# SKASE JOURNAL OF LITERARY AND CULTURAL STUDIES (SJLCS)
## VOLUME 4 - 2022 No. 3

## Table of contents
Files in PDF format

# Richard Rorty and Three Food Poets: Rortyan Humanism and Beyond in the Writings of Ruth Reichl, Anthony Bourdain, and Michael Pollan[1]

Silvia Rosivalová Baučeková, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice

*Abstract*
*Literature is a key element in the philosophy of the American neopragmatist Richard Rorty. In this paper, I take as a starting point Rorty's understanding of imaginative literature as the driving force of social change. I conduct an analysis of three books by three American food writers, Ruth Reichl, Anthony Bourdain, and Michael Pollan. I argue that while the selected works by Reichl and Bourdain echo aspects of Rorty's humanistic moral philosophy, Michael Pollan moves beyond humanism, dismantling the dichotomy of human/nonhuman to offer a new moral philosophy for the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** *Richard Rorty, humanism, food writing, Anthony Bourdain, Michael Pollan, Ruth Reichl*

## Introduction: Food Writing as Philosophical Manifesto

Richard Rorty was a well-known, albeit controversial figure in contemporary American philosophy. He formulated his own version of neopragmatism, in which he rejected Platonism and analytical philosophy and instead turned to language as a means of understanding and coping with the world. Rorty believed that language is the only medium that makes it possible for us to think, create, and communicate, and that finding new ways to use language, or new vocabularies, is how we can create a better future for humankind (see for example Rorty 1979: 359). Rorty claimed that poets "in the generic sense of maker[s] of new words, the shaper[s] of new languages" are the "vanguard" of the human species (1989: 20). He maintained that it is through literary imagination rather than philosophical reflection that people can come to know, understand, and change themselves and the world. "This understanding of language brought Rorty closer to his 'literary turn' – the literary conception of philosophy and literary humanistic culture" (Višňovský 2020: 5).

In this sense, Rorty understood writing literature as world-making, as envisaging possible better futures. He thought it "unhelpful to distinguish between philosophical texts as content based and literary ones as aesthetically pleasing" (Leypoldt 2008: 147). In "Looking Back at 'Literary Theory'" he proposed that "both comparative literature and philosophy departments should be places in which students receive plenty of suggestions about what sorts of books they might like to read, and are then left free to follow their noses" (Rorty 2006b: 65). Philosophy and fiction are here understood simply as two genres of writing whose purpose is the same as the purpose of any other "imaginative conversation" (Višňovský 2020: 5): to create common good. In fact, Rorty believed that narrative and fiction were even better suited to this purpose because "the novel's thick description of human particularities offers richer explorations of ethical complexities than the theoretical treatise" (Leypoldt 2008: 146).

In this paper I take as a starting point Rorty's understanding of imaginative literature "as the principal [vehicle] of moral change and progress" in contemporary societies (Rorty 1989: xvi). However, I argue that this function is not limited to literary fiction but is also performed by literary nonfiction and by the hybrid literary forms that make up the genre of food writing. The term "food writing" refers to a wide array of texts, from cookbooks and restaurant reviews to culinary mysteries and food memoirs. Although these texts are not typically considered part of the literary canon, I argue that their authors engage in writing as a form of literary world-making. Food writers make use of their imagination to carve their private place in the world or to envisage a better, more ethical, and more just future for the society as a whole. In this respect they are very much akin to the Romantic poets or Realist novelists whom Rorty so admired.

In what follows I present a reading of three books by three famous American food writers, Ruth Reichl, Anthony Bourdain, and Michael Pollan as examples of literary world-making. As such, I propose an analysis of these texts through the lens of Richard Rorty's humanistic moral philosophy. First, I argue that in Reichl's *My Kitchen Year: 136 Recipes that Saved My Life* (2015) the protagonist represents Rorty's ideal citizen: the liberal ironist. Second, I show how in *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly* (2000) Bourdain depicts the community of chefs in New York as a Rortyan "band of eccentrics": a group of independent individuals who work together to achieve shared goals. Lastly, I demonstrate how in *Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation* (2013) Pollan moves beyond Rorty's humanism and incorporates the human and the nonhuman as equal components of a new moral philosophy.

## The Neopragmatism of Richard Rorty

Throughout his life Richard Rorty developed a unique and controversial version of pragmatism. The main tenets of his neopragmatism include the "linguistic turn", that is a focus on language, rather than on the mind or consciousness, as a force defining the human condition; an insistence on anti-foundationalism and anti-essentialism; and a radical humanism. Rorty understood philosophy as a conversation (see for example "Spinoza, Pragmatism and the Love of Wisdom" in Rorty 2006a), and he believed that "philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language, or by understanding more about the language we presently use" (Rorty 1992: 3). In a pragmatist fashion, Rorty rejected the "notion of language as a medium" (Rorty 1989: 13), and instead viewed it as a tool, "a practical and social creative instrument for constructing and re-constructing our human world" (Višňovský 2020: 5).

Rorty's focus on language as a vehicle for change is intertwined with his anti-essentialist and anti-foundationalist views. He believed that humans possess no essence or universal inner nature, but instead that "the human self is created by the use of a vocabulary rather than being adequately or inadequately expressed in a vocabulary" (Rorty 1989: 7). Similarly, he rejected the notion of an ultimate Truth. He claimed that "truth is a property of linguistic entities, of sentences" (ibid.), and thus it is not found but created by language users, that is humans. Consequently, he argued that it should not be the aim of philosophy to look for the ultimate Truth and eternal universals, but rather to try to devise new languages that will make possible new and improved ways of life (Rorty 2006a: 52-53, 109, 113, and elsewhere).

Lastly, Rorty's belief in the centrality of language served as a foundation for his humanism. Rorty divided the world into the human and the nonhuman along the lines of

linguistic competence. Language, he claimed, is what makes us human. In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* he wrote: "The world does not speak. Only we do. The world can, once we have programmed ourselves with a language, cause us to hold beliefs. But it cannot propose a language for us to speak. Only other human beings can do that." (1989: 6) In other words, Rorty understood humans as detached from the nonhuman, and believed they were only accountable to other humans (1989: 7; see also Višňovský 2020).

This radical humanism served as the basis of Rorty's moral philosophy. In *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* he envisioned the ideal culture as

> one which was enlightened, secular, through and through. It would be one in which no trace of divinity remained, either in the form of a divinized world or a divinized self. Such a culture would have no room for the notion that there are nonhuman forces to which human beings should be responsible.
>
> (1989: 45)

Rorty described the ideal citizen for this humanistic utopia as a "liberal ironist", that is someone with "a sense of the contingency of their language of moral deliberation, and thus of their consciences, and thus of their community" (61). The ironist is defined first by their skepticism: they constantly ask questions about the language which they were brought up to use, and about what kind of person they became as a result of using this language; and second by their unending search for a "final vocabulary", that is for a language unique to them that would make it possible to create a new, better version of themselves (75-77). The ironist's ability to self-create is understood as their ultimate freedom. The yearning for a new language, or for the reinvention of the self, is inspired by Nietzsche, and Rorty also followed Nietzsche in claiming that it is poets or artists rather than philosophers who are most capable of self-creation.

However, Rorty did not envision his utopia as a society of individuals. On the contrary, he believed that "our connections with our fellow humans are of the utmost importance" (Višňovský 2020: 6), and that humans are ultimately accountable to other humans. Here Rorty stressed the distinction between the private and the public: the citizens of his liberal utopia would be free to be absolutely self-creating and passion-driven in their private lives, but in the public sphere they would become a collective working towards common goals:

> I want to see freely arrived at agreement as agreement on how to accomplish common purposes […], but I want to see these common purposes against the background of an increasing sense of the radical diversity of private purposes, of the radically poetic character of individual lives, and of the merely poetic foundations of the 'we-consciousness' which lies behind our social institutions. […] My "poeticized" culture is one which *has given up the attempt to unite one's private ways of dealing with one's finitude and one's sense of obligation to other human beings*.
>
> (67-68, emphasis mine)

The "poeticized culture" of Rorty's utopia is one in which people would strive for "aesthetic enhancement" rather than for objectivity, and "in which religion may flourish without gods, science without representations, and philosophy without confrontations" (Višňovský 2020: 14).

**Ruth Reichl: The Reluctant Ironist**

The American food critic and writer Ruth Reichl published *My Kitchen Year: 136 Recipes that Saved My Life* in 2015, but the book was actually written in 2009-2010, in the period immediately after the closing of the *Gourmet* magazine, where Reichl had served as editor-in-chief since 1999. Like a lot of food writing, *My Kitchen Year* falls somewhere in the fuzzy area between various genres: it is a cookbook, containing instructions for preparing the 136 recipes from its title, but at the same time it is a memoir chronicling what Reichl refers to as her "kitchen year" — a year of struggle, fear, but also of self-creation. The book is also the author's manifesto about what she has come to believe makes up good food and good life. In this sense, although it is certainly not a philosophical treatise, *My Kitchen Year* is a philosophical text, inasmuch as it asks moral questions about how one should live in order to be happy.

The narrative of the book begins with Reichl, the protagonist, in a state of profound crisis. The magazine in which she had hoped to end her long career was closed by its publisher without warning, the many plans for future issues and projects scrapped mercilessly. Thus, at the age of sixty-one, Reichl was left to look for a new job and a new purpose in life. She makes it clear in the book that she did not plan any of this. She had felt satisfied with her life as it used to be, enjoying the dazzling, fast-paced world of magazine publishing and glitzy New York restaurants. However, chance (or, to use Rorty's vocabulary, the contingency of future events) made her into an ironist, albeit a reluctant one. Reichl suddenly became just like Rorty's ideal citizen, who

> spends her time worrying about the possibility that she has been initiated into the wrong tribe, taught to play the wrong language game. She worries that the process of socialization which turned her into a human being by giving her a language may have given her the wrong language, and so turned her into the wrong kind of human being.
>
> (Rorty 1989: 75)

It takes some time for the facts of the situation to sink in. At first, Reichl is busy finishing projects, deliberately immersing herself in what few responsibilities to the magazine she has left to avoid pondering the future. However, the day when there is nothing left to do inevitably arrives:

> On the first day of my new life I woke, alone, to frosted windows in New York City. Michael was out of town, and for a moment I thought gratefully that I had no responsibilities, nowhere to go. Then the empty day rose before me, and I realized that that was literally true. I had nowhere to go. What would I do with myself? I went into the kitchen and opened the refrigerator door.
>
> (Reichl 2015: 59)

Reichl realizes that she must start building a new life and a new self: start constructing her "final vocabulary" (Rorty 1989: 77). And throughout the book, she makes it explicit that it is cooking and, later, writing about food, that enables her to do this. Cooking represents for Reichl a meditative, that is philosophical, but at the same time imaginative and creative process. While coming up with recipes, transforming the food she handles, thinking of new ways of combining ingredients, she also creates her new self. This creative, or self-creative,

aspect of cookery is highlighted by the images used in the book. In addition to the stylized pictures of meals typical of cookbooks, there are many photographs featuring the protagonist herself. However, it is not her face that is pictured, but her hands: a symbol of the creative work that goes into both making a meal and making an authentic life for oneself.

Reichl's process of self-creation is a deeply personal, private matter. This is in line with Rorty's belief that "we should treat vocabularies for deliberation about public goods and social and political arrangements, on the one hand, and vocabularies developed or created in pursuit of personal fulfilment, self-creation, and self-realization, on the other, as distinct tools" (Ramberg and Dieleman 2021). This is symbolically underscored in the text by the change of setting. After losing her job in the magazine, Reichl and her husband move from their New York City apartment to a cabin in the countryside. Here they spend a solitary winter, confined to the house for long stretches of time by severe snowstorms. Reichl uses this time to focus inward, cook and think, evaluating her past life and carving out possible future ones.

Once spring has come, Reichl is ready to be reborn, just like the nature around her. She can finally leave her house in the country and get back to New York City, even just for a stroll. By now she is a different woman. She is ready for a new adventure, although she is not yet quite sure what it may be:

> I'd gone out for a fresh loaf of bread, intending nothing more impressive than toast. But it was a beautiful day, and the good feelings on the street were so infectious that I came home eager to cook. French toast, I thought, *wondering how I might make it my own*.
>
> (Reichl 2015: 169, emphasis mine)

As the first sentence in the quote above suggest, her final vocabulary has not yet fully taken shape. But like the Romantic poets revered by Rorty, she is inspired by her surroundings and by the food she prepares. They lead her to the decision that she wants to write a cookbook. By the end of summer, Reichl is writing and feeling much happier than ever before. Her kitchen year has ended, and the journey has taken her full circle from the death of her old life, and her old language, through the painful process of self-creation, finally arriving at a new, improved vocabulary with which she can describe herself.

> Remembering how miserable I'd been at this time the year before, I smiled. Since then, I'd discovered the many things that I will never need. […] Living in that fast-paced world, I would not have thought to come home and make a quiet meal.
> I looked over at my computer, where the novel was waiting. I poured a glass of wine and sipped it slowly. Then I gathered up the dishes, took them to the kitchen, and plunged my hands into the warm water.
>
> (Reichl 2015: 304)

Reichl has become a food poet, someone who makes things using her imagination, not only metaphorically, but also literally, as she has become a fiction writer. The book ends with a couple of images. One is a blurry photograph of the protagonist's face. Throughout the book, Reichl's hands were depicted at work making things, and now, finally, we are shown her face: she has succeeded at creating herself. However, the blurriness of the image echoes Rorty's insistence that no language is ever completely final; that even what today seems like the "final vocabulary" is always open to new and better redescriptions. And fittingly, the last image in the book depicts a blue sky with white clouds: the open horizon offering never-ending possibilities for self-recreation.

**Anthony Bourdain and his Band of Eccentrics**

Like Reichl's *My Kitchen Year*, Anthony Bourdain's *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly* is a culinary memoir, a story of Bourdain's life as a cook, from his childhood, when he was dragged along on his parents' foodie travels across France, up until his latest job as executive chef at Brasserie Les Halles in New York City. And just like Reichl, Bourdain depicts his protagonist's journey of self-creation: from the moment little Anthony decided to become the most adventurous eater in his family up until he completes his self-creation as a successful professional chef. Throughout the book, Bourdain stylizes himself as a dark Romantic hero, a social outcast who lives by a self-imposed ethical code, but also a culinary poet and visionary, creating both meals and books.

However, while Reichl's is a private journey, undertaken in isolation from the outside world, *Kitchen Confidential* contains a second narrative in addition to the story of the hero's self-creation, and that is the story of his community. Although Bourdain presents himself as a lone wolf, wandering the streets of New York City or Tokyo at night, eating and drinking in solitude, he also understands himself as part of what he calls the "culinary underbelly": the world of urban restaurant kitchens, hidden from view of most, and thus representing a society of its own. The "culinary underbelly" can be read as an example of the second element present in Rorty's vision of a liberal utopia: the public domain in which citizens take part in productive arguments and collaborative work in order to achieve a common good. Rorty believed that engagement with the languages of others was inevitable; that "there can be no fully Nietzschean lives, lives which are pure action rather than reaction" (1989: 42). He also maintained that "the deepening and widening of solidarity" with as large and as diverse group of others as possible was "the hallmark of social progress" (Ramberg and Dieleman 2021). Thus, in Rorty's utopia the citizens, in addition to being independent liberal ironists, would also be capable of recognizing the humanity in others irrespective of their differences

In Rorty's vision, such a utopian liberal society would be one with a strictly humanistic moral code. Rorty rejected the notion of universal moral values or of values imposed from above. In his secular vision, "the notion of 'morality'" could have a place only "insofar as we can cease to think of morality as the voice of the divine part of ourselves and instead think of it as the voice of ourselves as members of a community, speakers of a common language" (1989: 59). In other words, humans only have responsibilities towards other humans, and the nature of these responsibilities is to be decided amongst them. Bourdain's narrative echoes both Rorty's humanism and his insistence that moral codes are created rather than pre-existent. The characters in *Kitchen Confidential* ostentatiously reject any rules dictated from above: they use illegal drugs, lead unconventional sexual lives, use profane language, and sometimes actually break the law. However, in the kitchen they all conform to a mutually agreed code of behavior. All members of the kitchen staff share this "common language" — the "knowledge that there are some things you *must* do—and some things you absolutely *must not* […] maybe not moral distinctions, but practical ones" (Bourdain 2000: 250, original emphasis).

Bourdain depicts the world of restaurant kitchens in New York City as a perfect example of "a society conceived as a band of eccentrics collaborating for purposes of mutual protection rather than as a band of fellow spirits united by a common goal" (Rorty 1989: 59). In his romanticized portrayal it becomes a world where chefs and other kitchen laborers from all walks of life and corners of the earth work side by side, preparing food and earning a living. Bourdain repeatedly emphasizes the fact that his "kitchen crew" are a diverse group of weirdos, outcasts, immigrants, miscreants, drug addicts, or outright criminals. In an answer to the

question "Who cooks?" he writes: "If the chef is anything like me, the cooks are a dysfunctional, mercenary lot, fringe-dwellers motivated by money, the peculiar lifestyle of cooking and a grim pride. *They're probably not even American*." (2000: 55, emphasis mine)

The book is populated by numerous examples of eccentric crew members from various stages of Bourdain's career. Bourdain was first initiated into the world of professional cooking as a college student looking for a part-time job during the summer break he spent in Provincetown, Cape Cod. And it was in the kitchen of one of the local restaurants where he met Tyrone, the awe-inspiring "broiler man". Tyrone was a huge and terrifying figure, but what fascinated young Bourdain most were his chef's hands:

> the hideous constellation of water-filled blisters, angry red welts from grill marks, the old scars, the raw flesh where steam or hot fat had made the skin simply roll off. They looked like the claws of some monstrous science-fiction crustacean, knobby and calloused under wounds old and new. I watched, transfixed, as Tyrone—his eyes never leaving mine—reached slowly under the broiler and, with one naked hand, picked up a glowing-hot sizzle-platter, moved it over to the cutting board, and set it down in front of me. He never flinched.
>
> (Bourdain 2000: 34)

Tyrone is awe-inspiring: powerful, dangerous, immune to pain, even monstrous. For Bourdain, he is definitely Other: black, huge, with a "silver-capped front tooth, and the ubiquitous fist-sized gold hoop earring" (31). This memorable episode foreshadows many other similar encounters yet to come. Segundo, Bourdain's assistant, is described as "a mean-looking bastard", a "headband-sporting, baggy-pantsed, top button-buttoned, bottom button open, moon boot-shod, half Puerto Rican, half cholo *vato loco*, with his crude prison-style tats and his butterfly knife tucked in his wristband" (223-24, original emphasis) who is rumored to have done "a lot of prison time" (190). The talented baker Adam Real-Last-Name-Unknown

> claims to be of Sicilian heritage, affecting the mannerisms and gestures and expressions of the street guinea from some Scorsese-inspired Brooklyn—but is he, actually of Italian lineage? No one knows for sure. Steven claims to have seen his birth certificate—the real one, mind you—and that his real last name is Turkish or Arab. But who knows? Documentation from Adam is always of dubious provenance.
>
> (Bourdain 2000: 239-40)

Tyrone, Segundo, and Adam are among the many chefs, assistants, dishwashers, busboys, and other restaurants staff described in the book as seeming different and exotic to Bourdain, and to each other. But somehow these diverse un-American others, among whom Bourdain proudly counts himself, manage not only to coexist, but work together, produce food, and thrive. They achieve this in a Rortyan manner by "widening their solidarity" and respecting each other's peculiarities. As Bourdain put it, "[i]n most kitchens, one's freakish personal proclivities matter little if at all" (2000: 62) as the crew are "too busy, and too close, and […] spend too much time together as an extended, dysfunctional family to care about sex, gender preference, race or national origin" (223). In this sense, the restaurant kitchen is home to a "poeticized" culture, in which "chances for fulfillment of idiosyncratic fantasies [are] equalized" (Rorty 1989: 53). As such, the kitchen becomes a liberal space where differences are overcome by adopting a shared language: the language of cookery.

**Michael Pollan in Conversation with the Nonhuman**

Richard Rorty's anti-representationalist philosophy is based on the assumption that "any vocabulary is optional and mutable" (Ramberg and Dieleman, 2021). Rorty insisted that there is nothing important outside of language and that the only criterion for determining the validity of a vocabulary is its usefulness in a certain community and context. This standpoint has important consequences for Rorty's cultural politics. By adopting it, he hoped to create a framework which would protect the freedom of diverse citizens in liberal societies and prevent such societies from lapsing into totalitarianism, in which all would be subject to a dogmatic moral code imposed from above.

However, Rorty's approach comes with its own problems, too. Nicholas Gaskill notes that Rorty's anti-foundationalism can easily be condemned as yet another example of "postmodern relativism" (2022: 12). Such criticism is particularly damning in the 21st century, which is steeped in "a climate of 'post-truth' politics, where 'alternative facts' are invoked to justify deplorable acts" (2). Secondly, since Rorty's moral philosophy and cultural politics were based on the notion of "conversation" or finding a common language, he believed that morality is limited to language users, that is humans. In other words, we only have responsibility to other speakers, not to the mute nonhuman world. Rorty's philosophy thus hinges on an implied nature/culture dichotomy. Gaskill observes that Rorty did not "argue the [nature/culture] distinction so much as take it as self-evident. Rorty knows what counts as social (namely, practices of justification) and what counts as natural (brute forces), and his gambit is to get us to stop thinking that the latter sets any conditions upon the former." (Gaskill 2022: 13)

However, considering what we believe about humans, nature, the environment, and their interconnections today, such callous repudiation of the nonhuman from philosophy and ethics seems highly problematic. Instead, contemporary philosophy highlights the inseparability and mutual dependence of the human and the nonhuman. The feminist scholar Donna Haraway, for example, suggests that the nonhuman has agency, just like the human:

> Actors come in many and wonderful forms. Accounts of a "real" world do not, then, depend on a logic of "discovery" but on a power-charged social relation of "conversation." The world neither speaks itself nor disappears in favor of a master decoder. The codes of the world are not still, waiting only to be read. The world is not raw material for humanization […]. In some critical sense that is crudely hinted at by the clumsy category of the social or of agency, the world encountered in knowledge projects is an active entity.
>
> (1988: 593)

Haraway, like Rorty, understands production of knowledge as a form of conversation. In Haraway's vision, however, the conversation is not just a chat between humans about the world. Instead, it is a conversation we are having with the world itself.

Philosophers such as Haraway, Bruno Latour, or Isabelle Stengers have persuasively argued that "the self-evident division between Nature and Culture is not only not that evident but also downright harmful" (Gaskill 2022: 14). If we are to survive as part of the world, we should substitute this division with a convivialist outlook; one in which existence is "built around the slogan 'to be is always to be-with'" (Boisvert 2010: 60). Raymond Boisvert defines a convivialist philosophy as one in which "association and conjunction" take precedence over

individual units (ibid.), and humans are "neither projectors nor mirrors. [They] are sapients, tasters, and, as such, look to trials, experimentations, lived experience, and conversations with others to enhance [their] understandings" (63). For humans who think of themselves as "convives", the nature/culture or human/nonhuman distinctions cease to make sense. They understand community as a "collectivity" of human and nonhuman entities "rather than a freestanding 'society' set against a natural, material backdrop" (65).

The food writing of Michael Pollan echoes many of the philosophical ideas outlined above. Just like Boisvert or Latour, Pollan rejects the human/nonhuman dichotomy. In *Cooked* he explains how people, plants, animals, bacteria, fungi, and inanimate objects each play an essential part in the preparation of our human food. Pollan emphasizes that without the input of numerous human and nonhuman entities we would never be able to sit down to a meal. *Cooked* is not the first text in which Pollan deals with these issues. In two of his earlier books, *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World* (2001) and *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (2006), he discusses the coevolution of humans and various plant species, such as tulips or corn. In *Omnivore's Dilemma* he writes:

> Corn is the hero of its own story, and though we humans played a crucial supporting role in its rise to world domination, it would be wrong to suggest we have been calling the shots, or acting always on our own best interests. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that corn has succeeded in domesticating us.
>
> (Pollan 2006: 23)

If we were to describe this passage using literary terminology, we would say that corn is being personified here. However, in *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, as well as in *Cooked*, Pollan makes it clear that he does not use such personification metaphorically. Corn, just like the wheat berry that beckons the baker to find out "how it thinks" (Pollan 2013: 284), or the yeast and bacteria in sourdough starter who are "temperamental" and require expert care (265) are literally understood as — to use Haraways' phrase — "active entities" with interests, plans, and desires of their own.

