

**Nationalism In Question:
A Study of Key Categories in
Ghanaian History
1863-1965**

by

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DEDICATION

For

My husband
Allen

My children:
Nii Odoi, Nii Kpobi, Naa Dzama and Nii Ako

My parents
Gabriel Kwaku Owusu
and
Esther Appiah

And
In Loving Memory of

My beautiful sister
Veronica Jacinta Akua Akyaa Owusu Quist-Doe
(October 6, 1976 – March 31, 2013)

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ABSTRACT

The unquestioned and unquestioning use of the categories of proto-nationalism, cultural nationalism, conservative nationalism and radical nationalism leads to a homogenised, homoarchic and binary framing of nineteenth- and twentieth-century writer-intellectuals in the nationalist historiography of Africa. By building a hierarchy of nationalisms that upholds radical nationalism above all others, existing scholarship has proven to be biased and misleading. This project points out the limitations of the key categories that have shaped the nationalist history of Ghana. It contextualises Ghanaian intellectuals and their writings and acknowledges the intellectuals' cosmopolitanism.

The intellectual history of Ghana continues to be shaped by the fascination of scholars with the vaunted radical nationalism of the Convention People's Party and its leader Kwame Nkrumah. The "Grand Narrative" built around this account of the birth of the Ghanaian nation treats all other forms of nationalism as less important than radical nationalism, thus creating an account that is simplistic, incomplete and exclusionary. Perhaps though, those who suffer the most in these accounts are the opponents of Nkrumah and his CPP, who are habitually marginalised and misrepresented. Consequently, the scholarly examination of writer-intellectuals whose works span an entire century, the 1860s to the 1960s, remains flawed.

Ghanaian writer-intellectuals were cosmopolitan, inspired by their nationalism to interpret their lived experience and projected from it the form of society that would best suit their community. They prescribed and adopted different approaches, which, although they appeared conservative sometimes, were mostly inventive in their promotion of synthesis. Through an examination of the intellectuals' writings as debates unfolding over time among cosmopolites, it becomes evident that there is a need to rethink the "Grand Narrative," carving out a space in it for their voices and pathways, and for the diversity of issues they studied, explained and resolved. This dissertation does not recognise those who have hitherto been omitted and leave out those already included, rather it tells a story in which loser and winner categories become superfluous. It disproves the theory of a single founder of Ghana by showing the conceptual complexities of making such a claim about Ghana and its nationalisms.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AYO	Anlo Youth Organisation
ARPS	Aborigines Rights Protection Society
AWAM	Association of West African Merchants
CPP	Convention People's Party
JPC	Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs
NCBWA	National Congress of British West Africa
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NLM	National Liberation Movement
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NT	Northern Territories
PNP	People's National Party
PRAAD	Public Records and Archives Administration Department
RWAFF	Royal West African Frontier Force
TC	Togoland Congress
UGCC	United Gold Coast Convention
UN	United Nations
UP	United Party
WAYL	West African Youth League
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Founder Myths and National History

The commemoration on 6th March 2007 of the fiftieth anniversary of Ghana's emergence from eighty years of British colonial rule exposed not only a bitter national divide over whom to credit with the nation's founding, but also the possibility that a flawed "Grand Narrative" of Ghana's modern history is the source of this abiding threat to national unity. In marking the Golden Jubilee, the government of the day, led by President John Kufuor of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), honoured heroes of both the national and continental struggles for Independence. On the national level, the NPP chose to celebrate the collective known in Ghanaian historical folklore as "The Big Six," the leadership of the post-World War II United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) nationalist movement.¹ This was evidenced by the widespread appearance in Jubilee literature and paraphernalia of an iconic 1947 group photograph of these statesmen. However, the NPP's political opponents, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), led by a professor of law, John Evans Atta Mills, objected to this choice. The NDC and other minority

¹ The Big Six were Ebenezer Ako-Adjei, Edward Akufo-Addo, Joseph Boakye Danquah, Kwame Nkrumah, Emmanuel Obetsebi-Lampitey, and William Ofori-Atta, all political leaders of the first national political party in the Gold Coast, the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC). On 20th January 1948, the Osu Alata Mantse, Nii Kwabena Bonney, initiated a successful boycott of European-made goods sold by the Association of West African Merchants (AWAM). The boycott was in full effect on 28th February, when ex-servicemen of the Royal West African Frontier Force's Gold Coast Regiment advertised a rally at the Accra Polo Ground, to demand payment of the war pensions the colonial administration had promised them. As the ex-servicemen marched through the suburb of Osu, a group of them spontaneously detoured toward the nearby Christiaansborg Castle, the seat of the British administration, with the intention of presenting their grievance to the Governor-General, Sir Gerald Creasy. After the group ignored his order to disperse, British police Superintendent Colin Herbert Imray shot at the unarmed demonstrators, killing Sergeant Adjetey, Corporal Attipoe and Private Odartey-Lampitey. UGCC leaders capitalised on the resulting civil unrest to press their demand for self-government. Their aspirations were expressed by Danquah, the leading intellectual of the time, in an article entitled, "The Hour of Liberation Has Struck" Danquah sent an 8,000-word cablegram to the Colonial Secretary, declaring, *inter alia*: "Civil Government Gold Coast broken down ... Working Committee [of UGCC] declare they are prepared and ready to take over." The colonial government arrested the UGCC executive and charged them with sedition. Newspaper articles published in the wake of these events accorded these leaders the "Big Six" accolade. On their release, the UGCC leaders appeared before the Watson Commission, which inquired into the events of February 1948 and ultimately confirmed the UGCC's view that the Gold Coast was ready for self-government. See: CO 964 Colonial Office: Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast (Watson Commission, 1948); Colonial No. 231, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*.

parties argued passionately that one individual among the Big Six, Kwame Nkrumah, the UGCC's General Secretary, who went on to become Ghana's first Prime Minister and later its first President, should be singled out for recognition as the sole "founder" of independent Ghana, and celebrated as such.² In support of this argument, the NDC cited the popular history of the making of Ghana, which is referred to in this study as the "Grand Narrative" and recounted below. In this hagiographic version of the birth story of the first Sub-Saharan African nation to break free of European colonialism, popularised through textbooks, Nkrumah is labelled a "radical nationalist." By stark contrast, the other members of The Big Six are marginalised in this account and categorised pejoratively as "conservative nationalists."

The bitter debate of 2007 resurfaced in 2013 when Ghana's government, now formed by the NDC and headed by Mills as President, tabled a motion in Parliament calling for Nkrumah's official birthday — the 21st of September — to be restored as a statutory public holiday and designated as "Founder's Day," effectively according Nkrumah the legal status of sole founder of Ghana. The NPP countered with a proposal for the designation of a "Founders' Day" in honour of multiple founders, and a war of words ensued, both inside and outside Parliament, over the placement of the apostrophe. In the event, the NDC's small majority in Parliament unilaterally passed a law reinstating Founder's Day.³

Following a third alternation of power under Ghana's Fourth Republic, Nana Akufo-Addo — whose father, Edward Akufo-Addo, was a member of The Big Six — assumed the presidency in 2017. In March 2019, Ghana's Parliament, now dominated by Akufo-Addo's NPP, passed a Public Holidays Amendment Law, which stipulated that the 21st of September would be observed thenceforth simply as "Kwame Nkrumah Memorial Day," while a previously uncelebrated date — the 4th of August — would be designated "Founders' Day." The significance of this date was that it marked the anniversary of the

² For a comprehensive assessment of the founder(s) debate, see: Felix Müller, "Ghanaian Intellectuals and the Nkrumah Controversy 1970-2007/8" in Bea Lundt and Christoph Marx (eds), *Kwame Nkrumah 1909-1972; A Controversial African Visionary* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016).

³ The first inkling of plans to restore the perception that Nkrumah alone founded Ghana, was given by President Mills in his first State of the Nation address in February 2009. See: siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGHANA/.../State_of_the_Nation_address_Feb_2009.

inauguration of both the UGCC⁴ and the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS),⁵ the pioneering nationalist organisation, which predated by a half-century Nkrumah's introduction by the UGCC into Gold Coast politics.

This polarising debate about the founding of Ghana has continued in various forms since 2007, most intensely around the annual Independence Day celebration, invariably pitting Nkrumaists (heirs to Nkrumah's formidable political legacy) against anti-Nkrumaists.⁶ Why does the discussion of Ghana's history remain caught up in these simplistic contests between the disciples of ostensibly saintly figures who are seen as rival contestants for the mantle of Creator and nation-maker? In other words, why are these fights over Ghana's history not about more complex questions, such as "What is Ghanaian nationalism about?" "Is Ghanaian nationalism radical or conservative in spirit?" "Where did it come from?" "Who were its followers?" and "Why are there different strains of it?" Ghana offers an intriguing case study for an exploration of these themes that have relevance for Africa, and indeed the world.

The territorial boundaries of Ghana were defined officially on 6th March 1957, when the country proclaimed its independence. The historical process that predetermined these boundaries can be traced back to 1946, when four separate territories — the Gold Coast Colony, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and the United Nations-mandated Trust Territory of Togoland (British Togoland) — were amalgamated into one entity known as The Gold Coast, with a shared Legislative Assembly. Following the contentious Gold Coast general election of 1954 and a 1956 plebiscite in British Togoland, the UN endorsed Britain's recommendation that the boundaries of the future independent Ghana should encompass these four territories, comprising states and peoples with differing pre-

⁴ The NPP is descended directly from the UGCC. The NDC has appropriated Nkrumah's political legacy from the CPP, which survives in name, but failed to win any seats in Parliament at the December 2016 election.

⁵ Founded in 1897, the ARPS was the first organised political group to contest British colonial policies in the Gold Coast, notably the 1897 Crown Lands Bill. By 1935, the ARPS had lost its effectiveness, but it continued to exist as an organisation until the 1950s. Its membership comprised chiefs and non-chiefs, educated Gold Coasters as well as merchants. The UGCC was established in 1947 by members of the ARPS who were dissatisfied with the pace of political and economic contestation, and who wanted early self-government for the Gold Coast.

⁶ On debates see Müeller "Ghanaian Intellectuals;" Kodzo Gavua "Monuments and Negotiations of Power in Ghana" in Derek R. Peterson, Kodzo Gavua and Ciraj Rassool (eds), *The Politics of Heritage in Africa* (London: Cambridge University Press 2015).

colonial ties and nationalisms.⁷ Among the four territories, Ashanti held a unique position as the only territory whose people spoke one language; identified with a single culture and hierarchical system of kingship; and shared a common process of unification over the 250-year history of the precursor Asante Empire.⁸ Of even greater significance perhaps, Asante formed the plurality, and generated a disproportionate share of the combined wealth, of the four territories. Dennis Austin notes that by 1953 “Ashanti produced more than half of the country’s cocoa and a substantial part of the country’s gold and timber exports.”⁹ The Ghana that emerged from this antecedence in 1957 was an unexplored supra-nation-state. Contemplating decolonisation therefore involved a contested process of deciding what to do with the component parts, and how to give form to Benedict Anderson’s “imagined community.”

In many instances in Africa, studies of pioneering nationalism have been limited to examining anti-colonial activism. Other meanings of nationalism, such as loyalty and devotion to a sense of national consciousness, have all been heaped together under the umbrella of post-1945 “anti-colonialism.” Further, the concept of nation in Africa has been restricted to the post-1950 political divisions, based on colonial boundaries. There is a common problem in African history of grand narratives being used to protect claims to power, and this has generated unnecessary rancour and rivalry in many post-colonial African states. Historians of Africa have helped to institutionalise dominant grand narratives, which have favoured leaders of winning political parties. This study therefore examines Ghana’s case in the broader context of this African problem. It attempts to

⁷ William Tordoff, *Ashanti under the Prempehs: 1888-1935* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); Kwame Yeboah Daaku, *Trade and politics on the Gold Coast, 1600-1720: A Study of the African Reaction to European Trade* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970); Divine Edem Kobla Amenumey, *The Ewe in Pre-Colonial Times: A Political History with Special Emphasis on the Anlo, Ge, and Krepi*. (Accra: Sedco Pub., 1986); Divine Edem Kobla Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: A Political History* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1989); Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge; New York, NY; Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Wilks, *Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993); Kofi Affrifah, *The Akyem Factor in Ghana's History: 1700-1875* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2000); Wilks, *Wa and the Wala: Islam and Polity in Northwestern Ghana* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁸ Tordoff, *Ashanti under the Prempehs*; Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*; Wilks, *Forests of Gold*; Tom C. McCaskie, *State and Society in Pre-Colonial Asante* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁹ Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana 1946-1960* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 177.

provide Gregory Mann and Baz Lecocq's "pause not ammunition"¹⁰ to post-colonial factions through a re-examination of the past in its complexity, without favouring one group over another. Any such history that contests, rebukes and broadens narrow narratives is valuable in rethinking the Grand Narrative.

Ghana occupies a pivotal place in the history of modern Africa, as the first sub-Saharan nation-state to achieve independence from colonial rule. Its leaders and intellectuals were pioneers of the anti-colonial campaign, as well as the conception and construction of the post-colonial African state. The issues raised in these endeavours are not uniquely Ghanaian; other nation-states in Africa, and elsewhere in the world, continue to struggle with the meanings of a modern nation, even as dominant narratives are contested and rebuked.¹¹ The challenges that contemporary Ghana faces in its narration of the nation bedevil other African countries, such as Guinea, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.¹² Like Nkrumah, Guinea's Sekou Touré, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, as leaders of successful nationalist parties, capitalized on the legitimacy they earned through their contributions to ending colonial rule, while their rivals were typically stigmatized as anti-revolutionary, unpatriotic and largely insignificant in the making of the nation.¹³ Probably the most notorious hagiography, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe*, written to affirm Robert Mugabe's indisputable "founding

¹⁰ Gregory Mann and Baz Lecocq, "Introduction: Writing Histories of an African Post-Colony," *Mande Studies*, 5 (2003), pp. 1-8.

¹¹ See: Stephanie Anderson, "The Stories Nations Tell: Sites of Pedagogy, Historical Consciousness, and National Narratives," *Canadian Journal of Education*, Vol. 40 (1) 2017; Daniel N. Paul, *We were not the Savages: A Mi'kmaq Perspective on the Collision between European and Native American Civilizations* (Halifax, NS: Fernwood, 2000). Indigenous societies (First Nations People) and other minorities in Canada, as their counterparts in the United States of America and Australia, continue to contest the national narratives of these nations.

