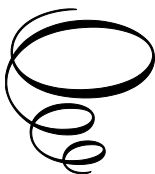# African Languages, Literatures, and Postcolonial Modernity

African Languages, Literatures, and Postcolonial Modernity

Edited by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

SAMBA CAMARA
AND MOHAMED MWAMZANDI

"Today, we can summon to memory the languages of our ancestors. What is paramount, though, is the rediscovery of the power of words of our people. Metropolitan French, English, Spanish – all languages of colonization to be colonized in turn."[1]

"There are not many countries in Africa today where you could abolish the language of the erstwhile colonial powers and still retain the facility for mutual communication. Therefore, those African writers who have chosen to write in English or French are not unpatriotic smart alecks with an eye on the main chance …I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home, but altered to suit its new African surroundings."[2]

"The contemporary black English, like the Anglo-Africans of earlier generations and perhaps, like all blacks in the West, stand between (at least) two great cultural assemblages, both of which have mutated through the course of the modern world that formed them and assumed new configurations".[3]

Over the past five decades, the question of modernity, in general, has persisted as a preoccupying topic in the field of African studies. The fascination with the idea of the "modern" during and after the post-independence period prompted a wealth of research by scholars curious about how African societies imagined modernity and how they acted upon it. This scholarship explored the social, political, economic and cultural transformations induced both by the transplantation of foreign models (both

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[1] Maryse Condé, "Beyond Languages and Colors," in *Discourse*, ed. John Williams (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 111.
[2] Chinua Achebe, "English and the African Writer," in *Transition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 343, 349.
[3] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 1.

western and Arabo-Muslim) on the continent and the subsequent reactions of Africans (Mudimbe 1988; Appiah 1992; Comaroff and Comaroff 1993, Diouf 2003; Falola 2008; Mbembe 2001, Geschiere et al. 2010; Kane 2012). Inquiries into the legacy of slavery and the fact of globalization have also stimulated serious reflections on the transcontinental dimension of modernity in Africa (Gilroy 1993; Diouf 2000; Mbembe 2010; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013; Wright 2016; M'baye 2017). The subsequent body of research challenged the Eurocentric metanarrative of modernity in various meaningful ways. Yet, much remains to be said about how African languages and literatures, both as means of communication and instruments of agency, have embodied and mediated modernization as uniquely experienced in the African "postcolony" (Mbembe 2001). This book makes a contribution in that regard.

The volume's contributors, which include literary and cultural critics and linguists, approach language from a broad perspective. The outcome is a two-part, multidisciplinary study of language and literature centered on postcolonial modernity in Africa and, to a lesser extent, the African diaspora. The book's first part entitled, "Postcolonial modernity in literature", explores how African authors created a postcolonial modernism in prose, poetry, film, and musical discourse mainly by drawing on the vast indigenous repertoires (orality, performance) to Africanize Western literary genres and forms. Charles Bodunde refers to this modernizing technique as "aesthetic transfer", whereby the author adapts oral narrative devices to the composition of a modern literary form and, by extension, a modern artform. With reference to "oral tradition" as the "complex corpus of verbal and spoken art created as a means of recalling the past" (Adedeji, cited in Bodunde 2001, 1), this book documents how oral devices – such as the uses of referential language (Michieka; Michieka and Omolola), African notions of motherhood (Lisanza; Michieka), popular language and metaphors (Muaka; Adamu; Camara) – have characterized postcolonial and contemporary African literatures. In addition to aesthetic transfer, the book discusses how African authors created postcolonial modernism through experimentalism in film (Coly) and, simply, by creating reflectionist and imaginative works whose themes are inspired by the peculiar reality of the African postcolony.

The second part of the book, "Language and educational integration", documents the importance of cultural valorization and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) for creating an integrated pedagogy of African languages and Afro-diasporic dialects. The book's critical study of literature and language pedagogy shines light on the crucial links between language and literature on the one hand, and language pedagogy and culture on the

other. More specifically, the first section of the book examines how African authors have sought in literature and popular culture the means to create new vernaculars for dealing with (and representing) modernity and its discontents in African/black contexts. The second section explores the cultural implications of a successful pedagogy for teaching African languages and, in one case, Afro-diasporic dialects as "vehicles of culture" (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1986). Therefore, while the bulk of the book focuses on the languages and literatures of continental Africa, it also touches on the African diaspora. In particular, the chapter by Maria Carolina de Azevedo examines the politics and the cultural value of African linguistic heritage in modern Brazil. Accordingly, the volume draws on both African and, to a lesser extent, Afro-diasporic case studies to document, in a relatively broad sense, the places of literature and language in processes of postcolonial modernization. In this endeavor, the book engages with two important genealogies of African heritage which, as discussed below, are relevant for mapping the scope and the complex dynamics of the multiple languages of postcolonial modernity. Such languages, in this context, refer to the diversified body of spoken, written and performative mediums through which African and Afro-diasporic "modernities" are created and articulated. Before developing on this term further, let us first define the idea of postcolonial modernity.

