe and Zambia and Malawi. What the agreement did show was desperation for labour by colonial Zimbabwean employers, and this was never satiated.

Gold mining expanded rapidly in South Africa from 1933, with the result that the labour recruiting agency of the South African Chamber of Mines, The Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WNLA) increased its hunting urge for labour in the region. Unfortunately for colonial Zimbabwe, the contract system offered by the WNLA was found both favourable and more attractive by the administration in Nyasaland as it was perceived to be a solution to unregulated movement of labour from the protectorate, the contract system had guarantees relating to minimum conditions of employment and a deferred pay system which provided capital for the development of the protectorate. In addition to this, the mines in South Africa had better remuneration in comparison with colonial Zimbabwe both in terms of sums paid to the individual employee and the protectorate, and the WNLA contract system which guaranteed the repatriation of workers at the end of their tenure (Johnson 1992).

It is against this state of affairs that Charles Bullock, the Secretary for Native Affairs in 1938 predicted bankruptcy, and a gloomy future for colonial Zimbabwe's settler farmers and a possible collapse of the colony's agricultural sector if nothing was done about the stiff competition WNLA was exerting in the labour market. These concerns were a major issue to colonial Zimbabwe to the extent that the Imperial Government of Britain was called in to arbitrate, since Malawi was under the direct control of the Colonial Office, as the general feeling in government was that it was the colony that was more entitled to Malawi's African labour. The differences between colonial Zimbabwe and South Africa over the Malawi labour market remained unresolved till the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. With the outbreak of the war Malawi suspended labour migration as it geared for the war effort with the recruitment of volunteers for the King's African Rifles (Johnson 1992).

By the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 the number of northern immigrants emigrating to Southern Rhodesia was falling. This downward trend had started well before the outbreak of the war. The number had fallen from 97 421 in 1937 to 71 021 by the end of 1938, and the

number had fallen further in 1939, with the result that employers turned their attention to the Mozambique for labour (Johnson 1992). It is important to note that not all employers were experiencing labour shortages. Bigger employers, such as the Southern Rhodesia Chamber of Mines and the municipalities were able to attract adequate labour on the open market in comparison with the farms.

The farms were hard hit by labour shortages, and by 1939 they were vigorously lobbying for government to intervene. In January 1939, for example, the Rhodesia Agricultural Union (RAU) and the Matabeleland Farmers' Union (MFU), compiled reports which showed that labour shortages on the farms ranged from 15 to 80 percent of farming needs in most districts of the country. With this state of affairs the discourse shifted to labour conditions, with newspaper editorials, government officials and other stakeholders proposed that improving labour conditions in the colony was the only way to deal with the colony's labour deficit. As the Rhodesia Herald put it in June 1939, "The development of the colony cannot advance on a basis of continued expansion of the native labour supply. As far as the native labour supply is concerned improvement cannot be by any large increase in numbers; it must therefore be in the quality of work done. That means, in other words, better pay, better conditions, better supervision and better work with less waste of labour."

The farmers' general perception of local labour was that there were adequate Africans to service the farms, but they were lazy. The image of the African seated in a shade, drinking lots of beer instead of working was common. This, outside showing the racism of the settlers, also demonstrates the desperation for labour in the 1940s. It also shows that, to an extent, the colonial system was not able 100 percent to control every facet of African life. As F. Cooper (1987:1) puts it, "Labelling the African worker as lazy was a way of acknowledging the limits of dominance while attributing these limits to the basic nature of the dominated, rather than the contradictions of exercising power." For J. R Douglas: "In most countries employees give of their best in fear of losing their employment and because of competition, there being thousands of others to take their place. Here no incentive exists, and 'Jim Fish' can find work tomorrow if discharged today – or else spend a pleasant week with a 'brother' in someone's compound." This state of affairs changed in 1942.

The war years were difficult for the colony from a food production point of view. Production declined as most settler farmers diverted their attention to tobacco, where better returns could be acquired, in comparison with maize (Phimister 1986). African foodstuff production, on the other hand, was stifled by the state, which utilised non-market forces to protect settler farmers from African competition. The competitiveness of Africans in the capitalist economy was being undermined in several ways. To start with, Africans were confined to poorer markets and often far away from transport networks. This separation of land, according to Arrighi (1967:42), "made it possible to direct capital expenditures in roads, dams, etc, so as to widen the differential in overall productivity of European and African agriculture. These were indirect checks on African competition. This was not a new phenomena; the government had used this tool successfully many times during the maize control years (Phimister 1988). In the late 1920s maize accounted for approximately 80 percent of the settler cropped area in Southern Rhodesia. The threat of competition from African farmers, who continued to generate maize surpluses at prices below the production costs for most settler farmers, resulted in the farmers lobbying colonial legislators to design and implement marketing systems that would protect them from African competition.

The slump in world agricultural markets during the 1930s depression catalyzed the enactment of the 1931 Maize Control Act. This process also happened in Zambia and Kenya. The Maize control Act created maize-buying stations for settler maize without a parallel process for African maize. It also created a two-tier pricing scheme with higher prices for settler maize and established restrictions on grain movement from African areas to demand areas such as towns and mines (Smale and Jayne 2003). These efforts to undermine the peasant sector, compounded by the impact of the war, and successive droughts made the situation difficult, for example in 1941 and 1942 (Samasuwo 2003). The colony was forced to ration maize. It was difficult to procure maize from South Africa, as South African maize was used to contribute to the war effort for troops in the Middle East (Johnson 1992). This led to a re-evaluation of policy, starting with the Food Production Committee (FPC) in March 1942, and a farming enquiry on commercial farms the same year.

A ban was put in place to ensure that no new players would get into tobacco production, and farmers who were already producing tobacco were asked to grow maize on 25 percent of their tobacco land (Masenda 1987). Government was compelled to solve the labour problem that had plagued farmers for a long time. On 1 August 1942 the Compulsory Native Labour Act was put in place. It empowered the State to forcibly conscript African males between the age of 18 and 45. The targeted group was those who had been out of employment for three months. The result impressed the farmers. As the Native Commissioner (NC) for Bindura put it in 1942; "The effects of the Compulsory Native Labour Act are most noticeable in that tremendous members of indigenous Natives have come out to work voluntarily from the reserves of this and neighbouring districts. These Natives realise that if they loaf in the Reserves they will be caught sooner or later by the 'press gang'. They consider it more pleasant to find work on their own. This factor has eased the labour shortage in this area considerably. There was however a lot of resistance, as Africans, especially in Matabeleland, fled to South Africa. In spite of this, the Compulsory Labour Act gave a huge boost to settler farmers."

Forced recruitment continued for months after victory in the Second World War had been declared by the allied forces. In February 1946 about 4000 conscripts were still on settler farms, and a further 400 had been requested by the farmers to assist with harvesting (Johnson 1992). Compulsory recruitment was only abolished in August 1946, with the result that the supply of labour on the farms dropped, and Africans celebrated the abolition of forced labour by withholding their labour and returning to their economic activities. Farmers responded by pressing government for the formation of a new labour recruiting organisation that would run conscription activities in ways similar to those used during the war.

By 1948 it was becoming clear that migrant labour would be a permanent feature of Rhodesian settler farming. The 1947 Migrant Workers' Bill was put in place. This Bill was the basis of the 1948 Migrant Workers' Act. The Bill and the Act, among other things, dealt with compulsory deduction and repatriation of African workers who came into the colony from 1 April 1948. In a country like Nyasaland, where Lydia Potts has noted that every male went to work abroad at least once in his lifetime, remittances constituted an important source of income for the country and at household level (Potts 1990). Farmers benefitted a lot from the 1947 Bill and the 1948 Act. As I.

Phimister (1988:223) puts it, "From 1947 onwards, white farmers were once again cushioned by the labour of thousands of foreign workers recruited from Nyasaland and Mozambique." The Act certainly brought improvements to the labour supply situation in the colony, especially from Nyasaland. F. Sanderson rightly notes that Nyasaland in the colonial period was never a significant "field of economic exploitation," its contribution was its labour (Sanderson 1961:259).

Conclusion

White people who settled in colonial Zimbabwe were just a small minority who arrogated to themselves the right to determine the direction the country took both in terms of its political and economic life. However, it is often not considered that this colonial privilege was intended for whites of British extraction. Immigrants from non-English backgrounds found it difficult to get acceptance into this community. Rhodesian policies militated against large-scale immigration. It is this nature of colonialism that made it impossible for the colony to get white people in adequate numbers, and thus dashed the dream of building a neo-Britain in the colony. The labour question was another stumbling block to the colony. The colony's economy - and this is especially true in relation to settler agriculture - was never able to get adequate labour on the local market. Even attempts at acquiring extra-territorial labour were not a huge success, as the colony was continuously a leaking bucket: a good number of the labourers who came to Southern Rhodesia from other territories all had their eyes glued on South Africa, where the mines offered better remuneration. Colonial Zimbabwe up to 1948 was thus grappling with these two issues; demography and the Labour question.

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Mapping Nigerian Literature

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Abstract

The discursive formation within which Nigerian literature emerged as a complex of diverse literary forms was one governed by an ethic of verbal artistry with strands that have resulted in discernable changes and continuities between the oral mode of the indigenous society and its more prestigious written counterpart of contemporary times. What this implies is that Nigerian literature like the literatures of other human societies has both an oral and a written category with the former predating the latter. The non-literate societies of pre-colonial Nigeria operated an oral literary culture (orature or oral literature) that consisted of poetry, folksongs, myths, legends, folktales, proverbs and other forms of dramatic and theatrical productions (Akporobaro 2001, 2008; Finnegan 1970). With the coming of Islam and Christianity, the introduction of literacy in Arabic and English and the advent of colonial rule, the artistic landscape broadened. The rise of Nigerian literature on the template provided by these developments is the subject of this introductory study.

The Oral Origin of Nigerian Literature

The connection between oral and written Nigerian literature may not be self-evident given the state of near extinction in which Nigeria's indigenous oral art forms have fallen; but the connection exists and is not always peripheral. A close reading of some of the best texts in written Nigerian literature in any of the three major genres of literature would yield enough evidence to justify this position. Indeed some studies (including Emenyonu 1988; Sekoni 1988) have asserted the oral origin of written Nigerian literature, while deploring the attempts in certain quarters to subsume the former under the latter. Locating the origin of written Nigerian literature, in English or the indigenous languages, in its oral predecessor is as natural as speech precedes writing. Most literatures in the world, it should be said, first existed in oral forms (Awoonor 1974, Uka 1980, Chinweizu *et al* 1980). As Awonoor posits, the various ceremonies for life and its renewal in Africa, including the funerary messages for the dead constitute the bedrock of literature. The non-literate indigenous societies of Nigeria were oral societies and to that extent their literary productions were oral in nature. It is in this context that Irele (2001) sees oral literature as the basic intertext of the African imagination. The point cannot be too strongly made that the relegation of oral Nigerian literature and the disruption of the smooth and natural transition from an oral to a literate culture was partly a consequence of the interruption occasioned by the advent of the Abrahamic religions and their introduction of Arabic and English into pre-colonial Nigerian societies.

An additional factor was colonialism which provided political ballast to the assimilationist-cum-hegemonic effort of foreign religionists, particularly Christian missionaries. This point shall be examined from a related but different perspective shortly. Suffice to say that the oral literature of Nigeria consisted in the myths, legends, tales, songs, proverbs and epics etc, of

the diverse communities that inhabit the Nigerian geographical space. Of the various forms poetry seems to have been the most developed and, perhaps, the genre with the oldest provenance. Among the Yoruba for example, poetry is a highly developed form. One example of this is *Esu pipe* which is the invocatory chant poetry performed for Esu, the youngest of the primordial deities said to be the offspring of Obatala and his wife (Soyinka 1976). Esu is the symbol of poetic justice who mediates between man and the deities. He is conceived in the indigenous Yoruba mind as a trickster god who can be benevolent, not the evil entity of the Judeo-Christian or Islamic imaginary (Abimbola 1997, Aiyejina 2009). He is an amoral being indifferent to the principle of good or evil. A typical *Esu pipe* must reflect all the known attributes, the likes and dislikes, of Esu as Yoruba myth has it. The poetry/song type for Sango, Oya and Osun is respectively called *Sango pipe*, *Oya pipe* or orin *Osun* (Ogundeji 2003:7). Others include *Ekun Iyawo* (nuptial or bridal chant), *Iwi* or *Esa Egungun* (masquerade ancestral chant), *Iyere Ifa* (Ifa's praise lamentation), *Ijala* (hunters' chant employed in the worship of Ogun) and, perhaps, the most popular of them all, O*riki Orile* (lineage praise chant). Each of this poetry/song type is basically chanted and/or sung. Other groups in Nigeria have poetic forms of their own. *Udje*, for example, is a satirical form of indigenous Nigerian song/poetry prominent among the Urhobo of the mid-west of Nigeria (Darah 1981, 1982). There is the Tiv's kwagh-hir theatre which combines elements both of poetry and drama (Hagher 2003); while the Igbo have diverse poetic forms including, epic, funerary and various types of traditional poetry (Azuonye 1989; Uzochukwu 2001).

The transmission and preservation of the oral forms, however, have been both fragile and unstable as they rely, in the main, on human memory. Beyond the fragility of human memory, the colonial anthropological attempts at exoticising the forms, defining them as unrefined types of Anglo-western archetypes while placing undue stress on their functional elements over and above their literary/aesthetic properties, did incalculable damage to the literary status of the oral productions which came to be defined in largely utilitarian/ritual terms. Such othering of Nigeria's or Africa's artistic creations by the Anglo-European metropole has come under the interrogative discourse of African scholars, with some of them questioning the homogenising overgeneralisations involved in the representation of Africa and Africans in discourses emanating from the centre. The net effect of this is that decades after written Nigerian, nay African, literature gained universal recognition, however grudging that might have been, African literary scholars are still engaged in producing counter-discourses for the explication of Africa's verbal arts.

Nigerian Literature in the Indigenous Languages

The second strand of what constitutes Nigerian literature is the literature written in the indigenous languages of Nigeria. Some scholars (Emenyonu 1988, Sekoni 1988) firmly hold that authentic Nigerian literature is that which is written in the indigenous languages. For Emenyonu, "It is important for any reader of fiction in Nigeria to realise that no matter how much the author denies or disguises it, every Nigerian who writes fiction in English today has his foundation in the oral heritage of his ethnic group…. An authentic study of Nigerian literature must, therefore, begin by examining and appreciating the origins and development of literatures in Nigerian indigenous languages." Emenyonu's position aligns with that of

such scholars as the Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiongo (1986; Ashcroft 1989) and before him, Nigeria's Obianjulu Wali who as far back as the early 1960s defined African literature as the literature written in the indigenous languages of Africa as opposed to English, French or Portuguese. Wa Thiongo would in his crusade for the exclusive use of African languages in African literature go as far as abandoning English in favour of his native Gikuyu. In recent times, however, he has gone back to writing in English (Jeyifo 2004) even if only in translation.

Written Nigerian literature is limited to a handful of the indigenous languages that have been reduced to writing such as Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa among others that have become literary languages (Jeyifo 1988). The vast majority of the other languages of Nigeria are only spoken. A point of significance here is that of the few that enjoy the technology of literacy, the earliest such as Hausa and Yoruba were initially written in Arabic and Roman scripts or a combination of both. This was the case with Hausa that was written in Ajami, a hybrid of Arabic and indigenous Hausa and Boko which was a script that combined Hausa and Roman scripts (Yahaya 1988).

The earliest literature in Hausa written in Arabic and Ajami, mostly poetry, was according to Yahaya written right about the seventeenth century by Islamic scholars such as Abdullahi Suka who wrote *Riwayar Annabi Musa* in Ajami, and Wali Danmasani Abdulajalil who wrote the Hausa poem *Wakir Yakin Badar* also in Ajami, etc. Literary writing in Hausaland would come to its height in the nineteenth century during the period of the Islamic Jihadist, Shehu Usman dan Fodio, who wrote hundreds of poems in Arabic, Fulfude and Hausa. Hausa literature in Boko script were mostly novels that have since become classics, published from the winning entries of a writing competition in the 1930s.These include *Ruwan Bagaja* (Abubakar Imam), *Shehu Umar* (Abubakar Tafawa Balewa), *Gandoki* (Bello Kagara), *Idon Matambayi* (Mohammadu Gwarzo) and *Jiki Magayi* (M. Tafida and Dr. East). *Six Hausa Plays* edited by Dr. R. M. East and published in 1930 were the first plays to appear in Hausa. *Kidan Ruwa*, *Yawon Magi* and *Kalankuwa* are traditional forms of drama among the Hausa (Kofoworola 1981). After the pioneering efforts of these writers, Hausa literature has continued to flourish becoming one of the most vibrant strands of Nigerian literature in the indigenous languages.

Written Igbo literature, no less illustrious than Hausa literature, is of much younger provenance than either Hausa or Yoruba literatures. The development of this literature was pioneered by missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, particularly the freed Yoruba slave, Rev. Samuel Ajayi Crowther who transformed Igbo, like he had done Yoruba, into written form (Emenyonu 1988: 35). It would be several decades later, precisely in 1933, that Pita Nwana would publish *Omenuko* the first novel in Igbo. The 1960s would usher in a few works in Igbo such as *Ije Odumodu* (Leopold Bell-Gam) and *Ala Bingo* (D.N. Achara). More literary works would appear all through the 1960s and 1970s with the literature, according to Emenyonu, attaining her maturity with the works of Uchenna Tony Ubesie the leading novelist in Igbo language. Ubesie's works include *Ukwa Ruo Oge Ya Odaa*, *Isi Akwu Dara Nala*, *Ukpana Okpoko Buuru* and *Juo Obinna*. While drama, especially in its modern sense, has not been the most popular art for among the Igbo, the people had dramatic and theatrical forms such as the *egwu amala* dance theatre (Quoted in Ogundeji 2003).