¹² David Martin and Phyllis Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981); Mohamed Saliou Camara, *His Master's Voice: Mass Communication and Single-Party Politics in Guinea under Sékou Touré* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2005); Marie-Aude Fouéré, "Julius Nyerere, Ujamaa, and Political Morality in Contemporary Tanzania," *African Studies Review* 57, no. 1 (2014): 1-24.

¹³ Susan Geiger, "Tanganyikan Nationalism as 'Women's Work': Life Histories, Collective Biography and Changing Historiography," *The Journal of African History* Vol. 37, no. 3 (1996): 465-478; Terence Ranger, "Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30:2 (2004); Bhebe Ngwabi, *The ZAPU ZANU Guerrilla Warfare and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe* (Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press, 2004); Elizabeth Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea, 1946-1958* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007); Alois S. Mlambo, *A History of Zimbabwe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

father” status, was made mandatory reading for upper-year public school pupils in Zimbabwe. Successful nationalist leaders and their political parties oversaw the deliberate crafting of national narratives that excluded their opponents, while presenting themselves as the radicals who resisted colonial rule successfully, thus seizing a massive head start in the race for the title of heroes in histories about the making of the nation.

Questions that concern this dissertation include those that Ghana’s “founder-versus-founders” debate *fails* to do. Is the assumption tenable that there is a select group of heroes? What resources were the founding generation working with? And what put them in a position by 1957 to proclaim a certain type of Ghanaian nation? This dissertation assesses the proposals aired in major publications by various writer-intellectuals from the late nineteenth century through the twentieth, as they pondered the reconstruction of the colonial order in their cosmopolitan world. It complicates key concepts of nation, colonialism, self-government, custom and customary law, as these notions were debated among the cosmopolites who inhabited the geographic area in which the Ghanaian state would be founded, and among the outsiders who were interested in debates that concerned those territories. Above all, this study problematises the key categories of proto-nationalism, cultural nationalism, conservative nationalism and radical nationalism, which have often been deployed in major discourses about the founding of Ghana and nationalism in Ghana. It therefore offers complexity to demonstrate the insufficiency of these accepted labels, and the way in which they have contributed to a homogenised and teleological history of Ghana. But what are the particulars of Ghana’s Grand Narrative, and how was it created? And how can the historian of Africa navigate issues of identity and belonging, inclusion and exclusion, in the making of national narratives?

1.2 Origins of the Grand Narrative of Ghana

One view of how the Grand Narrative was established points to the writings of David Kimble and Dennis Austin in the 1960s . Most historians are unanimous that Ghana’s Grand Narrative was established by these two pioneering chroniclers of the new nation’s political history.¹⁴ In a complicated way, Kimble’s and Austin’s treatment of

¹⁴ Jean Marie Allman, *The Quills of the Porcupine: Asante Nationalism in an Emergent Ghana* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1993); Roger Gocking, *Facing Two Ways: Ghana's Coastal Communities under Colonial Rule* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999); Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah &*

Ghanaian nationalism first attempted to correct the Grand Narrative, but then created it. Both authors sought to provide a scholarly correction to the Grand Narrative that focused on the victorious CPP as the epitome of Ghanaian nationalism. However, they inadvertently solidified the binary and homoarchic narrative of a historical continuum by, among other things, establishing a historical practice based on African resistance to colonial rule, and blotting out the vibrant political and intellectual exchanges of the interwar years, which involved the prominent Omanhene of Akyem (formerly Akim) Abuakwa, Nana Ofori Atta I, and a variety of intellectuals who are often left out of Ghana's Grand Narrative, such as Kobina Sekyi, J. W. de Graft Johnson and Nnamdi Azikiwe.

Kimble's *Political History* is a monument greatly appreciated by past and present researchers for its attention to detail. For many scholars, including Basil Davidson and George Shepperson, early giants in the study of African nationalism, Kimble's major contribution was the establishment of a history of anti-colonial nationalism for the Gold Coast that predated the era of the UGCC and the CPP. One of the earliest reviews of *Political History* was in fact written by Davidson.¹⁵ He noted that the study was a "masterly exercise in the scaling of an Everest of detail and the safe descent therefrom ... there is a large sense in which this book ... denotes the passing of an epoch." Shepperson's review noted that Kimble's study "demonstrates that, in one African country at least, nationalism is as old as it is amongst several European and American peoples."¹⁶ Although Shepperson criticised the work for its "lushness of details,"¹⁷ he saw in the history of the ARPS, as did Kimble and Davidson, evidence of a historical continuum in the anti-colonial movement. The problem with this way of thinking is that it flattens historical time by narrowly highlighting trends and ignoring context, thus confirming Cooper's observation in *Colonialism in Question* that history fraught with

the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951-60 (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2000); Joseph K. Adjaye, "Perspectives on Fifty Years of Ghanaian Historiography." *History in Africa* Vol. 35 (2008): 1-24; Esperanza Brizuela-Garcia, "Cosmopolitanism: Why Nineteenth-Century Gold Coast Thinkers Matter in the Twenty-First Century," *Ghana Studies* Vol. 17, no. 1 (2014): 203-221; Kate Skinner, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland: Literacy, Politics and Nationalism, 1914-2014* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

¹⁵ Basil Davidson, *New Statesman*, 19th July 1963, p. 84.

¹⁶ George Shepperson, *English Historical Review*, Vol. 80, No. 315 (1965), p. 368.

¹⁷ Shepperson, *Historical Review*, p. 368.

assumptions produces a teleological historical narrative. This will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3 below.

If Kimble looked to the past to contest the nationalist narratives of the 1960s that focused on CPP historical actors as the only nationalists, Austin rebuked the narrative by inserting a variegated opposition, personalities and theatres of conflict. The begged question that Austin sought to answer was why “a colony apparently so well-endowed in its national life as the Gold Coast, for whose political future every prediction in 1946 was cast in the most favourable terms, suddenly [entered] a period of violent conflict — first between the colonial government and local nationalist leaders, and then between rival political groups.”¹⁸ In examining the issue of what he termed “repeated failure in prediction,”¹⁹ Austin delved into the local politics, to the extent that some historians of Ghana chastised him for the effort he had put into giving a voice to the silenced homogenised people and groups — referred to in extant writings simply as “the opposition” — who had contested the policies of the CPP. J. D. Fage, who reviewed Austin’s book in the *New Statesman*, noted that it expanded the narrative from the political sphere to the socio-economic concerns that nurtured and produced conflict in the 1940s and 1950s.²⁰ Fage, however, criticised Austin for being the mouthpiece of the parties and personalities that opposed the Nkrumah agenda. Fage charged that Austin “unknowingly identifies himself too much with the Ashantis and the Northerners with whom he lived and worked; he is somewhat over-keen to see the faults of the CPP side.”²¹ Fage noted too that, “Mr. Austin’s sympathy for the Ghanaian people in their revolution may have induced in him a too harsh appraisal of the one-party state which resulted from it.”²² Rathbone notes how another reviewer of Austin’s *Politics in Ghana* in 1965 concluded of the chiefs and their supporters that, but for their “reactionary ideas and their dedication to tribalistic and ritualistic oligarchy, Africa would have shared in the universal history which has seen the demise of *anciens régimes* from Paris to Peking.”²³

¹⁸ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 1.

¹⁹ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 1.

²⁰ J. D. Fage, “Review,” *New Statesman*, 13th November 1964, pp. 740-741.

²¹ Fage, “Review,” p. 741.

²² Fage, “Review,” p. 740.

²³ Richard Rathbone, “Kwame Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Fate of ‘Natural Rulers’ under Nationalist Governments,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 10 (2000), p. 46. This was probably an allusion to the Akyem Abuakwa murder trial in the mid-1940s.

Austin's focus on the period from 1946 to 1960 broadened the field of historical actors, but as with Kimble, his choice of narrative structure affirmed the CPP's popular narrative of the post-1945 era as the authentic nationalist period.

Another view of how the Grand Narrative was consolidated has been put forward by historian Joseph Adjaye, who traces the rise of the dominant nationalist narrative from roots outside the historical academy. For Adjaye, because many of the early professional historians were uninterested in engaging with nationalist history on a large scale, this task was taken up by the authors of school textbooks.²⁴ As Adjaye explains, "Ghanaian historians were not embroiled in the debates surrounding the utility and merits of nationalist history that characterized the study of history in other parts of the continent."²⁵ Therefore, there was "no development at Legon²⁶ of an active nationalist school of historiography, as emerged at Ibadan."²⁷ Ghana's academic historians were more interested in pre-colonial state formation, and so "it was local, rather than national, history that was the hallmark of this renaissance in Ghanaian historiography."²⁸ Thus, for Adjaye, Ghanaian historiography could boast a rich culture of "microhistoria,"²⁹ but a "truly comprehensive history of Ghana" was non-existent.³⁰ Consequently, the textbooks established "the broad outlines of Ghanaian history" by focusing on "political developments rather than social and economic change."³¹ The most prominent and influential textbooks after Independence were W. E. F. Ward's books, legacies of the colonial era that were happily jettisoned in the 1960s, following the emergence of two native authors, Francis Kwamina ("F. K.") Buah and Albert Adu Boahen.

Buah published history textbooks on Ghana and Africa in the 1960s while he served as the headmaster of Tema Secondary School. *An Elementary History for Schools*

²⁴Adjaye, "Perspectives on Fifty Years of Ghanaian Historiography," p. 13.

²⁵ Adjaye, "Perspectives on Fifty Years of Ghanaian Historiography," p. 13-14.

²⁶ The University of Ghana, the nation's premier university, is situated in the northern Accra suburb of Legon. The western Nigerian city of Ibadan is the site of that country's comparable institution of higher learning.

²⁷ Adjaye, "Perspectives on ... Ghanaian Historiography," p. 12.

²⁸ Adjaye, "Perspectives on ... Ghanaian Historiography," p. 12.

²⁹ Adjaye, "Perspectives on ... Ghanaian Historiography," p. 19.

³⁰ Adjaye, "Perspectives on Fifty Years of Ghanaian Historiography," p. 20.

³¹ Adjaye, "Perspectives on Fifty Years of Ghanaian Historiography," p. 13.

Book One: Ghana was published in 1967 and 1968.³² *A History of Ghana*,³³ first published in 1966, was refined and published in 1978, when Buah was Minister of Education during the short-lived pro-Nkrumah administration of President Hilla Limann and his People's National Party (PNP). In the introduction to the revised and updated version published in 1998, Buah states that the text was written to cement Nkrumah's place as the father of the nation, and to provide a framework for interpreting the Nkrumah years as a period of true economic development and progress.

Boahen was a historian and politician who identified with the ideals of the UGCC. His textbook *Topics in West African History*,³⁴ published in 1966, established his reputation. In 1975, Boahen published *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*³⁵, a study that was written within the liberal paradigm and thus treated democracy and free markets favourably, while presenting socialism and state-led development as regrettable aberrations. The current official secondary school textbook for Ghana, which has been in circulation for over two decades now, is *History for Senior Secondary Schools*.³⁶ However, many current teachers and students prefer Vincent Okyere's *Ghana: A Historical Survey*,³⁷ because they find it to be more reader-friendly.³⁸ At the university level, D. E. K. Amenumey's *Ghana* is the textbook of choice.³⁹ Amenumey, like his forerunners, examined nationalism as a continuum and acknowledged, like the other textbook authors, that the preoccupation of the so-called "conservatives" and "radicals" was with answering questions about nation, nationalism and independence. Yet, in all the accounts, only one nationalism takes shape, while other kinds of nationalisms and imaginings of the Ghanaian nation are marginalised as we shall

³² F. K. Buah, *An Elementary History for Schools — Book One: Ghana* (London: Macmillan, 1967, 1968).

³³ F. K. Buah, *A History of Ghana* (Oxford: Macmillan Education, 1980, 1998).

³⁴ A. Adu Boahen, *Topics in West African History* (London: Longman, 1960).

³⁵ Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longman, 1975).

³⁶ J. K. Fynn & R. Addo-Fening, *History for Senior Secondary Schools* (Accra: Safeway Printing Works Ltd., 1991).

³⁷ Vincent Okyere, *Ghana: A Historical Survey* (Accra: Vinox Publications, 2000).

³⁸ Interview with Peter Boakye Ph.D., lecturer, University of Cape Coast and former Head of the History Department, Mfantshipim College, Cape Coast, March 2019.

³⁹ D. E. K. Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History from Pre-colonial Times to the 20th Century* (Accra: Woeli, 2008). Another textbook that is suitable for use at the university level is: Roger Gocking, *The History of Ghana* (Westport; Connecticut; London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005). Roger Gocking's textbook was written for education institutions in the USA and is not widely used in Ghana.

see below.

1.3 Features of the Grand Narrative

The characteristics of Ghana's Grand Narrative include its homoarchy (arranged in a fixed pecking order), its binary nature, and its assumption of a historical continuum. In keeping with its premise of continuity, the Grand Narrative recounts a single story about a hierarchical anti-colonial nationalist resistance system that spans a period of about one century (1860-1960). What emerges in this dominant narrative is the story of a clear pursuit of the nation-state ideal by a group of anti-colonial nationalist resisters from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. This is all the more evident because the post-1945 nation-states of Africa are projected too far back in time. And yet the Grand Narrative discounts relevant historically grounded cosmopolitan results of travel, interaction and knowledge-making that preceded the colonial encounter. The accounts examine the publications of nineteenth- and twentieth-century writer-intellectuals for evidence of their anti-colonial resistance, which is seen to be a continuous revolutionary agenda from pre-colonial times to colonial times. In this way, past scholars have built a Grand Narrative that is teleological, simplistic and tendentious.

The figure below uses major and minor qualities of the Grand Narrative to explain the complex problem in an accessible way.

Figure 1–1 Qualities of the Grand Narrative

Major Qualities	Historical Continuum	Homoarchic	Binary
Minor Qualities	Simplistic	Hierarchical	Limited cast of characters
	Nation state-bound	Teleological	Shallow in time
	Exclusionary	Tendentious	Western/Coloniser <i>versus</i> African/Colonised
	Examines all actions through the prism of post-1945 anti-colonial resistance	Favours radical nationalism	Educated <i>versus</i> Chiefs

The major and minor qualities are examined broadly in this study by subsuming the many attributes of the Grand Narrative under the three characteristics of its homoarchy, its binary structure and its assumptions of a historical continuum. This is because the various features of the Grand Narrative could be submerged in other qualities. Thus, this study will sometimes oversimplify and sometimes overlap these features in grouping the commonalities.