Yet Pollan goes further than simply claiming that human and nonhuman entities are both active agents in the world. He problematizes the human/nonhuman dichotomy itself by pointing out that even people are not one hundred percent human. In an interview with Pollan, the food activist Sandor Katz points out that our bodies contain ten times more bacterial cells that human cells. Katz claims that "[m]ost of the DNA we're carrying around is microbial DNA, not human", which, naturally, leads him to the question "Who exactly are we?" (Pollan 2013: 300). Are we really, fully human? And who are the bacteria living inside of us? Are they human, too? Or are we hybrid entities "stretch[ing] over the supposed chasm of mute things and speaking humans" (Gaskill 2022: 15)? Pollan and Katz conclude that, indeed, we are. Katz muses that "a visitor from another planet would be forced to conclude who we are is a superorganism, a symbiotic community of several hundred species, with *Homo sapiens* serving as unwitting front man and ambulatory device" (Pollan 2013: 300). And once even the definition of what is human is thus problematized, a convivialist philosophy becomes the only philosophy that makes sense.

Pollan presents the convivialist approach not only as the key to a healthier life, as it helps us produce and consume the best, highest quality foods, but also as a remedy for the ills of capitalism and contemporary hyperconsumerism. As he sees it

[t]o brew beer, to make cheese, to bake a loaf of bread, to braise a pork shoulder, is to be forcibly reminded that all these things are not just products, *in fact are not even really "things."* Most of what presents itself to us in the marketplace as a product is in truth a *web of relationships*, between people, yes, but also between ourselves and all the other species on which we still depend. Eating and drinking especially implicate us in the natural world in ways that the industrial economy, with its long and illegible supply chains, would have us forget.

<div align="right">(2013: 407-408, emphasis mine)</div>

To bake good bread, cook nutritious food, or brew tasty beer, that is in order to be healthy and happy, we humans must understand our place in the complex "web of relationships" that ties us to the nonhuman others both beyond and within ourselves. Only once we get to know them and learn to respect them can we live truly ethical lives.

## Conclusion

Language, narrative, and conversation are at the center of Richard Rorty's neopragmatism. As a result, Rorty's cultural politics and moral philosophy are characterized by a profound humanism. Rorty believed that maintaining human freedom and reducing human suffering were paramount if we hoped to create a good society. Rorty conceived his philosophy with the threat of totalitarianism in mind. His anti-representationalism, anti-essentialism, and his focus on the individual all aim to problematize the belief in universalizing moral or philosophical outlooks, which could be used as justification for imposing a dogmatic version of knowledge or an oppressive code of conduct on humankind. Instead, Rorty was an advocate of self-creation and of building communities in which members are ultimately responsible only to each other, not to some outside or divine force. However, while there is much value in Rorty's philosophical ideas, his insistence on ignoring the nonhuman is problematic. In the 21st century, food insecurity, climate change, and the epidemic of diseases of civilization serve as daily reminders that to detach ourselves from the nonhuman has disastrous consequences. Contemporary philosophers instead attempt to create conceptual and moral frameworks in which the human/nonhuman dichotomy is overcome.

In this paper I presented a reading of three works of food writing through the lens of Rortyan humanism and contemporary convivialist philosophy. I argued that while Ruth Reichl's *My Kitchen Year* and Anthony Bourdain's *Kitchen Confidential* can be interpreted as examples of Rortyan ethical ideals, namely the ideal liberal individual and the utopian liberal community, Michael Pollan's *Cooked* moves beyond Rorty's humanistic moral philosophy. Echoing contemporary philosophers such as Donna Haraway, Bruno Latour, or Isabelle Stengers, Pollan attempts to construct a new moral philosophy for the 21st century: one in which justice and care are not limited to people but are instead extended to all the objects and beings that, together with us humans, make up this community we call the world.

## References

Boisvert, Raymond D. 2010. Convivialism: A Philosophical Manifesto. *The Pluralist*, vol. 5, no. 2. 57-68. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5406/pluralist.5.2.0057

Bourdain, Anthony. 2000. *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly.* New York: Bloomsbury.

Gaskill, Nicholas. (2022, forthcoming). Rorty against Rorty: Climate Change, Rug-Pulling, and the Rhetoric of Philosophy. *Common Knowledge*, vol. 28, no. 3, 1-26.

Haraway, Donna. 1988. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3. 575-599. DOI: https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066

Leypoldt, Günter. 2008. Uses of Metaphor: Richard Rorty's Literary Criticism and the Poetics of World-Making. *New Literary History*, vol. 39, no. 1. 145-163. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1353/nlh.0.0010

Pollan, Michael. 2001. *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World.* New York: Random House

---. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals.* New York: The Penguin Press.

---. 2013. *Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation.* New York: The Penguin Press.

Ramberg, Bjørn and Dieleman, Susan. 2021. Richard Rorty. In Edward N. Z. (ed.). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/rorty/

Reichl, Ruth. 2015. *My Kitchen Year: 136 Recipes that Saved My Life.* New York: Random House.

Rorty, Richard. 1979. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

---. 1989. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

---. 1992. Introduction: Metaphilosophical Difficulties of Linguistic Philosophy. In Rorty, R. (ed.). *The Linguistic Turn: Essays in Philosophical Method.* 1-39. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

---. 2006a. *Filozofické orchidey.* Bratislava: Kalligram.

---. 2006b. Looking Back at "Literary Theory". In Saussy, H. (ed.). *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization.* 63-67. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Višňovský, Emil. 2020. Rorty's Humanism. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* [Online], vol. XII, no. 1. 1-23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4000/ejpap.1878

*Silvia Rosivalová Baučeková*
*Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice*
*Department of British and American Studies*
*Faculty of Arts*
*Moyzesova 9*
*040 01 Košice*
*silvia.baucekova@upjs.sk*

# Old Wine in New Bottle: The Issue of Corruption in Zambian Prose Fiction

Sylvester Mutunda, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia
Ngoza J. Banda, Zambia Institute of Special Education, Lusaka, Zambia

*Abstract*
*The main objective of this paper is to investigate aspects of corruption traits as reflected in the novel* A Casualty of Power *by Mukuka Chipanta. The study deals with the problem of corrupt leaders in Zambian society, who embezzle public funds, oppress the masses, neglect duties and stop press freedom. Sociological criticism and moral or philosophical approaches are the theories that inform this study. Through the application of these theories, the study has revealed how those in power abuse their offices and the drastic effects this has on the ordinary citizens. The findings indicate that there is manipulation of power through bribery, nepotism, patronage, blackmail and extortion. The findings further reveal how political corruption suppresses, intimidates and terrorizes innocent citizens and the media. The study has demonstrated that the powerless resiliently keep struggling for a better tomorrow. The motive of the writer is to correct the social vices in the society. The aim of the study is to x-ray the problem of corrupt leadership so that the next generation of leaders will not emulate the bad leadership style of older leaders.*

*Keywords: African society, corruption, leadership in Zambia, post-independence, power.*

## Introduction

Corruption has always existed in different forms and is not determined by politics or geography. It exists in rich and poor countries alike; it involves both individual States and international organizations and its costs are borne by the citizens. It affects the proper running of governments, distorts the correct functioning of economic and political institutions and hampers transparency, exploits the human person for selfish interests, renders respect for rules obsolete and is a manifestation of structural sin. In his 2014 article titled *Corruption: The Bane of Africa*, Lumumba quoted Kiraitu Murungi, Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs of Kenya as saying that corruption is worse than prostitution because the latter might endanger the morals of an individual, while the former invariably endangers the morals of an entire country (Lumumba 2014: 17).

As stated above, corruption has always existed in rich as well as poor countries. In Africa, as Hope et al. (2000: 17) observe, corruption has reached cancerous proportions. In fact, so pervasive is this phenomenon in the region that it has been labelled the "AIDS of democracy" which is destroying the future of many societies in the region. The corruption problem in Africa reflects the more general, and now legendary, climate of unethical leadership and bad governance found throughout most of the continent.

One of the major issues facing post-independence Africa is corruption. Indeed, ever since Africans attained political freedom, the continent has been struggling with issues of corruption. After independence, the peoples' hopes and expectations were shattered. Neo-colonialism replaced colonialism. As Ekeh (1975) argued, in the struggle for independence the African elite or bourgeoisie took advantage of ordinary Africans to discredit the alien colonizer, the common man

was encouraged to evade paying tax, go on strike or beat up his white employer and whoever did this was widely covered in the newspapers. This was used as a destructive strategy in the fight for independence. In addition, Ekeh (1975) reveals that, the African bourgeoisie made a lot of promises during the independence struggle to replace the colonial masters, which the ordinary man took seriously; some of them included increased benefits that were characterized with extravagance. However, after independence, most African politicians proved the opposite; they instead became worse than their predecessors, full of greediness and corruption. Consequently, the ordinary man was subjected to a lot of injustices and unfair living conditions. This view is supported by Ngozi Chuma-Udeh (2011: 131) who asserts thus:

> It turned out that a group of 'black power' elite cult had stepped into the vacated seat of the colonial masters. These leaders started where their masters stopped. Theirs was the same, if not worse than the colonial pattern of politics. The ruling class were the products of the same evil they fought against.

From the foregoing, it is clear that Africans in general, chased away the white men during the nationalist struggle in order to step into their shoes. Consequently, literary artists were forced to pick up their pens to write in order to expose and address the ills found among the leaders. Ittner (2009) citing Hope et al. (2000: 17) observes the seriousness of corruption in Africa as follows:

> Corruption in Africa has reached cancerous proportions. In fact, so pervasive is this phenomenon in the region that it has been labelled the "AIDS of democracy" which is destroying the future of many societies in the region. The corruption problem in Africa reflects the more general, and now legendary, climate of unethical leadership and bad governance found throughout most of the continent.

Thus, to make people aware of the effects, dangers and cancerous proportions of corruption, many writers have tried to expose its evils through literature. It is from this background that this paper attempts to unearth the moral and political corruption based on one Zambian novel namely *A Casualty of Power*, which thoroughly inspects the issue of corruption.

The background of corruption can be drawn from Bersselaar and Decker's (2011: 1) abstract in the article "Corruption as an institution in West Africa" where they state:

> Corruption in Africa is an institution that emerged in direct response to colonial systems of rule which super imposed an imported institutional system with different norms and values on an existing institutional landscape, despite the fact that both deeply conflicted and contradicted each other. During decolonization and after independence, corruption, although dysfunctional, fully evolved into an institution that allowed an uneasy cohabitation of colonial and domestic African institutions to grow into a composite, syncretic system facilitated by generalized corruption.

From the above quote, Bersselaar and Decker's (2011) argue that corruption in Africa emerged during the colonial period. Therefore, it is important to note that before colonialism, what is called corruption in Africa today was not corruption then; for Africans, when one is favoured or given something, it was a way of appreciation. Thus, the African traditional practice of giving and

receiving gifts which had existed in different parts of Africa before colonialism became replaced with selfish acts of taking more than what one had worked for. As Munyae and Lesetedi (1998) observes: "in traditional African communities, households exchanged gifts and tribute frequently and occasionally, individuals were expected to make special gifts to close relatives" (cited in Schapera and Comaroff, 1991: 19). It is important to note that such acts of exchanging gifts did not constitute corruption, meaning that they were neither carried out at the expense of the public good nor did they constitute a violation of any established rules and moral or ethical considerations.

Gifts in the African society before colonialism can be distinguished from bribes by drawing a line at the time of reciprocity, because the latter always imply the obligation to reciprocity while the former does not. However, during the colonial period, for instance, gifts were used to obtain favours in the community. The manner or practice of rewarding tax collectors developed into a system of accumulating private property, where African chiefs started taking more than the mandated ten per cent (10%) they were legally supposed to retain from the collected tax. Furthermore, this way of life encouraged chiefs to abuse their office and become more corrupt in their term of office (Munyae & Lesetedi, 1998). In addition, the policy of divide and rule in the colonial period also encouraged the practice of corruption. Munyae and Lesetedi (1998: 21) observe that:

> The policy of divide and rule appears to have permeated the entire fabric of the post-colonial state which encouraged the practice of corruption in several instances. First, the practice can be associated with the rampant ethnicity (tribalism) and/or nepotism that appear to be widespread in African countries. Aware of the political and economic value of the policy of divide and rule, post-colonial African political leaders have developed a tendency to treat members of their tribal group with favour thus setting the stage for the rapid growth of ethno-centric favouritism and nepotism. Second, in some countries, ethnicity/tribalism and nepotism have encouraged the spread of corrupt practices such as embezzlement and economic mismanagement through the appointment of under-qualified, and in some instances unqualified, but politically well-connected tribesmen to fill important positions.

The foregoing quote reveals how African leaders contributed to the rapid growth of corruption through ethno-centric favouritism, nepotism and cronyism. It is in this regard that this paper is attempting to x-ray, through Chipanta's *A Casualty of Power*, the problem of corrupt leaders in Zambia, who embezzle public funds, oppress the masses, neglect duties and stop press freedom. The motive of the writer is to correct the social vices in the society. This writer uses a very clearly way to reveal the greed and lust for wealth, power and corruption. Sociological criticism and moral or philosophical approaches are the theories that inform this study. Sociological theory focuses on the relationship between literature and society, while the philosophical approach focuses on literary works produced in society for the purpose of teaching. This approach examines the moral effect or value literary works are trying to impart in the reader as a moral being.

**Synopsis of the Novel**

Set in Zambia, *A Casualty of Power* (2016) is about an innocent student, Hamoonga, who is caught up in a web of corruption and is later unfairly jailed and tortured. He however does not give in, and after coming out of jail, he willingly fights for justice. This novel, as stated by Branspenning (2017), is an ultimate cry for justice and democracy in Zambia and the rest of Africa.

The story revolves around the main character Hamoonga Moya, a man from a humble background raised by a single mother in Kwacha – one of Kitwe's most notorious townships – who moves to Lusaka to study journalism. He is the first in his family to attend college and he has high hopes. Hamoonga's hopes for a prosperous future are shattered when he gets in the way of a high government official. He ends up as a political prisoner and spends several years in jail where he experiences brutal torture. After his prison sentence, a broken and destitute Hamoonga returns to his hometown Kitwe. Without having finished his degree, he has no other opportunity but to take up a job in a Chinese-owned mine as an unskilled labourer. Hamoonga is subjected to a lot of injustices from all circles of life. Through the protagonist Hamoonga, the author addresses issues of political greediness, betrayal, large-scale corruption, international crime and drug trafficking.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework used in this paper is eclectic, that is, it is built from more than one theory. These include the sociological criticism and moral or philosophical approaches. The decision to anchor the study in an eclectic framework is based on the awareness and acknowledgement of how these theories are interconnected and acceptance of the fact that, no theory is complete or exists independently. For the sake of the study, it is imperative to bring to light that each theory has got its strengths and weaknesses. Such weaknesses and strength show that no single theory can give a full account of the presentation of a phenomenon such as the one under study. Through the lens of these theories, we will attempt to analyse the portrayal of corruption in *A Casualty of Power.* Let us now turn to each of the theories for a greater insight.

Sociological criticism is one of the literary theories that informs this study. This approach which focuses on the relationship between literature and society "[. . .] believes that literature relates to the society and that the writer draws from what is happening in the society of his time in order to write. The writer writes in order to correct the ills found in the society of his time" (Chinelo 2016: 84). In other words, literature is the microcosm of society. The fact that literature acquaints us with a better knowledge of a specific society makes us appreciate this theory more.

The moral or philosophical approach is the other theory that informs this study. The focus will be on how a work of literature is meant to teach morality and to probe philosophical issues (Guerin et al. 2005). The approach focuses on literary works produced in society for the purpose of teaching. That a great literary work must possess seriousness and should insist on ascertaining and stating what is taught (Ibid.). The fact that corruption is still a major challenge among African States makes this approach very important in the study. It also believes that literature is and always has been an important source of moral guidance and spiritual inspiration. This approach examines the moral effect or value the selected text is trying to impart in the reader as a moral being.

**Textual Analysis and Discussion**

**1. Activities of Corrupt Leaders in *A Casualty of Power***

**1. 1. Political Corruption**

Political corruption is a widespread theme in post-independence African novels. Political corruption involves both political leaders and "public officials", it is one of the easiest method leaders adopt for self-enrichment and economic control. Wobilla defines political corruption as "a specific form of manipulation of power that does not always pay money, but the benefits granted in the form of functions within the state paid themselves" (2013: 10). Thus, political corruption can be described as "a method of exploitation by which a constituent part of the public sphere is exploited as if it were part of the market sphere" (Lodge 1998: 158). And from the understanding of Heidenheimer and Johnson (1993) cited by Ogbeidi, political corruption can be viewed as "an unethical behaviour which violates the norms of the system of political order" (2012: 5). In the same breath, Kra (2017) citing Ojaide defined political corruption as "an act which deviates from the formal rules of conduct governing the actions of someone in position of public authority because of private-regarding motive such as wealth, power or status" (2008: 8). Amundsen adds that "political corruption is the manipulation of the political institutions and the rules of procedure, and therefore, it influences the institution of government and political system, and it frequently leads to institution decay" (1999: 3). Therefore, in this study, political corruption is not only limited to manipulation of power by political leaders, but also includes corrupt public officials within the institutions of government including the legislatures, courts, bureaucracies and statutory bodies such as parastatal corporations or commissions. It is constituted by transactions or exchanges of public resources by officials or public representatives and always involves acts that are intentionally dishonest (Lodge, 1998). Corruption can occur at virtually any place within the government because of the sheer vastness of the public sector. Simply stated, political corruption is that which is located within the institutions of government including legislatures, courts, bureaucracies and statutory bodies such as parastatal corporations or commissions.

In *A Casualty of Power,* corrupt acts are revealed through the main character Hamoonga. The writer shows how those without a voice in society become a casualty of those who are in power or politicians. In the novel, political corruption has been depicted as one of the themes the author is trying to expose, which can be classified under the following forms: nepotism, cronyism, bribery, extortion and patronage. The mentioned aspects of corruption have been depicted in the novel as the most common practice and since literature is the microcosm of society, the text has addressed economic exploitation in the mining industry and the imbalance of life styles between the powerful and the weak in Zambia.

## 1. 1. 1. Types of political corruption in the novel

*Bribery*

Bribery as defined by *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (2015) involves payment of money or something valuable to somebody to persuade them to help especially in a dishonest manner. The payment is either done in kind or monetary form and is taken or given in a corrupt relationship (Appolloni and Nshombo 2013). This act of corruption is usually initiated (mostly in private) by a person who is in need of a favour. And for the desire to remain in business, most people find it necessary to bribe public officials so as to carry on with business or maintain their contracts (Gould and Amaro-Reyes 1983).

Bribery is strongly pronounced in *A Casualty of Power* as one of the commonly practiced form of corruption that politicians use to enrich themselves. According to the narrator, the top government positions and contracts are given neither on merit nor according to the rules and regulations of the system. We see how laws and regulations are abused, ignored or side-stepped by the political elite. For instance, both the president and the ministers accumulate wealth through illegal dealings. At this point, we can say that Chipanta as a writer has tried to reflect the realities of what transpires in the Zambian society. Disgusted with the politicians and the Chinese investors, Kalala, one of the character laments: "you see the key trick that imperialists use is to ensnare the mind by appealing to the greed of men" (Chipanta 2016: 140); he calls the politicians greedy, because they make decisions for themselves and their families disregarding the people's welfare. A good example can be drawn from the following excerpt:

> Indeed, the position of minister of mines was one of the most coveted ministerial portfolios. Ascending to that office was akin to having access to the bottomless treasure trove. All mining industry licenses were issued by the ministry of mines and personally signed by the minister.
>
> (Ibid: 157)

The foregoing quote is evidence of how political leaders empty the national treasury by deliberately manipulating the system to suit their interests. As Mutunda aptly observed: "the then Zambian president told his government ministers that a person who works in a farm must feed on the farm produces" (2018: 26). This was one way of encouraging those people holding government positions to use them to their advantage and misappropriate government funds as much as they can. Later on, to emulate the president's misguided advice, one of his ministers openly confessed: "We steal in order to have a good future, to prepare for the future of our children". This situation is unfortunate, misappropriating public funds is being perceived as an emblem of worth. However, Daouda Loum (2010) points out that this conception is neither rational nor ethical. In the people's psyche, to get a good position in government administration or in a company is viewed as a reward for one's work.

We also see how contracts are acquired by bribing the Minister of Mines because without '*nchekeleko*' (a *Bemba* term that means "let me have a share"), no contract was guaranteed. This is evident in the following excerpt: "All the multi-million-dollar mining contracts given to foreign mining companies and contractors had to be personally underwritten by the minister, '*nchekeleko*'

was the unwritten process by which every person wanting a contract or deal in the mining industry had to pay the minister of mines" (Chipanta 2016: 157).

As we learn from the above excerpt, bribing of the minister of mines was in the form of a secret exchange, where by virtue of his mandate or function as the Minister of mines, he takes personal advantage of his office. Because of the extra illegal income, the mines minister easily extracts through "*nchekeleko*" from contracts and licenses, he adopts "a devil-may-care attitude" towards his work. This corroborates Uneke's observation that public servants who are corrupt adopt a devil-may-care attitude towards their work and "do as little work as possible but make incomes far in excess of what their position and status would legally entitle them" (2010: 119, cited in Clarno and Falola 1998). This well-known practice of doing business had eroded ethics in the entire mining industry. Furthermore, apart from being destructive and pervasive, taking bribes is similar to a drug addict who keeps injecting himself, despite knowing that the habit leads to a tragic end. By describing Minister Zulu's position and all the corrupt practices surrounding it, the writer is trying to preach and warn that the graft of bribing is as addictive as taking drugs and the end result is always fatal. He is appealing to politicians to be morally upright thus adhering to the values surrounding the moral philosophical approach.

Another incidence of bribery is also seen among the customs officers at the airport. We witness how Lulu, who is involved in drug trafficking is assured of safety by the Zulus, telling her: "It's simple, there's no risk, we have our people planted at customs on that side but we need someone to carry the parcel" (Chipanta 2016: 58). To smuggle drugs, the customs officers, connive with the Zulus and use their official offices for private gain. Bribery is further evidenced in the text when the mine workers protest for a fair wage and demand for justice for their comrade Kalala who was shot dead by a Chinese supervisor. The mine union leaders remain quiet and side with the offenders instead of the victims they are supposed to protect. The corrupt activities of these mine workers can be seen in this sentence: "[. . .] it's the worst kept secret that all the MWU (Mine Workers Union) leaders are in the pockets of the Chinese and the politicians" (Chipanta 2016: 143). This means that all the union leaders have sold their voice and dignity to the Chinese and politicians; they cannot protect or fight for the workers despite the situation.

*Nepotism*

The term nepotism is derived from the Latin word for grandson or nephew. It is related to the English word nephew, which comes from Latin via Old French. Nepotism is a situation in which a person uses his or her public power to obtain a favour for a family member, usually a job or promotion. According to Alma, "nepotism is a form of discrimination in which members of the family or friends are hired not because of their talents or experience but only because they are relatives to the owner or to the executives of the enterprise" (2015: 13). In the same breath, *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (2000) defines nepotism as favouritism shown to nephews and other relatives by giving them positions because of their relationship rather than their competencies. It is also important to note that in some societies, nepotism is not viewed as a corrupt act, but as a form of appreciation or duty of those holding positions to help their relatives depending on the situation.

In *A Casualty of Power* nepotism depicts the way those with superior positions in government institutions exempt their relatives from certain laws or give undue preference to favour their family members. This is evident in the incident between Lulu and her chemistry teacher a Mr. Chanda, who is fond of sleeping with under aged school girls. When he impregnates Lulu, it is revealed that the young teacher has a bad record of abusing small school girls, but because he had an uncle who is National Commissioner of schools, he never got fired or jailed. Instead, he was transferred to a distant school every time he committed such a despicable offence. Through these acts, the text has exposed immorality in the education system which transpires in reality. It is for this reason that literature is said to be a microcosm of society. The government sets a bad example of transferring morally corrupt workers instead of issuing instant dismissals from the system.