Yoruba literature on its part has quite a distinguished pedigree having attained its maturity in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Although Yoruba did not become a written language until 1842 and Isaac B. Thomas' *Itan Emi Segilola Eleyinjuege*, *Elegberun oko laiye*, the first novel in Yoruba, would not be published until nearly a century later, precisely in 1930 (Isola 1988), there is evidence suggestive of the fact that the Arabic script was used in writing Yoruba as far back as the seventeenth century (Falola 1988). The obvious implication of this point is that Yoruba literature could also have been written in the same Arabic script, given it a much longer provenance than available evidence would suggest. Thomas' socially relevant, realistic novel, first serialised in 1929 in *Akede Omo*, was not the first attempt at novelistic writing in Yoruba. But his novel was the first that exhibited features of the modern novel. His effort would spawn further attempts in that direction, opening the way for other literary works such as Daniel Olurunfemi Fagunwa, the best known Yoruba novelist, whose *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale* (1938) is arguably the most popular literary work in Yoruba. *Ogboju Ode* has since been translated into English by Wole Soyinka as *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (1968). Fagunwa's picaresque novels which usually centre around a lone heroic figure would inaugurate the magical-realist tradition in Yoruba novelistic writing. This would serve as inspiration to a generation of Yoruba novelists including among others Ogundele (*Ejigbede Lona Isalu Orun*, 1956) and (*Ibu Olokun*, 1956), Omoyajowo (*Itan Odeniya-Omo Odeleru*, 1957) and Fatanmi (*Korimale Ninu Igbo Adimula*, 1976) (Isola 1988:80). Others written in more realistic tradition are Delano's *Aiye D'aiye Oyinbo* (1955), Afolabi Olabimtan's *Kekere Ekun* and Adebayo Faleti's *Omo Olokun Esin*, etc. Oladejo Okediji and Kola Akinlade pioneered the genre of the detective thriller in the Yoruba novel even as novelistic writing in Yoruba increases exponentially and gets more sophisticated as the years go by.

The Yoruba have a very vibrant theatre and drama tradition that dates back to the pre-colonial Alarinjo Agbegijo performers (Adedeji 1981) and other cultic/ritualistic theatres. This may account for the relative popularity of drama and the theatre, of the genres of literature, among the Yoruba. The modern era has, however, seen the publication of such popular and critically acclaimed works as Adebayo Faleti's *Basorun Gaa* and *Efunsetan Aniwura* and *Koseegbe* by Akinwumi Isola. Other pioneers of Yoruba theatre, forerunners of today's film and home video producers, include Hubert Ogunde, Duro Ladipo, Ishola Ogunmola and Oyin Adejobi who variously employed their theatre as tools for social mobilisation and conscientisation in the anti-colonial struggles and struggles against despotic rule in the country.

Poetry written in Yoruba has a far longer origin than Yoruba literature in the other genres. The earliest poetry, written in the form of religious hymns, was published in a collection by Henry Townsend in 1848. Moses Lijadu published *Kekere Iwe Orin Aribiloso* in 1886. He followed this with the publication of *Awon Arofo Orin ti Sobo Arobiodu ati ti Oyesile Keribo* both performed in the *arungbe* poetic form of the oro cult of the Egba (Isola 1988). Yoruba poetry has certainly come of age with many practitioners of modern Yoruba poetry (*ewi*

iwoyi) such as Olanrewaju Adepoju and Olatubosun Oladapo working side by side much older practitioners of the older forms.

Despite the attempts at cultural recuperations of indigenous art forms, Nigerian literature written in the indigenous languages is a syncretic enterprise that combines indigenous cultural forms with imported Anglo-western forms. The mimetic character of this literature, especially in its earliest incarnation, is not limited to its adoption and appropriation of imported literary forms. It also consists in its explorative riffling of the treasure troves of indigenous oratures and other traditional sources for thematic and stylistic experimentation.

Nigerian Literature in English

Although there are far more speakers of indigenous Nigerian languages than there are speakers of English, Nigerian literature of English expression is the far more influential category of the three strands that constitute Nigerian literature. It is also one of the most influential centres of African literature. The hegemonic and assimilationist policy of British educationists who imposed English as the language of instruction in schools (resulting in what has been referred to as the "hybridisation of power and discourse" in a different but related context) ensured the dominance of English as the language of official communication, prestige and high culture. One such policy came via an 1882 Ordinance that proclaimed English as the language of instruction in schools (Awonusi 2004). The literature spawned by policies such as this began within the matrix provided by western imperialism and colonialism and its earliest practitioners were Europeans and returnee slaves of Nigerian origin such as Olaudah Equiano (*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa*) and Samuel Ajayi-Crowther (who translated the English Bible into Yoruba and Igbo) among others. Most of them wrote against the background of slavery and their experience as freed slaves determined to spread the light and benefits of western civilisation to the local population while interrogating the colonialist representation of the indigenous people of Nigeria. Reconstituting Nigerian indigenous cultures and ways of life was a central agenda of this somewhat revisionist literature that was set against the canon of Imperial Britain. Nigerian literature, due partly to this early influence and the more expansive influence of indigenous oratures with its communitarian ethic that thrives on audience participation, has ever since had an activist, socially-grounded, slant that is often defined under the broad rubric of (politically) committed (or, perhaps less respectably) agitation / propaganda literature. Opposed in more ways than one to the self-referentiality of the Anglo-western arts-for-arts-sake movement, literature in this Nigerian context operates on the principle that literary aestheticism is coextensive with social relevance or functionality.

The activist temper of early Nigerian literature of English expression would gain more valence in the hands of the nationalist leaders (Nnamdi Azikiwe, Dennis Osadebey, etc) that upheld the liberation struggles and fought against British rule in the wake of the Second World War. In concurrent existence with the serious concerns of the nationalist literature was a popular literature of largely romantic preoccupations which flourished in the commercial city of Onitsha in the 1940s. Onitsha Market Literature as this forerunner of contemporary Nigerian literature is called stirred the popular imagination for nearly three decades, spawning over 200 titles that spanned themes as varied as love (its main staple), politics, biography and fiction (Darah 1988). *Jagua Nana* and *Jagua Nana's Daughter* novels of

Cyprian Ekwensi, one of the most celebrated writers of post-independence Nigeria, had their predecessors in the Onitsha Market literary school with the publication in 1947 of Ekwensi's *When Love Whispers* and *Ikolo, the Wrestler and other Igbo Tales*. In spite of this initial efforts, Nigerian literature in English would only gain serious international recognition upon the publication of Amos Tutuola's *Palmwine Drinkard* in 1952. Written in a highly domesticated English (more or less a transliteration from Yoruba) which Dylan Thomas called "young English", Tutuola's story came directly from Yoruba folklore (Lindfors 1982). *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* (1952), *Simbi and the Satyre of the Dark Jungle* (1955) were other titles in Tutuola's magical-realist/fabulist oeuvre. But Nigerian literature would enter a new epoch in 1958, the same year Tutuola released *The Brave African Huntress,* with the publication of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the landmark novel that was a couple of years back voted one of the most influential novels of the twentieth century.

With *Things Fall Apart*, Nigerian literature attained such recognition as directed attention to African literature as a vital part of the literatures of the world. Unlike the case with previous practitioners who tended to be more grounded in one of the three genres of literature, Nigerian writers of English expression are far more versatile and sophisticated, with several of the better known ones writing with expert competence in the three genres of literature. Nigerian writers of English expression are, in the post independence era, often divided into three broad generations in terms of their emergence, thematic concerns and stylistic predilection. The first generation were those who wrote in the period immediately before or after independence in 1960. These included those who provided counter-discourses to colonialist (mis)representation of Nigerians and Africans in texts such as Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* and *African Witch*, Rider Haggard's *She*, *King Solomon's Mines* and *Allan Quartermain*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, etc. These writers focussed on themes of cultural alterity, recuperation, urban versus rural life and encounters between the indigenous and imported cultures of Nigeria and Europe while calling for an end to colonial rule. The cultural agenda of these writers which found expression in the Negritude Movement led to their adopting an overtly romantic and often uncritical view of the ambiguous contradictions and contraries of the pre-colonial societies of Nigeria. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, Ekwensi's *People of the City* and *Jagua Nana* and T.M. Aluko's *One Man One Wife* belong in this group. With the departure of the colonialists, Nigerian writers turned inwards, raising questions on issues of governance and corruption among the indigenous politicians that took over. This period would witness the publication of highly critical novels like *No Longer At Ease* and *A Man of The People* (Chinua Achebe), *The Interpreters* and *Season of Anomy* (Wole Soyinka); plays like *A Dance of the Forest* (written by Soyinka to commemorate Nigeria's independence), *Kongi's Harvest*, *Madmen and Specialists* (Wole Soyinka), *Song of a Goat* and *The Raft* (J.P. Clark-Bekederemo) and such poems as *Path of Thunder* (Christopher Okigbo), *Casualties* (J.P. Clark-Bekederemo) and *A Shuttle in the Crypt* (Wole Soyinka). In terms of language the literature of this period was highly individualistic and stylised, tending towards the elitist end of the language spectrum (Jeyifo 1988).

The critical tone of the literature of the first generation of Nigerian writers would be sustained by writers of the second generation who entered the literary map in the mid 1970s to the late 1980s. These writers credited with initiating an *Alter/Native* tradition in terms of their adopted themes and styles (Aiyejina, 1988) wrote socially-relevant, highly critical (some of them with a Marxist-proletarian bent) literature in highly accessible, people-oriented language. Ola Rotimi, Femi Osofisan, Wale Ogunyemi, Bode Sowande, Tunde Fatunde, Olu Obafemi (playwrights); Femi Fatoba, Niyi Osundare, Odia Ofeimun, Funso Aiyejina, Tanure Ojaide (poets) and Festus Iyayi and Eddie Iroh (novelists), etc are members of this generation of writers. The point on the relative accessibility of the language of this generation of writers can be overstated in certain cases given the linguistic density of some of the writers, mostly poets, in this group. The latter writings of Niyi Osundare (*Moonsong*) and Odia Ofeimun (*Dreams at Work*, *London Letter and Other Poems*, *I Will Ask Questions With Stones If They Take My Voice*) are proofs, if no other, of this point.

The mid 1990s to the present is the era of the third generation who grew and started writing in the period of the structural and economic disjunctions that characterised military rule. The pressures exerted by the seemingly unending crises in various sectors of the economy: labour and electoral crises, mass unemployment, decayed infrastructures and constant closure of schools and lecturers' strikes; police and military brutality - all of these constitute the themes of the writings of this generation of writers. There is a lot of experimentation, both thematic and stylistic, in much of these writings. The dearth of publishing avenues which has been identified as impairing the quality of work produced in this period has never dampened the enthusiasm of the writers who continue to garner accolades against all odds.

Some of the more prominent members of this community of writers are Akin Adesokan (*Roots in the Sky*), Maik Nwosu (*Invisible Chapters*), Helon Habila (*Waiting for An Angel* and *Measuring Time*), Chimamanda Ngozi-Adichie (*Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*), Sefi Attah (*Everything Good Will Come* and *Swallow*), Adimora-Akachi Ezeigbo (*House of Symbols*), Biyi-Bandele (*The Sympathetic Undertaker and Other Dreams*, *The Man Who Came in From the Back of Beyond*, *Burma Boy*), Zainab Alkali (*Stillborn*), Akeem Lasisi (*Iremoje:Ritual Poetry for Ken Saro-Wiwa*), Toyin Adewale-Gabriel (*Naked Testimonies*), Lola Soneyin-Soyinka, (*All the While I was Sitting on An Egg*), Ogaga Ifowodo (*Mandela* and *Oil Lamp*), Remi-Raji (*Web of Remembrance; A Harvest of Laughters*), Ahmed Yerima (*Hard Ground* and *Yemoja*, etc), Ben Tomoloju (*Jankariwo* and *Askari*) and Tess Onwueme (*The Reign of Wazobia*) among others. In recent years Nigerian writers of the third generation have done well for themselves winning some of the most prestigious literary prizes available in the literary world. Helon Habila (*Prison Story*/*Waiting for an Angel*), Segun Afolabi (*Monday Morning*) have both won the Caine Prize for Writing in Africa sometimes called Africa's Booker. E. C. Osondu's "Waiting" won the 2009 edition of the prize, making him the third Nigerian to win in the ten years since the prize was instituted. Chimamanda Ngozi-Adichie has, like Habila, won the Commonwealth Prize for Literature (first book, Africa region) as well as the Orange Prize with her novels *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Contrary to what the division into three generations might suggest, Nigerian literature is yet a youthful literature of just about five decades. In a sense it came to the height of world

recognition in October of 1986 when Wole Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. A major fallout of this development is the emergence of successful women writers, especially among the third generation of writers. This is a great leap from when Nigerian women saw and described Nigerian literature in the words of Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi (1988) as phallic, "dominated as it is by male writers and male critics." This was the period between the early 60s through to the early 70s when the likes of Mabel Imokhuede (later Mabel Segun), Flora Nwapa and Phebean Ogundipe wrote, to be joined in the 1970s by the likes of Adaora Lily Ulasi (*Many Thing You No Understand*, *Many Thing Begin for Change* and *The Man From Sagamu*, etc) and Buchi Emecheta (*Double Yoke*, *Destination Biafra*, *The Joys of Motherhood*, etc) among others of the second generation of writers. The third generation of women writers have, arguably, gained visibility well beyond that of previous generations, broadening the discursive latitude of their thematic engagements. No more are they content with their own thirdworldisation, limiting themselves to the exploration of such ghetto topics as child upbringing and issues of male violence and domination. Politics, war and the economy hitherto seen as the exclusive province of male writers, have ceased to be a fairytale world from which female writers are either excluded or have excluded themselves. The marginality of women in written Nigerian literature is a clear departure from the role of women in Nigeria's oratures where they are/were by far the clear leaders and champions of the various verbal art forms.

One other important subtext of Nigeria's literary history is what some have come to see as the contemporary extraversion of the literature following the flight, due to economic divestment, of foreign publishing organisations that were instrumental to the development of the careers of the first and second generations of writers. This state of affair is compounded by a steadily growing and influential community of young Nigerian writers, resident across Western Europe and the Americas, that have added a diasporic dimension (with all the apparent disadvantages and not-so-apparent advantages) to a literature and literary culture already threatened by and in competition with other educative/entertainment media, especially the World Wide Web. The parlous state of the Nigerian economy and the supposed decline in Nigeria's literary culture makes any prediction about the immediate future of the troubled trajectory of contemporary Nigerian literature something of a seer's nightmare, to say nothing of a literary historian. There can be no doubt though that the ultimate destiny of this highly vibrant and resilient literature is a vertical way northward.

Conclusion

The development of Nigerian literature of English expression as an offshoot of Anglo-European or British literature that was at once reactive and revisionist in its manifold forms, hampered what would have been an otherwise smooth transition from an oral to a literate tradition. The break occasioned by this has tended to occlude the influences of the indigenous oratures of the various communities of Nigeria on written Nigerian literature. In spite of shortcomings such as this, however, a lot can still be achieved with the fusion of stylistic and thematic elements from both the oral and written modes of Nigerian literature.

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Hausa Literature as a Source for Studies in Cultural Boundaries

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Abstract

Literature is one of the most important and complex of cultural products. It reflects changes that are happening in the social order. Literature could also be used to protect culture from the changes that are coming from outside. This paper examines Hausa prose writings as veritable literary sources for reconstructing border studies. It conceptualises and articulates the field of border studies from the selected novels that describe Hausa society on the eve of the colonial transition. It argues that though written in African language and with the use of Latin alphabets, they suggest the depth of cultural intermingling and the changes that it brings. The paper submits that Hausa prose writings, especially the texts studied; essentially concentrate on borders both in their cultural and geographic contexts.

Introduction

There are many ways of studying the idea of borders and borderlands just as there are many definitions and meanings of the border itself. It could be literary, as the dividing line on the map or as a place where the area of influence of one state ends and that of another begins. But the border can also be understood more flexibly, as an area of cultural influence. Viewed from this perspective, a border possesses dual existence as a kind of guarantee for the preservation of cultural values against foreign influences or a place for the exchange of such influences among inhabitants of the border. But state and cultural borders are usually not the same thing, especially in Africa where colonial partitioning has left many ethnic groups divided and enclosed within frontiers that do not match their historical territory. For people who inhabit new independent countries, border is a line of divide both for the states and the culture. There are many examples of this in Africa and other continents where war, conflicts and foreign domination have left many people displaced or subjected to alien or hostile governments. For instance, Polish citizens left behind the country's eastern frontier after World War II. There is also the case of the Hausa divided between borders across English speaking Nigeria and French speaking Niger.

The problem of ethnic diversity constantly accompanied by fear of "tribalism" leads to efforts at nation-building in which cultural values are sometimes sacrificed in favour of unity founded around official symbols such as the national flag or national anthem. In such instance, political borders become a wall with various parts of the same ethnic group developing separately as subjects of diverse processes of nation building. This was the case when during the colonial era the colonial administration nurtured a local elite in its own fashion that was to take over from it. Situations like this could constitute the basis for conflicts where pre-colonial entities or communities, degraded to so-called tribal groups, want to recreate their old administrative units

or create new states based on cultural and linguistic affinity. This could result in internal or external violence since the people who feel that they are discriminated against often decide to fight for their rights and create separate states within the borders of an existing state or country.

Thus, a border region could become a meeting point for the exchange of cultural achievements or a place of cultural divide where people are consigned to live and develop separately, thus making it a potential centre of avoidable conflict among diverse cultures in competition for influence. This is especially the case where border is defined mainly in terms of being a political frontier. A more nuanced and interesting approach is to focus on its cultural implications, as cultural as opposed to political values are more subtle and catalytic for societal changes. Globalisation has created more streams for such penetration and it is much more difficult to separate society from trans-cultural movements and tendencies. On the other hand it is easy to define cultural borders and mark out religious, social and cultural differences in the light of modern definitions of a nation and what constitutes nationhood and the dividing line between the inhabitants of one region and another.

Cultural boundary, in comparison to political boundary is much more flexible and abstract in nature, but it is an obvious thing that both aspects of the idea of border are hard to separate, and that political frontiers deeply affect cultural frontiers by creating field for discussion, conflict or peaceful exchange of values. Analysis of the changes that affect borderlands and are linked with any kind of transitions related with the problem of political and cultural borders require careful study and effective methods of research. Probably one of the most efficient approach is that of personal observation and field study. It creates possibility of participation in the processes that affect the land and the people. But some other tools could be used as supplement, when from various reasons, personal experience of the changes that are happening in the society is not possible. In this case the study on the literature could be considered as one of such add-ons. In the first part of my article, I will try to explain the role of literature as a source for border region research. In the second part, I will focus on representative Hausa novels and by analysing their contents and historiographical potentials.

Why Literature?
Literature is a product of culture. But being a product, can literature become a basis for the analysis of the "producer"? Apart from being a creation of culture, or to be more precise, creation of people that were bred and raised in her shadow, literature is a looking-glass that reflects changes that are happening in diverse social and cultural contexts. It mirrors, sometimes in a wry manner, foreign influences and shows historical or political events that are woven into the plot of the story. Literature itself has a variety of forms which are more useful than others depending on a researcher's area of interest. Fiction which could be fully a product of the imagination of the author could also become useful even where action is not realistic as in Sci-Fi or Fantasy. Abruption from the reality still keeps the author in the net of cultural and global influences, so "the product" still shows world tendencies and processes that are affecting the culture or, as an opposite, reveals the author's struggle to remain creative and free from foreign interferences or obsessive defence of cultural values. Of course all the points between "copy" and "forced creationism" are possible. Even the question of writing a novel within a particular

genre or choice of subject are significant to the extent that they are indicators of certain processes operative in society as well as external influences.