Defining postcolonial modernity

Certainly, there is no room here to do justice to a broad review of the literature on modernity in postcolonial Africa. We can only sketch a general overview of modernity and modernization discourses in relation to our specific theme of language and literature in African/Afro-diasporic contexts. In popular discourse, the term "modern" merely refers to that which is new, contemporary, the present, or also that which is advanced and innovative. When historicized in the African context, however, the term modernity carries a more substantial meaning (Geschiere et al. 2010, 2). It evokes the idea of a historical time which not only informs our understanding of Africa, but also demonstrates how the very ontology of Africa–as a place, history and memory–has evolved relative to the rest of the world. In other words, defining modernity involves a reflection about Africa's representation in global history, as well as an exploration of how its encounters with its outer worlds–through commercialism, Atlantic and Arab-Islamic slaveries, colonialism, neoliberalism, and now digital globalization–have fundamentally shaped what Africa is and what it means to be African.

With that said, what is modernity? In the Western tradition, modernity has often been defined in relation to Europe, a definition that has its roots in the Enlightenment discourse. The Eurocentric tradition presents modernity as a civilizational progress originating entirely in Europe, whose rationalized models were then copied by the rest of the world (Turner vii, 4-5; Harootunian 2002, 61-62; Lazarus 2012, 234). Two problems emerge with this framing of modernity. First, it presents Europe as the sole progenitor of modernist progress while projecting the Eurocentric ideology of modernization as universal. Secondly, such a metanarrative of modernity is purposefully dichotomic. It conceives of modernity in opposition to the supposedly inferior cultures of Europe's "Others" – including Africa.

Africa has particularly borne the brunt of imperialistic misrepresentation for being constantly portrayed as the land of primitive, static, and backward cultures that remained stuck in "tradition" and darkness (Hegel 1900; Mudimbe 1988; Hountondji 1996; Shohat and Stam 2014). Modernity, in other words, was chiefly defined against the idea of Africa and blackness. It is therefore not surprising that from the pioneers of modernization theory, such as Max Weber and Karl Marx, to poststructuralist thinkers, like Michel Foucault, Western modernist discourse has placed the origins of modernity exclusively in Europe/the West, while neglecting the non-European origins of progress (Shohat and Stam 2014; Geschiere 2010; Amin 1989). Even when Western modernist ideology seems to recognize global differences, its emphasis on the idea of a "singular modernity" (Jameson 2002) suggests non-Western "modernisms" as derivatives, hence its failure to acknowledge fundamental plurality in its conception of "the modern". Consequently, what such a Eurocentric perspective ignores is that while capitalism drives the processes of modernization in the world (Jameson 2002), it does not forcibly affect all societies in the same way; nor does it engender the same socio-cultural responses everywhere. Observing Ghana in that sense, Appiah (2006, 101-105) notes that the influence of Western culture on his paternal homeland did not westernize it but, instead, only contributed to the emergence of new local identities that remain Ghanaian all the same. Likewise, many chapters in this volume illustrate how Western influences on African and Afro-diasporic cultures cannot simply be equated with westernization. For example, Michieka's critical-historical analysis of Margaret Ogola's literary language not only instantiates the Africanization of the novel as genre, but also it tells us more about the itinerant roots of Kenyan modernity than about the country's literary and cultural westernization. Aisha Umar Adamu's chapter, which focuses on the poetics of gender identity in Hausa-speaking northern Nigeria, suggests that though the postcolonial African state system emerged from European colonial

legacy, it has been in friction with many so-called Western beliefs. Similarly, Leonard Muaka's analysis of another novel by Ogola, *Mandate of the People* (2012), examines various aspects of demagoguery in Kenyan (and African) politics which result from typical failures of African political leaders to meet the expectations of their people.

Given these essentially local iterations of modernity, it is important therefore to uncenter Europe/the West in the definition of modernity to allow a more realistic appreciation of Africa's postcolonial experience. Going in that sense, Geschiere et. al (2010, 2-3) proposed a "genealogical" approach to modernity in which they emphasize a "relational" over a unidirectional understanding of the modernization process. They argue that the capitalist system did not engender a single universal modernity for all, but instead produced several "modernities", resulting each from a particular society's *longue durée* experience of the capitalist age (Geschiere et al, 3). Modernization, for them, emerges from the historical interaction of the so-called "local" and the "foreign" since no civilization – including both Europe's and Africa's – "modernized" without significant external influences. Thus, not only does the genealogical approach to modernity shine light on the multiple experiences of modernity over the illusion of a single, uniform experience; but also, it shows that each society owes its modernity partially to other societies. Furthermore, by decentering the Eurocentric ideology of modernization, the genealogical approach prods us to unmute historical silences underlying the Western metanarrative. One of such silences is, for instance, the ignorance of the African and Semitic influences that shaped ancient Greece and, therefore, European modernity (Shohat and Stam 2014, 14). Another silence is about Africa's contribution to the capitalist development of Europe (Rodney 1974), or also how European modernism in art had tapped into African and oceanic arts (Hassan 1995; Shohat and Stam 2014, 15). At the same time, however, the genealogical approach warns against what Wole Soyinka (1975, 38-39) called "Neo-Tarzanism", or the venture into an essentialist Afrocentrism that reduces African identity to the illusory ideas of "indigeneity" (Mamdani 2001) or "autochthony" (Mbembe 2007), while overlooking critical foreign influences on modern African society, culture and identity. Therefore, a genealogical approach to modernity is wary of both Eurocentric silences and essentialist Afrocentrism if one aims for a meaningful study of modernity especially in the domains of African language and literatures.