Another incidence of nepotism is seen in the favours that Minister Zulu enjoys because of his relationship with President Chibompo. Minister Zulu is President Chibompo's brother in-law, his wife is the President's cousin and they are also very good old friends. Because of Minister Zulu's connections with the President, he abuses his office by turning it into a black-market endeavour. And due to the corrupt culture in the ministry, the miners face detrimental effects. They are paid extremely low wages and they fail to have decent living standards. As Mbugua (2014) aptly argues, the menace of corruption has links to a multitude of vices like injustice, mistrust and extremism that threatens human rights. This is what is seen in the mine sector, Chinese investors degrade and dehumanize the mine workers. The mine workers as a vulnerable segment of society are subjected to so much extreme poverty, insecurity and misfortune that they fail to support themselves and their nuclear families. Chipanta directly reflects the Zambia China relationship that exist in reality.

*Extortion*

Extortion as a form of political corruption falls under the means used by the corrupt state to threaten, intimidate or assassinate those who criticize the ruling elite. Extortion is defined as a way in which money, information and other resources are extracted through the use of coercion, violence, force or threats. It is usually an action or process initiated by public officials directly or indirectly. It is said to be direct, when the official applies force or coercion when demanding for an advantage of a service not due to him or her, but taking himself the initiative. The act becomes indirect when the public official does not directly ask for a favour, but because of the position of power held, the client feels pressured and fears for more damage hence initiates the process (Lonema 2014). Similarly, Appolloni and Nshombo define extortion in terms of "money and other resources extracted by the use of coercion, violence or the threats to use force" (2013: 9). They further explain that extortion is a corrupt transaction where money or information is violently extracted by those who have the power to do so. A situation where very little is returned to the clients as vague promises of exception from further harassment usually coming from above (Appolloni and Nshombo 2013). In this paper, extortion has been viewed in line with the use of force, violence or threats to silence those who challenge government. Fake information is created and the victimized party is arrested, detained or murdered based on the extorted information.

We see abuse of authority in the way Hamoonga and Ken are attacked and beaten on campus in the night by army officers to the point of losing consciousness. The military officers brutalize the two students to find out the whereabouts of Lulu who has disappeared with Minister Zulu's most valued commodity, drugs. Hamoonga's imprisonment, beatings and torture at Cha-Cha-Cha prison is an example of how information is violently extracted from the powerless by those who have power. On several occasions, Hamoonga is questioned about what he knows about Lulu and the drugs she was exporting. In this case, Cha-Cha-Cha Prison is evidence enough of threatening, interrogating and torturing of innocent people and opposition members for the government. Hamoonga's misfortune and injustice is instigated by the Zulus. We are told that they are a powerful political family with "a vast empire of corruption, patronage and greed [. . .] involved in many things, kick-backs from foreign companies wanting government contracts, drug trafficking [. . .] they have used their political connections to smuggle narcotics across borders" (Chipanta 2016: 91). The Zulu family has abused its political connections and is involved in all the illegal and corrupt transactions. Drug trafficking is one of the means through which corruption is manifested and it brings negative effect on the powerless people who are used in that illicit trade. Thus, these greedy politicians look at Hamoonga as a "threat to the machinations of powerful political dynasty" (Chipanta 2016: 90). Hamoonga is innocently detained for four years without trial, all because these people who placed him in prison operate with impunity and feel they are above the law. Hamoonga is denied and deprived of a part of his humanity, personhood and self-responsibility which makes him suffer serious alienation. He becomes the victim of hopelessness and despondency (Mbugua 2014). It is important to further note that Hamoonga is the only child in his family with a promising future, but because of corrupt leaders, his future is shattered. The mine workers and Hamoonga's situation is as Lumumba (2014: 32) observes in his article that:

> Corruption and corrupt leaders both deepen poverty and make it difficult for ordinary people to get ahead as a result of their own efforts. There is increasing evidence that the costs of corruption disproportionately affect the poor, who do not only suffer from lack of services and efficient government, but who are also powerless to resist the demand of the corrupt officials.

The above excerpt applies to Hamoonga's fate in the novel; he suffers all kinds of abuse and at the hands of corrupt officials. In addition, he is powerless and cannot provide for himself and his family. He has no access to basic necessities of life which include adequate food, decent clothing, safe drinking water, a good education and medical care, and gainful employment (Ugoani 2016).

As a result, Hamoonga is unable to fulfil his social and cultural obligation to his family and community. In this regard, Hamoonga is said to be emasculated. The Senegalese critic Daouda Loum reminds us that in traditional African society, it is incumbent upon the head of the family to provide his wife and under age children with shelter, food and clothing. Therefore, "failure to fulfil this duty means to be unmanly, emasculated or effeminate" (2010: 281). It should be mentioned here that the term "emasculation" is used metaphorically; it does not actually involve mutilation of the genitalia, instead, it involves the use of power and determination on a figurative level. In this case, the metaphor of emasculation expresses the sense of loss that Hamoonga felt when he failed to provide for his family as expected of him by other men and the community at large.

*Cronyism*

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, cronyism is "the situation in which people in power give jobs to their friends" (2015: 356). It always involves favours of public service jobs among friends with no regard to professional qualifications. Cronyism is broader than nepotism because it covers preference in job appointments given to friends or colleagues. In addition, Aktan (1999) as quoted by Karakose (2014: 245), defines cronyism as "being appointed to a public service job or obtaining a concession in the profession based on friendship or citizenship relations". It does not consider the general moral duty of employing the most qualified candidate in job preferences; it is rather based on friendship.

 Chipanta's novel shows the practice of this form of favouritism in the way people are hired in different companies. Hamoonga fails to find a decent job because he is blocked by the security guards who are very corrupt, telling him that they only open the gate to their friends or relatives or those who bribe them. This is evidently expressed in the following excerpt:

> [. . .] many of the security guards purposefully blocked access to hiring supervisors within the plant. Aware of all vacancies, they filtered and channelled job openings to their friends and families, and to those willing to bribe their way in. Such was the depth of corruption in the entire system that even to get audience with a hiring supervisor was subject to patronage and cronyism.
>
>                    (Chipanta 2016: 117)

It should be mentioned that, like any cancerous disease, cronyism and favouritism are hard to control, especially in cultures that place a high value on interpersonal relations (http://www.citadel.edu/citade) particularly to cronies (close friend of long standing), especially as evidenced in the appointment of political hangers-on to office without regard to their qualifications (Ashour 2004).

*Patronage*

According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (2015: 1093), patronage is defined as "the system by which an important person gives help or a job to somebody in return for their support". It is a situation where those in higher positions, for instance politicians, give financial support or jobs to party cadres who in return support the party. Patronage is politically motivated and appointments are done without considering someone's competence or qualifications, which lowers the productivity of government institutions or bureaucracies as a result. The favours are at times extended to the recipient with the view of extracting certain future benefits (Gould and Amaro-Reyes 1983).

 In Chipanta's oeuvre, we learn that in the police service, for a person to rise to the position of police Chief, he/she needs to have strong connections with the higher authority in government. For example, Chief Daka manages to attain his current position of Police Chief because he "had strong political connections with the government, something one needed in order to rise to the rank of Chief of Police" (Chipanta 20016: 84). Patronage can further be seen in the appointment of the district governor of Kitwe. Mutale is given this position as a way of awarding him for his

commitment and loyalty. As the narrator reveals, Mutale was "known for doing as he was told, he had for years been an errand boy for senior party leaders. He had danced at party conventions, stuffed ballot boxes, ferried party hooligans to intimidate opposition members, and all without question" (Chipanta 2016: 165). The narrator explains how government positions are more of a reward to the president's loyalists. It is therefore important to note that such favours are at times extended to other individuals with the view or aim of exacting certain future benefits from the recipients of the favour (Gould and Amaro-Reyes 1983). The Chimbopo administration does not follow any discernible pattern in the appointments of government officials, as the narrator reveals: "[. . .] a few of such positions, served as rewards for the president's most ardent loyalists" (Chipanta 2016: 142). Hamoonga tries to explain to his work mate Kalala that the system supports or works only for the powerful, and not the weak: "in this world you have the powerful and the weak, we my friend, are the weak. That's the system that operates in this country, it's all about patronage; this is not a meritocracy, you rise and fall based on who you know" (Chipanta 2016: 142). This distinction made by Hamoonga is what controls the politics and welfare of the people, and corruption in this scenario lowers the general welfare of the populace (Gould and Amaro-Reyes 1983).

Hamoonga understands the gap between the powerful and the weak better than anyone else because he has gone through the worst in his life. All his sufferings and shattering of his bright future was caused by the so-called powerful people. Hamoonga had experienced grave injustice and after losing his mother he become depressed and "he cared for nothing, lived for nothing [. . .] a dead man walking" (Chipanta 2016: 105). Thus, Hamoonga, is portrayed as a common man who is struggling in life because of his low class. Hamoonga and his family are victims; they are the powerless and are ill-treated by the powerful politicians. Chipanta has presented class struggles in such a way that one can clearly see the injustice inflicted on the weak by the powerful in society. Through these class struggles we can conclude that literature is a true reflection of society. The text has given a true reflection of the socioeconomical relationship between the powerful and weak in a given society. The narrator has further explained elsewhere, that for one to be assigned a ministerial position of Mines Minister, that person should be a close friend of the president because a person who takes up this position has direct access to the treasure trove (Chipanta 2016: 157). These appointments are all made without following the right procedure or ethical code. The position of mines minister is seen as an avenue for both political and economic empowerment.

*Blackmail*

Blackmail is one of the common tricks corrupt people, particularly those in the position of power use to get what they want. It is defined as "the act of putting pressure on a person or a group to do something they do not want to do" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary 2015: 142). The victim is threatened with a secret revelation or something worse if they refuse to comply. Blackmail can either be emotional or moral, thus sometimes referred to as consciousness buying in this study.

We see this form of corruption at play in the way the Chief of Police Daka talks to the detective in charge of Hamoonga's disappearance. He does not ask him directly to drop the case, but talks about how he rose to his current position by covering up the corrupt acts of the politicians. He told the young detective that loyalty was very important in their system and asked him to close

the case stating that "the two boys were attacked by unknown common bandits and the missing boy has run off with some loose woman somewhere and does not want to be found. Case closed. Do you understand? Can I rely on your loyalty, Detective Sakala?" (Chipanta 2016: 86). After the detective was directed to discontinue the investigation, we witness how the poor officer slowly nods his head, "understanding clearly that he had been offered a choice. Essentially, comply-do as you are told, or you will be squashed like an ant beneath a boot" (Chipanta 2916: 86). Detective Sakala knew it was a wrong choice but he had no option but to comply instead of risking losing his job or worse still to be killed. It is unfortunate to note that in most cases subordinates are compelled by their superiors to participate in acts of corruption or risk losing their positions or jobs (Gould and Amaro-Reyes 1983). This is what has brought immorality in places of work. Superiors force their subordinates to be accomplices of corrupt practise in the name of loyalty, desire to be promoted or keep the job. It is such corrupt acts that Chipanta is trying to expose and preach about.

## 1. 2. Administrative Corruption

Apart from political corruption, administrative corruption has also been depicted in Chipanta's novel. Administrative corruption involves getting huge sums of money or commissions from rigged contracts in government institutions (Ugoani 2016). In the same vein, Hallak and Poissen further explain that "administrative corruption arises when public officials accept pay-offs to allow a person to secure a procurement contract or to evade taxes" (2007: 29). Both definitions suggest that administrative corruption allows public officials to fatten their pockets from the rigged contracts or the pay-offs they demand from those evading taxes. In corrupt systems, public officials do not award contracts according to the prescribed procedure. Instead, they give contracts to only those who are willing to pay something huge. In addition, Morris (2011) argues that administrative corruption occurs at the implementation of policy carried out by lower- level officials or the output side of the equation. This means that policy implementers in public offices who are the civil servants take advantage of the system and award contracts to only those who pay huge amounts of money.

Administrative corruption is evident in the novel when Hamoonga and his friends in their group discussion argue about the deals going on between the government and the Chinese investors. Brave bitterly complains that the negotiation on the sale of copper mines was not done in good faith. He calls it "daylight robbery" because, instead of negotiating for the Zambians citizens' interest, the mines minister was paid huge sums of money to approve the selling below fair-market value.

The extent of corruption acts by the Chinese and the mines minister shows no interest in the internal issues as long as they are able to maintain their system of making money. The tire system is an example of extreme unethical conditions of work. The text mirrors the reality of the author's environment at the time of writing, through the character Kalala, one of the mine workers, further expresses his disgust of the type of leadership and system of government found in Zambia, as well as the treatment local citizens are subjected to under foreigner investors through Kalala, one of the mine workers. Kalala further explains that:

What the Chinese are doing today in this country and across the continent is to lure our political leaders into a state of passivity by buying them off with deals to build a few malls or stadiums for which our politicians make a handsome personal profit. The consequence is that politicians sell our people and enslave them into a life of poverty as they enrich the Chinese imperial master.

(Chipanta 2016: 140-141)

The above excerpted passage reveals that corruption has permeated the African continent and the African leaders are busy selling their countries resources to foreign investors without caring about the effects such acts have on the common citizens. In the narrative, Kalala leads in the fight for better working conditions but he is shot in broad day light by a Chinese supervisor Jinan. Instead of arresting and prosecuting the culprit, we see the government together with the union leaders supporting and protecting the Chinese for fear of losing out on the reward they would get from the Chinese investors. We can thus note that Chipanta is trying to appeal to leaders to refrain from acts of corruption that are destroying the African continent. Since the main function of literature is to teach, through these acts, he condemns the system that freely accepts bribes while ignoring the harsh inhuman condition of the workers.

## 2. Effects of corruption

The effects of corruption in *A Casualty of Power* indicate how corruption alienates the poor and weak from participating in matters that directly affect their lives. They are forced to do most dangerous and risky jobs so as to make a living. The powerful abuse and use those who are weak and poor to their advantage by undermining their sense of responsibility. And in so doing, the poor are deprived of their humanity, personhood and suffer serious alienation (Mbugua 2014). For example, Lulu transports drugs from one country to another for the Minister of Mines. She knows it is a crime that can cost her life or imprisonment but is forced to do it anyway. There is also torture and unfair treatment of innocent people. The mine workers face all kinds of abuse under the Chinese supervisors ranging from low wages, belittling language, injuries and sometimes death. Chipanta, in this novel, brings to light the ill relationship that exists between foreign investors and their employees, specifically the Chinese investors in the mining sector. He intentionally condemns the socioeconomic conditions that exist between the exploiters and the exploited, which is a true reflection of most Africa societies. Through the revolt by miners to fight for their rights, Chipanta is consciously suggesting a new dawn which is balanced and secure for all the oppressed and controlled.

In this text, the poor and those who are weak suffer injustice at the hands of those who are strong. The poor become poorer and cannot do anything, while the powerful try to protect their interests by all means even if it means death or shedding innocent blood. This happens when Hamoonga, the only boy child with a bright future in his mother's eyes, is falsely accused and jailed. His mother dies from depression while on the Zulus' side, they do not care what happens to the victim and his family, as long as their emperor is not destroyed. We see how those with money are respected while the downtrodden suffer in silence.

Among the effects of corruption revealed in the text is how poverty and inequality levels within society inhibit the realisation of individual goals or dreams. At the individual level,

corruption adds to a person's misfortune and poverty. This is evident when Hamoonga experiences extreme poverty after he is deprived of a decent quality of life. As a character, he constantly struggles against the powerful. He lacks the basic necessities of life such as adequate food, good education and a gainful employment. He finds himself in a situation where he has no ability to fulfil his social and cultural obligations that are important in his life. One such obligation is when his mother dies, he is not allowed to put her to rest or attend and perform the burial rituals. Through this, Chipanta has demonstrated how the masses suffer in all sectors of life, struggling to improve their lives but unfortunately, the system does not give them room to improve and grow into competent citizens. Chipanta has used his novel to give a true reflection of what transpires in Zambia by focusing on exposing the imbalance that exists between foreign supervisors and the local workers. He has shown how Chimbopo's corrupt regime perpetuates discrimination in society, especially in the mining sector. The Chinese investors follow no ethics or morals and ignore the workers condition. Hence, in accordance with the moral philosophical approach, the text is preaching against injustice and unfair treatment employees receive from their employers.

Manipulation of the media is another effect depicted in the text. We see that the media is always manipulated so as to suit the government's interest especially that the media is the main source of information. Thus, once the government takes control of the media, it is easy for them to manipulate public opinion so as to satisfy their private and political interests. For instance, in the burning of Chisokone market, misinformation is utilised as a tool to divert the people and media's attention from protests by mine workers; this is Chipanta's way of exposing the government's corrupt network and their illegal dealings. Without shame, the Minister of Mines and his partners use thugs to destroy poor people's hard work, they kill three people and frame innocent mine leaders as culprits. This can be seen in the following narrative:

> The Zulus had put their thugs in place to set the market ablaze at precisely the right moment. Now with the market in ashes, and the marketeers' union leaders as reliable witnesses placing Hamoonga and his men at the scene of the crime, it was an open and shut case of arson and murder. The three deaths in the fire were an added indictment of the mine workers; the whole city turned against them. Now the narrative was that the mine workers were greedy men who had burned down Chisokone market to drum up attention for their selfish plight.
>
> (Chipanta 2016: 187)

From the above excerpt, we see that the police are full of apathy and incompetence before the people. When Chisokone market is burnt, innocent people are arrested and charged of treason and murder. The whole fire incident is the making of the politicians and the police are involved, they stand guard waiting to arrest the mine leaders as instructed. From this we can argue, in agreement with Mbugua (2014), that corruption leads to the infringement of numerous civil, social, economic and political rights. The politicians are not interested in the losses the owners of the goods at the market will incur apart from serving their personal interests. Despite the compensation the people of Chisokone market might receive for their goods, a lot of time and labour has been wasted which cannot be recovered with money. Chipanta has intentionally revealed how some politicians tend to be greedy, selfish and violent, leading to the exploitation of commoners. He reveals the oppressive socioeconomic forces ordinary citizens undergo due to selfish decisions politicians make.

Another effect is that corruption compromises the functioning of the state and negatively influences the relationship between those who govern and the governed. We see how Minister Zulu and his wife have made a good fortune out of corrupt activities. To the public they appear innocent and are not directly involved in the dirty jobs but use innocent youths, who are trying to make a living, to do all the dirty work for them. Lulu becomes their strong link as she adds to their fortune by transporting drugs form one country to another. The Zulu family is feared by many and they have managed to destroy different families with their greediness. We further see oppression of the poor pronounced in the novel. In Hamoonga's case, the joy of the family is destroyed after he is arrested, his mother suffers and undergoes depression when her hopes and aspirations for her only son are shattered. She dies while trying to figure out what has happened to her son. The misfortune in Hamoonga's family is evidence of social oppression imposed on the most vulnerable in society. Before Hamoonga's mother dies, she seeks help from the police but nothing happens. She realises that when you are a nonentity, no one hears you out, she laments: "There was no justice for the poor. If Hamoonga had been a well-known politician or some rich man, the police would have done everything to find him" (Chipanta 2016: 98). This excerpt proves the fact that in most societies, it is those with money who are given priority over matters of life. The mine workers are also oppressed by their supervisors; they earn little but work for long hours in a deplorable environment. They cry out to the government for help but are given a deaf ear and as a result they lack in almost all sectors of life. The poor working and living conditions affect their families, they fail to provide a decent living in terms of health, education and housing. We can therefore say that through the government's reluctance to do something about the mine workers' welfare, one may argue that it is as good as selling their country's heritage to foreigners because of their corrupt and greedy leadership. This demonstrates that one function of literature is to teach the general public by emphasising moralism in all sectors of life.

The text also portrays how prisoners are brutally beaten and kept in jail for a long time without trial. For instance, Hamoonga and other inmates are wrongfully kept at Cha-Cha-Cha prison. They experience all kinds of torture and are sometimes left to die after being beaten to the point of losing consciousness. All this is abuse of universal human rights that every person is entitled to and is supposed to enjoy.

**Conclusion**

Here, attempts have been made to summarize all that has been done in this research adventure. From the sociological point of view, we see that Chipanta has portrayed the reality of life with the aim of exposing the corrupt leadership style "for future generations to see and most importantly learn" (Asika 2011: 279). That is, through his novel, Chipanta aptly brings to the fore the malaise that Africa goes through under corrupt regimes.

Corruption leads to abuse of power and mismanagement of both human and natural resources. Indeed, as Ugoani aptly asserts, "corruption is a destroyer; it corrodes the democratic ethos, spreads it filth and eventually imperils democracy" (2016: 73). This study therefore, concludes that whatever its form, corruption is the greatest threat to democracy and economic development in any society. Since it breaches trust, fidelity and more importantly betrays moral principles and norms of social justice, corruption greatly hinders the development of a nation

(Mbugua 2014). It also deepens poverty and destroys work ethics. The text has portrayed corruption as an evil immoral act which, if not controlled, can greatly destroy the lives of innocent people and the nation at large. In the findings, we see how the poor citizens experience all kinds of exploitation from their corrupt rulers. A worst scenario in the text is when we see the police who are supposed to protect the citizens, oppress and intimidate the people instead. The police repress and manipulate the powerless through the media and national news. Information transmitted through the media is extorted.

In fact, the novel reveals how those who oppose or question the corrupt activities suffer over crimes they never committed. Extortion has been depicted as a common act of corruption in form of oppression, used to silence anyone against the ruling elite. The findings further reveal how those involved in corrupt acts end up being punished either by their fellow politicians or the oppressed citizens. Chipanta shows at the end of his novel that, society is for all the people and not only selfish politicians or the elite class. The study thus indicates that indeed power can inevitably be seized or replaced through a revolution. In *A Casualty of Power,* we see Hamoonga burning the Zulus to death in cold blood, an action which shows how far an innocent person can be pushed, to the point of taking power into his own hands.

From the analysis and effects of political corruption, this study agrees more with Amundsen (1999) who rightly points out that, political corruption affects the manner in which decisions are made through the manipulation of both political institutions and the rules of procedure. This study has presented how those in power abuse their offices and the drastic effects this has on the ordinary citizens. The effects reveal how political corruption betrays and destroys both the moral fabrics and norms of a society. In a nutshell, corruption compromises the functions of the state by influencing the relationship between those who govern and the governed negatively (Mbugua 2014). Therefore, through both the sociological criticism and the moral philosophical approaches, the study concludes that through the selected text, Chipanta expressed the courage of conviction to expose and attack injustice, social inequality and corruption in all its forms. The study has therefore revealed, through the two theories employed, that corruption is indeed a societal ill that needs to be addressed, controlled, and if possible, rooted out. Through the sociological approach, it has been revealed that the theme of corruption has permeated all sectors of most African societies, forcing the writer to condemn it through various genres as shown through the text in this study. Furthermore, corruption has been shown as a cancerous act that endangers the morals of the society, hence the need for the authors to expose it and preach against it as argued by the moral philosophical approach. And finally, the findings have shown how the powerful oppress and intimidate the weak, leading to social stigma and prevention of any change in the social hierarchy and power relations. From the analysis and discussion above, we can attempt to state that Chipanta has creatively demonstrated that leadership is the bane of our Zambian and African society at large. Finally, it is very obvious that corruption is one of the most dominant and rampant themes in post-colonial literature. Thus, Chipanta can be viewed as a rebellious novelist who took the initiative to tell the realities of his own society through his literary work. This writer is not ashamed to give very vivid pictures to his readers. As a social crusader, the novelist stands out among the crowd to write and preach against corrupt politicians occupying leadership positions in the society (Nnolim 2007: 62). The novelist as a social crusader preaches against bribery and

corruption, embezzlement of public funds, oppression of the masses, inhibition of press freedom and negligence of duty among leaders.

## References

Aktan, C. 1999. Restructuring as Moral and Towards Total Moral: 3 - political and Political ethics: Ari Thinking and community Development Association publication.