The other thing of significance is the historical and political contexts of the plot. A supposedly fictive work is situated in a particular period of time against the background of historical events, and describes real people, their actions and interactions with others. Such a work is a useful source material not only for those interested in literature but also for historians and ethnologists among other scholars. This is especially the case where such work is central to research or one of a few sources that informed the research in the first place as evidenced in various European chronicles or Scandinavian sagas in which materials from foreign sources are woven into plots to buttress certain facts even when the "novel" or fiction itself remains the main basis for the research. Situation like this is made possible where the author was a witness to the events recounted or had contact with others with first-hand knowledge of what happened or had access to sources no longer available. Viewed from this perspective, literature becomes one of the most important sources for the study of the past. Here the definition of literature could be extended to oral stories especially for a study such as this that centres on the border. It is one thing to see literature as a source of historical research and quite another to see it as useful in the study of Africa that is often described as non-literate. In this case, oral stories could serve as useful equivalents to written texts with their function of describing historical events, famous heroes and rulers. In many instances, oral tradition about Africa had their sources in the oral accounts of visitors from societies with established history of literacy.

In addition, the introduction and spread of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa greatly inspired the creation of texts written in Arabic and other African languages in scripts borrowed alongside merchandise and religious preaching that came with the caravans (Hiskett, 1984). This followed the first wave of the spread and acquisition of literacy which in turn led to the production of many manuscripts following the rapid growth of Islam and Islamic education, leading to the rise of famous centres of knowledge as Timbuktu.

Another great wave of influence on African literature took place after the introduction of European rule over the continent. As was the case with the Arabic language, the languages spoken by the colonial masters left deep imprints on the reality of daily life among ordinary people. The colonial administration, organised around European languages, values and ways of life left members of the indigenous population who wanted to rise within the colonial setting no option but to be assimilated into European culture. This was, and still is, another case of transition between cultural borders and, a process leading to various reactions.

History shows that conquerors strong enough to defeat traditional rulers earned the respect of the people because such success was considered proof of their power, prosperity and God's favour. The result of such reasoning is obvious in the ready acceptance of foreign cultural differences – religion, mode of behaviour, education and language. Introduction of literacy and translation of classic European texts into these languages have stimulated indigenous literature written in foreign languages or the use of Latin alphabet. This has further opened the door for the translation of African novels, plays and poetry into European languages, bringing international recognition to such black African writers as the Nigerian Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and their Caucasian counterparts like Nadine Gordimer and

John M. Coetze. The importance of African literature and growing interest in the literature is reflected in the number of awards and honorary titles that have been given to writers from Africa. Having in mind the evolution of African literature in local or European languages, it would be hard to underestimate the importance of this literature in the issue of border studies.

Literature, as one of the most important and complex of all cultural products, reflects changes in social order, religion and linguistics and, above all, it tells stories: tales about people, their actions and feelings. Storyline is usually situated within particular cultural and historical background. Thus, every literature is a valuable material for studying societal processes and history. Regarding the idea of border, literature can describe borderlines and events within the border. It reveals changes in the cultural substrate, manifested also in the choice of subject, genre or author's attitude to available facts and the text. Thus, the place of literature as source for border studies should be obvious.

Why Hausa?

Hausa is one of the three major languages in modern day Nigeria. Either as a first or second language, it is spoken by an estimated 50 million people around the world (Pawlak, 1998:6). It has a rich history of writing both in Arabic and European alphabets and majority of Hausa speakers live in Nigeria whose 150 million inhabitants make it the most populous country in Africa. Nigeria, a former British colony, is a multi-ethnic country, with the three leading groups being the Hausa in the north, Igbo in the east and Yoruba in the west. Northern dominance of political leadership dates back to the colonial era. The preferential treatment from colonial times resulted in political domination after independence and later provided reason for various coup d'états and inter ethnic tensions. The dissatisfaction of marginalised ethnic groups was the trigger for the most tragic internal conflict in Nigerian history – the Biafran war (Ejenavwo, 2007:19-26) - and is still behind the current unrest in the Niger Delta. Aside inter ethnic tensions, growing fundamentalism in the Muslim North have resulted into riots and aggression aimed at non-Muslims and foreigners (Meunier, 2009: 34-35). Interestingly, Nigeria is a country of border lines. As is the case with many African countries, the link between socio-cultural, political and geographical boundaries in many Nigerian communities and the people that inhabit them can be very arbitrary, making Nigeria an interesting field for border research. Trans-border movement of people can be seen in migrations (both willing and unwilling). Historically and contemporaneously, Nigerians are renowned migrants and the country is ranked top in Africa as source country for global human trafficking (UN, 2008). A country with such an interesting history and complex social and cultural background is without doubt a good field for research on various subjects.

The choice of Hausa literature for the present study should not be of any surprise for reasons ranging from the importance of the group given the huge population of Hausa speakers, early Islamisation of the region and its established trade and cultural links with Arabs and eventual conquest and colonisation by the British, particularly in the period immediately before or after the inauguration of colonial rule when a Westernised culture met with an Islamised African culture. The purpose of this article is to present some of the novels concerning the period under review and to explore their suitability for border studies.

Representative works will include *Shaihu Umar*, written by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa (Balewa, c1931), *Abdulbaki Tanimuddarin Tureta* an autobiography of the Muslim ruler (Tureta, 1936) and *Gandoki*, written by Alhaji Muhammadu Bello Kagara (Bello, 1978). The biographical character of the selected novels is a conscious choice. As earlier mentioned, every genre of literature can reveal interesting facts about society and people but biographies and chronicles are the most useful for studying history and inter-cultural or international relations. Another interesting thing about the selected works is that they were written with the support of European researchers. Written in Hausa with European alphabet (*boko*), the works are symbols of cultural transition. In addition, their role as sources for borderlands research is unquestionable.

Shaihu Umar

Shaihu Umar is one of the most famous Hausa novels. It attracts attention not only because of its undisputed literary value but also because of the tragic history of its author. The book was written by Abubakar Tafawa Balewa long before he sailed into the wild ocean of African politics and became first Prime Minister of independent Nigeria between 1960 and 1966. His assassination in the coup of January 15 1966 has been interpreted as was a clear manifestation of intra-state conflict around pre-colonial borderlines, the so called "borders within borders" (Ejenavwo, 2007:14).

In 1933, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa entered a literary contest organised by the Literature Bureau (*Hukumar Talifi*) in Zaria and emerged one of the winners. The Bureau, established by the colonial administration, had as one of the purposes for promoting the literary contest the need to inspire young Hausa novelists to write indigenous novels following European tradition. *Shaihu Umar* with its adventurous character meets this standard and is almost free from the fantastic elements that typify African fairy tales, heroic myths and traditional stories about life. The plot and construction of the novel demonstrate the superb literary skills of the then 21 year old Balewa. Although first published in the 1930s, the book has been reprinted many times and it is still possible to purchase a recent edition. So popular was it that it was converted to a play and later adopted for the cinema. Created by Umaru Ladan and Dexter Lyndersay, the play had its premiere in Kaduna, on 1st December 1972 with the then Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, in attendance (Ladan and Lyndersay, 1975). The screen version directed by Alhaji Adamu Halilu was released a few years later (Pilaszewicz, 1988: 160).

The popularity of this novel extended beyond the borders of Nigeria and an English translation was published in 1967 (Hiskett, 1967). This English version enjoyed the popularity of its predecessors and was republished in 1987 along with an introduction by Beverly Mack. Apart of the literary workshop of both the author and the translator, the novel attracts the attention of the audience because of the subject chosen and the time of action since all the events described in the book happened before the arrival of the Europeans.

Shaihu Umar is the fictional biography of an Hausa scholar (*malam*) named Umar who, asked by one of his students, decides to recount his adventurous life. He was born in Kagara in the family of a hard working man. Born after the death of his father, he goes to live with his grandmother. Vicissitudes of life will cause the young boy to move from his modest household into the intrigues of court life after the second marriage of his mother, and the death of his guardian. His mother (who in spite of being one of the main characters of the book was not even named by the

author), marries Makau, one of the trusted servants of the chief of Kagara. The groom is a man of virtue who becomes the victim of a plot conceived and hatched by other courtiers. Opportunity to make Makau lose favour with the chief comes during a slave raid ordered by the ruler. After a successful raid some of the warriors accuse Makau of hiding some of the booty. It was the practice to give the chief two of every three slaves captured. The accusations were untrue but Makau as a good Muslim accepts the decision of his sovereign and agrees to leave the city. He moves to an area of modern day Zaria and after many adventures and dangers he arrives in Makarfi where he eventually settles in. In the meantime, Umar's grandfather who lives in Fatika is accused of practising magic and the boy's mother decides to go to the village where she was born to give support to her family. She is yet making plans for the journey when the messenger of Makau arrives to Kagara with information about the whereabouts of the banished courtier. She, however, decides to visit her ancestral home before joining Makau in Makarfi. This, as it would turn out, would be one of the worst decisions of her life. Four-year old Umar is too young for the journey to Fatika and is left under the care of Amina, his mother's closest friend. It is from here that he is kidnapped.

Things get more interesting from here onwards. The kidnapper who later turns out to be some kind of a sorcerer armed with powerful charms is killed by an hyena during this journey to an unknown destination. Umar is found and adopted by a farmer and his childless wife. Soon afterwards, the new family of our protagonist is attacked by slave raiders and young Umar is once again kidnapped, this time by a court slave turned slave raider from Kano, Gumuzu. One of Gumuzu's friends and commercial partners is the Arab merchant, Abdulkarim, who also resides in Kano. Impressed by Umar's kindness and intellectual potentials, Abdulkarim adopts him and the young man begins life anew in the family of a wealthy merchant. It is here that he will receive his Koranic education, becoming a scholar eventually.

In the meantime, his distraught mother gathers money and goes in search of her son. She is on his trail when she herself falls victim of a kidnapping raid and becomes a slave. Deceived by a caravan leader in Kano and an *alkali* (Muslim judge) in Murzuk, she is forced to Tripoli where she becomes the slave of a prosperous trader called Ahmad. By some stroke of luck, she will meet her long lost son here but a combination of grief and weary resignation would cut her joy short as she dies, accompanied by her son, his stepfather and their caravan, on the return journey to her ancestral home after her release. Umar would be the sole survivor of a sandstorm that follows. He thereafter goes, as a wandering scholar, to Rauta where he settles and becomes famous, earning the respect of the people.

The foregoing, which demonstrates *Shaihu Umah's* relevance to the present study, is a thumb sketch account of this action-packed forty nine-page book. What the account immediately reveals is the problem of slavery, its routes and operation. Such is the centrality of the slavery theme to this book that its American publisher had advertised it as a novel about slavery in Africa. And its description as a "Nigerian Bestseller" underlines its popularity. The suitability of this novel as source for historical reconstruction might be questioned as it could be argued that it is a work of fiction. But this would not be entirely correct as there were people who witnessed slavery firsthand and knew much about commerce in the pre-colonial era who were yet alive as at the time Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was born and wrote his book. What is more, Balewa was

himself a descendant of slaves as his father had been a court slave in Bauchi. Thus, the reality and operation of slavery were not entirely new to the author. In addition, slave raids and slavery as related in Balewa's novel were rife as at the time the book was written. As at 1936, the British colonial administration was battling matters associated with the kidnapping and trafficking in children (Afigbo, 2003: n14). There is, therefore, every reason to consider *Shaihu Umar* a useful source for studying slavery in pre-colonial Northern Nigeria. But how does this statement apply to border studies or studies in cultural boundaries?

The answer here would be positive as the book describes social stratification and the relations between members of particular groups, ranging from common people to courtiers and nobles. It also shows the flexibility in crossing "social borders" as understood in the European sense. This is the case with Gumuzu who, despite being a slave of the ruler of Kano, is also a merchant and warrior. Even more telling is the evidence that the conspiracy against Makau was the handiwork of royal slaves working hand in glove with jealous courtiers. One of the main opponents of Makau is Sarkin Zagi (Balewa, c1931:7). This is the title of a slave official and one of the military leaders in the Hausa-Fulani court (Smith, 1978: 275). In the stage version of the novel, Sarkin Zagi is accompanied by Shantali. The Shantali, usually a eunuch, was the highest in charge of the slave soldiers and a member of the chief's council. Social frontiers are also visible in the relations of Gumuzu and his co-partner Abdulkarim. This Arab merchant, highly esteemed, is treated as if he is of higher status than his Hausa associates. There are two possible explanations for this. Abdulkarim, as a man of means, probably has representatives in the places where he runs his business. He is prosperous as each successful journey through the Sahara could bring a lot of profit for traders able to risk the dangerous route from the Maghreb to Sudanic Africa. The other reason is that it was Arabs who stayed back as representatives and champions of Muslim culture and education after Islam was introduced to Hausaland between the 11th and 12th centuries. In spite of the fact that Islam was introduced into Hausaland from Bornu through the Wangara people, Arabs, such as Abdulkarim, were highly respected in Hausa society.

Aside its being a deep well of cultural information, the usefulness of this novel for border studies is the political and geographical character of the frontiers it portrays, their association with the cultural ones and relations between ethnic groups. This is seen mainly in the travels of the main characters. The slave raid ordered by the chief of Kagara brings a reader to Gwari, a country south of the city that is inhabited by pagans. This provides opportunity for the author to describe not only the organisation of the slave raid, but also the situation of the pagan farmers whose land is not fertile enough to give them crops for a whole year. Forced to cultivate the fields that are lying far from their settlements they risk being kidnapped by man hunters. Opportunities for borderlines arise when the travels of the main protagonists, Makau, Umar and his mother are explored. First, Makau is banished from Kagara. On his journey to the capital of this state, he meets pagans, gets to Zaria and then Makarfi, a town that lies northeast of the state capital. Makau's journey is nothing compared to that of his wife and her son. Umar, after many adventures, he reaches Ber Kufa in Egypt and then, many years later, on his travel back to Hausaland with Abdulkarim, he visits Alexandria while on a trip to Tripoli. His mother gets as far as Libya, moving from Murzuk to Tripoli with her master Ahmad. Umar and his mother started out from Kano through to the Sahara which points to the importance of Kano as a major centre of commerce in Hausaland.

These journeys provide opportunity for the author to describe some of the cities while concealing his personal opinions and prejudices behind the words of his characters. A typical example is the point at which Umar and Abdulkarim after leaving Kano get to an oasis inhabited by Buzu. Aside describing the people's custom- habits and sense of fashion, there are comments on their language of which "every conversation (…) sounds like an argument." While these descriptions may be useful for the details they provide, they are probably not based on factual accounts of life as lived within the period the book covers but rather on actual eye witness accounts. While the descriptions of Kano, Zaria and other Hausa cities may be graphic enough that of Alexandria and Tripoli is far from sufficient. There is, however, enough in this work to demonstrate recognition of cultural differences among people from diverse cultural frontiers.

Another point of relevance for this study is the description of the trans-Saharan trade and its reliance on the political and social situation in the Sudan. Here information is provided on the organisation of expedition and the most popular trade routes. Right from the 15th century when the first inter-regional market was opened in Kano (Pilaszewicz, 1995: 79), this and other Hausa cities grew as important centres of commerce. After the conquest of Timbuktu by Moroccan soldiers in 1591, the trans-Saharan routes slowly moved east towards the Hausa states. In the 17th century cities such as Daura and Katsina were linked directly to the trading routes from Tripoli. The development of this region of Western Sudan, along with the institution of a central government following the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, made impact on the growing importance of the Hausa cities. In the 19th century, the route leading from the north through Ghadames, Air and on to Kano was one of the most popular and profitable of all trans-Saharan trails (Boahen, 1964: 108). There are other routes such as the "pilgrim's way," which goes eastwards from the Hausa State through Kanem-Bornu, Zaghawa and Sudan to Egypt.

There is also information on the effect of political instability on commerce. War could be a good time for business but this depends on the commodities up for sale, and even in this case, it is not a good time for everyone. As with Abdulkarim who, because of Umar's needs, plans another journey to the south in order to get to the Hausa States. As earlier mentioned, they take the road from Tripoli through Murzuk and probably Bilma and Kano. Abdulkarim is forced to make this choice for reasons of political instability in the Sudan caused by Mahdist uprising at the end of the 19th century (1881-1899). The revolt of Muhammad Ahmad resulted in a war that makes trade routes dangerous to ply if not completely unusable. It gets more interesting when Umar, as the lone survivor of the caravan destroyed by a sandstorm, reaches a town that lies on the African bank of the desert. There, in an area inhabited by Hausa speaking persons, he observes the siege of the city. On inquiring from fellow travellers, he discovers the presence of the soldiers that once pledged their oath to Rabih. This information suggests that after his fall as a ruler of Kanem-Borno and his death in 1900, remnants of his army moved westwards towards the Hausa States in search of their fortune. The foregoing illustrates aspects of border studies that could be found in this particular novel. There are inter-state travels, commerce, religious diversity and inter-ethnic relations. The narrative also focuses on the political situation and unrest in the Sudan as well as the other parts of western and central Sudan. Apparently, the book can serve as a basis for further studies.

Abdulbaki Tanimuddarin Tureta. *Daga bakinsa shi kansa*

Abdulbaki Tanimuddarin Tureta. By His Own Mouth, About Himself (Tureta, 1933) is the autobiography of Abdulbaki, ruler of Tureta, a city 43 miles south of Sokoto. Born in 1879 to a noble family, it was foretold that he would become ruler of Tureta while still a child. This was not altogether surprising as his father, Dangaladima Almustafa, had been a ruler himself. This prediction would prove a catalyst in moving forward the plot of the novel. The prediction would stir the jealousy of young Abdulbaki's uncle, Maigunya, who already nursed the idea of becoming the ruler of Tureta and had begun to see his young nephew as a threat that must be eliminated. Opportunity soon came his way for this. Rulers from the surrounding countries decide to join forces and pillage the city. Among the aggressors are soldiers from Zamfara, Gobir, Katsina and Maradi. After a few unsuccessful attempts to break behind the walls, Mijinyawa, ruler of Maradi, comes up with an idea to take the city. He and his soldiers make false overtures of friendship to the people of Tureta (called Burmi probably because of their Kanuri origin) only to betray them after a few days of feasting before inciting a fight within the walls of the city. Abdulbaki is kidnapped in the ensuing melee (Tureta, 1933:6).