Although this dissertation uses the term “national” to describe the Grand Narrative, there are in fact two versions of it in Ghana. A shorter, pedestrian version, often used by politicians, situates the anti-colonial movement as a post-1945 phenomenon, and highlights Nkrumah. The longer, academic version goes all the way back to 1870, and includes some non-Ghanaians. According to the shorter form, a conservative group of constitutionally-minded, well-to-do, older men, some of whom were lawyers, chiefs and businessmen and therefore elite, founded the United Gold Coast Convention in 1947 to

advocate for self-government.⁴⁰ On account of their occupations, the Grand Narrative labels these men as “elitists,” who adopted the uninspiring rallying cry of “Self-government in the shortest possible time,” and were unwilling to devote much of their own time and energies to taking action in pursuit of self-government. Thus, in 1947, they employed the more charismatic, down-to-earth and financially disadvantaged Kwame Nkrumah to be their General Secretary. Nkrumah, who was more radical and more committed to independence (the term “self-government” is rarely used in the narrative when Nkrumah is mentioned), found the slow pace of the conservatives increasingly unacceptable. Tired of their reactionary methods, Nkrumah parted ways with the conservatives in 1949 to establish his radical CPP, which purposefully adopted the slogan “Self-Government Now.” Unlike the UGCC’s conservatives, who were willing to collaborate with the colonial administration, Nkrumah was as uncompromising as he was insistent, and finally won the Gold Coast’s Independence from Britain in 1957. The narrative concludes that Independence was therefore wrested from the unwilling British and their UGCC collaborators, through Nkrumah’s steadfastness, hard work and able leadership. Thus, Nkrumah and his radical party pursued a logical vision in resisting colonial rule, while the conservative opponents of Nkrumah acquiesced in colonial rule.

The longer version of the Grand Narrative, in reality the academic and textbook version, recognises that the timeline of the pedestrian, or popular, Grand Narrative is too shallow. The label “proto-nationalist” is deployed to describe nationalists who, as critics of racism and empire, demanded changes in the *status quo*. Those described as “cultural nationalists” are praised for their foresight in locating the evils of Westernisation in the language, attitudes and behaviour of colonised Africans. Finally, “conservative nationalism” is deemed collaborative, pro-chief and pro-empire in its words and actions, and therefore is pitted against its opposite number, “radical nationalism.” The longer Grand Narrative includes as proto-nationalists intellectuals from elsewhere in West

⁴⁰ Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Nelson, 1957); ---, *I Speak of Freedom* (London: Panaf, 1961); David E. Apter, *The Gold Coast in Transition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955); Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (GB: Frederick Muller 1956); F. M. Bourret, *Ghana: The Road to Independence 1919-1957* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1960); Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press 1964); Basil Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah, 1973* (Oxford: James Currey, 2007).

Africa, such as James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1883) and Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912). As illustrated by Kwaku Larbi Korang's treatment of African modernity in *Writing Ghana*,⁴¹ Horton is located in these accounts as the progenitor of radical nationalism, with its rejection of African ways, while Blyden, for his promotion of African customs, is revered as the herald of cultural and conservative nationalism. The Fanti Confederation and the ARPS are also identified in these accounts as groups that were both culturally nationalist and proto nationalist. The nationalism of the UGCC is categorised as conservative, while that of its CPP adversary is described as radical.

The resultant homoarchy underlying this longer version of the Grand Narrative is then graded according to the perceived importance of the distinct nationalisms — in ascending order, from proto-nationalism at the base to cultural nationalism, to conservative nationalism and ultimately, to radical nationalism at the summit. In its global context, radical nationalism combines aspects of Socialism, Pan-Africanism and racial pride. By contrast, conservative nationalism combines the liberal tenets of representation, constitutionality and the rule of law, as well as the guarantee of individual liberties with local institutions. In all the accounts, proto-nationalists, cultural nationalists, conservative nationalists and radical nationalists are seen to engage in a monolithic anti-colonial struggle that sought to establish the nation-state that emerged in 1957. As Richard Rathbone notes, historians combed the “earlier history of Ghanaian political thought and movements for evidence of authentic antecedents of the kinds of ideas and methodologies which both constructed and inspired the CPP.”⁴² The outcome of this search was that:

Recent Ghanaian political history was increasingly expressed as a sequential rehearsal of what ultimately transpired in the 1950s. The Bond of 1844, the Mankessim or Fante Confederation, the Aborigines Rights Protection Society, the National Congress of British West Africa, the Youth Conference, the Youth League and the UGCC were all presented as ancestors of the eventual triumph

⁴¹ Kwaku Larbi Korang, *Writing Ghana, Imagining Africa: Nation and African Modernity* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003).

⁴² Richard Rathbone, “An Anti-Colonial African Monarchy; Nana Sir Ofori Atta I and the Conservative Nationalist tradition in Ghana” in Toyin Falola ed., *Ghana in Africa and the World: Essays in Honor of Adu Boahen* (Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press 2003), p. 623.

of not just nationalism but of radical nationalism. In some respects, this approach was at best highly selective. Its weakness was that it tended to marginalise other, more obviously discordant, voices.⁴³

Thus, the narrative is reinforced by the invention of a proto-nationalist prehistory for the CPP, based on an extended chronology of events. The designation of Horton and Blyden, as well as the 1870 Fanti Confederation and the 1897 ARPS, as the forerunners in the Grand Narrative of the CPP of 1949, assumes a common goal for their nationalisms that is, in reality, impossible. Such a conclusion exists in the dominant account because specificity has been replaced by a flattening of time, and complexity has been exchanged for simplicity. In the meantime, historical actors are credited with a premonition that they definitely never possessed, since in real time they could not have foreseen the future ramifications of their actions and inactions. When viewed in their distinct contemporaneous contexts, the Ghanaian nationalisms are easily recognisable as plural, as opposed to singular; heterarchic, as opposed to homoarchic; and cosmopolitan, as opposed to nation-state bounded. However, they are not so easily labelled.

1.4 Doing History Backwards: Problems of Narration in the Grand Narrative

Recent scholarship recognises, as an essential component of a nation's history, narratives that explain history from different perspectives, and in particular, new narratives that contest and rebuke "grand narratives."⁴⁴ Examining the problem of incomplete or misleading renderings of national histories, Cooper identifies teleological chronology as a major cause. With reference to the "study of nationalism in colonial societies,"⁴⁵ Cooper cautions against what he calls "doing history backwards." In his assessment, presentism plagues nationalist narratives because scholars choose to assess colonial history by focusing on the nation-state as the end result, without exploring the diverse debates and personalities, or the contested processes and compromises that shape historical outcomes. Therefore, historical narratives must span the gamut of forces and

⁴³ Rathbone, "An Anti-Colonial Monarchy," p. 624.

⁴⁴ Susan Geiger, Jean Marie Allman, and Nakanyike Musisi, *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002); Fouere, Marie-Aude, ed. *Remembering Julius Nyerere in Tanzania: History, Memory, Legacy* (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2015).

⁴⁵ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2005), p. 18.

factors that, to some historians, appear inconsequential to the making of modern society. Framing Ghana exclusively in terms of the pursuit of nationhood obscures pathways that were proposed and greatly influenced the historical process, although they were not successfully or completely traversed.

Accounts of the nation rooted in a teleological chronology of events within a framework of graded nationalism create the demand for what Pieter Boele van Hensbroek calls “nationalism’s colonial prehistory.”⁴⁶ As van Hensbroek notes, although this sounds useful:

The idea of a prehistory of nationalism should be rejected.... It betrays an anachronistic perspective that treats categories of a later period, which are assumed to embody the full idea of what nationalism “really” is, as a yardstick for assessing thought through its various specific historical discourses, deciphering their particular conceptions of liberation and reconstructing the options for political action within their particular historical context.⁴⁷

The failure of Ghana’s grand narrative to contextualise various discourses has meant that, stifled by the notion of a historical continuum, nationalisms other than radical nationalism have not been understood as potent responses in their own right to distinct historical times.

1.5 Problems of a Homoarchic Grand Narrative

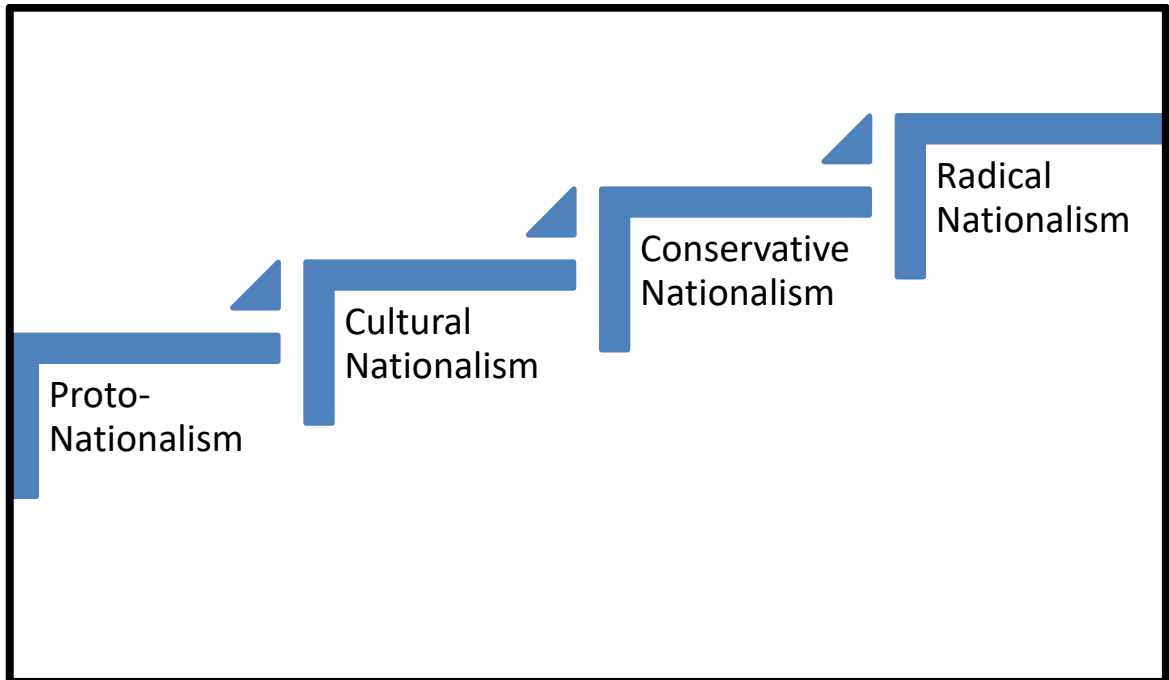
The hierarchical arrangement of the stages of Ghanaian nationalism from the least relevant — proto-nationalism — to the most relevant — radical nationalism — has obscured the complexities of the national narrative. In this flawed interpretation, the collective agenda of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century writer-intellectuals is juxtaposed against that of radical nationalism, which emerged after World War II and is supposedly the highest and most authentic form of nationalism. By styling some actors as radicals and rendering a narrative that focuses on their ultimate victory, anchored in ostensibly superior ideologies, academic history has downplayed the programme of other

⁴⁶ Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses in African Thought: 1860 to Present* (Westport, CT; London Praeger Publishers, 1999), p. 71.

⁴⁷ Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 71.

nationalists, who were variously proto-nationalists, cultural nationalists and conservative nationalists. The works of academic scholarship that established this hierarchy of nationalists thus provided ammunition for debates about the origin of the nation-state, by creating the concepts of triumphant nationalisms and inadequate nationalisms. Figure 1.2 depicts the hierarchy, as presented in the dominant accounts.

Figure 1–2 Graded Homoarchic Nationalism in Ghana



The tendency to credit so-called radical anti-colonial nationalism with the making of modern Africa, silences many voices, including those of women, the youth, chiefs and non-chiefly leaders, as well as those that tell other stories off the central pathway of radical nationalism.⁴⁸ Consequently, other matters that are relevant to the question that the Grand Narrative pretends to answer, such as the very important evolving quest to find the Ghanaian nation-state, and the way in which the definition of that nation-state changes over time, cannot be accommodated.

Rathbone also observes how the homoarchy that is reified with radical nationalism

⁴⁸ Susan Geiger, “Women and African Nationalism,” *Journal of Women's History* Vol. 2, no. 1 (1990): 227-244.

at the top and other nationalisms beneath it has marginalised other voices. In the *longue durée*, those most affected are the ones categorized as conservative nationalists, who in extant accounts are treated in such negative terms that they remain misunderstood years later. In the dominant accounts, Rathbone opines, “the conservative nationalists were widely perceived by formal scholarship as both wrong and unromantic”⁴⁹ because:

The conservative nationalist tradition was painted by scholars using a borrowed and intensely pejorative palette generated by the CPP’s own understandably hostile feelings about its political enemies. We find out little about their personalities and their ideas from texts. The fate of opposition politicians was, it seems, to fade after 1951, forgotten and unloved by the bulk of the Ghanaian electorate.⁵⁰

The Grand Narrative that emerged therefore used language that cemented a negative image of non-CPP historical actors, and this made it difficult for their agenda to be assessed without prejudice. In this way, the nationalist history of Ghana has been both consciously and unconsciously crafted to highlight one version of radical nationalism as the final and inevitable outcome of the African struggle against European colonialism.

1.6 Problems of a Binary Grand Narrative

E. A. Ayandele, Basil Davidson, and the historian and traditional ruler, Nana Kobina Nketsia V, are scholars of nationalism who pursue the dyad of Africa versus the West to emphasise an authentic African difference that experienced a siege during the colonial period.⁵¹ Ayandele accuses the Nigerian intelligentsia of succumbing to “cultural enslavement,”⁵² and deluded hybridism. He opines further:

The total ideological barrenness [*sic*] of the educated class is the best illustration of the ill-suited, ill-digested, procrustean [*sic*] and mentally

⁴⁹ Rathbone, “An Anti-Colonial African Monarchy,” 624.

⁵⁰ Rathbone, “An Anti-Colonial African Monarchy,” 624.

⁵¹ Emmanuel Ayankanmi Ayandele, *The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society* (Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1974); Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992). Ayandele used the term “deluded hybrids” as the title of a chapter in his book.