After noting the importance of uncentering Europe/the West in our definition of modernity, we can now ask: what is postcolonial modernity in Africa? Simply put, it can be understood as the experience of modernization

in the African "postcolony". The postcolony, as Achille Mbembe describes, is an "age," a historical period, marked profoundly by the legacies of colonialism and the subsequent postcolonial "entanglement" in the world system (2001, 18). The social reality of the African postcolony is complex; and this complexity is even more evident when Mbembe describes it outside the Western framework of linear time. If time is the measure through which we make sense of things, Mbembe writes that such a time, in the African postcolony, is neither singular nor linear. For him, time in the postcolony is made up of, "an interlocking of presents, pasts, and futures that retain their depths of other presents, pasts, and futures". With "each age," he adds, "bearing, altering, and maintaining the previous ones" (Mbembe 2001). Therefore, the cultural world of the postcolony is not only historically multilayered, but also its present forms bear the traces of different, and often contradictory, histories and origins. In this volume, nowhere is this multilayered diversity better illustrated than in the postcolonial African urban space as portrayed, for instance, in the fiction of Margaret Ogola, the films of Alain Gomis or the code-switching tongues of Senegalese Islamic rap. As analyzed by the respective authors, the sociocultural reality of the postcolonial city conveys a profound diversity in the domains of language, ethnic culture, politics, music, and religion. Whether in Nairobi, Kinshasa, Kano or Dakar, there is as much to say about ethnic diversity as about linguistic, ideological, and religious diversity; and it is interesting to see how different subcultures in each of these areas have influenced mutually over time. The multilayered diversity in postcolonial African nations along with their entanglement in the capitalist world forms part of their colonial legacy, and how African societies manage both in relation to their respective temporalities is what ultimately shapes modernization on the continent. Moreover, such a multilayered diversity has engendered social relations characterized by cultural fluctuation, negotiated coexistence, tension, and paradox. The latter have been the signature traits of postcolonial African modernity and informed the themes of African literature and cultural discourse in various ways.

The authors of this book discuss the literatures and languages emerging from these African/black contexts. On the one hand, the authors explore the literary representation of Africa's entanglement in the capitalist world; and on the other, they examine the implications of language pedagogy in African and Afro-diasporic contexts of modernization. Here, both literature and language form part of what Mbembe (2001, 18) called, "languages of life." By the latter, he refers to, "a set of material practices, signs, figures, superstitions, images, and fictions" which people resort to "because they are available to individuals' imagination and intelligence" and because they are

part of a reality that the people have "actually experienced" (Mbembe 2001, 18). If languages of life designate the sum of all life acts, the languages of postcolonial modernity, in this book, refers to the sets of literary, linguistic and performative practices through which modernity is lived and articulated in postcolonial contexts. In this book, we study postcolonial African literature and languages not only as means through which modernization is achieved and expressed in the postcolony, but also as examples of Africa's cultural imprint on the global modern world.

Linguistic and literary dimensions of postcolonial modernity in Africa and beyond

To be sure, there are several ways in which language and literature, respectively, convey and embody postcolonial modernity in Africa. The roots of linguistic modernity in sub-Saharan Africa go back to the continent's first substantial encounters with its outside world, particularly Muslim Arabia and Europe, in the 14th and 16th centuries. This period, which marked the beginning of the Modern Age, was not only the time when European voyagers encountered non-European languages and cultures, including African ones; but it was also the time when African societies began to be exposed to external languages. Pre-colonial Africa's trade contacts with the Arabian Peninsula through the trans Saharan and Swahili-Coast gateways of Islam paved the way for the influence of Arabic on the continent (Robinson 2012; Kane 2012). The introduction of Arabic literacy for religious purposes since at least the 14th century gave rise to the gradual development of secular literacy, whereby practices derived from religion were adapted to worldly contexts (Hunwick 2008; Kane 2012; Diallo 2012; Ngom 2016; Camara and Mwamzandi 2023). The importance of Arabic in sub-Saharan African literacy is evidenced by the emergence of a written literature in *'Ajami* (transcription of foreign languages using Arabic script). It is also documented in the lexical borrowings of many indigenous African languages, such as Berber, Pulaar/Fula, Hausa, Swahili, Mandinka and Wolof. The linguistic dimension of postcolonial African Muslim modernity is illustrated in this volume by Samba Camara's study of Senegalese Muslim hip hop. Its aspects are also discussed in Aisha Umar Adamu's chapter.

Like in the Arabic connection, Africa's linguistic contact with Europe followed the trajectories of European missionary work and colonial education in Africa. As Europe's newly recognized Latin vernaculars–French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, etc.–began serving as national languages

in the 16th century (Anderson 1983), they came in contact with several African languages as part of the pre-imperialist project. By the official start of European colonization in 1870, European languages were gradually penetrating indigenous African languages, in large part, due to Europe's imperialist project spearheaded by language instructions (wa Thiong'o 1986; Oyewumi 1997, 128-136; Faty 2014; Nana 2015; Emenyonu 2020, 37-45).

