

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION**

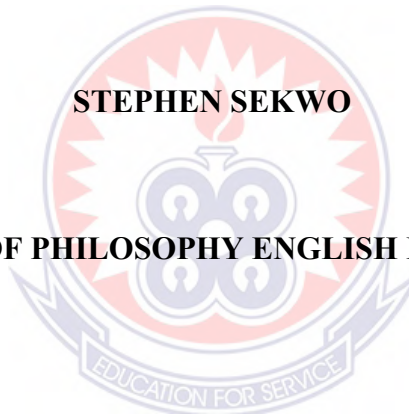
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**ASPECTS OF POSTCOLONIALISM IN THE CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE**

**POETRY OF GOMBILLA THE POET**

**STEPHEN SEKWO**

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY ENGLISH LANGUAGE**



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A THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION, FACULTY OF FOREIGN  
LANGUAGES, SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH

AUGUST, 2024

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is entirely an original work I conducted under the guidance of my supervisor. I have acknowledged quotations and referenced information obtained from published materials and research. To the best of my knowledge, this work has not been submitted by anyone to any other institution for the award of any degree.

Name: Stephen Sekwo

Signature.....

Date .....

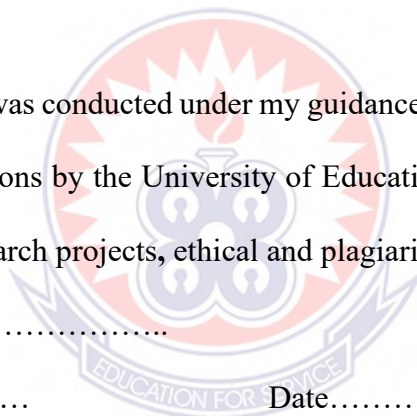
### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis was conducted under my guidance and that the researcher observed the laid down rules and regulations by the University of Education, Winneba with regards to the conduct and supervision of research projects, ethical and plagiarism issues included.

Name .....

Signature.....

Date.....



## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my late father, Mr Philip Sekwo, who suffered renal failure and passed on during the course of this course. May his soul rest in perfect peace with the Lord.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many people have contributed to the success and completion of this thesis for which I wish to acknowledge. My supervisor, Dr Kholinar Andani, pushed me to dig deep before I put pen to paper, which helped me a lot in coming out with a quality work. I also want to thank all faculty and staff members of the Department of English Education, who rendered one word of advice or the other as to how to improve this work. I will particularly mention Dr Aboobo Kumbolonah, Dr Kyileyang, and Dr Grace Danquah. I also thank my family, and friends and all supported during the difficult times. Last but not least, I am grateful to Gombilla the Poet, who was readily available and made time for me during the data collection stage of this thesis. Indeed, I am forever grateful.



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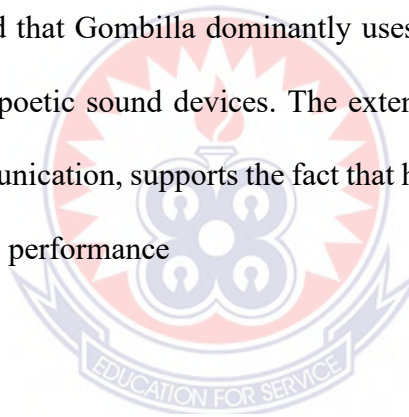
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## ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify and analyse the aspects of postcolonialism in the performance poetry of Gombilla the Poet, and to ascertain the performance and literary styles he employed in drumming home these issues. A qualitative cross-analysis of the poems was done using eight poems by Gombilla the Poet. Orientalism, African values, Ghanaian culture and identity, hybridity and mimicry, subalternism, and effects of capitalism and globalization on communal living were found in the poems. In the eight sampled performance poems, Gombilla deplored orthodox performance techniques such as repetition, piling of adjectives, parallelism, and allusion. In addition to personal techniques such as juxtaposition and contradiction, and the narrator's approach. This study also found that Gombilla dominantly uses metaphors, symbolism, similes, puns, rhetorical questions, and poetic sound devices. The extensive use of diverse performance techniques and figurative communication, supports the fact that his performance poetry is not only rich, but an embodiment of total performance



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

Studies in performance arts have gained interest in recent times (McCarthy et al., 2002). Performance arts often cover film, music, drama, and performance poetry. Unfortunately, though studies in the performance arts is growing, that of performance poetry is not commensurate with the others, especially in the case of Ghana (Asihene, 2017). However, in recent times, performance poetry has seen relevant attention in terms of performances and growth. For instance, in 2021, during the inauguration of Joe Biden as American president, a performance poet, Amanda Gorman, performed the much-acclaimed poem, *The Hills We Climb*. Within the past two decades in Ghana, there has been an increase in the activities of spoken word poetry. Chief Moomen, Nana Asaase, Gombilla Tofic, and Mutombo the Poet are top spoken word poets who have lifted the bar in Ghana. In 2019, TV3's Talented Kids' winner was the performance poet, Nakeeyat Dramani. We see then that performance poetry has now become part of our daily lives.

One of the reasons for the rise in popularity of performance poetry is due to the fact that it is much more engaging than written poetry (Alvarez and Mearns, 2014; Fisher, 2005; Xerri, 2024). Besides, performance poetry allows poets the license to speak on crucial issues of social and community interest (Brattin, 2013). It is also a galvanizing force for group and national cohesion, especially among marginalized people, because it creates a platform for such people to glorify and empower their culture and identity (Lowery and Walker, 2017). Marginalized people include blacks, especially of colonized states of the British Empire, women of colour, Asians, and people from countries with unpopular cultures. From the above, we see that performance poetry contains some postcolonial issues when it communicates in the instance of group identity, culture and the

authentic self. According to Elam (2019), postcolonial criticism gained momentum in the 1980s, in UK and American even though precursors to the theory existed few years back. For example, Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* (1961), and *Black Man, White Masks* (1967) were part of the earlier works that initiated discussions on postcolonialism. In these works, Fanon, exposes the mental damage colonialism meted out to indigenes. He contended colonialism created intellectuals who were deprived of their identity. Fanon contended that violence was the only way of restoring order and respect for the indigenes and their self- esteem. Said's *Orientalism* (1978), in which he discusses the manner the West elevates themselves and relegates the East to an inferior status through the media, caught the attention of scholars. Spivak's *Can the Subaltern speak?* (1987), also became a focal text for postcolonial theory for Subalternism. Using Hindi culture, Spivak detailed the manner the voices of lower-class people aren't heard, in many times they are spoken for, and their views and concerns not heard. Ashcroft et al. (1989), talks about the manner the colonized are responding to misrepresentation. Their work offers insights into the ways writers of colour and blacks counter Orientalist presentation of the colonized. Homi Bhabha's *the Location of Culture* (1994) examines the process of acculturation, and its consequences on the indigenes. He coins the terms ambivalence, hybridity and mimicry to explain the effects on Western culture of the colonized and its culture. It imperative to note that, even though the texts mentioned above, are being reference in many postcolonial studies, they are not the only ones; the point however, is that they are key in the discussion of postcolonialism and its development as a theory.

One performance poet who has delved largely into varied aspects of postcolonialism is Gombilla the poet, a Ghanaian who has over 20 performance poems. He has performed on various stages prior to his travel to Canada. In addition, he has a YouTube Channel in which he has his collection of performance poems. The celebrated poet, in a recent interview I had with him, indicated his

poems centre on varied issues but aim at liberating his people and contributing to promoting African and Ghanaian culture. If postcolonialism is expanding as noted by Ashcroft et al (2002), and the calls for reading texts with an eye for Eurocentrism (Quayson, 2000), it would be prudent to examine a number of his poems to ascertain the poet's postcolonial philosophical depth.

Postcolonialism has been defined and discussed in various ways. Ashcroft et al. (2002, p. 2) posit that the term "covers the cultures affected by imperialism from initial colonialism until today. "

Saada (2014) emphasizes interactions between the colonized and the colonizer in his definition.

These definitions stress colonialism and its effect on colonized people and their cultures from its inception till date. However, recent discourses on postcolonialism focus not only on the lingering effects of colonialism, but its interdisciplinary nature. For example, Moreno (2014) argues that in the 21st century, postcolonialism should be opened to interdisciplinary studies. Furthering this line of thought, Quayson (2020, p. 1) opines that postcolonialism is "a wide-ranging cultural analysis in the hands of critics to question Western assumptions of the colonized states." He adds that postcolonialism is now seen as a form of literary criticism with at least an intersection with race, diaspora, and gender, among others. In conclusion, postcolonialism is no longer just about colonialism, but about critical nuances or implications of the discourses and interactions among former colonial societies and their former colonizers.

Colonialism, which lasted for over forty years, permeated every facet of the lives of the colonized people, leaving an indelible mark on their lives (Rodney, 1972; Fanon, 1961). As a result, colonialism is regarded as the origin of postcolonialism. One reason is that colonialism subjected the colonized people to dehumanizing treatment, resulting in the loss of self-confidence. (Cesaire, 2000; Fanon, 1961) Besides, colonialism undermined the culture and identity of the colonized.

The economic banditry in the form of the colonizers' rape of the resources of the colonized was also not unnoticed.

A number of scholars have demonstrated the destruction colonialism meted out to the colonized, especially in Africa. For example, Arowolo (2010, p. 2) says, "it at most distorted and retarded the tempo of cultural growth and trend of civilization." This explains why even today, the culture of Africa and the colonized is often frowned upon in the Western world. Sangmor (2013) concurs much with Arowolo, but he extends the discourses to land ownership and language when he says, "it at worst affected culture, language, and land ownership" (p. 1). Assessing the economic impact of colonialism, Ocheni and Nkankwo (2012) posit that the economic failure of Africa is a result of colonialism. However, Rodney (2018) and Afigbo et al. (1968) provide a more complete work on colonialism in Africa; they submit that the political, economic, and cultural dangers of colonialism meant colonialism was set up to under developed Africa. In furthering the latter parts of the discussion, which talks about neocolonialism, Ogar et al. (2019) opine that homogenization is the most dangerous tool the West uses to cut through the cultural identity of Africa. With the extensive review on colonialism as the starting point of postcolonialism, it means colonialism is crucial in postcolonial studies.

There are certain key areas that postcolonial criticism concerns itself with. Some of these are explained below. Postcolonialism draws attention to the cultural differences in texts. In addition to issues of representation and culture, postcolonial criticism also explains development gaps emanating from the strategies the colonizer used and continues to use for their economic and material gains, to the neglect of the colonized people. Loomba (2000), for example, writes that the Western world controls the world's economic order and trade relations. Thus, he argues there is

no longer a need for direct colonialism. Loomba's arguments concur with the Marxists who argue that struggles for economic power are key in postcolonial criticism.

Postcolonial critics also hold religion as a diversified phenomenon and an inalienable part of culture and identity (Saani, 2016; Gyekye, 1995). Central to this preposition is Europe's misunderstanding of religion among Africans, Asians, and Arabs. The misunderstanding stems from the fact that the approach to religion by these people is different from that of the West. Religion among Africans, Arabs, and Asians is more spiritual than in the West, which is more secular. Thus, because Western scholars didn't have much knowledge about the religious practices in these regions, they concluded that what these people practiced was not religion. In the case of Africa, Alem (2019) posits that Western scholars argue that Africans practised superstition and idol worship. This conclusion is close to taking away spirituality, and the sense of God from Africans. Consequently, the question of what constitutes religion and what is the right way of worshipping God becomes important in postcolonial criticism.

In reaction to the negative representation, postcolonial critics have called for respect for all religions, arguing that religion forms part of a people's identity. (Chidester et al., 2004; King, 1999). With regards to African traditional religion, Olupona (2015, P. 1) states that, "African spirituality is embodied in every sphere of human life, and cannot be separated from the everyday mundane." He argues that the incursion of Western religions into Africa has pushed Africans away from themselves. Similarly, Said (1978) detailed the orientalist portrayal of Islam in America. Islam, there, is tagged as a religion of violence, and Muslims are tagged as terrorists. In addition, religious rites of the religion are interpreted by Western scholars who don't understand the significance of these rites. The tendency, like he points out, then is that when people view a religion

as unpopular, they misrepresent and misjudge such a religion to feed their orientalist egos. The culprit, most of the time, is the West.

Globalization is also strongly discussed in postcolonial studies. Najar (2016, p.6) defines globalization as “strategic policies and principles used to exploit post-national tendencies of the colonized states for development of the West.” He opines that in the process of promoting international trade and multiculturalism, globalization often has a cultural homogeneity agenda. For instance, the promotion of multinational companies and transnational projects as development agents is not often the case. Rather, they are tools for marketing the culture and worldview of the Western world. Besides, in many cases, indigenes of the native countries do not benefit much from the activities of these multinational institutions, since the companies usually repatriate a large part of the profit home. Thus, postcolonial critics examine the influx of multinational companies, ideas, and technological advancements in colonized states with the aim of identifying remote implications of wholesale consumption of services and products on the culture of the locals. The other motive is often to understand the overall effects of such businesses in a two-way consideration.

Discourses on language as a medium of expression and for literature also occupy an important place in postcolonialism (Wiredu, 1980; Ngugi, 1986). Largely, the colonizers forced their languages on Africans to the neglect of the indigenous languages. For instance, in many parts of West Africa, French and English became the languages used in education and in government business. This is the case even today. The result was that many indigenes were cut off since they couldn't understand or speak the foreign languages. In resolving that problem, the indigenes had to spend several years and time learning these languages. That was necessary because of the prestige and opportunities which were accorded to natives proficient in these languages.

Some scholars have discussed the discomfort and implications inherent in using a language alien to a person (Tangwa, 2017; Oroh, 1994). For example, Tangwa (2017) argues that language is the best tool for inner self-expression and that can be effective if the person uses his native language to create his or her perception of the world. This stance concurs largely with Ngugi (1986), who argues that since language is the highest medium of expressing one's inner world view, Africa can only adequately talk about its experiences when it uses the native language. Consequently, he calls for the use of the local languages in the creative process of African literature.

In light of the debate on language use, a number of scholars recommended some solutions; some went ahead to bell the cat. For example, Ngugi led by example by writing in his native Gikuyu language. Other writers 'Africanized' the English language by way of the use of oral literary elements. Examples of such writers are Achebe and Soyinka. One writer who strongly championed the inculcation of oral traditions, mythology, and culture in creating literatures of the colonized world is Braithwaite. Reiss (2001) reveals that Braithwaite uses the style of non-compliance with English language rules as a way of reclaiming identity. Thus, he used approbation as a form of writing back.

The discussions above show that postcolonialism is a vast topic. Barry (2002, p. 131), a vociferous postcolonial scholar opines that postcolonialism,

1. dismisses Western universalist assertions because they fail to recognize cultural and ethnic variations.
2. analyzes how different civilizations are portrayed in literature,
3. demonstrates how colonization is typically not discussed in literature,
4. brings up the subject of cultural diversity and how it is handled in literature.

5. recognizes "cultural polyvalency," the condition in which a person is a member of multiple cultures, and
6. creates a perspective that does not view marginality and plurality as inferior

In light of the identity and cultural crises colonized people have been submerged in, Berry and Candis (2013) have argued for a new form of education to raise awareness of issues related to minority groups' cultures and identity. They contend that the yoke of an inferiority complex on minority groups can be broken if education raises consciousness and alerts them to the need to accept themselves and their identities. Citing the instance of use of slam poetry in hoods in America to create confidence about black culture and identity, Berry and Candis contend that performance poetry should be harnessed to give voice to marginalized people, and to provide them with a platform to talk about issues confronting them.

One performance poet who has taken to project Ghanaian culture and identity, and other postcolonial issues, is the Ghanaian performance poet, Gombilla the Poet. Gombilla the Poet, who hails from the Northern Region of Ghana, has 21 performance poems, some of which speak on crucial postcolonial issues. The present study adopts the traditional and contemporary definitions of postcolonialism to study selected poems of Gombilla the Poet for postcolonial issues. Again, the study also looks at the performance and poetic style he uses to drum home these thematic postcolonial issues.

## **1.2 Performance Poetry**

It is important to adequately explain what performance poetry is from the start to enable us to have a good understanding of performance poetry as a distinct genre from written poetry. This will also guide us in our discussions in the current study. Generally, performance poetry comprises performing the content of the poem as much as possible to bring out the totality of meaning. It

involves the use of drama, music, sound, gestures and gesticulations, and other paralinguistic devices to contribute to meaning (Gräbner and Casas, 2011). But more importantly, performance poetry is often done before an audience who have the cultural ability to decode the messages (Anyidoho, 1991). The terms spoken word poetry, slam poetry, and performance poetry are closely related, and sometimes used interchangeably. However, performance poetry is the umbrella name for poetry orally delivered before an audience. I shall come back to make a distinction between spoken word, and slam poetry later.

A number of scholars have defined performance poetry in ways that show which elements they consider very vital in their discussions. Scheub (2002, p. 226) says it “involves things of the external form: gestures, the spoken word, silences, body movement, facial expressions, audiences and places of performance, in addition to involving the ‘internal form’: all the feelings and meanings undercurrent of the external forms.” This definition is comprehensive because it touches all aspects of performance poetry. Asihene (2017) stresses performance, orality, and word play. According to Asihene, performance poetry is a kind of oral poetry or performance that emphasizes word play’ (2017, p. 3). Even though D’Abdon (2016) also provides a multi-modal definition, he stresses performance poetry’s appeal to the youth. As a result of its popularity among the youth, D’abdon, a performance poet and teacher, campaigns that the genre be included in the educational curriculum in schools in South Africa.

A number of key features of performance poetry can be gathered from the above definitions. First, performance poetry is the broad name used for any form of poetry that is constructed for live performance. Secondly, it is often packed with rhyme and other sound devices. Performance poetry also appeals to the audience in a way that the performer isn’t different from the speaking voice in the poem. In addition, the focus is on the delivery, and so the performer has some air of flexibility

in his performances. Lastly, performance poets may use background visuals, videos, and acting to depict the content of the poems. This makes performance poetry a total craft.

The three terms, performance poetry, slam poetry, and spoken word poetry, as similar as they are, have little differences. As stated earlier, performance poetry is the umbrella name for all genres of performance poetry. Today, spoken word poetry is often equated with performance poetry, but in the near past, it referred to poetry that was delivered orally alongside the use of gestures and gesticulations. Slam poetry refers to performance poetry orally delivered with emphasis on word play, rhyme, and rhythm that is often organized in the form of a competition. Slam poetry has a semblance to hip-hop. Susan and Somer -Willets (2012) assert that with the nuanced connection between slam and hip-hop, black poets are able to harness the power of these two genres to drum home to other races the struggles and inner feelings of black Americans. For example, hip-hop performers in slam echo the experiences and inner feelings of blacks. That is what it means to live as a black man. Thus, slam shows the audience the authentic black culture and identity.

One performance poet whose works seek to authenticate the African and Ghanaian culture and identity, and other broader postcolonial issues, is Gombilla the Poet. With 21 poems and over 20 years as a performance poet, the question of what performance poetry is couldn't have been better posed to any other person. In the interview I conducted with Gombilla the Poet on May 22, 2022, he said that,

performance poetry is when poetry is brought to light through an artist's word craft, and sometimes with drama, use of musical instruments, or other forms which make the poem. You can use background music, for example guitar, to enhance the meaning and message

The definition is consistent with Sheub (2002) in many ways since it provides a multi-modal exposition of performance poetry.

Some scholars have discussed performance poetry to demonstrate the link between performance poetry and culture and identity. According to Hall (2014), contemporary performance poetry is a voice of common culture and identity. Berry and Candis (2013, p. 44) define cultural experiences as “events (singularly or collectively engaged), specific to a group of individuals with shared beliefs, values, traditions, practices, and languages.” Robison (1999, p. 85) defines identity as “both visible and invisible domains of the self that influence self-construction.” Cultural experiences and identity largely influence the manner people conceive the world (Berry, 2005). Consequently, performance poetry is the window to understanding a people, especially their inner selves and identity. Therefore, there is a need to take performance poetry seriously as a tool for understanding minority, postcolonial, and marginalized groups.

In the modern era, apart from live performances by poets, technological advancement can be used to harness the potential of using performance poetry as an educational tool. It is possible to move performances in recorded forms for people to view outside the theatre of real performance. Thus, in the form of specials, performances could be made available to people through various platforms to educate them on postcolonial issues. On the strength of spoken poetry in this regard, Cronin and Hawthorne (2019) found in their study that the use of spoken word poetry in pedagogy propelled an increase in students’ interest in learning.

### **1.3 Profile of Gombilla the Poet**

Gombilla the Poet, whose real name is Gombilla Tofic, is one of the prominent contemporary Ghanaian Performance Poets. He comes from the Northern Region of Ghana. He started his education at Abe Halperin Basic School Ltd. At that very young age, he started showing signs of

ability in poetry recitals at school events. He then attended T.I. Ahmadiyya Senior High School in Kumasi. There, he continued to write and perform poems. When he gained admission to the University of Ghana, he told himself he was going to make performance poetry popular and also build his craft as a performance poet. As such, he used lecture halls, school events, and other platforms to showcase his talent. Within a short period, he got many people yearning for his performances due mainly to the thematic relevance of his poems, his lexical dexterity, and his vocal prowess. Today, Gombilla the Poet has 21 performance poems centred on various aspects of life. He also has a YouTube channel. Some of his popular poems are *History Lied to Africa*, *Ghana is Peaceful*, *Why I hate Religion*, *Wicked World*, *Waakye Eaters Matter*, *Maxwell Mahama*, *I love Sakina*, and *We came from the Future*. Gombilla the Poet has also successfully featured known musicians in some of his performances, such as Don Sigli, and has won some awards. Gombilla the Poet has performed on various occasions throughout the country. In addition, he has also authored many poems. He recently published his collection of poems entitled *Hope Lives Here*. Gombilla the Poet, who currently lives in Canada, has recently obtained a Master of Arts degree in Public Policy and Governance from the University of Ottawa. His poetry, according to the interview I held with him and the one he granted to *Diamond FM*, is to motivate and encourage people to greater heights, and as an African poet, to help promote some aspects of the African culture and identity. He combines performance with education and writing.

#### **1.4. Problem Statement**

Postcolonialism has seen growth over the years from its initial concentration on effects of colonialism. McLeod (2000) discussing the varied fields of postcolonialism, highlights and contends that new angles are coming up; from colonization to orientalism, cultural reclamation, writing back, globalization, and postcolonial diaspora. Quayson and Goldberg (2002) and Quayson

(2000) have called for postcolonial analysis to be broadened as a way of looking at text for identity and the authentic self. Thus, it is imperative to continue to examine the kind of angles of postcolonialism writers and poets are expounding in their works. The studies by Karmaka (2015) and Usongo (2011) found a promotion of the culture of the colonized and the writers' reclamation of the pre-colonial period. Djorbua et al. (2021) and Nabutanyi (2019) found exploitation and psychological damage on the colonized in the works of Diop and Rubadari. Moreover, postcolonialism has become more relevant today as the need to challenge Eurocentrism and to counter the invading role of orientalism. Yousef and Al-Rub (2016) found that Darwish, the poet whose poems he studied, is a voice for Palestine which has lost its lands. Spacey (2022) also found in his study of Maya's 'Still I Arise' that the American government, the judiciary and the police are institutions which help grow orientalist ideas about black Americans. Besides, even though many postcolonial studies exist with written texts, same cannot be said with performance poetry. For instance, recent performance studies in Ghana have not focused on postcolonial issues. For example, the performance poetry study by Asihene (2017) concentrated on the scope, the emergence, and the challenges of performance poetry in Ghana. Yao (2020) established the link between traditional and spoken word poetry in Ghana and also studied the content of some poems of Chief Moomen and Nana Asaase, concentrating on the use of gestures as a performance style. A study of postcolonial issues in the performance poetry of Gombilla the Poet allows us to understand the manner performance poets are responding to the changing meaning of postcolonialism, and has the potential of helping us understand the future direction of performance poetry in postcolonial studies.

### **1.5. Objectives of the Study**

The study examined postcolonial issues in selected poems of Gombilla the Poet. Specifically, the study sought to find out the,

1. postcolonial issues in the selected performance poems,
2. the performance styles Gombilla the Poet uses
3. The poetic styles Gombilla the Poet uses in his poetry.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

**The study sought to answer these Research Questions:**

1. What are the postcolonial issues in Gombilla's performance poetry?
2. What performance styles does he use to express postcolonial issues?
3. What poetic styles does he use in discussing these issues?