⁵² Ayandele, *The Educated Elite*, p. 177.

benumbing Western-style education system in which they had been brought up, and in which they continued to wallow long after it ought to have occurred to them to ponder a truly national educational system designed to achieve such national objectives envisioned by deluded hybrids like James Johnson, Mojola Agbebi and Henry Carr — an educational system that would have liberated the genius of Nigerians in relation to their authentic social, cultural, economic and political aspirations.⁵³

For Davidson, the nationalism that produced the nation-states of Africa is “not a restoration of Africa to Africa’s own history, but the onset of a new period of indirect subjection to the history of Europe.”⁵⁴ In a lengthy and well-researched book, Nana Nketsia⁵⁵ continues in the tradition of Ayandele, accusing the educated elite of Ghana, to whom he refers as “*aburoba*,”⁵⁶ of supplanting rich and relevant indigenous African institutions and cultures with ill-fitting European substitutes. For Nana Nketsia, this catastrophic adoption has stymied African development, because the educated African was “structured and indoctrinated to follow ingrained European models.” For Nana Nketsia therefore, “the mind of the ‘educated’ African serves as Africa’s executioner.”⁵⁷ Although he gives the educated elite, from Blyden to Nkrumah, credit for leading the nationalist struggle, Nana Nketsia ultimately singles out their Western indoctrination as the bane of Africa. His conclusion is in line with Davidson’s, articulated forcefully in *Black Man’s Burden* — an opportunity was missed during the decades of the independence struggle to shun European nation-state models in favour of culturally relevant African systems. Scholars such as Ayandele, Davidson and Nana Nketsia, who problematise the loss of the “African personality,” also see a historical continuum — a long walk to independence by African nationalists, beginning in the nineteenth century.

Another way in which the binary is enforced is through the casting of the narratives in a pan-African frame, as in the case of Korang’s *Writing Ghana, Imagining Africa*. The

⁵³ Ayandele, *The Educated Elite*, p. 142.

⁵⁴ Davidson, *Black Man’s Burden*, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Nana Kobina Nketsia V, *African Culture in Governance and Development: The Ghana Paradigm* (Accra and Cape Coast: Ghana Universities Press and Cape Coast University Press, 2013), p. 869.

⁵⁶ Nana Nketsia, *African Culture*, p. 380. The Fanti term “*aburoba*,” signifying “the poster child of Western influence,” literally means “child of a Caucasian.”

⁵⁷ Nana Nketsia, *African Culture*, p.108.

problem with the pan-African perspective is its insistence on African difference and its consequent denial of the cosmopolitan milieu that distilled the thoughts of historical actors. With the exception of Hakim Adi's *Pan-Africanism and Communism*,⁵⁸ which highlights the collaboration between Africans, Americans and Europeans, historians who have examined pan-Africanism as a concept, such as Geiss and Langley,⁵⁹ have emphasized the polarity of African versus Western. Langley's work with its emphasis on the interwar years affirms the position of this dissertation that those years are key to our understanding of post-1945 nationalism. Yet, Langley as other scholars examines the intellectual productions of this era as designed by the leaders to reassert and rediscover themselves after the dehumanizing experience of alien rule."⁶⁰ He gets caught in the dyad of Africa versus the West and this limits his appreciation of the full gamut of the intellectual works of his West African intellectuals from Horton to Nkrumah. As the networks and intellectual pursuits of the intelligentsia demonstrated, the writer intellectuals were not constrained by a binary choice between "Africa" and "the West." Rather, their world view, which was shaped by the numerous voyages they undertook across the Atlantic and the networks they formed with other colonial subjects abroad, expressed itself through their active participation in the world.

The Grand Narrative fails to recognise a calculated African engagement with global ideas, and the simultaneous choice made by African thinkers to pursue a path within the context of the possibilities and constraints of their own time. Fortunately, this failure has not gone unnoticed in recent scholarship. Philip Zachernuk has challenged Ayandele's assessment of the Nigerian intelligentsia through the binary prism, by questioning the practice of defining the agenda of the intelligentsia in terms of "conserving African difference or converting Africa to modern, "Western" ways."⁶¹ As Zachernuk argues, the concept of "posed opposites"⁶² does not recognize the complexities of African and

⁵⁸ Hakim Adi, *Pan-Africanism and Communism: The Communist International, Africa and the Diaspora, 1919-1939* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2013).

⁵⁹ Imanuel Geiss and Anne Keep, *The Pan-African Movement: A History of Pan-Africanism in America, Europe, and Africa* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1974); Ayo Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism in West Africa 1900-1945: A Study in Ideology and Social Classes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).

⁶⁰ Langley, *Pan-Africanism and Nationalism*, p. 8.

⁶¹ Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 4.

⁶² Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 4.

European colonial encounters. Zachernuk argues that instead of treating “intellectual history as a unilinear development,”⁶³ there should be a consideration of the “why factors” that contributed to making ideas popular, fade or return.⁶⁴ One important contribution of Zachernuk’s study is that it demonstrates that colonial subjects, such as the Nigerian intellectuals, were able participants in an inter-connected Atlantic world, who “addressed urgent questions of their day.”⁶⁵ Zachernuk’s observations about the Nigerian intelligentsia are useful in the Ghanaian case, since close examination reveals that the Gold Coast intelligentsia were driven by the force of their political, economic and social circumstances to do likewise. They assessed problems of the European colonial era, including the Gold Coast’s continued membership of the British Empire, and weighed the loss of sovereignty against the gains realised from it. Their interest in resolving the problems of their community led them to engage creatively and discriminately with trans-Atlantic ideas in order to develop locally adapted solutions. Zachernuk therefore shows that working without an assumed framework of a historical continuum could open up the possibility of “revising simple ideas about the phases of Nigerian thought,”⁶⁶ while illuminating how available options “were understood at different times.”⁶⁷

Ultimately, the binary imposed by the Grand Narrative emphasises what nineteenth- and twentieth-century writer-intellectuals lacked, as opposed to ascertaining their programme. Thus, the Grand Narrative misses the fact that the writer-intellectuals were cosmopolitan and non-binary, as opposed to rigid proponents of African difference, because the West African environment that produced them had a long history of engaging with non-binary difference. It is also unable to grasp how and why they could not have been anti-colonial, because it refuses to pay attention to the historical context of their times. The fact is that the first-generation nationalists liked the promise of empire, but having once experienced colonial rule, nationalists such as the members of the ARPS were dissatisfied with the benefits that the British Empire delivered. The ARPS agenda

⁶³ Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 8.

⁶⁴ Zachernuk, p. 8.

⁶⁵ Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 13.

⁶⁶ Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 11.

⁶⁷ Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 11.

differed for example from that of Horton and Blyden, who proposed belonging to Empire as an option for African progress. For the ARPS, the British Empire was their lived experience, and they sought to make it effective through reform. The ARPS, like Horton and Blyden, embraced cosmopolitan difference. This innate willingness to engage with other cultures is germane to understanding their writings and their activism. Thus, they made a distinction between a defective colonial régime and a potentially productive Atlantic/global culture. All the writer-intellectuals, from Horton to the post-1945 cohort, were thus comfortable proposing cosmopolitan solutions — such as European-type education for Africans — even as they identified, and protested against, injustices meted out to Africans. Yet, the binary accounts of nationalist history pit nation against empire, interpreting as contradictory the suggestions of these nationalists about how to co-opt colonial rule to gain African progress, while furthering British imperial designs.

1.7 The Grand Narrative as a Continuum

The Grand Narrative relies on a periodisation concept that assumes a historical continuum, treating the agenda of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Gold Coast writer-intellectuals as part of a continuous quest, first for nationhood and ultimately for the pan-African ideal of continental unity. David Kimble, who provided the first exhaustive study of these people identified the nineteenth-century Gold Coast intellectuals as cultural nationalists, insists that Gold Coast history “can only be fully interpreted in the light of the rise of nationalism.”⁶⁸ Citing Hodgkin, Kimble contends that an entity or group earns the right to be identified as nationalist if it asserts “the rights, claims and aspirations of a given African society in opposition to European authority.”⁶⁹ The problem here is that Kimble, like Hodgkin, defines nationalism narrowly in association with anti-colonialism. Kimble assumes, and later historians have concurred with him, that “the awakening of national consciousness [that was] partly responsible for, and partly stimulated by, the revival of interest in the past”⁷⁰ is on that continuum. Although Kimble acknowledges that the “words ‘nation’ and ‘national’ have meant very

⁶⁸ David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. xv.

⁶⁹ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. xiv.

⁷⁰ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 523.

different things at ... different times,”⁷¹ he insists that “one conclusion that emerges from this detailed study is the essential continuity of the nationalist tradition.”⁷² For good measure, he explicitly presents his study of the origins of nationalism in the Gold Coast as a “continuously growing volume of [anti-colonial] resentment and criticism.”⁷³ Kimble accepts that his cultural nationalist writers aimed primarily to demonstrate “that their own customs, ways of life and ideas were a sufficient basis for educational and constitutional advancement,” yet he nonetheless equates their evidently reform-oriented nationalism with later anti-colonial nationalism, which aimed to end colonial rule, not to reform it.

Another proponent of African nationalism as a continuous historical process is Korang, who interprets the agenda of the Gold Coast writer-intellectuals within the frame of the pursuit of the nation-state, for which cause Korang defines the intellectuals as participants “in the unfolding drama of the modern.”⁷⁴ For Korang, they matter because they engaged with the “recurrent problem of African modernity at the frontline.”⁷⁵ The issue is that Korang and other proponents of nationalist history have missed the concept of historical continuity and change by holding tenaciously to the exclusive equation of Gold Coast nationalism with continuous anti-colonial resistance. As Frederick Cooper cautions, it is attentiveness to context that protects the historian from “story plucking, leapfrogging legacies, doing history backward, and the epochal fallacy.”⁷⁶ Cooper concedes that focusing on historical context does not amount to abandoning previous epochs. Indeed, he admits that in recognising historical time as both plural and “lumpy,”⁷⁷ the historian accepts that “time [...] is not divided into self-contained compartments.”⁷⁸ However, Cooper contends that the tendency to consider the present as the natural outcome of the past, and the habit of “using the analytic categories of the present with the native categories of the past”⁷⁹ is to blame for much of the teleology

⁷¹ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 554.

⁷² Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 554.

⁷³ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 555.

⁷⁴ Korang, *Writing Ghana, Imagining Africa* (University of Rochester Press, 2004), p. 10.

⁷⁵ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 21.

⁷⁶ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), p.17.

⁷⁷ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, p. 21.

⁷⁸ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, p. 22.

⁷⁹ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, p. 18.

found in African histories.⁸⁰ For Cooper, this is the familiar pitfall of “doing history backwards.”⁸¹ Applying Cooper’s admonition, it is evident that although Korang appropriately locates African writer-intellectuals as active participants in the making of the modern his methodology is flawed, because the logic of his periodisation is premised on the assumption of homogeneity.

As Cooper notes, the theory of historical continuum, with its homoarchical and binary attributes, results in the flattening of time. However, contrary to its portrayal in the Grand Narrative, the Gold Coast’s nationalism was not linear. Instead, it can be imagined as a variety of nationalisms, with post-1945 anti-colonial nationalism as a moment in one strain that stretches back in time. In the Grand Narrative accounts, the rise of a new kind of nationalism usurps and displaces the old type of nationalism. Thus, conservative nationalism supplanted cultural nationalism, while radical nationalism replaced conservative nationalism. Yet in reality, some aspects of each outgoing nationalism, as labelled by the dominant narrative, remained and continued to compete alongside the incoming nationalism. All the nationalisms were deeply rooted in West African history, with many overlapping actors and many uncertainties, but with related outcomes. At various times, the emergent nationalisms were parts of the same whole, distinguished only by historical context and historical actors. In short, nationalism in Ghana, as in many other places in Africa, can best be understood as a series of historical processes that unfolded in a cosmopolitan context with cosmopolitan participants, but is otherwise not easily defined or categorised.

1.8 Nation and Nationalism: Review of Relevant Literature

Since Thomas Hodgkin first defined the term for the African context in 1956, scholars of nationalism have used it to denote resistance to European domination, thus supporting a dominant discourse of dualism — the binary of African versus Western. In *Nation and Narration*, Homi Bhabha has shown the continuing relevance of the thoughts of the nineteenth-century theorist Ernest Renan on nation and nationalism. Renan’s theory of nation is predated by that of Johann Gottfried Fichte. Together, Fichte and

⁸⁰ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, p. 18.

⁸¹ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, p. 18.

Renan suggested ways of thinking about the nation that continue to dominate most writings on the subject.⁸² Fichte, applying his own concept to Germany, defined the nation as a natural and sacred community of people bonded together in an organic and spiritual union. The fundamental attributes of Fichte's nation include its internal boundary, defined by language and culture, and its external boundary, defined by physical space. Fichte's internal boundary is fixed and critical to the nation's survival, but the external boundary can be redrawn to suit the people's needs. In the 1880s, Renan conceptualised the nation as a community of people with a shared history and mindset, who have a will to continue to live together. Renan differs from Fichte in that he emphasises the critical aspect of human will — the determination of the present people to continue to participate in the enterprise that the past has bequeathed to them, whether through blood and culture, or through political or religious coercion. For Renan, as for Fichte, territory is important but not critical. Benedict Anderson's concept of the nation as fiction, an imagined community, is closely related to Renan's view. The difference is that Anderson views the rise of the modern nation as an elitist creation of print culture. Other scholars, such as Edward Said, Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty, have viewed the nation and its attendant nationalism as a hegemonic ideology imposed on modern society by Europe.⁸³

There are many ways to understand the terms “nation,” “nationalism” and “nationalist,” and this study recognises and exploits this variety. In relation to Ghana, the terms are used in this dissertation not in strict reference to the post-1957 nation-state, but contextually, to reflect the meanings intended by historical actors at various times in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For example, the term “nationalism” is employed here to connote loyalty and devotion to one's nation, as well as a sense of national consciousness. Thus, a nationalist is one who evinces such forms of affection for their concept of nation, and this dissertation does not contest the use of that word to describe

⁸² Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation, 1807-8* “Reden an die deutsche Nation,” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Joseph Ernest Renan, *What is a Nation?* (Translated and annotated by Martin Thom), “Qu'est-Ce Qu'une Nation? Conférence (1882),” in Homi K. Bhabha, ed. *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis 1990) pp. 8-22.

⁸³ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979); Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Vol. 11. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

the Gold Coast writer-intellectuals and their West African peers, Horton and Blyden.

