

Africa's Many Divides and Africa's Future

Africa's Many Divides and Africa's Future:

*Pursuing Nkrumah's Vision
of Pan-Africanism
in an Era of Globalization*

Edited by

Charles Quist-Adade and Vincent Dodoo

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Dr Charles Quist-Adade, Department of Sociology, KPU
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PREFACE

DR. CHARLES QUIST-ADADE

CONFERENCE CO-ORGANIZER AND CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

From September 21–23, 2012, Kwantlen Polytechnic University (KPU) and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) hosted the 2nd Biennial Kwame Nkrumah International Conference (KNIC2) at the KNUST campus in Kumasi, Ghana. The conference was a sequel to the very successful SSHRC-funded first Kwame Nkrumah International Conference, held at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Summer 2010, which attracted more than 200 participants globally. The theme for the inaugural conference, which marked the Centenary Birthday Anniversary of “Africa’s Man of the Millennium,” was “From Neo-Colonization to Neo-Liberal Globalization: The Political and Intellectual Legacies of Kwame Nkrumah.”

The theme for KNIC2 was “Africa’s Many Divides and Africa’s Future,” and it targeted international and Canadian scholars. The presenters included academics as well as members of non-governmental organizations and civic society organizations (NGOs and CSOs).

KNIC2 was organized by the Sociology Department of KPU and the Political Science Department of KNUST. KNIC2 attracted worldwide interest and brought a global focus to the economic, cultural, social and political issues that African countries and Africans face in the twenty-first century.

As its theme, “Africa’s Many Divides and Africa’s Future,” indicates, KNIC2’s primary objective was to provide an avenue for the creation and sharing of knowledge on ways to bridge Africa’s many divides and to break Africa’s cycle of underdevelopment.

“If in the past the Sahara divided us, now it unites us,” Kwame Nkrumah declared some fifty years ago. Keenly aware of Africa’s many artificial divides, Nkrumah was determined to lead a revolution that would bridge them. One way to achieve this goal, Nkrumah proposed, was a continental pan-African government, which would provide the African people with the opportunity to pool and marshal their enormous real and potential economic, human and natural resources for the optimal

development of their continent. A continental union government, Nkrumah was convinced, would ensure that Africa ended the divisions created by the trilogy of the enslavement, colonization and neo-colonization of Africans. Nkrumah was concerned by other divisions as well, specifically those created by time/history, nature and above all Africans themselves, such as ethnic/racial and religious discrimination, classism, sexism and ageism as well as atavistic and backward traditional practices, including “tribalism” and patriarchy.

Nkrumah had long predicted that unless Africans formed a political and economic union to address the continent’s acute problems, the raging “revolutions” in the north of the continent, religious and ethnic strife and civil wars in other parts of Africa were inevitable. He warned that unless urgent steps were taken to bridge Africa’s divides, Africans would be warring among themselves as their detractors hid behind the scenes, pulling “vicious wires” to cut “each other’s throats.” For him, these upheavals are all masked economic “wars.” In other words, these wars and unrests are struggles over scarce economic resources and scrambles to control political power. Religion and “tribalism” are mere fronts for deep-seated grievances over economic deprivation.

Topics discussed included: The Northern Africa-Southern Africa divide; the linguistic divide; the class divide; the ethnic divide; the ideological-political divide; the gender and sexuality divides; the heterosexuality/homosexuality divide; the ability/disability divide, the generational divide; the religious divides; the rural/urban divide; the afro-pessimism/afro-optimism divide; the continental Africa-diaspora/Africa divide; the intellectual/non-intellectual divide; the elitism/non-elitism divide; the Global South/Global North divide; the Cold War ideological (Soviet-East/American-West) divide; the post-Cold War divide(s); the slave-raiders/sellers and the enslaved divide; and the rhetoric (theory)/action (practice) divide.

Scholars of all stripes agree that peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sound economic management are pre-conditions for ending the economic marginalization of Africa. But this is where the agreement ends. Scholarship on post-colonial Africa is riveted by several interconnected discursive debates on the historical, current and future trajectories of the continent. The debates reflect two general politico-ideological positions: (1) the discourse of Afro-pessimism versus the discourse of Afro-optimism; and (2) the discourse of looking inward (internalist) versus the discourse of looking outward (externalist) (Bourenane 1992). Briefly, Afro-pessimists insist that African underdevelopment is self-induced through inept, autocratic and kleptocratic leadership, and that

Western aid does more harm than good to the continent (Ayittey 1992; 1998; Kaplan 1994). Afro-optimists, on the other hand, argue that Africa's current parlous state is attributable to centuries of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism (TSCN) (Quist-Adade 2001), and that the West has a moral obligation to right the wrongs of the past (of slavery and colonialism) and to end its continuing neo-colonial policies in Africa if the continent is to have any hope to develop. The "Afro-pessimism/Afro-optimism divide" also reflects diametrically opposed positions on pan-Africanism. Afro-pessimists dismiss pan-Africanism as a chimera, a utopian pipe dream, while Afro-optimists, like Kwame Nkrumah, see in pan-Africanism the antidote to African underdevelopment (Mbeki 1999). Between the Afro-pessimists and Afro-optimists are the Afro-realists, who temper pessimism with healthy doses of optimism (Gordon & Wolpe 1998). While they take into account the weight of Africa's sordid colonial history and the 500-year vestiges of the TSCN, as well as the current lopsided global economic system, they also account for African agency—the creative energies of Africans to overcome at least some of their problems.