Finally, the itinerant history of language development itself in Africa justifies the need of a decentered and multivocal approach to postcolonial modernity, if only to consider – insofar as the volume's scope allows – the multidirectional genealogies of language and literacy in the continent. Concerning these genealogies, the three quotes with which we open this introduction capture two of the most important of them, each one of those tracing the historical itinerary of an African linguistic genealogy. The first genealogy can be called *internal* and the second *external*. The internal genealogy encompasses the history of the languages spoken by Africans on the continent. Such languages include, on the one hand, the so-called indigenous African languages whose respective lexical scopes, grammars and syntaxes have not remained intact, due to contact with foreign languages and epistemologies. On the other hand, they include historically foreign languages (Arabic and European languages) that have been dialectically Africanized in form (orthography and phonology) and in content (vocabulary). Guadeloupean-French author Maryse Condé and Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe reclaim the totality of this internal linguistic genealogy. Both posit that modern African knowledge production cannot forego linguistic appropriation and the postcolonial heritage of multilingualism. Therefore, Condé highlights the need for the "languages of colonization to be colonized in turn", while Achebe urges for the invention of a "new English" that suits the "new African surroundings." All the novels and cultural works analyzed in this volume reflect such creative endeavors and their hybridized forms. The literary and/or cultural vernacular used by each author reflects characteristics of the internal genealogy. Either the work is written/composed in indigenous languages – Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Caitaani Mutharaba-Ini* "Devil on the cross", Aliyu's Hausa poetry, Wolof hip hop, Gomis's *Tey/Today* (2012) – and reflect a postcolonial culture that resist fetishization into any kind of linguistic indigeneity. Or they are written in a literary vernacular of Africanized English – Ogola's and Achebe's novels as analyzed in this volume. What both Condé and Achebe suggest is that, by force of the circumstances, colonial languages became African as well and so did all creative works composed in them. In this volume, the

chapter by Michieka and Omolola revisits the debate on the question of the language of African literature and brings refreshing insights on the matter.

The second, external genealogy is the inversion of the first. It accounts for the traces of Africa's linguistic heritage in the Diaspora. It includes mostly dialects and vernaculars invented and spoken by African descendants. Famous examples include African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Haitian Creole and Pretuguês" / "Pretoguês (Portuguese dialect created by black Brazilians). In this volume, Azevedo's chapter focuses on Brazil's Pretuguês"/"Pretoguês. These Afro-diasporic dialects and vernaculars carry cultural and/or ideological elements of blackness which have been linked to Africa either historically or mythologically. For Gilroy (1993, 1), these Afro-diasporic forms of language emerged from the historical encounter of African cultures with, at least, one host linguistic environment. Yet, he argues that neither the exported African culture nor the host linguistic environment in this context have remained homogenous and fixed in time. Instead, Gilroy views both as "cultural assemblages" that "have mutated through the course of the modern world that formed them and assumed new configurations" (Gilroy, 1). In other words, Afro-diasporic dialects and cultures, as Bernabé et al. (1993) argued in their seminal study of *Creolité*, do not in themselves constitute the transplantation of a timeless African authenticity, but rather bear witness to a black diasporic modernity which carries, among other things, an identity discourse rooted in a history, memory or powerful myth of a partial belonging to the African heritage. In Azevedo's analysis of Pretuguês in this volume, she reiterates the belief that Pretuguês remains a "linguistic technology" operating, "as a tool capable of connecting the past, the present and of building strong bridges for the future through knowledge exchange between Africa and its Brazilian diaspora". In short, these are the two genealogies of African languages as captured in this volume. Certainly, the fact that only one chapter in the volume is devoted to the external genealogy creates a large imbalance. It is important, however, that both genealogies are outlined here, if only for the purpose of pointing at the breadth of postcolonial modernities related to Africa.

Chapter Summaries

The chapters in this volume grapple with the literary and linguistic dimensions of postcolonial modernity as portrayed in African novels, film, poetry and popular music and as embodied in African and Afro-diasporic languages and dialects. They explore how literature and language, as mediums of cultural production, represent discourses, phenomena, histories,

ideologies, beliefs, etc. that result, in one way or another, from the legacies of colonialism and from Africa's global entanglements. The periods captured by the authors span the 1870s to the present. Major questions drive the contributors' analyses. What is the role of African literature and languages toward undoing the work of colonial language pedagogies which, as Frederick D. Lugard (1922) once said, only aimed to train the African subjects just enough to keep them as dependent colonial workers? In other words, if colonial education used European languages to colonize the African mind (wa Thiong'o 1986), how may African literature be decolonized through the very literary vernaculars born off the same colonial heritage? What examples of creative continuities, or aesthetic transfer, can be observed in the evolution of African writing? How should we teach African languages without alienating learners from African cultural modernity?