Between 1860 and 1965, “nation” meant different things at different times to different people, and the writer-intellectuals whose works are studied here adjusted their understanding of the term constantly to reflect their times. Some of the writer-intellectuals, such as Horton, Blyden and Hayford, imagined Anglophone West Africa as a nation. At the same time, Horton and Blyden, like Sarbah and Hayford, defined the Fanti and Ashanti territories as nations. In the same way, all of the writer-intellectuals, including Attoh Ahuma, J. B. Danquah and Kwame Nkrumah, advocated for a Gold Coast nation that did not necessarily include all the land that would become Ghana. Some of them understood themselves to be race nationalists. The majority of them were both race nationalists and West African nationalists, as well as Gold Coast nationalists, and after 1957, some became Ghana nationalists. The argument is that they deserve to be studied on their own terms, using the meanings of nation that they understood. This is essential because the projection backwards from 1957 of the nation-state idea to capture their thoughts has led to ways of examining those thoughts that are misleading. As Bhabha has noted, contrary to past practice, “no single explanation sending one back immediately to a single origin is adequate.”⁸⁴

The Independence anniversary debate in Ghana illustrates a narrow understanding of the concepts of nation and nationalism, and the way in which a misunderstanding of these terms can provide ammunition to interest groups. While a lot has been written about colonial knowledge-making and how one must read against the grain of the colonial archive to arrive at historical facts,⁸⁵ knowledge-making about the making of the nation has received barely any attention.⁸⁶ Issues raised about colonial knowledge-making resulted, for example, in the adoption of the subaltern approach, and the inclusion of the

⁸⁴ Homi K. Bhabha, “DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation,” in Homi K. Bhabha, ed. *op. cit.*, p. 293.

⁸⁵ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁸⁶ Dan O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party, 1948-1994* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1997); Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); Saul Dubow, *Apartheid, 1948-1994* (Oxford: OUP, 2014).

colonial experiences of women and everyday people.⁸⁷ Elsewhere in Africa, recent literature on African nationalism has begun to engage critically with the processes involved in the construction of our knowledge of the making of the nation.⁸⁸ The same cannot be said for Ghana, and the publications that heralded the fiftieth anniversary of Independence exemplify how the Grand Narrative continues to dominate scholarship on Ghana.

Two seminal works — Basil Davidson’s 1974 publication *Black Star* and David Rooney’s 1988 book *Kwame Nkrumah*— were reprinted in 2007 to coincide with the Golden Jubilee.⁸⁹ Both Rooney’s work, although slightly revised from the first edition, and the Davidson reprint, maintain their original focus on Nkrumah as the history-maker, and retain the essential reading of conservative nationalism as a dead end. Another publication that emerged from the fiftieth anniversary observance was Ama Biney’s intellectual history of Kwame Nkrumah, written to affirm his “continuing relevance.”⁹⁰ For Biney, the Nkrumah agenda, though sometimes flawed in its practical implementation, remains a viable tool for the political and economic advancement of Ghana and Africa. A recent study by Jeffrey Ahlman, about the experiences of those who shared the postcolonial world of Nkrumah, examines “Nkrumaism,” as the CPP called their philosophy.⁹¹ Ahlman explores Nkrumaism as an evolving ideology that was constructed for a “disciplined, socialist, modern, and cosmopolitan citizenry.”⁹² Ahlman’s appreciation of the cosmopolitan society that Nkrumaism sought to create, as distinct from the cosmopolitan society that existed before Nkrumah burst onto the scene in 1947, is at the heart of the tensions the book explores. Ahlman’s study offers a

⁸⁷ Ahlman, *Quills of the Porcupine*; Susan Geiger, “Tanganyikan Nationalism as ‘Women’s Work,’” Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization*.

⁸⁸ See the following revisionist works that focus on nationalism. Emma Hunter, *Political Thought and the Public Sphere in Tanzania* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Meredith Terretta, *Nation of Outlaws, State of Violence: Nationalism, Grassfields Tradition, and State Building in Cameroon* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013); James R. Brennan, *Taiya: Making Nation and Race in Urban Tanzania* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012); Schmidt, *Cold War and Decolonization*.

⁸⁹ Basil Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Praeger, 1974; Oxford: James Currey, 2007); David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Political Kingdom in the Third World* (London, UK: IB Tauris, 1988; Accra: Sub-Saharan, 2007).

⁹⁰ Ama Biney, *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 8.

⁹¹ Jeffrey S. Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism: Nation, State, and Pan-Africanism in Ghana* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2017).

⁹² Ahlman, *Nkrumahism*, p. 4.

balanced understanding of Nkrumaism, but it does not examine critically the competing concepts that struggled for space in the Ghanaian public sphere.

With the exception of Rathbone, who questioned the language that had been used to describe the so-called conservative nationalist agenda, most scholars engaged with the making of Ghana's national narrative have expanded the history without necessarily contesting or rebuking the Grand Narrative. The serious contestations that have come from opponents of the Nkrumah agenda have either been overly critical of Nkrumah, e.g. Peter Omari's *Kwame Nkrumah*,⁹³ or insufficiently critical of his opponents' agendas, e.g. Ofori-Appiah's *J. B. Danquah*.⁹⁴ As evidenced by the books that were reissued to mark Ghana's fiftieth Independence Day in 2007, and by the reinstatement of a Founder's Day in 2009, the common homoarchic reading of Nkrumah's nationalism as radical does not accommodate a heterarchic perspective on the making of the nation. Hence the continued dominance of Ghana's Grand Narrative.

This study does not contest the abiding relevance of Nkrumah's politics or his thought. It does argue however, that the continued focus on Nkrumah as the central figure in the anti-colonial struggle and in post-colonial Ghana privileges an elitist history and reifies a single story because Nkrumah crafted his political party and the nation disproportionately around his own persona, and strove consciously to eliminate other characters from the story. As Biney notes, Nkrumah's dream of national and continental unity continues to be an elusive project. This is precisely because Nkrumah's socialist programme was unintentionally divisive in its implementation. As they do with the "colonial archives," scholars must recognise the existence of a metaphorical "Nkrumah archive." The study of this archive must necessarily involve Ann Stoler's reading simultaneously with and against the grain of the archives,⁹⁵ as well as Jacques Derrida's caution that a "*mal d'archive*"⁹⁶ actually exists. Derrida's prompting to see archives as a place of power play is particularly useful for studies of nationalists and nationalism, because the documented history and archival resources in respect of a significant period

⁹³ T. Peter Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship* (London: C. Hurst, 1970).

⁹⁴ Lawrence H. Ofori-Appiah, *The Life and Times of Dr. J. B. Danquah* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1974).

⁹⁵ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton University Press, 2010).

⁹⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

in post-colonial states remain politically and logistically biased in favour of successful nationalist parties and their leaders. As argued by Jean Allman, inconsistencies in the information management systems of postcolonial African states such as Ghana have resulted in predominantly underdeveloped and therefore flawed archives.⁹⁷ The corollary of this *mal d'archive* is for researchers to think of the postcolonial archive in its cosmopolitan contexts; thus, a heavy reliance on a “global transnational archive.”⁹⁸ This is not to say that there are no scholarly works that take seriously those who contested the Nkrumah agenda. The argument is that postcolonial history writing must acknowledge that the Ghana archive is incomplete.

Theories by various scholars, including Cooper, Achille Mbembe and Homi Bhabha, hold out the promise of cutting through the sterility of these debates. Mbembe, invoking Cooper, argues that African societies are “rooted in a multiplicity of times, trajectories, and rationalities that, although particular and sometimes local, cannot be conceptualised outside of a world that is, so to speak, globalised.”⁹⁹ Other scholars, such as V. Y. Mudimbe and Kwame Anthony Appiah, have thought of Africa in relation to the world, and have provoked scholars into engaging more deeply with Africa. Mudimbe’s argument that Africa is a concept invented by a discourse engaged in by insiders and outsiders over a long period of time, is useful.¹⁰⁰ His assessment of the discourses of intellectuals such as Blyden, Jean-Paul Sartre and Léopold Sédar Senghor, as they projected their visions and understandings of the continent, is a useful background for this research, which targets the networks of Gold Coast writer-intellectuals and the interactions between them and their peers.

1.9 Cosmopolitan Nationalism: A Conceptual Framework

Because the Grand Narrative embeds an understanding of African (and Ghanaian) history as binary, it does not take into account the geographical context that facilitated key events and debates, such as the cosmopolitan connections that shaped West African

⁹⁷ Jean Allman, “Phantoms of the Archive: Kwame Nkrumah, a Nazi Pilot Named Hanna, and the Contingencies of Postcolonial History-Writing,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 118, No. 1 (February 2013), pp. 104-129.

⁹⁸ Allman, “Phantoms of the Archive,” p. 126.

⁹⁹ Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁰ V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Indiana University Press, 1988).

people and their environment. Although history books have not presented it accurately, the revelation of an active engagement by West Africans with a different culture is not new.¹⁰¹ Various scholars have even made the case that Africa, and not least Ghana, is, in fact, essentially cosmopolitan. Cosmopolitan orientations were already at play before the fifteenth century, when the interactions between Africa and Europe intensified. Recent scholarship agrees that inaccurate readings of West Africa as unchanging and isolated from the world until the European encounter, inhibit understandings of the later interactions.¹⁰² Toby Green's *Fistful of Shells* confirms the complexities that marked the interconnected exchanges of West Africa, within the dynamics of the Old World and later, those of the New World. Green's chapter on the Gold Coast in Part I (c. 1400-1680) and Part II (c. 1680-1830), asserts much about cultural cosmopolitanism in West Africa.¹⁰³

Arabic sources create an awareness of the long history of interaction between West Africa, Europe and Asia. They confirm that for centuries, the peoples of West Africa interacted with the rest of the Old-World leaving vestiges of this past in their languages, religious practices and politics as well as trade patterns. The contributions of the Moroccan scholar Ibn Battuta (1304-1377)¹⁰⁴ and the Tunisian scholar, Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406)¹⁰⁵ are examples of Arabic sources that provide glimpses into the lives of Africans before the European contact of the fifteenth century. In all the cultures within the West African trade zone, intellectual life was verbally and visually communicated and consisted of proverbs, oral history and songs as well as art forms. Knowledge transfer and acquisition, which became possible with the emergence of wise men, was mostly oral

¹⁰¹ Frederick Cooper, *Africa in the World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), p. 9.

¹⁰² Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*; Cooper, *Africa in the World*; Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001).

¹⁰³ Toby Green, *A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the Rise of the Slave Trade to the Age of Revolution* (London: Penguin UK, 2019).

¹⁰⁴ Ibn Battuta was a scholar and explorer who dictated details of his travels to Ibn Juzzay who is the known author of Battuta's travel accounts. The title of the resultant manuscript is: *A Gift to Those who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Traveling. The Travels or Rihla* was dictated in 1334 and the manuscript completed in 1356. It is a celebrated piece of writing in African history because of the details it gives about African life and customs in an era thought to be without written sources.

¹⁰⁵ Ibn Khaldun is best known for his chronicle of seven books, *Kitab-al-ibar (Book of Lessons)* fully translated as *Book of Lessons, record of Beginnings and Events in the History of the Arabs and the Berbers and their Powerful Contemporaries*. He is considered to be a forerunner in the theoretical framing of various disciplines including history, sociology and economics.

and symbolic in character but with social ownership not individual ownership. Also, certain people (mostly rulers) were so distinct that their names became synonymous with wisdom. These interactions gradually created a cosmopolitan group of people along the trading routes, some of whom founded new settlements. In Asante, Ivor Wilks has noted how the “*akwan tempɔn*” (highways) connected Asante to “transcontinental caravan trails leading to the Mediterranean shores via the great *entrepôts* of the Western and Central Sudan.”¹⁰⁶ Such trade as in the case of Old Ghana, Old Mali and Songhai, served as a source of attraction for Muslim traders and clerics to Asante who were eventually integrated into Asante society for their knowledge of the Trans-Saharan trade as well as their war medicines (Sufism) and record keeping.

Cooper and Mbembe have also called attention to how West Africa engaged with Europe and the Arab world through the North Africa-bound trans-Saharan trade, and, to a degree, with the Orient via the Indian Ocean, before the Portuguese made maritime contact. As a result, the people of West Africa became simultaneously donors to, and recipients of, these cultural interactions. What was new about the direct encounter with Europe was that the change in the direction of trade — to southbound from northbound — situated coastal Africans at the forefront of cultural interaction. As Cooper puts it, since Africa did not exist independently of the rest of the world, a history of Africa is as incomplete without an acknowledgement of its interactions as is a history of the world without due consideration for Africa’s role in it. This is because “the connections that influenced the course of African history go back deeply in time — before the development of capitalism, before European conquests on the continent.”¹⁰⁷ Such contacts, as unequal as they often were, compelled and then shaped debates about Africans and the progress of Africa over time.

Appiah has explored cosmopolitanism as a universal and ethically upright concept. He argues that “cosmopolitanism is about intelligence and curiosity, as well as engagement.”¹⁰⁸ Appiah's cosmopolite values individualism, yet is not limited by

¹⁰⁶ Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Cooper, *Africa in the World*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁸ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), p. 168.

parochial concerns about identity.¹⁰⁹ This cosmopolite is open-minded enough to accept difference and to engage with difference. As a slogan for cosmopolitanism, Appiah proposes “universality plus difference.”¹¹⁰ The deep appreciation of Appiah's cosmopolite for difference entails a world of travel, shared and borrowed knowledge, and the willingness to learn. This is because the cosmopolite “values human variety for what it makes possible,”¹¹¹ and “sees a world of cultural and social variety as a precondition for the self-creation that is at the heart of a meaningful human life.”¹¹² Although the term “Afropolitanism” is widely identified with Mbembe, it was first popularised by Taiye Selasi¹¹³ in a 2005 magazine article, before Mbembe defined its parameters for the academic world.¹¹⁴ Mbembe argues for an African identity that looks beyond both failed utopian anti-colonial nationalism and the “racial solidarity”¹¹⁵ of Pan-Africanism, to capture the lived experiences of Africans. He invokes Africa’s centuries-old history of transnational interactions to affirm his thesis that a plural existence is an authentically African way of life. He further interrogates the “nativistic reflex”¹¹⁶ of Pan-Africanism, which for him is *passé* because the myth of maintaining an autochthonous African culture remains forever challenged by the outward and inward migration of both Africans and non-Africans. Mbembe proposes Afropolitanism as a unifying concept that recognises both continental and diasporic Africans here, there and everywhere, acknowledging their contributions to humanity, as well as their aspirations, which will lead to an Afro-futuristic ideal both on and off the continent.