Nkrumah's Continuing Relevance

Nkrumah was ahead of his time, a political prophet, as many of his pessimistic cautions about the fate of the African continent have proven to be true (Davidson 1973). Four decades since his death, the ideas and issues for which Nkrumah lived and fought and about which he wrote continue to reverberate across the continent. In his controversial book *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, Nkrumah denounced the rampaging nature of multi-national companies operating on the continent, as well as Africa's dependency on aid, its debt and its increasing poverty in the absence of greater economic and political integration (Biney 2008). As Mazrui (2004) points out, Nkrumah's book, like Lenin's more famous *Imperialism: The Last Stage of Capitalism*, identified the negative side of globalization. *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism* was published when Kwame Nkrumah was the President of Ghana, the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence from colonial rule. He had come to the sad conclusion that his country had moved from colonial state to neo-colonial country after the euphoria and optimism of the heady years of independence. Like the rest of the countries in the tri-continent of Africa, Asia and Latin America, now known as the Global South, Ghana was a neo-colonial state instead of the full-blooded independent country that the independence leaders had envisioned. No doubt, the heady years of

independence were imbued with bold ideas and projects to break away entirely from the colonial yoke. But as Nkrumah would explain in his book and post-coup writings, this was not to be. In fact, one would say that Nkrumah and his fellow independence leaders became managers of a neo-colonial project in the scheme of the grand neo-imperialism of things (Quist-Adade 2012, 144).

Among the innumerable ways of neo-colonialist exploitation (read—neo-liberal globalization), Nkrumah delineates and emphasizes the following: (1) the conclusion of commerce and navigation treaties; (2) agreements for economic co-operation; (3) the right to meddle in internal finances, including currency and foreign exchange, (4) lowering trade barriers in favour of the donor country's goods and capital; (5) protecting the interests of private investments; (6) the determination of how the funds are to be used; (7) forcing the recipient to set up counterpart funds; (8) supplying raw materials to the donor; and (9) using the majority of such funds to buy goods from the donor nation (Quist-Adade 2012, 146).

Nkrumah's analysis of neo-colonialism is classic. It is not only relevant for understanding the dynamics and logics of the current processes of our post-Cold War world; it offers a clear trajectory and a lens for viewing and understanding neo-colonialism in the twenty-first century. Neo-liberal globalization is a continuation of twentieth-century neo-colonialism. Neo-liberal globalization is simply old wine in a new bottle. Thus, the conference offered a unique opportunity to contextualize Nkrumah's pan-Africanist agenda within the neo-liberal global project and against the backdrop of the current global economic and political ferment.

For Nkrumah, African unity was the first requisite for defeating neo-colonialism. He considered African unity a precondition for the survival of Africa and Africans. In the present era of neo-liberal globalization and unbridled capitalist expansion, Nkrumah's socio-political and economic thought continues to have relevance to a new generation of scholars and African people around the world (Biney 2008).

Who Was Nkrumah?

One hundred years ago, in the small village of Nkroful in the Western region of Ghana, a child was born. The event passed, as in the case of many children, as an ordinary event. Like many African families, the parents of this child did not even take note of the date on which he was born. Later, in his autobiography, Nkrumah stated that it was with some difficulty that he could pinpoint his birth date: September 21, 1909. As fate would have it, Kwame Nkrumah, the man his admirers called "Osagyefo,"

(the Redeemer) left our shore to join the ancestors when he succumbed to cancer on a cold, Romanian hospital bed in 1972.

Born into a humble smith's family, Nkrumah was to become one of the most illustrious makers of modern Africa, and perhaps the most ardent, consistent advocate of the unity of the black race after Marcus Garvey. Nkrumah was a visionary and fearless leader of the African people whose desire to see the continent united knew no bounds. He led Ghana to independence on March 6, 1957 after more than a century of British colonial rule, the first independent state in sub-Saharan Africa. He declared, on Ghana's Independence Day, that Ghana's independence was meaningless unless it was linked with the liberation of the entire African continent.

Nkrumah's words of wisdom reveal the extent of his commitment to unflagging zeal and unquenchable optimism in the African cause and world peace. It is no wonder many say he lived ahead of his times. Nkrumah's axioms should serve as constant reminders and signposts to Africans and all well-meaning people as we chart our way through the current millennium.