### **1.7 Significance of the study**

The study will contribute to understanding new angles in postcolonialism. The study will also expand on Anyidoho's *Dramatic Performance theory* by showing how Gombilla the Poet has used performance poetry to promote various postcolonial issues. The poetry of Gombilla, the poet, can be categorized as level two and three according to Anyidoho's categorization of performance poetry. Again, since there aren't many studies in the field of performance poetry, this study will contribute to the field of performance poetry studies in Ghana and has the potential to open up doors for future researchers to build on.

### **1.8 Scope of the Study**

The study centred on the following postcolonial issues: orientalism, 'dehumanization', and 'thingification,' Ghanaian culture and identity, African religion and spirituality, capitalism versus communal living, and subalternism. In this study, postcolonialism is taken as a broader term. The

study also centred on eight poems of Gombilla the Poet: *History Lied to Africa*, *Wicked World*, *Ghana is Peaceful*, *Why I Hate Religion*, *I love Sakina*, *One world, one love*, and *We came from the future*. Lastly, with the linguistic style under the poetic style in Gombilla the Poet, I concentrated on the lexical and phonological style.

### **1.9. Delimitation**

There are many spoken poets or recent performance poets in Ghana. But these are not included in the study due to time constraints and the fact that the study is an MPhil thesis. Secondly, not all poems of Gombilla the Poet have been included in the study. The ones selected are those that centre on postcolonialism. For the performance style, certain elements have been left out, especially in the use of paralinguistics. Similarly, on poetic style, the linguistic part of the study looks at only lexical and phonological issues in the poems.

### **1.10. Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one introduces the concepts of postcolonialism and performance poetry, and the link between the two. The statement of the problem, objectives, scope, and significance of the study are also found in this chapter.

Chapter two centres on the theoretical framework and the literature review. The chapter commences by defining postcolonialism and postcolonial theory. It also looks at the major topics in postcolonial theory and some key concepts. The next part of the chapter discusses Anyidoho's Dramatic Performance Theory and other traditional performance theorists. In chapter two, I also review style in performance poetry. There is also a place for performance poetry in Ghana. The chapter ends with a discussion on oral performance in general and its characteristics. Chapter three explains the manner the study is conceived and carried out. The chapter reviews the research approaches, data collection procedure, research instruments, and the methods of data analysis.

The fourth chapter presents the research findings of the study based on the objectives. The findings are presented thematically under two broad issues, postcolonial issues and style. The postcolonial issues I looked at are effects of colonialism on the colonized in the poems, Ghanaian culture and identity, African cultural values, Orientalism, Sulbaternism, and the effects of globalization on African cultural values. I divided poetic under two categories: linguistic and figurative. In the final chapter, Chapter Five, I discussed the findings and then suggest some recommendations

### **1.11. Definition of Terms**

#### **Performance Poetry:**

It refers to any poetry that is performed before an audience. It uses visuals, sound, music, drama, and other extra-textual elements besides the oral delivery. In this study, performance poetry includes spoken word poetry and slam poetry.

#### **Postcolonialism:**

Postcolonialism refers to the past and present consequences of colonialism on the colonized people. It also looks at the manner culture, and identity and power are construed between the colonized and European country in the present day stemming from the contacts between the two. In this study, postcolonialism is defined to mean the continuous consequences of the interaction between the colonized and colonizer.

#### **Aspects:**

The various realizations or angles of postcolonialism and postcolonial theor

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviewed two theories used in the study: the Postcolonial Theory and Dramatic Performance Theory. Because postcolonialism is broad, detailed discussion is provided to cover key definitions, theorists and main topics that have so far been identified in postcolonial studies. The chapter also offers a comprehensive review of secondary literature on performance poetry, including features and use of paralinguistic tools. There is also a section for the importance and functions of contemporary performance poetry. The next part of the chapter talks about performance poetry in Ghana. At the end of the chapter, I reviewed related studies that were conducted using the postcolonial theory, with representation of studies from colonized regions such as Africa, India, and the Caribbeans.

#### 2.2 Defining Postcolonialism

Saada (2014) defines postcolonialism as the study and examination of the experiences of colonized people stemming from their interaction with the colonizer. The term 'interaction' is broad and refers to any form of contact between the colonizer and the colonized through colonialism, cooperation, or trade. When Europeans set out to discover new lands and trade opportunities around the 1400s, they ended up setting up foreign governments in many of the new lands. In the process, they subjugated the people under their rule. The peak of colonization was between 1500 and 1800, and scholars often refer to it in postcolonial discussions because it was widespread. Again, many European countries were involved in it. After decolonization, the European countries still viewed their former colonies as extensions outside Europe. As a result, the European governments continued to exploit resources in these countries and also dumped their goods in the

colonies. Thus, in colonialism, Europe achieved its goal of searching for fresh economic opportunities. The period saw the rape of resources, the dehumanizing treatment of indigenes of the colonized states, cultural reorientation, and identity reconstruction. (Fanon, 1961; Rodney, 1972)

Ashcroft et al. (2002) recounts that by the end of decolonization, many colonized countries were still tied to their colonial masters. For example, the English-speaking West African countries aligned with Britain and became the Commonwealth. They shared a mutual friendship, and so as part of that, the colonizer continued to lend assistance by supplying books and other materials to them. However, it was realized that some of the books contained stories that denigrated or presented the colonized in a demeaning manner. In response to this, scholars emerging from the colonized countries started to question this orientalist presentation. Some of these are Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Martinique, and Chinua Achebe. They countered the distortion of culture, misrepresentation, and the dehumanizing portrayal of the colonized and their institutions.

In the 1970s, following the seminal work of Edward Said, the term postcolonialism became popular and also oriental studies. Said (1978) decried the manner in which the West appropriates for itself a superior tag while placing an inferior tag on the East. Alongside the representation of the vulnerable and the deprived became an area of great interest following Spivak's work in the 1980s. In 1989, Ashcroft et al detailed important areas of postcolonialism, including ways the colonized world is writing back. Thus, by the 1990s, postcolonialism had become an established field of study with attention on orientalism, representation, Subalternism, and writing back approaches.

Today, in the 21st century, postcolonialism has widened. It is no longer a time-bound phenomenon (Moreno, 2014; Quayson, 2020). One present concern is globalization and its effects on indigenous

institutions, businesses, and culture. In addition, diaspora and migration issues have become relevant due to the increase in movement and displacement globally. Another interest in postcolonial studies in recent times is postcolonial feminism. I shall look at these broadly later in this chapter.

Various scholars have defined postcolonialism in their own ways. As early as 1996, Gilbert and Tompkins defined postcolonialism with a call for widening the frontiers of postcolonialism. They noted that,

Postcolonialism is, rather, an engagement with, and contestation of, colonialism's discourse, power structures, and social hierarchies. A theory of postcolonialism must then respond to more than the merely chronological construction of post-independence and more than just the discursive experience of imperialism (Gilbert and Tompkins, 1996, p.3)

Other scholars stress an aspect of the colonized people's life that postcolonial studies centre on. For instance, Mewan (2008) says postcolonialism studies the cultural, political, social, and economic aspects of the life of the colonized. Quayson (2020) argues that postcolonialism has moved on from colonialism to become an interdisciplinary discipline that focuses on critical reading of texts for Eurocentric undertones. This means reading to identify implications of actions and events on colonized people's cultures, self-esteem, and identity. Saada (2014) emphasizes the continuous relevance of postcolonialism, meaning postcolonialism is relevant today than before since time has increased contact and movement of people across continents.

One key characteristic of postcolonialism is that it thrives on power relations between the colonizer, or the powerful, on the one hand, and the colonized, or the less powerful, on the other side. According to Said (1978) the Europeans, who often control the narrative, consciously elevate

whatever comes from the West while denigrating that which comes from the East. This is achieved through the control of information. They use binary labels to that effect. Examples of binary labels are as follows: the West is civilized, the East is uncivilized; white is good, black is bad; the West has religion, Africa has superstition; the West has a language, Africa has vernacular.

### **2.3 Postcolonial Theory**

In this part of the chapter, I discuss postcolonial theory from its inception, pointing out key theorists. Postcolonial theory is a critical theory that identifies and addresses issues of identity, culture, representation, and other legacies of colonialism. Elam (2019, p. 1) defines postcolonial theory as, “a body of thought concerned with accounting for the political, economic, historical, and social impact of European rule around the 18th to 20th century.” Postcolonial theory traces its beginnings to colonialism. Major works on postcolonial thought emerged out of the independence struggle. One of such key writers is Frantz Fanon. Fanon (1961) who discusses the negative effects of the French colony on Algeria and that sub-region. Fanon labels colonialism as destructive, contending that it poses mental health challenges to the indigenes. In *Black Skins, White Masks* (1967), Fanon reveals the manner in which colonialism depletes the self-esteem of the black man. Thus, Fanon was not only talking about the brutalities and distortion of the people’s culture but also the manner in which the dignity and self-confidence of the black people were lost with the onset of colonialization.

Another key scholar in colonial discourse is Aimé Césaire. Césaire (2000) exposed the hypocrisy of the West, arguing that colonialism defeated the principles of the Enlightenment. If the West was using colonialism, a form of exploitation to enrich themselves, he argues, then they were more malicious than the Nazi in the Second World War. In drawing this analogy, Césaire has opened our eyes to the self- centred motive which occasioned colonialism. Rodney (1972) contents that

the mission was to exploit resources, find free markets and thereby feed their ego and interest without regard for the consequences on the indigenes.

Postcolonial studies gained prominence in Western universities during the Cold War period when faculties and departments dedicated themselves to studying Oriental studies following Edward Said's seminal work. Said (1978) notes that the West has divided the world into two: the 'occident' and the 'orient.' This also corresponds to the west and the east, respectively. He reasons that the social relations between these two is based on the binary of 'them and us.' Through the continuous control of information, the tag of superiority becomes natural to the West, while the tag of inferiority goes to the East. Said named this mentality *Orientalism*. Soon, orientalism became a vital critical way of reading Eurocentric portrayals of the East and colonized in literature.

Soon after, Spivak (1987) wrote about the manner in which the vulnerable are treated and misrepresented. Using the case of the British contact with Hindi culture, he reveals that the colonizers misrepresented the traditions of the Hindus because they didn't understand their culture or didn't care to understand what those traditions meant. Other scenarios Spivak used to explain subalternism centred on the manner in which ordinary indigenes weren't involved in decision-making. He used the instance of the young lady who committed suicide to avoid taking part in committing a group offence. After her death, community members who retold her story said she died out of sexual escapades with her boyfriend, without trying to extract the possible cause of her death from close relatives or by research. Subalterns are like the dead lady; they usually have no voice. The powerful, with their 'outside knowledge,' speak for them. Spivak's theory then became relevant in studying the marginalized, children, ordinary people, the disabled, and women.

From the selected scholars and the works reviewed above, we conclude that postcolonial theory is derived from many fields, such as Marxism, linguistics, psychoanalysis, and feminism. With

regards to Marxism, the theory examines relationships between the upper class and lower class, and the effects of capitalism on the lower class. In Linguistics, postcolonial theorists are concerned with the role of language in identity creation. Psychoanalysis refers to the manner in which colonialism has contributed to the mental-related hazards that the colonized experiences. Feminism draws from the manner in which women are victims of colonization and the manner in which women of colour are viewed and treated, especially in the Western world.

Postcolonial theory has a number of criticisms. Watson and Wilder (2018) contend that its continuous reflection on colonialism is no longer necessary. Another concern is that many postcolonial theorists are educated in the Western world, and so they are brainwashed. Not only are these scholars educated to think like people of the West, but they also become alien to their native languages since they teach or research using foreign languages. These people become hybridized (Bhabha, 1994). Thus, such people cannot be custodians of knowledge of the people because they have undergone a kind of mind shift.

Critics also contend that postcolonial studies, which became popular after the Cold War in Western universities, is dominated by Western scholars who critique works, replicate their views, and send them back to the colonized countries (Chinweizu and Ihechuckwu, 1980). One reason for this is that Western scholars have control of knowledge, publication, and reach. Trivedi and Mukherjee (1996) argue that even immigrant faculty members, from the colonized countries, in the prestigious university also critique in a similar manner akin to their European counterparts since they have also acquired doses of Eurocentrism.

Notwithstanding these incontestable submissions, postcolonial theory has even become more relevant in recent times. Scholars from colonized origins are expanding discourses on postcolonial theory. For example, Quayson and Goldberg (2002), who writes extensively on the theory, has

called for postcolonial studies to become interdisciplinary, to discard the over-concentration on colonialism. Thus, colonized scholars are writing on new themes are being demonstrated by colonized scholars. For example, colonized writers are moving postcolonialism beyond the frontiers of colonialism and post-independence disillusionment to issues of transnationalism as seen in *Beyond the Horizon* and *Americannah* by Ama Darko and Chimamanda Adichie, respectively.

## **2.4. Main Topics in Postcolonial Theory**

In this section, I discuss the main topics in postcolonial theory: colonial discourse, orientalism, language, culture and identity, diaspora and migration, and postcolonial feminism. It is impossible to mention all scholars under each topic; however, the motive in this review is to help us understand the thread of thoughts that surrounds a particular school of thought and to become familiar with some of the key scholars in each topic.

### **2.4.1 Colonialism and Colonial Discourse**

From the early days of postcolonial theory, colonialism was central to the writings and thoughts of major scholars in the field. This tended to focus on the dehumanizing nature of colonial administration and social structure. As early as 1950, Césaire labelled colonialism as an act of exploitation. Césaire contended that colonialism made a mockery of Europe's self-acclaimed enlightened status since colonialism was similar to the evils the Nazi committed in the Second World War. He coined the term 'thingification' to describe the manner in which the colonizers dehumanized or treated the colonized. Another key figure to illuminate the barbaric nature of colonialism in the 1960s is Fanon. In *Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Fanon traces the nature of French colonial administration in Algeria to violence. He equates colonialism to an evil force that takes away the national culture while it creates intellectuals stripped of their identity. In the final

analysis, he posits that violence will be used to resist the violence. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), Fanon argues that the white person views the black person as inferior, regardless of the latter's assertiveness. In summary, both Caesar and Fanon have similar viewpoints on colonialism; however, Fanon has gone much deeper into the psyche of the white colonizers and their understanding of the black and colonized people.

Some scholars have also examined the all-round effects of colonialism. Rodney (1972) traces Africa's economic stagnation and failure to Europe. He opines that colonialism was a tool used to retard the growth of African institutions, to the benefit of Europe. As a result, he sees colonialism as a 'one-armed bandit'. He opines that Europe, in the process of developing itself, underdeveloped Africa, most of which was the reason for colonialism. Thus, Rodney concludes that all the ills in Africa, such as bad governance, economic stagnation, and other structural deficiencies, are traceable to Europe's activities during colonialism and imperialism. Loomba (2015) concurs with Rodney, but has delved more into neocolonialism and the impact of globalization on Africa and other colonized states. He contends that European countries have established a machinery that has ensured their continuous dominance at the economic level. This is possible through international trade policies to which developing countries are signatories. He argues that the colonized or developing countries don't benefit much from their policies. In summary, the West has instituted a new form of colonialism known as neocolonialism, which is the new milk cow.

#### **2.4.2 Orientalism**

Orientalism is drawn from power, dominance, and representation. Orientalism originated from the manner in which Western art denigrated Asians and people from the Middle East. It broadened later to include all people of the colonized world. However, Orientalism gained popularity during the Cold War period when Said's seminal work revealed the manner in which the West creates

narratives to project itself as superior while mirroring the East as inferior (Said, 1978). Said argues Orientalism is achieved through the control of knowledge. Since knowledge is a form of power, he argues, the one who has power is often placed in an advantageous position to see himself better than the one with no power. Said opines that since the dominant narratives are created through the control of information, such narratives are imaginary and without any scientific basis. He coined the term Orientalism to describe this mentality. This connects well with Spivak's (1987) argument that the vulnerable are often not allowed to speak for themselves. Spivak uses the term subaltern for such people who aren't given space to speak about themselves. This is discussed adequately under the subheading of subalternism later in the chapter.

### **2.4.3 Language and Identity**

The role of language in expressing one's inner self and its role in identity creation occupies a respected position in postcolonial discussions. (Wiredu, 1995, Okolo, 2005, Ngugi, 1986). During colonialism, the West imposed its languages on the colonized. These foreign languages became the languages for education and governance, relegating the indigenous languages to the background. This induced a number of protests, such as the Soweto uprising, in which school children protested against the introduction of Afrikaans as the language of instruction in the schools.

Some scholars argue that attention should be given to indigenous languages when writing. They contend that language isn't only a symbol of identity, but it is a tool of access to the inner world of a people (Fasiku, 2008; Egbunu, 2014, Ngugi, 1986). Achebe, for example, says that when you speak to a man in his native language, it gets to his soul. Ngugi (1986) opines that using a foreign language limits the ability of natives to express themselves fully. In this case, the use of foreign languages is a window through which the West deposits images of racism and values on the

natives. Ngugi concludes that literature in any society should be written in the language of the people. Thus, in the case of Africa, African languages should be used in writing. However, other scholars contend that since the European languages have a wider reach, they should still be used in writing, but that these languages should be used in ways that allow them to serve the needs of the colonized world. This is often known as the utilitarian school. Members of this school are Achebe and Soyinka. Thus, such writers attempt to ‘nativize’ the foreign languages as much as possible in their writings.

Ashcroft and Tiffin (1989) elaborate on ways in which writers break the rigidity of the English language in their writings. Writers from the colonized regions rewrite European plots by infusing elements of oral literature. The second method, appropriation, is similar to what Achebe and Soyinka use. Thus, the alternative to Ngugi’s abrogation is to write back in forms of adaptation and appropriation. Some scholars looked at the manner in which indigenes have coped with the imposition or existence of a dominant alien language, often the European one, with other indigenous or minor languages in a multi-lingual cultural setting.

Brathwaite, writing on the Caribbean experience, says that when the British occupied the lands there, there was a clash of the languages of the African slaves, the indigenes, and that of Europe. This created a multi-lingual society. The people developed a language that consisted of a less rigid English structure, with lexemes and expressions from the languages of indigenes and African slaves (Brathwaite, 1984). Brathwaite (1984) calls this the *Nation Language*, a spontaneous language consisting of a mixture of standard, creoles, and other forms to address the communication needs of all people in a multi-lingual society. Postcolonial studies, from the linguistic perspective examine the dynamics of language in a multi-cultural setting to identify

changes, compromises and influences. This is especially the case with the dominant language of the colonizers comes against the indigenous languages.

#### **2.4.4 Culture and Identity**

Cultural postcolonial theories explore the manner in which colonialism has contributed to undermining the culture of colonized people (Fanon, 1961; Said, 1976; Bhabha, 1994). I have already reviewed articles by these scholars, and so I will take a few arguments they make that are related to culture and identity. Said talks about cultural hegemony when the West elevates its culture but sees the colonized as the 'other'. Said illustrates cultural hegemony using religion. He reveals the West sees Islam as an evil religion, and so they proceed to interpret Islamic practices with 'outside knowledge' to suit their orientalist mindset. Chiorazzi (2015) concurs with Said's argument but focuses on religion in Africa. He argues that the fact that Christianity has occupied the religious space in Africa means the African has been decoupled from the environment. He says that the African traditional religion permeates every aspect of the life of the African.

Homi Bhabha (1994) demonstrates the manner in which the colonized loses his culture and identity using three important terms: Ambivalence, Hybridity, and Mimicry. It should be recalled that colonialism, in initiating cultural hegemony, also exposed the indigenes to the life of the new culture, which came with the tag of 'refinedness.' Again, it opened doors for opportunities for jobs and upper-class association. As a result, the indigenes develop a liking for the new culture, but in doing this, they also hold back a bit because they believe the new culture is corrupt and evil. This is called ambivalence: the desire that the indigene has for the culture of the West and the perception he labours that the foreign culture is corrupt.

Hybridity, as a horticultural term, refers to the offspring that emerge when two species mate. The hybrid often has features of both species. The indigenous people become a mixed breed as they

exhibit traits from the two cultures. Bhaba contends that colonized people lose their culture and identity when they try to absorb the culture of the West. Mimicry refers to the exaggerated display of the colonizer's culture by the new converts. Such people exhibit traits of the new culture with noticeable exaggeration, which may evoke laughter from people. For example, there is mimicry if a character speaks English with a 'forced' accent.

#### **2.4.5 Diaspora Discourses**

At the height of imperialism and colonialism, people got displaced and dispersed from their original homes, requiring them to start all over. Even though slavery, colonialism, and wars of expansion were the foremost causes of displacement, the modern era has seen a myriad of reasons that explain the increase in population dispersal. This also positions postcolonial diaspora studies as crucial and relevant. Procter (2003, p. 13) defines postcolonial diaspora as a 'travelling metaphor of tropes of mobility, displacement, borders and crossings'. Today, people move across borders for various reasons: access to quality education, search for peace, fulfilment of personal dreams, and for vacation.

People in the diaspora face many challenges in the new country. Among other things, they face linguistic, cultural, social, political, and racial dissonance, which sometimes requires reconstruction. This may include learning a new language and new habits to be able to cope with the new environment. Again, the whole society may have to undergo adjustments. In such a situation, each member will also have to adjust. For example, in a dominant white community, blacks from Africa will have to learn how to eat some types of food that are not originally found in their home countries. The stress of reconstruction may lead members of the diaspora to psychological dissonance.

Secondly, people in diaspora often face acceptance problems. According to McLeod (2010, p. 122), immigrants, “can be deemed not to belong there, and disqualified from thinking about the new land as their home.” Sometimes, this also applies to members of the diaspora who have lived in foreign lands for years and have even attained some level of societal success. Sometimes, members of the diaspora may not be fully accepted in the foreign country. An example is the case of black Americans who are still facing acceptance issues among some Native Americans in that country.

Thus, the concept of home assumes a non-fixed meaning in diaspora and immigrant studies. In one instance, the immigrants develop attachment to the home country they left, even if they initially had negative views of it. They may even yearn for it again, as a result of the social, cultural, and linguistic dissonance they faced in the foreign land. Naipaul, who used the example of some workers who left India to go to Trinidad for greener pastures, found that the workers developed a yearning to go back to India after a short period away, since they didn’t feel at home as a result of psychological dissonances and challenges of adapting to life in Trinidad (Naipaul, 1987).

Thus, in diaspora studies, home is not just a physical location, but a place of emotional and spiritual connection. It may refer to any of the following: a place one finds peace, or is fulfilled. Thus, those in the diaspora can also see the foreign country as home if they find fulfilment there. An example is refugees who may settle into better lives in the new place. In that case, they may not think about returning to their places of origin. This perfectly concurs with Brah (1996, p. 192), when he noted that home “is a mystic place of desire in the diasporic imagination.” It is only the person in diaspora who can explain that mystic place.

#### **2.4.6 Postcolonial Feminism**

Another topic under postcolonial theory is feminism. Following the Beijing conference in 1995, when women leaders met and deliberated on challenges facing women, feminism has received major attention. But women continue to face socio-cultural bottlenecks that need drastic action. Postcolonial feminism first examines the manner in which the colonial process contributed to deepening the woes of women. This corpus explores the dual suppression that women in colonized states face, which includes patriarchy on the one hand and the brutalities of colonialism on the other hand. This is often referred to as ‘double colonization.’

In recent times, new aspects of postcolonial feminism have emerged, including the manner in which the colonizers perceive and treat women of colour (McLeod, 2015). For example, in the West, sometimes successful black career women are not respected enough for their achievements. Other times, women of colour are labelled as incapable for certain offices due to their colour. Again, black women are objectified as sex objects. For example, Serena Williams and Michelle Obama have faced various sorts of objectification in the United States of America. In addition, the concept of beauty is often bestowed on the physical traits of the white woman, leaving out those of the black or women of colour. For instance, the constant portrayal of long hair, light skin colour, and a long nose as the features of beauty in women has the potential of forcing some black women to use whatever means available to obtain those features. In sum, postcolonial feminism examines the physical and emotional discrimination women of colour face in Western or mixed societies.

#### **2.4.7 Globalization**

Advances in information technology has spurred companies to expansionist drives, enabling nations to spread their operations across the world. Again, liberalized trade policies have allowed movements across borders. This phenomenon, known as globalization, is also an avenue through which Western and advanced countries are spreading their cultures. For instance, a company may

promote a culture where families eat at restaurants but not at home. This contradicts certain cultures where families eat together at home to encourage family bonding.