Alma, S. 2015. Nepotism as a Negative Factor in Organization Performance. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies.* MCSER publishing, Rome-Italy, 4 (2). 9-13.

Amundsen, I. 1999. *Political Corruption: An Introduction to the issues*. Norway: Chr. Michelsen Institute. Development Studies and Human Rights.

Appolloni, A. & Nshombo, J. 2013. *Public procurement and corruption in Africa*. A Literature Review. Rivista di Politica Economica.

Asika, E. I. 2011. Military Dictatorship in Nigerian Novels: A Study of Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* and Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah. Multi-Disciplinary Journal,* Ethiopia, 5 (3), 20. 275-289.

Ashour, A.S. 2004. Transparency and accountability in the public sector in the Arab region. Concept paper3, United Nations. Accessed October 25, 2019. www.unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan015390.pdf.

Bersselaar, D & Decker, S. 2011. No Longer at Ease: Corruption as an institution in West Africa. *International Journal of Public Administration*. Accessed November 02, 2019. http://www.tandfonline.com/do/abs/10.1080/01900692.2011.598272.

Branspenning, G. 2017. Mukuka Chipanta's A Casualty of Power, A Review. Africa Book Link, Spring 2017. *New African Literature, drama & criticism*.

Chinelo, O. F. 2016. Corruption in the African novels: Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautyful One's Are Not Yet Born*. International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies (LALIGENS) Ethiopia, 1 (11). 82-88.

Chipanta, M. 2016. *A Casualty of Power*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Weaver Press.

Chuma-Udeh, Ngozi. 2011. "Literature and Post-colonial Disillusionment" *Trends and issues in Nigeria Literature*. Nigeria: Malchjay Limited.

Clarno, A. & Falola, T. 1998. "Patriarchy, Patronage, and Power: Corruption in Nigeria," in J.M. Mbaku (ed.). *Corruption and the Crisis of Institutional Reforms in Africa*, 167-191. Edwin Mellen.

Ekeh, P. 1975. Colonialism and the two publics in Africa: A Theoretical statement. *Comparative studies in society and History*, 17 (1): 91-112.

Gould, D.J. & Amaro-Reyes 1983. *The Effects of Corruption on Administrative Performance. Illustrations from Developing Countries*. The World Bank, Washington, D.C, U.S.A

Guerin, W. L. et al. 2005. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. (5th edition). New York: Oxford University.

Hallak, J. & Poissen, M. 2007. *Corrupt Schools, Corrupt Universities: What Can be Done?* Paris: International institute for educational planning.

Heidenheimer, A & Johnson M. (eds.) 1993. *Political Corruption: Concepts and Contexts*. London: Transaction Publishers.

Hope, K. R. et al. (eds.). 2000. *Corruption and Development in Africa*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Ittner, S. 2009. *Fighting Corruption in Africa – A Comparative study of Uganda and Botswana* (Dissertation) Deutschen Hochschule Speyer.

Karakose, T. 2014. The Effects of Nepotism, Cronyism and Political Favoritism on the Doctors Working in Public Hospitals. *Ethnol med.* 8 (3). 245-250.

Kra, K. 2017. Corruption in Anglophone African Literature: An Analysis of Achebe and Soyinka's Novels. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Knowledge.* 2 (4). 112-126.

Lodge, T. 1998. Political Corruption in South Africa. *African Affairs*, (97).157-187.

Lonema, F. 2014. Juridical Status of Corruption in Civil law and in Canon Law. In Nduku, E. & Tenamwenye, J (eds.). *Corruption in Africa: A Threat to Justice and Sustainable Peace*. 252-267. Geneva: Globethics.

Loum, Daouda. 2010. The Ambivalence of Masculinity in Gorgui Dieng's *A Leap Out of the Dark*. In Mugambi, H. N. and Tuzyline Jita Allan (eds.). *Masculinities in African Literacy and cultural Texts*. 270-287. Banbury: Ayeba Clarke Publishing Limited.

Lumumba, P. 2014. Corruption. The Bane of Africa. In Nduku, E. & Tenamwenye, J (eds.). *Corruption in Africa: A Threat to Justice and Sustainable Peace*. 24-47. Geneva: Globethics.

Mbugua, D. 2014. Corruption and Human Rights Moral. Theological Perspectives In Nduku, E. & Tenamwenye, J. (eds.). *Corruption in Africa: A Threat to Justice and Sustainable Peace.* 217-244. Geneva: Globethics

Merriam Webster. 2000. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. Springfield: Merriam Webster incorporated.

Morris, S. 2011. Forms of corruption, CESIFO DICE Report. Ifo Institut-leibniz- *Institute for Economic Research at the University of Munich*, 9 (2). 10-14.

Munyae, M. M. & Lesetedi, G.N.1998. Interrogating our past: Colonialism and corruption in Sub-Saharan Africa. *African Association of Political Science*. *African e- Journals project* Michigan State University Library, 3 (2). 15-28.

Mutunda, Sylvester. 2018. Hegemonic Masculinity and Emasculation in Aminata Sow Fall's *The Beggars Strike*. *International Journal of Educational Investigations*, Vol.5, No.6. 23-36.

Nnolim, Charles E. (2007). The writer's responsibility and literature in National Development. In *Literature, Literary criticism and National Development*. University of Port Harcourt: SGS Lecture series. 2007.

Ogbeidi, M. 2012. Political Leadership and Corruption in Nigeria Since 1960: A Socio-Economic Analysis. *Journal of Nigeria Studies* 1(2): 1-25.

Ojaide, F. 2008. The Professional Account and Anti-Corruption Crusade. *I can News*, July-September.

*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. 2015. UK: Oxford University Press.

Schapera, Z. & Comaroff, J. 1991. *The Tswana* (Revised Edition), London: Kegan Paul

Ugoani, J. 2016). Political Will and Anticorruption Crusade Management in Nigeria. *Independent Journal of Management and Production*, 7 (1). 72-97.

Uneke, O. 2010. Corruption in Africa South of the Sahara: Bureaucratic Facilitator or Handicap to Development. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3 (6). 111-128.

*Wester New International Dictionary*. 2000. UK: Oxford University Press.

Wobilla, S. L. 2013. *Christian identity and the fight against corruption: Reflection on the need of a diaconal approach in the eradication of corruption in Cameroon*. (Master's thesis), Diakonhjemmet University College, Oslo, Norway. http//www.citadel.edu/citadel. Accessed on: 20-08-2019: 22:45.

*Sylvester Mutunda*
*Department of Literature and Languages*
*University of Zambia, P.O. Box 32379, Lusaka, Zambia*
*e-mail: musvester@yahoo.com*

*Ngoza J. Banda*
*Language and Literacy Section*
*Zambia Institute of Special Education (ZAMISE), P.O. Box 320081, Lusaka, Zambia*
*e-mail: ngozakamanisha3@gmail.com*

# Emotiveness of Multimodal Website Book Reviews: an Influential Aspect

Iryna Ushchapovska, Halyna Chulanova, and Diana Movchan, Sumy State University, Ukraine

*Abstract*

*The article presents the results of the study of the influential potential of website book reviews in terms of multimodality. The research is based on modern approaches to understanding the issue of linguistic influence as a multimodal suggestive discursive phenomenon. Being a secondary text, a book review optionally accompanies the literary work as a primary construction with its pragmatic orientation. Targeted at the main text, the book review makes it the object of evaluation, while the reader, being the author of the review, acts as the subject of the evaluation. It has been revealed that emotional saturation is an immanent characteristic of website book reviews. Persuasive influence is simultaneously a psychological phenomenon and communicative process. The appeal of book reviews to the psychic and emotional sphere of human life determines the specificity of the selection and organization of verbal and non-verbal resources. It is proved that the emotiveness of book reviews has a categorical status and is implemented at different verbal (phonetic, morphological, lexical, and syntactic) and non-verbal (graphic and visual) levels.*

*Keywords: book review, website, reader, multimodality, emotionality, emotiveness*

## 1 Introduction

Considering the rapid pace of the development of computer communication, the Internet is an integral component of interpersonal interaction and a mobilizer of language resources to influence people's consciousness, feelings, and thoughts. The use of verbal and non-verbal means in the field of electronic communication has a conscious, purposeful, and social-evaluative character, which determines the need for research aimed at identifying and explaining the potential of multilevel means of speech influence of certain genres in Internet discourse, implemented both in the general strategies of this Internet genre and in its separate segments.

The issue of the effectiveness of speech influence involves addressing such concepts as "persuasiveness" and "suggestiveness". At the same time, persuasive influence is considered a special type of communicative action, namely a certain influence of the author of an oral or written message on his addressee to convince of something, to call for the implementation or non-implementation of certain actions (Hesse 2015). Persuasive communication is often equated with rational argumentation. If persuasive influence is an appeal to logic, reason, and facts, then suggestive influence bypasses reason through direct or indirect suggestions. This is usually an appeal to emotions, the unconscious, and vivid impressions (Miller & Johnson-Laird 2014).

It is worth noting that, despite the differences, persuasive and suggestive means of influence are often used in a complex manner; the use of suggestive methods at the initial stage of influence is particularly productive, as it allows bringing the addressee into a certain psychological state, which is necessary for the further perception of arguments and the achievement of a perlocutionary effect. This work deals mainly with the form of hidden,

disguised influence, i.e., suggestion. A suggestion can be described as an effect on the mental sphere of the addressee, which is associated with a decrease in the level of criticality in the perception of content, with a lack of purposeful and active understanding, analysis, and correlation with experience (Bandler 2019). The effectiveness of suggestion is determined, according to researchers, by the characteristics of the suggestor (status, intellectual, etc.), the characteristics of the suggerend (emotional state, degree of perception of external influence), relations between the participants of the act of suggestion (trust, authority, and dependence), ways of constructing forms and means of influence. Suggestiveness as a type of hidden influence in the process of communication is widely used in many types of discourse, including Internet discourse, but the specifics of suggestive influence within the framework of text reviews have not yet become the subject of a special linguistic analysis, which determines the relevance of this scientific investigation.

The theoretical base of the study was made up of the concepts of domestic and foreign authors, dedicated to various aspects of the study of the problem of linguistic influence in the field of communication theory, pragmalinguistics, discourse analysis, multimodal linguistics, and psycholinguistics (Batsevich 2004, Zasekina, Zasekin 2008, Pocheptsov 2012, Susov 2009, Kaminska 2019, Kalmykova 2015, Kutuza 2018, Osgood 1988, Pinker 1998, Turnbull 2003, Seuren 2009, Turk 2003, Kress G. & van Leeuwen 2001, etc.). The purpose of the study is to identify and comprehensively describe the communicative, pragmatic, and suggestive characteristics of website book reviews as a relevant component of multimodal Internet discourse and modern communicative space.

## 2 Material and methods

The material of the research is book reviews, selected by the method of continuous sampling from the book review website (*Goodreads*). The research involves such research methods as the discursive method, the contextual and interpretive method, the descriptive method, the analysis of linguistic means of suggestion, and the analysis of communication in the light of the theory of language activity.

## 3 Presentation of the main material

Given the unstoppable pace of informatization of society, the study of the peculiarities of communicative behavior in the virtual space gives rise to several issues related to the explanation of the characteristic features of communication within the framework of various genres of Internet discourse: Internet forums, chats, electronic magazines, web pages, banner advertising, correspondence via e-mail, etc. Analyzing virtual communication on Internet forums, some peculiarities can be highlighted. Thus, virtual communication is multimodal as it is both verbal and non-verbal (visual), it has signs of both oral and written communication, it is unofficial, which is determined by the status equality of the participants, it is asynchronous, it is open and proactive as users can choose the interlocutor themselves and interrupt communication at any time. An important feature of Internet communication is anonymity, which allows an individual to feel free and reveal those qualities that he does not allow himself to show in real life (Kaminska 2019: 151).

Book reviews or "blurbs" as an example of Internet communication have all the above-mentioned features. Blurbs are a key part of book marketing: they are supposed to entice readers to buy the book. They are a sales pitch that should sound interesting and

should represent what is in the book without giving too much away. The blurb is designed to entice the reader. If a blurb makes a reader want to read more, it's successful, if a blurb bores or overwhelms the reader, it needs to be rewritten. Blurbs are sure to be called a marketing tool to sell a book. Thus, book review websites can be considered a marketing platform. There are several such sites a reader may refer to before making his/her purchase decision. The greater the diversity of opinions gathered on the website, the more confidence the reader may have about his further interaction with the book.

New technologies have enabled free access to any source of information, to its literary form as well, providing the possibility of prompt direct contact, the dialogue between the author and the reader, as well as between the readers. The freedom, efficiency, immediacy, and interactivity of this kind of communication led to the emergence of a fundamentally new actor in traditional literature – an active reader. He seeks to influence potential readers and for this purpose, he organizes a kind of "advertising campaign" of the literary piece he has read, creating his book review based on his reading experience. The communicative situation carried out with the help of such a book review text can be described by the following scheme:

AUTHOR 1 → BOOK → READER = AUTHOR 2 → BOOK REVIEW → POTENTIAL READER

The reader, who is also the producer of the review text, having familiarized himself with the new book, expresses his opinion about what he has read and shares it with other readers. Being an auxiliary text, a book review text optionally accompanies the literary text as a primary construction with its inherent pragmatic orientation. Book reviews are informative, self-sufficient for interpretation, have their addresser and addressee, set clear goals, and are one of the means of influencing the recipient's choice. The purpose of such texts is to form a certain reader's assessment and create a psychological and emotional atmosphere, prompting the reader to take a certain action (Movchan, Chulanova, Kobyakova 2017: 110). The significance of book reviews is indicated by the fact that when choosing a new book, a potential reader, before buying it, tries, as if to "peek" inside the book, to understand whether this work will meet his expectations. Thus, the reader is assisted by the book review texts posted on the websites, to which the reader draws his attention. Further readers' revelations posted on the Internet prove this fact:

Scanning the reviews, one particular unhappy customer called the book "puerile". They intended it as an insult but actually, it's the truest thing they said about the book they never finished (1).

First look at that title. It's weird, isn't it? I would never have read this if not for the amazing cover next to it and the good reviews and let's admit, the fact that there is a movie on this (2).

The suggestiveness of book review texts is the infusion that is consciously carried out by the author of such a book review text (suggestor) concerning a potential reader (suggerend). Deliberate infusion in book review texts consists in the use of special "verbal formulas" by the suggestor, which are introduced into the mental sphere of the suggerend and become active elements of his consciousness and behavior. The content of deliberate infusion is a component of the information contained in the text and is often characterized by unawareness, imperceptibility, and involuntary assimilation.

Given the fact that indirect infusion appeals not to the consciousness of the suggerend, but to mental structures that lie beyond it, it can be argued that linguistic suggestion is characterized by the "logic of trance", that is, tolerance of logical contradictions under the influence of emotional and irrational elements of the listener's psyche (Denisevych 2016: 33).

Emotional infusion within the framework of book review texts as a product of processing primary literary texts is aimed at creating or correcting the general emotional mood of a potential reader. The suggestor tries to evoke certain positive or negative emotions of the suggerend, among which we highlight the following:

- pleasant surprise:

I'm at a loss for how to tell you about this book without telling you too much of what makes it so *juicy and enjoyable.* I'll just sum it up as READ. THIS. BOOK! (3)

- pleasure:

LOVED this book. It's like watching a train wreck in slow motion. It reminds me of BIG LITTLE LIES- parents behaving badly in believable, horrifying, yet shockingly relatable ways! So so so good (3).

- delight:

This book is solidly on my 'best of 2019' book list. GET THIS BOOK NOW, Y'ALL…. order it, pick it up at your local indie book shop, put it on your library holds list...just get your hands on it (3).

Exceptional? Oh yes! This, my friends, was just about the best inside look at privileged parenting I've ever read. What a great idea for a book! (3).

- respect for the author and his work:

**I am madly in love with Jane Fallon's latest novel!!!** I can't believe I have had *Sweet Revenge* forever and haven't read it yet. You can be sure to see it reviewed very soon! (4).

I highly enjoy Stephen King's descriptive writing style! I was on the edge of my seat for the majority of the novel, and I definitely did not sleep well the following night! (5).

- disappointment:

I've been reading Uncle Stevie for about 35 years now, and there's been plenty of peaks and valleys in my fandom. This time out he found *a whole new way to disappoint me* (6).

- dislike of the author:

Juvenile. Immature. Boring. I couldn't care less what happened to Holly. I didn't finish the book. I've always enjoyed Jane Fallon's books (the first 7 were brilliant) but I feel she's just churning them out now. I didn't enjoy her previous book to this and was hoping she'd get back on track but not with this one. A 10-year-old could read this book (4).

- irritation:

There's *nothing* positive about this book, so let's just go straight into *why it was so bad* (7).

I fully respect what Stein was trying to do...well, I guess what she actually did and why, but I never want to read the story of Melanctha again in my life. No never no more do I want to read Melanctha. Never no more in my life do I want to read Melanctha. No never no more again (8).

The emotional saturation of book review texts is their immanent quality, the purpose of which is the ability to excite the reader and influence his emotional and mental state. Emotions are expressed as a kind of experience that performs a key function in managing behavior (Apresyan 2018; Argaman 2010). Osgood sees emotions as "one of the subsystems of consciousness that is part of human intelligence" (Osgood 1988). From this statement, it follows that emotionality has a close connection with consciousness and thinking, and therefore with language. Emotiveness, acting as a means of linguistic influence, can stimulate emotionality, which at the same time functions together with language and compensates for linguistic means.

Emotive adjectives (emotives), such as *juicy and enjoyable, achingly funny, laugh-out-loud brilliant, all-around wholesome, nutritious, genuinely fascinated,* etc. have special pragmatic potential. A specific feature of emotions is their special reference: they do not correlate directly, like indicative words, with objects and phenomena of reality. They correspond to the typed emotions evoked by these objects, in our case, books. In the closest context, the presence of several emotives creates an emotive "chain", in which the nature of semantic relations is determined by the specifics of the situation being transmitted, the systemic relations of emotive lexical units, the features of the thesaurus of the linguistic personality. In emotional chains, both the convergence of the meanings of emotional lexical units and their opposition can occur:

*Funny, enjoyable, somewhat predictable* but once I start I can't put it down.

I hate Joel Golby cause he made me write my first Goodreads review. I hate Joel Golby because his writing is *so good* I *get disappointed* in my own. I hate Joel Golby because he made me have a Big Think about drinking. I hope he writes a load more books (1).

Emotives as a special layer of vocabulary are characterized by contextuality, i.e., the maximum conditioning of their meaning by the speech situation. Let's consider a few examples:

Enthralling, admirable, *refreshing* book from an extraordinary lady (9).

*Garish!* Outrageous! The master of snappy dialogue (10).

Thus, in example, the adjective "refreshing" attracts attention precisely in the context mentioned above. The direct meaning of the word garish is "bright", but the brightness denoted by the word is unpleasant for the eye, which is reflected in the dictionary definition as "unpleasantly bright" and is proved by the examples of garish light – "something that cuts the eyes, blinding light", garish clothes – "motley clothes". In the book review text, this word acquires a positive meaning and emphasizes the extraordinary, scandalous nature of the book. Based on the propositions of suggestive linguistics, it can be argued that adjectives used to denote sensory and visual perception are quite productive, as they quite accurately visualize the characteristics of the subject of the message, "visualizing" the content of what is communicated, thereby intensifying the impact on the recipient. From the perspective of multimodal linguistics, book review texts are a multimodal formation – a synthesis of modes – semiotic resources of different natures (Ushchapovska, Movchan, Chulanova 2020: 211). A verbal text is complemented by visual resources (pictures, symbols, typefaces, and use of colors) to intensify the perception of the book review and make it more attractive and persuasive.
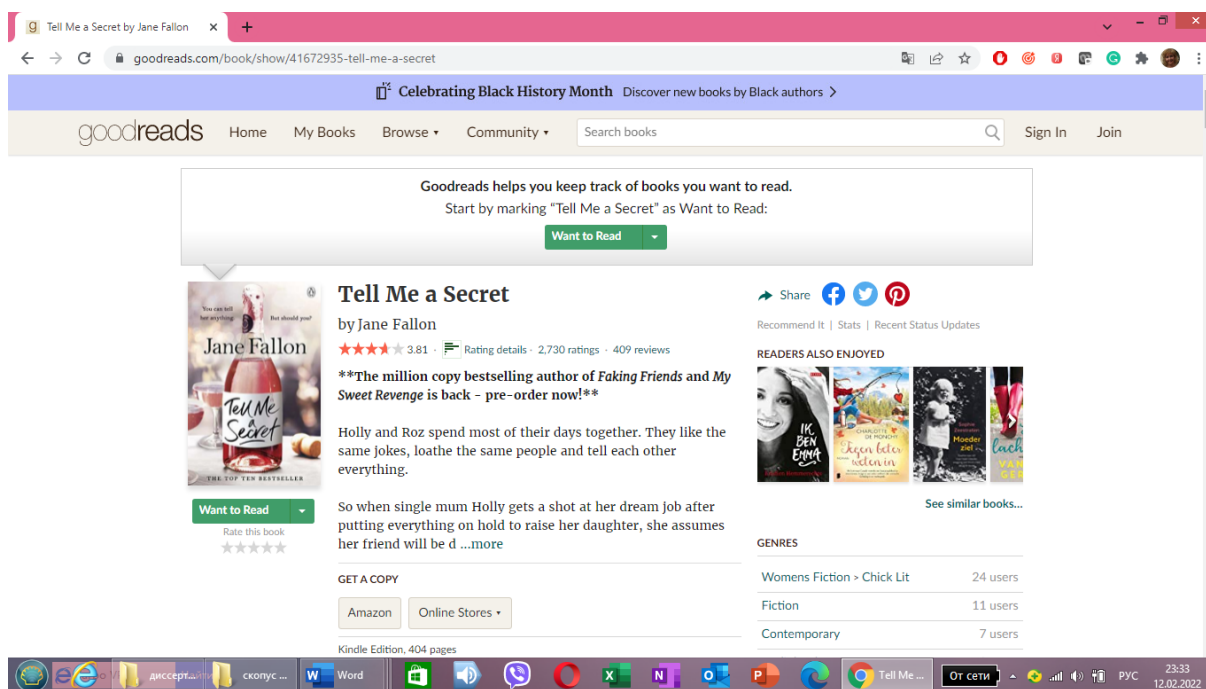
Figure 1: "Tell Me a Secret" book review (4)

As we can see from the below-listed examples, to emphasize the intensity of impressions from the literary work, capture the reader's attention, and evoke certain emotions in him, various types of intensifiers are used, such as "creative" spelling, capitalization, intentional violation of punctuation rules, exclamation marks, interrogative sentences, unfinished statements, etc. The combination of text and visual signs dramatically lowers the threshold of effort required to perceive the message. A "cooperative effect" is created, associated with the interaction of two types of perception – semantic and aesthetic since graphic design is an integral part of the discourse of aesthetics (Kress G. & van Leeuwen 2001). The use of a capital letter in cases not determined by the rules of grammar is a common method of suggestion: a capital letter gives weight, and visually distinguishes a word from others:
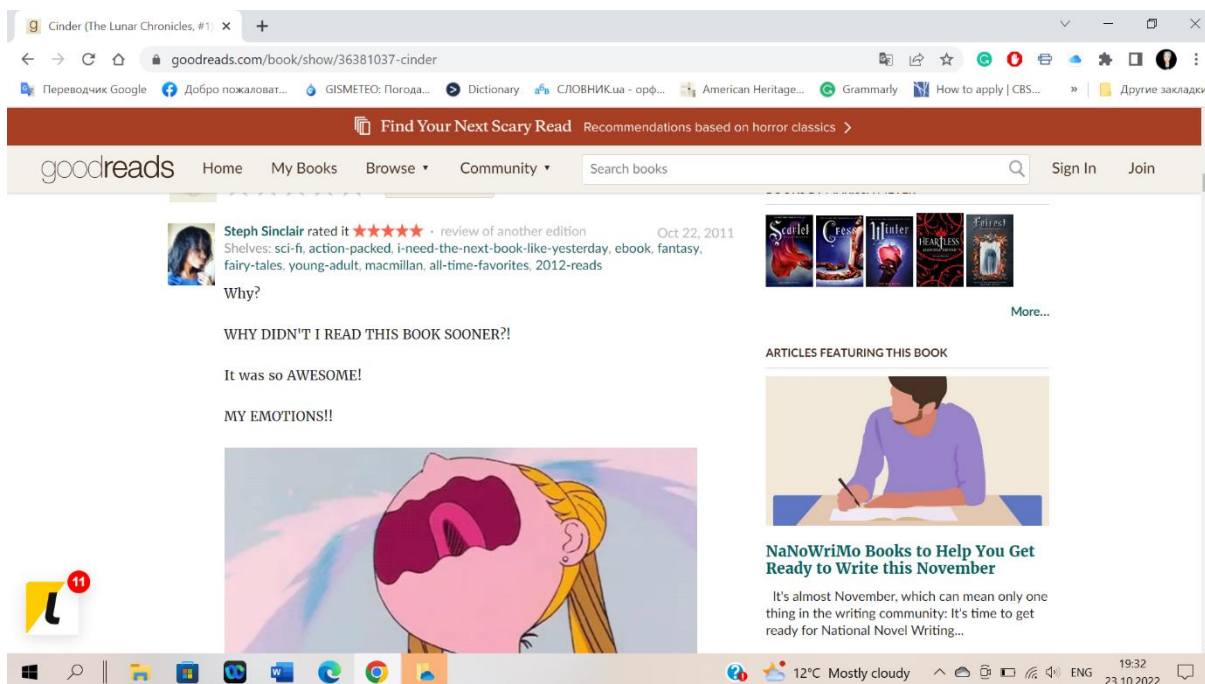
Figure 2: "Cinder (The Lunar Chronicles)" book review (16)

