

From the Editorial Team

Dear Readers, dear friends:

When I wrote the introduction to CJAS 10(2) I was at the University of Kassel's Global Network Programme (GPN) as the Wangari Maathai Visiting Professor. In that issue I mentioned my horror at Hamas attacks in Israel as well as my heartache over the 12,000 deaths in Gaza as a result of Israel's retaliation. That number is now estimated at over 30,000 with another over 70,000 injured. As for the numbers of people experiencing trauma in both Israel and Palestine, not to mention globally because of this senseless war which seems to have no end in sight, only God knows. Each time I enter the GPN I pass by two beautiful portraits side by side, Dr Maathai and Thomas Sankara, two bold individuals who didn't set out to be "revolutionaries", simply to play a part in changing the unjust status quo. All of us can be revolutionary scholars by unsettling harmful orthodoxies through our research and writings—the questions we ask, how we ask them, of whom we ask them, and how and where we discuss our findings.

In this issue CJAS presents you, dear readers, with five very diverse articles that hopefully contribute to our decolonial discourse of dismantling orthodoxies by offering alternative readings. We have an eclectic collection of papers on Ghana, Mali, and Nigeria.

The first three papers speak to the theme of the "word" but in very different ways. The first brings language in context to our attention. Much of the scholarly work on the Lɛtɛ language or the Larteh people focuses on the grammar, syntax, or linguistics of Lɛtɛ. As the title indicates, "An account of Lɛtɛ language context" discusses the context in which Lɛtɛ is currently spoken, namely the intersections of grammar and social life. Mercy Akrofi Ansah discusses the migration history of the Larteh and the linguistic neighborhood of the people and hence their language.

In "The Yùngbà Panegyric Poem: A Metatext Of The Òyó Empire" Nana Aba Benti-Mawusi brings to us not just poetry but a metatext of empire, specifically the Oyo empire and the idea of Yoruba-Oyo imperial hegemony. Benti-Mawusi argues that the heroic deeds of the king are the main text through which he earns a metatext of praise names and epithets, which then form the foundation for the Yùngbà praise poem. Afro future scholars might be excited about this story that illustrates how revisiting and re-enacting the past can enable a reimagining of the future through collective memory.

In the third article on “the word” we move to pop music, and indeed pop theology. Kofi Kinaata (Martin King Arthur) released his first song in 2011, and really hit the music scene in 2015 with his song “Made in Taadi” an ode to his hometown, Takoradi. In “Through a Glass Darkly: Grassroots Theology and the Music of Ghanaian Hip-Life Artist Kofi Kinaata” Joshua Settles employs lyrics from selected songs to show how popular youth (Christian) theology, the arts, and African tradition are brought into conversation. In using the concept of “grassroots theology”, Settles offers us an example of speaking back— of a young person to both popular music as well as mainstream Christian theology—even though this is not his explicit framing.

The next paper is also about youth agency and innovation. Kajsa Hallberg Adu’s article titled, “‘I don’t want my children to grow up there’: Counter-Narratives to Migration by University Students in Ghana’ allows us to travel the migration journey with prospective migrants and complicate the conventional discourse on so-called economic migrants. Relying on a more privileged group than we find in many studies, the students’ narratives include reservations and even counter-narratives to migration such as “concerns about racism and discrimination abroad, and the draw of family and culture at home”.

The final paper in this issue is titled “The interplay of international and domestic factors in Mali: The case of politico-religious actors” by Beatriz Mesa. Although the Sahel region is a helpful analytical space from which to observe the interplay of domestic and international religious influencers in political dramas, it has not featured much in the academic literature. Beatriz offers a window into the roles and rivalries of both in the evolution of religious actors into political actors in Mali.

Finally, as CJAS does every now and then, in this issue we bring you a paper from a keynote lecture titled, “In my father’s house’: Conceptualising the Pragmatics of Cognitions” delivered by Akinola Odeunmi, a Professor of Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis at the University of Ibadan. The original lecture was delivered on 12th May 2021 at the retirement programme organised in honour of Professor Lekan Oyeleye by the Department of English at the University of Ibadan.

On behalf of the entire editorial team at the Institute of African Studies, I want to thank the numerous authors who entrust us with their intellectual work, and are patient with us through the arduous process of finding reviewers, waiting for reviews and so on. As for our reviewers, what can we say for your massive labour of love—thank you so much for keeping CJAS going. We truly survive because of you. We also appreciate the Institute of African Studies and the University of Ghana journals office for their support. On a personal note, I

would like to thank the CJAS editorial family—editors, graduate assistants, and National Service staff— for your dedication and commitment.

Akosua Adomako Ampofo

Editor-in-Chief, CJAS.

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