Scholars of globalization contend that globalization doesn't have an equal playing field. They contend globalization is an avenue through which the West deposits its culture on others (Steger, 2009; Ogar and Nwoye, 2019). For example, Steger (2009) views globalization as a form of imperialism and a process that allows for the re-imposition of economic and cultural dominion. He further attributes the decline in development in colonized states to the presence of multinational companies. These companies have taken over markets and created a taste culture among indigenes, making demand for local produce low. Ogar & Nwoye (2019) have observed that institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank continue to play roles that militate against the economic growth of colonized states.

In conclusion, the review suggests that there are many topics under postcolonialism. This is necessary because the study examines which of these topics are encapsulated in the performance poetry of Gombilla the Poet, and the relevance the poet gives to each topic contained in the poems.

## **2.5 Key Terms in Postcolonial Theory**

### **Imperialism**

Imperialism is when a nation appropriates upon itself the right to lord over a less powerful nation. The nation which lords over the other is called imperialist. The imperialist often uses machinations to exploit the less powerful nation for its benefit. Again, the imperialist often sets off with a natural duty to subjugate the weaker one to domination. One form of imperialism is colonialism.

### **Colonialism**

It is a form of imperialism. It was at its highest from 1950 to 1980 when European countries expanded their territorial control over African, Asia and South America, and the Caribbean. In

colonialism, the colonizers always institute political control over the countries they occupy. At the same time, the colonizers exploit these countries they have occupied. Thus, colonialism also often come with various forms of exploitation, physical, economic and psychological. This was one of the main reasons for which the European countries to meet and divide Africa among themselves in the Berlin Conference.

### **Orientalism**

Orientalism is the mindset ingrained in the European that he is of higher make than other people. Orientalism thrives on using information to create and grow perceptions. With time, the perceptions become naturalized (Said,1978)

### **Binarism**

It refers to the two-way labels that the Orientalist use to describe themselves as against others. The term has its roots in Ferdinand de Saussure's work on structuralism where he uses the concepts of signifier and the signified. Some examples of binarism are as follows; advanced, rural; good, evil; pupil, teacher; civilized, savage, and human; bestial. The first of each label refers to the west whereas, the second refers to the east or colonized states.

### **Othering and Alteration**

In Othering, religion, race, tribe and location are used by the west as conduits to place themselves in one social class of high status, enabling them to create a sense of themselves and the other. Orchi (2009, p. 9) says that,

the process of othering refers to the construction of a 'self' against an 'other.' It is a way of labeling one's position and identity while disapproving of the other. The racial, sexual, religious, economic, ethnic, geographical or ideological indicators of social demarcation also shape the positions of the priority and the other groups.

The process of othering thus allows the ‘other’ to be labelled separately from the lenses of West and hence treated differently, albeit in the negative manner.

### **Ambivalence**

It refers to the dual relationship the colonized has for the new culture and his native culture as a result of contact. This term was introduced by Homi Bhabha, in 1994. The colonized usually admires the culture of the colonizer and so becomes envious of it. However, he is cautious accepting it totally because he believes that culture is corrupt. The colonizer also sees the colonized and his culture as inferior, but is still ready to deal with the natives if they upgrade. Thus, the colonizer provides incentives for the colonized willing to take on the new culture.

### **Mimicry**

Mimicry refers to attempts by the new converts to look like the colonizer. In mimicry, the indigenous person imitates the colonizer in an exaggerated manner which may evoke laughter from people. Some examples are when one speaks with a ‘forced’ western accent or when a woman wears a wig which is disproportional to her head.

### **Hybridity**

Homi Bhabha coins this term to describe the result of the clash of cultures where the colonized in attempting to take on the new culture takes on one which is neither totally the western nor native culture. The result is that the colonized people come out being of mixed culture and identity. Hybridity is taken from Horticulture which refers to the new one formed when two species mate or are cross-breed.

### **Approbation**

Approbation refers to the process in which scholars and writers in a multi-lingual environment use a language form that is suitable to speakers of that community. In such a multi-lingual society,

there is often dominant language, usually the European which is forced on the people directly or indirectly. As a result, speakers of the minority and indigenous languages resist by coming one with a language with local lexemes, and a structure that is suitable to them.

### **Adaptation**

Adaptation is when authors rewrite plots of stories originating from the Western world using local plot structures or versions. It is a form of writing back that the colonized world use in literature.

An example of an adaptation is the *Gods Are not to Blame*.

### **Subaltern**

A subaltern is a vulnerable fellow who is neglected when decisions are being taken for him or her.

The subaltern is often not given a voice. This term was coined by Spivak, the Indian literary critic and feminist. Subalterns include women, children, widows, the colonized and so on. Largely, subalterns settle for what those in power says about and for them. In instances that the Subaltern even gets the chance to speak, his or her opinions are not taken seriously. In other words, people do not take their opinions into consideration.

### **Nation Language**

The nation language is a new language which emerges to serve a multilingual society. Braithwaite coined this term. The nation language takes on a mixture of indigenous codes, lexemes, and oral literary elements. In addition, it breaks way from rigid English structure such as such tense, and rules of agreement.

### **Neocolonialism**

Neocolonialism refers to all new forms of activities the colonizers use to continuously have grips on the colonized countries. Globalization is an example of neocolonialism.

### **Globalization**

Globalization refers to movement of culture across geographical locations due to advances of technology. It also involves multilateral companies setting base in other countries for trade and market opportunities. It also explains the role international financial institutions play in creating poverty and suppression in communities with least economic power. Postcolonial scholars have thus warned colonized states especially Africa to beware of this new trend.

## **2.6. Dramatic Performance Theory**

Performance is a key concept in oral African literature, and so to fully understand performance poetry there is need to examine the ingredients and nature of performance. In his 1991 paper, Anyidoho provides a framework which is suitable for this study. He posits that performance is usually a whole package that has many things in one. On the one hand, there is skill set or style of the performer; at the other hand there are extra-textual components such as music, dance and drama. Anyidoho discusses this to emphasize the need to include in performance one or all of the following: music, drama, gestures, and body expressions. Anyidoho also marks out music in African performance as the first connector with the audience. Many African traditional performances are anchored on music which usually initiates the other non-verbal communicative acts. Thus, music is a metaphor for communication beyond text.

Anyidoho also stresses the connectedness of the performer, audience, and participation. The performer uses varied techniques to carry communicate his message to the audience. The poet may use props, drama, gesticulation and voice modulations to help carry the message successfully to the audience. The audience replicates the performer's gestures by applauding when they are pleased with the performance, but they respond negatively when the delivery is off. Anyidoho identifies three levels of performance: dramatic reading, dramatic performance and total performance. These also correspond to level one, two and three respectively. For level one, the

performer reads the work before the audience while incorporating facial expressions and gestures. For the second level, the poet recites the poem from memory but only looks into the script from time to time. The recitation also has background music, drama and at times audience involvement. With the third level, the content of the poem is staged alongside the recital as much as possible. In level three, the performance may also make use of “technical resource people such as directors, actors, singers and dancers. In addition, props, costume. Lightening and sound effects are used.”(Anyidoho, 1991, p. 46). Anyidoho refers this level total performance. This theory is relevant in the study because, I attempt to examine the performance techniques in the poems. Again, my choice of this theory is based on the fact that it is an African theory. As Anyidoho has observed, using western theories to study performance is problematic because such theories often box performances into one category when doing research.

## **2.7 Other Performance Theorists**

Many scholars have written on the centrality of performance in African tradition literature (Finnegan, 1970; Okpewho, 1992.) Finnegan who researches in oral literature in African societies, marked out performance as key saying that the tonal nature of African languages enhances in general. Finnegan further observed three continuums in performance; the performer, the delivery, and the audience. Finnegan’s ideas have become the foundation of research in African oral literature.

One important scholar in performance is Bauman who in 1975 strongly suggested that performance was a verbal art. The performer uses some skills to carry across his message to audience. Since he knows the context, his performance is curved in a manner that his messages are understood. This means messages that are delivered by the performer are only useful when the audience is able to

make meaning out of them. In this regard Bauman also agrees on the continuum of the performer, message and audience in the communication role of performance.

With the growth in oral literature studies Okpewho (1992) explored the African terrain further. Though he concurs with Finnegan and Bauman in terms of the characteristics of oral literature, and continuum of the performer, message and audience, he stressed the significance of context and genre in performance. He uses examples of performances from various zones of Africa to stress difference and meanings in performances. In addition, Okpewho points out some recurrent performance techniques used in performances. These include repetition, parallelism, idiophones, digression, pun and many others I shall explain under performance styles latter in this thesis.

No other theorist makes a case for the centrality of the artist in the study of African performance than Muleka. He contends that since oral literature depends on the performer, and when the performer dies, the performance also die, critiques should give more credence to the performer. He also warned against the use of theories to study African oral performances. (Muleka, 2014).

## **2.8 Functions of Contemporary Performance Poetry**

This part of the chapter looks at some of the functions recent studies have shown about contemporary performance poetry. Brattin (2013) revealed that Xhosa performance poetry, with its strong link with protest and resistance, provides the opportunity for poets to speak on issues of societal concern without fear. It would be recalled that protest was an important tool that was used towards the end of Apartheid in South Africa. Brattin argues that contemporary performance poetry can engender activism in attempts at addressing social issues in post-Apartheid South Africa. Some of these issues include racism, gender inequality, land ownership challenges, and crime.

Performance poetry is also a cultural empowerment, and as an anti-orientalist tool. For example, Lowery and Walker (2017), who studied selections of messages and metaphors in selected performance poems by black Americans, found that the poems expressed the socio-cultural concerns of black Americans. The performance poems also constituted educational material that was vital for reorienting the minds of non-black Americans on the manner they perceive blacks. Over the years, racial issues have dominated the interracial relationship between blacks and whites in the United States of America.

The use of performance poetry as a source of motivation and building group identity in pursuing collective goals has also been established (Rudd, 2012). In a study of *slammin* youth in an urban school, Rudd found that the group helped students cultivate an identity as one people who can better their lot, thereby helping them discard an earlier culture that made them see themselves as outcasts. Again, the study found that the youth's engagement with the performance poetry club had positive effects on their academic and personal lives. The inspiration to become successful poets gave them hope to move away from their previous lives.

Other studies have shown that performance poetry provides the atmosphere for conducive learning. For example, Fiore (2013) found that performance poetry was effective in titillating interest in learning and participation among students. This study reveal that performance poetry increase the interest of pupils in learning as they exhibited high readiness to participate. This is consistent with Fisher (2005), who found that performance poetry is an effective pedagogical tool.

Performance poetry is also a confidence booster for the marginalized youth. Fenge et al. (2016), for example, established its potential in aiding understanding and confidence in young people, especially the physically impaired. They used an art-based project where researchers engaged two performance poets, some disabled children, and a health worker. With the use of the art-based

approach, the performers were able to engage the audience in a manner that allowed them to question assumptions about the disabled. At the end, the audience got enlightened that the disabled were also humans like them. Again, the disabled youth became confident that they could do much for themselves and society. The findings of this study concur with WHO (2011), which established the potential of performance poetry in promoting positive discourses on disability. In conclusion, performance poetry has a myriad of functions which, when harnessed in full, could propel development at the individual and societal levels.

## **2.9. Performance Poetry in Ghana**

Ghanaian scholars have varied views on the exact date performance poetry started in the country. However, the literature suggests it could be traced to the 1980s (Yao, 2020; Anyidoho, 1991). Before that period, poetry in Ghana was not noted for performance. However, a one-time visit to Ghana by Braithwaite had a significant impression. Some Ghanaian poets, such as Kofi Awoonor and Kobina Ayi Aquah, also performed. Yao (2020) contends that the performance at the national theatre was a novelty that the audience had not seen before, and so they yearned for more of such performances. It should be pointed out that, unfortunately, there were no follow-up performances after this. This led to initial interest dying off (Asihene, 2017).

However, from the 1990s through to the early 2000s, Atukwei Okai became a visible figure who took on the task of popularizing performance poetry. He used various national programmes and holidays to perform his poems. The success of Atukwei Okai stemmed from the fact that he was a polyglot. He lived in Northern Ghana during part of his childhood, but returned to Accra, the country's capital; consequently, he spoke many languages. He infuses some words and expressions from these languages into the English language in his poems and performances. He employed dramatic reading and played with words. *Logoligi Logarithms*, and *Rosemaya* are examples of his

poems in which he used these styles. Atukwei Okai excited Ghanaians with his performance poetry and became popular thereafter. As a result, many scholars see him as the doyen of Ghanaian performance poetry (Yao, 2020; Anyidoho, 1991). However, there were a few written poets who did dramatic readings of their poems, albeit not often.

The major turning point in performance poetry in Ghana occurred in 2007, when some returnees from the USA teamed up with others back home to start a platform for poets to meet and perform their poems. Nii Ayikwei Sparkes and Martin Egblewogbe of the Writers' Project of Ghana were the pioneers of the programme. These performances, held monthly, became known as Ehalakasa. The platform allowed young poets to perform and discover their talent. Asihene (2017) credits Ehalakasa with popularizing and making performance poetry accepted in Ghana. As the popularity of performance poetry increased, more young poets joined the Ehalakasa. These creative talents also enticed the Ghanaian population. More and more Ghanaians became interested in performance poetry and looked out for the next performance shows. Within the same period, television stations such as *Citifm* and *Metro TV* also provided platforms for the artists to air readings and performances.

From the historical account, we can categorize performance poetry in Ghana into two eras: the first-generation phase and the second-generation phase. The first generation includes the period before the Ehalakasa project. Kofi Awoonor, Atukwei Okai, Kobina Acquah, and the earlier poets belong to this category. The second generation covers the period of the Ehalakasa project and thereafter. Within the second generation, we have the first phase and the second phase. The first phase includes the pioneering poets of Ehalakasa, some of whom are Mutombo the Poet, Chief, Moomen, and Naana Asaase. The second phase labels those who came thereafter and includes Gombilla the Poet.

Unfortunately, today, there are few literary groups with regular meetings for readings, unlike it was during the Ehalasaka period. There is generally a decline in the spread of performance. Asihene (2017) traces his decline to the unavailability of infrastructure to host poets and the audience. Infrastructure includes theatres and equipment. Secondly, there were not enough producers ready to invest in performance poetry shows. Sadly, as Asihene posits, the few organizers who ventured into funding performance poetry shows had to quit because they could not break even. Another challenge is that many performance poets have taken on other crafts or combined performance with other crafts. This has not allowed them ample time to concentrate on performance poetry. Gombilla the Poet, for example, combines education with performance poetry. In the interview, I conducted with Gombilla the Poet, he called on the government to support performance poetry by creating structures to promote the genre. He contends this is important because performance poetry has the potential to contribute to national cohesion and to promote cultural identity.

Notwithstanding these challenges, performance poets have continued to perform in national programmes across the country. Examples of such performers in recent times are Nana Asaase and Nakeeyat Dramani. Gombilla the Poet and Chief Moomen have organized group and individual shows across the country. An example is Gombilla's *Chicken and Sobolo* programme in Tamale in 2016.

## **2.10. Style and Paralinguistic Features in Performance Poetry**

As a general term, style refers to the manner in which an artist goes about creating their content. Style is what makes up a particular work, and the performer's particular manner of delivery of the message (Leech & Short, 1981). Style in performance poetry includes all the techniques the performer employs in delivering his message. Again, since performance poetry also uses the

medium of language, it is possible to study style focusing on linguistics and poetic elements, as we do with studies on written poetry.

In the definition of style, some scholars have emphasized the skills of the performer; others have stressed the presence of crucial features that constitute a genre. Leech (2014) says style is the way in which something is spoken, written, or performed. He adds that it includes the various tools the writer uses to create meaning. Nnamani (2020) concurs with Leech, highlighting the fact that style is the sum of methods a writer uses to use language. One technique Leech talks about is the writer's use of deviations to create meaning. Deviation is a departure from everyday writing norms to foreground a message. The writer uses words in ways different from the ordinary for a purpose. Thus, in identifying a writer's style, there is a need to identify deviant forms for meaning.

This study views style as the techniques the performer has employed in delivering the performance, as well as the poetic and linguistic patterns he has used in the poems. Style in performance poetry refers to the total examination of the techniques the performer uses in delivering his messages. Literary stylistics refers to the manner in which meaning is created with devices. Linguistic style centres on the manner in which the writer uses linguistic devices such as phonological, lexical, and other grammatical categories to create meaning. Thus, style is broad and consists of numerous features.

Bauman (1975) identifies the common elements of style in community-based performance as follows:

- 1) There are often specific codes, such as esoteric or antiquated language, used to measure and diagnose performance.
- 2) There are formulaic formulas at various stages of the performance. Some examples include customary openings and closings, as well as explicit claims about performance.

- 3) There is figurative use of language, including metonymy and metaphor.
- 4) There are formal stylistic elements such as rhyme, vowel harmony, and other parallelism-based techniques.
- 5) There is a unique pace, stress, and pitch patterns
- 6) Unique vocalization and voice quality paralinguistic patterns are used for audibility and other effects.
- 7) There is the use and regard for custom.

Many of these features run through studies of communicative acts in performances. Okpewho (1992) identifies repetition, piling of adjectives, association, tonality, digression, and allusion as common elements of oral performance in African societies. Some of these elements are also identified by Yao (2020). In the next few paragraphs, I list and explain these elements of style in oral performances.

### **Repetition**

Repetition involves bringing back a lexeme, a clause, or a sentence that has already been mentioned. Repetition plays diverse but relevant functions. Not only does it foreground those structures for emphasis. It is also a tool the performer uses to attract the interest of the audience. In addition, because performance usually takes a long time on stage, through repetition, the performer can let the audience join the performance. According to Yao (2020, p. 131), “One important use of the repetition in traditional oral poetry is to cause a pause in the performance so that the performer could carefully think about what to say next, especially when he seems to have forgotten what to say.” Thus, it is possible to use repetition as a thought reorganizing tool.

### **Parallelism**

Parallelism is when the performer repeats structures close to each other, usually separated by major or long pauses. Okpewho (1992, p. 78) says parallelism, “is a device whereby the oral artist brings together in balanced relationship ideas and images that may seem independent of one another.”

Parallelisms can be in the form of lexemes, phrases, or clauses.

### **Poetic Sound Devices**

Sound devices are important in performance poetry. Popular poetic sound devices are alliteration, assonance, rhyme, and onomatopoeia. Alliteration is the repetition of the same consonant sound, while assonance is the repetition of the same vowel sound, either short or long. Rhyme is the sameness of sound at the end of lines, which allows for pleasant musicality. Another important device is rhythm, a patterned beat that creates musicality, intending to contribute to the mood of the presentation or performance. Onomatopoeia is when words whose sound suggests their meaning are used. The audience decodes the meaning because the onomatopoeic word is often drawn from the environment with which the audience is very familiar.

### **Digression**

Digression refers to a pause in the middle of a performance to address members of the audience. The performer uses digression if he thinks engaging the audience is crucial for any stage of the performance. Yao (2020) says that it allows the performer time to reorganize without creating a hiatus or boredom. Digression is also commonly used in stand-up comedy.

### **Refrain**

A refrain is a part of a song or performance that other singers join in singing. Sometimes, it is a repeated string of words constituting a stanza. It could also be a part of the poem that allows for audience participation. For example, the Igbos have special antiphonal phrases that invite the

audience to join in during the dirge performances. The lead singer starts the dirge, and then the chorus joins.

### **Formulaic Expressions**

These are expressions commonly used in oral performances to introduce or end the performance. Formulaic statements play various functions in the delivery. First, they could be a kind of invitation to respond or attention-seeking calls. In most cases, formulaic expressions alert the audience to get ready for the performance. For example, some cultures have formulaic expressions that narrators use to introduce the narration.

Besides the features above, oral literature and performance poetry also use paralinguistic elements to drum home meaning. Paralinguistic features include all non-verbal communicative acts the performer uses in carrying the message to the audience. Generally, paralinguistic features are classified into three main categories. The first is the use of parts of the body to communicate such as the use of facial expressions, body movement and gestures and gesticulation. The second group of paralinguistic features is the performer's use of tone, intonation and pitch variations. The third category includes the use of ambience and other tools outside the performer to communicate. Examples of such elements are setting, props and costume. In the next paragraphs, I discuss some examples of paralinguistic features in performance.

### **Ideophones**

Ideophones are stylistic devices that rely on the effects of sound to create meaning. In the use of ideophones the audience could deduce the message or gather a sense about the object or event under reference. However, we should not only concentrate on words, but sometimes it can be musical instruments. Examples include the gong-gong of the drums or tichanchan-tichanchan sound of the nkwatankwa.

## **Musical Instruments**

Traditional performances often involve the use of musical instruments. Indeed, some performances are made up of only playing a particular instrument. In such instances, the drum or instrument communicates based on how it is played. There are some occasions that performing with only a drum or instrument take place. Again, a particular drum or instrument may be the only one that fulfils a particular need in a performance. For instance, Akpabot (1981), states that *ogene* and *ogogo* are used in ritual ceremonies and also in orchestral ensembles to provide rhythmic and poetic beats. Also, the Kasenas in the Upper East Region of Ghana, use the *gong- gonga* to provide background music during praise songs and also during war dance. However, the tempo and manner of play in the two occasions differ significantly.

## **Rhythm**

In performance, there is often a patterned beat. This can be achieved in different ways: drumming, playing of instrument, ringing of bells and so on. This is often accompanied by movement of hands, body or dance. The manner these synchronize usually determine the success of the performance. The selection of rhythm depends on the mood of the performance.

## **Gestures and Gesticulation**

Movement of parts of the body constitute a vital part of communication in performance. This includes movement of hands and fingers, facial expressions and body movement. As mentioned earlier these are often used in solo or with musical instruments or beat to create total communication. For example, in Adowa dance among the Akan, the wounding or movement of hands has meaning. One can also read messages or mood quite easily from the face. A teary face or frowning suggest sorrow; a beaming face depicts happiness and so on. Thus, facial expression confirms the content of the performance.

## **Drama**

Drama is key to performances. In traditional literature, the performer tries to act the content of the performances. This ranges from movement of body, limbs, legs and even facial expressions. It could also demand the use of some costume. Again, because performance poetry is communal in nature, it is possible for the performer to have other characters on stage to help him demonstrate the contents of the performances or add another angle of meaning to the performances.

Performance poetry uses many or some of the paralinguistic features mentioned above. The review of these features is relevant to this study, as one objective is to understand the performance styles Gombilla uses. Paralinguistic features fall under style in performance poetry, even though the focus of this study is not on paralinguistic features.

### **2.11. Performance Poetry as Oral Literature**

Performance poetry falls under the oral literature. Oral literature is also called oral tradition, folklore, folk literature, and orature. Examples of oral literature are folk songs, occupational songs, incantations, praise songs, and dirges. The names confirm the fact that oral literature draws its origin from traditional and is often community based. Okpewho (1992) opines that oral literature is one delivered by word of mouth, which uses control of pitch, use of intonation, stress, and pauses. He adds that the performer possesses a skill set that enables him to deliver the message, one of which Okpewho identifies as a sharp voice.

Mbunda (2006) also mentions oral delivery in his definition, highlighting its appeal to traditional and non-literate societies. He contends oral literature is “the verbal art of essentially non-literate societies composed extemporaneously before a traditional audience and transmitted from one generation to another by word of mouth.” (p. 125). Here, he emphasizes the fact that oral literature is informal and doesn’t demand formal planning before delivery. Mbunda adds that oral literature

is artistic and imaginative work, sung or spoken, which may reveal facts or be just for entertainment purposes. The issue of creativity and imagination means oral literature is as complex as written literature. Thus, though oral literature is less formal; it doesn't mean anyone can start to perform.

Oral literature also involves the dexterous use of language. Williams (1990) coined the term 'ingenious creativity' to explain this feature in oral literature. Fowler (1988, p. 3) argues that "anything that can pass as literature uses language and without language, no literature exists." This means a burden is placed on the audience to possess some appreciation skills, not only in terms of language but also cultural awareness, to enable them to understand the performance well. This shows that oral literature is also complex.