His single-minded desire to make Africa the proud home of all people of African descent dispersed around the world brought him to work together with leaders and architects of the Pan-Africanist movement, including W.E.B. Du Bois of the United States, George Padmore of Trinidad, Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, Sekou Toure of Guinea, Modibo Keita of Mali, and Patrice Lumumba of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Nkrumah was one of the organizers of the historic fifth Pan-Africanist Congress in Manchester more than half a century ago; a congress that proved decisive in the struggle against foreign rule in Africa and racial oppression in the West, and that demonstrated a remarkable unity between continental Africans and Africans in the Diaspora. He not only brought Pan-Africanism to its natural home when he returned to the Gold Coast after his sojourn in America and England to lead the independence movement, he also established and sustained a link between the continent and the Diaspora until the end of his regime.

Without doubt, Nkrumah ranks among the greatest political figures of the twentieth century. An indefatigable champion of world peace, advocate and spokesman of the Non-Aligned Movement, it was only ironic that his government was overthrown in a violent CIA-masterminded coup while he was on his way to Hanoi to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the war in Vietnam.

His courageous and tactical (Gandhian passive non-resistance, or what he termed "positive action") leadership led to the wresting of political independence of his country from Britain, the first in sub-Saharan Africa. Ghana's independence not only became a powder keg that ignited a continental revolution against European imperialism, Nkrumah consciously made his newly liberated country the powerhouse of the African revolution.

Nkrumah's revolutionary and pan-Africanist ideas swept across the entire continent—from Casablanca to Cape Town. Consistent with his independence day declaration that the independence of Ghana was meaningless unless it was linked with the total liberation of the entire African continent, Nkrumah trained African liberation fighters, financed their movements and encouraged them to dislodge colonial rule from their territories.

It was no wonder that in less than a decade after Ghana's independence in 1957, more than 90% of African countries had attained their own independence.

All of Nkrumah's adult life was devoted to one and one passion alone—the liberation and unity of the African people. He lived, dreamed and died for this ideal. This passion and quest for a continental union government prompted his enemies to brand him a dreamer, a megalomaniac, and an African Don Quixote. But judging from the parlous state of the continent's desperate, dispirited and non-viable fifty-five countries today, Nkrumah's call for the formation of a United States of Africa government was a wise one, even if it was brazen at the time. Nkrumah argued forcefully that only a federal state of Africa based on a common market, a common currency, a unified army (an African High Command) and a common foreign policy could not only provide the launching pad for a massive reconstruction and modernization of the continent, but also optimize Africa's efforts to find its rightful place in the international arena and effectively checkmate internal conflicts, as well as fending off superpower interference and predatory and imperialistic wars.

But Nkrumah's tragedy was probably that he came to power at an inauspicious time, in the "heat" of the Cold War, a period when the bipolar East-West ideological confrontation made leaders like Nkrumah sacrificial lambs on the altar of superpower chauvinism. Cold War politics broached no homegrown nationalists and patriots; it did not forgive leaders who refused to worship the gods of Soviet Communism or American capitalism. Would Nkrumah's ideas have been much more welcome in this post-Cold War, uni-polar, globalizing world? It is difficult to say.

A continental union government as advocated by Nkrumah may not have been a magic bullet or a panacea for all of the continent's seemingly

intractable problems, but one can say without fear of contradiction that the situation in the continent would have been better than it is today. Such a union would have made it possible for the marshalling and pooling of the continent's rich resources for the collective benefit of the citizens of Africa. Advantages of economies of scale, the avoidance of duplicity, presenting a united voice in world affairs and a collective bargain in international trade (instead of Africans competing among themselves for the lowest commodity prices at the international bargaining table) are but a few of the fruits that could be reaped in a continental union government.

The examples on both sides of the Atlantic—the European Union and the North American Free Trade Agreement—which have united countries of disparate cultures, languages, political and even ideological orientations, coupled with the surging globalization of the world economy, point to the breadth of Nkrumah's vision. But Nkrumah was no paragon of political virtues; he had his flaws. His one-party state “democracy” stifled different and divergent views from the other side of the political divide.

His installation as “Life President” of his party, the Convention People's Party, made Nkrumah a dictator in the eyes of many. He also did nothing to discourage party cronies from turning him into a demigod. While he did not subject his opponents to the callous, brutal repressions and bloody massacres symptomatic of African dictators such as Idi Amin of Uganda and Jean-Bédél Bokassa of the Central African Republic, Nkrumah did use the Preventative Detention Act (PDA), enacted by the British Colonial Administration, to throw his political opponents into jail without trial. His enforcement of the PDA to crack down on his opponents, who were bent on unseating him through terrorist bombings and numerous assassination attempts, was criticized as dictatorial and draconian.

This volume brings together scholars from across this country and internationally to share their research and ideas about Dr Kwame Nkrumah. It is hoped that it provides an excellent opportunity for scholars and students from different disciplines to connect with peers, share ideas and cultivate knowledge.