To attract the reader's attention, the author selects individual segments of the statement in bold, and resorts to multiple repetitions of a letter within one word, thereby optically increasing its volume.
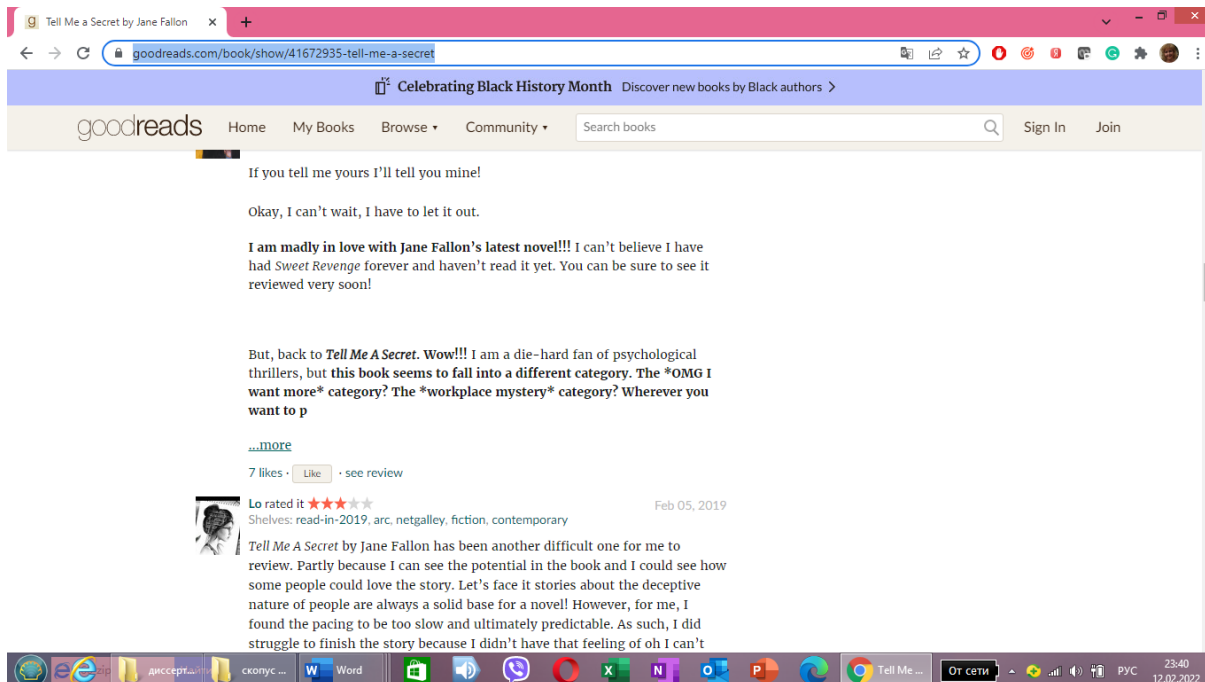

Figure 3: "Tell Me a Secret" book review (4)

Violation of punctuation and spelling rules can also be considered as a means of explaining the author's heightened emotional tone. The number of used exclamation marks, question marks, and ellipsis corresponds to the strength of the addresser's emotions. All these means emphasize the addressability and dynamics of the message, implicitly appealing to the consciousness of the potential reader, and increasing the influential effect. An example of using exclamation and question marks:
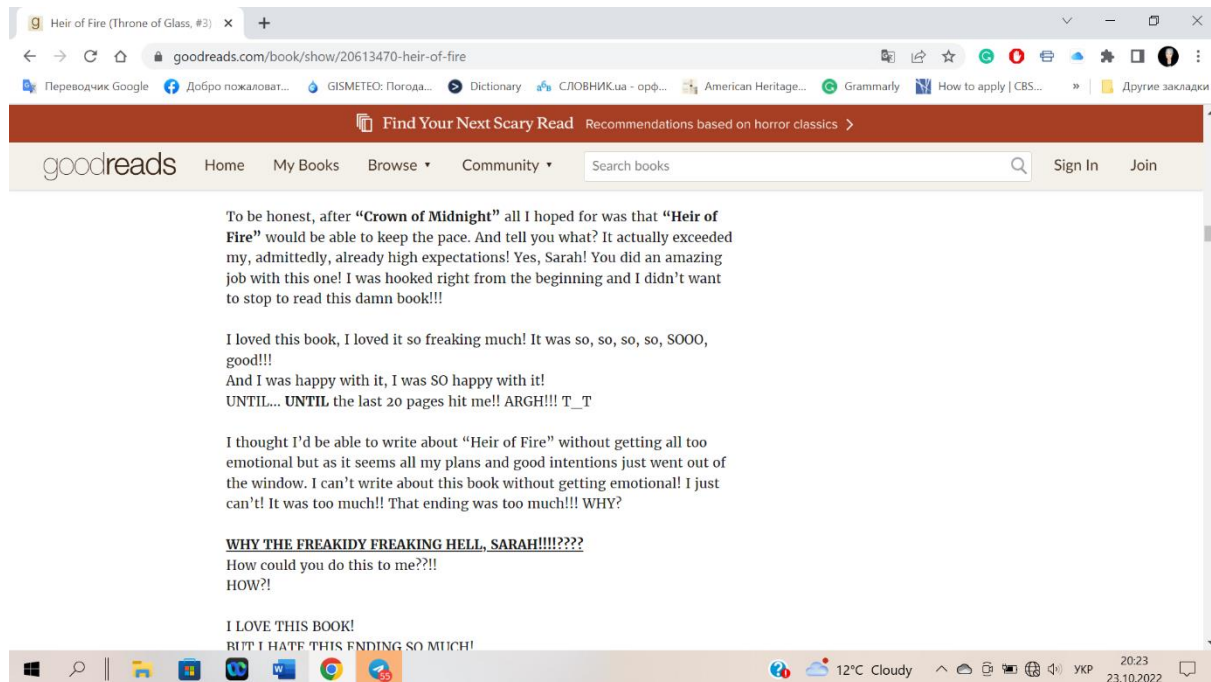


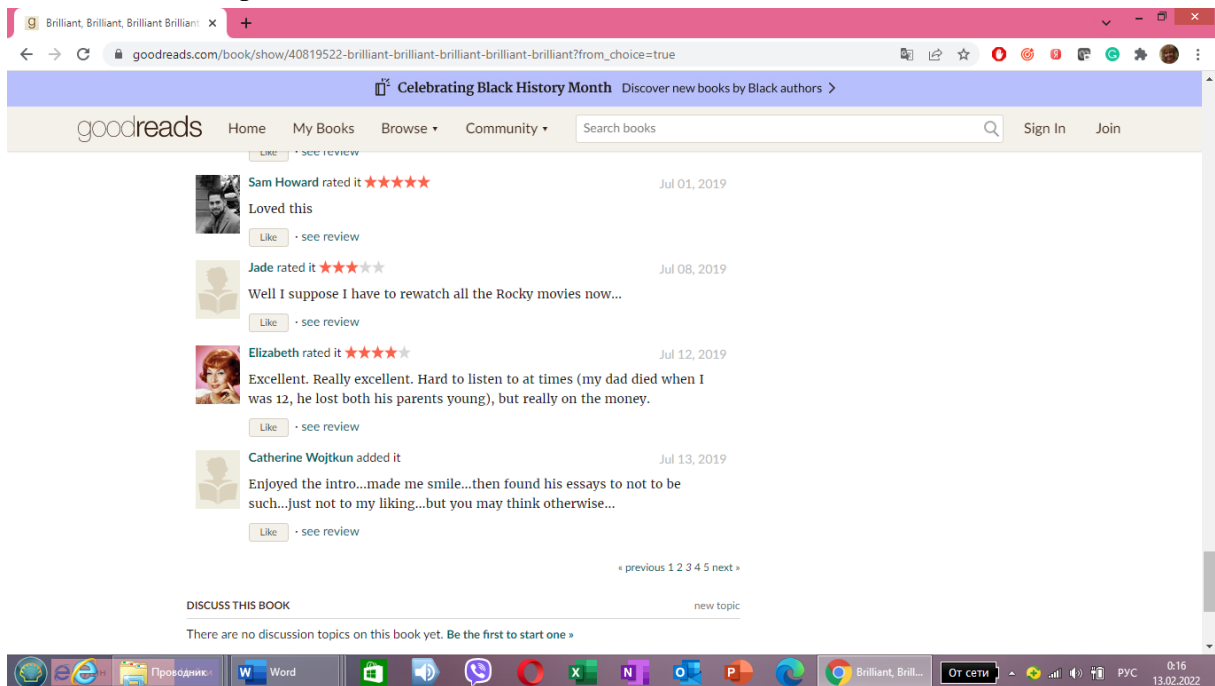Figure 4: "Heir of Fire" book review (17)

Use of ellipses:



Figure 5: "Brilliant, Brilliant, Brilliant Brilliant Brilliant" book review (1)

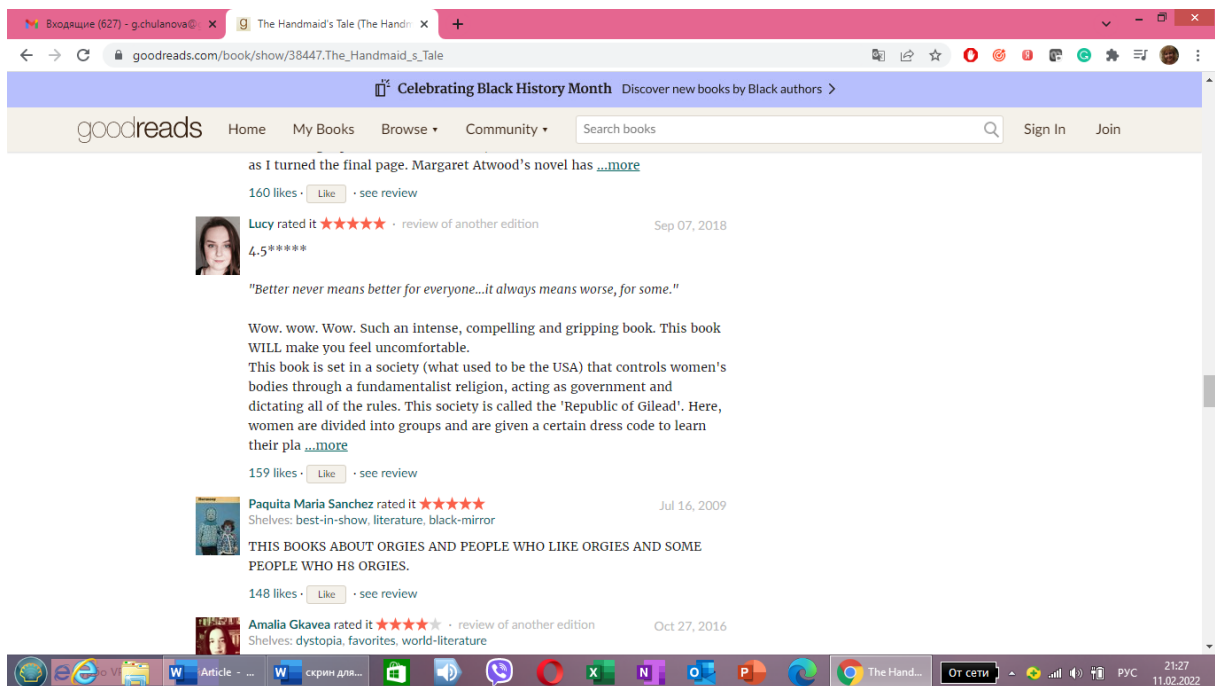Use of blended spelling: "people who H8 orgies":



Figure 6: "The Handmaid's Tale" book review (18)

Modern internet communication brought about new multimodal tools – emoticons – to express the emotions:

Dear,

What's your opinion, if instead of using something like ... "he said with a smile", I'll put "-:)" in a fictional book? Or about the use of emoticons in books in general? I know it's probably not customary, 'shallow, cheap and infantile' even, but their use becomes more and more frequent. If I wrote something Leo Tolstoy style, it wouldn't fit, but in my stuff, it should be Ok. My editor and beta-readers seem to be against. You? (11).
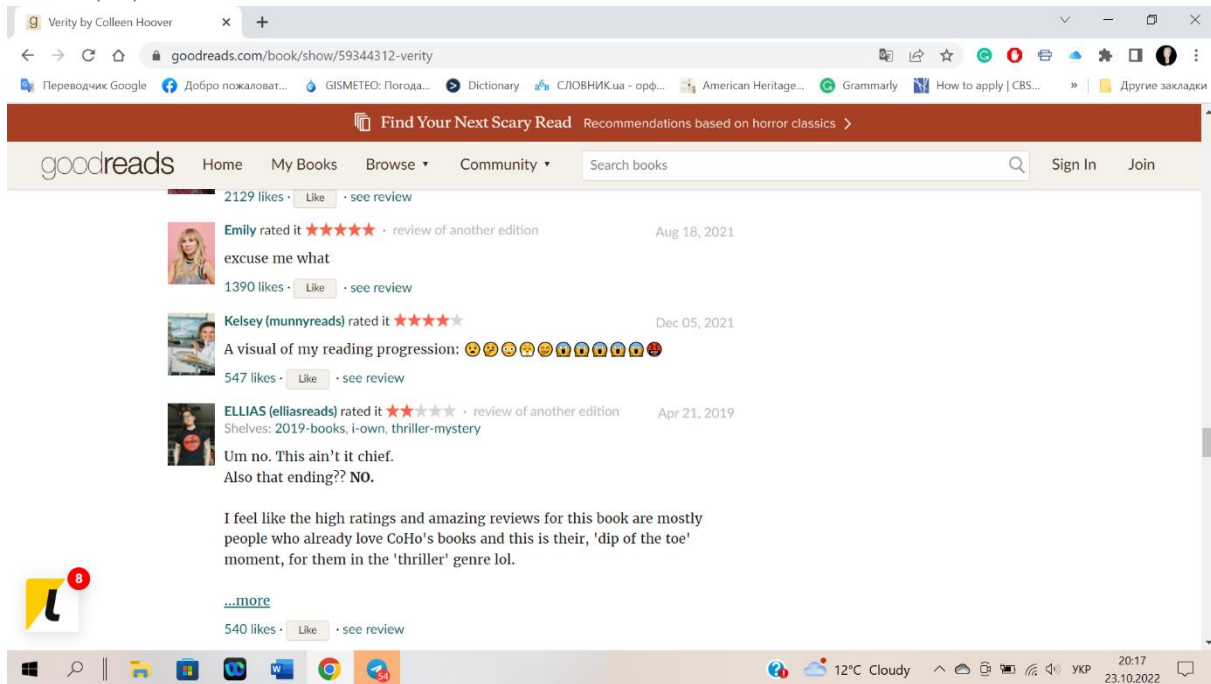


Figure 7: "Verity" book review (19)

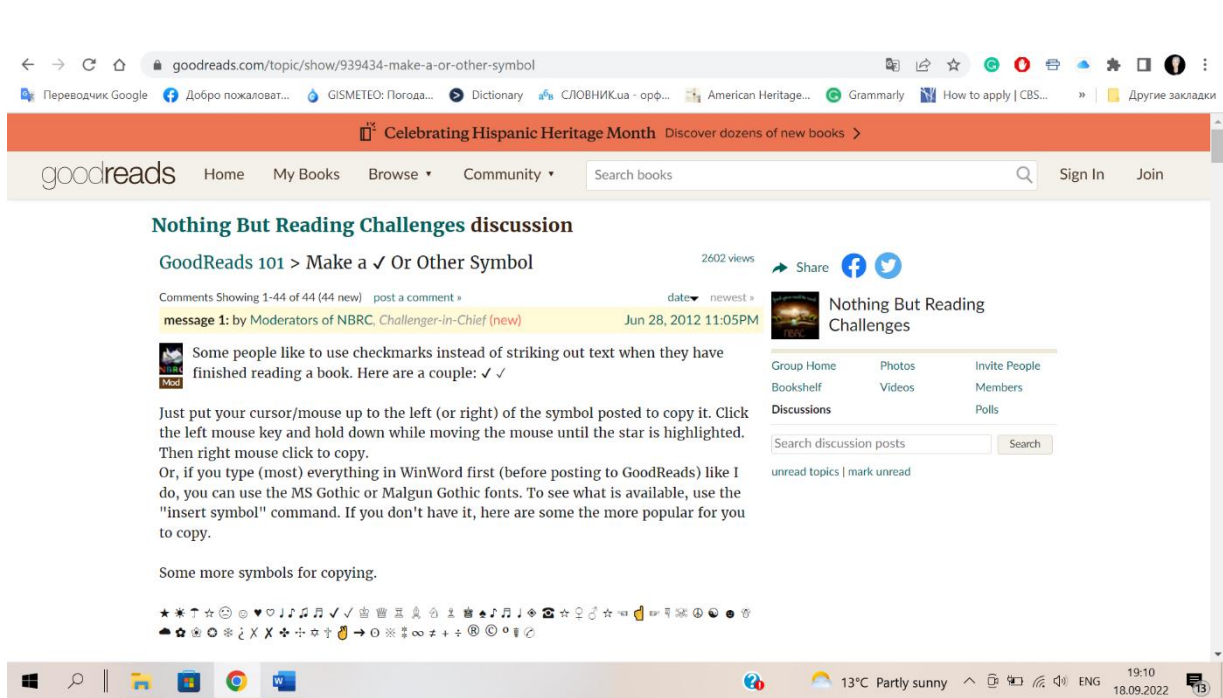The Goodreads website gives it advice how to use emoticons to emphasize the book review text:



Fugire 8: "Make a or other symbols" (20)

To influence the choice of a potential reader, book review authors such a visual tool as star-rating emphasizing their preferences:
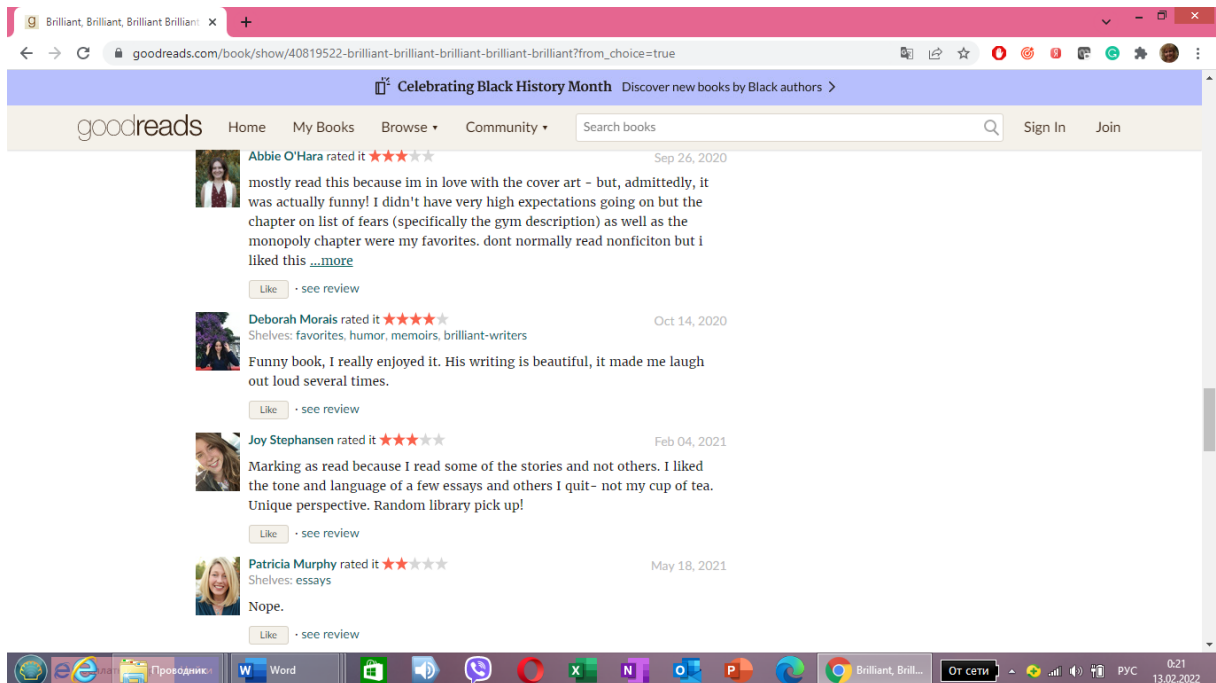


Figure 9: "Brilliant, Brilliant, Brilliant Brilliant Brilliant" book review (1)

Some book review writers resort to the use of memes – another modern multimodal tool, which literally shows the emotions:
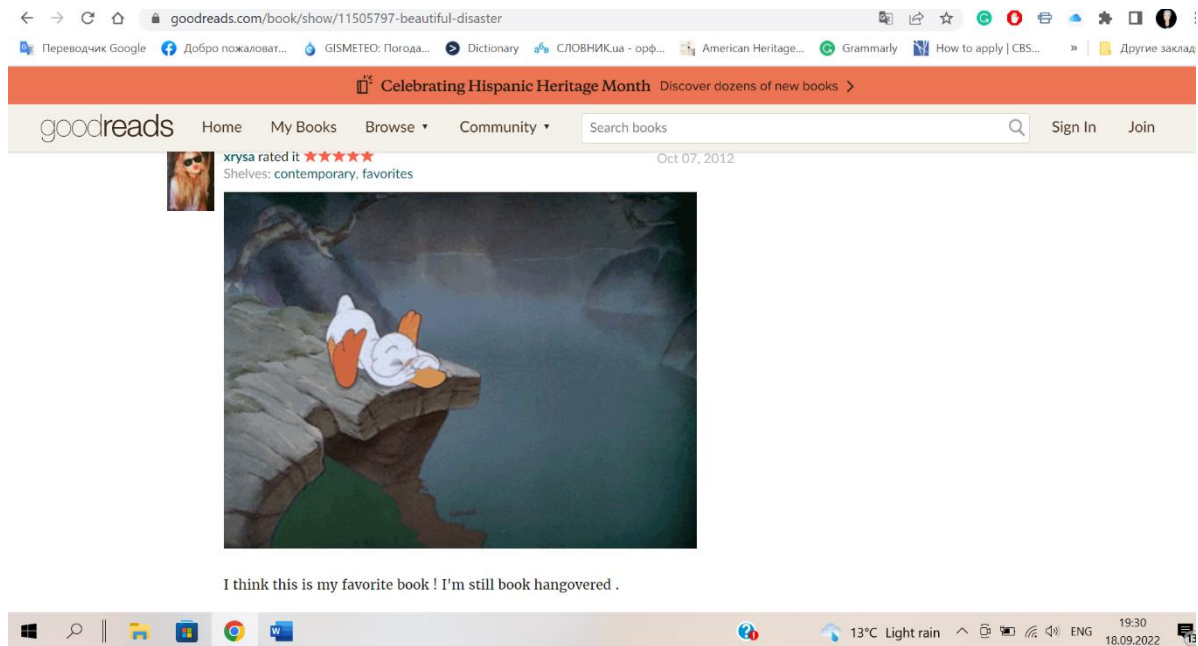