Oral literature is often classified under two categories: ritualistic and non-ritualistic. As the name suggests, ritual literature includes recitations and performances done for ritual purposes. It includes performances by priests, healers, and chiefs. Again, this kind of performance uses cryptic communication. Hence, the audience may not necessarily understand the message. Some critics tag such performances as sacred codes and so insist that such performances don't qualify as literature. Non-ritualist performances are done for non-ritual purposes, and so in non-ritualistic oral literature, there is also the use of simple and understandable code, devoid of secrecy. But here the performance may still use figurative language and cultural lexemes. This means the audience needs to have interpretation competence to enable them to decode the message well. Examples of non-ritualist performances include praise songs and folktales.

Some scholars have highlighted the importance of oral literature in their definitions. Finnegan (1978) says oral literature embodies the culture of a people. He also emphasizes the all-inclusive nature of oral literature. Carter and McCrae (2001) elevate oral literature from the historical

viewpoint. They contend that oral literature preceded written literature in many cultures. The writers use examples from Greek epics, the Epic of Gilgamesh, and the Bible to illustrate how oral traditions superseded written literature.

## **2.12. Functions of Oral Performances**

Performance poetry has its roots in traditional literature, and so it is a kind of revisit to oral performances, which is central to African indigenous communities (Yao, 2020). Oral poetry is a subset of oral literature in general, which includes dirges, folktales, songs, praise songs, war songs, and so on. Traditional literature or oral literature in Africa is intertwined with various aspects of the lives of the people, hence underscoring its importance (Finnegan, 1970). Sheub (2002) sees oral performance as an aesthetic that is admired for its aesthetic qualities. He noted that with myths, artists have to produce stories of the past which though may be untrue are to appear realistic and culturally relevant. This demands creativity on the part of the performer. Again, with folktales and praise songs, the performer does not just present stories but are clothed in aesthetics by the performer serving the active audience. The performer uses devices to hook the audience on. Again, because the audience comes from that community, they have a measure of what a successful delivery looks like, and so they look out for elements of creative beauty. In the case of praise poems, the audience expects deeper and fresher eulogies mixed with history and exaggerations. The fact that performance is aesthetic also suggests that not everyone can do it. In some African societies, it is believed that some performers are gifted their talent by an ancestor or spirits.

Performance poetry, like other oral literature, is also a tool for teaching and socialization (Owomoyela, 1988). Owomoyela discusses the use of proverbs to trigger learning among the youth. In addition, folktales and legends, for example, have a lot of lessons to teach people, especially the younger generation. They teach qualities of bravery, sacrifice, kindness, humility

and other virtues. In folktales, the teaching is also highly didactic, and so sometimes tales are used to bring up the youth in a way that the community expects them to behave. Performance poetry may also be used to teach from various kinds of perspectives. Epic and myths are very vital in helping the young ones learn about their environment physically, socially, and spiritually.

Ouattara (2018) stresses the contribution of oral literature in preserving the history of the people. If people are to keep their culture, they need to know their history to enable them to pass it on to the next generations. He notes that the griot, for example, not only sings praises but is a repository of the traditions and history of the people. In West Africa, especially in Mali and Senegal, the griot contributes to keeping the history of the Mandinka and Wolof tribes. In addition, war songs among the Kasena and Balsa ethnic groups in northern Ghana also contain the vital history of the heroic deeds of the ancestors.

Performance poetry and oral literature have often served as social commentary. In the days of wars, it was very difficult or dangerous to speak directly on contentious issues to authority. On this ground, the performer, through the poetic license he holds, is able to indirectly weave in issues of a contentious nature in his performances to provoke thinking. In praise songs, the performer may use innuendoes, for example, to talk about what the king or chief is doing, which is not very good. The license of the performer is borne partly from the belief that he is not an ordinary man, but one chosen by the gods or spirits.

Performance poetry is also a vital window for spiritual bonding. In ritualistic performances, incantations and performances have direct spiritual undertones. Thus, when audiences participate, they become beneficiaries. This also explains why performance poetry is different from written literature; it has the ability to carry and transmit instantaneous emotions of varied nature, including the spiritual.

### **2.13. Empirical Studies on Postcolonialism**

In this section of the chapter, I reviewed studies conducted with postcolonial theory. I reviewed works by some writers from the continents which were colonized. Thus, the review of related studies includes writers from Africa, South America, Asia, and the Caribbean. I categorize the related studies under Orientalism, culture and identity, colonialism and dehumanization, home and diaspora, globalization and postcolonial feminism.

#### **Colonialism and Dehumanization**

Studies on this topic examine the manner in which colonialism brought physical and psychological torture to the colonized. Djorbua et al. (2021), in their reading of Diop's *Africa*, point to the exploitation of blacks and the yearning of the colonized to return to the pre-independent era. The researchers found that the poet dominantly used deviation, parallelism, and figurative language in the work. Nabutanyi (2019) also found exploitation of the colonized in his study, but he focused on the psychological effects. He discovered that David Rubadari used ordinary people to depict the manner in which the Negro or black is mentally displaced, thus making it easy for readers to relate better. This study largely concurs with Fanon's ideas in *Wretched of the Earth*. However, Nabutanyi only focused on the use of imagery since he didn't consider style in his analysis. Adetuyi and Adeniran (2018) also identified psychological torture, as well as injustice, in their study of *Night Fall in Soweto and Peasant*. These concentrated on the use of poetic devices.

#### **Orientalism**

In Orientalism writers study texts to see the manner plots and characterization demean the colonized while projecting the West as superior. Orientalist studies read the frames that show these binary relationships. Achebe in Watts (1983), for example, questioned Conrad's negative portrayal of Africa in *Heart of Darkness*. In this novel, Conrad depicted the Blacks along the Congo River

as animals. Similar orientalist issues are seen in Baraka's controversial poem. Mehrvand (2020) argues that America perceives itself as an angel, but Arabs and black Americans as terrorists and belligerent, respectively. In addition, America determines when war is morally right and when it is not. Merhvand highlights the silence of the media where they need to be loud, and their loudness in support of America's assault on other nations.

Similarly, Khan et al. (2022) also found othering, stereotyping, and racism in England when blacks are denied rooms when they look for rent. Khan et al. and Merhvand used textual analysis, but not stylistic approaches. Again, Spacey (2022) studied Maya Angelou's *Still I Rise* and found that the American government, the Judiciary, and the police are institutions that nurture and grow the prejudice against blacks. Using stylistic analysis, Spacey found that the poet dominantly used repetition, rhyme, and figurative language. Every stanza has at least one simile or metaphor. Thus, Spacey's findings concur with Febiyanto (2010) on grounds of discrimination and oppression.

### **Subalternism**

Subaltern studies either investigate the exploitation of the lower class or the silencing of their voices. Again, Subaltern studies may examine the manner in which literary works create voices for the vulnerable, the less powerful, and the discriminated. For example, Yousef (2016) found that Darwish is a voice who speaks on the difficulties Palestinians face as a result of Israel's occupation of their lands. He is also oppressed by Western culture and its understanding and presentation of the East. Yousef used textual analysis and so did not analyse the poems stylistically. Similarly, Kumari (2016) found that Maya and Bama created a voice for blacks, black women, and Indians, respectively. These poets are the voices through which social issues affecting the African American community and the Indian civil society are addressed.

### **Culture and Identity**

Culture relates to identity in many ways, and so earlier scholars demonstrate the manner in which the culture of the colonized was eroded and belittled, leading to the loss of identity. Kunene, the South African scholar, in 1988, used the term ‘deculturation’ to refer to this process. Some literary works have depicted the tension thereof. Perhaps no other poem adequately centres on cultural clashes than *Song of Lawino*. Usongo (2011) posits that the poem, written against the background of Acholi’s culture, history, and cultural practices, is an advocate of African cultural values. The poet’s message is that Africa does not immediately adopt European ways of doing things to be recognized. Karmaka (2015) also relishes Indian culture and traditions in his study. He finds that Ezekiel yearns for the past and rural living in a modernized period. In a more recent study, Glover-Meni and Akakpo (2020) dismiss capitalism in communal African societies using a text analysis approach. In addition, they found that Awoonor promotes Ghanaian culture in two ways: his yearning for the native culture, and his revulsion at the spread of Western culture.

### **Language**

Discourses on language became important following the colonizer’s imposition of their languages on the colonized, while relegating the indigenous languages to the background. Ashcroft and Tiffin (1989) recommend writing through approbation and adaptation. Some studies have demonstrated ways language can be utilized as a form of response. For example, Mehrvand (2016) found that Baraka breaks away from American Standard English in two ways. He drops the s’ at the end of verbs in the third person, and also uses hip-hop versus in the poems. Karmakar (2015) found that Ezekiel uses myths and oral forms to create a nationalist identity. Similarly, Acho (2020) finds a departure in the British English standard in his study of Walcott’s poems. Walcott uses multiple languages in his poems to achieve a Caribbean identity. Again, Ezekiel’s poems contain lexemes

from the languages of the African slaves and the English language. This resulted in the creation of a sort of national *language*.

### **Displacement and Home**

Displacement is geographical, cultural, psychological, and social alienation that may create in the person in diaspora a yearning for their home country. Naipaul (1987) demonstrates this using his own experiences and the indentured Indian workers who had travelled to Trinidad for greener pastures. Sarmat (2018) sees the concept of home in Ezekiel's *Background Casualty* as a place of acceptance. Ezekiel felt unacceptable when he was growing up in India. Since he traced his origin to Israel, without strong Indian roots, he was often molested, marginalized, and bullied in school and other public places. He therefore suffered from an identity crisis. Agbozo (2019) established an inescapable relationship between home, identity, and nationhood. Studying the poems of Awoonor, Anyidoho, and Adzei, he concludes that home is both a physical and spiritual realm that creates a sense of identity and nationhood.

### **Globalization**

Some literary works centre on the negatives of globalization. For example, Maswabi (2008) condemns the negative effects of the bedfellows of globalization like capitalism, democracy, and Christianity. He identifies them as problems the non-Western world is confronted with. He contends the West is using these to achieve homogeneity, which is not altogether a good thing. Similarly, Glover-Meni and Akakpo (ibid) raised the issue of capitalism. They found that Aidoo in *Anowa* had long denounced capitalism, a new phenomenon which was entering the country soon after independence. Studies on globalization also examine the effects of city life on communal living in rural communities. Karmakar (2015) revealed that congestion and love for money in India have made the youth corrupt. Thus, in his poems, he yearns for rural and communal living as was

the case before modernity. However, globalization is not always bad (Shija, 2007; Ojaide, 2008). For instance, Ojaide (2008) opines that it has widened the concept of home and also offers writers the opportunity to write on diverse transnational issues, not just local issues, thereby giving writers a larger audience than before.

The review discussed has revealed that many postcolonial issues can be identified in one study. Secondly, many researchers did textual analysis, with a few using stylistic approaches. Stylistic approaches in research help readers to understand the manner in which the messages are being conveyed. Therefore, it is important to always discuss the style the poet has used to deliver the message.



## **CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Research methodology includes all the processes used in carrying out a study from the inception to the conclusion. Methodology is the totality of procedures that researchers adopt to help them in describing, explaining, and predicting phenomena (Rajaesekar et al.,2006). In this chapter, I

discuss the research design, research approaches, sampling methods, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and the data analysis method.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study employed qualitative approaches. Qualitative studies allow for a deeper appreciation of a phenomenon, but not necessarily its spread in terms of numbers. Denzin and Lincoln (2005, p. 3) provide a comprehensive definition as follows:

Qualitative study is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. It means qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

This study sought to describe the aspects of postcolonialism, performance, and poetic styles in the poetry of Gombilla the Poet. As a result, qualitative research is more suitable.

### **3.3 Research Paradigm**

This study hinges on the transformative paradigm. Guba (1990, p. 17) defines paradigm as “a basic set of beliefs that guide action.” Creswel & Creswel (2018) opine that the transformative paradigm is applied when a researcher studies the marginalized, or people of unpopular cultures. However, Mertens (2010) opines that studies conducted using this paradigm often aim to demand change in the status quo. Mertens in Creswel & Creswel (2018, p. 47) numerate the following features of a transformative research worldview:

1. It studies the lives and experiences of diverse groups, especially the marginalized.

2. It focuses on the manner in which oppressive activities have constrained the lives of marginalized groups.
3. It examines the strategies marginalized and oppressed groups utilize to counter or speak back.
4. The researcher focuses on the differences emanating from gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class that result in asymmetric power relationships.
5. It links political and social action to these inequities.
6. This paradigm may also use a programme theory to understand how such a programme functions and why oppression, dominance, and power relations exist.

### **3.4 Research Approaches**

Qualitative research approaches were used to understand the aspects of postcolonialism and the poetic and performance styles in the poems of Gombilla the Poet. I employed textual and stylistic analysis. Textual analysis is used to describe and interpret the characteristics of recorded or visual images (Frey et al., 1999). Stylistic analysis explores language use in literary works. For the current study, I am interested in the meaning of messages rather than the spread of those in the poems.

### **3.5 Sampling and Sample Size**

The purposive sampling technique was used. Poems that centre more profoundly on postcolonialism were selected for the study. Eight out of the 21 poems I gathered in preparing for the study were used for this study. I sampled eight poems because it was enough to understand postcolonial issues in Gombilla studies since in qualitative studies it is not necessarily about the number of items used in the study. As Shaw and Holland (2014) argue, the choice is often based on which ones constitute typical cases or extreme cases. In addition, since these poems were typical

of postcolonial issues, the researcher believes that beyond the eight poems saturation of ideas would have set in the analysis.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

First, I did a comprehensive reading on performance poetry and postcolonialism. Then, I gathered all the poems of Gombilla the Poet by contacting his Facebook and YouTube pages. Dr. Kholinar Andani, my supervisor, gave me the contact of Gombilla the Poet, whom I approached. Gombilla the Poet, ready to assist in the study, sent me some of his poems and agreed to have an in-depth interview with me. After that, I downloaded and viewed all the poems repeatedly, and then sampled eight poems for the current study in consultation with my supervisor. The eight poems sampled delve into postcolonial issues. Poems that did not contain postcolonial issues were excluded. Thus, I used a purposive sampling approach in choosing the poems to use. Next, I transcribed the eight poems. In addition, I designed an interview guide, and had an in-depth interview with Gombilla the Poet. The questions guide focused on the background of the poet and on postcolonial issues in the sampled poems. The in-depth interview was later transcribed. This became a source of data for the study.

### **3.7 Data Collection Instrument**

The transcripts of the eight poems constitute one instrument. Another instrument is the repeated viewing of the performances for qualitative frames in the selected poems. The third instrument is the transcript of the interview I conducted with Gombilla the Poet. The use of open-ended questions allowed the poet the opportunity to express himself uninterruptedly. Except for instances where I needed clarification or confirmation on an issue, I didn't interrupt the poet during the interview proper.

### **3.8 Method of Data Analysis**

Cross-reading and Thematic analysis were done. I identified a postcolonial issue by examining how the issue is manifest in all or some of the sampled poems. Quotes, from the transcript of the eight poems, were used to support postcolonial issues identified in the poems. I also relied on information from the interview Gombilla the Poet granted me to buttress issues whenever necessary. Performance styles were also discussed in detail through cross-reading of the eight poems. I did the poetic analysis by close examination of the transcripts of the poems, enabling me to identify figurative language use and lexical and phonological patterns in the poems. For the thematic issues of postcolonialism, I patterned recurrent issues under one theme, which then constituted a point for analysis.

### **3.9 Validity and Reliability**

The conclusions drawn from the study are only applicable to the sampled poems since Gombilla the Poet has many other poems. The findings are dependent on a critical analysis of the selected poems. I have consciously kept out personal idiosyncrasies and ‘outside knowledge’ from the analysis. Consequently, the reliability of the study is assured.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

I organize this chapter into two headings: the thematic isolations of the various postcolonial issues which recur in Gombilla the Poet’s performance poetry, and then stylistic matters. Through detailed review and analysis of the sampled poems, as well as the review of the interview the

Gombilla the Poet granted me, I present the major themes in the poems. For the sake of convenience, the thematic issues have been categorized under subheadings. With regards to stylistics, the second preoccupation of the study, I have two main categories: performance and poetic. The performance style centres on the delivery techniques, whereas the poetic style delves into the interaction between language and meaning. I have further divided the poetic style into linguistic and figurative. Under linguistic style, I focus on only phonology and lexical issues in the poems because it will be difficult to cover every linguistic style in a study of this nature. The phonological and lexical style are selected. Lastly, under figurative style, I examine the manner in which Gombilla the Poet uses indirect language to communicate.

#### **4.2. Thematic Postcolonial Issues**

The first objective was to identify the postcolonial issues in the sampled poems of Gombilla the Poet. After considering the review of the literature and examining the eight poems, I organize the thematic isolations of postcolonial issues under the following headings: African religion and Spirituality, dehumanization and ‘Thingification’, Orientalism and Othering, subalternism, and Ghanaian culture and identity.

##### **4.2.1 Dehumanization and ‘Thingification’**

The poems demonstrated the various ways Africans were treated as objects and subjected to inhumane treatment. Largely, these terms include physical and emotional torture that the colonized meted out to Africans. The poems, *Ghana is Peaceful* and *History Lied to us*, predominantly speak on the two terms. The persona recalls in *History Lied to us* that, “the voices from echoes of the people got lost through the whip of the enslavers”. This statement, ambivalent in meaning, depicts not only the physical assaults but also the role colonialism played in shaping the colonized people into subalterns. *Loss of voice* shows a state of being silenced. The enslavers also scarred the bodies

of Africans as a form of identification. In *History Lied to Us*, the singer of the refrain recalls: “They used to put us in chains and sail us around the world.” The pains erupting from these two acts were so severe that some Africans died before they got to their destinations.

The Europeans also sexually abused women. In *History lied to us*, the persona noted, “Our beautiful women with dangling rhythm of their backside at slightest movement of their bodies got the white men attracted and so their pride was arrested, bundled, and shifted away into unknown lands of thirst.” This resulted in the birth of children who had traits of Africa and Europe, especially in terms of skin colour. Sadly, in some instances, these children were abandoned to suffer since some of the Europeans didn’t take responsibility for their actions. The rape instances depict the callous nature of the Europeans. It also further depicts their greed, which occasioned their coming to Africa.

#### **4.2.3 Hybridity and Mimicry**

In postcolonial studies, Hybridity and Mimicry are considered under cultural, linguistic, and social realizations. Homi Bhabha derived these terms from his analysis of the clash of colonized people and the colonizers, focusing on the effects on culture and identity. Hybridity describes the situation in which one takes a new culture, ends up in the middle of the old and new cultures. Mimicry is when a convert of the new culture exaggerates their love for the new culture, which sometimes creates humour.

Gombilla the Poet uses religion, which is an element of culture, to demonstrate hybridity and mimicry. In *Why I Hate Religion*, followers of Christianity and Islam are hybridized in that their lifestyles do not correspond with the teachings in the Holy books. For example, they oppress and despise those who don’t belong to their religions. The persona further contends that love extends to cover the future generation and the environment. Unfortunately, the lifestyles of Muslims and

Christians do not show love in this regard. The persona notes that they destroy the environment with recklessness. Then, there are church leaders who constantly steal the little there is in the society to share among people who add nothing to society. The persona says this further makes life hard for those with no food.

The poem denotes mimicry in the manner some Christians attend churches through the week, yet their lives do not reflect that. Again, some Muslims pray five times a day and appear holy during Ramadan to impress other people. The persona in *Why I Hate Religion* notes, “the veil depicts honour and dignity, but beyond the veil of some wearers are monsters with dark hearts.” Inherent in this quote, the persona points to the mimicry of followers who attempt to overly show themselves like the people from where these religions originated. The persona also says, “from dusk of the week to its dawn, church we attend. At the melodious calls to Azan, we respond five times daily, yet we are the most dishonest people.” These kinds of people are often keen to label people who belong to other faiths or who are not deeply involved in religious activities as less holy.

However, Gombilla the Poet’s depiction of followers of the two Abrahamic religions as hybridized is not a condemnation of the religions. The persona in *Why I Hate Religion* acknowledges the importance of the Abrahamic religions when he says, “if we allowed the values of religion to sink into the very fabric of our core, the world would be a better place.” The problem, however, is that in hybridity, the new converts hardly get to the level of the originators of that culture.

#### **4.2.4 Orientalism and Othering**

Orientalism refers to the mentality that one sect, ethnicity or group is superior to another. Since Orientalists often hold their race or sect in higher esteem than others, they usually create the concept of the ‘others.’ ‘Othering’ refers to the totality of negative betrayal and portrayal of other

people by the Orientalists. In *One world; One love*, the persona dismisses Orientalism in forms of racism, and religion, when he said, “let it not be said that for the colour of my skin, I may not fit into the equation. ” He opines such a stance is senseless. Similarly, the persona admonishes that no one should be denied marriage based on race, tribe or social status. He noted, “Let it not be said that for my country of origin, tribe and social status, I will not enjoy the beauty of holy matrimony.” There is, therefore, a call to end all forms of discrimination.

Racism, which is a form of orientalism, could also be in subtle forms. Gombilla the Poet makes this observation in the interview he granted me. When I asked about his experiences on racism in the interview I conducted with him, he noted, “the white man will not just meet you and tell you I don’t like you because you are black, but the manner in which they may act towards you will show.” He adds that even if discrimination is indirect or subtle, there is still a need to stop racism and other forms of Orientalism because not everyone can stand even the most subtle. Gombilla the Poet also noticed and pointed out a new form of orientalism gaining ground which is intra-regional discrimination. This is a form of discrimination where people face discrimination, though from the same region or country. In the interview, Gombilla the Poet observed that, “Even in our country, for example, someone may deny you a job because you belong to this or that tribe. He adds that in some instances, a person could be denied being called to take a job because the person belongs to a particular religion.” In the instance cited above, the employer ends up hiring less competent workers since the employer considers religion or ethnicity more important than competence. Gombilla the Poet adds that most of the intra-regional orientalism could also be subtle in nature. The persona argues for education as the best way of addressing Orientalism. Since Orientalism thrives because orientalists are overtly attached to their own kind, when they learn

about others, the Orientalists expand their knowledge and understanding of other people and this could reduce the way they misconstrue other people.

Another form of orientalism that Gombilla the Poet rejects is the Western world's imposition of religions on others. It would be recalled that at the dawn of Europe's encounter with Africa through colonialism, the West saw African Traditional religion as idol worship and also as a form of superstition, an assumption which has lingered on to date. The persona in *Why I Hate Religion* calls for the respect of all religions when he said, "Why fight me because I don't agree with your definition of God?" The persona strongly opines that the concept of God is innate and individually construed, and so one should not be forced to accept who God is. He noted in same poem that, "One man cannot define God. He is bigger than we can fathom." Europe's understanding of God in Christianity is that God consists of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit but other faiths or religions do not construe God in this way. The persona rejects the universal conceptualization of God when he said, "If you think I must believe your idea about God, and not have an opinion, you must be wrong." Even though the persona has not explicitly called for Africans to return to the African traditional religion, his presentation of natives in a hybridized identity in their conduct as Christians and Muslims lends support to this call.

#### **4.2 5 Subalternism**

Subalternism manifests itself in Marxist and capitalist establishments where the upper class exploits the lower class for their selfish gains. Gombilla the Poet has touched on some nuances of subalternism. First, in *Wicked World*, the villagers are exploited by the political class in Ghana. The politicians mostly go to the village folks for votes, but abandon them after the election. In *Wicked World*, the persona noted, "Pakora, a village I saw, was an epitome of sorrow, yet the vote every year." Thus, the village folks are just milking cows.

Secondly, in *Ghana is Peaceful* Gombilla the Poet re-echoes the fact that the Europeans or colonizers looted gold from Ghana to build luxurious living back home. Capitalism has also contributed to the plight of the subalterns. As cities are expanding, a lot more companies are relying on the sweat of the underprivileged to make huge profits. Unfortunately, in most cases, people experiencing poverty do not benefit from the profits of these companies. Gombilla the Poet, responding to a question I posed about the effects of globalization on the African community, says that globalization is a double-edged sword, not only in Africa but also abroad. He contends that globalization, even in the USA, has not bridged poverty gaps. Consequently, he opines that Africa embraces the values of communal living where everyone shares with others, even though when the person has little.