We are convinced that this volume offers a unique opportunity to contextualize Nkrumah's pan-Africanist agenda within the neo-liberal global project and against the backdrop of the current global economic and political ferment. We also hope that it will generate new ideas, revise and fortify old ones, and cross-fertilize theories on international/transnational development, post-colonial Africa and global/international issues.

Comprising papers delivered at the first and second KNICs dedicated to “Africa's Man of the Millennium” in a period of intense academic debate about the merits and demerits of globalization and the place and

role of the tri-continent of Africa, Asia and Latin America, this volume provides Canadian scholars with a unique and timely opportunity to seriously engage and scrutinize Nkrumah's intellectual and political legacy in the areas of international political economy and governance.

Included in this volume are the following topics: "Perspectives on African Independence—Perennial Challenges to African Independence and the Nagging Essentials of African Liberation" by Dr Zizwe Poe, chapter one, "Global African Unity in the Era of Globalization—An Assessment of the Place of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)" by Dr Asogwa Felix Chinwe and Akachuku Anny Agu, chapter two, "Colonialism, Ethnicity and Nigeria's Integration—An Analysis of Impact Relationship" by Professor O. S. A. Obikeze, chapter three, "Ethnic Integration and Continental Unity" by Dr Vincent Dodoo and Amisah Zenabu Bakuri, chapter four, "Perspectives on African Decolonization and Development—The Case of Kenya" by Omosa Mogambi and Kennedy Onkware, chapter five, "Nkrumah and His 'Chicks'—An Examination of Women and Organisational Strategies of the CPP" by Dr Wilhelmina Donkoh, chapter six, "Africa Unite—A Slogan of Intellectual and Cultural Significance in the Works of Kwame Nkrumah and Bob Marley" by Dr B. Steiner Iferkwe, chapter seven, "The Intellectual and Political Legacies of Kwame Nkrumah" by Ama Biney, chapter eight, "Pan-Africanism, Feminism and Socio-Sexual Power" by Dr Annecka Leolyn Marshall, chapter nine, "Africa and the Gender Debate—Basis of Division and Future Union" by Henry Kam Kah, chapter ten, "Sino-Pessimism versus Sino-Optimism—Which way for Chinese Africana?" by Abdul-Gafar Tobi Oshodi, chapter eleven, "Racialization of Asia, Africa and the Americas, and the Construction of the Ideal Iranian Citizen—Local and Global Representations of Colonialism, Geography, Culture and Religious Diversity in Iranian School Textbooks" by Amir Mirfakhraie, chapter twelve, "The United States Peace Corps as a Facet of US-Ghana Relations" by E. Ofori Bekoe, chapter thirteen, "South-South Cooperation—A New Post-Cold War Divide or a True Post-North-South Divide?" by Dr Catherine Schittecatte, chapter fourteen, "Pan-African-Education—A Case Study of The Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, Print Media and The Young Pioneer Movement" Dr Mjiba Frehiwot, chapter fifteen

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WELCOME ADDRESSES AT THE OPENING
CEREMONY OF THE SECOND KWAME
NKRUMAH INTERNATIONAL (KNIC2)
CONFERENCE AND A STATEMENT
ON THE MAN KWAME NKRUMAH

**From Professor William Otoo Ellis,
Vice-Chancellor, KNUST**

It is with great pleasure that I welcome all participants to the KNUST campus. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of our country, the great pan-Africanist and the person for whom our university is named, had a vision and a mission not limited to Africa alone but which extended to the rest of the world. He wanted a free and peaceful world where Africans are featured as equal partners, not as subordinate players. He had confidence in the ability of the African and the University of Science & Technology (UST), now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology (KNUST), which was established with this objective in mind, to train engineers, architects and other professionals for the continent. The person he selected to supervise this project was an accomplished African, R. P. Baffour. He was a good example of what the African could do if they are given the opportunity and the resources.

The problems of Africa and especially its status in the world, Kwame Nkrumah insisted, can never be resolved if Africans remain divided. The great debate on uniting Africans has been going on for half a century and one theme of this conference is seeking to provide new suggestions to help eliminate disunity among them. Looking at the program, there are about eighty papers to be presented within the two days of the conference. These new ideas should contribute to the solution of the African problem. It has been observed rightly that, if in the past the Sahara divided us, now it should unite us.

With these few words, I wish you all fruitful deliberations and an enjoyable conference. Once more, welcome to the KNUST campus and enjoy our green environment.

**From Dr Alan R. Davis,
President and Vice-Chancellor of KPU**

It is my pleasure to add my welcome to those attending the 2nd Biennial Kwame Nkrumah International Conference: Africa's Many Divides and Africa's Future. You have come from all corners of the world to focus your discussions on the issues and opportunities facing this wonderful, diverse and extraordinary continent.