He is taken to Cikaji, a settlement described in the novel as a town "in a French country" but is to be found in modern day Niger. He stays for two years there and when the information about his whereabouts reaches his family, his father at once decides to buy him his freedom but those he sends to do this do not have sufficient funds for it. He was later sold to the Tuaregs from Air. The Tuaregs decides to take young Abdulbaki to Niger where he ends up the slave of a certain Bubakar who lives in Dadin Kowa, which literally means "Everyone's Happiness." Abdulbaki would spend 26 years in slavery despite fruitless attempts to find him by his father. While being a slave of Bubakar he becomes a candidate for a test that the Tuaregs require of their slaves that is meant to reveal a slave's fortune and economic potential. Abdulbaki receives a sheep from his master and it is said that that animal becomes his property. The sheep turns out to be pregnant and Abdulbaki soon proves his mettle as a competent herds man as he becomes owner of a large herd of sheep, camels and donkeys. His wealth will stir the envy of his master who offers him his freedom in exchange for his animals.

He later gathers enough information along the way which enables him to continue his journey back home to Tureta. He finally arrives Tureta and discovers that his father has died few years earlier and even his uncle is no longer a ruler because he was dethroned by the people. To say more, no one recognises the one who, by the help of god, manages to come back. No one knows that he is a son of the deceased ruler. The situation changes when Abdulbaki's mother, enticed by the rumours about the big herd that is passing through the city, comes to take a look at the animals. She then recognises her long lost son who later, just as predictions told, becomes a ruler of Tureta. In 1933 Abdulbaki is invited to Sokoto and is turbaned Sarkin Tureta, the fifteenth on the throne. Abdulbaki Tureta's narrative is in many ways similar to *Shaihu Umar* with the singular exception that *Abdulbaki Tanimuddarin Tureta* is an autobiography. But what both books testify to is the insecurity of life especially with regards to children in pre-colonial Hausa society where battles among rival states and slavery were facts of everyday existence.

Typical for an African tale, the narrative is relatively short but has interesting information that compensates for its size. For one, the narrative provides a genealogical account of past rulers of Tureta. There is also the important detail on the names of the emirs and where the rulers of

Burmi resided (Tureta, 1933: 1-5). With such important details it is possible to trace the course of their migration from the east to the areas they inhabited at the time the book was published. Description of the siege of Tureta and enumeration of the diverse forces from various parts of Hausaland involved in the assault is another point of importance. The case of Maradi from whose king originated the idea that led to the fall of Tureta is of particular importance. Not forgetting the involvement of soldiers from Niger that had been active participants in wars that had taken place in this part of modern day Nigeria. This is one more illustration of the contemporary situation in Africa where ethnic groups that were once united found themselves separated behind arbitrary lines drawn by European colonialists. Even when the names of the towns and villages are not mentioned, the travels of Abdulbaki and his family through them are significant.

While the relationship between the slave boy from Hausaland and his master is not fully explored, there are interesting details worth mentioning especially the illustrations reflecting the cultural diversities across the different borders traversed by the protagonist. When Abdulbaki is stripped of his property by Bubakar, the matter is only resolved with the intervention of the European commandant. In this encounter, Bubakar represents the old order, ruling his household on an ethic derived from pre-colonial relations between slaves and their masters. Representing the new order is the French colonial officer and a local policeman. Although part of the old order, the local policeman supports the reforms initiated by outsiders. His hostile attitude to slavery and slave holders shows his acceptance of the new social order and is an indication of the fact that society has crossed a cultural border and has transited from an archaic social order to a new one. Both works under review describe the affairs and adventures of members of some indigenous communities. *Shaihu Umar* is a novel about slavery, Muslim virtues and the power of God. Europeans are marginal actors in this narrative and have no influence on the plot. This is not exactly the case with the autobiographical narrative in which European intervention proves crucial to the position of the protagonist. The difference is even more obvious in *Gandoki.*

Gandoki

Gandoki (Bello, 1978) was written by Muhammadu Bello Kagara, another laureate of the contest that resulted in the publication of Tafawa Balewa's *Shaihu Umar*. Like the two previous works, this eponymously titled book is a tale of adventure in which Gandoki, a famous warrior, settles in Katsina in his old age. Asked by one of the children in his household, he recounts the story of his life. He has a lot to tell because, in writing the book, Bello Kagara figuratively opened the borders of his imagination and incorporated elements of fantasy into his narrative.

Gandoki is a brave and powerful warrior who fights in almost every battle from during Usman Dan Fodio's jihad until the arrival of the Europeans. He takes his battles, his son Garba Gagare on his side, even into the surreal world of ghosts and *Jinnis*. But the central concern of this work, especially as it relates to this study, is Gandoki's attitude to Europeans. As a warrior, he fights in defence of Bida in 1897 and Kontagora which fell in 1901. Beyond armed combat, he employs other stratagems in his battle against the British. Failing in his defence of Bida, he makes friendly overtures to the Europeans and their local allies only to behead the local judge in Wushishi for collaborating with the enemy. He, with his dependants, then relocates to Kontagora. It is 1901 and British forces are approaching the walls of the city defended by the famous Ibrahim Nagwamatse, the Sarkin or king of Sudan. Despite their heroic efforts

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Kontagora falls to the forces of a new order. Gandoki, alongside other warriors, escapes from town, going as far as Sokoto to pray at the tomb of Shaikh Usman Dan Fodio only to retreat on hearing of the fall of the Caliphate's capital to the British. He decides to join Caliph Attahiru Ahmadu I on a hajj trip that is aborted by British ambush. After the tiring battle near Dutsen Bima, Gandoki and his son fall asleep in the bush and wake up in an enchanted land, somewhere in India. Here the quasi-historical narrative takes on the form of a fable.

In spite of this change in his material circumstance, surrounded by ghosts and daemons, Gandoki remains his old self, a devout Muslim and brave warrior. He is mindful of his obligations as a Muslim and does his best to spread the message of Islam among those he meets on his journeys, especially the *Jinnis*. After many more adventures, he leaves the comfort of his ex-wives in the enchanted world and returns to earth with the singular purpose of inciting the people of the Sokoto Caliphate against the Europeans (Bello, 1978: 45). But contrary to his expectation, he meets a people too contented to be stirred to rise against British rule. On realising this, he reconsiders his action, hangs up his sword and settles down to a life of contemplation and scholarship. *Gandoki*, an early example of heroic-fantasy in Hausa literature, presents interesting facts that are of relevance to our study. One is the description of famous battles such as the siege of Kontagora which is probably based on personal recollection of the author who was born in 1890. As is the case with Balewa's *Shaihu Umar,* some veterans of these battles were alive at the first publication of *Gandoki* in 1934. Another point of importance is the manner Gandoki relates with the Europeans and their supporters. It is an apt portrayal of the kind of political and cultural conflicts that arise in border regions. Certainly a patriot, Gandoki is nevertheless a warlike figure who thrives amid the chaos of battle. It is this character trait that will lead him to thoughts of inciting armed insurrection against European domination of his land only to have a complete change of mind and plans on returning home. A pragmatist, he not only approves of the transformation that has taken place in his absence but also signals his acceptance of the new order by sending his son to school in Katsina. This might all look surprising, but only if one fails to take cognisance of the social atmosphere and one possible reason the Literature Bureau published the book in the first instance which must have been to foster social harmony and acceptance of British rule. It would have been strange for Europeans to promote a literary contest in which one of the winning entries was openly antagonistic to their cause. Such reading becomes more plausible when *Gandoki* is seen as the author's alter ego. Bello Kagara made no secret of his feelings about British rule but he was pragmatic enough to see the good side of that rule and in what manner it could prove of personal use.

Conclusion

The reviewed books are connected by their shared concerns with particular epochs in Nigeria's historical development and transition from a pre-colonial to a colonial state. These concerns make them an important source, one of several sources, of information for the period of Nigerian history that they cover. Their claims have to be checked against less manipulable and, perhaps, more reliable sources. These books, however, share the advantage of being eye witness accounts of people who had lived through the events they describe or had the events recounted to them by others who had experienced them firsthand. A book provides a reader the opportunity to enter the creative universe of an author, share in the author's experience and engage in intellectual transactions across cultural borders, making it veritable source and resource for border studies, especially as is the case with the books here examined.

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Social Welfare Strategies in Colonial Lagos

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Abstract

This paper examines a number of social welfare strategies that were introduced in Lagos by the British colonial administrators to arrest the alarming rate of mass poverty in Lagos during the period under review. Essentially, the paper draws heavily on archival data to specifically address colonial policies such as repatriation, rehabilitation, provision of employment opportunities as well as the regulation of the working conditions of poor people in Lagos. The paper submits that these policies were discriminatory and not properly implemented, hence, rather than alleviate poverty, urban unemployment and its attendant social consequences became the order of the day.

Introduction

Poverty is a historical phenomenon and the poor have lived in Africa from pre-colonial period till present day. In pre-colonial Africa, poverty occurred more as a non-monetary phenomenon (Abimbola 1977: 1-4). A typical African began his life through birth into a particular social class and grew to learn the language, skills and vocation of his people or the profession of his parents. Then he became integrated into the processes that ensured his admission or initiation into certain age grades. Wealth was in form of land, chieftaincy titles, livestock, skill and vocation, age, wisdom, spirituality, kingship and membership of royalty, social class, etc. Poverty often existed on an individual level when the individual was not able to assess majority of the above or if his ability to assess them was hindered by either some form of disability, through birth into what was regarded as a degrading social class (Okeke 1986: 9). The reason why some scholars referred to a merrie Africa was because it was difficult to refer to a man who lacked money in pre-colonial Africa as poor because the yardstick for measuring poverty was essentially, and as stated earlier, non-monetary. Though, it has been argued by subaltern theorists that the major causative factor for the incidence of poverty is non-monetary (Smith and Joseph, 1999: 203 – 208), this study is of the view that with the advent of colonialism, poverty became an increasingly monetary occurrence, particularly with the gradual domination of Western monetary exchange system (Bennel, 1982: 127–154).

Indeed, the conventional meaning of poverty is the lack of the basic necessities of life – food, shelter and clothing – in the life of an individual or group. However, the lack of money is the fundamental indicator of poverty. Statistics are generated and used for policy direction and implementation, using the fiscal perception of poverty. This strategy remains basic to the understanding of poverty and the social welfare strategies that are targeted towards alleviating poverty.

The rapid urbanisation of Lagos as a result of the decision of the British colonial administrators to make Lagos the capital of Nigeria brought along with it numerous social problems associated with a new colonial capital. Some of these include, inadequate social infrastructure, massive

rural-urban migration as well as the social costs of the attempts at nascent industrialisation. Understandably, this new system created and entrenched a new form of poverty. The reaction of the colonial regime to these new challenges is the major pre-occupation of this paper.

Colonial Welfare Strategies

Poverty and welfare strategies are historical facts in pre-colonial Lagos. However, these assumed a different dimension with the advent of colonialism. Under this new dispensation, the British colonial officers faced challenges occasioned by accumulated and continuing developments: western education, new monetary exchange, white collar employment, new governance, and new culture and other urban-related social problems. Some of the social welfare strategies employed by the colonial administrators included repatriation, rehabilitation, provision of social services, provision of employment, extra-curricular activities among children, awareness creation and propaganda. These were partly designed to alleviate the conditions of the poor but also to check the impact of their activities, agitations, grievance and nuisance to the newly emerging urban culture.

Repatriation of Paupers

Repatriation expressed the determination of the colonial authorities in Lagos to maintain certain 'approved' urban standards and practices by the inhabitants. Majority of those repatriated were labelled "undesirables" who, the authorities considered a nuisance to the new urban environment. Also included in this category were beggars and prostitutes. This method was firmly resisted by some of the poor and welcomed by others. The poor themselves devised various means and strategy to evade repatriation and in some cases were actually successful (National Archive, Comcol 1, File No. 1493 Vol 4). This paper considers the policy of repatriation as a social welfare strategy because available evidence suggests many repatriates expressed gratitude to the Colony's administration for their repatriation. This was often the case in the event that the individual affected was the one who initiated the repatriation process. Repatriation was costly and the governing authorities who undertook the process were careful to spend within the limits that could be well defended. The process of repatriation involved first, the identification and consideration of the activities of the individual as damaging to the social conduct of the colonial urban centre. Second, a written petition was forwarded to a governing institutional authority, often anonymously. Third, investigations were conducted by the relevant authority to ascertain the allegations. These investigations could stretch into long periods and often involved the collaboration of two or more institutional authorities, one of which was a law enforcement agency. Fourth, the suspect was interrogated by the institutional authority involved. Fifth, fund was sourced and mobilised from relevant government agencies. Sixth, the travel arrangement of the individual was conducted usually in collaboration with the relevant provincial authority in the hinterlands. The point of destination was ascertained and the individual was repatriated.

Rehabilitation and Provision of Employment for Juveniles

This strategy was adopted to turn around the conditions of juveniles that are delinquent and poor (NAI, Comcol I, File No. 2600, *Daily Times* 5 August 1950). This was particularly adopted for indigenes of Lagos or those who had no place in the provinces where they could stay if repatriated. By 1950, the scheme for the welfare of juveniles had become successful. The Colony

Welfare Officer had gone through hundreds of requests in form of correspondences written by and or on behalf of juveniles. The office had the responsibility of conducting investigations into the authenticity or otherwise of claims by juveniles. The office sought and got employment on behalf of the juveniles and also organised for the repatriation of those whose relations were in the provinces. The welfare officer equally stood as referee and guarantor for juveniles who got employment in the colony. The office also arranged with other bodies to pay the school fees of indigent students who needed assistance. This policy also included the provision and administration of hostels for juveniles. They were provided medical assistance and taught how to read and write. In addition, some of them cleaned, cooked, washed, and learnt crafts like broom making and brush making. They gardened, swam and were instructed in religious studies. A social worker was attached to each hostel and such spent long hours individually with the children finding out circumstances that brought them into the hostel (NAI, Comcol I, File No. 2600, *Daily Times*, 5 August 1950).

It should be re-emphasised that a good number of the poor in Lagos from the 1940s to 1950s included juveniles who sought employment. This drew the attention of the governing authorities to the effect that a committee was appointed in 1943 to assess the situation. Between December 1943 and May 1944, the Committee registered 683 boys and 174 girls as eligible for employment. By the end of May 1944, the register of the committee only reflected 414 boys and 124 girls (NAI, Comcol I, File No. 2784). Overall, the total number of juveniles placed for employment under this scheme was 105 boys and 15 girls. This trend continued till 1946 when Bishop Vining and Bishop Taylor presented a report to the Governor of Lagos on July 18, 1946 (NAI Comcol I, File No 2784). The report prompted the colonial administration to consider the establishment of a new committee to handle the responsibilities.

The new committee was named The Advisory Committee on Juvenile Employment and After Care. Its function was to advise on juvenile employment and after care. The existing practice had been that a child entering an infant class at the age of 5 years (which was the lowest age limit) was expected to complete the 8 years of the primary course at age 13. Many did not enter so early until the highest legal age limit for primary school enrolment which was 16 years. As a result, in December each year, a number of children between the ages of 13 and 16 joined the labour market. The colonial administration feared the influx of child labour into Lagos from other provinces and thus issued the Registration (Lagos Township Young Persons) Order No. 51 of 1946 and a Government Circular 20 / 1946 – paragraph 3. These regulations specified that only those children who have attended a bonafide primary school in Lagos and colony (a period of three years was taken as the qualifying period) were without further formalities eligible for what was considered 'Blue card" i.e. to be registered at the Lagos employment exchange as juveniles seeking employment.

The juvenile employment exchange was organised as a separate branch of the adult employment exchange. School registers were a major source of documentation for the juvenile exchange and was used as evidence of domicile. For juveniles in secondary schools, the conditions for registration at the employment exchange were far less strict than for primary school leavers. Juveniles in the secondary school category who provided evidence of successful completion of class IV in a secondary school where a government certificate was given in any part of Nigeria and who must be under 24 years were included in the school leavers' register. As soon as there

were vacancies, they were offered work suitable to their attainments. Those from northern and eastern provinces who desired work in the government service were registered locally within their provinces.

Prosecution and Rehabilitation of Beggars

One of the challenges the colonial administration faced during this period was the need not only to control the influx of crippled beggars into Lagos but also to contain those that were already living in the city (NAI, Comcol 1, File No. 797 / 1 Vol. I). In February 1944, the Lagos Women Welfare Council wrote to the Secretary of the Lagos Town Council about these issues – the fact that the number of these beggars was growing alarmingly, and constituting danger to vehicular traffic (Jones, 1944, NAI, Comcol 1/ 797/1/Vol I.). The reply of the Lagos Town Council was to the effect that the Council itself was at a loss concerning what to do with the beggars. The Council stated in its reply that investigations revealed that some of the beggars lived in the Agege area of the mainland and that they travelled all the way from that area of Lagos to the island to conduct their trade (Martin, 1944, NAI / Comcol I/ 797/ I / Vol I.). Within the same month, the Lagos Town Council proposed to the Commissioner for the Colonies that the proposed repatriation of beggars from the Lagos area would not stop the trend. It therefore, proposed that a welfare agency that would cater for the needs of the beggars should be established.

Such measures, it was considered, would rehabilitate those who were genuinely incapacitated physically (Wright 1944, NAI Comcol I/ 797 / 1/ Vol. I). The Council noted that some of the beggars were professionals who would resist moves to rehabilitate them but that such strategy should nevertheless proceed in spite of this setback. The Council therefore decided to engage the police to arrest those who pretended to be beggars. The police were urged to house and feed them, and then examine them as to their physical fitness to earn a livelihood. Prescribed courses for treatment were made for those in need of it, while permanent provision was to be made for those who were found to be incapacitated permanently (Wright 1944, NAI Comcol I/ 797 / 1/ Vol. I). According to the investigations of the Town Council, beggars have died living properties behind for their offspring. What was of great concern to the Secretary of the Lagos Town Council was the fund that would be involved in the upkeep of the beggars in a camp. He noted that majority of the beggars were northerners who came to Lagos to beg. For this reason, he considered that the tax payers in Lagos should not be held responsible for the upkeep of those who were not resident in Lagos (Martin 1944, NAI /Comcol/ I 797/I / Vol I).