The poems also present the African continent as a subaltern. Through continuous presentations and moulding of the continent and its people as inferior, the Western world has succeeded in making the continent to lose its place in the global space. We see this in the separate lines from *History Lied to Us*, and *Ghana is Peaceful*: “The voices of our people got lost among the tumultuous voices,” “The old pages of history faded our stories into oceans,” “our achievements were characterized as worthless”, and “that we never at slide in history contributed to the human race

Today, Africa’s voice on global issues is often not heard or nor considered. For example, not only does Africa not have a permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council, but it has not been given voting powers in several activities of the Council. Subalternism is also seen in the relationship between the church leaders and the members; the latter are exploited. The persona awaits the day the eyes of the gullible members will open, when he said. “If men were clairvoyant, some so-called religious leaders masking behind religion to steal the conscience and hearts of

people while sucking their pockets dry would have been treated with disdain.” Again, in times of decision-making, the church leaders do not often consider the concerns of the subaltern. The persona uses the instance of building more worship centres. As these worship centres are built, the poor, “still sleep in streets soaked in the rains and excruciating pain.” Perhaps, if they had been involved in deciding what to use the money for, they would have asked that rooms be built for them.

#### **4.2.6 Ghanaian Culture and Identity**

Ghanaian culture and identity are promoted in the poems, especially in *Ghana is Peaceful*, and *Waakye Eaters*. First, the persona sees the diversity of people as a rallying point of oneness. He considers the differences of political ideology as a point of togetherness when he said Ghana is “wrapped with kente and smock carried at the back of an elephant called NPP shielded from the rain by an umbrella called NDC.” He continued to wit that “PPP wake her (Ghana) up to the pot of chicken called CPP, chewing with coconut called PNC.” In depicting the parties as individuals playing varied roles, the persona is calling for the celebration of diversity as oneness. Another way the poems project Ghanaian culture is the elevation of the local clothes. The persona in *Ghana is Peaceful* in describing the ecstasy of Ghanaians at independence, says, “united people submerged in Kente and smock devoid of tribalism.” Today, Ghanaians still rally together for occasions of national importance in kente and smock. National identity is also promoted through the references to the national anthem and the flag. The persona in *Ghana is Peaceful*, recalls as follows: “And there came Miss Theodosia Okoe with her flag covered in red, gold, green with the black star rising to the sky to flatter serenely from lamp post to the glory of Philip Gbeho’s ‘God bless our homeland Ghana.’ ”

As shown in the above quote, not only does the persona glorify the national symbols, but also the historical figures behind some of these symbols and songs. These include Ephraim Amu, a great composer of Ghanaian patriotic songs; Theodosia Okoe, designer of the Ghana flag; and Tetteh Quarshie, the first person to bring cocoa to Ghana. Thus, since a people's identity is linked with their history, Ghanaians should always remember and celebrate these personalities.

Ghanaian culture is also promoted in our dance as Ghanaians. The persona captures Ghanaians' love for dancing in *History Lied to us* when he said, "multitudes danced, sang and wined away their worries into sleep." He also mentioned an important drum among the Akan when he said, "Dr Ephraim Amu brought out his Ntentebem to blow songs full of melodies to greet the arrival of a new nation, Ghana." Drumming and dancing takes place in almost every community event in Ghana and different ethnicities have the types of dances they perform, and the drums that are used. It should be pointed out that the kind of instrument, together with the dance, depends on the occasion.

Ghanaian culture is also eulogized through food. In *Waakye Eaters*, waakye is depicted as a tool of social cohesion. According to the persona, "waakye isn't just food but a movement; it is togetherness." It also brings joy and peace to the people. In many ways, waakye stands for all Ghanaian dishes. The persona rhetorically asked, "What is tea with bread when waakye aroma sips through your window?" Here, tea and bread stand for Western food, while waakye stands for local dishes. In some instances, in Africa, people have emotive attachment to some kinds of food. Sometimes, it could be spiritual. The concept of people having a bonding, perhaps spiritual, with some native food is evident in dishes used for cultural and ritual rites. In such occasions, the food or dish used in the cultural rites becomes part of the communication process to the gods and or ancestors. Thus, such food or dish attains some spiritual significance. The persona has likened the

importance of such food to waakye food when he said, '*Waakye is divine*'. He believes Waakye has come above, from God, meaning it is not just taken to fill the stomach.

Lastly, there is the elevation of a Ghanaian dish as food tourism. In the interview, Gombilla the Poet granted me, he observed that waakye has the potential of becoming a food tourism. He explains that there is a need to market and package it well for foreigners to know about it and develop the desire to eat it, especially when they come to Ghana. He also made a call for the authorities to look at how food could be used as a form of tourism.

#### **4.2.6 African Culture and Cultural Values**

The poems have eulogized some African culture, beliefs, and values. First, the gods play a central role in African society, which Gombilla the Poet demonstrates. Believers of African traditional religion worship the Supreme Being through the gods. They often do this through making libation. In many African societies, the gods are believed to perform varied functions in the lives of the people. The persona evokes the powers of the gods of peace in *Why I Hate Religion* when he says, "when the gods of peace descend, tell them unity in diversity shrouded with tranquillity is all we love to hold as a nation." The suggestion is that the gods contribute to sustainable peace. As a result, the clan, the family and the community have their gods and or deities. For example, the Yoruba have a complex god system, and each God plays a particular function. There is a god for thunder and iron; a god of war; and a god of fertility, and so on. Communicating with God through the gods is often done by the chief priest or clan head, as may be appropriate.

Africans also believe that though the ancestors are dead, they continue to live with the people, and so there is continuous interaction with them. Thus, people consult them to ask for protection and guidance as and when there is a need. In *Waakye Eaters*, the persona demonstrates the closeness and powers of the ancestors when he says that they control the pleasure we obtain from eating

food. The persona noted, “else the ancestor spirits governing the pleasure ... wouldn’t come to you ooh”. Because of the importance of ancestors in the community and the powers they have, clan heads, family heads and even priests often make libation through the gods to the ancestors to seek their intervention or blessings.

African cultural values have also been elevated in the poems, especially in *I Love Sakina* and *Wicked World*. Using Senghor’s component of the Negritude, Gombilla the Poet celebrates African’s beauty and cultural values. The continent is also blessed with riches, including many natural resources. In *I love Sakina*, “Her declared asserts that” stands for the natural resources and mineral worth of the continent. Africa’s wealth has long been traced to the abundance of gold, oil, and timber, among others. But the wealth of the continent extends to knowledge, its institutions, and its contribution to world history. Unfortunately, the rich history and contributions of the continent to expertise have been downplayed.

One cultural value discussed in *Wicked World* is communal living and sharing. In the African society, people see each other as brothers and sisters and so live together and share things. The persona laments the neglect of people with low incomes by the rich. He is worried the rich are not worries about the situation of their poor neighbours and their children. Another cultural value raised is respect for elders. This is evident in *We Came from the Future*. Here, the persona calls on the disgruntled and ignorant people to get closer to the elders and learn about life. In Africa, elders are seen as custodians of knowledge.

The persona, however, reveals that the onset of capitalism has eroded these African values. As seen in *Wicked World*, capitalism which now fully in place in the African society, has undermined the communal spirit of togetherness and sharing. The performer uses the poor in Pakora as an example. Some people have a lot of food but do not care to share with the less privileged. In the

interview I conducted with Gombilla the Poet, he noted that though globalization in the form of cross-cultural movement of institutions has enabled many more people and countries to become wealthy, it has also not solved the gaps in poverty and hunger.

### 4.3. Performance Styles

Performance styles are the techniques the poet employed in his performances. This part of the findings looks at the performance styles.

#### 4.3.1 Repetition

There is repetition when a word, phrase or clause recurs a number of times for some effects. For example, in *Wicked World*, the line, ‘show them love’ is repeated two times in the poem, while in the refrain, it is repeated several times. Again, in *History lied to us*, ‘I am an Africa’ is repeatedly many times as well as the word, ‘Negro.’ Another observation is that Gombilla the poet repeats pronouns a lot in the performances. This is specially the case with subject and possessive pronouns. For instance, in *Why I Hate Religion*, *you* is repeated as follows: “you constantly betray, ” “you constantly steal, ” “you destroy the environment, ” and “you will never enter paradise. ” In the quotes above the word, *constantly* is also repeated several times to depict the performer’s discontent. Another example of repetition of the pronoun ‘I’ in the same poem is seen in the following separate extracts: “I believe God is kind, ” “I believe in miracles not perceptions, ” and “I am condemned for keeping condoms. ” There is also repetition of the same pronoun in, “I will not take the mirrors definition of my life.” So also is, “I am not judged by the quality of my mind, but by the nature of my religion,” and “If religion will make me murder, I cease to be religious.” Examples of possessive pronouns repeated include the following in *Ghana is Peaceful*: ‘Our screams,’ ‘our beautiful women,’ ‘our system,’ ‘our grim perceptions,’ ‘our passion,’ and ‘our

destiny.’ A full sentence extract is, “our system may have problems, but our passion and determination, will clear the path to our destiny.”

Repetitions are a foregrounding method for emphasis, but in the use of pronouns the persona uses them to establish the ‘them- and- us’ dichotomy or to build difference especially between the powerful and the less powerful. I shall explain this further under lexical styles in the poems. Another use of repetition is to foreground to show displeasure. Here, the repetition demonstrates a dislike through the repetition of the word. An example is the *constantly* in *Why I Hate Religion*.

#### 4.3.2 Parallelism

Parallelism can also be found in the way lexemes, phrases or clauses are sequenced. Clausal examples include the following separate quotes drawn from *We came from the Future*: “The nature of hope flints help; The nature of help brings happiness, ” and “Speak to the children, and they will teach you what know about. Speak to the old people, and they will make life unstressful to you. ” We can also identify parallelism in *Why I Hate Religion* in the following: “Love is complementary to wisdom, Buddhism. Love is like a soul within us, Hinduism. Love you neighbour as yourself, Jesus Christ, ” and “You will never enter paradise until you have faith. Your faith will never be complete until you love one another. ” A Parallel clausal structure in *Wicked Word* is in, “We talk and laugh, we smile and cry, we eat and dance, yet we will die and go.” It should be stated that parallel structures abound in all the poems since it is through these that the persona achieves rhythm in the poems.

Parallel structures can also be lexical, that is noun, adjective, or verb. For example, in the use of parallel structure that follows from *Wicked World*, the persona emphasized the nouns to highlight a difference. “You woke up this morning to tea, bread and egg.” In this quote, *tea, bread and egg* are parallel “Similarly, ‘white men and women,’ ‘bag and baggage,’ and ‘kith and kin’ are parallel

pairs in the quote in *Ghana is Peaceful* as follows: “We bid the white men and women farewell as they took, bag and baggage, kin and kith, from our land of gold to their land of splendour.” In the same line, we can also deduce a parallel structure in, ‘from land of gold’ and ‘to their land of splendour.’ This is a parallelism on prepositional phrase. In all the lines from the extracts above, the performer’s use of parallelism has helped him to achieve the required rhythm or rhyme.

There are also verb parallelisms in the poems. An example in *History Lied to us* is when the persona said, “their pride was arrested, bundled and shifted away into unknown lands of thirst. ”

Another one in *Ghana is Peaceful* is “multitude sang, danced and wined away their worries into sleep. ” Lastly, lexical parallel structures with using adjectives also exist in the poems. For

example, *red, gold and green* are parallel in the *Ghana is Peaceful* when the extract that follows: “then Theodora Okoe came with her flag covered in red, gold, and green.” Green, gold and green are adjectives. It is also possible to have participial parallel structures. For example, in *Ghana is Peaceful*, the persona noted, “Ephraim Amu, brought out his Ntntenbem to blow songs full of melodies to greet the arrival of a new nation. ” The parallel structures, ‘to blow songs full of melodies,’ and ‘to greet the arrival of a new nation’ are participial clauses.

#### **4.3.3 Narrator style**

Gombilla the Poet has deployed traditional African story telling techniques in the poems, including the narrator approach and the griot style. The narrator who often assumes total knowledge of the story, is aware the audience also have synopsis of the story, and so he makes the narrative relevant, exciting and immediate through picturesque and dramatic presentation. He does this through story telling competences and techniques. The narrator approach is used in *Ghana is Peaceful* and *History Lied to us*. In the poems, the persona uses fresh imagery, hyperbole, and flashbacks to recount the manner colonization came to Africa and its nature. This makes listening to the

performances interesting. In *We Came from the Future*, the persona assumes the role of the griot. He is ‘all knowing’, and seer of the future, as well as the custodian of the history of the people. The persona says he is a clairvoyant and sees beyond time and space. These attributes are characteristic of the griot. The griot, it is believed is given the talent of narration and praise singing at birth by the benevolent spirits or ancestors. This lends credibility to performances which inculcate tradition narrator techniques. Thus, Gombilla’s use of the narrator style not just makes the narration interesting but also lends some form of credibility to his performances.

#### 4.3. 4 Description

One dominant style in the poems is the use of colourful and effective description. This is done through piling of adjectives and imagery. For example, in *History Lied to us*, the persona describes the African women as, “beautiful women with dangling rhythm of their backside.” Here, the adjectival phrase captures the curvaceous nature of black women. In *Wicked World*, the persona paints a picturesque picture of the poor mothers of the poor children when he said, “I saw the weak loose hanging breasts of their poor mothers.” The poor children’s attempts to suck the breast of the mother is also effectively captured in, “their searching mouths in their tiny lean faces, their voracious draw on the high wrinkled nipples, their speck of energy from an elevated body.” It should be pointed out that the sequencing of adjectives, and use of participial modifiers has enabled the persona to not only paint a graphic picture of the situation, but to elicit bathos and empathy from the audience. This stems from the fact that the audience is able to see in their mind’s eyes, the malnourished and deprived mothers and children. In the same poem, the children were said to be in, “tattered brown underpants, with diseased red heads and protruding stomachs.” In *Waakye Eaters*, the persona says people search for waakye with ‘hankering and hungering enthusiasm,’ while the feeling waakye gives is ‘legendary and inexplicable.’ These quotes illustrate the

tendency of Gombilla the Poet using participial, especially, -ing forms to describe effectively. However, the sequencing of adjectives is at times used for hyperbolic effect. For example, the day the persona met Sakina in *I love Sakina* is described as “faithful gold night of bliss. ” Here, the fortune of the persona coming across Sakina is exaggerated even as it also shows the depth of love the persona developed for Sakina.

The use of imagery as descriptive tool also abounds in the poems. An example is when the persona notes in *Ghana is Peaceful* that “Fabric of Ghanaians society intertwined to form loops of a united people submerged in kente and smock devoid of tribalism.” Here, the persona compares the unity at independence to the manner threads are knit together in a fabric.

#### **4.3.5 Refrain**

A refrain is a line or group often repeated by a chorus or the audience but constitute a part of the poem or song. The use of refrain as a performance technique is found in the poems. Two of the sampled poems have refrain in the form of stanzas. These poems are *History Lied to us* and *Wicked World*. I found out that the refrain reaffirms the thematic occupation of the poem in question. For example, the stanzas of the refrain in *History Lied us* re-echoes the suffering the colonized people’s fathers went through. It also contains a call on the Negro to accept his identity. The persona in *History lied to us* asked, “Who do you say you are? Ooh, yeah, yeah because I know who I am. I am a Negro. I am a Negro, ooh. I am an African. ” In addition, the refrain has called on Africans to beware of the activities of the colonizers today and in the future following lessons from the past. Similarly, the refrain in *Wicked World*, reaffirms the persona’s call on every one to return to communal living by showing love to the poor. The singer of the refrain asserts, “Show love to the fatherless. Show love to the motherless. Love to the helpless.” Thus, the refrain reaffirms the poem’s themes such as the effects of capitalism on communal living. In conclusion, the poet uses

refrain to add or affirm aspects of the theme of the poem in question. It is also used as a window for the audience to participate in the performance. It is often easy for the audience to join in to recite or sing when it is time for the refrain to be recited or sang.

#### 4.3.6 Allusion

Allusions are references made to events, books, or historical figures to enrich a point or help the audience understand the issue better by association. In the poems, Gombilla the Poet has alluded in all these fronts. In *Ghana is Peaceful*, the persona alluded to the 2012 Supreme court case, in which the New Patriotic Party challenged the results of the presidential election. The persona used the allusion in calling Ghanaians to live peacefully and to resolve problems through due processes of court. In *Why I Hate Religion*, the persona alluded to major religious leaders to stress the centrality of love. He said,

You will never enter paradise until you have faith and you will never complete your faith until you love one another,' said the Holy Prophet of Islam. Love is complementary to wisdom and necessary for enlightenment, Buddhism. Love is like a soul within us, Hinduism. Love your neighbour as yourself, Jesus Christ.

(Why I Hate Religion, 37-39)

By alluding to various definitions of love by various religious leaders, the persona is able to emphasize the centrality of love in religion better.

Gombilla the Poet has also used a number of literary allusions. In *We came from the future* the persona indirectly alludes to Shakespeare's popular quote in 'As you like it' as follows: "All the world's a stage. And all the men and women merely players: they have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts, his act being seven stages." (Act 3: scene 8,

139). There is also an allusion in *Wicked World* when the persona draws from Ama Darko's *Faceless* in describing the malnourished children as follows:

seeing this children in tattered brown underpants, with diseased red heads and protruding stomachs, carried on legs like two dry sticks, malnourish as they come  
I saw the weak loose hanging breasts of their poor mothers; their searching mouths in their tiny lean face, their voracious draw on the high wrinkled nipple, their speck of energy from an elevated body, that was clearly the anger of a little hungry child, their only crime was coming into this world, and all they had left is their anger at the world (*Wicked World*, 25-26)

Ama Darko's words helps to paint the picture of poverty better than if the persona had relied on only his own words. Alluding to Ghanaian and African historical figures also abounds in the poem. Some of the personalities alluded to are Nkrumah, Ephraim Amu, Tetteh Quarshie, and Ndewura Japka in *Ghana is Peaceful, and History Lied to us*. In *I love Sakina*, the persona alluded to Dangote, the richest man in Africa. The use of historical figures enables the audience connect easily with the narrative since they already know about these personalities.

Finally, the persona also alluded to two historical events, key to postcolonial studies; slavery and colonialism. The allusion is in form of the persona's re-echoe of the various forms of exploitation the colonized suffered during the dawn of these events. Moreover, the persona traces the sources of the identity crises the African has faced to these two events.

In conclusion whether event, historical or literary allusion, Gombilla the Poet, by making reference to the past, helps him explain the issues in contention better. He could not have been able to communicate these issues better without alluding to the events and people. Lastly, the reference to personalities help to fan the spirit of national and or regional identity.

#### 4.3.6 Juxtaposition

Juxtaposition is the technique of placing one idea side by side with another so that a similarity or difference between the two ideas is magnified for an effect. This technique is effectively used in *Why I Hate Religion, Wicked World, and History lied to us*. For example, the persona juxtaposed the current freedom Africans are enjoying to the torturous days of slavery and colonialism. Let us take few quotes to illustrate the manner juxtaposition works. First, in relation to the conditions during colonialism, the persona makes these statements: “I remember the past, they used to put us in chains and sail us around the world, ” and “the old pages of history faded our stories into oceans of deception and perceptive nature. ” Other lines in same poem are, “the voices of our people got lost among the tumult voices echoed from the whips of the slave masters” and “their pride was arrested, bundled, and shifted away into unknown lands of thirst.” All the above quotes demonstrate the discomfort colonialism brought to the natives. This is juxtaposed with the period of freedom in the following separate quotes: “Multitudes danced, sang and wined away their worries into sleep, ” and “fabric of Ghanaian society intertwined to form loops of a united people, submerged in kente and smock devoid of tribalism.”

There is also a juxtaposition of how the Europeans came to Africa and how they are trying to recapture the continent through globalization and neo-colonialism. They came using *schnapps* and other items to coax the natives. Schnapps symbolizes the tricks they used on the leaders represented by the chiefs. The persona noted, “our screams were collected into bottles of schnapps to bellyful our chiefs into psychological distortion. ” This is juxtaposed with the western world’s efforts to recapture the continent culturally. Here, the persona is warning Africa to be vigilant. In *Waakye Eaters*, the persona pitches an African dish with that of the European when he quizzes, “What is tea with bread when the aroma of waakye sips through your window?” Tea with bread not only

stands for European food but a style of life which denotes affluence. Again, in *Wicked World*, the persona again pitches the affluence of the rich with the nothingness of the poor to depict the gaps created by capitalism and individualism. He noted, “You woke up this morning to tea, bread, and eggs. Yet your brothers and sisters have nothing to eat.” This makes it easier for the audience to see the difference in lives of the two groups. Thus, in foregrounding the differences in the lives of these two groups, the audience understand the call on all to share and or embrace communal living as argued by the persona.

#### 4.3.7 Contradiction

In contradiction, statements are presented to show some incongruity or inconsistency. This then drives the audience to get the main message in the poem. Many examples exist in the poems under study. There is contradiction in *Wicked World*, when the persona says, “the sexy birds are crying, the romantic dogs are barking. The beautiful month is dying, yet men are hungry.” Here, the birds and nature are taken care of while men aren’t. This is an incongruity for if birds and dogs are being taken care of or are in their elements, it would appear natural that men are also taken care of or are made to be happy.

In *Why I Hate Religion*, the presentation of Christians and Muslims as hybridized is effective largely due to the use of contradiction. For example, the followers of these religions don’t show love to people, especially those not members of their religions, though the good books tell them to do so. Again, instead of church leaders to share with the poor, some rather steal from members, the persona is worried these monies don’t often get to be used in the proper manner. It is contradictory then that instead of using the money to help the poor the leaders rather share the money with those not worthy of it; they already have enough. Some religious leaders even exhort from the poor church members. Again, the hybridized followers condemn those who keep

condoms, but in the event that people contract HIV AIDs, the same religious people will stigmatize them. There is also a contradiction when some Muslims and Christians refuse to extend love to the environment when they claim to love God. The environment not only stands for future generation but it is what is closer to us than Heaven. It also essentially what we can see.

Gombilla the Poet uses contradiction to present a message by foregrounding the difference in the minds' eyes to enable them see a sharp difference which may shock the audience. This allows the audience to deduce message quickly through the shock difference.

#### **4.3.8 Humour**

Another performance technique used by Gombilla the Poet is humour. In the heat of discussing a postcolonial issue, the persona weaves in a humour. This makes the otherwise tensed audience to relax. For example, on Christians and Muslims banking their hopes on heaven, to the neglect of making life decent for colleague humans, the persona humorously asked, “What if we die and realized that the only heaven we could have had was created a world? Well, I have learnt.” This quote is from *Why I Hate Religion*.

Another humour, this time, in *Ghana is Peaceful* is when in urging politicians to solve their problems through democratic means, the persona alluded to a funny incident which was said to have occurred during the 2012 Presidential election trial at the Supreme Court. Asiedu Nketiah, the NDC general secretary, was said to have come into the court in a woman's jacket. The persona witted, “you and I were not there with Nketiah when he wore his wife's jacket. ” Again, on the back and forth questioning and answering between Justice Atuguba and Dr. Bawumiah, the persona witted, “I know Justice Atuguba will be there with pink sheets, so Bawumia, hold your peace. Hahaha.” Though the persona was reminding Ghanaians to use court of law to solve disputes, the use of humour enabled him present the process of a trial as less stressful. Through

humour, he diffused the tension in the trial itself. Thus, humour allows the persona trivialize differences in order to focus on togetherness. In the poems it is common to see humour through the use of exclamation and intonation. Examples abound in *Waakye Eaters* where the persona uses tone alongside the exclamation. Examples of humour in *Waakye Eaters* are as follows: “Waakye is divine ooh!” and “Oh lord the feeling is legendary and inexplicable!” There is also humour in these quotes from same poem: “the excitement reverberates through the ceiling of your heart,” and “all over laughter strikes and strikes with each scoop.”

Humour breaks the tension and gets the audience going. If we agree that the performer has to find ways of getting his message across to the audience, the performer must also device ways of driving away boredom. Humour does the trick. In addition, the poet uses humour to entertain even as he passes on the message through direct and indirect humours.

#### **4.3.9 Pun**

Another performance technique Gombilla the Poet uses is word play. This technique is so crucial that some scholars define performance poetry as that which uses word play. Puns abounds in all the poems under study. In *Wicked World*, the persona plays on with contended and content in, “The rich never get contended, let alone the poor whose lives have no content.” In *I love Sakina*, there is pun on ‘lecture’ in “the whole semester, I had no lecture to lecture me on love on her.” Again, there is pun in the use of Harbour and harbour in the quote, “the sadness I harbour in my heart is like the Tema Harbour.”