Part One, "Postcolonial modernity in literature", contains seven chapters dedicated to a critical analysis of novels, poems, film, and popular music. Chapter One, by Martha Michieka, analyzes Margaret Ogola's literary vernacular as a language of Kenyan postcolonial modernity. Focusing on *The River and the Source* (1994) and its sequel, *I Swear by Apollo* (2002), Michieka discusses how Ogola's language choices is analogous with the history of Kenyan language policy. Though *The River and the Source* and *I Swear by Apollo* are published, respectively, during the late 20th and the early 21st centuries, Michieka notes that the two plots combined span over a century, a period over which Kenya underwent significant transformations. Michieka shows that Ogola's novels reimagine this period in Kenyan history using a referential and orally inflected language of storytelling. Michieka argues that the author provides details about objects and historical events hinting to important dates not just about the characters' lives, but also about Kenya's modern history. For example, she tells us that the bracelet of main character Akoko's son, Obura, carries "strange marks" hinting to the period when Kenya was declared a colony. She also notes how Ogola uses "a poorly pronounced English" when depicting colonial era Kenya. The two novels thus present two periods in Kenyan history. The first part of *The River and the Source* is written in an English infused with Luo words, thus conveying Luo culture through both translatable and untranslatable concepts. In the novel's part two and through the end of *I Swear by Apollo*, the English and Swahili languages replace Luo. This linguistic transition, for Michieka, signals the emergence of Christian baptism and Christian names which replace indigenous names and naming ceremonies. Michieka's chapter analyzes these narrative elements as iconic milestones of modernization and historical change in Kenya.

Chapter Two, by Guillaume Coly, examines the aesthetics of silence as cinematic language. The chapter analyzes *Tey/Today* (2012), a film by French-Senegalese director Alain Gomis, and it explores the trauma of migration and return as a feature of African modernity. Coly's analysis departs from the idea that minimal (or the absence of) speech in the film's protagonist, Satché, is rather communicative. Because words are simply not enough to realize the director's ambition in the film, Coly suggests that Gomis chose to expose viewers more to the protagonist's inexpressible emotions than to what he says, thus making them "feel his experience" of trauma, shock and panic in the face of imminent death. Coly's chapter describes how Gomis creates a filmic language that features thin plots, elliptical editing, non-linear storylines, and narrative elision. He analyzes Gomis's skillful editing and manipulation of both image and sound as crucial parts of the filmic language of silence. Coly suggests that Gomis's emphasis on minimal speech invites the viewers to have a sensory rather than linguistic viewing experience. He shows how Gomis achieves this by foregrounding the body and the sense of touch, "notably through numerous and extreme closeups".

Chapter Three, authored by Leonard Muaka, is a study of Margaret Ogola's novel, *Mandate of the People*, published posthumously in 2012. Muaka studies the literary representation of Kenyan political language as depicted by Ogola. He does so by spotting the powerful narrative devices mobilized by the author to describe some of the most pervasive aspects of postcolonial African politics, namely corruption, betrayal, disappointment, and the lack of accountability to the people. Muaka shows that Ogola subtly uses literary imagery and style to do two things: to depict the political language used by Kenyan politicians use to woo voters during election time; and to portray the evils of power-hungry politicians. Such a political language, as Muaka notes, taps into communication tactics ranging from, "name calling, mudslinging" to "the mobilization of supporters along ethnic and clan lines." Muaka's chapter also delves into Ogola's representation of the topics of activism, power, and sociopolitical changes and their interplay with language as a potent tool. In examining this variety of issues, Muaka draws from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), an interdisciplinary approach that demonstrates how language expresses social change. Muaka argues that Ogola's main purpose in the novel is to represent a society and people who are determined to change their destiny. For him, Ogola acknowledges the rot in the postcolonial society but rather than continue whining and lamenting about it, she provides hints to solutions. One such solutions, Muaka shows, is the sheer action of empowering the forgotten layers of the Kenyan population. Muaka reads this narrative direction as a demonstration

of a renewed society that yearns toward positive social transformation. Therefore, just as Esther Lisanza and Martha Michieka discuss in their respective chapters in this volume, the narrative empowering of the oppressed constitutes a signature pattern in Ogola's work.

In Chapter Four, Aisha Umar Adamu explores the question of gender "deviance" and its implications for social (un)acceptability in Hausa-speaking northern Nigeria. Her study focuses on the poetry of famous Hausa poet Akilu Aliyu (1918 – 1999) and traditional Hausa proverbs to show the place of the "Ɗan Daudu", or "men who act like women", in traditional Hausa society. Adamu notes that the Hausa heterosexual discourse describes the Ɗan Daudu as a minority group who fall under neither of the male and female categories and who often work as "pimps" or cross dressers. She notes that the identity crisis provoked by Ɗan Daudus' non-conformity to local gender norms inspired famous Hausa poet and Muslim reformist Aliyu to compose a 1976 poem titled, "Ɗan Daudu". For Adamu, Aliyu's poem mainly reflects the perspective of the Hausa people on homosexuality and why they perceive the Ɗan Daudu as socially "deviant". Adamu highlights that Aliyu's poem, "Ɗan Daudu", is built on a vehement dismissal of the 'Yan Daudu and their behavior and cultural expression. If previous scholars of viewed Aliyu's poem as the transformation of a personal emotional response into an edifying public text, Adamu analyzes Aliyu's poem a "real representation" of Hausa people's true ideology about gender and sexuality.