Figure 10: "Beautiful Disaster" book review (21)

Using illustrations from the screen adaptation of the book is also a powerful emotional tool to persuade a book review reader to choose it, even because of curiosity:



Figure 11: "Memoirs of Geisha" book review (22)

Language forms, with the help of which communication is carried out on the Internet, have their specific features. These include the reflection of oral speech in writing. Thus, one

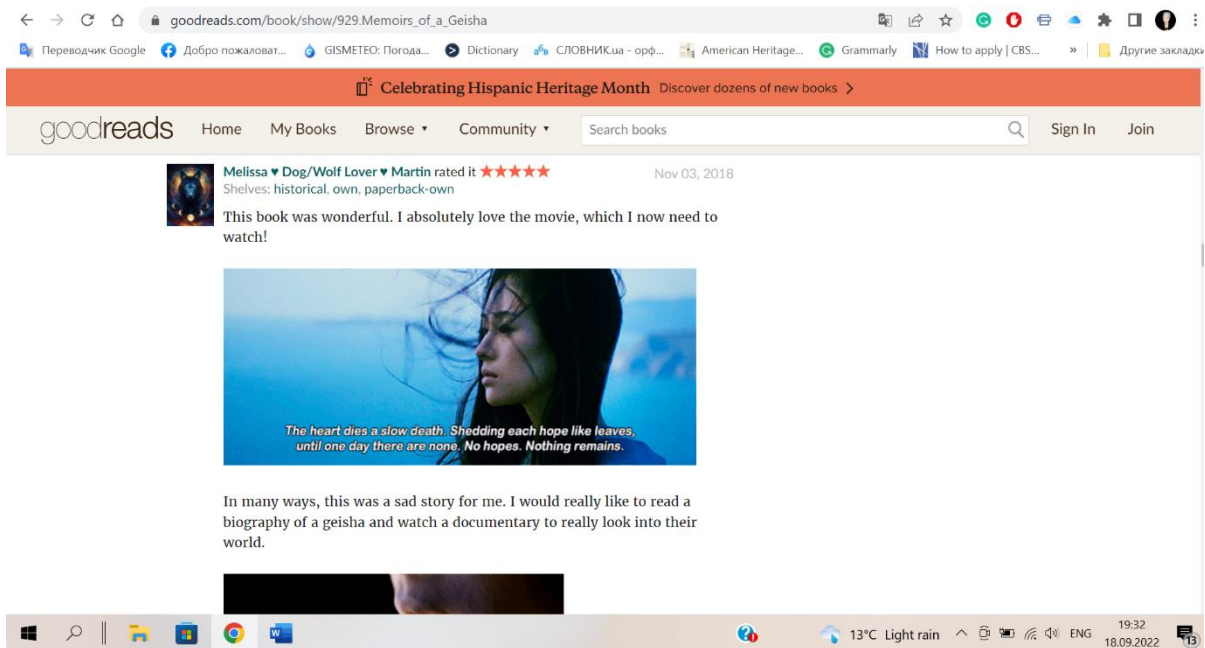can often find spoken exclamations in the book review texts. They, as in conversation, denote the primary emotion felt after reading the book. All typical features of emotional vocabulary are concentrated in exclamations: syntactic optionality, that is, the possibility of omission without breaking the phrase, lack of syntactic connections with other parts of the sentence; semantic irradiation, which consists in the fact that the presence of at least one emotive word gives emotionality to the entire statement, provoking empathy – a self-organizing conceptual structure that arises in consciousness as a reflection of the probabilistic nature of the world (Tatsenko, 2020: 414). Exclamations fully reflect the breakthrough of the subjective, personal in speech, as well as the psychological adjustment of communicators. By the nature of the expressed meaning, there can be exclamations of an emotional state, as well as emotional and evaluative exclamations with significant evaluation roles in their semantics. The examples are as follows:

Well, I must say this book was aptly named! "Mmm" was basically my main reaction while looking through it (12).

Then they can say, "Oh, that's why the chorus gets stuck in our heads (13).

Wow. Wow. Wow. Such an intense, compelling, and gripping book. This book WILL make you feel uncomfortable (14).

The role of exclamations is significant, as they give the expression an idioethnicity, naturalness, and emotionality.

A change in the sound form of an exclamation opens great opportunities for semantic differentiation:

ewwww… I hated this book. it was really uninteresting 2 me. I only finished it cuz it was a skool assignment (15).

The intonation variation of consonants reflects the degree of disappointment of the authors of the reviews. The book review texts, in which the addresser's emotional attitude towards the book is expressed with the help of exclamations, are characterized by high expressiveness and emotionality. In live communication, exclamations are words that spontaneously express a person's emotional state, so here their expressiveness is primary. In book review texts, expressiveness is secondary and stylistically determined.

## 4. Conclusions and perspectives

Thus, an immanent property of website book review texts is their emotional load, i.e., the ability to excite the reader, influence his emotional and mental state, setting a behavior algorithm that determines the specificity of the selection and organization of verbal and nonverbal resources. In the book review texts we analyzed, there are no clear directives, and the words and visual means used with a suggestive purpose are perceived casually and imperceptibly, influencing the recipient's subconscious. Such a selection of verbal and non-verbal means contributes to unconscious, imperceptible, and involuntary assimilation of information. The emotionality of book review texts has a categorical status and is realized at different verbal levels (phonetic, morphological, lexical, and syntactic), as well as non-verbal (graphical and visual). Emotionality, acting as a means of linguistic influence, can stimulate emotionality, thereby causing emotional resonance between the addresser and the addressee. Pragmatic influence in book review texts is carried out by activating cognitive, psychological, social, and linguistic mechanisms that make it possible to influence consciousness, the process of making certain decisions by a potential reader. We associate the prospects of further scientific enquiries with the expansion of the source base for the study of book review texts,

which will make it possible to obtain knowledge about the general patterns and influential nature of the book review text and the specifics of its constructions. We also see another possible direction of further work in the study of book review texts aimed at different target audiences.

**References**

Apresyan, Margarita. 2018. On the Concept of "Expressiveness" In Modern Linguistics. *Annals of Language and Literature*. Volume 2. Issue 4. 8-12.

Argaman, Osnat. 2010. Linguistic Markers and Emotional Intensity. *Journal of psycholinguistic research.* Vol. 39 Issue 2. 89-99.

Bandler, David. 2019. *Neuro-linguistic programming: The complete guide to behavioral psychology and social influence using NLP, covert persuasion, mind control and ethical manipulation*. London: Independently Published.

Batsevych, Florii. 2009. *Osnovy komunikatyvnoyi linhvistyky* (Basics of communicative linguistics). In Ukrainian. Kyiv: Akademiya.

Denisevych, Olena. 2016. Specifics of the structure of associative fields of advertising vocabulary. *Psycholinguistics.* 20 (2), 30-39

Freeth, Peter. 2008. *NLP in Business.* London: Communications In Action.

Hesse, Nina. 2015. *Persuasive Kommunikation. Die Kunst der Überredung.* München: GRIN Verlag.

Kalmykova, Larysa. 2015. Movlennyeva diyalnistyak skladova chastyna predmeta psykholinhvistyky (Speech activity as a constituent part of the subject of psycholinguistics). In Ukrainian. *East European Journal of Psycholinguistics.* Vol. 2. No. 1, 59-67.

Kaminska, Olha, Stezhko, Yuri & Hliebova, Lyudmyla. 2019. Psykholynhvistyka virtualnoi komunikatsii v konteksti zalezhnosti vid sotsialnykh merezh (Psycholinguistics of virtual communication in the context of addiction to social networks). In Ukrainian. *Psychoguistics.* 25 (1), 147-164.

Kress, Gunter. & Van Leeuwen, Theo. 2010. *Multimodal Discourse: The Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication.* London: Arnold Publishers.

Kutuza, Natalya. 2018. *Communicative suggestion in advertising discourse: Psycholinguistic aspect.* Kyiv: Dmytro Burago Publishing House.

Miller, George & Johnson-Laird, Philip. 2014. *Language and perception.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Movchan, Diana, Chulanova, Galyna & Kobyakova, Iryna. 2017. Communicative-mediatory function of secondary text-reviews. *Advanced Education.* 7. 108–113.

Osgood, Charles. 1988. *Psycholinguistics, Cross-Cultural Universals, and Prospects for Mankind.* Praeger Publishers.

Petrenko, Victor & Kucherenko, Vladimir. 2009. Iskusstvo suggestivnogo vozdejstviya, ili nekotorye mysli vprok. (The art of suggestive influence, or some experimental thoughts). In Russian. *Zhurnal praktikuyushhego psikhologa*. Issue 6. 73–84.

Pinker, Steven. 1998. *The Language Instinct. How the Mind Works.* London: Penguin Books.

Pocheptsov, Gerogii. 2012. Zabezpechennya komunikatyvnykh operatsiy derzhavy. (Ensuring communicative operations of the state). *Psycholinguistics.* In Ukrainian. Issue 10. 300-305.

Seuren, Pieter A. M. 2009. *Language in Cognition.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Susov, Ivan. 2009. *Lingvisticheskaya pragmatika* (Linguistic pragmatics). In Russian. Vinnytsia: Nova Knyha.

Tatsenko, Nataliia. 2020. Empathy as a self-organized cognitive model: a linguistic synergetic perspective. *Lege artis. Language yesterday, today, tomorrow.* The journal of University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. Trnava: University of SS Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, 2020, V (1), 390-423. (Web of Science)

Turk, Christopher. 2003. *Effective Speaking. Communicating in Speech.* Cardiff: Taylor & Francis Group.

Turnbull, William. 2003. *Language in Action. Psychological Models of Conversation.* Hove; New York: Taylor & Francis Group.

Ushchapovska, Iryna, Movchan, Diana, and Chulanova, Halyna. 2020. Idioethnic Features of Multimodal Advertising Texts: a Case Study of Coffee Commercials. *SKASE Journal of theoretical linguistics*. Vol. 17, № 5. 208-222.

Zasekina, Larysa & Zasekin, Serhii. 2008. *Psykholinhvistychna diahnostyka* (Psycholinguistic diagnosis). In Ukrainian. Lutsk: RVV Vezha.

**Sources**

1. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/40819522-brilliant-brilliant-brilliant-brilliant-brilliant
2. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/35900387-eleanor-oliphant-is-completely-fine
3. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/42207168-the-gifted-school
4. https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/41672935-tell-me-a-secret
5. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/55944544-later
6. https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/2401538293
7. https://www.goodreads.com/questions/1532946-thoughts-on-the-ending
8. https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/120595050
9. https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/49202118-a-rogue-of-one-s-own
10. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/24224064-there-must-be-some-mistake
11. https://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/18009449-use-of-emoticons-in-a-book
12. https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/20913852-foods-that-make-you-say-mmm-mmm
13. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/25985241-before-the-devil-breaks-you?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=ufBDExmkhL&rank=1
14. https://www.goodreads.com/en/book/show/43080854-the-home
15. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/55817097-twisted-love
16. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/36381037-cinder?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=ZbOKsxB4II&rank=1
17. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/20613470-heir-of-fire?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=Pn768DKUsZ&rank=1
18. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/38447.The_Handmaid_s_Tale?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=LkqyLgKWqq&rank=1
19. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/59344312-verity?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=Zx1AKriWLT&rank=1
20. https://www.goodreads.com/topic/939434-make-or-other-symbols
21. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/11505797-beautiful-disaster?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=KoZRpIDf1e&rank=1
22. https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/929.Memoirs_of_a_Geisha?ac=1&from_search=true&qid=U1UivWjCs1&rank=1

*Iryna Ushchapovska*
*PhD in Philology, Associate Professor*
*Department of Germanic Philology*
*Sumy State University Ukraine*
i.ushchapovska@gf.sumdu.edu.ua

*Halyna Chulanova*
*PhD in Philology, Associate Professor*
*Department of Germanic Philology*
*Sumy State University Ukraine*
g.chulanova@gf.sumdu.edu.ua

*Diana Movchan*
*PhD in Philology, Associate Professor*
*Department of Germanic Philology*
*Sumy State University Ukraine*
d.movchan@gf.sumdu.edu.ua

# A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Yoruba Names Derived from Proverbs

Michael A. Abiọdun and Oluwatoyin M. Ọlaiya, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

Kẹhinde O. Ọladeji, University of Lagos, Lagos

*Abstract*

*This paper investigates a group of Yoruba names that started as appellation but with time became personal names. The category of names was derived from Yoruba proverbs. Scholars in the field of anthroponomy have not given much attention to this category of names. Yoruba personal names invariably reflect the people's philosophy, beliefs and general world-view. The group of names under focus also reflects the philosophy and beliefs of the people. They define the aspiration, psychological tendencies and consciousness of the bearer. Data for the study was sourced from convocation brochure of four universities in southwest Nigeria over a period of six years. Oral interviews were also held in different towns across the southwest. The study relies on the assumptions of cultural theory in explaining the rationale behind the names, and their functions as personal names. The paper reveals that proverbs inscribed on vehicles or houses, used as trade names on shops, and proverbs frequently used as catchy phrases do end up as personal names in the Yoruba sociolinguistic landscape. The study contributes to existing works on Yoruba names, and it further broadens our understanding about Yoruba personal names.*

*Keywords: appellation, personal names, proverbs, world-view, southwest Nigeria.*

## Introduction

Naming is common to all the cultures of the world. In fact, all human societies give names to humans, animals, objects, places and landmark events. Naming acquires social importance and relevance because of its functions of identification and referencing (Agyekum 2006, Fasiku 2006 Olatunji and Issah 2015). *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Name) says that "a name is used to refer to an individual entity, the name singles out the entity by directly pointing to it…." In Africa, and particularly among the Yoruba, names are not mere labels of identity. As scholars have argued, they express experience, values, hopes, traditional and religious beliefs, and events in the lives of the people (Akinnaso 1980, Nwaniki 2013, Fakuade, Friday-Otun and Adeosun 2020). Yoruba take great interest in the circumstances that surround the birth of a child; they commence in-depth observation from conception to the time the child is born. This helps in determining a name or names that accurately describe the events and circumstances that surround the birth. This is equally true of names given to places and events; circumstances that surround event sand locations to be named are adequately considered. To this extent therefore, Yoruba personal names often reflect social and psychological meanings (Ogunwale 2015).

Scholars including Adeoye (1972), Oduyoye (1972), Akinola (2014) and a host of others identify different types or category of names: personal name (orúkọ àbísọ) panegyric name or praise name (oríkì) prestine name or names brought from heaven (àmútọ̀runwá), and appellation (ìnagijẹ/àlàjẹ́). The present study describes and reflects on the category of names under appellation, specifically those derived from proverbs. Unlike other categories identified above, appellations are not given at birth, rather they evolve later in the lives of the bearer, and

in most cases, supplant personal names that were given at birth. Names derived from proverbs fall into this category.

Yoruba language is rich in proverbs, and the use of proverbs in discourse is celebrated as the hallmark of oratory. Delana (1966: ix) writes that "no one can be considered educated or qualified to take part in communal discussion unless he is able to quote the proverbs relevant to each situation." Yoruba proverbs reflect the wisdom, philosophy and world-view of the people, thus they come in handy in important discourses that reflect everyday life and everyday patterns of social interaction (Fasiku 2006; Abiodun 2000, 2018). A popular Yoruba adage says *òwelẹsin òrò, ọ̀rọ̀lẹsinòwe; bí ọ̀rọ̀básọnù, òwe la fi ńwa.* A literal translation of the proverb says that proverb is the horse of discourse, and discourse is the horse of proverb; when discourse is lost, proverb is used to retrieve it. The message inherent in the proverb is that proverb is the fastest or shortest means of clarifying issues in discourse. Put another way, it means that the easiest means of making salient points in discourse is the employment of appropriate proverb(s). From the foregoing, it is apparent that Yoruba names and proverbs are both linked to the philosophy and world view of the people. However, while proverb takes a comprehensive view of the people's ways of life, their environment, beliefs and general philosophy, personal name is not as comprehensive in reflecting the world-view of the people. This is manifested in the apparent fact that whereas proverb reflects every aspect of human existence: his environment, experience, social activities and natural phenomena; name is limited in its coverage of all these aspects of human existence.

## Names in Yoruba Culture

Yoruba names have profound values in relation to the culture, philosophy, religion, social organization and general word-view of the people; this explains why Yoruba names are not mere tags of identification. The Yoruba give considerable attention to events before, during and immediately after the birth of a child, and all the phenomena duly observed are considered in the naming of the child (Adeoye 1972; Oduyoye 1972; Akinnaso 1980, Fasiku 2006; Fakuade, Friday-Otun and Adeosun 2020). Yoruba personal names are sacrosanct, "they constitute an integral part of human existence" (Fakuade et al 2020: 252). So much goes into naming a child because names play significant role in the life of a child, thus the saying *orúkọnííroni* (a name is the anchor of existence). Akinola (2014:66) writes that a "name is spiritually inclined. It possesses ability to predict the child's path in life."

To buttress the importance of naming a child, so much funfair goes into naming ceremony. It is always a form of feast where a lot of eating, drinking, singing and dancing take place. In addition, *ìwúre* (prayers) are normally offered in abundance, accompanied with symbolic items that include kolanut (*obì*); bitterkola (*orógbó*); honey, sugar, sugarcane, salt, alligator pepper (*ataare),* alcohol and money. Each of the items is used to recite appropriate prayers for the child to live a long and peaceful life; and to be successful in life

It is mentioned earlier in the study that Yoruba names are categorized into personal names (orúkọ àbísọ). Names in this category are given by the parents and relatives based on events and situations noticed before during and after the birth of the child. Such names may reflect the religion, vocation or situation of the parents, e.g.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Ògúndélé | Oyèkúnlé | Olúwayémisí |
| Ọ̀ṣúndíyà | Ọ̀ládoṣù | Olúwaṣèyí |
| Àyánkúnlé | Aṣáolú | Adébímpé |

|  | Ọ̀jẹ́labí | Abímbọ́lá | Adédèjì |
|---|---|---|---|

Another category is the panegyric name (oríkì). The names in this category are given as praise name in addition to personal name, e.g.

|  | Àlàní | Àkànní | Àbẹ̀kẹ́ |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Àdìgún | Àjàmú | Àríkẹ́ |
|  | Àrẹ̀mú | Àkànmú | Àṣàkẹ́ |

One other category is the pristine name, or names brought from heaven (àmútọ̀runwá). Names in this category are given based on specific sign(s) noticed during the birth of a child. If for instance a child is born with the umbilical cord tied around its neck, it is named Òjó, while one that shows the leg first instead of the head during birth is named Ìgè (Adeoye 1972; Oduyoye 1972; Fakuade et al 2020). Other names in this category include

|  | Òjó | Àjàyí | Òkẹ́ |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Tàlàbí | Dáda | Olúgbodì |
|  | Táíwò | Ìdòwú | Àìná |
|  | Ìdògbé | Ìgè | Ìlọrí |

Apart from the categories already discussed, there is appellation (ìnagijẹ/àlàjẹ́). The names in this category are not given at birth. They are not given to infants. Rather, these group of names may be adopted by a person on self-volition, or may be given to a person by the people around him/her based on their observations of the person's features, behaviour/attitudes, vocation or any other observed traits. Abiodun and Olaogun (2012) write about appellation thus:

> Names that "give a person out" in that they serve as a source of defining and evaluating a person; they also have the power of suggesting or predicting possible behaviour of the bearer. They are not given at birth, rather they are given later in life based on observed characteristic features, behaviour or traits (positive or negative).

Appellations are open-ended; they are borne out of physical and characteristic features, and any other form of behaviour. Their construction is not guided by social rules, rather, ability to observe accurately the physical and characteristic features of a person, and his/her pattern of behaviour is the major requirement for giving a person an appellation. This is why it is possible to come up with any appellation at any point in time based on any observed feature in a person. Such appellation may connote a positive or negative reference depending on the observed trait. However, Abiodun, Aladesanmi and Olaiya (2016) affirm that only positive appellations can become actual names. The examples below demonstrate a few examples of appellation that have become names:

| Ajóńgọ́lọ̀: | a thin and fairly tall person |
|---|---|
| Fílàní: | a lanky and light complexion male who looks like a Fulani man |
| Adú: | a person who is very dark in complexion |
| Òyìnbó: | a person who is very light in complexion |
| Asíndẹmádé: | a trained crown maker/builder |

| Amóọ́ta: | a sharp shooter |
| Adúróta: | a sharp shooter |
| Òlébè: | a professional farmer, renowned for making many heaps in a day |
| Àgbẹ̀dẹ: | a blacksmith |
| Alùfóge(jó): | a renowned drummer |
| Ajófóyìnbó: | a professional dancer, known for entertaining important dignitaries |
| Abulégíga: | known as the first man to erect a multistorey building in his community |

Appellation, as already mentioned above, is the focus of this study. It is important to stress that not all names under appellation are discussed in the study, rather, attention is focused only on those appellations that are derived from proverbs, and which have become personal names, and are so used by people.

## Literature Review

Scholars from different field of studies have written on Yoruba personal names. Adeoye (1972) and Oduyoye (1972) write on the importance of personal names. Each of the scholars describes the nature of naming ceremony and the different groups of personal names. They identify and extensively illustrate four groups that have been mentioned in this study, namely personal name (orúkọàbísọ) pristine or names brought from heaven (orúkọàmútọ̀runwá), panegyric name (oríkì) and appellation (ìnagijẹ/àlàjẹ́). Akinola (2014) writes on the communicative role of Yoruba names. The scholar claims that names communicate beliefs, situations and events about the bearer and the people around him/her (parents, extended family etc.). He categorized Yoruba personal names into nine groups rather than the four categories popular in the literature. However, we note that his coming up with nine groups is due to his regrouping the Àbísọ category into six, namely: i) bestowed names, where he combines pristine and some that are non-pristine names; ii) circumstantial names; iii) name by profession; iv) name by family belief or worship; v) name by nobility; and vi) deliberate/freely given name. We observe fluidity and inconsistency in the regrouping presented in the work. For instance, putting Táíwò, KẹhìndéAbíọ́dún, Abíọ̀nà in the same category as bestowed names raises questions. Equally so is the grouping of Àsàkẹ́, Àjíkẹ́, Àbíkẹ́, Fọ́lọ́runsọ́Àbáyọ̀mí and Èyítáyọ̀ under deliberate/freely given names. The present study will not pursue the fluidity and inconsistency any further because they do not come under the focus of our research.

Ogunwale (2015) focuses on Yoruba reincarnated names, stressing their sociolinguistic importance and meanings within the context of Yoruba beliefs, psychology and philosophy. Relying on the theory of critical discourse analysis, the scholar contends that reincarnated names perform many functions, and reflect meanings that include "soliciting, condemnation, interpersonal-authorities, predictions, entreaties…" (46).

Olatunji and Issah (2015) explain that personal names are meaningful constructs that reflect the day-to-day endeavours, hope, aspiration, achievements and state of being and the beliefs of the African people. They claim further that naming is not static in nature because as events unfold, naming continue to change to reflect the inner-minds of the people. The scholars conclude that name should be seen from a dynamic socio-cultural practice and also as a reflection of the reality of everyday social life of people (85).

Fakuade et al (2020) investigate and describe sociolinguistic features of Yoruba personal names and the influence of modernity and western culture on naming and names in the Yoruba culture. Like many scholars have opined, these scholars note that Yoruba personal names reflect socio-cultural practices, and more, they are not mere tags for identification, they show the "philosophical value of the people, and also emphasize the significance of past experiences, events or phenomena" (252).