A further option of the prosecution of beggars was considered and was administered to discourage intending beggars from continuing the trade. The police noted that the option of prosecution would help to an extent but suggested that a home for beggars be established. The police noted that their investigations reveal that such homes were operational in Mali, and that the fear of being incarcerated in such homes kept the beggars in Mali in check (Hook 1944). The police also noted that though they had a vote for the repatriation of beggars and other destitute, but that the establishment of a beggars' home would be less expensive in the long run. In July 1944, the Lagos Town Council suggested to the Commissioner for the colonies that a clear demarcation be made between destitute beggars and professional beggars. With reference to the criminal code in use at the time, the Lagos Town Council was willing to prosecute only

professional beggars. Actually, many of the professional beggars made enough money to afford daily transport in and out of the Lagos by lorry (Secretary, Lagos Town Council, 1944).

Eventually, the Lagos Town Council and the Colony's Welfare Officer administered a census of beggars in Lagos in 1943 (Colony Welfare Officer 1944, NAI Comcol I / 797 / Vol. II,) The census revealed that there were 153 beggars in Lagos. The result of the survey was also assessed with the conclusion that the beggars could be broadly divided into two classes: those who begged because it was the easiest way of making a livelihood and those who begged because it was the easiest way of subsistence. The Colony's Commissioner suggested that in a bid to solve the problem, three approaches should be followed – establishment of a vocational training school, establishment of a welfare home and repatriation (ComCol 1944, NAI Comcol / 797 / I / Vol. II.). The first approach was considered for crippled children who could be trained in rope making, basket work, mat making, cigar making, fish net making, etc. The second option was considered for beggars who were old, who had been residents of Lagos for many years, and who had no means of supporting themselves and so took to begging in order to do so. Also considered along this line were those who grew blind in old age. The third option was considered for beggars whose physical defects were not so serious as to prevent them from earning a living. Those in this category included those considered as professional beggars mainly from the northern parts of Nigeria.

By October 1944 steps were taken towards the three options by the Department of Medical Services, the office of the Commissioner of Police and the Lagos Town Council. A rehabilitation centre was constructed for the treatment and training of crippled children. Accommodation was also considered for the purpose of the care of the children (NAI, Comcol I / 7907 / I / Vol II.). Additionally, the office of the superintendent of police for the Lagos colony began the process of persecuting adult beggars and the application for repatriation orders against those who were not natives of Lagos. In the case of the persistent begging of those who were residents of Lagos, there cases were referred to the Lagos Town Council. (Acting Commissioner of Police 1944, NAI, Comcol I / 797 / I / Vol II) The Lagos Town Council was unanimous in its direction concerning beggars. It particularly instructed the police commissioner to undertake and maintain the campaign of persecution of beggars who were not indigenes of Lagos and that after persecution such beggars should be repatriated. The Council further instructed the Commissioner of Police that repatriated beggars should be photographed and their records kept for another round of prosecution in the event of default (NAI, Comcol I / 797 / I / Vol. I.).

Concerning beggars of Lagos origin, the Council followed up on the further expansion of the rehabilitation centre to serve as an avenue to equip them with skills that would enable them fend for themselves despite their physical disability. The Town Council requested the police department to give the matter considerable attention over a long time frame to discourage those in the provinces from travelling to Lagos to beg (NAI, Comcol I / 797 / I / Vol. I.). The Council also sought government support towards the upkeep of the inmates of the rehabilitation centre situated at Igbobi in mainland Lagos.

Enactment and Administration of Ordinance for Ex-Service Men

Ex-service men emerged as members of the sub-group of the new class of the poor in Lagos and faced very grave conditions after returning from the Second World War. The colonial

administration responded mainly through the implementation of the Ex-service Men Ordinance of 1945 (NAI, Comcol I, File No. 2807 / S I). By the Ordinance, government established vocational training centres and industrial rehabilitation centres for disabled ex-service men who needed training to undertake employment or work on their own. Facilities and other requirements required for the training of these men was also provided in such centres and the expenses incurred by the Governor-in-council in the process of establishing and maintenance of such centres were defrayed out of the general revenue of Nigeria. Through the Ordinance, an Advisory Council was established and charged with the duty to advise and assist the Commissioner of Labour in matters relating to the employment or training of ex-service men.

An ex-service man was not registered if he unreasonably refused or failed to attend a vocational or industrial rehabilitation centres, if he was not 'ordinarily' resident in Nigeria, or if there was probability that the disablement was likely to continue for six months or more from the date of the entry of the name in the register, or if he was habitually of bad character (NAI, Comcol I, File No. 2807 / S I). Ex-service men were also required to apply to the Commissioner of Labour for inclusion of their names in the register. The application was screened by the Commissioner and approved. If there were special cases, the Commissioner referred the matter to the Advisory Council which then decided on the applications (Ex-Service Men Ordinance 1945, NAI, Comcol I, File No. 2807 / S I).

Able bodied ex-service men were also required to register through written applications approved by the Commissioner of Labour, with the same conditions for registration or deregistration as that of disabled ex-service men. Employers of ex-service men included government departments, all public authorities and all native authorities. These institutions were required to have in their employment not less than ten ex-service men "or *such number as may be specified from time to time either generally or in respect of any particular occupation, trade industry or undertaking, by an order made by the Commissioner of Labour*" (NAI, Comcol I, File No. 2807 / S I).

Regulation of the Service Conditions of Domestic Servants

Moreover, among the new poor in colonial Lagos were domestic servants. They were among the few sub groups which agitated, through the Domestic Servants Union, for better welfare from their employers. Government's reaction to the agitations was to the effect that it considered the services provided by the Union's members as unorganised and difficult to classify (NAI Comcol I, File No. 248/S 156). Eventually, a wage regime for domestic servants was put in place. The regime considered appropriate measures on hours of work, arrangements when employer is on leave, vacation, sick leave and medical attention and shelter. In spite of these recommendations, the Commissioner of the Colony in Lagos considered that the standard of efficiency of domestic servants was low in comparison with servants in Europe and that their qualification and performance should be monitored and reviewed to allow for commensurable income earned. Additionally, the Commissioner of the Colony was of the opinion that the recommendation of the Board was not comprehensive enough to discourage the exploitation of the services of domestic servants by unscrupulous employers. The Commissioner felt seriously that the opportunities available for unscrupulous employers to exploit domestic servants can only be reduced greatly if government employs the services of inspectors to monitor the conditions of services of domestic servants. He also decided that the monitoring should include conditions of

service for domestic servants of both European and non European employers. The recommendations of the Committee were implemented and monitored occasionally.

Inspection and Monitoring of Service Conditions of Daily Paid Labour

In 1935, questions regarding the working conditions of labourers in British territories in Africa arose during debates in the British Parliament (NAI, Comcol I, File No. 1097). The Lagos Colony generated particular interest and was considered necessary to monitor the conditions under which labour was employed in factories and other related establishments in Lagos. In addition, government began to consider the need for regular inspection of places of employment. The Home government was worried that Labour Departments in some British territories had been abolished; and for that reason, the possible worsening of working conditions. The decision to implement this policy of labour inspection was indeed a follow up to the request made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Government of Nigeria in August 1930 to review the working conditions of labour as it concerns hours of work, rates of pay, conditions of contract, housing conditions, health medicals and the considerations of provisions which might contribute to the social welfare of labour in the Lagos colony and the provinces. The interest of the British Government was not necessarily to directly improve the conditions of work of the labourers but to protect Britain's interest in issues concerning international Labour Law (NAI, Comcol I, File No. 1097).

Conclusion

In spite of these afore-mentioned social welfare strategies in colonial Lagos, it suffices to state that facts from archival sources suggest that there was an intensification of poverty towards the end of colonial rule. Indeed, a consideration of the numerous requests for assistance made by poor people in Lagos to the Commissioner for the Lagos Colony between 1930 and 1960 reveal a progressively growing incidence of poverty among ex-service men, juveniles, women, beggars, paupers and so on. Ordinarily, our conclusion should be to reveal with specific data the incidence of poverty alleviation and social welfare strategies using the poor in the period covered as a case study. However, this kind of historical empiricism is not feasible because of the non-demographic representation of the poor in colonial Lagos, the non-availability of a statistical yardstick to assess the living standards of the poor, the non-determination of a poverty line and the non-availability of a poverty profile that can lead to conclusions that are empirically well grounded. Interestingly, (Okoh, 1997: 225-229) has shown that policies or conclusions on poverty alleviation are difficult to determine because they are dependent on poverty measurement mechanisms, many of which are controversial due to the drawbacks associated with various models. Thus, the conclusion that can be reached is that the colonial regime made serious attempts to address the high incidence of urban poverty in colonial Lagos but that these policies did not achieve the desired results.

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Conflicting Framings of Women in Nollywood Videos

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> As men have traditionally been in power in the film industry,
> Theorists believe that the camera shows us the world through
> the stereotype eyes of the 'male gaze' (Lovey 2004).

Abstract
The representations of women in Nollywood videos fail to depict them in ways which evaluate the sordid reality of things in the real world. To achieve this false representation, the filmmakers have resorted to reversal in roles of women and men in the society. The implication of such misconstructions is that women are made to be seen and read in both the films and in real life as outlaws and evil to their families and society as a whole. This paper aims at outlining and critically analysing the role of women in Nigerian videos using two Nigerian videos *Omata Women* (2003) and *More than a Woman* (2004) to interrogate how Nollywood videos thrive on conflicting framings of women in ways which lead to understanding how the videos reproduce societal fears and anxieties that are borne out of patriarchy and the filmmakers' bias.

Introduction
The representations of women in Nollywood videos fail to depict them in ways which evaluate the sordid reality of things in the real world. To achieve this false representation, the filmmakers have resorted to reversal in roles of women and men in the society. The implication of such misconstructions is that women are made to be seen and read in both the films and in real life as outlaws and evil to their families and society as a whole. This paper aims at outlining and critically analysing the role of women in Nigerian videos using two Nigerian videos *Omata Women* (2003) and *More than a Woman* (2004) to interrogate how Nollywood videos thrive on conflicting framings of women in ways which lead to understanding how the videos reproduce societal fears and anxieties that are borne out of patriarchy and the filmmakers' bias. Women are represented in outrageous roles which conflict with what society knows women for, like sophisticated thieves and murderers. Women in most Nigerian videos resort to the use of charms superstitiously believed to embody magical powers like *juju* to get what they want. Moreover, women are portrayed in criminal and other evil tendencies like prostitution, roguery traits among other character portrayals, with excessive or irrational devotion as the activities which eventually ruin them. This forms the basis of interrogating women portrayals as a social construction in Nollywood videos which has no significant relationship with how Nigerian women are.

Nigerian videos have since their inception been mostly produced and directed by men and this has an adverse effect on how women are represented in the videos. Their representation tends to have a bearing with the social constructions of the society especially as that which privileges

patriarchy. Patriarchy is a form of social organisation that recognises and privileges the male as the head of the family and title is traced through the male line. The man becomes the dominant within the patriarchal society thereby reducing women to the periphery and silencing them politically, socially, economically and otherwise. Bunmi Olujinmi (2008:119) attests to the fact that film producers/directors churn out films in line with male domineering status that emanate from the patriarchal school of thought. In consequence, the woman is tempestuous, devilish and perpetually the weeping and unsympathetic character. This forms the major argument that this paper raises as being responsible for the negative representation of women in Nollywood videos.

The second reason is that of the male filmmakers' bias which also relates and feeds into patriarchy and which furthermore, informs how the various character moulds of women in Nollywood videos is achieved. The paper poses two critical questions, first, why should women characters creation be in outrageous roles and of what significance is it to the overall image of women in Nigerian videos? The second question seeks to ask why it is not other patterns of representations, and why this in particular? Such questions look at the social stratifications in the society for answers and explain how it translates in the way Nigerian film industry, mostly male dominated, insists on portraying women in conflicting images. This is seen in the various ways that bring out the bias that informs women's roles in the kinds of storylines and character representation they are made to assume in Nollywood narratives. This, arguably, may not have been so if Nigerian women become more involved in film production. Mabel Evwierhoma (2008:115) notes the late entry of women in film production and direction in Nigeria as being responsible for the way women are portrayed in Nollywood films. But, she cautions that the "social arrangements of masculinity that the home video entrenches" should be disabused, noting that "what the world sees about the Nigerian woman through the eye of the camera" should be that which will dignify womanhood and not the misrepresentations currently going on in Nollywood videos.

To achieve this false representation, the filmmakers have employed various tactics which also form the structural pattern of the arguments that this paper will be engaged with: creating women in role reversals and using all filmic narrative techniques including songs to achieve their aims. It is the insistence to represent women in roles that mostly portray vices that continues to beg the question: why is it that women cannot be given good representations like most men characters in Nigerian videos? The paper, on this premise, challenges the representations of women in Nollywood videos as representing the concept of women as evil.

Engaging the Videos *Omata Women and More than a Woman*

Omata Women
This film is produced by Okigwe Ekweh (2003) and directed by Ndubisi Okoh. The image of women in this film is the type of images that should be removed from the Nigeria video screen. This is the same way that Black responses with artistic creations sought to redeem the negative way in which the Black people have been presented, even though achieving it is such an enormous task (Ukadike: 1996, 195). The women characters in the film are represented as evil but can easily recruit other women who choose to identify with these characters either as a result of their beauty or the flamboyant social status which the camera tries to give them.

The film portrays the *femme fatale* or dangerous image of women. Here, four married women, Chinasa, Ijiele, Ifeoma and Nkechi, engage themselves in a dangerous plot to dominate their own husbands, even if this means killing them. They seek to acquire riches at all cost. Their consortium results in the formation of Onitsha Market Women Association. They tag themselves as "the life wire of the town." They recruit other women, promising them better recognition. However, the zeal with which they pursue their goals gets the better of them as these four central characters have their families destroyed in the end. For instance, Chinasa kills her husband through the assistance of hired assassins. The primary motivation for this is the need to avoid the shame that would trail her husband's knowledge of her extra-marital affair with Dozie. Her other motivation for doing this is the need to inherit all the worldly goods that her husband has acquired. Later, she also goes after Dozie killing him and taking his money too. Her last victim is a minor, Ejike, whom she lures into a relationship and then she dupes him of 1.5 million naira which is actually the money Ejike was given as settlement by his boss for serving him satisfactorily. She makes him hand over the money to her. However, being determined to own the money makes her swear to an oath that she had not received the money from Ejike which becomes her undoing. For, she ends up being struck dead by the deity, Ogugwu. Ijiele on her part reduces her husband, Nduka, to a mere house boy by casting a spell on him. By so doing, she destroys her own home.

Meanwhile, she also destroys her friend Ifeoma's home. She achieves this by divulging to Ifeoma's husband the secret affairs the latter has been engaging in with her landlord. Her motivation for divulging this information is a misunderstanding she earlier had with Ifeoma. Consequently, Ifeoma is driven by her husband to the village and asked to report herself to her parents. She is also asked to face the same village deity for a confession. She however refuses to do this and instead seeks to embark on a revenge mission which sees her pouring chemicals on Ijiele's face and mutilating her beauty forever. It is at this point that Ijiele's husband is released from the spell earlier cast on him. The last of the women, Nkechi, is a trained lawyer who initially seeks to practise the profession. However, her husband insists on a different idea and she is eventually set up by the husband to run a super boutique in the Onitsha Market. This compromise marks the beginning of the disintegration of their familial harmony as she comes in contact with a group of friends purporting to be running a business association. She is thoroughly proselytised into prostitution by the trio, having been made to believe that it is the fastest means of making wealth. Her husband's knowledge of her extra marital affairs results in a fight one day and he dies in that fight. Being widowed makes her miserable and she becomes a drug addict. In one of her inebriated moments one day, she is stabbed to death by her little daughter. Her death ends the tale of four women whose behaviour leaves much to be desired. However, of interest to me in this paper is the need for a more careful examination of the portrayal of women with such low moral standards as a recurring theme in Nigerian films.

More than a Woman
This second film produced by Ossy Okeke (2005) and directed by Tarilla Thompson, responds to the femme fatale image which Eko and Emenyi (2002:172) identify as one popular image that has been transferred from the print media into Nigerian films, a disposition which has been greatly critiqued for continuing women's derogatory representation in films. The film eulogizes roguery, a trend which does not in any way fit into the Nigerian movie space. Such a character will help to corrupt women as they identify with Trechia who disguises as a man when she goes

for operations but appears as a perfect beauty outside the cover- up. Her beauty can attract the audience who will judge her actions to be a welcome development because they have already identified with her beauty. At the same time, they may also feel that a person of Trechia's beauty cannot embody negativity. Besides, the camera and other film effects are employed to enhance her roguery portrayal thus, making her an enviable model rather than what she really is. A film of this construct serves no good purpose to the Nigeria film society, in the wake of increasing crime wave in the country. Such dangerous image is the type which this study on the image of women in films finds very misleading and potentially corrupting.

The female villain, Trechia, is a complete incarnation of a dangerous woman. Her embodiment seems alien to a typical Nigerian film space. She therefore can be described as an adaptation from other spaces like America as her roles are realized for the most part through special effects such as overblown actions, slow motions, among others, to match with her foreign image of "super woman." Her prowess and ingenuity, which are unfortunately used for criminality and roguery, exceed those of an ordinary woman. She is a thief who successfully shoplifts some of the most expensive and heavily guarded jewellery no matter how superb the security is at those shops. She is very resourceful and clever at organising and mapping out strategies for prospective operations. For instance, she carefully maps out her routes to avoid being arrested. Based on the way her character is portrayed in the film, we know that she is a tree without roots, since, she has no family pedigree, which in a way adds a mythical dimension to her personality. Nevertheless, she is eventually apprehended by a special squad of the state police and made to face the wrath of the law. However, the admirable portrayal of Trechia in roguery in this film could impact negatively on the image of women. Indeed, young ladies could be easily carried away by Trechia's misdemeanours. It can be argued that by trying to inter-textualise the film *Super Woman*, whose theme is foreign and does not fit into the Nigerian film space, the film makers are creating a glorified super woman thief worthy of emulation rather than condemnation.

Role Reversal: The Rewriting of Women in Nigerian Video Films
The idea of role reversal as is used in this paper is to look at how roles and responsibilities which are Biblically and culturally prescribed as acceptable roles for men and women in the society have been reversed from pre-existing order or situations in Nigerian videos. The opposite role that the men and women are made to assume then makes for a reading of women as non conformist to social order in the society. The politics that surround the representation of women in non conformist roles and responsibilities in video narratives relates to the way women are erroneously viewed as outlaws and trying to bring confusion to a once ordered society.