Chapter Five, by Esther Lisanza Mukewa, is one of the volume's three chapters focused on the fiction of late Kenyan author Margaret Ogola. Lisanza's chapter analyzes the discourse of gender equality in *Place of Destiny* (2005). The theoretical framework of her study draws from African feminist literature which, unlike in the (generally male-authored) first wave of African novels, portrays African men as important active subjects. Lisanza reminds that the liberation of women in the society is everyone's responsibility and that women's empowerment does not necessarily mean the disempowerment of men. She argues that *Place of Destiny* along with Ogola's other novels depicts female characters as movers. Contextualizing her discussion of gender issues in postcolonial Kenyan contexts, Lisanza proposes that Ogola's fiction represents African women as agents who make decisions at the family and community levels. For example, Lisanza emphasizes the success of the novel's female protagonist, Amor Lore, in making each of her four children into, "a powerhouse in the society irrespective of their gender". Lisanza's study of Amor's lifepath not only reflects the importance of education as a path of enlightenment in the novel,

but it describes African motherhood as the woman's deployment of a constructive labor that sustains both family and society.

In Chapter Six, Samba Camara studies the language of Senegalese Muslim hip hop as the expression of a postcolonial Muslim modernity in sub-Saharan Africa. The chapter's theoretical framework builds on Achille Mbembe's notion of Afropolitanism, which Mbembe deploys, on the one hand, to describe an aesthetic of itinerancy in African identity and, on the other, as an African ethical consciousness (2005). Camara's study analyzes how Senegalese Muslim hip hop reflects the aesthetics and ethics of Afropolitanism through both lyrics and music videos. First, the chapter zooms on selected songs to analyze how Senegalese rap deconstructs essentialist notions of Muslimness. Then, it describes how the rappers mobilize Islam-inflected musical discourse as an alternative language of interfaith dialogue.

Chapter Seven, co-authored by Martha Michieka and Giwa Omolola, revisits a classic debate about the question of language in the production of African literature. They address questions about the language of African literature, which had elicited contrasting views between Chinua Achebe and Ngugi wa Thiong'o in the 1960s and 1970s. Using a comparative analysis of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross* (*Caitaani Mutharaba-Ini*) (1980), Michieka and Omolola discuss how African authors have used both indigenous and formerly colonial languages legitimately to produce an African literature worthy of the name. For the authors, "what makes a literary work written in English African lies in the author's use of a style that enables the reflection of African culture and values". They also suggest that writing in African languages remains crucial, for it constitutes an important step toward, "independence from centuries of European colonization". Thus, Michieka and Omolola adopt an ambivalent approach to the question of language in African literature, and they draw on character analysis and aesthetic analysis of orality in Achebe and wa Thiong'o's texts to illustrate how each of Africa's Europhone and Afrophone literary genealogies each constitute a valid example of African modernism.

Part Two, "Language and educational integration," contains three chapters. The authors explore the pedagogical advantages of valuing culture, diversity and communicative pedagogy in teaching and learning African languages and Afro-diasporic dialects. Chapter Eight, by Carolina Maria Azevedo, is a study of Pretuguês, a Portuguese dialect spoken by blacks in Brazil. Pretuguês, like Haitian Creole or AAVE, is an example of the external

linguistic heritage of Africa as discussed above. Azevedo examines the significance of African linguistic heritage in postcolonial Brazil and investigates the intersections of language policy and race as a colonial legacy that continues undermining black heritage and the education of blacks in Brazil. Azevedo discusses racial inequality around language, and she does so by unveiling longstanding biases in the treatment of the English language over Pretuguês/Pretoguês. Here, Azevedo's analysis of linguistic coloniality reminds of the African experience, which Mwamzandi discusses briefly in this volume in connection to the importance of decolonizing STEM research in Africa. Azevedo's study draws on English language teaching theory and postcolonial studies theory, and she argues that Pretuguês constitutes an important tool not only for valuing Brazil's African heritage in the classroom, but also for eliminating racial inequalities in the production of knowledge in Brazil.

In Chapter Nine, Mohamed Mwamzandi examines the importance of valuing culture in teaching African languages for the purposes of scientific research on the continent. The study draws on language and intercultural training workshops organized for American participants in the Energy Poverty PIRE in Southern Africa (EPPSA) project run in 2018 and 2019 by the African Studies Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill). The project's main objective was to teach Chichewa, Malawi's national language, to EPPSA researchers based at UNC Chapel Hill. Mwamzandi's chapter shares lessons learnt from the workshop and provides pedagogical insights about language and cultural instruction for STEM researchers. Mwamzandi's analysis foregrounds a decolonial approach to Africa and it views the researcher's knowledge of the target African culture as critical to decolonizing research. In addition to describing the pedagogy used to teach Chichewa to STEM research participants, Mwamzandi notes that centering culture in language training was one way to counteract methodological problems tied to the "Eurocentric ideologies of one nation – one state – one language, which have continued to undermine linguistic and cultural pluralism" in modern African countries.