The program shows enormous depth and breadth, and I congratulate Dr Charles Quist-Adade and Dr Vincent Dodoo on their success in organizing such a rich event, and, on behalf of Kwantlen Polytechnic University, I thank them and all of you for your contributions to the conference.

As the new President of Kwantlen Polytechnic University, I am especially proud to see this wonderful, new and important institution be so involved in this major global initiative, and to see the partnership it has developed with the host, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. I am also proud as a Canadian to see the support of our government through the Social Science and Humanities Research Council. Likewise, the support of the Oxford University Press is important and heartening.

Most recently in my career, in the field of open and distance learning, I have had the privilege of meeting with many colleagues from across Africa, including those at the Africa Virtual University, the University of South Africa, and similar open institutions across the continent. I am humbled by their optimism and commitment. I look forward to expanding my understanding of all aspects of Africa's future in the years ahead through events and partnerships such as this.

I wish you all the very best in your endeavours.

**From Professor Sam Afrane, Provost of the College of Art
and Social Sciences, KNUST**

There is no doubt that the social, economic and political landscape of Africa is characterized by visible and disturbing "divides" which cloak the wheel of progress of the continent. These "divides" result in many forms of countless "dualisms." The common ones include formal and informal, poor and rich, urban and rich, educated and uneducated, etc. This is not to mention the serious societal divides driven by parochial partisan politics and ideological posturing in many African countries.

Unfortunately, the policy objectives of many governments in Africa have, rather than built bridges between these crippling dichotomies, widened these gaps.

Many political and economic analysts/commenters blame this situation on our colonial past. They argue that the colonial masters created disjointed social and economic systems that failed to develop “holistic” economies and consequently gave birth to divided societies. Obviously, there may be other causes we need to identify and critically interrogate.

Fortunately, this conference comes at the right time to help us understand this phenomenon in Africa. It is expected that the presenters will not only explore the causes, dynamics, effects and ramifications of this problem, but will also go further to offer prescriptions that will unify and consolidate the African society for accelerated development.

I want to take this opportunity to welcome all participants of the conference, especially our friends from outside our borders. We hope the conference will provide an appropriate platform for stimulating intellectual exchanges and mutual learning. Besides the core business of the conference, please find some time to fraternize and also enjoy a bit of our beautiful campus and country.

Once again I welcome you to the KNUST campus and Ghana.

From Dr Diane Purvey, Dean of Arts, KPU

Two years ago, Kwantlen Polytechnic University was pleased to hold the inaugural Biennial Kwame Nkrumah International Conference in Metro Vancouver, in the shared traditional territories of the Kwantlen, Kwatzie, Semiahmoo and Tsawwassen First Nations. It is highly gratifying to see that the promise of the first meeting has been realized with a second. It is often challenging enough to organize a series of conferences in one city, on one continent; to do so half a world away is a major accomplishment, for which the organizers must be applauded.

It has been fifty-five years since Ghana achieved independence. In those years, the size and extent of the African diaspora have continued to grow. Currently, slightly more than one Canadian in one hundred identifies in the census as “African.” The share of Canadians with African ancestry—recent or remote—is much, much greater. A desktop globe suggests that we are far apart, though in fact we are not.

The Faculty of Arts at Kwantlen Polytechnic University is happy to continue supporting this conference. The program is a robust and ambitious one, reflecting the excellence of scholarship on topics as diverse as Rastafari and the gendered implications of mobile phone technology,

from Pan-Africanism to Brazilian footballers. There is much on the table here at this international gathering and Kwantlen is proud to play its part.

With best wishes for an invigorating and fruitful conference.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:
LITERATURE AS A TOOL FOR NATIONAL
LIBERATION AND POST-COLONIAL
RECONSTRUCTION, ANTI-PALANQUINITY
AND THE PAN-AFRICANIST IMPERATIVE

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History will single you out, Kwantlen Polytechnic University, for this gesture and venture of yours, in organizing this Nkrumah International Conference. It is a laudable and memorable gesture and venture. Consider this conference as a critical building block in the body of worldwide efforts to achieve the United States of Africa. Doubtless, it is a veritable Molotov cocktail hurled against those elements that would try to construct belief systems against our drive for unification of our continent.

In this keynote address, I wish to address the questions of whether and how literature can be a tool for national liberation and post-colonial reconstruction, and why it should be an important tool for modern Africa. It is because literature carries and conveys information in a powerfully persuasive and permanent way—across consciousness, into psyches, across borders and boundaries, and across ages; its nature and construct has invested it with the aura and awe of authority. Throughout history there have been several cases of the deployment of the power of books to affect and turn minds, to orient or reorient, and thereby control them.