The two videos of our analysis in this paper *Omata Women* and *More than a Woman* have depicted the theme of role reversals in Nigerian video narratives. The way women are portrayed to fit imaginary negative roles is exemplified in how Trechia is represented to assume men's role as sophisticated thief which sees her shoplifting in heavily guarded jewellery shops. Trechia's character is re–written in a way which depicts her to be more calculating in stealing than women should be. Her use of computer to map out her larceny strategies combines with the cardboard drawings where she maps out the routes to her target shops in a systematic way to give her a good mental picture of the modus operandi for each shoplifting adventure. She also uses video camera which enables her to record the organisational structures of the shops she attacks, in

order to improve upon her strategies next time. The totality of her preparation validates her professional ingenuity while at the same time portraying her as a highly sophisticated thief.

This confirms the way both Detective Banjo Daniels and the entire police force, in particular the information unit which unsuccessfully tries to capture the photograph of the thief from the shop close circuit television are humbled by Trechia's technological advancements. This highlights Detective Daniels' explanation to Trechia of this thief being a highly sophisticated thief and not just the local hoodlums, who operate because of the guns which they have at their disposal. Telling Trechia all these becomes his undoing as this piece of information makes her to know how to re-strategise and further build her confidence for more shoplifting adventures.

Another aspect where the narrative constructs role reversals is in making Trechia to be the one to steal while Dan, a man, becomes the buyer of the stolen items. This position should have been the other way round where Dan should have stolen for Trechia to buy. This chronicles the irony of roles which is given cogency in the characters' phone conversation below:

Dan: … my partners are leaving for Europe tomorrow, so I want the goods delivered.
Trechia: (reassuring but with some caution) Sure I will deliver.... I will deliver the goods.

During this scene that the narrative depicts Trechia assuring Dan of her ability to deliver the desired goods Trechia is already pregnant. In an earlier scene, the visuals depict Trechia and Detective Daniels doing shopping for the baby they are expecting, following Trechia's announcement and confirmation of her pregnancy. The pregnancy serves to justify the view that women are capable of performing every task during pregnancy, and pregnancy should not be seen as an excuse to exonerate and absolve women of criminal engagements. The way her strength is built as not only capable of riding her bike, but also has to run and jump over a heap of sand in a rough and steep terrain as she tries to escape from the police, gives cogency to this view. This segment of the narrative happens in her last scene of shoplifting which ironically correlates with her promise of delivering the goods, and the visuals on the race culminates in her final arrest. While her arrest ends the film narrative, her pregnancy serves to draw our attention to the lack of objectivity that underscores the filmmakers' representation of women in reversed roles. The implication of such representations is that women use their biological function as mothers to cover for most evils that they commit as people exonerate them from crime when truly pregnancy does not inhibit them. It draws on the politics of typification, which stands to portray women in ways which do not reflect how real women are. For instance, a woman who is pregnant finds it really difficult to function and to do most of the things that were easy for her to conveniently do before. It further speaks to how such role reversal representations of women lead to a misrepresentation which is capable of sending only wrong signals about women.

The misrepresentation of women in role reversals and rewriting is also a thematic concern in *Omata Women.* For instance, Ijele's name as a metaphorical fearful masquerade as well as a lioness, serves to illustrate the enormous strength that she possesses. Her character provides a re-reading of women in the Nigerian society as having undeserving power over their husbands. Her name here serves to introduce her willingness to play out the role in the narrative. The narrative informs the video patrons that her real name is Agnes but because she is aware that the name does not resonate with her strength in terms of the kinds of evils that she is capable of indulging

in, she chooses and prefers to be called by her nick name "Ijele." The only time that we are told that her proper name is Agnes, is when her husband is first introduced and is warning Ifeoma to desist from calling his wife Ijele "for the last time if you don't know, her name her name is Agnes." According to Rollin (1999:305), "even when names seem nondescript, there may be artfulness in the author's choices….Even secondary characters speak for their creators." This position supports the fact that it is only at the introduction of her husband Nduka during part of this scene that we see him acting out his traditional role as a man who has the authority to discipline a woman and bring her under his total control. The story enunciates his manly role, as he meets his wife Ijele in the company of her lesbian friends and he orders her companions out. Just as Ijele's friends are making their exit, Ifeoma makes her entry and he is seen also warning Ifeoma, whose introduction to the viewers also coincides with this moment. This scene constructs the authority which a traditional African man is supposed to have over his wife and children. It explains how Ngugi in *Wizard of the Crow* expounds on the idea surrounding how men assert themselves over women "Listen. Tradition is on my side, it is the man who wears the pants in the house" (2007: 435).

However, shortly after the first part of their story, patrons of the video already know that Nduka's traditional role would be short-lived. This is because of her association with Chinasa, as we have already been introduced to her character in the third scene of the narrative. For instance, in that scene, her role of enumerating what Chinasa stands to gain with her husband's death leaves us with a hint of her character and foreshadows many other shocking revelations. Thus, within the second half of her husband's introduction, her role is reversed by the filmmakers to suite that which they prefer. She is depicted through the visuals adding some substance to her husband Nduka's food and verbalizing the effect she expects from it: "as from today whatever I say you must do! You must do!" As in most Nigerian video narratives that deal with fetish powers, sound becomes a way of telling that the unusual has taken place. Once her husband Nduka swallows the food under the vigilant and monitoring eyes of his wife Ijele the earlier popular sound that tells that something unnatural is taking place is introduced. The sound becomes a telling point through which we are called upon to know that something terrible and unusual has happened.

There are very many sounds that most Nigerian video films employ especially within scenes which depict the occult world but one of them is most popularly used in most Nigerian videos that it is very easy to tell its function in terms of what follows it. However, no matter how new a particular sound which is meant to shock and cause fear is enunciated, it is always able to call our attention through its systematic shocking auditory power to shock our sensibility into believing that the atmosphere has been charged spiritually. This explains why in the narrative the danger sound is validated by Nduka's immediate reaction of placing both hands on his chest. He does it in a manner which serves to confirm that a transformation has taken place within him which he seems unable to control. To establish the magnitude of the fetish powers on him, the sound is again repeated and this time, it is louder. The sound now follows a spontaneous reaction which sees him twisting his face and this action culminates in an unprecedented smile and hilarious shouts of Ijele and not Agnes. This contradicts his former position where he earlier warned Ifeoma not to call his wife Ijele but Agnes.

His wife's reaction at this time is brought to focus by the close camera pan that she is given which helps to depict her confirmation of the efficacy of the fetish powers on Nduka as she is seen nodding her head and smiling in approval of the transformation going on. Shortly after this confirmation, she walks out of the inner room where she was with Nduka and is depicted in a long shot as she walks to the beer parlour where she is hailed by customers and Ifeoma "Ijele! Ijele!" The hailing portrays her toughness as a strong and feared woman whose popularity is undoubted. She walks over to where Ifeoma is sitting and announces to her that she has taken care of her husband and now belongs to Ifeoma as her lesbian wife. The choice of lesbianism over heterosexual marriage is unprecedented in Nigeria since traditionally women are made to see themselves as incomplete and unimportant without husbands and such a re-conditioning of society provokes no anxiety about why lesbianism should become an issue of concern in Nollywood videos. The camera followed her back to their house where she meets Nduka still eating the food and, being impatient to have him start obeying her orders, she starts giving out orders immediately "Nduka, take this plates to the kitchen and wash them." Her husband Nduka who is now fully under the effect of the spell, willingly answers "with all pleasure I would wash them and wash them until they are sparkling clean as Ijele" (*Omata Women*). Under the influence of the spell, Nduka tells his wife that they can call her "Ijele from morning till night" and he also starts calling her Ijele too from that moment until the end of the film. This is one of the attitudinal changes in him that serves to indicate that the spell is working on him.

Another area that also portrays his unbalanced state is in the manner he responds to his wife's orders by taking the plates for washing. To ridicule his demented state as a signal to the emasculation going on in him, he is depicted in shots as he happily sings and dances all the way out of the sitting room to the back of the house where he has to wash the dishes. Besides, the camera also focuses on every bit of the washing details to validate the sudden transformation which has started in his life. From this time onward we know that Nduka has been emasculated by his wife Ijele. This scene also builds upon the idea that the wifely responsibilities have been transferred to Nduka and he graciously does them throughout the narrative until the final scene of his portrayal when the spell is eventually broken following Ifeoma's mutilation of Ijele's body with chemicals. Nevertheless, the destructive consequence of the reversal of roles which sees Ijele performing the male role in her family argues Aristotle's views which Catharine M Mackinnon (2005:50) echoes that "excellence of character…the temperance of a man and of a woman, or the courage of a man is shown in commanding, of a woman in obeying. And this holds of other excellences…." Thus Mackinnon (2005:50) summarises Aristotle's position as she notes that "the sexes are different: men tell women what to do, women do it, and so on. Gender is defined as a difference, the sex difference. This has been as much social construct, imposed social fact, as philosophical argument. Human societies have tended to define women as such in terms of just such differences from men, whether real or imagined, generally enforced to women's detriment in resources, roles, respect, and rights." Contrary to Aristotle's view which is also echoed by Mackinnon which shows the order of things *Omata Women,* has represented reversal of roles in ways which contradict how men and women are read within African society as men being in charge as a demonstration that shows that what role and responsibilities one plays determines who is ruling over the other as in the dominant and the subordinate. This goes back to the concept of the family which tilts towards the Bible organisational structure which follows that husbands are heads.

In Nigeria and within the Onitsha film space in particular, it is not the duty of a man to do house chores like washing of dishes and cooking for the family or going to the market to buy soup condiments. But being under the spell, Nduka engages in these roles which the traditional society views as women's roles without realising that his role has deviated from that which the society approves for men. The narrative draws the attention of the viewers to how he has lost his sense of manhood, by using another male character, Orimili, Nkechi's husband to satirise how Nduka has allowed his wife to use him as a woman. It shows that the story consciously makes an effort to point out that his emasculated role acted out in his new responsibilities clearly identifies him as a man who has deviated from the accepted norm within the society. Thus, the story depicts Orimili taunting Nduka for asking Orimili to give him the money that he owes his wife Ijele. He not only refuses to give him the money on grounds that he did not transact any business with him, but makes the former to understand that the society frowns at men playing roles that are meant for women, like Nduka attending to his wife's errands. This culminates in his question: "Nduka, are you not ashamed of yourself going on an errand for a woman in main market? (*Omata Women*).

The totality of Nduka's reduction by his wife Ijele into a woman, or worst still, houseboy status is dramatised through the visualising of Nduka as he carries a basket of goods on his head, while he walks behind his wife who shows him her customers in the market so that he will be able to know where to buy things. This segment adds to how the video song whose wordings at this point corresponds with the action that is taking place "*this woman go turn you to houseboy, this woman fit to kill you…*" (Omata Women) becomes an authorial voice which functions as the omniscient narrator in the narrative to portray women as evil. The song at strategic points is embellished with a voice-over produced by a male voice which enumerates the many ways that women have dealt wickedly with their husbands. This brings to focus how the song and voice-over builds on the change in husband and wife responsibilities' between Nduka and Ijele which sees him cooking in the kitchen and tasting for salt. At this point, the song is introduced to give value to what is happening in this family and the lyrics add value and explain that it is out of place to see a Nigerian man in kitchen cooking and suggests that such an action must have been masterminded by unusual circumstances "*if you want to marry a woman, never you marry a bad woman, because that woman fit to kill you, they will plan, plot and lie and kill, just to control their husbands for house! They will plot lie and kill just to have their way…*" (*Omata women*). The song, like Burt (1994:7) explains, has the ability to create several underlining meanings, which serves to give more explicit meaning to the story. He notes that the quality and language of music are vital aids in breaking down the objective explicitness of certain pictures where there is a need to redefine them in a way that is consistent with the intentions of the story.

To that effect, the lyric helps to depict through her that such position not only undermines the men but makes the women themselves to lose the value and essence of being women who should be loved and cared for by their husbands. Overall, Nduka and Ijele's duties as husband and wife in *Omata Women* hold in the same way that Garritano explains that "Mabel's manliness" and Joshua's "womanliness" are symptomatic of a world in disarray, and both characters suffer for their deviance. But such deviance interrogates the postcolonial nature of Nigeria that sees both men and women working in offices and industries. The implication of women also in gainful employments is that there are bound to be changes in terms of roles and responsibilities which will affect the standing traditional responsibilities and duties for men and women and

necessitates the very anxieties that see such a change as amounting to a world in disarray. This is since the husband is no longer the sole bread winner for the family and sometimes in some cases the woman has a more income generating job than the man which makes it difficult to insist on saying that men must not help out in roles which where hitherto regarded as those for women. If the woman does not stay at home but has a busy day at work then it stands to reason that by the end of the day she is also tired and the man (husband) if he gets back before her can assist with kitchen chores to make the work easier. By so doing postcolonial Nigerian family roles are becoming similar to those of the western world and Nigeria is gradually moving away from the predominantly agrarian society it used to be in pre-colonial times where specific roles were for men and others for women. This explains the anxiety of men having to share the constructed roles and responsibilities which hitherto were exclusively for women as a fallout of postcolonial reconstruction of the Nigerian society. It is such anxieties that Nigerian videos interrogate through Nduka and Ijele who exemplify how men and women should not act, and in so doing, they construct gendered norms similar to those described in "*Hostages* and *Dust to Dust*" (187). Similarly, Ijele's character exemplifies what the duo Haynes and Okome say about Mabel's character that it embodies "immense frightening power." The film condemns Mabel as a powerful woman. The perversion of her natural "roles" as mother and wife signifies her moral degeneracy" (cited in Garritano 2000:180). Such a position also stands to condemn the usurping of powers by Ijele and its connotation that is translated in the metaphorical frightening masquerade name which Ijele means even though customarily, it is only men and not women who wear masquerades and terrorize people with them. A name that invokes the concept of a masquerade helps to build Ijele's role in the story to assume a masculine trait of strength although it brings to bear the very fact that the name embodies her corrupt power of role reversal and vendetta character portrayal in *Omata Women.*

Song as Instrument for Judging Women as Evil in Nigerian Videos
The song becomes the personified judge on women's characters in the film. The song is used to draw relationships that help to enunciate the various icons of wickedness that women in this video are associated with. It is through the song that the representation of the men (husband) characters are enshrined with outstanding qualities as good and stable home builders as against the women whose lust for money and quest to be at the head of affairs in the family has put the society in disarray. It further facilitates the way women are represented in order to portray how their behaviours affect the male characters. Sometimes the song is given more emphasis through a voice-over which has words loudly spoken out to represent the various conditions which men with such women as Ijele and her vicious circle of friends face as their wives. For instance, Nkechi's husband Orimili's psychological state is captured through a voice-over which accompanies the sound track of the narrative above: "*if you marry a bad woman, everyday na wahala you go dey so so find yourself for bar on top of beer bottles.*" [Its translation is that if you have a bad wife, you would be having problems to contend with which would make you to result to taking alcohol] (*Omata Women*). The song and its voice-over is used to explain the transformation which has taken place in Nkechi's life. The visuals reveal that Nkechi travelled with Onwa to Port Harcourt for two days, and abandoned her matrimonial duties for prostitution. Upon return from his trip to the village, Nkechi's husband Orimili, discovers that his wife has been away for two days. The story portrays how worried he is that she has changed from the once caring mother into a carefree mother who can abandon her children to the care of his niece (Obiageli) for two days. Her absence means that women have abandoned their roles as home

builders and that it is the men as depicted in the narrative that the responsibilities of building the home has now been shifted to. This becomes a postcolonial critique to analyse how families are negotiating their responsibilities as a result of the changing society that builds tensions based on the quest for resources which takes women out of their responsibility as care givers. The implication is that the very tensions which have given rise to women's new responsibilities are thrown back to the family to deal with especially when children are not well brought up and both the family and the society have to suffer embarrassing consequences as a result of it.

The song and voice-over are deployed strategically to bring out Nkechi's deviant behaviour and to portray how that feeling induces Orimili to take alcohol. This explains how music and the voice-over in *Omata Women* functions as an authorial commentary particularly, as they correspond with scenes where women are depicted as naturalized evils of the society. Besides, it helps to draw a similarity between the Eve's and Jezebels or Delilah's of the Bible and the women of *Omata Women*, in terms of portraying how women can take their husbands away from their destinies. Nkechi's role as it changes from good to bad like Mabel's in *True Confession*, contradicts her formal position which like that of Moses was to lead women towards actualizing an ideal society but which she compromises for money. Her latter role echoes that which according to Garritano, is "equated with the unchecked greed and insatiable desire that has infected Nigerian culture with a rampant immorality, the very immorality Moses hoped to eradicate" (187).

Aesthetically, the song is embellished with Pidgin English, few Igbo language words and proverbs which give the film its local flavour. Its aesthetic relevance is that it helps to locate the setting of the story to be Onitsha, an Ibo town in eastern Nigeria. Within this town, there is always an admixture of Igbo, Pidgin English and Standard English in most people's conversations.

The imaginary roles of women in this study reflect those of *Dark Goddess* and *True Confession* which as Emenyi and Eko affirm "satisfies patriarchy and promotes expediency to the detriment of creating a sustaining vision of reality" (178). Thus, if real Nigerian women should be seen in their proper way, Nigerian video makers must take the challenge of representing society in films to suite reality. This avocation reiterates Olujinmi's that video filmmakers should "wake up and come out of the patriarchal dreams and fantasies" (125). For according to her, "there is no doubt that there may be some women who fit into the pictures painted in the films. However, these negligible cases should not be turned into a norm" (125). The constant representation of women in Nollywood videos in outrageous ways clearly denotes the anxieties and fears of male filmmakers for successful women in the society and that is where we make a clarion call to filmmakers to outgrow their biases and patriarchal ideologies to represent society just the way it is.

Conclusion
This paper has shown that women are portrayed in criminal and other evil tendencies with excessive or irrational devotions. This forms the basis of interrogating women portrayals as a social construction in Nollywood videos which has no significant relationship with how Nigerian women are. Indeed, the conflicting way of framing women from how real women are demeans them and is uncalled for. The reversals of the roles of men and women in the society and

rewriting women in ways which will lead them to be seen as evil portray women as the major cause of societal ills and subvert conventional cultures.

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Diplomacy and Emirate Formation: The Integration of the Igbomina into the Ilorin Emirate in the 19th Century

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Abstract

This paper examines the mode of integration of the Igbomina into the Ilorin emirate system in the light of the prevailing controversy surrounding the subject. Available oral and written sources of the historical account on the relationship between the two sub-groups are examined to see how much they could be relied upon as authentic historical sources. From various lines of argument adduced for and against diplomacy and conquest as the likely mode of integration of the Igbomina into Ilorin emirate system, it would appear that diplomacy was the probable mode of integration of the Igbomina into the Ilorin emirate system.