There are also many figurative puns in the poems. In such cases, words are used in a way that the original meanings give way to new meanings. In *History Lied to us*, we have pun on *soiled in*, “We may want to search into areas that soiled our white garment”. There is a pun on ‘sleep’ when the persona admonishes Johnson Aseidu and Sir John in *Ghana is Peaceful* as follows: “They

must sleep into the stillness of dawn and rise against violence.” Here, the persona is not talking about the sleep at night where there is no disturbance. Thus, the ‘sleep’ here has two meanings; sleeping as we do in the night, and to become calm or less violent. Again, there is play on the words ‘cook’ and ‘evaporate’ in “without diversity gathered into a national pot, to cook consolidation to evaporate unity into a national pride”. In the same poem, the persona plays on cushioning in “thereby cushioning many souls from the shackles of conflict.” Cushions provide comfort and protection and so the persona plays with the use here.

In *One world; One love*, there is pun on *weed* ‘in, “Let’s cut down the bitter weed so that that seed will succeed.” Weeds are unwanted plants which disrupt the growth of any plant and so disunity is equated to weeds. In *Waakye Eaters*, there is play on ‘waves’ in ‘it is the feeling that waves through your arteries and capillaries, ’ and *shovelling* in “while shovelling ravenously. ” Waves refers originally to movement of waves through an oven or the sea. Perhaps the poem whose strength lies most on pun is *We came from the future*. In the following separate quotes from the poem, there are puns: “play not for the black stars because you are stars,” “I still ran the race in your face, ” “I will mix words into delicious and tasty noodles,” “their minds will swell with wisdom,” and “speak to children and they will teach you what you know about. ” From the quotes, Gombilla the Poet plays with words based on their sound or pronunciation and then the meaning. This also enables him achieve rhyme in some cases. The figurative puns allow for reflective thinking by the audience to understand the message. For example, *swell* in "*their minds will swell with wisdom,* ” means grow or increase in wisdom, but the audience arrives at this meaning knowing that when something swells it become bigger in size even if that is often negative. Other puns based on similarity of sounds of the words are as follows: In *Ghana is Peaceful*, the persona puns on *Liberia, library and liberate* in “Liberia can liberate us with their library of mistakes.” In

*One world; One love*, the persona plays on cupcakes and mistakes in, “we will make cupcakes and bake better without mistakes. ” There is also pun *with milkshakes and handshake in* “then we will share milkshakes and part ways with great handshakes. ” Though these pairs have different meanings, their sounds are similar especially at the end.

Generally, puns are used by Gombilla the poet to invite the audience to reflect on the words used for a second meaning. Puns also allows for rhyme as they appeal to the audience senses of hearing. Thus, puns contribute to the poetic or musicality of performance. Gombilla the Poet also uses puns as a creative process to provide a form of entertainment.

#### **4.4 Poetic Style**

I have divided poetic style into linguistics, and figurative. I have limited the linguistic style to only phonological and lexical analysis. Since linguistics is broad is broad, it will be difficult to examine every aspect. So, this study focuses on only phonological and lexical issues.

##### **Phonological Style**

Phonological style is concerned with the use of phonetic sound patterns in a literary work. It studies the manner these patterns contribute to the creative process and then meaning. Therefore, in this section, I examine the ways sound patterns are used in Gombilla’s poems

##### **Rhythm**

Rhythm is sequencing of words or phrases in a manner to create beat. In the poems, Gombilla the Poet uses musical instruments alongside the words to create rhythm. In *Why I Hate Religion* the musical beat accompanying the words for rhythm is fast pace. In *Wicked World* soft music accompanied the pattern of words to create the rhythm. In *one world, one love*, the performer says the words while at the background we hear some strings of guitar beat. Rhythm is best detected in parallel structures as seen in these lines from *Wicked World*: “Such is the life we live in // such

is the mystery we can't understand //,” and “In all, // I sigh to the displeasure // of my inability // to offer ability // to the hopeless//.” We also have rhythm in, “We talk and laugh, // we smile and cry // we eat and dance // yet we will die and go //,” and “You woke up this morning // to tea, // bread, //and eggs//.” A last example from same poem is in, “when their hearts bleed // like the Zambesi River // tears glee in my eyes //.” There are brief pauses in each of the lines. We can also detect recognisable beats in *Ghana is Peaceful* in the lines that follow: “Her hopes wrapped with kente and smock // carried at the back of an elephant // called NPP// shielded from the rain by an umbrella // called NDC //.” The following lines also have patterned beats in same poem: “We bid the White men and women farewell // as they took bag and baggage // kith and Kin// //from our land of Gold // enroute to their world of splendour // built from our sweat //.” The use of musical instruments together with drama in some of the poems, especially in *History Lied to us*, *Why I Hate Religion* and *Ghana is Peaceful* are instances of total performances. As indicated by Anyidoho (1991), these come together to make the experience of performance poetry total.

### **Rhyme**

Gombilla the Poet use same sound patterns in words close to each other to create an effect. There are both internal rhyme, and end rhyme in the poems. Examples of rhyme in *Ghana Is Peaceful* are as follows: “onto our land to nurture our Agriculture,” and “our passion and determination.” In *Wicked World*, audacity rhymes with poverty in the extract, ‘whose audacity got arrested by poverty? Also ‘bleed’ rhymes with ‘glee’ in same poem as follows: “When their hearts bleed like the Zambesi River, tears glee in my eyes.” In *Why I Hate Religion*, ‘pontificating’ rhymes with ‘contemplating’ in “I am not pontificating but contemplating.” In *Ghana is Peaceful*, ‘unity’ rhymes with ‘tranquillity’ in “unity in diversity shrouded with tranquillity.” In *One World, One Love*, there is rhyme in, “I wish you have a sense to recompense for your over intense offense.”

Again, in the same poem, the words ending ‘-tion’ rhyme in the following extract: “labelling ourselves and hating to the core of dejection, rejection and discrimination and exclusion is not a solution but destruction.” In *Waakye Eaters*, the words, *arteries* and *capillaries* rhyme in “it waves through your arteries and capillaries. ”

Some words that rhyme in *We Came from the Future* are visibility and vitality in the following line: “Effectivity tells me I am tells me I am made of vitality and that is the power of my visibility.” In the same poem, *generation* and *liberation* also rhyme in “I will write for my generation’s mental liberation.” Gombilla the Poet uses rhyme to achieve some poetic beat. This contributes to the genre as performance poetry since performance poetry is based on word craft. It also pleases the ear and contributes to the overall music appeal of the poems.

Rhyme also helps the performer to create puns. This is a source of humour and also engages the audience to reflect on such words for a deeper meaning. Lastly, like a potter who uses clay in moulding, the effective use of rhyme contributes to the creative beauty and competence of the poet.

I have also observed the stringing of consonant sounds in words close to each other in the poem. This is called alliteration. The persona’s aim in foregrounding consonant sounds is to enable him depict a dislike or discontent for something. There is recurrence of /d/, /p/ and /k/ in the separate lines from the *Why I Hate Religion*: “You destroy the environment with weapons of mass destruction and deplete the Ozone layer, ” “What some people practice is sheer hypocrisy, ” and “It is fine to criticize the creative outcome of the creativity constructively. The consonant sounds /d/, /p/ and /k/ are also repeated in same poems in the following extracts: “I am not pontificating but contemplating on a complete compound of people possessed by stake insensitivity to other

people's view, ” and “I am condemned for keeping condoms, but wait till I contract the deadly H.I.V. In each of these lines, the persona shows his dislike for the action he mentioned.

There is also repetition of vowel sounds for effects in the poems. For example, in *Ghana is Peaceful*, there is the repetition of /a/ in the following: “with the black star rising to the sky to flatter serenely from lamp,” “multitudes danced, sang and wined away their worries” and “our passion and determination will clear the path to our destiny to salvation .” An example of assonance in *One world; One Love* is, “I wish you have a sense to recompense for your over intense offense. ” Here, /e/ is repeated. In some instances, alliteration and assonance are used concurrently. This is especially when the persona wants to achieve rhythm. In the extract from *One World; One Love* below, /s/, /d/ and /i:/ are repeated, “Let's cut down the bitter weed so that seed will succeed. ” In the same poem, /i/, /ai/ and /k/ are also repeated in, “it is fine to criticize the creative outcome of the creativity constructively.” In some instances, the persona also uses alliteration and assonance concurrently to reinforce his call for unity. In *One World; One love*, the persona enhances his call for oneness through the concurrent use of alliteration and assonance, /s/, /h/ and /a/ in the following extract: “this world will be the blanket that shrouds us from the cold hands of hatred.” The repetition of varied sounds together is a call for love and unity.

Gombilla the poet has also used exclamations or sounds that suggest the meaning he wishes to carry across. Some of these are not necessarily words. In *Ghana is Peaceful*, for example, in *comparing* the peace in Ghana to the night when everyone is asleep, the persona used the exclamation, hree in, “*Very* soon night will dawn to still at sunshine, snores hreee, will be gathered from homes.” In *Waakye Eaters*, the persona is onomatopoeic when he said, people search for waakye with ‘*hankering and hungering* enthusiasm.’ The words *hankering* and *hungering* depict the rush with which people search for waakye, and what hunger do to men.

## **Lexical Analysis**

Lexical style is the use of words by a writer. I categorize lexical style of Gombilla poems under word classes, cultural lexemes, and symbolism.

### **Word Classes**

#### **Nouns**

There is a mixed use of proper nouns, common nouns and abstract nouns in the poems. Names of persons such as Kwame Nkrumah, Ndewura Japka, Aligko Dangote, Prophet Mohammed, and Jesus are proper nouns. The audience is able to relate to each of this proper nouns. Common nouns which are readily found in the environment such as *bird, dog, river, gold, tea, bread, egg, politician, village, girl, north* are used. This makes it easy for the audience to associate with the contents of the poems. It must however be established that in some of the poems, Gombilla the Poet uses abstract nouns more than the other types of nouns. This is because the issues he talks about are predominantly philosophical and abstract. In *History Lied to us*, there are over twenty abstract nouns; some are *colonialism, screams, distortions, stupor, deception, civilization, tribalism, liberation, and determination*. *Wicked World*, the second shortest of the poems, has over ten abstract nouns. Some of these are *poverty, mystery, sorrow, inability, love and beauty, anger among others*. In this poem, every emotion is captured in abstract noun. *Why I Hate Religion* has over 25 abstract nouns including *opinion, conscience, hypocrisy, dignity, faith, passion, principalities* among others. The use of abstract nouns contributes to the sophistication of the poems of Gombilla Poet. This demands that audience have competence in the English language to be able to understand the issues discussed. However, the use of abstract nouns is appropriate given the philosophical nature of the topics.

#### **Verbs**

The persona predominantly uses passive forms to emphasize actions when uninterested in the doer. Here, the focus is on the action since the persona believes the audience already know the doer of the action. Examples of passive verb use in *History Lied to us* are as follows: “stories were told, ” “our achievements were characterized as worthless, ” and “so their pride was arrested, bundled, and shifted away into unknown lands.” In these examples, the persona is only interested in the action since he believes the audience know the perpetrators who are the colonizers.

The poet has also used transitive and or action verbs to enable him demonstrate the effects of an action on the object. In *Why I Hate Religion*, transitive verbs are used in the following separate lines from the poem: “you constantly steal the little there are in our society, ” “You destroy the environment with weapons of mass destruction, ” and “You will never enter paradise.” An example in *One World; One Love*, is “Let’s cut down the bitter weed.” In each of the above extracts, the persona focuses on the effects of the action on the object. This contrast with the poet’s use of stative verbs. The poet uses them to show inner feelings but not action. Examples of such verbs are *think, believe, is, and know*. Stative verbs also allow us insight into the mind of the persona.

There is also a dominant metaphorical verb usage in the poems. For example, In *History Lied to us*, the verbs *soiled, blows, and drags* are used metaphorically in the following: “search into areas that soiled our white garment, ” “the wind of new era blows against our infant dreams, ” and “drags us through the pain of toughness” *Bark, smell* and *slow* have also been used metaphorically in *Ghana is Peaceful* in the lines, “why bark in anguish ?” and, “allow not the smell of hard currency slow your consciences into sleep.” In each of these lines, we transport the original meaning of the verb to a new context which helps us understand the point made. I shall discuss further figurative language in the poems later in this thesis.

The use of the present continuous is also quite visible in the poems. In some instances, the persona drops the auxiliary verb. Generally, the persona uses the continuous or present continuous participle to make an action more immediate or present. It also allows the performer show regularity in doing something. In *We came from the Future* the persona uses the continuous forms to show persistence and continuity in “If I am winning, why doubt my winning spirit?” and “I keep growing my mind.” In *Waakye Eaters*, ‘shovelling’, is used to add to the drama and to show immediacy in, “While shovelling ravenously, grab a chill glass of water and step it down.” In *Why I Hate Religion*, the use of *masking and sucking* show continuity and immediacy. The persona noted, “some so called religious leaders masking behind religion to steal the conscience and hearts of people while sucking their pockets dry would have been treated with disdain.” Again, the use of the continuous forms also allows the persona to express discontent. For instance, the persona expresses his discontent for the attitude of some pastors through the verbs ‘flying’ and ‘starving’ in the extract that follows: “There you sit eating and flying private jets while your followers are starving.”

### Adjectives

Gombilla the Poet uses adjectives to create mental images, and to present issues in a picturesque manner. Adjectives constitute one of the common lexical categories in the poems especially in *Wicked World*, *Waakye Eaters* and *I love Sakina*. I have categorized the use of adjectives in the poems under attributive, predicative, and participial. Examples are given under each category in the table below.

ATTRIBUTIVE	PREDICATIVE	PARTICIPIAL
<i>Tolerant</i> spirits	The feeling is <i>legendary</i>	<i>Unrelenting</i> stigma
<i>Mental</i> liberation	The voice of our people got <i>lost</i>	Hungering enthusiasm

<i>Amiable girl</i>	The world was <i>drenched</i>	<i>Tattered brown underpants</i>
<i>a little hungry child</i>	Pride was <i>arrested, bundled</i>	<i>Protruding stomachs</i>
<i>Hungry enthusiasm</i>	better <i>tomorrow</i>	<i>Passing day</i>
Theatrical experience	the pain <i>welling</i> in my heart	<i>drowning man</i>

## Pronouns

Though pronouns are a closed group, they have been dominantly used in the poems. One observation is that pronouns are used to build the ‘they and we’ dichotomy which helps us to understand postcolonial issues. For example, in *History lied to us*, and *Ghana is Peaceful*, the use of pronouns points to Africans and the colonizers. The persona uses *we*, *our* and *us* to represent Africans, while he uses *their*, *your*, and *them* to label the colonizers.

Subject pronouns and possession pronouns are used more in the poems. The first- person singular is dominantly used because many of the poems are told in the first person. The use of first person allows us get into the mind of the performer. In *History Lied to us*, the first- person singular is used thirteen times, while the first-person plural is used seven times, the possessive pronoun *our* is used fifteen times, while the object pronoun *us* is used about five times. In *Wicked World*, the first- person pronoun is used seven times, *we* is used seven times, and the possessive pronoun *their* is used six times. In *Why I Hate Religion*, the first-person pronoun is repeated twenty-five times, while *the* second-person pronoun (*you*) is repeated eleven times. There is a peculiar use of pronouns is *you and we*. The persona uses *you* at times to show displeasure at what some people are doing, but *we* to express dislike for what he or his people are doing that he dislikes. In *Why I Hate Religion*, the persona used the pronoun *you* eleven times to show discontent at the attitude some of religious people. Indeed, the persona uses the word, *constantly* after the ‘you’ to show his

displeasure. Conversely, the persona uses *we* to demonstrate a collective need. In *One World; One love*, the persona uses *we* to show unity is a collective responsibility. In the poem, *we* is used about six times. Similarly, in *Wicked World*, *we* is used six times to show the folly of disunity as the persona argues for unity and love. He noted, ‘We talk and laugh, we smile and cry, we eat and dance, yet we will die and go.’ Thus, the persona is suggesting it is foolish to hold on to food and not share with those are in need. Again, the persona uses *we* whenever he wishes to include himself in something he is criticizing. In such a case, he doesn’t exempt himself from the issue. For example, In *Why I Hate Religion*, the persona noted, “if we allowed the values of religion to pass through us, the world will be a better place to live in.” Consequently, persona is not criticising for the sake of it. Rather, he is part of the system and wants followers of the Abrahamic religions to exhibit the true values of these religions.

### **Lexemes of Cultural Appeal**

The Poet has used a number of lexemes with have cultural appeal in the Ghanaian society. Examples are *kente*, *smock*, *waakye*, *ntentembem*, and *schnapps*. In *I love Sakina*, the persona uses words such as *Nnakupenada*, a Swahili word to express his love for Sakina. In addition, there are expressions with cultural appeal. Examples are as follows: “a river without a source will soon dry out of thirst, ” and “the virginity of her unity has greeted peace into souls. ” *Virginity*, *souls* and *rivers* are important lexemes in African culture and tradition. Virginity stands for innocence and purity; rivers stand for life and also have spiritual significance to some communities. The soul is one of the invisible parts of humans. In using words and expressions which appeal to culture, the poet reinforces the postcolonial theme of culture and identity. It also helps Ghanaian audience to be able to understand the message since they can relate to these items and expressions.

### **4.4.2 Figurative Style**

Figurative language is an indirect way of communication. It usually involves the use of words and expressions in ways that convey meanings different from their literal meanings. In other words, in figurative language, words and expressions have connotative meanings. A connotative meaning is the ‘deeper meaning’ that a word or expression shows. Consequently, in order to understand a poet’s work, there is a need to examine figurative techniques the poet has employed to communicate his/her messages.

One of the major figurative styles used in the poems is making a point clearer by directly comparing one thing to another. This is often called a metaphor. In *History Lied to us*, the persona compares the unity of Ghanaians at independence to the fabric. He noted, “on that day of freedom, the fabric of Ghanaian society intertwined to form loops of a united people. ” Different threads come together to make a thread. Ghana also has diverse religions and ethnic groups, but they have come together to form one nation. Again, in *Ghana is Peaceful*, the progress of Ghana’s development is likened to a journey in which the traveller encounters difficulties, such as wind. The persona noted, “as the wind of the new era blows against our infant dreams and drags us through the pain of toughness as we rebuild our nation. ” There is also this kind of figurative communication in *Why I Hate Region*. For example, the persona compares the manner some religious leaders make life uncomfortable for others to a driver who has congested people in a bus, making their travel uncomfortable. He also compares the holiness of believers during Ramadan to that of angels. But he compares the pretentious life of believers to monsters when he said, “beyond the veil of some wearers are some dark monsters.” A monster is not only dangerous but attacks when the victim does not expect it. In *Ghana is Peaceful*, the persona compares the peace in Ghana to a sleeping person. He also draws on a fight scene to demonstrate the danger of conflict to the country. The persona notes, “let not wake our nation with our midnight fight, else blood will stain

her white smock and her hopes will vanish into nothingness.” The verbs *fight*, *wake*, and *stain* are used indirectly. In the same poem, the persona compares the unity of Ghanaian diversity to the manner a meal is prepared. He notes, “therefore Ghana can never develop without diversity gathered into a national pot to cook consolidation to evaporate unity into a national pride.” Thus, the diversity of Ghanaians in terms of religion and ethnic groups is a positive ingredient for a great nation. In the same poem, the persona compares the country's need to know its history to a river's source. A river necessarily needs a source to remain relevant and alive. He notes, “a river without a source will soon dry out of thirst to become a bare land and become useless because weeds will creep into the once existing joy of fish, excited to fill the air with life.” In addition, the agricultural terms, *weeds*, and *creeping plants* suggest distractive acts that can derail the unity of the country. In the same poem, the persona compares Ghana’s current development challenges to a state of pregnancy. Pains often come before a baby is born, and so Ghanaians should not make give up. The persona admonishes Ghanaians to keep on working for a better Ghana.

*We came from the future* is a poem laddered with metaphor. In having many words but not having space to let out, the persona said his “(my) throat is choked with words begging for attention.” He also compares his use of words to the preparing of noodles when he said, “I will mix words into delicious and tasty noodles to roll away ignorance.” Again, though the persona has faced life's challenges, he is still determined to succeed, thereby likening his determination to that of a dog in heat. The persona noted, “if life is a bitch, I am the dog on libido.” In this manner, we see that the desire of the Poet to succeed is unwavering.

Another form of figurative language is comparing two things with words such as like, as, as... as, or than. There are many examples in *I Love Sakina*. For example, the persona compares the manner he fell in love with Sakina to the falling of a tree. He noted, “I fell for her like a tree onto the

ground. ” Furthermore, the persona likened the attraction he has for Sakina to the Titanic love story. He noted that “my eyes sank into her eye like the Titanic ship. ” Here, sank is rather used positively. In *Why I Hate Religion*, the persona compares the people intolerant of other religions to HIV AIDs. The persona noted, “Some of us are poorly educated about religion, that we don’t know we are poorly educated, and that is worse than HIV AIDS.” HIV AIDS is a dangerous disease that attacks and weakens the human immune system, and so the comparison allows the persona to depict the danger of discriminating against people because of the religions they belong. Again, in stressing the importance of love in religion, the persona compares it to the importance of a soul to the human body. He noted, “Love is like a soul within us. ” Here, the importance of love is amplified. A human being cannot live without a soul just as a religious person without love. In *Wicked World*, the persona compares the pain of the poor to the Zambesi River, saying, “when their hearts bleed like the Zambesi River, tears glee in my eyes.” The Zambesi River is the fourth-longest river in Africa and the most important river to Zambians. Another comparison that aptly captures the condition of the poor and also creates mental pictures in the minds of the audience is when the persona likened the children’s legs to sticks. In *Ghana is Peaceful*, the persona compares Ghana’s problems to the puzzle. The persona notes, "Ghana is like a puzzle, which must fit into folders.” A puzzle usually requires thinking and several attempts before the answer is found. Similarly, Ghana can only overcome its developmental challenges through persistent attempts. The persona through similes, enables the audience to better understand a point he makes through association.

Another figurative communication used in the poems is exaggeration to elevate or emphasis a point. In *Waakye Eaters*, we have examples as follows: “Waakye is divine ooh! ” and “Waakye isn’t just isn’t just food but a movement; it is togetherness.” The poet has also used a number of

symbolisms to drive home key messages in the poems. A tarantula, in *We Came from the Future*, represents distractive and retrogressive people. *Vultures* in *Why I Hate Religion* stand for unworthy people. By using this word, the performer is saying that some church leaders spent church money on people who do not contribute in any way to the benefit of society. *Crow* in 'Ndewura Japka's crow' stands for traditional voice, while *waakye* stands for African and Ghanaian dishes. The word "mirror" is also symbolic in *Why I Hate Religion*. In the context, it stands for the defects in judging people base on their appearance. Some people make the mistake of labelling others as sinful because those people belong to a religion they do not believe. The persona says religion is like a mirror which cannot reflect the inner self. Thus, it important not to a tag people with wrong doing when we do not have the opportunity to know much about their character.

**Another vital figurative communication tool is the use of rhetorical questions. The persona** deploys them when he wishes to question a particular mentality. For example, in *One World; One Love*, the persona demonstrates the folly of continuous hate on a person when he asks, "Why condemn me for no sensible reason?" and "Why must I bear the brand of your hate for nature's creativity?" In *Ghana is Peaceful*; the persona also employed rhetorical questions to reveal the folly of people engaging in political violence. He asked these questions: "Wait a minute. How long is 4 years.?" The persona asked, "Why bark in anguish after losing an election as if 4 years was a century.?" In *Why I Hate Religion*, the persona used a rhetorical question to show a contradiction when he said, "If the foundation of religion is love, why do some religious people do the opposite?" In this manner, the persona is able to demonstrate the folly of some Christians and Muslims who don't show love to people not in their faith. Thus, rhetorical questions are' used when the persona wishes to prompt the audience to pause and reflect on a scenario. This allows the audience to reassess their perception of the issue under discussion. In *Why I Hate Religion*, the

persona draws the audience's attention to reflect on certain conducts he frowns on when he said: "You constantly steal the little there is in our society to share them among vultures to dine and wine, and you think that child who is uncertain of the next meal isn't feeling hell on earth?". The persona again posed a rhetorical question to elicit a self-reflection from the audience in, "You gather hopes into boneshaker and shake what little life wells in them and think that isn't hell being created?" Lastly, in the same poem the rhetorical question demands a reflection on whether people who claim to love the next generation would destroy the environment. The persona observed, "you destroy the environment with weapons of mass destruction and deplete the Ozone layer with your constant bad environmental activities, and come to tell us you wish the next generation well?" I have also noticed that the persona uses rhetorical questions in succession to condemn an assumption or claim. There is a sequence of rhetorical questions in *Why I Hate Religion* as follows: "Why fight me because I don't agree with your definition of religion and idea about God?" and "You see God from an angle; I see him from a different angle. Why force me to see Him from your viewpoint?". Another rhetorical question is when the persona asked, "How on earth do we, in spite of religion, fixate our focus on ourselves when the generality of society threatens to fall off?" In the above extracts, the persona shows his discontent for the illogical stance by some believers. Lastly, the persona also uses rhetorical questions to call people to action or to coax them into embracing a particular action. For example, in *Wicked World*, the persona asks, "Why can't we cushion the poor child whose audacity got arrested by poverty?" This means there is no reason

for one to neglect a responsibility of assisting the poor. Here, the rhetorical question is used to call for collective responsibility, including the persona himself.



## CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

The study sought to examine postcolonial issues in the performance poetry of Gombilla the Poet and the performance and poetic styles he used to expound them. In this chapter, I discuss the findings presented in the previous chapter. I seek to do this by marrying the literature, especially empirical studies, with the study's findings. In the final part of the chapter, I make recommendations for future studies

### 5.2 Discussion of Findings

The poems have exposed and condemned various forms of Orientalism. Orientalism which originated from the manner Europeans regarded themselves as superior to the East, was later extended to cover the manner the Western world generally perceives other nations, especially the colonized. Said (1978, p.4) makes the following observation about orientalism:

A line is drawn between two continents. Europe is powerful and articulate; Asia is defeated and distant...It is Europe that articulates the Orient; this articulation is the prerogative, not of a puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life-giving power represents, animates, and constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries. Rationality is undermined by Eastern accesses, those mysteriously attractive opposites to what seem to be normal values.

Gombilla dismisses and dismantles Eurocentric views that Africa lacked history and never contributed to the advancement of world history. *In History Lied to us*, and *Ghana is Peaceful*, the persona adequately pronounces these objections. This is consistent with Omer-Cooper et al. (1968), who painstakingly demonstrated that Africans had stronger social institutions, Kingdoms, and great warriors who ruled and oversaw powerful empires. The history also shows that Egyptian civilization, one of the earliest in the world, contributed significantly to advances in agriculture,

education, architecture, and many other aspects of life. Today, the pyramids of Egypt and the tombs of the mummies are still a marvel to the world. In addition, the ancient Kingdoms of Mali, Ghana, and Songhai demonstrated great economic potential and organizational success.

However, Gombilla the Poet doesn't just frown on orientalism in terms of Europe and colonized dichotomy, but is concerned about intra-regional discrimination when people from the same region or country are discriminated against on the basis of race, religion, or ethnicity. In the interview I held with him, Gombilla revealed that intra-regional discrimination exists even in Ghana. His call for equal opportunity to all in areas of marriage, associations, and work is consistent with Febiyanto (2010), who identified discrimination against blacks in dominant white communities.

Colonialism and slavery, though long gone, are still relevant today. As Gombilla argues, they are the cause of the identity crises Africa faces today. In addition, Gombilla demonstrated the physical and emotional torture the colonizers brought onto the colonized people during the period of colonization and slavery. Thus, his ideas concur with Fanon's 'psychological damage' as torture and dehumanizing treatment left trauma on the natives in *History Lied to us*. The ideas in these poems are consistent with Nabutanyi (2019), who found lingering psychological damage among the natives in his study.

But a more dangerous consequence of colonialism is the economic exploitation of the colonized, the Marxist and capitalist angle of postcolonialism. Not only did Europe build its empire from the sweat of Africa, as noted by Gombilla the Poet, but the activities and architecture of colonialism derailed the growth of economic institutions in the colonized world. This concurs with Loomba (2000), who opines that, after independence, the colonial empires put in place strategies to continue to accumulate wealth from the colonized countries. Some of these strategies include the Western world's control of the global trade order and the establishment of free-market systems.

Another way of reading Gombilla's poems is as a form of cultural reclamation. He tries to project or promote Ghanaian and Africa cultural values. Western culture has deeply infiltrated the colonized, leaving natives hybridized and in a state of mimicry. Gombilla the Poet demonstrates this using religion. As Homi Bhabha (1994) established, the person adopting the new culture adopts new habits and ways of life that do not exactly resemble those of the West. Thus, Africans, by imitating Western culture, are now halfway between the two cultures: between the native and Western cultures. This has given the African an identity crisis. Gombilla the Poet, who illustrates this by pointing to the Abrahamic religions' invasion of the African religious space, makes an indirect call to the African to beware that, no matter how he imitates someone, he can never be like that person. Again, there is an indirect reminder to Africans that African traditional religion and spirituality permeate every sphere of their life. It is an identity marker; it connects the people to their ancestors and environment. This observation by Gombilla the Poet concurs with Chiorazzi (2015), who contends that Christianity's invasion of the African religious space has further pushed the African away from himself. Ghanaian culture, in terms of dances, food, dress, and the people, has also been promoted in detail in the poems. This is consistent with Usongo's (2011) study, which found that *Song of Lawino* serves as an advocate for Acholi and African culture. Gombilla relishes African culture and argues that there is no need to rush and adopt Western culture. This is also consistent with Karmaka (2015), who relished India culture and rural living.

Globalization, along with capitalism, has created wealth for some people and nations, but it has also destroyed rural and communal living. The two concepts hinge on economic exploitation and the culture of profiteering. These have contributed to the disintegration of communal living in African societies. Gombilla the Poet demonstrates the effects of these on the people of Pakora, a village in Northern region. The love for wealth has led to the demise of communal values such as

sharing and empathy towards the poor and the disabled. This is consistent with part of the study by Glover-Meni & Akakpo (ibid), which found that Aidoo condemned capitalism in immediate post-independence Ghana.

Gombilla the Poet also examined the Subaltern in various perspectives to expand the discourse on subalternism. He demonstrates this using Africa in the global space. Africa is a subaltern that has lost its voice in the global space. Secondly, there is 'hidden' subalternism in the relationships between church leaders and members, politicians, and the citizens. The subaltern, a member of the lower class, usually doesn't have a voice to express himself/herself, but is rather the powerful who speaks for them. The poet reveals that church members are mere followers whose concerns are not considered in decision-making within the church. For example, church members are made to contribute money to build worship centres even when they don't have places to lay their heads. Similarly, Ghanaian politicians ask villagers to vote for them, but after the election, the politicians hardly consider their living conditions of the rural poor. The poet is then calling on people to be vigilant, as Subalternism can be found in places they least expect.

Gombilla the Poet has excellently elevated African cultural values in his poems. Examples of such are communal living, hospitality, courtesy, and respect for the elderly, among others. The values form part of African identity and largely distinguish Africans from others. Therefore, it is relevant to champion these values. Thus, this study concurs with Alam (2004), who identified one of these cultural values among the Igbos: communal living. Again, the Poet's deliberation on African values is consistent with Gyekye (1996) who elaborates on African cultural values.

The role of traditional literature in African society is paramount. It is the source of written literature in many ways. Gombilla the Poet established in his poetry the synergy between the two. He does this through the use of traditional narrative techniques such as the narrator and the griot. Thus, this

concur with Yao (2020) who established the link between traditional poetry and performance poetry. In traditional performances, the narrator is the all-knowing fellow who retells stories with wit, imagery, and hyperbole to keep the audience hooked. Similarly, in African folklore, the griot helps preserve the people's history. It is believed that he has an anointing from the ancestors or deities to fulfil his duties as custodian of the people's history and culture. The incorporation of these traditional or oral traditions into his poems makes Gombilla's poems richer and more relatable to the audience.

The study found that Negritude expressions remain highly relevant today. Part of the Negritude movement was a form of cultural reclamation. Gombilla the Poet uses the northern girl to glorify Africa. The Northern region is among the most deprived regions of Ghana, yet it is rich in culture. Thus, the beauty of the Northern lady in *I love Sakina* is a celebration of Africa, despite the negative reportage about the region. Again, the Negritude concept is also a way of uplifting the image of the black man and could be seen as a form of writing back by elevating the identity of the Negro. This is consistent with major Negritude poets like Senghor, who sought to promote African culture through the figure of the African girl.

Anyidoho (1991) identified three levels of performance in performance poetry. These have been adequately explained under the literature review. Analysis of the poems shows that Gombilla the Poet's poetry falls under levels two and three. For example, *Waakye Eaters* falls under level two, in which the performer recites the words in same time with the guitar strings. The performance of *Why I Hate Religion* is a total performance, as the performer himself and other characters act out the poem's content alongside music and his own performance. This is also the case in *History Lied to us* and *Ghana is Peaceful*. Again, Gombilla the Poet poetry demonstrates the 'all in one package' label Anyidoho talks about in *Poetry as a Dramatic Performance*. There is recital, acting, drama,

music, the use of paralinguistic elements, props, and so on. For instance, in *History lied to us* the performer is involved in acting out the poem's meaning. He weeps and screams as he is whipped by a slave master. In *Waakye Eaters*, he uses gestures, hand movements, and facial expressions alongside intonation to convey the deliciousness of waakye to the audience. Even props and costumes help in the communication of meaning. Therefore, Gombilla's ability to combine all these techniques allows the audience to have a complete experience as noted by Anyidoho (1991). In terms of performance techniques, Gombilla the Poet has employed techniques identified by Okpewho (1992) and Yao (2020). These are repetition, idiophone, allusion, gesticulation, parallelism, cultural appeal, and digression. Repetitions allow Gombilla the Poet to emphasize issues; onomatopoeic words or exclamations lead the audience to meaning, since such devices appeal to the senses. Through allusion, the Poet invites the audience to understand a present issue by reference to a past event or a known person or figure. The effectiveness of Gombilla's use of allusions lies in his choice of familiar events or figures, which make it easier for the audience to relate to what he says.

Gombilla the Poet has deployed performance techniques beyond those listed by Yao and Okpewho above. These are description, juxtaposition and contradiction, and humour. Gombilla the Poet creates mental pictures in the audience's minds through imagery and the piling up of adjective language. Juxtaposition and contradiction enable the audience to see the similarities or differences between two things or ideas. Here, the poet foregrounds similarities and differences to help the audience better understand the postcolonial issue at stake. The use of humour makes light of highly tensed philosophical topics raised in the poems.

This study demonstrates the relevance of pun in performance poetry. The pun is central in Gombilla's performance process; he has used them in almost all the poems studied. The use of

puns allows the audience to pause and reflect on the possible ambivalent meanings. Puns are also an indication of the creative abilities of the poet in selection words. The performance poet has to select words not just for meaning but for sound effects. This, Gombilla the Poet, has exhibited in his poems. The literature review had placed much emphasis on pun as a technique in performance poetry to the extent that some scholars define performance poetry as oral delivery that uses puns. The study also established the centrality of figurative use of language in performance poetry. Gombilla's use of figurative language not only helps him drive home his postcolonial messages but also shows his level of sophistication. This allows us to counter hitherto arguments that oral literature was inferior to written literature. In many ways, anyone who wishes to adequately understand Gombilla's poems needs to have competence in interpreting figurative language. One of the figurative styles Gombilla the Poet uses is to compare an issue or idea he is discussing with another idea or scenario.

The use of rhetorical questions is also worth noting. In the poems, they are used not just to call on the audience to reflect on an issue, but also to show the awkwardness of a perception of a school of thought. The Poet does pile rhetorical questions to demonstrate the irrationality of a particular school of thought. Another figurative strategy Gombilla the Poet uses is exaggeration. He uses this so often to emphasize positivity or negativity. For example, in his elevation of Waakye in *Waakye Eaters*, he says it is divine. When we say something is divine, it means it is heavenly. Again, the elevation of Sakina's name above a PhD degree is an exaggeration used to magnify the persona's love for Sakina.

The main phonological patterns used in the poems include rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, and onomatopoeia. Gombilla the Poet uses rhyme to contribute to musicality or beat, and so appeal to the audience's sense of hearing. This, along with the rhythm and background music, contributes

to the poem's tone. Gombilla uses alliteration to foreground dislike in the poems. This has been clearly demonstrated in his use of alliteration of sounds such as /d /, /g/ and /k/. Lastly, there is the use of words (lexemes) to facilitate a distinct way of communication in the poems. For example, Gombilla the Poet predominantly uses abstract nouns to contribute to the sophistication of the themes of postcolonialism. This also allows the poet to communicate at the philosophical level. Pronouns have a distinct function in the poems. They are used to establish the we-and-them dichotomy, which is relevant to rhetoric and postcolonialism. Personal pronouns and possessive pronouns are relevant in this regard. Adjectives have also been used for description to project and to degrade, especially when two groups are in contention. For example, the poor and the rich; the colonized and the colonizers. Through the use of adjectives, the poet juxtaposes ideas to help the audience arrive at the message he wishes to communicate.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

The poetry of Gombilla the Poet encompasses many postcolonial issues, traversing traditional to contemporary postcolonialism. It is sophisticated in its use of figurative language and the performance techniques employed. This counters any argument undermining the sophisticated nature of performance poetry. The study shows that Gombilla the Poet has built his craft on orthodox performance techniques and his own to create a complex personal style.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

The purpose of the study was to identify postcolonial issues in the performance poetry of Gombilla the Poet and to explore the performance and poetic styles he employed to drum home these issues. Based on the findings of the study, I offer some recommendations.

The study could be replicated using a different methodology, such as staging the performances before students or the audience, or playing the YouTube performances to study participants. The

study participants would then be interviewed about postcolonial issues and what they experienced or felt while watching the performance. Conducting a study with this methodology will enable the researcher to obtain audience-based responses, which is crucial in performance poetry studies.

This study also mentions the use of gestures and gesticulations, albeit in passing. However, because Yao (2020) and Asihene (2017) studied the use of these in the poems of some Ghanaian performance poets, I did not focus on gestures and gesticulations in my study. New studies could investigate Gombilla the Poet's use of gestures, gesticulations, and other paralinguistic features. Similarly, a semiotic study could be conducted to examine how props, artifacts, and ambience contribute to the communication of postcolonial issues in the poems.

Negritude expressions, a form of cultural celebration, abound in the poems, though they are most prominent in "*I love Sakina*." In reviewing the totality of Gombilla the Poet's poems, I found that he also has poems that centre on love. The setting of these poems is rural. As a result, I recommend these poems should be examined from other angles, such as romanticism.

Regarding performance styles, I recommend that future studies compare Gombilla's style with those of other performance poets in Ghana. For example, a first-generation poet can be compared with Gombilla the Poet, who is a second-generation poet. One could do a comparative study of style in Gombilla's poetry and Naana Asaase. A study of this nature will reveal how the use of styles by the two performance poets feed into each other and depart from each other with respect to time. In terms of linguistic style, this study focused only on lexical and phonological styles. There are other elements of linguistics which could be studied in Gombilla the Poet's poems. Some of these are semantics, syntax, and graphology. Therefore, I recommend that future studies look at these other aspects of linguistic style in the poems of Gombilla the Poet.

Lastly, I have discovered that the poems of Gombilla the poet present varied levels of interpretations and meaning. This allows one to look at them from various angles as well. For example, in *We came from the future*, the poet not only expresses his desire to make a change in his society through poetry but also talks about the need for endurance and perseverance in life amidst difficulties, ultimately making it possible to study the poems from other theoretical angles, such as modernism and postmodernism. Consequently, I recommend that future studies examine Gombilla's poetry from other theoretical perspectives to enable us to comprehensively understand the creative mind of Gombilla the Poet and to contribute to those theories.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1

#### TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW HELD WITH GOMBILLA THE POET

Mode of Interview: WhatsApp Call

Date : Monday, July 8, 2022

Time: 9: 30 Pm – 10 : 40 Pm

**Interviewer:** Good evening, we are about to start the interview. I will start with the background questions first, then I will ask questions on the selected poems.

**Gombilla the Poet:** That is okay!

**Interviewer:** Please, could you tell us about yourself?

**Gombilla:** I am a performance poet and a writer. My poetry seeks to motivate and encourage people and to better their lives. I have written many poems and performed in a number of occasions.

**Interviewer:** That is good. Please, can you tell us about the schools you attended, where you started school then till now.

**Gombilla:** Yes, I had my basic education at Abel Halperin School in Tamale. I then attended T. I Ahmadiyya Senior High school in Kumasi, and later to the University of Ghana. I recently graduated with Masters of Arts in Public and International Affairs from the University of Ottawa.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much, and congratulations. As a performance poet yourself, how will you define performance poetry?

**Gombilla the Poet:** Performance poetry is when written poetry is brought to light through artist's words and craft, and sometimes with drama, use of music or any other form which makes the poem richer. You can use background music, guitar to enhance the meaning and message.

**Interviewer:** Okay. What in your opinion is the role of the African performance poet?

**Gombilla the Poet:** The role of the performance poet is to educate society on various aspects of life but more importantly to empower the people. My poetry is to motivate and empower individuals to enable him better their lot. I have often tried to get to the inside of the individual to reflect what we experience in our lives. As an African poet, I also try to promote the culture of the Africa people so that we don't lose our identity. So that is it. We need to highlight aspects of our culture, especially the positive ones, so that they do not die off.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much. We now move to the next session of the interview which is on the selected poems. The first one is *History Lied to us*. Here, the persona was quite emotional in performing this poem. What in your opinion accounted for this?

**Gombilla the Poet:** We grew up hearing these things and it is one of the most important aspects of the life of the black people so I needed to show it as it is. There are many stories about Africa and the black man but we don't have to pick and choose which stories to tell the world, especially only those which are good before the western community. We need to tell the story as it is.

**Interviewer:** okay. In which ways is there need for us to be retelling the story about slavery and colonialism?

**Gombilla the Poet:** Colonialism and slavery are part of the Africa people and we need to keep telling it. Even though we have come a long way and things have changed, issues of slavery and colonialism can't be forgotten since still have impact on our lives. The colonial masters used to chain our fathers and ship them across to Europe and this painful experience lingers on through us

**Interviewer:** Thanks very much. That was very detailed. Our next poem is *Ghana is Peaceful*. In which ways can Ghanaians promote national identity?

**Gombilla the Poet:** Ghanaians are noted for their tolerance and togetherness, so we can use this as opportunity to promote national identity. Our diversity in religion and culture should be an avenue for togetherness. Our flag, national anthem, food and many other things in the country should be used to rally us together. Sports is also another avenue we can use to promote national unity. We can use sports to help advance our togetherness. The artists also have a role to play in promoting national identity and so the government should sponsor research into that, and assist artists to enable them play this role well.

**Interviewer:** our next question is on *Why I Hate Religion*. How will the persona in the poem characterize the relationship between Ghanaians and the two Abrahamic religions mentioned in the poem?

**Gombilla the Poet:** Ghana is a very religious country. In Ghana, Christians and Muslims live well with each other and cooperate with one another. What I was asking in this poem is that everyone should respect each other's religion and allow others to practise what they believe in. For example, there are few instances such as in our secondary schools where some students are forced not to practise their faiths, or are forced to go to church even if though there are Muslims. This has to change. We should stop nosing around and poking our nose into other people's religious affairs. Everyone should be free to practise his / her faith.

**Interviewer:** Okay, excuse me to cut in. Are there ways we can say some Christians and Muslims don't really understand the faith of these two religions as presented in the poem.?

**Gombilla the Poet:** Well, whatever an individual does in the practice of faith should remain at the personal level. Whatever they exhibit in terms of knowledge or practice is left onto them. I believe we should allow these at the individual level because we will not be able to get to the individual level of each person and his belief.

**Interviewer:** But would you say as Africans we should do *sankofa*, that is go back to the African Traditional Religion?

**Gombilla the Poet:** Well, I didn't really think of that. But what I was saying is that we should allow everyone to practise the religion he/she wishes to practise whether it is Traditional African religion, Christianity or Islam or any other religion

**Interviewer:** The next poem is *One world; One love*. You condemned discrimination in all forms: racial, religious and ethnic. Would you mind to share any form of discrimination you ever experienced (if any).

**Gombilla the Poet:** eem, issues of discrimination exist in various forms, racial, ethnic and religious but these things sometimes are not very clear but subtle. So, I will not sit here and say I have not encountered this and that type of discrimination and say it doesn't exist. Issues of racism, for example, exist in a way - the White man will not just meet you and tell you I don't like you because you are black but in ways and manner they may act towards you. Even in our country, for example, someone may deny you a job because you don't belong to this ethnic group or the other. In other instances, you could be denied being called for a job because you belong to one religion. But the people in charge would not clearly tell you it is because you belong to this or that religion. All these things have to stop.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you. The next poem is *We came from the future*. In this poem, the persona emphasized the role of the poet in helping change the narrative about his race and place of birth. What do you think motivated the persona to make that call?

**Gombilla the Poet:** It is good that you have different interpretation of the poem. But this poem was one of the works you know, you usually do, in response to viewers' comments and feedback you receive, from those who listen to you and follow you. In it, I was trying to indicate that

everyone has inner talents which often need to be developed and nurtured but our society usually has little or no opportunity for one to express himself. I had a lot in my throat at the time but didn't have platforms or opportunities to bring these out so I really felt I needed to bring this out.

**Interviewer:** okay thanks very much, but you will agree with me that it is part of the duty of the artist and for that matter the poet to help promote and elevate his people to a better level.

**Gombilla the Poet:** Yes, of course,

**Interviewer:** The next question is on one poem I love a lot, *Waakye Eaters*. In which ways do you think food can be used as cultural branding artefact in the Ghanaian society.?

**Gombilla the Poet:** You see that everywhere in the streets, people have packaged and are selling waakye and making a living out of it. When we were in school, we used to hunt for waakye. I remember one day, one weekend, the urge to eat waakye was high and I had to go look for it with friends. So, after that I decided to put something down to write this poem. Food is an important component of our culture and waakye is one of the commonest food that we can use to market our country. We can make it appealing to the international community so that foreigners who come to Ghana will love to eat it. Waakye is already creating jobs for people, but if we continue to promote and package it well, a lot more people will get into the selling of waakye and make money. Women are selling, but teeming graduates can also go into it. So, we should take the issue of promoting our food seriously.

**Interviewer:** The next poem is an interesting poem I listen to a lot, *Wicked World*, in which you featured Don Sigli. The persona depicts the growing gap between the rich and the poor, and also bemoans greed, and lack of love on the part of the former. How does modernity contribute to this situation?

**Gombilla the Poet:** Globalization has created a system where efforts are made to uplift and make the world a global village. It also works towards one culture. The movement of companies and institutions and sharing of knowledge has made a lot of countries and people to become very rich. For example, the United States of America has a very strong film industry which promotes their culture and now through which they are pushing their culture across the world. But the film industry has also generated to them a lot of money. Globalization has not solved the issues of gaps between the between rich and the poor, be it in America, Europe or Africa. There are still poor people in these countries much as there are rich people. I was in this poem, saying, you see in our communities many poor people who need help. We all have to find ways of helping them. It is not about meeting all their requests. For example, if someone asks you for Gh¢2000, you may not need to get him/her this entire amount but you can assist. For example, we are learning from each other. So, people can always offer a hand. This way, we can make progress. And some of these things have the political angles as well.

**Interviewer:** Thanks very much. Our last poem is *I love Sakina*. Would you consider this poem to be in a continuum with literary movements such as the Negritude movement or the Romantic Movement?

**Gombilla the Poet:** This poem was written to express the good qualities of a girl from the Northern region. I can't really say it's a romantic poem. Sakina was someone who represented the northern girls.

**Interviewer:** But in which ways can we look at or see this northern girl.

**Gombilla the Poet:** beauty

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much for you time and help. We have come to the end of the interview. I will transcribe and plead with you that as I go through it and there is need, I will get

back to you. I may not be able to get everything we have said, but I will try to get most of the things we discussed here.

**Gombilla the Poet:** You are welcome.

**Interviewer:** Goodnight, and have a sound sleep

**Gombilla the Poet:** goodnight

**Time of end of Interview:** 10: 40

## **APPENDIX II:**

### **TRANSCRIPTS OF SELECTED PERFORMANCE POEMS**

#### **1. HISTORY LIED TO US**

Gom-billa, Gom-billa Hmmm, hmm, hmmm (**amidst cries, and guitar beat**)

Our screams were collected into bottles of schnapps to bellyful our chiefs into psychological distortion.