Chapter Ten, by Raphael Birya, assesses the instructional uses of YouTube videos in a context of technological globalization. The chapter investigates the application of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in Swahili language teaching YouTube videos. The growth of such pedagogical materials, as Birya notes, occurred in a context of increased demand for online language instruction. In the field of Swahili language teaching, this growth is evidenced by the voluminous language content found on websites and social media platforms. While these videos can ease

the teaching-learning process, Birya argues that it is crucial that the content meet CLT requirement to achieve the best learning outcomes. Birya's study, therefore, measures the extent to which CLT pedagogical components are integrated (or not) in Swahili teaching YouTube videos created for different levels of online learning. The study pulled its data from YouTube videos created by Swahili Language School in Tanzania, SwahiliPod101.com, and LangMedia between 2016 and 2020. Based on Birya's assessment of the materials, the three institutions have had an unstandardized approach to CLT components, which he argues, can potentially hinder learners' acquisition of Swahili language skills. Based on these findings, Birya concludes that "using online instruction in offering language content can enrich and modernize delivery and significantly increase learners' ability to acquire speaking competence skills if CLT components are utterly incorporated".

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PART ONE:

POSTCOLONIAL MODERNITY IN LITERATURE

CHAPTER ONE

LANGUAGE POLICY, IDENTITY, AND THE POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION IN MARGARET OGOLA'S WORKS

MARTHA MORAA MICHIEKA

Abstract:

This study analyzes the language choices that Margaret Ogola makes in two of her works, and it draws inferences from those choices about attitudes towards indigenous African languages in Kenya. Although both *The River and the Source* (1994) and its sequel, *I swear by Apollo* (2002), are published during the late 20th to the early 21st century, the plots of these works combined span several years, ranging from the late 19th century to the present. The novel, *The River and the Source,* covers a period of more than one hundred years and about five generations beginning in the late 1800s all the way into the late 1990s. Its sequel, I *swear by Apollo,* is set during the early part of the 21st century. During this same time, many changes take place in the Kenyan nation, including changes in culture, traditions, politics and upheld religious practices. Linguistic changes are also experienced as the country transitions from the pre-colonial period to the colonial and post-colonial eras.

Bio:

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This study analyzes the language choices that Margaret Ogola makes in two of her works, and it draws inferences from those choices about attitudes towards indigenous African languages in the modern postcolonial context. Although both *The River and the Source* and its sequel, *I swear by Apollo*, are published during the late 20th to the early 21st century, the plots of these works combined span several years, ranging from the late 19th century to the present. The novel, *The River and the Source,* covers a period of more than one hundred years and about five generations beginning in the late 1800s all the way into the late 1990s. Its sequel, *I swear by Apollo,* is set during the early part of the 21st century. During this period, many changes take place in the Kenyan nation, reflecting local experiences of modernity. Those changes are articulated through transformations in culture, tradition, politics, and through upheld religious practices. Linguistic changes are also experienced as the country transitions from the pre-colonial period to the colonial and post-colonial eras, which evidence important transformations characteristic of what Camara and Mwamzandi (in this volume) call "the internal genealogy of African languages".

This study focuses on changes in Kenyan language policies and how those are reflected in the author's literary language used for each historical era. It addresses the following questions: How do Ogola's literary works reflect changing language policies in Kenya's history? What can be inferred from her narrative language choice about existing beliefs concerning the role and place of African languages in modernization and globalization? In addressing these questions, the chapter highlights how Margaret Ogola's linguistic choices in *The River and the Source* and *I swear by Apollo* reflect historical changes in Kenyan language policies as well as community beliefs about the place of indigenous languages in contexts of globalization and modernization.

About the author and the setting

Ogola was born in 1958, a few years before Kenya gained independence from Great Britain. Her father was a civil servant and veteran of WWII. The novel, *The River and the Source,* can be considered semi-autobiographical because Ogola notes that she was inspired by her mother who had told her about the lives of her grandmother and great grandmother. In the novel's acknowledgements page, Ogola (1994) mentions the significant role her mother played in inspiring the work. She writes, "The germ of this book was planted earlier in my life by my mother Herina Odongo whose gift as a storyteller and acerbic wit are still the spice of our lives." In that same

section of the novel, Ogola also recognizes her grandmother's contribution to the work by stating that, "For the first part of the book, I have extensively borrowed from the life and times of Obanda Kingi nyar Ang'eyo my great grandmother."

Ogola's family are from Kenya's Luo ethnic group, and they speak the Luo language, a Nilo Saharan language also known as Dholuo. It is, therefore, not surprising that Ogola's characters have Luo names and often speak Luo. Both *The River and the Source* and *I Swear by Apollo* are set in Kenya, although Ogola's characters in the second novel are shown to have spread their wings outside the country. The work spans several generations and, therefore, presents some historical facts with realistic details. The story of the Kenyan nation is well told through the characters, and the experiences of Ogola's characters mirror those of the Kenyan nation. Although she was a medical doctor, Ogola was always interested in writing; and before her death in 2011, she had published four novels.