While Mudimbe demands an understanding of Africa that is grounded in its intellectual history, Appiah’s concept of cosmopolitanism works as a useful analytical tool for understanding cross-cultural engagements. By contrast, Mbembe’s

¹⁰⁹ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 213-272. Chapter 6 of this book, titled “Rooted Cosmopolitanism,” explores Appiah’s concept of a cosmopolitan as one who, like Appiah’s own father, embodies a blend of patriotism, universalism and responsible membership of society, and is not afraid to be different.

¹¹⁰ Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, p. 151.

¹¹¹ Appiah, *Identity*, p. 268.

¹¹² Appiah, *Identity*, p. 268.

¹¹³ Taiye Selasi, “Bye-Bye Babar (Or: What is an Afropolitan?),” *LIP Magazine*, 3rd March 2005.

¹¹⁴ Achille Mbembe, “Afropolitanism” trans. Laurent Chauvet, *Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2007), pp. 26-29.

¹¹⁵ Mbembe, “Afropolitanism,” p. 29.

¹¹⁶ Mbembe, “Afropolitanism,” p. 28.

Afropolitanism looks beyond a provincial image of Africa to provoke an understanding of the continent that transcends the well-worn rhetoric of nationalism and pan-Africanism. This dissertation agrees with Afropolitanism's recognition of an African cosmopolitanism that is so deeply rooted in African history as to make it impossible to recognise an authentic African difference. However, Afropolitanism as a concept does little to address how to examine the thoughts of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century writer-intellectuals, as they pondered the meanings of Africa and contemplated its progress.

Across the board, scholars have framed their perspectives of Ghana's evolution mainly through the prism of nationalism. Nationalism was a common-sense approach that was useful, albeit fraught with dualisms and the dangerous weaknesses of a single story. This established approach to studying Ghanaian history is currently being challenged by emergent versions that recognise the global contexts that shaped historical events. In an assessment of Gold Coast writer-intellectuals, the historian Esperanza Brizuela-Garcia contends that the refusal to acknowledge the nineteenth-century as cosmopolitan has perpetuated the notion of an African culture that was different from, and in opposition to, European culture.¹¹⁷ She argues that the failure to recognise the cosmopolitan context of the writer-intellectuals, coupled with the tendency to pursue binary narratives, is responsible for "what modern observers could see as a central contradiction in the thought of cultural nationalist writers, who did not outright oppose British rule, but looked at the way in which it could be reformed and adapted to better serve the interests of both Crown and people."¹¹⁸ For Brizuela-Garcia, the problem is that the dominant nationalist frame established by Kimble situates historical actors of different historical contexts in a historical continuum of anti-colonial resistance, instead of focusing on the nationalists' preoccupation with empire reform. According to her:

African writers understood that they must not simply rethink the ways in which African communities related to Europeans. What was most important was how they related to one another. In that regard, their writings were deeply

¹¹⁷ Brizuela-Garcia, "*Cosmopolitanism*," p. 209.

¹¹⁸ Brizuela-Garcia, "*Cosmopolitanism*," p. 204.

cosmopolitan. They tried to devise strategies of engagement with communities other than their own (both African and European), while at the same time re-examining their own identities and redefining their obligations.¹¹⁹

Therefore the solution is to devise an alternative interpretation that is “firmly rooted in an understanding of the historical conditions that elicited and encouraged the ideas and works of these men.”¹²⁰ This is because Gold Coast intellectualism was rooted in “a long tradition of cosmopolitan thinking that speaks to the challenges facing modern Ghana, and Africa more generally.”¹²¹

Brizuela-Garcia’s suggested rethink of the Ghanaian intellectuals’ agenda promises to be a useful way forward. However, her call for the application of Appiah’s concept of cosmopolitanism remains largely unheeded. Appiah’s cosmopolitanism appeals because it specifically maps out cosmopolitanism as an intelligent engagement with difference. As Brizuela-Garcia notes, the publications of Gold Coast intellectuals could be better understood if they were situated within the historical context of their authors’ familiarity with other cultures.¹²² Like Appiah’s cosmopolitans, Brizuela-Garcia’s Gold Coast intellectuals were at ease with other cultures because they were well-travelled, well-read and willing to engage intelligently with difference. By recognizing the cosmopolitan environment that fostered key debates in West Africa, the historian can study these events in their complexities through time and space, to facilitate a fuller history of Ghana. Geography and history ensured that being cosmopolitan would not prevent the African debaters examined here from being nationalist. Their nationalism, when it occurred, was located within the geographical and historical context of their prior cosmopolitanism — and necessarily so. Similarly, Bonny Ibhawoh’s *Imperialism and Human Rights* situates key debates in British Africa within the context of rights discourses and shows how cosmopolitan Africans employed Atlantic rights language to pursue their agenda for progress within colonised spaces.¹²³ Ibhawoh’s examination of human rights discourses

¹¹⁹ Brizuela-Garcia, “*Cosmopolitanism*,” p. 220.

¹²⁰ Brizuela-Garcia, “*Cosmopolitanism*,” p. 204.

¹²¹ Brizuela-Garcia, “*Cosmopolitanism*,” p. 204.

¹²² Esperanza Brizuela-Garcia, “*Cosmopolitanism: Why Nineteenth Century Gold Coast Thinkers Matter in the Twenty-First Century*,” *Ghana Studies*, Volume 17, 2014, pp. 203-221.

¹²³ Bonny Ibhawoh, *Imperialism and Human Rights: Colonial Discourses of Rights and Liberties in African History* (Albany: state University of New York Press, 2007).

during the colonial period avoids a homoarchic frame, and demonstrates that African nationalists were not fixated on a nation-state ideal as they clamoured for equal rights with the metropolis. His analysis is also non-binary. Although he examines protests and insistent calls for reform, Ibhawoh is able to show that Africans arrived at the designation of human rights as a universal attribute by themselves and for their own purposes, using tools that were available in the Atlantic world. This dissertation is inspired by such works that have contested the nationalist narrative in innovative ways.

One problem with the adoption of Appiah's concept as Brizuela-Garcia moots is that it does not sufficiently address what to do with nationalism. This dissertation bridges that gap by proposing an understanding of cosmopolitanism as the ever-present environment in which nationalisms and national identities were fostered. In particular, while deconstructing sources and examining them critically, it recognises nationalisms as variegated and situated within the geographical and historical moments in which they occurred. If nationalism is defined as loyalty and devotion to one's nation, and cosmopolitanism is defined as a willingness to engage with difference, then in the case of cosmopolitan African societies, opposing concepts converge. Since being cosmopolitan did not prevent historical actors from being nationalist, and they navigated both terrains in an orderly manner, the term "cosmopolitan nationalism" captures both the historical contexts and the real-time responses better, since it acknowledges the continuous interactions in which Africans engaged. As both Cooper and Mbembe suggest, the timelessness implied in denying pre-European interactions distorts the agenda of the people involved. Interrogating the points of intersection between the two common-sense approaches of nationalism and cosmopolitanism, often seen as contradictory, can help to bridge this historiographical gap. This dissertation goes beyond the binaries of Western/African, resistor/collaborator and radical/conservative, as well as proto nationalist/nationalist, to study key debates through an approach that recognises that debaters were cosmopolitan people who covered a variety of topics, one of which was nationalism.

Cosmopolitan nationalism is proposed not as a narrative framework but to problematise the old categories of proto-nationalism, cultural nationalism, conservative nationalism and radical nationalism. By pointing to the historical actors as both pluralistic

and provincial, this research highlights the fact of their task as negotiators of culture and encounter, while highlighting nationalism as heterarchic, as opposed to homoarchic. The apparently oxymoronic but potentially heuristic quality of the concept of cosmopolitan nationalism is exactly what complicates the narrative and reflects the intellectuals' lived experiences. Contrary to what the homoarchic national narrative has concluded, the road to Ghana was in fact paved by the cosmopolitan nationalisms of different but equal historical actors and times.

1.10 Research Methodology

The study combined desk-based research with field work and is organized around the major themes and major texts that have been used to create the Grand Narrative. All books written by participants in debates are treated as primary sources. The dissertation takes into account the major writer-intellectuals whose works have generally been used by other researchers interested in intellectual history, as great books of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹²⁴ The major texts that shaped debates and informed the popular framework of nationalism are revisited because of the continuing relevance of such basic narratives to the present in many African countries. The “great books” approach is useful because it highlights the sources that feature in the Grand Narrative, and thus makes it possible to rethink the Grand Narrative and shake it up using its own sources. Recent scholarship finds a concentration on great men's thoughts limiting, and thus focuses on grassroots nationalism and other corpuses of texts.¹²⁵ This approach, recently restated by Emma Hunter, expands the available material and multiplies the interpretations of the times, but does not engage directly with, or rebuke, the basic narratives.

The stories that nations like Ghana tell — framed as they are by the assumptions of the 1960s — are embedded in pedagogy, sites of memory and publications. It is therefore useful to re-examine old and familiar sources of historical information, and their interpretations, in new ways. In focusing on the major publications about the Gold Coast and Ghana, this dissertation re-examines the meanings to historical actors of “colonialism” and “nationalism,” and the sufficiency of nationalism as a defining force in

¹²⁴ Kimble, *Political History*; July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought*; van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*; Korang, *Writing Ghana*.

¹²⁵ Hunter, *Political Thought and the Public Sphere*, p. 3.

the creation of modern Ghana. In particular, it relocates Ghanaian nationalisms within their cosmopolitan milieu, and examines them through the eyes of the intellectuals as they debated everyday problems and envisioned the post-colonial state. Since no specific books exist that use cosmopolitanism as a framework for the period, books that acknowledge Atlantic connections are treated as sources for evaluating the Gold Coast and Ghanaian cosmopolitanisms. References to Zachernuk's *Colonial Subjects*, van Hensbroek's *Political Discourses* and Stephanie Newell's *Literary Culture*¹²⁶ are evidence of the use of this method. Other valuable and inspirational works of transnational scholarship include Marc Matera's *Black London*,¹²⁷ J. T. Campbell's *Middle Passages*,¹²⁸ and Hakim Adi's *Pan-Africanism and Communism*, as well as Penny von Eschen's *Race Against Empire*¹²⁹ and *American Africans* by Kevin Gaines.¹³⁰ This dissertation focuses on the Atlantic World and its connections to the making of nationalism in the area currently known as Ghana. However, it does not present a comprehensive transnational history of Ghanaian nationalism. Such a thorough investigation is beyond the scope of this work. Other important issues, such as the role of women in these narratives, as well as the rich history of unwritten nationalisms and intellectual works, have not been addressed. Although this dissertation relies heavily on the print culture, it does not highlight subaltern writers of nationalist orientation. Nor does this study offer an exhaustive account of newspaper publications that emerged within the period under review. The great books approach is upheld here because such publications provide the broad landscape of ideas even if they perhaps miss the nuance of the more voluminous periodical press.

Most of the archival material used in the research is from the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) of Ghana. The material was gathered from the national archives in Accra, Cape Coast and Kumasi, as well as the State

¹²⁶ Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: How to Play the Game of Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002).

¹²⁷ Matera, Marc. *Black London: The Imperial Metropolis and Decolonization in the Twentieth Century* (University of California Press, 2015).

¹²⁸ James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African American Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005* (New York: Penguin, 2007).

¹²⁹ Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

¹³⁰ Kevin Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

Archives of Akyem Abuakwa and the Manhyia Palace Archives. Copies of various Constitutions of Ghana had to be obtained from the Assembly Press, Accra, which continues to house copies of national legislation and parliamentary proceedings. However, Legislative Council Debates had to be obtained from the bookshop of the Ghana Parliament, located at Parliament House, Accra. The scattered disposition of archival material presents a major challenge to doing research in Ghana. Another weakness is the nature of what is available in the archives. PRAAD houses newspapers from the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, most of which are heavily pro-CPP. This catalogue includes many copies of the *Evening News*. However, PRAAD has no copies of the Kumasi-based, opposition-leaning *Ashanti Pioneer* for many of the years under review. The Cape Coast archives, which house Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) documents, could not account for those documents. The researcher had to rely on information presented in an unpublished manuscript by Sammy Tenkorang, who conducted research on the ARPS at the Cape Coast archives during the 1970s. In many instances, the Dalhousie Killam Library archives proved resourceful for newspaper publications relevant to the work that could not be obtained in Ghana. Owing to financial constraints, obtaining physical copies of archival material from the United Kingdom's National Archives proved infeasible, but its valuable information and insights about key personalities, such as Manya Konor Nene Matey Kole (1860-1939), were accessed online.

For a well-rounded contextual analysis, oral testimony was used as a key supplementary source. Interviews with key personalities such as Attoh Kwashie, the founder of the Ga Shifimo Kpee and a founding member of the United Party (UP), provided the context for key debates. The interviews also pointed the researcher to archival and written sources. Other oral interviews pointed out the key role of music as a form of discourse among debaters in colonial Ghana. The dissertation interweaves oral accounts with written sources because intellectual disposition in Africa is not demonstrated only in the library in the form of books, newspapers, essays and letters. Among the Akan of Ghana, for example, a distinction is made between “*efie nyansa*” ([home] wisdom) and “*book mu nyansa*” (book [knowledge] wisdom). Pioneer intellectuals in West Africa — from Blyden to Hayford and Danquah — constantly

harped on the aspects of wisdom (“*efie nyansa*”) that were encapsulated in local customs and laws and advocated formal instruction in customary practice as part of the acquisition of complete knowledge. West Africans recognised that intellectual disposition was a result and function of various forms of cerebral engagement by literates and non-literates. Consequently, the society acknowledged and revered both lettered and unlettered intellectuals, as well as knowledge obtained from literary and non-literary sources. Moreover, an analysis of material written by key persons during the times examined; the words debaters used and the ways they were used, as well as their self-fashioning; indicates that they relied on oral information, which they treated as authentic. Although the intellectual philosophies of the unlettered are equally important in the African context, if not more so, this dissertation does not assess unwritten intellectual works.