Our platform is that, if the books had been used to colonize our minds, then we must use the book to decolonize our minds. Take for example the statement by Pastor Mensa Otabil that shows how a wicked and vicious interpretation of the Bible has been used to destroy the self-confidence of a whole race, even to the point of building the pillars of Apartheid on the

teachings of the Dutch Reform Church. Otabil has even read a book by a “Bible-believing” Canadian minister, which taught that the black man is what the Bible calls the “beast of the field” (Otabil, 10). By omitting or treating lightly those areas that mention a Black presence in scripture, European and Euro-American biblical scholars have, for long, obscured the role of Blacks in the Bible, thus giving a deceptively racial bias to this subject. Otabil, in his book *Beyond The Rivers of Ethiopia*, tracks the biblical narrative in a new way as he lifts up such blatant omissions as Keturah’s six children, fathered by Abraham, who were, “given gifts and sent to the East.” According to Otabil, these black children of Abraham and Keturah were the ones who were disinherited. Another example cites Moses who sat at the feet of the priest of Midian and married Zipporah. Racism, an old problem, surfaced as a result of Moses’s marriage to an Ethiopian. As noted by Leonard Lovett, with Otabil’s invaluable insistence on a sense of history, he explodes long-held myths about Africa and exhorts us to unite (Lovett, in Otabil, xiii). Explaining how the world’s power structures perpetuate themselves through a meticulous and systematic network designed to keep their subjects in total ignorance, Otabil points out the often quoted revealing statement that U.S. Senator Henry Berry made to the Virginia House of delegates, concerning the state of the Negro slaves:

We have as far as possible, closed every avenue by which light may enter the slave’s mind. If we could extinguish the capacity to see the light, our work would be complete. They would then be on the level with the beast of the field and we should be safe (Otabil, 3).

As a result of persistent misinformation and misinterpretation, the tragedy we have to contend with is that many blacks have bought into this propaganda of the inferiority of the black race and have resigned themselves to the unfortunate notion that God designed them to be non-achievers. One needs only to look further back to the Great Flood. After the flood, the leaders of the world were Cushites, whose skin colour was black, and Ethiopia and Cush are synonymous. Obviously, Blacks are not a biblically cursed race.

It takes a long process to make one dependent, and it will take a longer fighting process to make one independent. Mental slavery is more difficult to shrug off than physical slavery (we need a spirit of anti-palanquinity!). In our national liberation struggles, literature played a clear and key role. “The African intellectual who fought for independence engaged himself in agonizing cerebral calisthenics in order to carve an enduring path for his

nations' development, and he values education and reading over everything else," (Achebe, 32).

The early nationalist intellectuals included, for example, Africa's great poet Leopold Sedar Senghor, who was also Senegal's President; Agostinho Neto, another great poet who stirred up his Angolan fighters for independence by reading poems he had composed; Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya; Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda; Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana; Nigeria's Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and Aminu Kano; South Africa's Mandela and Kenya's Oginga Odinga. They all wrote masterpieces on governance or fiction. As recorded by Joseph Ushie and Denja Abdullahi, there was, at this time, hardly any gulf between the crown and the gown, and this marriage between the two benefitted the town. This time, too, "education, as the indispensable bedrock for development, was accorded the highest priority by this group of visionary leaders, a tradition that has continued anywhere else in the world except in sub-Saharan Africa's murderdoms where visionless military and neomilitary lootocrats (looters) have kidnapped whole nations and turned them into death-prone prisons without walls, such as Nigeria," (Achebe, 32). Using Nigeria as a case study, Ushie and Abdullahi note that:

In no other sector is this strange betrayal more visible than in the nation's education sector, which baked these literary giants for the world, but which the neo-colonialist leaders treat with disdain after having yanked off their own children and relatives from the virused system and emptied them into schools in other lands where sanity in governance has prevailed (Achebe, 33).

They observe that, of course, in the absence of any vision or ideology, the political scene is no better than a fathering of drunken pirates and outlaws among whom the decent dwell at their own peril" (Achebe, 23). The dispiriting consequence is that, Nigeria, for example, which was the hope of Africa in the 1960s, galloping fast to level up with the likes of Britain and the United States, has been "burnt into cold nauseating ash" as the only country in the world where the unbelievable situation of a local government councillor earning four times the salary of a professor is considered normal, and where the senator's monthly salary is the professor's annual salary, and it is seen as normal. All these are testimonies that Chinua Achebe's vision is recreating the pre-colonial African society in *Things Fall Apart* "which ought to be factored into a truly postcolonial cultural reconstruction of Africa, has been afflicted with a still birth by these neo-colonialist rulers," (Achebe, 33).

It is a cause for concern that the early team spirit of collaboration that was evident among Nigeria's cultural producers and the political-intellectual class, which was in the interest of the nation's independence, has now vanished to the point that the country's writers such as Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Niyi Osundare, Tanure Ojaide, and others have been made to drift away and have remained ill at ease with home.