Introduction

The Igbomina could be described as a heterogeneous sub-group of the Yoruba who migrated to the present place of settlement from various locations and at different times between the 14th and 17th century A.D (Dada, 1985:1) They presently occupy the southeast of Ilorin within Longitude 8^0 and 9^0 North and Latitude 4^0 and 6^0 West (Adeyemi, 1984:7-8). Thus, the Igbominaland is bounded on the west by Ilorin, to the northeast are the Yagba while the south eastern part is occupied by the Ekiti. Igbomina's northern boundary is shared with the Nupe and the southern part is with the Yoruba of Osun State. While the largest concentration of Igbomina resides in Kwara State, a considerable proportion could be found in Osun State especially Ila Orangun, Oke-Ila and Ora Igbomina.

Although the Igbomina has a tradition of origin that attempts to explain the origin of their common language, culture and political institutions from their descent through a single ancestry, Oduduwa, they were never united under a single political authority (Atanda, 1973:132). Each of them was split into a large number of tiny political units. This perhaps more than any other factor influenced the pattern of resistance to various foreign intruders like the Nupe and the Fulani of Ilorin.

For the Igbomina, foreign domination started not with the British presence in the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, rather it began with the extension of Oyo suzerainty over the territory early in her history and continued with Nupe incursions and Ilorin imperial dominance (Ibiloye, 1994:27). With the establishment of imperial presence through the planting of colonies and appointment of agents called *Ajele* to oversee various Igbomina towns and villages, the domination of Igbomina by these African imperialists was complete and this was no less humiliating or distasteful than the British colonial presence in Nigeria. Igbominaland fell under the category of smaller kingdom allegorically described by scholars as constantly being menaced and subdued by the consuming imperial ambitions of its bigger

neighbours (Ibiloye, 1994:27). First in the series of her capitulation was her subordination under the hegemonious influence of Oyo at a period which cannot be easily determined, but however terminated with the revolt of Afonja in the early part of the 19th century. Then came the first phase of Nupe incursions which took place in the 18th century at a period when Oyo influence still dominated Igbomina but was however, dwindling as the ageing empire was at the terminal stage of her existence as a virile polity. The situation at this time could be described as one of overlapping imperial interests as the Etsu Nupe seemed to have seized control in those Igbomina villages where Oyo political control was no longer effective or relevant (Ibiloye, 1994:55-65).

Ilorin imperial dominance came in quick succession during the first half of the 19th century with the collapse Oyo and the successful take off of Ilorin Emirate. Contemporaneous with it was the second phase of Nupe/ Fulani intrusion into northern Igbomina country, which led to a permanent division of the land into two distinguishable sub-cultural units, the *Mosan* and *Moyee* (Dada, 1985: 24). While the mode of integration into each of these erstwhile kingdoms and empires (Oyo and Nupe) were never disputed, the case of Igbomina relation with Ilorin Emirate seemed to have been an exception to the general rule. Oral and written sources in Nupe and Igbominaland corroborate the claim that conquest was the mode of integration of Igbomina into Nupe kingdom and even the latter Nupe/ Fulani Emirate (Nadel, 1965:406-40). So also was the Ibadan *(Aganigan)* intrusion and foraging through Igbomina country confirmed by written and oral traditions (Ibiloye, 1994:73-74). However, the Igbomina claimed that they were never conquered by the Ilorin but were tricked into subordination through friendship of equal status translated into subservience with the passage of time (Ibiloye, 1994:73-74).

This age long controversy between the Igbomina and Ilorin on the mode of integration has generated very little interest in scholarly circles as only very few researchers have endeavoured to mention it as part of their research efforts or findings. Those who did at all did so very casually as if the subject does not deserve serious attention. However, it may neither be fair nor objective to dismiss this claim outright without subjecting it to rigorous historical scrutiny (Ibiloye, 1994:73-74).

This paper therefore examines the credibility or otherwise of Igbomina claim that they were not conquered but rather tricked into subordination by a friend and ally. The study examines the various sources of our knowledge of the history of Ilorin/Igbomina relation in the 19th century, both oral and written and the extent to which each could be absolutely relied upon as an objective and dependable historical source.

A Critique of the Current State of the Historiography on the Ilorin Emirate

It would not be out of place to conjecture that our present state of knowledge of the history of Ilorin/Igbomina relations has been passed down to us through Ilorin scholars or Ilorin influenced traveller's accounts. Travellers / explorers in the 19th century visited mainly major centres of political activities and their views, as reflected in their writings, were determined or greatly influenced by prejudices of their sources of information. Explorers like Mango Park, the Lander brothers (Richard and John) and others were known to have

visited Katunga (Oyo), Sokoto, Dahomey and wrote extensively mostly on centralised kingdoms to the neglect of the smaller non-centralised states.

Therefore, Ilorin perspectives could not but be reflected in most of the historical accounts currently in circulation. For instance, Ilorin not only enjoyed monopoly in Arabic literacy, through which most of such events were recorded most travellers' accounts also reflect a deep leaning to Ilorin version of the story (Ibn Bakri, nd). It should be noted also that travellers' accounts were also gathered from the metropolis, which constituted the main centre of political authority in the emirate (Clark, 1972 & Campbell, 1861).

Arabic manuscripts mostly originating from Ilorin or Ilorin influenced sources are not by any way better in this farrago of extreme bias for the Ilorin version of Igbomina's integration into the Ilorin Emirate. Thus, an extreme Islamic historiographical approach to issues which sees all things that are un-Islamic as bad and evil could not have treated Igbomina, the "pagan" any better than it did. Indeed, Igbomina's subordination could not have been through any other means except through Jihad to suppress the "infidel."

Therefore, most of the existing written sources on the nature of the relationship between Ilorin and Igbomina, especially those dating back to the 19th century (whether in Roman or Arabic manuscript) should be treated with extreme caution. They in most cases, represent only one side perception of the historical events they describe. They should therefore be subjected to thorough historical searchlight for proven authenticity and should not be taken at face value.

Diplomacy as a Weapon of War

Pre-colonial Nigerian societies have had to contend with the issues of integration to sustain themselves as viable polities for several centuries. As empires and kingdoms within the enclave grew in size and strength, smaller polities and states were incorporated into the expanding empires through either diplomacy or conquest. The concept of integration is so important in the transformation process of incorporating diverse ethnic groups into nation state that it has attracted various definitions from scholars. Doro and Stultz (1970: 171) see integration as the cumulative effect of individual allegiance to and identification with society and its goal. Related to this is Pye (1966: 65) definition which can be summarised as bridging the gap between groups by "subsuming" their narrow interests in terms of culture, language and ethnic affinity to the larger interest of the national community. However, for the purpose of this paper, we will accept the simple definition from Lee (1969) which describes integration as the incorporation of separate ethnic or religious elements of the population into a unified society.

Just as these definitions of integration may be adequate to modern nations, they are equally applicable to the developments in the Ilorin / Igbomina relations in the 19th century. The issue at stake here is whether the initial incorporation of the Igbomina into the Ilorin emirate system was achieved through act of diplomacy or war. Diplomacy, like warfare, was an instrument of state policy in the 19th century Ilorin Emirate Administration (Danmole, 1987:46). The art of diplomacy for which Ilorin was well known among the Yoruba was equally important to the ability of the emirate to survive. Indeed, the employment of diplomacy by rulers of Ilorin began in the early days of the emirate before the first emir had

even consolidated his position. Abd al-salami he says, used a combination of diplomacy and military force to deal with his rivals (Law, 19876:47). Whereas he used tact and diplomacy with Bako, the then Sarkin Gambari at Ilorin, he combined diplomacy with force against Solagberu, the Yoruba Muslim leader at Okesuna (Hermon-Hodge, 1929:68). Ilorin interfered in Nupe politics for more than four decades through diplomacy and where diplomacy failed, she resorted to military expeditions. In as much as Ilorin was interested in warfare she did not close the door to diplomatic avenues if such avenue would achieve the same objective.

The use of diplomacy, however, could sometimes be a veritable sign of weakness on the part of the user and a clear apprehension of the possibility of being overwhelmed by greater forces around. This could be clearly discerned in the pattern of alliances Ilorin entered into with neighbouring states in the face of perceived threats to her existence during the turbulent years of Yoruba civil wars in the 19th century (Danmole, 1987:47: Law, 1997: 296). So also in its relationship with the Igbomina, the use of diplomacy cannot be totally ruled out. Apart from the character traits that suggest the possibility of the use of "trick" (diplomacy), a few documentary evidences could be adduced which point to the use of diplomacy by Ilorin in its relation and mode of integration of the Igbomina into the emirate system. These references point to alliances between Ilorin and Igbomina potentates in the pre-emirate and the early years of the war that brought the emirate into being (Law, 1977:296).

For instance, it has been argued that Afonja at a point of desperation and in an attempt to ensure the success of his rebellion against the Alafin "formed an alliance with Olupo of Ajasse-Ipo, the principal ruler in Igbomina province of Oyo kingdom" (Law, 1977:250). By logical inference, such alliance and friendship was possibly transferred to subsequent authority at Ilorin succeeding to Afonja's position especially, in the face of shifting alliance that characterised the early years of Ilorin Emirate administration. Evidences abound that in the events that ultimately culminated in the termination of Afonja's reign at Ilorin, alliances were freely transferred from one group to another between the Fulani and Afonja groups.

An example was the support Solagberu, a close friend of Afonja, lent to the Fulani against his former friend (Johnson, 1976:203) in the light of the turbulent political atmosphere that pervaded the first three decades of the 19th century in Yorubaland. Therefore based on perception of where their interest could best be served, Igbomina people chose to ally themselves with the Fulani of Ilorin whom they perceived as a lesser evil relative to Ibadan. It was easy to reduce the weaker partner in such alliance to subordination in the face of general insecurity. Dada (1985:4) suggests that when Alimi took over from Afonja, the Igbomina people were with him. This could be interpreted to mean that there was a simple transfer of allegiance and friendship after the defeat of Afonja. Ajayi (1974:141) records that several chiefs who resisted subjugation under Ilorin chose to collaborate with it in their efforts to frustrate the rebirth of the old Oyo monarchy. Igbomina was probably one of such collaborators as there was no evidence of a single serious pitched battle between Ilorin and Igbomina to demonstrate objection to imposition of alien rule.

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Similar allusion was made to friendship between Elese Abidolu, the founder of the present ruling dynasty in Igbaja, and Alfa Alimi, founder of the Fulani emirate at Ilorin. Abidolu was said to be a great friend of Alimi and that Abidolu fought several wars on Ilorin's side on account of this friendship. The friendship, the source goes further, led to the conversion of Abidolu to Islam and his being turbaned in 1883 as the first Muslim Elese of Igbaja. It was this friendship that was probably translated into subordination with passage of time by subsequent Ilorin Emirs who did not know the basis of the friendship between Abidolu and Alfa Alimi. It was most probable that the spirit of these alliances and friendship between the various Igbomina groups and Ilorin referred to above placed Igbomina within the fold of the Ilorin / Ekiti Parapo confederate camp against Ibadan during the Kiriji and Erin-Mope wars (Ibiloye, 1994:103).

This was another evidence of co-operation between Ilorin and Igbomina people in the turbulent years of the Yoruba civil war and it is only logical to assume that the Igbomina were willing ally in all these military adventures considering the frequency of their occurrence. If the joint exploits were not voluntary the occasion of Ilorin's defeat by Ibadan at Erin-Mope would have been a most auspicious time for Igbomina to revolt and stage a mutiny in the war camp or even betray the common cause. This was common in Yorubaland throughout the 19th century. Absolute loyalty and commitment, such as demonstrated by the Igbomina, could not have been possible in a situation of involuntary service or subservience. One is then tempted to suspect that what governed Ilorin/Igbomina relationship in the 19th century was more complex than a mere lord / vassal relationship secured through forcible integration.

Several oral evidences abound in Igbominaland, which refute Ilorin's claim to military victory over Igbomina. It is needless preoccupying ourselves with naming all sources relating to this subject. Indeed, nearly all sources from Igbomina refute subjugation while those originating from Ilorin confirmed it (Fakeye, Dada & Ekinrin, 1978). The complex process of transforming a relationship to vassalage may not be that obvious to the modern historian. The descendants of Abidolu of Igbaja, the affable friend of Alimi of Ilorin became slaves to the succeeding authority at Ilorin. If the above premise is accepted, then Igbomina servitude was rightly a logical consequence of a friendship turned sour.

Integration through Conquest

Sound and plausible as these arguments in favour of diplomacy are, they are difficult to be sustained against the available and overwhelming documentary evidences that point to integration through conquest. One of such clear reference to conquest explained that after the overthrow of Afonja in Ilorin, Alimi was said to have incorporated all northern Yoruba towns one after the other into the Ilorin Emirate (Anene, 1970:151-152). Of course this assertion contradicts other sources which believe that Alimi himself did not fight to expand the Emirate and that responsibility for this rested with his son Abdul Salami who was regarded as the first emir.

Details of numerous references to conquest of the Igbomina during the reign of Abdul Salami are also contained in Adeyemi (1984:37). Also Elphinstone (1921) explains how Abdul Salami declared war upon the whole of Yorubaland and how Igbomina clan were conquered. Olupo of Ajasse-Ipo was said to have made submission to Ali Balogun Gambari and Ajia

Gaju, the two representatives of the Ilorin invading army. Orangun of Ila was over powered and taken prisoner to Ilorin together with other Igbomina chiefs. They were later released and allowed to return to their countries. Interestingly, these authors rely on Adeyemi (1984) for their submissions.

Significantly, this present study also disagrees with one aspect of Adeyemi's work, which refers, in the affirmative to the "laconic" presentation by Ahmed Ibn Bakri Kokoro, of how the emir (Abdul Salami) sent an army which routed the Igbomina in three days (Adeyemi, 1984:37). Ibn Bakri (an Ilorin Islamic historian) wrote his book during the reign of Emir Sulaiman (1896-1915), precisely in 1912, over eighty years after the event he described. As an Ilorin scholar who was writing from a prejudiced Ilorin perspective, his view could not but be coloured by prejudices natural to his circumstances and environment. The author himself confessed to the fact that he was writing from established tradition in Ilorin. He wrote, inter-alia "And I shall mention in this book what I have heard and what I remember, what I witness in (my own) time" (Ibn Bakri, 1912:1). The authenticity of such remembered eyewitness account, juxtaposed with established tradition derived from biased Islamic texts cannot be taken as laconic or gospel truth as Adeyemi seems to suggest in his presentation of evidence to affirm that the integration of Igbomina into the Ilorin Emirate was through conquest.

Similarly, Ibn Bakri (1912) could not have been an eyewitness to the events of 1831, the probable year of the purported conquest of the Igbomina, which was about eighty years from the time of his writing. Nor had the Igbomina, any unified central army in the 1830's that could be made a target of attack and routed in three days by Abdul Salami (Ibiloye, 1994:106). Even if the conquest of the area was made possible and easy by the sparse population and a general lack of centralised army and administration, absolute subjugation could only be achieved through military operation conducted from village to village. That should definitely take more than three days to achieve considering the size and topography of the area.

As evident in most of the referenced sources and the extent of Ilorin Emirate administrative coverage, Ilorin military activities must have been limited to southern Igbomina towns such as Igbo-Owu, Idofian, Ila-Orangun, and Omu- Aran, most of which either quietly submitted to or collaborated with the invader with little resistance because of the inherent advantages of active co-operation rather than resistance. Definitely northern Igbomina towns such as Oke-Ode, Share, Oro-Ago Ile-Ire and Ora were left to the conquering forces of the Nupe Emirate. Therefore, it is out of place to claim that the entire Igbominaland was "routed in three days by Abdul Salami"

It is also pertinent to mention that if the eyewitness chronicles of the Nigerian civil war (1967-1970) were anything to go by, it is clear that eyewitness account could be extremely unreliable. The civil war veteran who wrote on the events that they actively participated in their various autobiographies, have clearly demonstrated that it could be extremely difficult, even in modern time, for eyewitnesses to out-grow the tendency for self glorification. Thus,

19th century pro-Ilorin scholars could but be prejudiced in their various accounts on the patterns of intergroup relations between Ilorin and its neighbours.

Conclusion

This paper argues that diplomacy major part in the process of Igbomina's integration into the Ilorin Emirate system. Indeed, if the claim by the Igbomina not to have been conquered by Ilorin was borne out of sheer ethnic chauvinism, then it should be expected that such a denial syndrome could as well have applied to other similar relationships between the Igbomina on the one hand, and other groups such as Oyo, Nupe, and Ibadan on the other. The series of invasions of Igbomina by these groups with the exception of Ilorin are confirmed by Igbomina's oral traditions. It is in the light of these that this research concludes that the mode of Igbomina integration into the Ilorin Emirate system was rather more complex than just a sweep of military adventure. Diplomacy definitely played a pivotal role.

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A Historical Overview of the Economic Foundations of States in the Nile Valley Region

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Abstract

This paper discusses the nature of the traditional economies of states located in the Nile Valley region. Records have shown that all of these states operated a command economy, where the government had a firm grip over the economies. In Ethiopia, a new dimension was introduced as the church was also a major player in the economy. The paper also reveals that the states of Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia practised a blend of mixed agriculture i.e. animal husbandry and farming. Furthermore, some of these states engaged in trade, taxation, slavery, slave trade, forced labour, and manufacturing. The paper concludes that the various economies have since transformed from their traditional nature to modern economies still leaving room for accelerated advancement.

Introduction

The economic foundation of states in the Nile Valley region from its traditional state is the central theme of discussion in this paper. The states under consideration are Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Sudan. Available records have shown that agriculture was the mainstay of these economies, and it also formed the basis of other economic activities, such as trade and manufacturing, especially in Egypt. Furthermore, agricultural practices in these states entailed farming and animal husbandry. Climatic conditions also played a major role in the type of agriculture practiced in these states; states such as Ethiopia and Eritrea could not engage in extensive farming activities as a result of their climate and general topography. Although, the nature of the economies of the various states in the Nile Valley region was generally agrarian, yet it could not be considered to have had uniform structures. Our attention shall now be focused on each of the states mentioned above.

Egypt

The economy of Egypt during the pharaonic period could be described as an ancient command economy (Nefertiti, 2008). This means that specialised bureaucracies monitored and controlled much of the economic activities that occurred in Egypt. Since agriculture was the mainstay of the ancient Egyptian economy, the allocation of land, assessment of expected crops, and collection of agricultural produce as taxes, storage and redistribution of agricultural products were done by the special bureaucracies. Perhaps, the only freedom, which the farmer had, was his choice of what to plant.