One vital limitation of assessing the cosmopolitanism of the writer-intellectuals through the expanded approach adopted in this dissertation is that the research could not pursue a strict methodology of Africans networking on an international scale and applying what they learned internationally to their local situation. This means that the dissertation missed many of the opportunities that a focus on networks and exchanges alone could have for instance revealed. The effect of the decision to steer clear of common perceptions of cosmopolitans as travelled is that the thesis does not present a comprehensive transnational history of Ghanaian nationalism. Another limitation of this study is the absence of women and the decision to not use a gendered lens. The latter is because of time constraint and space as well as the many conceptual issues raised by the Grand Narrative that required a narrow focus. The choice to remain silent on women in this work is because the author of this thesis rejects the condescending creation of spaces for women on the periphery of African history. The author endorses histories that properly integrate women, such as Elizabeth Schmidts’ *Mobilizing the Masses*.¹³¹ Schmidt’s use of extensive primary and secondary sources to uncover a silent majority of hardworking women, whose activities contributed as much to Guinean independence as the activities of war veterans and striking workers, is something the author would like to

¹³¹ Elizabeth Schmidt, *Mobilizing the Masses: Gender, Ethnicity, and Class in the Nationalist Movement in Guinea, 1939-1958* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann 2005); See also: ---, *Cold War and Decolonization in Guinea, 1946–1958* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2007).

see replicated in Ghanaian history. Uncovering the voices of women is too important a project to be treated lightly. Dedicated research is needed to undertake this important project of examining Ghanaian history through the prism of gender in order to make room in the story for the many voices that continue to be silenced because of an ahistorical founder narrative. Other limitations of this work include the choice of a great books approach instead of attempting an exhaustive account of newspaper publications and highlighting subaltern writers whose works are of importance to Ghanaian nationalism. A simple answer is that this work aimed at amplifying the voice and agendas of writer intellectuals who remain marginalised or poorly presented in the grand narrative.

1.11 Chapter Plan

My aim in these chapters is not to provide new categories but to weaken existing categories by broadening the scope of analysis through the lens of cosmopolitanism. The chapters in the study are organized thematically with a loose chronology. When considered as a whole, the chapters object to the hierarchy and fixity of nationalist narratives, and to the singular story about the making of the nation-state. Although the study recognises the many features of the Grand Narrative, the main chapters problematise the homoarchic categorisation of nationalisms, into proto-, cultural, conservative and radical, that is most often used in nationalist history. By examining major publications, key debates and personalities from 1860 to 1965, the dissertation posits that the accepted categories, though useful, remain insufficient when considered against the cosmopolitanism of the Gold Coast and West Africa. The study therefore focuses on the problems associated with the continued use of these labels, in order to make a case for the revision of the dominant account.

Chapter 2 examines the category of proto-nationalism, using the writings of two major nineteenth-century West African figures, James Africanus Beale Horton and Edward Wilmot Blyden, to reveal the inconsistencies of the term proto-nationalism. Horton and Blyden do not fit neatly into that category in the sense in which the term is typically applied to them, because they were both in favour of the imposition of colonial rule. The chapter shows how their cosmopolitan quality, evidenced through their

international and local networks — and not reasons given heretofore by historians — shaped their programme.

In Chapter 3, the term “cultural nationalism” is analysed in relation to the writings and networks of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century writer intellectuals: John Mensah Sarbah, Attoh Ahuma and J. E. Casely Hayford. The chapter highlights their relationship with the British colonial critics Mary Kingsley and E. D. Morel, and how they used their international relations to push their agenda for effective colonial administration in the Gold Coast. Extant interpretations of their agenda ignore this aspect of how their programme evolved. The chapter also discusses how the idea of a uniform Akan culture was cultivated by these early Gold Coast writer-intellectuals, even as they pushed an agenda of synthesis that sought to merge what was good in African (Fanti/Akan) culture with the global. The chapter argues that the seeming inconsistency of the writer-intellectuals’ programme can only be reconciled by taking account of their cosmopolitan milieu. In the old view, the writer-intellectuals of this period are assessed as anti-colonial cultural nationalists of the nation-state type, but this chapter argues that a contextual examination of their publications proves that they were preoccupied with the problem of how to make colonial rule more effective through a synthesis of the local and the global, not with how to conserve the local. It is pointed out that the intellectuals were in favour of Gold Coast membership of the British Empire.

Chapter 4, which is centred on the interwar decades, examines the writings of J. W. de Graft Johnson and J. B. Danquah. It also highlights the role of Nnamdi Azikiwe, a Nigerian journalist in Ghana who would go on to become a leading Nigerian nationalist, and his verdict on the Gold Coasters’ programme of cultural synthesis and the Indirect Rule that came with it. Against the dominant tendency to dismiss the debates about Akan culture that marked this period as symbolic of petty squabbles and factional rivalry, this chapter argues that these debates were in fact the strictly consequential product of the contested processes that marked the imposition of Indirect Rule in southern Ghana. Further, the label of “conservative nationalist” affixed to the main actors in this period is misleading if one examines their agenda in relation to the liberalism of their times. While in England the Liberal Party was distinct from the Conservative Party, in the African context, the “conservatives” were champions of liberalism. The chapter therefore

analyses the interwar period as a time of vibrant intellectual debate, as opposed to the traditional view of this period as a time of political passivity.

Chapter 5 analyses the binary of conservative and radical that is used in relation to the post-1945 politics of the proponents and opponents of synthesis. On the surface, radical nationalism, with its lack of appreciation for African ways, displaced conservatism. However, the questions posed by the proponents of synthesis were not extinguished, even as Nkrumah did his best to sweep them aside. Indeed, these questions still matter today. Again, the questions of socialism and liberalism continue to be as relevant as the Black internationalism that characterized Nkrumah's national policy. The argument in this chapter, as in all the others, is that taking note of the cosmopolitan qualities of the nationalist intellectuals makes a substantial contribution to the story.

Finally, questions that motivate this dissertation concern the nation, nationalism, the distortion of key debates and cosmopolitanism. The dissertation looks beyond the dominant narrative of radical anti-colonial nationalism to recover the creative sites of the intellectual forces that constituted modern Ghana. As is evidenced by their writings, the intellectuals pondered the nation with a cosmopolitan mindset. However, the richness of their engagement with different ideas and possibilities is buried under the grand narrative. Thus, the concept of cosmopolitan nationalism opens up the old categories to expose the plural nationalisms that the historical actors encountered and tried to dominate. At the least, it creates an opportunity to rewrite Ghanaian intellectual history as diverse and complex instead of unilinear and simple. In this way, the concerns of the writer-intellectuals about chieftaincy, modernisation and synthesis, which have been misread by historians, can be revisited and rewritten by appreciating the cosmopolitan context that incubated those thoughts. Most importantly, the research shows how information provided by historical actors and scholars in their writings was transformed into knowledge about the making of the nation and, through constant repetition and enactment, became the national narrative.

CHAPTER 2

Rethinking Proto-Nationalism: Horton and Blyden (1863-1912)

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the writings of two leading nineteenth-century West African intellectuals, James Africanus Beale Horton and Edward Wilmot Blyden, to show the inconsistencies of the term proto-nationalism. The chapter shows how it was their cosmopolitan inclination that shaped their programme, as evidenced by the local and international networks, and not the factors to which historians heretofore have lent attribution. Horton and Blyden, and their networks, are used to explore the lived experiences of nineteenth-century cosmopolitans who identified the problems of their communities and suggested solutions for their time instead of budding opposition to problems which did not yet exist.

The accepted reasoning about proto nationalism assesses nineteenth-century writer-intellectuals within a continuum of anti-colonial resistance. Such scholarship defines the proto nationalists as anti-colonial resisters, race nationalists and cultural nationalists, or in some instances as “deluded hybrids,” when they are seen as having been too pro-Western. Scholarship that hypothesises about a continuous African resistance to European political and cultural imperialism from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century also upholds the binary of African *versus* European/Western.¹ Thus, Korang posits that “African intellectual history is ultimately intelligible only within the unbroken continuum of *one* post-encounter epoch.”² Also, “the chronologies and the writer-intellectuals ... — from the mid- and late-nineteenth century to the recent past, the period labelled as “pre-independence” — are all *contemporary*.”³ Korang argues further that earlier and later African thought is “continuous and inter-illuminating; and, indeed, for

¹ This approach has had a long tenure. See Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (London: Muller, 1956); David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); E. A. Ayandele, *The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society* (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1974); Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992); Nana Kobina Nketsia V, *African Culture in Governance and Development: The Ghana Paradigm* (Cape Coast: Cape Coast University Press and Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2014).

² Kweku Larbi Korang, *Writing Ghana, Imagining Africa: Nation and African Modernity* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press and Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2003), p. 21.

³ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 21.

the same reason, ‘pre-independence’ and ‘post-independence’ are *logically* interchangeable (even if *ideological* responses to the problem of African modernity are historically mutable).”⁴ Why must nineteenth-century writer-intellectuals be examined within a continuous frame of anti-colonial resistance? Why should these nationalists from the era before the colonial state was even formally established be assessed using the same yardstick as the post-World War II nationalists of a century later?

As noted in the previous chapter, the homoarchy that attends such scholarship homogenises the agenda of multiple generations of writer-intellectuals, even as it trivialises their intellectual contributions. The nineteenth-century writer-intellectuals advocated for their race, so they were race nationalists; yet they were neither anti-colonial resisters nor deluded hybrids. They should be seen as pragmatists who adopted a cosmopolitan approach to culture and were therefore selective, as opposed to preservative. They were conscious of the limits of West African customary practices and European-propagated Christianity in an Atlantic world that was changing rapidly due to the Industrial Revolution. Instead of finding evidence of their proto nationalism, they should be assessed as nationalists who were devoutly religious, and in search of a way to synthesise local and Atlantic ways. Thus, they are best described as early or first-generation, pro-synthesis West African nationalists. Contrary to the view that emerges from the framework of resistance, feeding off the binary of Western *versus* African, pre-colonial nationalist writer-intellectuals contested European prejudices through debate.

Horton and Blyden merit attention because extant accounts examine their writings as the proto-nationalist precursors of later anti-colonial writings. Korang notes for example that:

Horton was a major influence in the late 1860s on the modern political self-conception of the short-lived proto-nationalism of the Fanti Confederation on the Gold Coast’s western littoral. He was also in the nineteenth century the first, and a most articulate, ideologue of modern *étatisme* — or the ideology of state — in African political nationalism. Horton, in this wise, may be seen standing at the head of an ideological tradition, relatively muted under colonial

⁴ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 21.

rule, but rekindled in post-World War II African anti-colonialism, and embodied centrally by Kwame Nkrumah's nationalist ideopraxis.⁵

Korang opines further that:

“[Blyden was the founder of] what one might call a tradition of Orphean nationalism. This was a conservative nationalism of culture — or nativism — and, in its more or less ‘pure’ form, it [would] dominate pre-independence Ghanaian — and for that matter, West African — intellection and anticolonial strategy until roughly World War II.”⁶

As Korang argues, Horton and Blyden are generally recognised as the leading West African scholars of the nineteenth century, albeit with differing opinions about the path to African progress, who most profoundly influenced their peers and later generations. This chapter contends that the writings of Horton and Blyden can be better understood when situated amongst the intellectual currents of the nineteenth-century Atlantic world, and alongside the emergence of nineteenth-century pseudo-scientific racism.

Horton might well emerge as an example of a “deluded hybrid” if his writings were only read outside the historical context of his times. In the same way, Blyden's writings are susceptible to misperception as being “characterised by ambiguities and tensions,”⁷ when they are read as the proto-nationalist precursor to the post-1945 anti-colonial resistance, without due regard to historical context. These West African intellectuals, recognised as giants, were engaging in their intellectual pursuits at the dawning of the age of European imperialism in Africa, not in the full bloom of Empire, as the label “proto-nationalist” might suggest. Treating Horton and Blyden as prototypical anti-colonial nationalists has proved difficult because of their patently pro-imperial statements and actions. In addition, simplistic binaries of coloniser/colonised and Western/African silence the voices of non-African allies with whom African intellectuals such as Horton and Blyden worked closely. The alternative, to treat them as hostile to the ideals of later

⁵ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, pp. 16-17.

⁶ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 16.

⁷ P. F. de Moraes Farias and Karin Barber, eds., *Self-Assertion and Brokerage: Early Cultural Nationalism in West Africa* (Birmingham: Centre for West African Studies, University of Birmingham, 1990), p. 1.

anti-colonial nationalists, however, also falls down because they shared with the latter group a faith in, and hope for, a florescence of African independence. These conundrums can be resolved if Horton and Blyden are understood as first dealing with problems of the day in the terms of the day, and second finding ways to be pro-African that are not necessarily anti-colonial, but that should not be seen either as blindly *pro*-colonial or derided as evidence of their delusion.

Horton and Blyden, as West African pioneers of the use of print culture to redress Africa's development deficit, tapped into a broader Atlantic network to advance their cause. This network included prominent nineteenth-century British figures, such as Ferdinand Fitzgerald, a member of the African Aid Society and editor of the *African Times*, and the ethnographer Mary Kingsley. Fitzgerald became a good friend of Horton's and helped him to navigate social and business circles in Britain and France. Within the network, Blyden's views about African regeneration were influenced by his association with the C. M. S. Secretary, the Rev. Henry Venn, to whom Horton referred as his father. Perhaps the individual who qualified most easily as Blyden's intellectual "fellow traveller" was Kingsley, whose acquaintance Blyden made in the 1890s after the partition of Africa, but in the days when British African policy was still inchoate. As did their contemporaries, Blyden and Kingsley engaged with the possible shapes of colonial rule at a time of possibility, before the fact of empire. Horton and Blyden and their networks consciously and systematically crafted a West African intellectual discourse by asking enduring questions about their race and region. They engaged with difference by assessing West Africa's relationship with the West in the nineteenth century, at a particular moment in the latter's imperial expression, and prescribed ways in which that encounter could be structured to the advantage of Africans.

In the nineteenth century, collaborations such as those that transpired between Horton and Fitzgerald, and Blyden and Kingsley, contributed to lively debates about African regeneration. While most historians agree that Horton and Blyden pondered the question of Africa's regeneration, they rarely acknowledge the contributions to this agenda that the international networks made. As noted by Philip Zachernuk, "when we trace the things that West Africans wrote, the causes they pursued, the arguments they

made, it is easy to find people linked together in camps that are not racially exclusive.”⁸ Frequent examination of Horton’s and Blyden’s thought as part of a continuous anti-colonial project has led to the omission of their international fellow travellers, and consequently to a misunderstanding of their agenda. In this sense the writer-intellectuals were as much cosmopolitans as they were nationalists. Thinking of Horton and Blyden as cosmopolitan nationalists therefore frames their agenda without pigeon-holing them into any category. Various questions come to mind in thinking about how these intellectuals envisioned African regeneration. How did they interpret their lived experiences as intellectuals, as supporters of empire, and as nationalists? What role did their professional and personal networks play in their interpretation of empire and colonialism? How did travel and the inter-connectedness of the Atlantic world affect their views and influence their programme?