Governance and literature

For literature to succeed in doing what it is carved out to do with its particular contribution in the scheme of things, there is the need for the creation of an enabling environment that will facilitate both the coming into being, as well as the strategic positioning of the various factors that can produce the sustainable synergy of productive possibilities. In this regard, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'O believes that in order to create a progressive movement in the African novel and literature, it will take "a progressive state which would overhaul the current neo-colonial linguistic policies and tackle the national question in a democratic manner." Above all, the most important element, Ngũgĩ submits, is a willing and widening readership (Ngũgĩ, 85). Ngũgĩ spells out the power that literature has in the moulding of the mind of man in his book *Writers in Politics*, where he sums up the kinds of literature available to African children in the classrooms and libraries for their school and university education. He classifies them in three broad categories.

The first category was the great humanist and democratic tradition of European literature: Aeschylus, Balzac, Brecht, Dickens, Dostoevsky, Gorky, Shakespeare, Sophocles, and Tolstoy just to mention a few. But as Ngũgĩ points out, their literature, even at its most humane and universal, necessarily reflected the European experience of history. The world of its setting and the world it evoked would be more familiar to a child brought up in the same landscape than to one brought up outside it. The second category was the literature of liberal Europeans who often had Africa as the subject of their imaginative explorations. The third category was the downright racist literature of writers like Rider Haggard, Elspeth Hatley, Nicholas Monsarrat, and Robert Ruark, whose work depicted mainly two types of Africans: the good and the bad. Ngũgĩ further explains that:

The good African was the one who co-operated with the European colonizer; particularly the African who helped the European colonizer in the occupation and subjugation of his own people and country. Such a character was portrayed as possessing qualities of strength, intelligence and beauty. But it was the strength, intelligence and the beauty of a sell-out.

The bad African character was the one who offered resistance to the foreign conquest and occupation of his country. Such a character was portrayed as being ugly, weak, cowardly and scheming. (Ngũgĩ, 92).

Ngũgĩ further points out that the reader's sympathies are guided in such a way as to make him identify with Africans collaborating with colonialism and to make him distance himself from those offering political and military resistance to colonialism (Ngũgĩ, 92). Ngũgĩ therefore concludes that African children who encountered literature in colonial schools and universities were experiencing the world as defined and reflected in the European experiences of history. The African children's entire way of looking at the world, even the world of the immediate environment, was Eurocentric. Europe was the centre of the universe, and the earth, Ngũgĩ reminds us, moved around the European intellectual scholarly axis.

Reinforcing the images children encountered in literature by their study of geography and history fit well with the cultural imperatives of British imperialism. Thus the economic control of the African people was effected through politics and culture, and the universities and colleges set up in the colonies after the war were meant to produce a native elite which would later help prop up the Empire (Ngũgĩ, 93).

It is clear that African children studying literature in our schools and universities are subjected to a literature that defines the world in a certain way. Literature indeed has an enormous impact and therefore must be carefully selected, given due attention, and handled carefully. It should always be borne in mind that literature is a powerful instrument in evolving the cultural ethos of a people and imperialism, particularly during colonialism, provides the best example of how literature as an element of culture was used in the domination of Africa (Ngũgĩ, 99).

For instance, prior to independence, education in Kenya was an instrument of colonial policy designed to educate the people of Kenya into acceptance of their role as the colonised (Ngũgĩ, 96). The language and literature syllabuses, inadequate and irrelevant to the needs of the country, were so organized that a Kenyan child knew himself through London and New York (Ngũgĩ, 97).

The quest for self-recognition: the anti-palanquinity mindset

The quest for self-recognition: the anti-palanquinity mindset: In reflecting on what immediately underlines the politics of languages in African literature, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'O observes that it is the search for a

liberation in which to see ourselves clearly in relationship to ourselves and to otherselves in the universe, and calls this “a quest for relevance..” I would rather suggest we term it “the quest for self-recognition.” Such a mission has the aim of rediscovering and accepting ourselves, and thereupon feeling empowered and enlightened enough to develop an anti-palanquinity mindset and consciousness in order to transform our condition.

A basic quality of the anti-palanquinity consciousness is to question and subvert a negative or unjust status quo. In the context of the history of the African People, an anti-palanquinity consciousness and mindset involves a psychological reorientation of self, a reordering of our belief systems from an inferiority complex and replacing it with new belief systems of self-knowledge, self-discovery, self-confidence, and self-reliance—and the reinforcement within our people’s psyche of an inner posture of anti-palanquinity.

Anti-palanquinity denotes a readiness to question sacred cows. A palanquin is a covered litter, carried by four people. The African bourgeoisie would miss the revolution’s productive characteristics, which marked the rise of its Western counterpart from the ashes of feudal Europe. It is under feudalism that you agree to carry another person, a higher, mighty person, or personage, in a palanquin!

An anti-palanquinity consciousness will not accept the present neo-colonial order (Onoge, 34). An anti-palanquinity consciousness will not entertain any feeling of inferiority complex nor accept any act of superiority complex on anybody’s part.