Kenyan language policies as reflected in Ogola's works

Before looking at the two novels under study, it is important to look at Kenyan language policies and how they have evolved over time. Kenya, like the rest of the former British colonies, has a history of policies that have been deeply influenced by the British rule and the subsequent introduction of the English language. English, as Ayo Bamgbose (2003) argued, is a "recurring decimal" in the language policies of many former British colonies. The prestige of the English language in these former colonies has remained despite the former countries gaining independence from the British. In fact, when the missionaries had first introduced western education in Kenya and in other African countries, they did not believe in the use of a foreign (European) language to educate the natives. As Thomas Gorman (1974, 404) notes, the missionaries believed that, "Africa would only be converted by Africa". These missionaries believed, and rightfully so, that a community is best reached by using the native language that they understand. In the Kenyan context, the early missionaries advocated for the use of Kiswahili, which was considered a local or indigenous language.

Therefore, the missionaries can be considered among the first Europeans to have introduced an educational language policy in Kenya. While they emphasized Kiswahili as a means of Christianization, Ogola's readers are also introduced to the Luo language. Attentive readers will likely infer from Ogola's novels the role that various Kenyan languages play in the processes of modernization and globalization.

The first novel, *The River and the Source*, is divided into four parts. Part I: The girl child; Part II: The art of giving; Part III: Love and hate; Part IV: Variable winds. These distinct parts are set within given historical periods that parallel various Kenyan language policies. The overall plot of the two novels correspond to the different changes that the country has experienced in the processes of defining and refining its language policies. While exact time periods are not explicitly mentioned, the plots, especially that of *The River and the Source,* provide informational clues that help determine the historical settings and time periods. Part 1: The girl child, for instance, begins with the birth of the protagonist and provides hints alluding to a specific historical period, "One night in the smoky hut of Aketch, the second wife of the chief Odero Gogni of Yimbo, a baby was born. It was about thirty seasons before that great snaking metal road of *Jorochere* the white people reached the bartering market of Kisuma." (Ogola 1994, 9). Readers with some knowledge of Kenyan history would use the information in the quote above to place Akoko's birth some thirty years before 1901. The railway line being referred to here as the snaking metal road was the Kenya-Uganda railway which was completed in 1901. That part of the novel ends with Akoko's return to her parents' home from her matrimonial home, after the death of her husband. Here, again, the author gives a clue about the period of this return:

> Akoko left the clan of her husband Owuor and returned to Yimbo with all the property she had salvaged from her brother in-law Otieno. It was a mighty herd which moved in three cohorts. Of the three children she had borne, there survived only one; of the grandchildren only two still lived; and she dwelt in the household of her brother Oloo. She was fifty seasons of age, a middle-aged woman (Ogola 1994, 86)

Although there is no explicit mention of the time, the details are clear enough about the period. If Akoko was born around 1870, and she is fifty seasons of age, and if we assume that a season represents one year, her return to Yimbo probably happens in the early to mid-1920s, just after World War 1. In another instance, Ogola introduces her readers to Obura, Akoko's son who, as a young man enlisted by the British to fight in World War I:

> Now over the last few years a clan of white people called *jo-jerman,* started a war with everybody in the world joining in and taking their side or the side of our white people the *jo-ingreza* who have eventually won this war. Now to help them, many young men from all over the country were taken (Ogola 1994, 55)

Here, the historical period is made explicitly clear. Ogola takes the reader
to the time of World War I, and there is even a mention of the year:

> "one thousandth, nine hundred and eighteenth season"
> "Since what?", someone asked
> "Since their god had a son," replied one in the know (Ogola 1994, 53)

Given these details, the reader knows the exact year, and later when Obura,
Akoko's son, dies, Ogola tells us that Nyabera was fourteen. There is even
more evidence to indicate the historical period. Ogola points out that,
unfortunately, the only thing the family gets from the government in
memory of their deceased son, and for his service in the war, is a bracelet.
The bracelet had strange marks that they could not decipher, but to Ogola's
readers, the message is clear: OWUOR OBURA KEMBO: KAR MIA 1918.
(Ogola 1994, 59).

The bracelet becomes a critical time marker. It tells readers the accurate
time when the events took place and makes it even possible to calculate the
exact birth years of the characters. The rest of the plot of *The River and the
Source,* as well as that of its sequel, *I Swear by Apollo,* gives similar details
that help determine historical time periods.

Because the two works span over a hundred years, beginning in the late 19th
century and continuing to the 21st century, the plots cover several generations
that parallel the inception of the Kenyan nation and its development. The
protagonist, Akoko Obanda, is the daughter of the great Chief Gogni, and
as already noted, she is born in the 1870's. For the Kenyan nation, that
would mark a period just before colonization. Kenya, along with the other
East African countries, fell into the British hands and became the East
African protectorate in 1895. The main character could therefore have been
in her mid-twenties when the country was colonized. She left her
matrimonial home around 1920-1930, a momentous time when Kenya had
just been declared a British colony. The novel transitions with the nation,
and unique events in the protagonist's life parallel the events in the
country's political life.

Although Ogola may not have intended for this book to reflect the linguistic
scenario in Kenya, language is so much a part of society that it cannot be
separated from the culture and history of the people and from what goes on
in the community. People do not use language in isolation, and the
characters' language choices reveal what is going on in the society. As
Ogola develops her narration and incorporates various other languages into
her otherwise English novel, one can see a reflection of the Kenyan