One particular study that is very relevant to the present study is Fasiku (2006); the study focuses on the relationship between proverbs and personal names in Yoruba culture. The scholar identifies two ways in which proverbs and names are related. The first way, according to the scholar, is that some "proverbs underscore the importance of names" (54). To support this claim, he cites proverbs that include

1. Orúkọọmọniìjánuọmọ          A child's name is his/her brake'
2. Orúkọ níí roọmọ          A child is influenced by his/her name
3. Orúkọ ìsọ ọmọ níí mọ́ ọmọ lára          A child gets used to behaving like his/her name.

(Fasiku 2006: 54)

The scholar argues correctly that while proverbs like these suggest that names determine or "establish the role expectations, aspirations and consciousness of the Yoruba" (54), there is no absolute connection to show that proverbs are truly determinant of a person's role expectation, aspiration or consciousness. He writes to affirm this position thus,

…in a pure dialectical relation between name and proverb there is no necessary causal connection between a name and the message it conveys, the name does no "determine" the consciousness of the bearer, and it is possible for a person not to be mindful of whatever message or responsibility is imposed by the name he/she bears. (57)

The second way in which proverbs and names are related is that "there are specific names that correlate some proverbs that in some cases have an origin in specific events and experiences in history, and thus serve as a way of reliving significant lessons, expectations, aspirations and roles, and experiences/events where the proverb was originally enacted" (57). In support of this thesis, the scholar illustrates with the following names, and their corresponding proverbs.

1. Kúmólú          Bíkò bá n'ìdí obìrinkì í jẹ́ 'Kúmólú. (Without a special reason, a woman is never named to mark the death of a family pillar).
2. Ọláníyọnu          Ẹnití kò rí ọlá rí, tí ó sọ ọmọ rẹ̀ ní Ọláníyọnu. (Those who have never experienced wealth or honour, say there is problem in wealth or honour and name their children so).
3. Aríléyan          Bàbáolórùlékantí ó sọọmọ rẹ̀níaríléyan, ní'boní óyansí? (An owner of one house who names his child takes pride in ownership of many houses, where is his pride?).
4. Àṣàmú          Ọmọ tí yóò jẹ Àṣàmú, kékeré ló ti ń ṣenuṣámúṣámú. (A child that will be sharp, shows it early in his speech).

5. Apálará          Apá l'ará, ìgbọ́nwọ́ niiyèkan; bí a ò rẹnifẹ̀yìntì bí ọ̀lẹni à ń

rí, bí a ò rénigbékè lé, a teramósé eni. (A man's arms are
his relatives, his helpers, if there is no one to lean on, it
looks like we are failures, if we have no one to rely on,
we get serious with our work).

6.  Àńjùwón          Àńjùwónkòseéwí léjó, ìjàìlarakòtánbòrò. (We are superior
to them cannot be quoted as an argument or complaint in
court; a quarrel due to envy is not settled by the passage of
time).

(Fasiku 2006: 57-58)

The present study calls for a review of the claim by the scholar that Oláníyonu, Aríléyan,
Apálará and Àńjùwonare names given at birth. The name Kúmólú, as correctly noted in the
work in question, belongs to the category of names that "have an origin in spectacular events
and experiences in history" (57), and it is given at birth as rightly noted in the study. Àsàmú,
on the other hand, is also given at birth, being a panegyric name, however, it cannot be traced
to spectacular events or experience in history as suggested by the scholar. The name, as already
noted, is a panegyric name like Àlàmú, Àrèmú, Àjàmú, Àkànmú and others in the category.

Findings in the present study reveal that Àńjùwón, Apálará, Aríléyan and Oláníyonu,
are appellations, they are not given at birth as personal names (orúkoàbíso), as suggested in
Fasiku (2006: 53). Direct interviews with children of the bearers of the names Apálará and
Àńjùwón in the course of the research reveals that the two names are appellations. The children,
who inherited the names, claimed they knew and still know the names that their fathers were
given at birth, but their father was better known by appellation in their live times, and the
appellations eventually became personal names which they (the children) inherited as
surnames. Their evidence points out to us that these names are appellations. On the remaining
two names Apálará and Àńjùwón, field work, and search in documents that included graduation
brochures of four universities in the Southwest Nigeria between 2010 and 2016 did not reflect
these names. We consulted elders in different communities, and they informed us that the two
names in question are not personal names. According to a few of the elders, Aríléyan(ká) is an
analogy drawn from Afoláyan(ka). It features in eulogy to praise any person or children of a
person who is able to erect a big house with many rooms and sitting rooms, and possibly with
a big compound. This is common among rich people who have many wives and children. The
other name Oláníyonu is a derogatory appellation used to rebuke an erstwhile poor person who
by accident becomes rich and starts to flaunt his riches. This is reflected in the proverb: *Ojú
òrólárítí ńsomorèní Oláníyonu*. The clause *Ojú òrólárí*is derogatory, it implies *perpetual
poverty.* The name Oláníyonu is a derogatory appellation of rebuke, because of its derogatory
connotation, it is never used as a name.  The point being made is that our research does not
come across Aríléyan and Oláníyonu as personal names, rather, they are appellations; The
former is normally use to eulogize and the latter to rebuke. Be that as it may, the present study
calls for further research on these names and others that may fall into the same category.

**Theoretical Framework**

Cultural theory is adopted in this study, and as will be explained, it is appropriate for effective
explication of the theme of the study. Culture is the totality of a people's ways of life. It captures
the beliefs, institutions, art, language and other norms and general pattern of life of a society,

(Tylor 2016, Ajayi 2005, Adedeji 2010). The present study is situated within the ambit of the socio-cultural experience and activities of the Yoruba society. It focuses on an aspect of language (proverb), names and naming, and aesthetics that form part of the culture of the people.

The major assumption of cultural theory is that society is invariably guided by culture; as such, everyday activities of a society is dictated and governed by the culture of that society (Smith 2001). Culture is handed down from one generation to the other; thus, from generation to generation, the everyday experience and activities of a society reflect the imbibed culture of the society. Even when culture undergoes changes due to contact with other cultures, or due to other factors, relics of the old culture always reflect in the new culture or ways of life. For instance, the activity of naming remains an everyday part of the Yoruba culture even when foreign religions have influenced the content, types and pattern of naming among the people. Cultural theory is therefore designed to account for the motivation and rationale for the everyday activities of the society in relation to the culture. It also accounts for the ways and manner the culture of a people in a given society determines how they relate and interact with the environment in specific contexts and situations. In the light of the above, cultural theory is appropriate to the theme of the study in the sense that the study is a part of the culture of the people; naming and names, aesthetics through writing and diagrams, and the use of proverbs in various contexts are all parts of the culture of the Yoruba people.

**Methodology**

Document assessment and oral interviews were used in gathering data for the study. Graduation brochures that contain names of graduating students in four universities between 2010 and 2016 were studied to extract names that were derived from proverbs. The four universities: Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti; University of Ibadan, Ibadan; Obaafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife; and Osun State University, Osogbo are located in the Southwest of Nigeria where a large population of students that graduated from these universities came from. The researchers had oral interview sessions with elderly Yoruba people in Adó-Èkìtì, Òtùn-Èkìtì, Ilé-Ifẹ̀, Ìbàdàn, Ìkirẹ̀, Òṣogbo, Ìlá-Ọ̀ràngún, Ìkàrẹ́-Àkókó and Oǹdó. Apart from conducting interviews with selected elders the researcher located families that answer to the names discussed in the study, they were found mainly in Adó-Èkìtì, Òtùn-Èkìtì, Ìbàdàn, Òṣogbo, Ìlá-Ọ̀ràngún, Oǹdó and two communities in Kwara State: Ìmọdẹ and Egòsì-Ilé in Òkè-Ẹ̀rọ́ Local Government Area of Kwara State.

**Presentation of Data**

Twenty names are presented below. The corresponding proverb from which each of the name is derived is also presented. It is observed that each of the names do not reflect the proverbs in full, rather each is a shortened form of the corresponding proverb from which it is derived.

| Names | Proverbs |
|---|---|
| 1. Awọ̀lúmátẹ̀ẹ́ | Awọ̀lúmátẹ̀ẹ́, ìwọ̀n ara ẹ̀ ló mọ̀. (The guest or stranger who never gets messed up, must have learned the art of self-respect). |
| 2. Alátiṣe | Alátiṣe ló mọ àtiṣeara rẹ̀. (A focused person will always find |

solutions to his/her problems).

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3. | Ojúmóòla | Ojúmó òla kò yéénikéni. (The events of the day that will break cannot be foretold by any person). |
| 4. | Báòkú | Bí a ò kú, isé ò tán. (When there is life, there is hope). |
| 5. | Inúomi | Inú omikò se é bí. (No one keeps malice/grudges with water). |
| 6. | Asónibáré | Asónibáré ló mo èteisónibárìn. (One who is careful in the choice of friends, possesses the knowledge and antics of close relationship). |
| 7. | Àbánikánńdá | Àbániikán ń dá, ikánkan ò le mu òkúta. (It is mere wishes of the termite, no termite can consume stones). |
| 8. | Àdábá | Àdábá niìjà, eniìjà ò bá ní ń peara rè lókùnrin. (It is the lonely person that appreciates the tribulations of life, the person who has never experienced tribulations (of life) hails himself as a hero). |
| 9. | Bólódeòkú | Bólóde òkú, òde rèkòníhugbégi. (When the house owner is still alive, the frontage of the house cannot be bushy). |
| 10. | Àjànàkú | Àjànàkúkì í yarárá omo tí erínbá bí, erinní í jo. (The Elephant is never born a dwarf, an elephant will invariably give birth to its type). |
| 11. | Èrùòbodò | Èrù òbodò, enitíyóòwodò, lominú ńko. (A river is never in fear, it is the person entering the river that is weary and unsure). |
| 12. | Àdàbà | Àdàbàkònáání à ńkùngbé, iná jóeyé lo. (The dove is unperturbed when the bush is set on fire, as the fire starts, the bird immediately takes off). |
| 13. | Abèrùàgbà | Abèrùàgbà niyóò lo ilè yí pé. (Those who respect the elders will live long in life). |
| 14. | Àjùmobí | Àjùmobí òkantàánú, eniOlúwaránsíniní ńsenilóore. (Being born into the same family does not assure one of getting automatic assistance, only those sent to a person by God render assistance). |
| 15. | Apálará | Apá l'ará, ìgbónwó niiyèkan; bí a ò rénifèyìntì bí òleni à ń rí, bí a ò rénigbékè lé, a teramósé eni. (A man's arms are his relatives, his helpers, if there is no one to lean on, it looks like we are failures, if we have no one to rely on, we get serious with our work). |
| 16. | Òjòòbánìkan | Òjò ò bénikansòtá, eniejírínieji ń pa. (The rain has no enemy, it falls or rains on any person). |
| 17. | Àńjoórìn | À ń jo órìn, a òmoríolówó. (We relate and struggle together, we cannot tell those created to be wealthy). |
| 18. | Orítíńgbeni | Orí tí ńgbenikìí tójànrànjanran. (The head (inner head or personal god) that will favour a person, does not need to be extra-large). |
| 19. | Àtidádé | Àtidádé kìnìúnkò sèyìnOlódùmarè. (Securing a crown, as a mark of greatness, by the lion, is ordained by God). |
| 20. | Omoònláyòlé | Omo òláyòlé, eniomó sin lóbímo. (Begetting children is not the mark of fulfillment in life, rather, having children to perform the final burial rites is the ultimate mark). |

## Sociolinguistic Overview

Two questions come to mind following the presentation in this paper so far. The first question has to do with how the names presented in the data, and others like them evolve to become personal names. The second question is about the rationale or motivation for adopting them as personal names considering the fact that those who adopted them had personal names given at birth.

Looking at the first question, the study reveals that a number of the names started as inscriptions on vehicles (commercial vehicles), houses and shops (as trade names) as a mark of identification or advertisement. Apart from the theory that the names started as inscription, some evolved because they were used as catchy phrases, and they became popular with the users, thereby becoming a means of identification (for the users). With time such inscriptions and popular catchy phrases became the major means of reference to the users, and they eventually became personal names. In the course of our research, we came across the families of bearers of these names who informed us about the source of the names.

| | |
|---|---|
| Àtidádé | We met families that answer to the name inÒṣogbo, Ìlá-Ọ̀ràngún, and Ìkìrun, all in Osun State. They each told us that the name started as inscription on vehicles owned by their great grandfather. |
| Alátiṣe | The name is often spelled Alátishe. We met one old man who bears the name in Egòsì-Ilé in Kwara State. According to the old man, it started as an inscription on his commercial vehicle. We also met a family in Ọ̀tùn-Èkìtì in Èkìtì State who also claimed that their grandfather used the name as an inscription on his commercial vehicle, and as a trade name boldly inscribed his shop as a dealer in building materials. |
| Abẹ̀rùàgbà | The Abẹ̀rùàgbà family is in Ìlá-Ọ̀ràngún. The name started as Inscription on commercial vehicle. |
| Ojúmọ́ọ̀la | We met two families that answer to the name, one in Ibadan in Oyo State, the other in Ìmọdẹ in Kwara State. The families had similar story about the way the name evolved. Their grandfathers were fond of the proverb: *Ojúmọ́ ọ̀lakò yéẹnikẹ́ni*. The family in Ìmọdẹ affirmed that their grandfather was known for repeating the following at meetings: |

> Ojúmọ́ ọ̀la kòyéni,
> Ilẹ̀tíyóòmọ́ lọ́la kòyéèyàn,
> Kò sẹ́ni tómọohuntíyóòṣẹlẹ̀kó tó dọ̀la,
> E jẹ́káṣesùúrù.
> (Tomorrows events are unknown to any person
> The day that will break is unpredictable
> No one can tell the events of tomorrow
> Let us be patient).

With time Ojúmọ́ọ̀la became the identity by which the grandfather was known. Upon registering in school, the children registered Ojúmọ́ọ̀la as surname, and the grandchildren inherited the surname. With respect to the family in Ibadan, their great grandfather was also found of the catchy phrase, and he also used it as a trade name. It eventually became a personal name.

| | |
|---|---|
| Àdábá | The researchers interacted with an elderly person who goes by the name in Oǹdó town. He claimed that his father went through tribulations in his 30s, and did not get any support from friends and relatives. He, however, overcame the tribulations, and became fond of the proverb from which the name Àdábá was derived. The proverb became part of his daily repertoire, and with time, the shortened form Àdábánìjà became an appellation, it was later shortened to Àdábá, which eventually became his name, and surname for the children. |

We heard stories similar to the one told in respect of **Ojúmọ́ọ̀la** and **Àdábá** about names such as **Apálará**, **Ilésanmí**, **Òjòòbánìkan**, **Ẹ̀rùòbodò**, **Àjùmọ̀bí**, **Inúomi**, **Báòkú** and a number of others. They are shortened forms of proverbs common in the repertoire of the bearers of the names. Our findings further reveals that, either as an inscription on commercial vehicles, shops or houses, or as a catchy saying popular with the users, they (the users) readily accepted the names as a mark of reference and identity.

Inscriptions becoming personal names as claimed in this paper is a common phenomenon in the Yoruba culture since the introduction of western education and the acquisition of the skills of reading and writing by the people (Oduro-Frimpong 2013; Faniran, Ikotun and Oloyede 2019). Writing on inscriptions becoming personal names among the Yoruba people, Faniran et al (2019:115) claim that

> In the 60's, for instance, there were instances when users/owners used to be known and addressed by the inscription on their vehicles. They were hardly addressed by their real names…the catchy inscriptions on their vehicles were generally taken for the owner's personal names. In such cases, the inscriptions on their vehicles eventually become their aliases, nick-names or even surnames.

The important point noted in Faniran et al (2019) is that it is not just proverbs inscribed on vehicles that become personal names, other forms of inscriptions or catchy phrases do become names as well. Oduro-Frimpong (2013), based on his study in Ghana, affirms that any form of inscription can become an address form and, eventually, become a personal name. Our interest in this study is however on inscriptions and catchy phrases that are related to proverb.

The second question relates to the rationale or motivation behind accepting or taking up inscription on vehicles, houses and shops/trade names, and also catchy phrases common to a person/user as personal names. This question is germane, considering the fact that the users of inscriptions and catchy phrases had personal names at birth, yet such names given at birth becomes supplanted by appellations. With regards to the names under focus in this study, one important factor revealed to us as to why people accept and/or adopt appellations derived from proverbs as personal names is the wisdom and the philosophy behind the proverbs from which the names are derived. Proverbs are words of wisdom, they reflect the consciousness of the people about the ups and downs of life; they communicate to the people the hidden truth of life, and the essential steps to happiness and successful life. Thus, inherent in proverbs are hope, motivation, warnings, caution, advice, rebuke, admonition and many other lessons of life that are meant to guide a careful person on the journeys of life. When a person, therefore, becomes fascinated by the wisdom in a proverb, he/she may inscribe it on easily visible belongings such as a vehicle, a house, or a shop. The person may also use it as a trade name or make it a catchy phrase used almost on all speech occasions as a mark of self-identification or

to buttress a point. The wisdom inherent in the proverb thus becomes the watchword and guide for the person in his/her activities.

For instance, the proverb *Alátiṣe lómọàtiṣeara rẹ̀* (a focused person will always find solutions to his/her problems) is an admonition that reminds a person that success or greatness is only attainable when one commits him/herself to a set goal. The bearer of the name who we encountered in Egòsì-Ilé claimed the he struggled for long to buy a commercial vehicle after successfully completing training as a commercial driver. But help to accomplish this did not come despite appeals to relations and friends. According to him, he was on the verge of giving up when he reminded himself of the proverb. He picked up the courage to meet a vehicle dealer, who sold him a vehicle for commercial purpose with the agreement to pay in installment, he inscribe the proverb on the vehicle. He affirmed that with time people identified and referred to him as *Alátiṣe*. He further affirmed that the proverb became his guiding principle, thereby reminding himself at all times that whatever he was capable of doing for himself mattered and not expectations of what people would do for him.

We encountered the bearer of *Àdábá,* who claimed to be a cocoa farmer in Ondo town. He informed us that the proverb *Àdábá nìjà, ẹniìjà ò bá ní ń peara rẹ̀ lọ́kùnrin* (it is the lonely person who appreciates the tribulations of life, the person who never experienced tribulations of life hails himself as a hero) became popular with him following tribulations he faced early in life. He claimed he was a successful cocoa farmer in Bágbè-Oǹdó before the age of thirty-five. However, his cocoa farm was razed by fire, and he became poor and frustrated with life. What stuck him most, according to him, was that friends and relatives did not help him to recover from the misfortune. He said he, however, recovered gradually, but learned the lesson that people hardly assist a person during difficult times. For him, the proverb became a catchy phrase he used very often to guide himself, and to admonish and encourage people when they are going through hard times. The shortened form of the proverb *Àdábánìjà* eventually became his mark of identification, and later supplanted his original name. The shortened form was later shortened to *Àdábá*, which he claimed he uses for all official transactions.

The researchers also met Alhaji *Èrùòbodò* in Ìlá-Ọ̀ràngún. He claimed to be over ninety years of age. He explained to us that he was nicknamed Eruobodo because of his constant use of the proverb *èrù òbodò, ẹnitíyóòwọdòlominú ńkọ* (a river is never in fear, it is the person entering the river that is weary and unsure) in his youthful days during wrestling contests. According to him, he was a good wrestler in his youth and was capable of throwing older and apparently stronger opponents. Whenever there was a wrestling contest in which he had to face an older and apparently stronger opponent, he would intone, *èrù òbodò, ẹnitíyóòwọdòlominú ńkọ* or its shortened form *èrù òbodò....* to awaken his consciousness regarding his strengthen and ability, to create fear in the mind of the opponent, and to remind himself that with determination and sense of purpose he would throw any opponent. He jokingly informed us that today, only his peers who are ninety years and above know his actual name which he told us is *Àkànní Bùrẹ́mọ̀*.

From the above, it is evident that each proverb from which names are derived contains one lesson or the other which users are conscious of. The attraction to the wisdom or lesson in proverbs are responsible for their being inscribed on vehicles, houses and shops, or being used as catchy phrases. The users never intended using them as personal names, but with time, people use abbreviated forms of the proverbs to identify and signify the users. In most cases, the users do not reject the identity, or reject being identified and referred to by the abbreviated forms they chose to use, and with time they become personal names, supplanting actual names giving at birth, and in a number of cases becoming surnames.

## Conclusion

This paper has added to our knowledge and understanding of personal names in Yoruba. The study reveals that shortened forms of Yoruba proverbs inscribed on vehicles, houses and shops as trade names either for aesthetics, and/or in some cases as a reminder of experiences of life do become names of user. Not only are the users known and identified by the inscriptions, they answer to the inscription as means of identification. Equally so are shortened forms of proverbs that become catchy phrases common to a person. With time, such catchy phrases become the means of address and identification of the user. As revealed in the paper, there are people whose personal names and surnames are easily traceable to proverbs across the Yoruba nation. The paper concludes that names derived from proverbs serve the purpose of reliving experiences, and equally serve as guidance to the users in their daily activities and interactions with others.

## References

Abiodun M. A. 2000. Acknowledgment and the use of proverbs in Yoruba. *Proverbium*17:23-26.

Abiodun M. A. 2018. ÀfojúsùnYorùbá nípaàgbà nínú òwe. In Salawu A. S. and Rabiu O. I. (ed.) *Trends in African oral literature, creative writings and contemporary Society: Articles in honour of Adéọlá AdijatÀbẹ̀kẹ́ Fákẹ́yẹ.* 60-67. Ibadan: University Press Plc.

Abiodun, M. A., Aladesanmi B, and Olaiya T. 2016. Ìfojú àṣà ìfúnnilórúkọ wo àwọnorúkọ ẹdá ìtàn Fágúnwà. In Adebowale Oluwayemisi. Adeleke Duro and Adejumo Arinpe (eds). Ọ̀tunìmọ̀ nínú ìtàn-àròsọ D. O. Fágúnwà. Lagos: The Capstone Publications

Abiodun M.A. and Olaogun J. 2012. *A sociolinguistic analysis of appellations in Yoruba Culture.* (Ms).

Adedeji, A. 2010. Yoruba culture and its influence in the development of modern popular music in Nigeria. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Sheffield, U.K.

Adeoye C. L. 1972. *OrúkọYorùbá.* Ibadan: Ibadan University Press

Agyekum. 2006. The sociolinguistic of Akan personal names. *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 15, (2): 205-235.

Ajayi S. A. 2005. African culture and civilization. Ibadan: Atlantic Books.

Akinnaso F. N. 1980. The sociolinguistic bases of Yoruba personal names. *Anthropological Linguistics* 22, (7): 275-304.

Akinola O. A. 2014. Communicative role of Yoruba names. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature* 2, (9): 65-72.

Delana I. 1972. *Òwel'ẹsin ọ̀rọ̀: Yorùbá Proverbs, their meanings and usage.* Ibadan: Oxford University Press.

Fakuade G., Friday-Otun J. and Adeosun H. 2020. Yoruba personal naming system: Traditions, patterns and practices. *Sociolinguistic Studies* 13, 2-4: 251-271.

Faniran O. A, Ikotun R. O. and Oloyede A. 2019. The utilitarian functions and nature of vehicle inscriptions and stickers in Southwestern Nigeria. *Journal of Language and Literature* 19, (2) 108-128.

Fasiku G. 2006. Yoruba Proverbs, names and national consciousness. *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 1, (4): 50-63.

Name. *Encyclopedia Britannica.* https://www.britannica.com/search?query=name.

Nwaniki I. N. 2013. Oral narratives: social cultural repository of names and naming practices of Agikuyun in Kenya.*International Journal of Education and Research* 1 (8): 1-12

Oduro-Frimpong J. 2013. Cry your own cry: On popular visual media of life experiences on Ghanian Metonyms. Paper to the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA). E-seminar series. Anthropology Network's 43rd e-seminar, March 29-April 9. 2013. Available online at: http://media-anthropology. Net/index. php/e-seminar, pp.1-23.

Oduyoye M. 1972. *Yoruba names*. Ibadan: Daystar Press.