The Pan-Africanist Imperative

Given our pan-Africanist conviction, agenda, and struggle, it is imperative for us to build our countries in a particular direction. This will only be possible if we pay proper attention to the place of literature in the scheme of things through the promotion of production, appreciation and consumption of our indigenous literary offerings. We need to promote our indigenous book industry because in the general competitive marketplace of ideas, there is a struggle for the influencing and controlling of the minds of people against their own interests.

A major pan-Africanist imperative in reaching this goal is the challenge of guiding, encouraging and inspiring the youth to empower themselves with knowledge and enlightenment. The youth must struggle “to know the time of day.” As a people who believe we have a stake in the real destiny of Africa, we may ask ourselves, for instance, how many of

Nkrumah's books have we read in order to ground our understandings fully, not only in the arguments for the creation of a United States of Africa, but also in the knowledge of the incredible good we stand to gain as a people, and therefore as individuals?

What, now, is the task confronting modern African youth? It is that they have to empower themselves by reading widely and by self-education in order to achieve enlightenment. It has rarely been noted and propagated for the benefit of the youth that Nkrumah's brilliance as a leader, revolutionary organizer and writer was predicated on his self-education and not by the orthodox methods of acquiring knowledge. He read widely, beyond and around his basic textbooks. He realized that he needed to know as much as he could in order to first understand the real forces that had created the given circumstances of his people; secondly, he needed to dig deep into the heritage of human history in order to so enlighten himself that he could then fashion the requisite, but then non-existent theories and strategies that would empower him to liberate his people. The youth have to learn how to organize, because it is indisputable that organization decides everything. This has been proven over the centuries by societies and organizations, and we have the examples of Ghandi and Gamal Abdul Nasser, among others.

The case for the youth reading broadly is premised on the fact that the modern African world was not born at the inception of the African struggle, and they therefore need to read avidly so as to catch up with their heritage in order to "know the time of the day" and understand the times in which we live. In his essay of 2006, "The Unfortunate Children of Fortunate Parents: Reflections on African Literature in the Wake of 1986 and the Age of Neoliberal Globalization," Biodun Jeyifo wrote that the previous two decades had witnessed an "arrested decolonization and the devaluation of the legacies of the national liberation movement," and that the relationship between African writers and their audiences have undergone tremendous changes (2006, 28). These resulted "in a phenomenon of worldwide dimensions, a seismic, tectonic migration of persons, projects and ideas and movements around the globe—to the overwhelming detriment of the developing world." He said, as did Wole Soyinka, that many of the most:

Authoritative scholars and critics of African literature have departed from African universities and colleges and now reside and teach in North American and European institutions (we are talking here of the Ireles, the Jeyifos, the Obiechinas, the Okpewhos, the Emenyinous, the Osundares, the Gikandas and many, many others) (*ibid.*, 29).

The universities on the continent themselves, he continues, are buffeted by unprecedented crises of underfunding, demoralization of faculty, staff and students, as well as the rise of a pervasive culture of obscurantism and fetishistic pseudo-intellectualism and the attendant subversion of reason and critical thought (Gbemi, 29). Amidst all these reversals, other concerns are raised by critics. Chinweizu, for example, states that direct rule might have ended, but what about indirect rule? “What of African political elites managing their independent nations for Europe’s economic benefits? Or intellectual elites managing Africa’s minds for the benefits of Western Cultural Imperialism?” (Chinweizu & Madubuike 1980, 232).

The Pan-Africanist imperative recognizes that enslavement wiped our minds of our heritage, and that colonialism filled the vacuum with its own ideas. It is therefore a sharp and sensitive response to the Pan-Africanist imperative when Pastor Mensa Otabil declares that: “as a black man, I have observed that a war is being waged on all fronts to portray our people in a very negative light ...” (1992, 6). Luckily for us, Otabil, as witnessed by the inspiring revelations in *Beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia*, reveals that he believes in a faith which is able to speak to Africa’s social needs, and is convinced that the inherent strength of the great African people is yet to be fully released.

The Pan-Africanist imperative demands that as many of our people as possible be brought as fast as possible into connection with an understanding and appreciation of our common heritage and destiny. This raises the question of the provision of libraries and their stocking with the necessary kinds of books. We also need to translate works by African writers into other African languages, so that the African citizen can have access to his continental literary heritage.

In conclusion, let us take note that those who in 1884 sat down to parcel out among themselves pencilled chunks of the territories of the African people are no longer after Africans—they are after Africa! Thousands of acres of land—land with resources—are being acquired by outsiders in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Nigeria.

Africa is the richest continent on earth, yet we need outside support for our budgets. In light of the pan-Africanist imperative, the understanding must be clear that our individual African states, as they are now, are as viable and fragile as a broomstick. The security of our future lies in the strength of a broom, which is unbreakable. The insurrection of pan-Africanist ideas needs to be everywhere.

Indeed, the independence of African states is meaningless to the African people unless it is translated into a United States of Africa; a proper image of the African self, inculcated through an understanding of