Important crops grown in Egypt were wheat, barley, lettuce, beans onions, grapes, melons, cucumbers, and the castor oil plant *(Ricinus communis)* from the fruit of which oil which was used for many purposes was pressed. The natural river irrigation shaped the early landscape of ancient Egypt. This also aided the cultivation of crops such that drainage was not required for the valley to become liveable because it might constitute some problems by washing away planted

and growing crops in the lower lying region of the delta which, more often than not, were marshy lands. Thus, with the aid of natural flooding and draining of the floodplain, the annual inundation allowed for a single crop-season over two-thirds of the alluvial ground (Nefertiti, 2008).

Although the practice of agriculture in ancient Egypt and other states in the Nile Valley region was not mechanised, the farmers understood and adopted simple farming techniques, such as ploughing with the aid of animals, which sustained that sector of the economy. The Egyptian plough was lightly built and tied to the horns of cattle but, when animals are not available, humans pull the plough instead. Furthermore, the Egyptian farmer made effective use of the hoe in loosening the soil (Ikpe, 2003: 226).

On the whole, ancient Egyptian farmers could be accurately described as accomplished farmers, who were ingenious with a system of irrigation which prevented the salinity of the soil. However, when compared to modern-day agricultural practice, one would not be wrong to argue that agricultural techniques in ancient Egypt were not very efficient. Improvements on production techniques were rare and implements remained traditional. Furthermore, the breeding of livestock was haphazard because, more often than not, cattle were bred for ploughing purposes.

Aside from agriculture, other sectors of the ancient Egyptian economy included trade and manufacturing. Trade became a feature of the ancient Egyptian economy during the fourth century BC (Grant, 1996: 50). The Egyptians engaged in both domestic and foreign trade. However, because the ancient Egyptian society was one in which most people engaged and made a living from agriculture, surpluses were small, thus, trade was limited.

The Egyptians traded with countries around the Mediterranean Sea, Aegean Sea and the Red Sea. Silver, iron, cedar logs, horses, ivory, copper, cattle, leopard skins, and spices formed the bulk of items brought from other countries into Egypt, while the main products taken or bought from Egypt included gold, wheat, barley, and papyrus sheets (Grant, 1996: 53). It is important to mention here that overseas trade was mainly in the hands of royal emissaries. This was largely because the needs of the Egyptian farming population were basic; they needed grain, dried fish, vegetables, some linen for a simple loincloth and mud bricks to build a hut. In this regard, Egyptian farmers produced their own food without any plan to produce for the market and got mud from the nearby river bank (Nefertiti, 2008). Unlike the Greeks and Romans, the Egyptians did not see trade as a legitimate way to amass wealth and get rich; hence they had no merchant class. Those who could be described as merchants were people who were simply employed "...to find and deliver merchandise; they were paid for their labour but did not expect any additional profit" (Nefertiti, 2008). Depending on the wealth of royal emissaries, they could trade for all of the necessities and wide range of luxuries.

During the period under review, the Egyptians had not invented the use of coin and paper currency as a medium of exchange; hence, trade was by barter and this continued even after coin money was introduced during the second half of the first millennium BC. However, the impact which the introduction of coin and paper currency had on the domestic economy and trade in general was negligible until the Roman times when the effects became widely noticeable (Grant, 1996:54).

Some rudimentary form of manufacturing also took place in ancient Egypt with women playing a very significant role. It is important to state here that there were no legal restrictions on the participation of women in economic activities in the ancient Egyptian economy. Most of the women could and actually possessed properties, they were fully engaged in commerce, borrowed and loaned money, and above all, a woman could inherit and operate a large, wealthy estate. Thus, it was not strange to discover that division of labour existed between men and women in the practice of basic manufacturing in ancient Egypt. For instance, while the men grew flax plants (a plant that is made into thread and woven into linen fabric), their women spun and wove them into linen.

Basically, manufacturing activities in the ancient Egyptian economy was largely carried out by families that produced raw materials, which indicates subsistence just as in the practice of agriculture. A sizeable proportion of cultivated grain was processed for beer production and, across the country, there were basic factories that produced beer, as well as cloth, and dried fish in the quantity that sustained the economy. There were also bakeries where breads were produced. Overall, it would not be wrong to assert that the ancient Egyptians had a thriving economy that met their needs.

Moving forward to the more recent times, from about 1259 AD, the agrarian nature of the Egyptian economy continued but suffered some neglect during the era of the Mamelukes. Not only did the Mamelukes neglect the agricultural sector of the Egyptian economy, they also imposed heavy taxes on the peasantry and nearly bled the country white. At this juncture, it must be mentioned that the Egyptian peasants were exploited by the Mamelukes with the active cooperation of the Ottoman Sultan of Turkey, who was only interested in the financial returns made by the Mamelukes to him.

The arrival of Napoleon Bonaparte to Egypt in 1789 marked a new turn in the Egyptian economy. Napoleon Bonaparte did not only revive the irrigation system, which was very crucial to the growth and development of agriculture, he also reduced the burden of heavy taxation imposed on the peasants by the Mamelukes. This, he did in order to be accepted by the ordinary citizens of Egypt (Al-Heji, 1996: 162). With the exit of the French from Egypt, Muhammad Ali assumed the mantle of leadership in Egypt and improved on the irrigation systems, trade and commerce. Perhaps, the sector of the economy, where Muhammad Ali left his footprints on the sand of time was the manufacturing and industrial sectors. In this sector, Muhammad Ali desired to be independent of Europe but made use of European technicians to achieve his aims. He established a steel and iron foundry, as well as ship building plants erected in Alexandria. Modern textile mills were also established in various parts of Egypt (Wilber, 1967: 282).

Although, Muhammad Ali's industrial project did not succeed as he had wished, he should be credited for modernising the economy of Egypt and laying a foundation for his successors to follow. On the whole, it can be safely argued that the economy of Egypt has grown from its traditional state to a modern-day economy.

Ethiopia

Like Egypt, agriculture has been the mainstay of the Ethiopian economy. Due to its natural environment, the people of Ethiopia had an advantage over the other states of the Nile Valley region because the country has a diversity of soil, climatic altitude, and a long planting season.

The combination of these factors made it possible for farmers to cultivate a variety of crops. The general topography of the country also determined the regional distribution of crops planted and cultivated, hence the people were able to meet their domestic needs and also kept pace with expanding demand (Luther, 1958: 58).

During the period under consideration, aside from agriculture, taxation also formed a cornerstone on which the economy rested. The administration imposed taxes on the people for the upkeep of the government. Furthermore, the principle of serfdom was fully operational in the old Ethiopian kingdom. This meant that the peasants surrendered one-third or more of their produce to either the Emperor or the Church, who were the principal land owners. In addition, the land owners also collected the traditional tithe and a host of other taxes. Provincial Governors collected tributes, tithes and other items, such as horses, clothes and gold on behalf of the Emperor. However, the Provincial Governors were allowed to deduct the cost of running the provincial administration from the collections before remitting the remaining to the Emperor (Luther, 1958: 20).

As was the practice in Egypt, a level of command economy also existed in Ethiopia. Slavery and forced labour was a common feature of the Ethiopian economy as both went hand in hand. It may be a surprise to many scholars of Ethiopian history and observers that the Ethiopian Christian and Muslim population approved the existence and practice of slavery and slave trade within the Ethiopian society until 1935 when the Italians tried to occupy Ethiopia (Lipsky, 1962: 245-247). Thus, it will not be wrong to state here that the existence of slavery, serfdom and forced labour contributed largely to the development of agricultural practices in Ethiopia.

As the mainstay of the Ethiopian economy, agriculture comprised farming and animal husbandry. A majority of the population were involved in subsistence farming, consuming most of their products while surpluses were disposed off through the barter system. As was obtained in Egypt, the Ethiopians also used the plough and hoe in their farming activities and in both cases were complemented with cattle and human labour. It was only at the beginning of the 20th century that the use of modern equipment became a feature of Ethiopian agriculture (Gartler, 1982: 29).

Crops planted and cultivated by Ethiopian farmers included coffee, barley, wheat, maize, and sorghum. Cotton was grown but in limited quantities just like the oilseed. Other crops were citrus fruits, bananas, avocado peers, grapes, mangoes, strawberries, pineapples, to mention but a few. These crops were grown in various parts of the country. However, the most widely grown food crop in the highlands was *teff* – a variety of grain, which remains a staple food item in Ethiopia till date (Lipsky, 1962: 254).

As mentioned earlier, animal husbandry was also a feature of Ethiopian agriculture. Livestock, such as cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, horses, mules and camels were reared and bred in various parts of Ethiopia. The animals had economic values because they served as a source of obtaining meat, dairy products, wool, hides and skin. While the donkey, horse, mule and camels served as pack animals and also as means of transportation. The cattle ranks first in socio-economic importance because ownership of this animal was regarded as a sign of wealth in the northern part of the country while, in the south, the cattle was regarded as a sacred animal, which must not

be eaten (Luther, 1958: 89). Sheep and goats provided the main source of obtaining hides and skins.

It is expedient to state here that local markets in Ethiopia, during the period under consideration up to the 20th century thrived. Trade in animal, hides and skins served as a major source of foreign exchange to the country. A general survey of the Ethiopian economy towards the beginning of the 20th century has shown that economic activities were geared towards meeting its domestic needs with minimal export activities. International trade was barely non-existent in Ethiopia before the war it fought with Italy.

However, over the years, the Ethiopian authorities have adopted modern economic principles and have tried to modernise economic activities in the country. This effort notwithstanding, the agricultural sector has been suffering from frequent drought and poor cultivation practices. It is worthy of note that till date, under Ethiopia's land tenure system, the government owns all land and provides long-term leases to the tenants; this system has continued to hamper growth in the industrial sector as entrepreneurs are unable to use land as collateral for securing loans (Luther, 1958: 137-139). Finally, it will not be wrong to assert that although the Ethiopian economy has responded to transformation, the frequent drought has left the economy gasping for breath.

Eritrea

Located in the Horn of Africa near Ethiopia, the country is bounded in the south by Ethiopia, in the west by Sudan, in the north and east by the Red Sea (Legun & Lee, 1977: 20). The country was formally integrated into the kingdom of Ethiopia under a federal arrangement by the United Nations Organisation on September 15, 1952. Before the integration, the country was administered by Great Britain for eleven years. At this point, it is pertinent to mention that the country known as Eritrea today was in 600 AD under the kingdom of Axum (Treraskis, 1960: 50).

The nature and structure of economic activities in Eritrea during the 18th and 19th centuries were basically traditional. Climatic conditions affected agricultural activities in Eritrea, just as in Ethiopia. The lowlands were generally hot and dry, while rainfall was barely adequate except for a small area north of Asmara. The Red Sea plain has an intense hot desert climate, and the country has only one river, the River Setit, which is located on the southern frontier with Ethiopia, and flows for approximately three months in a year.[23] Eritrean land is largely uncultivable because most of it is used for grazing by herders, while farming was not a viable venture because the farmers had to contend with stony soil. Again, deforestation and the consequent problem of erosion coupled with non-availability of irrigation channels made more Eritreans to take to nomadic activities other than farming.

In the early 19th century, Eritrea was occupied by the Italians and, henceforth, the country became a channel through which manufactured goods from Italy reached Ethiopia, Sudan and Arabia. From these countries, the Italians obtained some raw materials needed by Italian industries. Thus, Eritrea became virtually dependent on Italy as a source of obtaining manufactured goods from Europe. However, the tide of history changed in Eritrea from May 1941, when British forces took over the country after running over Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia, thereby taking over the full control of economic activities in the region.

Economic activities in Eritrea during the British period were not much different from what was obtained during the period when the Italians were in control. Available records have shown that the British continued from where the Italians stopped such that from about the middle of 1941, the few industrial outlets that were in existence in Eritrea commenced operations again and items manufactured by these outlets included soap, beer, and matches, to mention but a few. Most of these products were just enough to meet the needs of the domestic market but towards the end of 1943, a few quantity of each of these items became available for export to neighbouring countries (Treraskis, 1960: 52-60). However, by 1945, most of the industrial outlets in Eritrea had closed down because they could not compete with products from European factories. This was the situation until the country became a part of Ethiopia under a federal arrangement in 1952.

After decades of being an integral part of Ethiopia, Eritrea declared unilateral independence on 24 May 1993 from Ethiopia. This led to a bitter and long drawn war. Since independence, the country has been faced with series of economic problem being a small and poor country. Like the economy of other nations in the Nile Valley region, the economy of the country is still based on subsistence agriculture with 80% of the population involved in farming and animal rearing. The Ethiopian-Eritrean war that occurred between 1998 and 2000, caused severe damage, and wreaked havoc on the Eritrean economy (Fukui & Markakis, 1994: 218).

Since the war ended, the government of Eritrea has maintained a firm grip on the economy by insisting on, and expanding the use of the military and party-owned businesses to execute Eritrea's socio-economic development agenda. The delayed demobilisation of farmers from the military along with the continued experience of erratic rainfall has kept agricultural production well below average. On the whole, Eritrea's economic future depends upon its ability to find long-term sustainable solutions to problems, such as illiteracy, unemployment, and low skills. Its economic development also depends on the willingness of the leaders to open its economy to private sector initiatives so that expertise and the needed financial impetus to boost the economy can flow into the country from overseas.

Somalia

Like Eritrea, Somalia is also located in the Horn of Africa. The basis of Somalia's economy during the 18th and 19th centuries was agriculture. This comprised subsistence farming and much of animal husbandry. Animals reared in Somalia include camels, cattle, sheep, goats and horses. While slaves were not allowed to own horses, wealth and status in the country were measured by the number of horses and other livestock each man or household kept. In the northern part of the country, camels were the most important animals and a rich stock owner could have as many as a hundred camels in his herd (Lewis, 1955a: 282-290).

In the southern part of Somalia, particularly among the Hauriya, Rahanirein and Digil, cattle remained the most important livestock, although the people still kept other animals, such as goats, horses, and donkeys, which served other purposes. The cattle, in particular, were kept for its economic and agricultural value. Livestock owners exchanged milk and other dairy products for grains and other produce from the cultivators. During the period under consideration, cultivation of agricultural produce was best done in the south than in the north. This is because the southern region was less arid compared to the north. Crops produced in the south include

cereals, beans, sesame, cotton, durra, and banana, to mention a few. It is important to note that these products were cultivated by the ethnic groups in the south according to the texture of their soil. Millet and maize were produced mainly by the people of the north (Lewis, 1965b: 55). The people of Somalia also practised fishing and hunting. Fishing activities took place mainly in the coastal waters of the north, while hunting was practised wherever games existed.

The people of Somalia also engaged in exchange. Thus, it was not surprising to discover that this exchange activity assumed a higher dimension, when the Indians and Arab traders arrived in the coastal waters of Somalia during the 19th century to purchase slaves and other items from the interior of Somalia. The trade in slaves continued until it was wiped out by the British towards the end of the 19th century. Economic activities in Somalia assumed a new dimension in the early 20th century when the British and the French occupied different parts of the country and took effective control of economic affairs in their areas of domain.

For about three decades now, Somalia's economic fortunes have been driven by its deep political divisions. The northern area has declared its independence as "Somaliland," the central area, Puntland, is a self-declared autonomous state, while the remaining southern portion is riddled with the struggles of rival factions. The situation notwithstanding, agriculture remains the most important sector of the economy with livestock accounting for about 40% of the gross domestic product and about 65% of export earnings. The ongoing civil disturbances and clan rivalries have made it difficult, if not extremely impossible, to introduce a broad-based economic development plan for the country.

Sudan

Sudan, also located in the Nile Valley region, occupies the largest landmass in Africa. The nature and structure of the Sudanese economy starting from the Funj period was basically traditional. The landmass of Sudan was traversed by a number of trade routes. Among the routes were one from the south to the north linking Sennar with Egypt, another was from the west to the east linking Darfur with Suakin (O'Fahley & Spaulding, 1974: 30). Commercial activities in the eastern part of Sudan were quite different from what was obtainable in the central region, yet contact and communication among the people was made possible by the various trade routes that linked the communities together. Thus, the differences in commercial activities that existed in several parts of the Sudan were harmonised by the numerous trade routes that were kept busy by caravans moving from one point to another. This situation made trade a flourishing venture, bringing people from different locations, such as Darfur, Egypt, and Arbaji together for commerce (holt, 1969: 14).

In most cases, market towns developed along the trade routes especially around the Salima and Kharija Oases. Traders bought Sudanese products such as millet, cotton, slaves, etc (Barbour, 1961: 1090. It is important to mention here that some of the slaves were used as domestic servants, field workers and armed bodyguards within Sudanese territory, while some were taken to far places, such as Egypt and the Arabian Peninsula. Slaves were taken mainly from Darfur, which is located in the southwest of the country.

During the Turco-Egyptian regime in the Sudan, some economic changes were introduced, taxes were reduced and some duties paid on goods before the incursion of the Turco-Egyptian forces were abolished. Land abandoned during the revolt against the invasion became cultivable again.

People who left the country were persuaded to return to their various villages and re-engage themselves in their former economic activities. The Blue and the White Nile facilitated economic activities in the Sudan. The Nile did not only serve as a source of water for domestic uses, it also served as a source of getting irrigation water for the farmlands, especially in the northern part of the country. Today, Sudan still faces formidable economic problems as a result of its seemingly intractable civil strife. Agriculture remains Sudan's most important sector, employing 80% of the workforce and contributing 39% of the gross domestic product (Wai, 1993).

However, most farms still depend on rain for adequate watering of crops and this has made such farms to be susceptible to drought. On the whole, it may be difficult to experience sustainable economic growth in the Sudan due to chronic instability resulting from the long civil war between the north and the southern part of the country, ethnic cleansing in Darfur, adverse weather, and unstable and low prices of agricultural products in the world market which contributed to ensuring that a greater part of the population continues to live below the poverty line.

Conclusion

This paper has given us an insight into the economic foundations of states located in the Nile Valley region. On the whole, we have seen that subsistence agriculture comprising farming and animal husbandry formed the mainstay of economic activities of these states. Furthermore, some rudimentary form of manufacturing also existed in virtually all the states. Trade and commerce also was another important feature of the economic activities of the people of this region. The barter system facilitated exchange before the introduction of modern currency as a medium of exchange.

The existence of slavery and slave trade in these states showed that their economies were not completely isolated from the world economy during the period under consideration. Furthermore, most of the economies could be safely classified as command economies due to excessive government intervention in economic activities. More significantly, the incursion of foreign powers into the states of the Nile Valley region marked a watershed in their economic activities and development. As from that period, western economic ideals and practices became a permanent feature of the states, while exploitation of natural resources by European firms became more noticeable. However, the various degrees of civil wars, ethnic cleansing, and factionalism that bedevilled some of the states, like Sudan, Eritrea and Somalia have made it impossible for sustainable economic activities to take place.

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