During their drunken stupor, stories were told that even the foodless knew the light of civilization dawn from Africa.

At the time, the world was drenched in darkness until the old pages of history faded our stories into oceans of deception and perceptive nature where our achievements were characterized as worthless, and that we never at slide in history contributed to the human race.

The voices of our people got lost among the tumult voices echoed from the whips of the slave masters.

Our beautiful women with dangling rhythm of their backside at slightest movement of their bodies got the white men attracted and so their pride was arrested, bundled, and shifted away into unknown lands of thirst then saw the birth of Mulattoes.

***Singer sings (staggering with chains around his neck)***

*I remember the past; they used to put us in chains and sail us around the world.*

*But now we welcome them with open hearts; that is the heart of Negro, Negro, and Negro*

*I am an African.*

From east to west, north to south, a breeze gathered to wake a country from the slumber of colonialism into helm of freedom. Then our young cried further to make a new nation Ghana

But surprising, the crow of Ndewura Japka's cock never sounded as usual in our ears.

But rather a heavy storm from the voice of Nkrumah saying: "Ghana, your beloved country is free forever!."

Multitudes danced, sang and wined away their worries into sleep when Dr Ephraim Amu brought out his Ntentenbem to blow songs full of melodies to greet the arrival of a new nation, Ghana.

This inspired Gbeho to sing from the depth of his heart a song which got tears rolling down the check onto our land to nurture our Agriculture to become our backbone when Tetteh Quarshie came out to show us the seed of life hidden in cocoa.

What men can do women can do better, and there came Miss Theodore Okoe with her flag covered in red, gold, green, with the black star rising to the sky to flatter serenely from lamp post to the glory of Philip Gbeho's 'God bless our homeland Ghana'.

On that day of freedom, fabric of Ghanaians society intertwined to form loops of a united people submerged in kente and smock devoid of tribalism.

We bid the White men and women farewell as they took bag and baggage, kith and Kin, from our land of Gold enroute to their world of splendour built from our sweat.

But throughout these years, we may want to search into areas that soiled our white garment to purge our nation of all strains to rebuild its focus towards economic liberation.

Our system may have problems, but our passion and determination will clear the path to our destiny to salvation. Let's not give up on the Ghanaian dream

Let's keep pushing the wind of destiny

As the wind of new era blows against our infant dreams and drags us through the pain of toughness as we rebuild our nation, we may know that our survival will only be assured by the consolidation of our past while acting on them today.

**Singer sings (to guitar)**

*Now we are living in the present, where all blacks all want to be part*

*So, they forced their culture and put on another one*

*Have you forgotten the suffering, suffering of your forefathers?*

*I am an Africa*

Songs of infant voices, as shrill and thin as they may sound must not be used in throwing tantrums for sorrow to give into despair

Our grim perception must not halt our quest onto unlocking national potential to overflow joyousness into the very recesses of our near indignation towards a better tomorrow

It is okay to be different. Even nature agrees we can't all be equal, perfect.

The difference is nature created is for a joined effort towards progress.

Therefore, if our nation must see the face of prosperity, our difference must in equal measure see convergence.

peace

***Singer sings (to Guitar)***

So, who do you say you are? Ooh, yeah, ooh

Because I know who I say I am

Who do you say you are? Ooh, yeah, yeah

Because I know who I am

I am a Negro. I am a Negro, ooh

I am an Africa

I am a Negro, Negro, hoo hoo

I am an African. I am Africa

### **WICKED WORLD (FEATURING DON SIGLI)**

*Sound of music, signature introduction by Don Sigli, the featured Singer*

*Naana na*

*Blue Beat,*

*wo ho wo*

*Mama Mama haha ha*

*Chorus*

*Show love to the motherless*

*Love to the fatherless*

*Show love to helpless ones*

*Out there*

Gom— billa. Hmm. Hmm. Hmm

You woke up this morning to tea, bread, and eggs

Yet your brothers and sisters have nothing to eat

The question I am asking myself is if God created some people poor and others rich

But this is something I don't understand but I will understand

But what I know is that he lives today but tomorrow he is gone



Such is the life we live in; such is the mystery we can't understand  
We talk and laugh, we smile and cry, we eat and dance, yet we will die and go  
Why can't we cushion the poor child whose hopes are lost  
Whose audacity got arrested by poverty?  
That disable creature who has no option.  
If creation was the handiwork of man, beauty would have been their beholders.  
In all, a sigh to the displeasure of my inability to offer ability to the hopeless  
I feel a pain of guilt when under my very eyes, fellow men die of hunger,  
crying deep down their hearts, yet no one to help them.  
They need love show them love  
No wonder the sexy birds are crying, the romantic dogs are barking  
The beautiful month is dying, yet men are hungry.  
The rich never get contended, let alone the poor whose lives have no content.  
When their hearts bleed like the Zambesi River, tears glee in my eyes  
threatening to betray the pain welling in my heart  
Pakora a village I saw was an epitome of sorrow, yet they vote every four years.  
A man boasting of ten children his manhood manufactured  
yet the same manhood has no power of life.  
Men, men, men, if you know you have no food for these children  
then advise this stick with eggs between your legs.  
It's time for the world to come together to save this people from the doldrums of their emotional  
quarantine.  
Let us show them love. No wonder Ama Darko said,

seeing these children in tattered brown underpants, with diseased red heads and protruding stomachs, carried on legs like two dry sticks, malnourish as they come I saw the weak, loose, hanging breast of their poor mothers; their searching mouths in their tiny lean faces, their voracious draw on the high wrinkled nipple, their speck of energy from an elevated body, that was clearly the anger of a little hungry child, their only crime was coming into this world, and all they had left is their anger at the world. They need love. Show them love! ”

**Chorus (Don Sigli sings alongside music)**

My people, where you dey?

Show love to the fatherless

Show love to the motherless

Love to the helpless

Gombilla, where you dey?

You show them to the helpless.

*(Fades out with beat)*



***WHY I HATE RELIGION***

Why fight me because I don't agree with your definition of religion and idea about God?

If you think I must agree with you and not have an opinion, you must be wrong.

But just because I have an opinion doesn't make me right either.

One man can't define God; He is bigger than we can fathom

So let me keep mine, and you keep yours and let the world move on

Some of us are poorly educated about religion that we don't know we are poorly educated

and that is worse than HIV and AIDS.

You see God from an angle; I see him from a different angle.

Why force me to see Him from your view point?

Our world is held in a palm of disunity that we sometimes kill and destroy because of our myopic understanding of religion and idea about God.

I am not pontificating but contemplating on a complete compound of people possessed by stake insensitivity to other people's view.

We have been trained to appreciate that which is seen to the neglect of the unseen.

The irony is true with religion.

We constantly are told about heaven and hell we are yet to land sight on

Yet, with all passion and faith we believe there is some air condition in heaven and heated hell

Don't be quick to judge my religious integrity.

Hear me out with open- mindedness.

You constantly betray and make your fellow depressed and think, you are not creating hell for them?

You constantly steal the little there are in our society to share them among vultures to dine and wine and you think that child who is uncertain of the next meal isn't feeling hell on earth?

You gather hopes into boneshaker and shake what little life wells in them and think that isn't hell being created?

You destroy the environment with weapons of mass destruction and deplete the Ozone layer with your constant bad environmental activities and come to tell us you wish the next generation well?

At the melodic call to Azan, we respond five times daily

From dusk of the week to its dawn church we attend yet we are the most dishonest people.

The veil depicts honour and dignity yet behind the veil of some wearers are some monsters with dark hearts.

Ramadan makes us angles; its passage reveals our hypocrisy.

I know humans are not perfect, but trying to be perfect is just perfect.

But if we allowed the values of religion sink into the very fabric of our core, our world will be a better place.

Till the world is a better place, there is no religion.

What some people practise is sheer hypocrisy.

How on earth do we in spite of religion fixate our focus on ourselves when the generality of society threatens to fall off?

Our world of inequality is born out of our individualistic demands to the neglect of the wail of the future generation and the now generation.

You see so many moments have drunk away our joy leaving us dry up in sorrow while roasting our hopes in the sun, and leaving us broken insane.

If religion will make me a murderer and sing hatred into my soul, I cease to be religious.

‘You will never enter paradise until you have faith and you will never complete your faith until you love one another,’ said the Holy Prophet of Islam.

Love is complementary to wisdom and necessary for enlightenment, Buddhism

Love is like a soul within us, Hinduism.

Love your neighbour as yourself, Jesus Christ.

If the very foundation of religion is love, why do some religious people do the opposite?

If men were clairvoyant, some so called religious leaders masking behind religion to steal the conscience and hearts of people while sucking their pockets dry would have been treated with disdain.

There you sit eating and flying private jets while your followers are starving.

I am not suggesting living in poverty.

Just stop amassing through systematic exploitation of the masses. Is that enough to ask for?

I believe God is a kind God so stop asking me for consultation fees to seek his help.

I believe in miracles not deception.

If there is a link between religion and worship of a God, who is merciful, who is caring who is loving

Why do we his followers exhibit the direct opposite of this ideal description,

when we claim to have been made in his image and likeness. Hmmm

I am condemned for keeping condoms, but wait till I contract the deadly disease.

and you will see the same society and its unrelenting stigma.

I am not glorifying sex, but exposing the hypocritical nature of our society that thinks itself religious.

Don't get me wrong. Just because the bad is unseen doesn't make the bad you do in the dark good.

I wouldn't accept the mirror's reflection of me.

If really the mirror reflects me let my intestines be reflected too.

As long as my outer being is what I see I will not take the mirror's definition of my life.

The mirror I am talking about is society.

I am not judged by the quality of my mind but by the nature of my religion.

I am judged outwardly not inwardly for not belonging to them.

I am tempted to think the principalities we pray against are just figments of our imagination

With all that I see each passing day we religious people erect such principalities.

How funny it is that religion is the heart of many, yet the rate of crimes are abnormally pregnant!

I am not against the building of worship centres, but where is the point in building more when many people still sleep in streets soaked in the rain and excruciating pain.

It is one thing to believe in God, and another thing to follow religion.

If our narrow understanding of religion stops us from questioning some believes stifling our growth,

it can't be of God because God is a God of progress.

If a particular practice makes sense a century ago it may not make sense today

And this calls for comparing today's reality to yesterday reality for a whole new model of existence.

We need to be humble enough to subject some archaic practices to reasoning.

I admit to the fact that there is a bound to human rationality but just because people get involve in accidents every now and then doesn't mean I shouldn't drive a car.

Rationality is there for usage.

Just because am told there is heaven after death, I can't have heaven on earth?

What if we die and realized that the only heaven we could have had was created a world?

Well, I have learnt.

## **GHANA IS PEACEFUL**

Gom-billa, hmm, hmm, hmm, hmm

God bless our Homeland Ghana, and make our nation great and strong

Very soon night will dawn to still at sunshine, snores *hreee*, will be gathered from homes sleep away the night with rhythmic procession.

So, when the gods of peace descend tell them unity in diversity shrouded with tranquillity is all we love to hold as a nation in good sleep

The nation is sleeping. Her hopes rapped with kente and smock carried at the back of an elephant called NPP shielded from the rain by an umbrella called NDC.

PPP wake her up to the pot of chicken called CPP chewing with coconut called PNC.

Wait a minute, let not wake our nation with our midnight fight, else blood will stain her white smock

and her hopes will vanish into nothingness.

Anas Amereyaw Anas, let no politician stay wake.

Use your Tiger -eye on Aseidu and Sir John

They must sleep into the stillness of dawn and rise against violence while holding hands with beaming smiles.

One thing is clear; there cannot be a forest without trees

There equally can be no sea without water; therefore, Ghana can never develop without diversity gathered into a national pot to cook consolidation to evaporate unity into a national pride.

A river without a source will soon dry out of thirst to become a bare land and become useless because weeds will creep into the once existing joy of fish excited to fill the air of life.

Ghana is like a puzzle; her map must fix into folders.

Once society falls out to upset burgeoning, economic political and social credentials

Since creation, her people have been united

The virginity of her unity has greeted peace into souls, thereby cushioning many souls

from the shackles of conflict.

One thing is clear; the day society will become harmonious in character it will cease to be called society because our differences make us a community.

Our tolerant spirit must bond us together.

Blood saved our society those of men and women who once lived.

If we destroy our lands with blood of innocent souls our forbearers will cry with disappointment after all this sacrifice they made for us.

Ghana's development is at pregnancy and abortion can't be an option, a baby is yet to be born; a cry of new dawn awaits to sound.

Wait a minute. How long is 4 years?

Why bark in anguish from losing an election as if 4 years were a century.

Youth of Ghana, wise up! Allow not the smell of hard currency slow your consciences into sleep, to carry arms at the behest of political influence to cause blood flow like streams of water.

The nation will fly; her future will be bright.

She will meet light and all will fall right.

Politicians, solve your disputes in court. I know Justice Atuguba will be there with pink sheets.

So Bawumiah, hold your peace, because you and I were not there with Aseidu Nketiah when he wore his wife's jacket. Hahaha!

We need not suffer to learn but learn not to suffer because Liberia can liberate us with their library of mistakes.

Let us hold the pen in our hands while driving ideas into a paper not guns and knives to butcher men like meat.

If we held peace at its neck, history will beg to be forgiven

Osama Bin Laden will become a preacher man; Adolf Hitler, a Pope.

And there wouldn't have been need for United Nations.

So, I long to see the day, a cat will eat fish with the mouse;

a dog will kiss a cat; a crocodile will save drowning man from the river.

These would have been the genesis of love.

Let us mend those things we have in common.

Let's wash away the diversities

We unite because we are one people with a common destiny

*Sound of music fades*

## **ONE WORLD; ONE LOVE**

Gom-billa. Hmm, hmmm, hmm

Embrace my race. Don't stigmatize me because I have AIDS

Together we can dance with grace. So come with me.

Let us make the world our birth place

In the heart of our human diversity lies the strength we need to build a community in unity.

Our tolerate spirit must bound us together and forever.

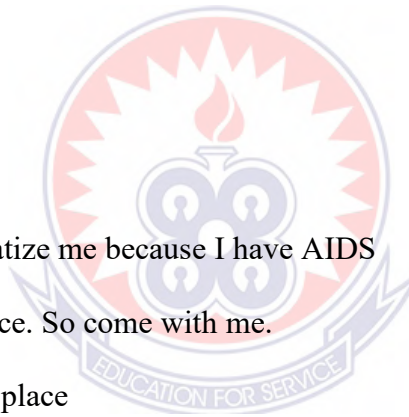
Let it not be said that for the colour of my skin I may not fit into the equation.

That is a wrong interpretation of a senseless formalization.

Let it not be said for my country of origin, tribe, religion, and social status, I may not enjoy the beauty of holy matrimony and crossbreed with someone of a different breed.

Let's cut down the bitter weed so that that seed will succeed.

Why condemn me for no sensible reason?



Why must I bear the brand of your hate for nature's creativity?

It is fine to criticize the creative outcome of the creativity constructively, but it not okay to hurt the creative element that had no power to create itself.

Understandably, we people are attracted to those people of our immediate kind but if we expanded our view of what our kind should be nothing will qualify more to relate a kind to another kind as a tall head of the kind we find with one mankind.

See me first as humankind before any other kind

To do this is to be kind. I am not a curse.

I wish you have a sense to recompense for your over intense offense.

Love me with passion, and this world will be the blanket that shrouds us from the cold hands of hatred. And so, my dear friend, when you walk in the rain of hate, I will be your umbrella of love.

With love, we can collect our uniqueness to fresh birth ideas for human progress and prosperity for posterity.

Let's stop putting yourselves into the boxes of insanity because of our insecurity

Making the world a divided place and labelling ourselves and hating to the core of dejection, rejection, discrimination and exclusion is not a solution but destruction.

Come to the world of love

In the end, we will make cupcakes and bake better without mistakes

because unity will be the icing in our world cake

and then we will share milkshakes and part ways with great handshakes

## **WAAKYE EATERS**

There is this hankering and hungering enthusiasm on a Friday night

At the thought of having waakye for breakfast on a weekend  
It is the feeling that waves through your arteries and capillaries  
On a typical weekend we wake up in an unkempt state, dash into the street in search of waakye,  
ehe  
It doesn't matter where it is located ooh  
Ghanaians have a way of hunting waakye  
What is tea with bread when waakye's aroma sips through your windows at first light?  
Waakye is our soul food ooh. Eat with your hands and feel the moment  
Eat with spoon and lose the feeling.  
Use your hand to mix the gari with waakye and 'shito' and stew  
Massage the package, take a scoop and mould in your hand  
I bet you will lick your fingers dry  
The excitement waakye brings to your soul reverberates through the ceiling of your heart  
And all over laughter strikes and strikes with each scoop  
While shovelling ravenously, grab a chill glass of water and step it down  
It will push the waakye with some swag into your stomach.  
Oh lord, this feeling is legendary and inexplicable!  
Hungry enthusiasm humbles  
Ghanaians have gentle humility when talking to waakye vendors.  
Just thinking about waakye surges peace and quiet and banishes your worries to the urge of your  
mind. At the sight of waakye you drool with saliva else the ancestral spirit governing the pleasure  
set in the meal wouldn't come to you yooh  
Waakye is divine ooh!. Heaven knows about its coming.

Waakye isn't just food but a movement; it is togetherness

It doesn't matter who you are

It is one of the levellers of the Ghanaian society

Whether rich or poor everyone queues to have their share

Eating waakye with friends is a theatrical experience

You keep reliving the moment even when the show has ended

Beware not to speak with Ghanaians with waakye before their eyes

Else they will look at you as if you haven't spoken at all

When you get to visit Ghana ask to be served waakye

There is this passion that stirs you up when waakye meets your eyes

Wrapped in banana leaves, beauty and nature is added to waakye

Peace.!!

### ***WE CAME FROM THE FUTURE***

Gom-billa Hmm Hmm Hmm

I am gradually sinking into reality. The feel of it threatens to hault my creativity.

Effectivity tells me I am made of vitality and that is the power of my visibility.

We have passed through hell so heaven must pass through us.

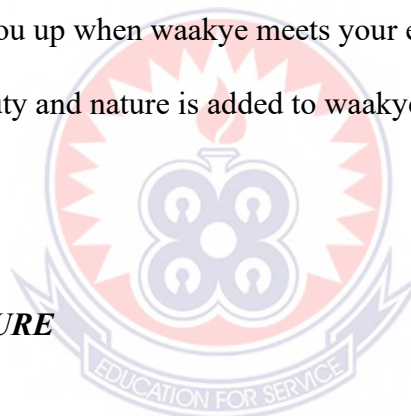
If life is a bitch, I am that dog on libido.

So, if you act WhatsApp with me, I will tell it on a phone.

I am that poet whose mind sees belong time and space.

I eavesdrop at the doors of longing generations.

I see into the unseen reality life.



My grandparents gave birth to my parents and the unflinching sexual desires of my parents got me into life and now I am stranded.

My throat is choked with words begging for attention.

My pen writes slowly so there is a traffic jam of words on my mind.

But no matter how long it takes I will write for my generation's mental liberation

I will mix words into delicious and tasty noodles to role away ignorance and purge their hearts of misery so that like noodles they will be indomitable like indomie

They would read books from the depth of my heart and their minds will swell with wisdom no darling. Everyone has a role to play on earth and my role is to cook you words, so you get not worries

My wife's pregnancy will be collection of words master brewed from heavens out of Grace.

See I think this poem makes sense but thank God you are quietly listening.

There is a narrow path, yet the biggest of vision must sail through.

Some people think they are just not good to know

They are just thinking they can't and just keep justifying their just can't attitude.

Stop and hear the heart beat that shows life. The presence of life boss hope

The nature of hope flints helps

The nature of help brings happiness

and happiness arrest flames of bitterness.

Play not for Black stars but you are stars because stars have light and yet can't see

Yet men have eyes with no light yet they see, so take the light of the stars to brighten your world

and use your eyes to see for the stars to gather the well beings of your goodness.

If I am winning, why thought my winning spirit?

A tarantula wants to work on my belly

But why use me when equally you can use yourself?

Why be a servant when you equally can be a boss?

Why make your situation permanent when nothing in life is permanent except change.?

Life should flow away from stagnancy.

I know I know nothing so I keep growing my mind. Humility is my passport.

Speak to children and they will teach you what you know about.

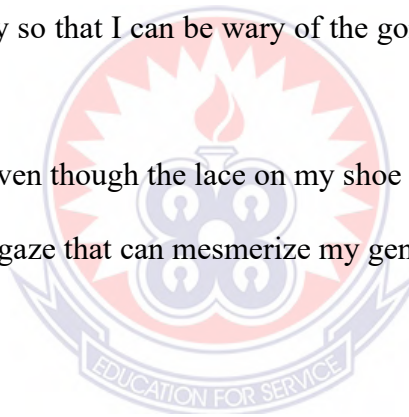
Speak to old people and they will make life unstressful for they will tell you

all that is around to be done and undone.

So, tell me a story of your worry so that I can be wary of the gory nature of the stories enough to know when to say sorry.

I still run the race in your face even though the lace on my shoe can't tighten my foot enough.

Let me trace my face towards a gaze that can mesmerize my generation in this maze called life.



## **I LOVE SAKINA**

Gom- billa Hmm

Sakina is an amiable girl who hails from the North

A Muslim she became of birth

On that faithful gold night of bliss when the creator of such a creature revealed onto my eyes the magnanimous nature of her declared assets my heart shank deep into her eyes like the titanic ship.

My memory knew no barrier for her name alone enriched my degree than a PhD

Then I understood how rich she was with beauty courtesy and value

In fact, her monetary equivalence surpasses Alhaji Aliko Dangote's empire of wealth

Grammatically, my words are woefully inadequate in describing what feels inside of me for her

I will learn Swahili so I can express to her *Nnakupenda*

I will also travel a journey of thousand miles just to learn

For now, I feel so disorganized but calms so quickly when my heart finally finds solace

in the beauty of her smiling happiness

I fell for her like a tree onto the ground only to realize it was a slip of the heart just as slip of the tongue

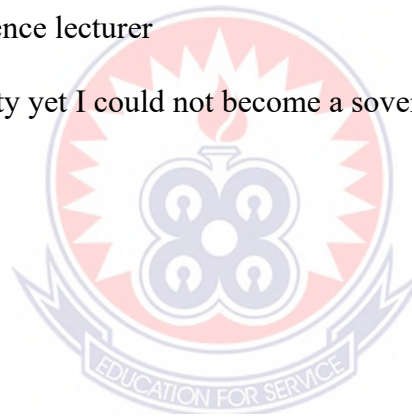
The sadness I harbour in my heart like the Tema Harbour only stems from my inexperience

Can you imagine that a whole semester I had no lecture to lecture me on love on her not even Dr

Aggrey Darko, my political science lecturer

All he taught me was sovereignty yet I could not become a sovereign of her heart

Sakina Oh Sakina



### **APPENDIX III:**

#### **INTERVIEW GUIDE USED FOR THE INTERVIEW HELD WITH GOMBILLA**

1. Could you please tell me about yourself?
2. How will you define performance poetry?
3. What in your opinion is the role of the African performance poet

Guide to selected Poems

#### ***History lied to Africa***

4. The persona was emotional in performing this poem. What do you think accounted for this?

5. What is the importance of retelling the story about slavery and colonialism?

***Ghana is Peaceful***

6. What can Ghanaians do to promote national identity?

***Why I Hate Religion***

7. How will the persona in the poem characterize the relationship between Ghanaians and the two Abrahamic religions mentioned in the poem?
8. Would you advise that Ghanaians go back to African Traditional religion?

***One world, one love***

9. Would you care to share any kind of discrimination you ever faced (if any): racial, religious or ethnic in Ghana or Canada.

***We came from the future***

10. The persona emphasized the role of the poet in helping change the narrative about his race and place of birth. What do you think motivated the persona to make that call?

***Waakye Eaters***

11. In which ways do you think food can be used as cultural branding artefact in Ghana?

***Wicked world***

12. The persona depicts growing gaps between the rich and the poor, and bemoans greed and lack of love on the part of the former. How does modernity contribute to this current situation?

***I love Sakina***

13. Would you consider this poem to be in a continuum with any literary movement?
14. In which ways can we construe Sakina in this poem?