Ogunwale J. A. 2015. Paradigm shifts in the Yoruba anthroponyms: A critical discourse analysis on Yoruba reincarnated-child's names. *International Journal of African Society, Cultures and Traditions* 3, (4): 32-48.

Olatunji A. andIssiah M. 2015. Personal name as a reality of everyday life: Naming dynamics in select African societies. *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 8,(1): 72-90.

Smith, P.2001. Cultural theory: An introduction. New York: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Tylor E. B. 2016. Primitive culture. (Reprint, Volume 1). Dove Publication.

*Michael A. Abịọdunand Oluwatoyin*
*Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages*
*Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria*

*Mary Oluwatoyin Ọlaiya*
*Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages*
*Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria*

*Kehinde O. Ọladeji*
*Department of Linguistics, Language, African and Asian Studies*
*University of Lagos, Lagos*

# Text as an Archive: A Critical Reading of Easterine Kire's *When the River Sleeps*

Ujjwal Jana and Tanushree Dutta, Pondicherry University, Puducherry, India

*Abstract*

*Text plays a vital role in archiving documents sealed with facts, information and knowledge which present the historical importance of a marginalized community. This paper aims to present how a text records the tribal people's lifestyle by providing us insights into their attitudes, behavior, rituals, cultural practices and indigenous knowledge in the eyes of mankind. The study unfolds the fact that when the archive's benefits are fused with the fiction's power, it helps in producing meaningful and historical evidence for reinterpreting the past, reliving in the present and preserving for the future. Kire divulges the Angami community of Nagaland where the tribal life stands in contrast to the common people's lives of mainstream cultures. She unravels the mystical and beautiful world of the Nagas, where nature is presented as a character that nurtures the human characters to portray a wonderful relationship between the two non-identical characters, along with their traditional community knowledge which helps in shaping their unique identity since ages. Archiving the traditions and the way of livelihood in a text protects the marginalized community from the threat of cultural loss which is an ongoing problem in this modern world*
*.*

***Keywords***: *culture, archive, oral tradition, identity, myths, memory*

## Introduction

The present study seeks to critically explore how a text becomes an archive where much information, facts and knowledge of an ethnic community are recorded for the benefit of future generations. A text acts as a repository of culture and knowledge which opens a doorway to preserve the discourses of a given community and prolong the circulation in the society. Moreover, text as an archive is an umbrella term, but our focus is on how archiving is undertaken in the fields of ecocritical reading and community knowledge in a given text. This paper is divided into four sections: the First section presents the critical analysis and plot overview of the text. The Second section defines the word "archive" and explains how a text can be represented as an archive. The Third section presents an eco-critical reading of my primary text by connecting the man-nature relationship in a community, and the Fourth section unravels the community knowledge system and its cultural practices whirled around a community. This study seeks to examine how Kire's *When the River Sleeps* makes a synthetic study through close examination, with the idea of the text as an archive and how it acts as a powerhouse of a knowledge system. The paper showcases the ability of a text to cultivate numerous ideas and concepts which makes it eligible to be treated as an archive. The novel *When the River Sleeps* is beautifully woven with supernatural elements, folklore and culture, which charms the heart of the readers to the core, and her narrative takes us on a fascinating ride to a mystical world.

## Critical Analysis and Plot Overview

This section presents the plot overview and critical analysis of the literary work *When the River Sleeps* (2014). Its author is a Naga writer hailing from the beautiful landscapes of the North-Eastern state, who provides us with glimpses of rich and ethnic Naga folk traditions and an exotic natural environment. The novel portrays a location embedded with nature's wonderment and mystical enchantments, and which presents a blurred line between magic and reality. Kire transports the readers into the exotic world of Angami tribes in the remote blue mountains of Nagaland and their colorful community life. She presents the realities of the Naga people's lives, which are hauntingly beautiful, and the narrative captivates the minds of the readers, exploring a community life that whirls around a traditional tribal lifestyle and their ethnic belief systems. Kire exhibits a tiny world of the Angami tribes by unveiling the laws, cultures and morals of those indigenous people of Nagaland and enchants the minds of readers with her lyrical quality and eloquent narrative technique in the portrayal of the novel. She displays the beauty of the oral traditions, both for the indigenous and non-indigenous readers, who remain airheaded in this contemporary world of noble lifestyle. Kire attempts to preserve the traditional culture of an endangered human race from getting lost in thin lines of air. In the novel, she presents a mystical atmosphere where both the physical and spiritual worlds turn into one entity and hence, blurs the peripheries between magic and reality.

The novel *When the River Sleeps* is a Hindu Prize winner and presents an adventurous journey of a lone hunter, Villie, who is in pursuit of the heart-stone unearth the bed of a mysterious sleeping river, which can grant him boundless powers and abundance. Villie undertakes the epic journey when some unfathomable dreams sway his mind and impel him to risk his precious life for seeking the magical stone. Villie is mesmerized by the power of the mysterious sleeping river:

> When the river is asleep, it is completely still. Yet the enchantment of those minutes or hours when it sleeps is so powerful, that it turns the stones in the middle of the river bed into a charm. If you can wrest a stone from the heart of the sleeping river and take it home, it will grant you whatever it is empowered to grant you.
>
> (Kire 2014: 12)

In the course of his journey, Villie gives us glimpses of the village and community life of Angami tribes and how nature plays a glaring role in the survival of tribal people. The protagonist encounters widow spirits and weretigers in his dangerous journey of attaining his goal by overpowering all malignant evil forces posited in his trail and hence, he proves himself as a "mythical hero" by showcasing his bravery in the novel. Kire sprinkles the supernatural elements which influence the lives of characters and the natural surroundings of Angami tribes. Villie's beloved, Mechuseno was seized by the wings of death after she caught a mysterious fever when she went into the forest for collecting herbs with her friends. Mechuseno's eyes caught sight of a tall dark man after she plucked orchids from a tree and the man followed her home like a shadow, and surprisingly, no one other than Mechuseno could see him. And soon after that, she left the world. The superstitions of the villagers can be observed here: "Mechuseno was buried outside the village gate because she had died in what were considered 'ominous circumstances.' Any clan member dying after encountering a spirit could not be buried in the village" (15). Villie, the

protagonist, possessed this superstitious mindset as he defended his life from weretigers and spirits by casting off spells foretold by the spirits of his ancestral people. His homecoming journey after gaining the heart-stone was even more challenging, as evil spirits whirled around Villie to snatch it away and misuse the powers of the magical stone. The spirits dwelling in the forests, the spirits in the shape of charming girls, and the widow-spirits who guard the sleeping river play with Villie by causing trouble in his journey. And he also came across the village of *Kirhupfumia* where women possessed magical powers for cursing and even killing people by pointing their fingers. The characters Ate and Zote were descendants of *Kirhupfumia* who were the most feared people in the mountains for their practice of witchcraft. Later on, Villie, after being convinced that Ate was harmless, brings Ate along to his abode, as her ancestral village people have mysteriously fled away and it is unsafe for her to stay in an isolated village. Afterwards, she lives with Villie's family in his village where he hands the heart-stone over to Ate. In the end, Villie is brutally murdered by a man who desired to possess the heart-stone for worldly pleasures. Therefore, the journey which Villie undertakes transforms his soul into a more humane one, as a stream of spiritual knowledge flows through him, and he understands the purpose of the heart-stone which is not for gaining wealth, and instead bestows spiritual knowledge and power over both the world of senses and the world of spirit.

Kire presents the practices and belief systems of Angami tribes which is rooted in their indigenous culture and beautifully weaves the story to present a world of fantasy, magic realism, superstitions, etc. to entice the palpitating heart of the readers. Kire presents the importance of viewing dreams in their cultural belief systems. The Angami people believe dreams to be signs from the creator deity *Kepenuopfu* for channeling messages. The novel is comprised of multiple themes and loads of meaningful indigenous knowledge, well-knitted in a flow of simple language, and provides us with the flavors of the Angami tribe's culture and traditional belief systems.

**Reading as an Archive**

An archive is the means to restore, cumulate, record the historical knowledge and facts which have been silenced and enshrouded by ravages of time. The archive is fabricated by individuals and groups, as much as by state corporations and institutions, be it in form of verbal, written or visual mediums, which embodies an organized form of documenting facts. According to Merewether (2006: 6), who quotes the *Encyclopedia Universalis* and the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the term "archive" can be defined in the following way:

> In the former, we read, "archives are constituted by the set of documents that result from the activity of an institution or of a physical or moral person". The latter says that "the term archive designates the organized body of records produced or received by a public, semi-public, institutional, business or private entity in the transaction of its affairs and preserved by it, its successors or authorized repository through extension of its original meaning as the repository for such materials".

Archiving documents is significant in this modern era for it opens a doorway to preserving the discourses of a given community or group by preserving and sustenance in circulation through generations. The text produced in relation to culture renders an outlet of repository of knowledge as documents corroborating to their own past, or evidence of an endurable identity, whether it is a

specific group or an individual. As Merewether (2006: 12) writes, "For Paul Ricoeur ('Archives, Documents, Traces', 1978) the concept of the archive is synonymous with the trace and the document: in each we are able to measure not only a relation between the past and present, but between the event and evidence of its occurrence, and between the fabric of everyday life and its representation." The later decades of the twentieth century marked literature participating in full swing for archiving the historical documents by producing creative works. Texts, perhaps, are the most prominent forms which archive the historical facts by using literature's power, depending on narratives, languages, cultures, ideologies etc., as exhibited by the author. Writing in 2001, Suzanne Keene observed a "proliferation" of late-twentieth-century novels representing a material encounter with archives by scholarly or amateur characters "who seek information in a collection of documents" (Chadwick and Vermeulen 2020: 2). By archiving texts, it opens the doorways to experience the world that administers the appearance of statements as distinctive events.

*When the River Sleeps* presents the world as a "frame" through which people can communicate with their past history and culture by archiving the events based on past experiences, oral histories, etc., which embodies recording the life stories of Angami tribal people. Kings M. Phiri has demonstrated that this may be of considerable significance in matrilineal societies, where the means of transmission of oral tradition and the content reflects the social structure. Moreover, oral tradition is a vehicle that helps in filling the gap in the archived records that is seldom touched by the written records. At the same time, archiving a text can be accomplished by various fields of study, but the field of our study centers around eco-critical reading and community knowledge of a given text. Therefore, the document produced by archiving the ecocritical arena and community knowledge of the given text reflects the indigenous identity, worldview, belief systems, traditional cultural practices, etc. of the specific community.

**Eco-critical Reading**

The term "ecocriticism" traces back to William Rueckert's critical essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" in 1978. Eco-criticism illuminates an intense relationship between the human and non-human worlds which helps our humanistic intellect to understand the deep connections among self, community, nature and the text. According to Lawrence Buell, the term "ecocriticism" means "the study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist's praxis" (Buell 1996: 430). Buell pinpointed two waves of ecocriticism: "the first wave ecocritics focused on nature writing, nature poetry, and wilderness fiction" (Buell 1996: 138). They used the philosophy of organism and here, the environment effectively means natural environment (Buell 1996:28). The second wave ecocritics inclined towards environmental justice issues and a "social ecocriticism" that takes a landscape as seriously as "natural landscape" (Buell 1996: 22). Ecocritics regard the environment as inextricable from the clench of human culture, a fact which is predominant in many canonical writings of the times. The traditional or regional literatures put forth the notion of how harmoniously, we, the human beings can weave a beautiful relationship with the wonders of Mother Nature.

The novel is set in the beautiful hills of Nagaland and the characters have a deep connection with the gravity of nature. When Daftuar asks Kire about the inception of *When the River Sleeps* in *The Hindu*, she states:

I have many hunter friends. My own son is hunter. They would tell me stories, and in particular this one about rivers that 'went to sleep' at a certain time at night. No one knew when the river would fall asleep, but if they were fortunate enough to find it asleep, they would quickly take out a stone from its depths and it would acts as a charm. This story stayed with me a long time and surfaced when it was time for it to be written as a book.

<div align="right">(Daftuar 2015)</div>

The novel unfolds a vivid atmosphere for understanding and enhancing the relations between the people, the natural landscape and the notion of ecology in the minds of readers. In the literary history of the times, the man-nature relationship is portrayed as a crucial concept in the branch of literature that forges a bridge for communication between man and nature. From the perspective of literary environmental ethics: "literature should eulogize nature and its harmonious relation with human beings" (Wang 2009: 292). In the novel, Kire provides us glimpses of an adventurous journey of Villie, the protagonist which was undertaken through the dense forests of Naga hills. Kire represents how nature functions as a healer, protector, provider and spouse in the entire journey of Villie's quest for searching the river of his dreams. The entangled loops between man-nature relationships are well-portrayed in the novel. In the beginning of the novel, Villie personified the forest as a living being, as he says: "the forest is my wife" (7). The forest gave him company in his solitary life after the death of his beloved and hence, he never longed to abandon the forest as "he had the sensation that he was being an unfaithful spouse. He began to think that leaving the forest would be the same as abandoning his wife" (9). Villie took shelter in the heart of the forest when people accused him of murdering a man, though he had committed no crime, and he starts thinking, "the forest was his wife indeed: providing him with sanctuary when he most needed it; and food when his rations were inadequate. The forest also protected him from the evil in the heart of man. He felt truly wedded to her at that moment" (51). Joseph Wood Krutch states: "Thoreau's work is not about plants or animals or birds; it is about his relation to them; one may almost say about himself in connection with nature" (quoted in Mishra 2016: 168). Along with Villie, we find other characters, like a Nepali couple who relies on nature, and when Ville asked their opinion about sending their baby to school, the baby's father replied that education in school was not for people like them. Villie thought "What could school possibly teach him that his parents could not improve upon? They were rich in their knowledge of the ways of the forest, the herbs one could use for food, the animals and birds one could trap and the bitter herbs to counteract the sting of a poisonous snake" (15). The sublime relationship between the characters and the forest depicts the wonders of nature, about which people remain ignorant in this era of humiliating nature. As Rachel Carson said, "the more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe about us, the less taste we shall have for the destruction of our race" (Carson 1962: 20).

Kire emphasizes nature as a "healer" in the novel. When Villie, the protagonist wandered in the jungles of *Rahuria*[1] or the unclean forest, he caught a fever and he thought "the seer would give them a drink made of *ginseng* and *tsomhou*[2], the wild sour seed that grew on trees. Stir in a little honey and the mixture would go easily" (54). In the course of his journey, whenever he was injured, nature healed his wounds as he prepares: "pastes of *ciena*[3] for open wounds. That worked for smaller injuries, but for bigger wounds he liked to use pungent *Japan nha*[4] and rock bee honey. He had tried these on himself, and the healing had been quick, with little scarring" (41). Kire

exhibits the traditional medicinal knowledge which is rich and valuable in natural remedies, helping the people to get cured in a natural way with herbs, plants, seeds, honey etc. In a way, Kire is representing their traditional Angami culture of healing and recovering from the ailments inflected by the nature, defining their indigenous identity in front of the world.

Kire presents an environment-oriented study of the text to inculcate a sense of nature's consciousness (or ecoconsciousness) among the minds of the people that help in archiving how nature was a crucial part in the lives of Angami tribes through the medium of text discourse. The novel represents the close harmony between the characters and the natural elements of Mother Earth, which fabricates a compact bond which is the premise of ecocriticism: "The modern ecological consciousness has a feeling of balance between human and the natural world must be maintained. A perfect ecology is one in which plants, animals, birds and human beings live in such harmony that none dominates or destroys the other" (Mishra 2016: 169). Kire, in a way, rejects the idea of the anthropocentric attitude of human beings as it threatens nature and its serene environment, and rather instills the idea of an ecocentric attitude amidst the people.

## Community Knowledge: A Mirror of Society

"Cultural pluralism" is a term used when smaller groups within a larger society maintain their unique cultural identities, and their values and practices are accepted by the wider culture, provided they are consistent with the laws and values of the wider society. Horace M. Kallen coined the term "cultural pluralism" which emerged in the 1910s in America, but became a widely popular term in the 1940s worldwide. In the essay "Horace M. Kallen and Cultural Pluralism", Sidney Ratner states: "Kallen realized how important the dependence of each individual upon his own group's culture was as a basis for that individual achieving his full potential as a distinctive personality. Ruth and other anthropologists have made this fact a commonplace in the last few decades but it was not so widely appreciated before the 1930's" (Ratner 1984: 188). The concept of "cultural pluralism" fits like a globe in our deep-rooted cultural Indian society or community in specific. The North-Eastern states of India where many ethnic groups dwell amidst the green lushes of forests, blue hills, golden valleys and silver streams, conjure up an image of regional ethnic identity. North-East is regarded as a land of "unity in diversity" where multiple ethnic groups reside by diving in the colors of ethnic traditions and cultures of their own ethnic identity. Literature from the North-East India represents the marginalized social groups by archiving the cultural, social, traditional and historical backgrounds of the respective communities. Indigenous literature encompasses narratives of socio-cultural life of the people to rediscover their cultural identity which is fused with folk literature, oral tradition, customary practices, ethnic food habits, etc. Hence, literature is a tool where collective and subjective truths can be voiced by the indigenous writers to pour out their hearts to reflect their ethnic group's identity as "Kallen beliefs that ethnic minority groups would cherish their cultural traits and feel it desirable to do so, in one way or another" (Ratner 1984: 197).

The idea of "cultural pluralism" has been foregrounded in Kire's literary works by her powerful narratives related to her indigenous community. Nagaland comprises of sixteen tribal communities and Angami is one among the tribal communities which is fused with its own melody of culture. In the novel *When the River Sleeps*, Kire portrays the community life of Angami tribes which provides us glimpses of the traditional community knowledge which is full of spirits,

superstitions, occult practices, heart-stones etc., which provides a unique sense of "mythopoeic imagination". The writers ranging from this region look at their embedded culture as a process of preservation and continuity of the community, and this concept of continuity is essential, given that the works, which can be placed under the category of "realistic" fiction, re-define permanence of culture and tradition. In an academic lecture titled "The Peripheral Imagination: Writing the Invisible India," Aruni Kashyap concisely tells about the narrative representation of literary texts from the region that is often more than an imaginative story (Menon 2017: 23). The novel unfolds the indigenous way of livelihood of the Angami tribes which defines its rich cultural heritage which is untouched by the pangs of modernization, hence, unbothered by the dominant cultures of India. The novel depicts an adventurous journey by the protagonist, Villie, where Kire blazingly presents the indigenous community knowledge of Angami tribes by her use of cultural narratives as "the writers are cognizant of preserving the rich oral tradition of story-telling technique" (Menon 2017:24). Kire discloses the community belief systems and knowledge throughout her novel which is an act of discovering their cultural roots and shaping them for the future.

The North-East is a base where the community's belief in supernatural elements is rooted in their indigenous culture. For Angamis, supernaturalism plays a significant role in the everyday lives of people, something which is mysterious in the eyes mainstream cultures. In the encounter of the protagonist Villie with *Tekhumiavi*[5], "the folk practice of certain men transforming their spirits into tigers" (25) is seen. Villie in his journey where the forest was his shelter, was attacked and he fought with mysterious spirits, "Mine is the greater spirit. I will never submit to you!" (83). When Villie was attacked by weretigers at night, he puts forth the gun to shoot but then he suddenly remembers the ancestral knowledge that he has gained in the age-group house of their village to protect his soul: "*Kuovi! Menuolhoulie!Wetsho*! Is this the way you treat your clansman? I am Villie, son of Kedo, your clansman. I am not here to do you harm. Why are you treating me as a stranger? I come in peace. You owe me your hospitality. I am your guest!"(26).The Angami traditional knowledge system inculcates a wonderful practice of thanksgiving ritual to the creator deity *Ukepenuopfii*[6] as an act of hospitality, whenever people take firewood from the forest and collect herbs or find an animal in their traps-*Terhuomiapeziemu*."Thanks be to the spirits"(80).The Angami tribes have native beliefs, like the one that only their creator deity's name can protect their souls from spirits*: "Kepenuopfu Zanutsie la mhatalie*[7]!"(105).While returning with Ate, Villie's companion was attacked by a tiger-spirit and he protected her by spelling: "*Kepenuopfu Zanutsielatalie*!" (189). The constant attacks of spirits bestowed him with wisdom and knowledge that: "sometimes the struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual powers which you would be quite foolish to defy with gunpowder" (189).

The novel *When the River Sleeps* archives the indigenous belief system which upholds the community's knowledge which whirls around supernaturalism, mysticism, religious practices etc. defining Angami tribe's cultural identity. Their indigenous wisdom of knowledge has still not vanished among their culture due to the mainstream cultures. Kallen's concept of "cultural pluralism" fits well in this exotic Naga literature where Kire presents a wonderful world of an ethnic group which has its unique identity, patterns of belief, different traditional practices, yet dwell a harmonious life by adhering to their own culture without being disrupted by the dominant culture. Cultural pluralism supports small and ethnic communities to survive within the fence of dominant cultures. In the essay "Identity and Globalization Naga Perspective" Temsula Ao puts

forth a similar expression where she talks about the contemporary challenges faced by North-Eastern cultures that are beginning to evolve, stripped off all human significance due to global market (Menon 2017:24)

**Conclusion**

The present study highlights the essence of the novel in preserving the cultural hub of the indigenous people by the author's keen observation of the cultural practices and lifestyles in their community. The paper provides glimpses of the crude lifestyle of the people with nature and the rich knowledge of traditional practices of a given community, which are archived by the author in the form of fiction for preserving their cultural identity. Hence, a text stores multiple elements, encompassing the knowledge of cultures, lifestyle, traditions, belief systems which reflect the cultural identity of an ethnic community, in contrast to modernization which is spreading in every nook and corner of the world and is wiping away the primitive roots of the people and their ways of ethnic lifestyles. Archiving the history of a community in the form of a written document can resurrect and safeguard the primitive cultures, traditions and belief systems of people. It also provides a sense of security from the threat of cultural loss. Kire, in her novel beautifully presents the Angami community's cultural life which is linked with Mother Nature and whirls around flavors of community knowledge systems, which indicates her attempt to preserve the indigenous culture from getting lost in thin lines of novelty.

**Notes:**

[1]*Rarhuria* : unclean forest, certain spirit-infested places shunned by villagers.
[2]*Tsomhou* : Nutgall tree , medicinal shrub.
[3]*Ciena* : Bitter wormwood, a herb used to staunch blood from small cuts, also believed to have supernatural properties.
[4]*Japan nha* : Crofton weed,
[5]*Tekhumiavi* : weretiger, a phenomenon amongst the Tenyimia people where certain members of the tribe transform their spirits into tigers.
[6]*Ukepenuopfii* : The creator deity worshipped in the old religion of the Tenyi people.
[7]*Kepenuopfii zanu tsie la mhatalie* : In the name of the creator, retreat at once.

**References**

Buell, Lawrence. 1996. The *Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture.* Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press.
Carson, Rachel.1962. *Silent Spring.* London: Penguin Books.
Chadwick,Tom, and Pieter Vermeulen. 2020. Literature in the New Archival Landscape. *Literature Interpretation Theory*, vol. 31, no.1.1-7.
Daftuar, Swati. 2015. No division between spiritual and physical. *The Hindu-The Hindu21*, www.thehindu.com
Kire, Easterine. 2014.*When the River Sleeps*. India: Zubaan Books.
Menon, Nirmala. 2017. Mapping the Literature Contours of North-East India. *MZU Journal of Literature and Cultural Studies*, vol. IV, no.1.19-36.

Merewether, Charles. (ed.) 2006. Introduction. Art and the Archive in *The Archive*, Whitechapel.

Mishra. Sandip Kumar. 2016. Ecocriticism: A study of Environmental Issues in Literature. *BRICS Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 6, no.4.1-3.

Ratner, Sidney.1984. Horace M. Kallen and Cultural Pluralism. *Modern Judaism*, vol. 4, no.2.185-200.

Wang, Ning. 2009.Toward a Literary Environmental Ethics: a Reflection on Eco-Criticism. *Neohelicon,* vol. 36, no.2. 289-298.

*Ujjwal Jana*
*Department of English, Pondicherry University*
*Puducherry, India*
*ujjwal.dakshini@gmail.com*

*Tanushree Dutta*
*Former PG Student,*
*Department of English, Pondicherry University*
*Puducherry, India*