2.2 The African Aid Society and the Niger Valley Exploring Party

The creation of the African Aid Society is directly linked to the activities of the African American physician and author, Martin Delany, and his fellow commissioner on the Niger Valley Exploring Party, Robert Campbell. The founding of the Niger Valley Exploring Party followed heated debates in the United States over the best living environment for freed Blacks after Britain abolished the Atlantic slave trade officially. Another organisation that was spawned by these debates was the American Colonization Society, established in 1816. Perhaps the Colonization Society, which founded Liberia, attracted the more unlikely membership.⁹ It comprised a bi-racial group of pro-slavers and abolitionists, who were united in their conviction that the colonisation of Africa by freed Blacks was the most viable option for the maintenance of peace among the races and the advancement of African Americans. One might agree with Samantha Seeley that the choice of colonisation over equality “demonstrates that removal and migration were at the centre of conceptions of race, citizenship, and freedom in the early United

⁸ Philip S. Zachernuk, “Africans as Africanists: Tensions of Identity in Colonial Intellectual Life,” paper presented at 19th Annual Africa Conference, University of Texas at Austin, March 29-31, 2019, p. 2.

⁹ Douglas R. Egerton, “Averting a Crisis: The Pro-Slavery Critique of the American Colonization Society,” *Civil War History*, 43, 2 (1997), 142-156; Samantha Seeley, “Beyond the American Colonization Society,” *History Compass*, 14/ 3 (2016), pp. 23-104.

States.”¹⁰ The Colonization Society’s solution of emigration to Africa was opposed by a significant number of anti-slavery missionaries and African American scholars. Prominent among these was Delany, who had emigrated from the United States to Canada in 1856, having been expelled from Harvard Medical School in 1850 on racial grounds.¹¹

Delany and his group argued that like Whites, freed Blacks were destined to thrive in the Western Hemisphere. They therefore supported migration to Canada, the West Indies and Latin America, and debated ways to “civilise” (in most cases they meant “modernise”) Africa and uplift Africans. However, Delany and some of those who were opposed to emigration outside the Western hemisphere, later changed their minds to consider the colonisation of territory in Africa, and specifically in the Niger valley, through land purchase or by negotiation.¹² One reason Delany and his group opted for the *volte face* was to tackle the economic reasons that continued to drive the slave trade. Thus, they conceived of the Niger project as an alternate means of becoming the suppliers of valuable commodities that could confer dignity on the African. For them, cotton had kept slavery alive in the American South and so, instead of migrating to Africa, they proposed that the African should grow cotton “in the African’s own home — as well as in the West Indies, cotton of the same quality as the American, and at a cheaper rate.”¹³ They argued that this would strike at the heart of slavery in the South. Promoting the scheme in Britain, they reasoned:

We feel that we have in Canada the coloured men to pioneer the way — men reared among the cotton of the United States, and who have found an asylum among us. The bone and sinew is in Africa — we wish to give it direction. We wish thereby to save to England millions of pounds by the difference in price between the two cottons; we wish to ward off the blow to England which must

¹⁰ Seeley, “Beyond the American Colonization Society,” p. 100.

¹¹ Anthony Kirk-Greene, “America in the Niger Valley: A Colonization Centenary,” *Phylon* (1960-) 23, no. 3 (1962): 225-239.

¹² Martin Robison Delany, *Official Report of the Niger Valley Exploring Party*. Vol. 3, no. 1. Rhistoric Publications, 1861; Kass, Amalie M., and Edward H. Kass, “Doctors Afield: Martin Delany, Thomas Hodgkin, and the Black Nationalist Movement,” *The New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 305 (12) (1981): 682-684.

¹³ *The Leeds Mercury*, England: E. Baines, Esq., M.P., and Sons, 8th December 1860, in Delany, *Official Report of the Niger Valley*, p. 71.

be felt by four millions of people interested in the article to be produced if an untimely frost or an insurrection should take place — and, above all, to lift up Africa by means of her own children.¹⁴

Thus, the Niger Valley Exploring Party of 1859,¹⁵ headed by Delany, was founded to go to Africa (Nigeria) and explore the scheme's feasibility.¹⁶ The Delany mission did not fulfil the dream of establishing a colony in Nigeria. However, it left in its wake a lasting legacy through the activities of the African Aid Society, which was established by a group of philanthropists in London to promote the economic advancement of Africa and Africans.

The aims of the African Aid Society were "to develop the material resources of Africa, Madagascar and the adjacent Islands; and to promote the Christian civilisation of the African races," as a means to accomplish the annihilation of slavery. One of the ways to achieve this purpose was to "assist, by loans and other-wise, Africans willing to emigrate from Canada and other parts to our West Indian Colonies, Liberia, Natal and Africa generally."¹⁷ Fitzgerald was the Secretary of the African Aid Society. The African Aid Society provided a platform for African voices to be heard in Europe through the Society's mouthpiece, the *African Times* newspaper, established in 1861.¹⁸ This newspaper was the primary source of information about Africa in Britain, and had a large African subscriber base, both in Britain and in its African territories. As editor, Fitzgerald published articles written by Africans, and often sought the opinions of African intellectuals on matters that concerned Africa. Horton was one of the prominent Africans who contributed articles to the newspaper.

¹⁴ *The Leeds Mercury*, p. 71.

¹⁵ Delany, *Official Report of the Niger Valley*; Kass and Kass. "Martin Delany, Thomas Hodgkin, and the Black Nationalist Movement." (1981): 682-684.

¹⁶ The outcome of the Delany mission to Nigeria – a treaty with King Docemo of Lagos for a parcel of land in 1859- met with such euphoria among antislavery activists in London that before the mission returned to the Americas, they had secured notes to purchase the uncultivated cotton from capitalists in England. See: Delany, *Official Report of the Niger Valley*.

¹⁷ Kirk-Greene, "America in the Niger Valley," p. 237.

¹⁸ Fred I. A. Omu, "The Dilemma of Press Freedom in Colonial Africa: The West African Example." *The Journal of African History* 9, no. 2 (1968): 279-298. Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, pp. 58-59. Other publications quote 1862 as the founding date of the newspaper. See: K. A. B. Jones-Quartey, "Anglo-African Journals and Journalists in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 4, 1 (1959), pp. 47-56.

2.3 Asante Influence on West African Questions of the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Van Hensbroek has identified three major events in the history of West African political thought in the 1860s and 1870s: “the proposals for African self-government in the 1865 report of a Select Committee of the British House of Commons; the so-called Fanti Federation of 1870; and the second Ashanti war in 1873-74.”¹⁹ These events featured in the writings of both Horton and Blyden. Horton involved himself in all three as, respectively, a commentator, an intermediary and an army officer. For him, the first event presented an opportunity to accelerate West African civilisation. The second event was a chance to test out his political theories among the Fanti. The third event substantially ended Horton’s political activities, but not his West African project. Unlike Horton, Blyden did not participate directly in any of these events, but they each contributed to his theory on spoiled and unspoiled Africa. All three events involved the inland Asante, their nationalism, and their relations with their southern neighbours, including the Europeans stationed on the coast. Many discourses about nineteenth-century nationalism exclude the significant role of Asante in shaping the agenda of nationalist writer-intellectuals such as Horton.

By 1860, the relationship between Asante and its southern neighbours was characterised by accommodation and resistance from both sides.²⁰ The southern people comprised various coastal groups, including the Fante, the Assin, the Wassaw and the Twifo, as well as European traders, missionaries, and administrators. Asante, established towards the end of the seventeenth century, had become a formidable inland empire by the nineteenth century, famed for its prowess in both trade and war. Asante’s traders operated both northwards and southwards from the middle of southern Ghana. As

¹⁹ Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 32.

²⁰ There is a vast library on the early period written by travellers, traders, missionaries and officials on the West African Coast. For details about Asante –British relations and early African and European contact on the Gold Coast, see the following: Brodie Cruickshank, *Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast of Africa; Including an Account of the Native Tribes, And Their Intercourse with Europeans*, Vol I &II (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1853); W. Walton Claridge, *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti: From Earliest Times to the Commencement of the Twentieth Century*, Vol I &II (London: John Murray, 1915; London: Frank Cass, 1964); William Tordoff, *Ashanti Under the Prempehs: 1888-1935* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); J. K. Fynn, *Asante and its Neighbours, 1700-1807* (London: Longman 1971); Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Osei Kwadwo, *An Outline of Asante History*. 3ed. (Kumasi: Cita Press, 2004).

the trans-Atlantic trade grew in importance for the economic and political security of its landlocked territory, Asante contended constantly with the Fante, Assin, Wassaw and Twifo states for direct trade contacts with the Europeans on the coast.²¹ The southern states, in a bid to safeguard their middleman role in the trans-Atlantic trade and prevent Asante from participating directly in the trade, repeatedly blockaded the trade routes to the coast, and also sold adulterated goods to Asante traders.²² As Asanteman grappled with the economic challenges of trading to the south, they were also faced with the problem of subject states and peoples who sought, among the Fantis and their allies, refuge from Asante aggression.

In 1863, the British and their coastal allies, led by the Fanti chiefs, decided to ignore Asante demands for the repatriation of an Asante fugitive, Quacoo Gamin,²³ and instead provided him with refuge.²⁴ This act of political and diplomatic defiance culminated in a war between Asante on one side and the British and their allies on the other. Horton, who left a first-hand account of events, opined that the ensuing British defeat occurred because their military commanders spread their troops too thinly and committed a series of blunders. The Asante won two significant battles, the last victory occurring in May.²⁵ Horton reported:

Viewing the state of affairs at this particular crisis of the country, an impartial

²¹ See: Cruikshank, *Eighteen Years*, Claridge, *History of the Gold Coast*, Fynn, *Asante and its Neighbours* and Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*. Fynn agrees with Claridge and Cruickshank that Asante pushed for access to the coast for two reasons: to participate in the trans-Atlantic trade and to displace the Fanti, Wassaw and Twifo from their middleman role. Wilks agrees to a large extent but argues that because the chiefs who controlled trade did not engage in trade for everyday goods meant for the ordinary citizen, Asante was not a nation of traders. Wilks notes that trade was conducted by Asanteman at the highest level of its government to procure equipment for its military.

²² F. K. Buah, *A History of Ghana* (Oxford: Macmillan Publishing, 1998), p. 15; A. A. Boahen, *Ghana Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Accra: Sankofa, 2000), p. 20-21; Osei-Kwadwo, *An Outline*, p. 24-27; Toyin Falola (ed), *Africa in the Twentieth Century: The Adu Boahen Reader* (Asmara: Africa World Press Inc., 2014), 39-40; D. E. K. Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History from Pre-colonial Times to the Twentieth Century* (Accra: Woeli Publishing, 2008), p. 76-77.

²³ See also: Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p 492. According to Ivor Wilks the Asante fugitive was Kwasi Gyani.

²⁴ Horton, *Letters*, p. 53.

²⁵ The Asante, having won significant battles, proposed a peaceful settlement with the British. In Horton's opinion, the Asante general Owusu Korkor, sought a truce because the month of May was the start of the rainy season, and he calculated that the potential loss of troops to the ravages of the tropical climate made it futile to continue the war.

witness cannot help justifying both parties for the part they played in it — viz., Governor Pine in retaining Gamin, and the King of Ashantee in immediately declaring war; but the balance of justification rests with the King of Ashantee.²⁶

When the British public first heard news of the 1863 war, it was that “soldiers were dying like flies in a remote jungle.”²⁷ This reporting caused considerable anger and dismay in Britain, and led to the abrupt recall of the British troops.²⁸ For many in Britain, the failure of the British and their allies to score a decisive victory, even with the benefit of troop reinforcements from the British West African territories of Nigeria,²⁹ Gambia and Sierra Leone,³⁰ was simply incomprehensible. The fact that the war ended in a stalemate was considered a waste of money and a disgrace to the British army. It even prompted a parliamentary enquiry into the viability of British Overseas Territories in West Africa.³¹

The Parliamentary Select Committee interviewed missionaries, European officials and traders, as well as soldiers and explorers. Perhaps the most prominent and significant person to be interviewed was the vice president of the London-based Royal Anthropological Society, Richard Burton. As Ayandele notes, educated West Africans were roused to action because of the publications and utterances of the Anthropological Society.³² Horton and Blyden both reacted in their publications to the Anthropological Society and its findings about race and Africans. In the end, the Select Committee report of 1865, reflecting public opinion, called for a preparation of the British West African territories for eventual self-government. The report advised that “with the possible exception of Sierra Leone,”³³ the object of British policy should be “to encourage in the

²⁶ Horton, *Letters*, p.55.

²⁷ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 54.

²⁸ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 54.

²⁹ Horton, *Letters*, p.59. Note Horton’s language here: “Fortunately a detachment of the 2nd West India Regiment, from Lagos, arrived at Accra at this opportune moment, on board the transport, in which the other troops were embarked for Cape Coast.”

³⁰ Horton, *Letters*, p.63. “About this time, a reinforcement of 180 men arrived from Sierra Leone and The Gambia aboard HMS Dart and HMS Dover. Forty were sent to Accra, and the remaining 140, under the command of Captain (now Lieutenant-Colonel) Harley, were ordered to Mansoo, where a large, inactive native force had been garrisoned for more than a month.”

³¹ Parliamentary Debate (House of Commons), vol. 177, col. 535-59, 21st February 1865.

³² Ayandele, *The Educated Elite*, p. 21.

³³ Horton, *Letters*, p.28.

natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible more and more to transfer to them the administration of all the Governments, with a view to our ultimate withdrawal.”³⁴ In anticipation of withdrawal, the British centralised their administration of the West African territories in Sierra Leone, with the appointment of a Governor-General who, between 1865 and 1874, oversaw British subjects and interests in the Gold Coast, Lagos and Gambia from his base in Freetown.³⁵ The decision to withdraw never materialised because the Gold Coast Colony was officially created in 1874 after the defeat of Asanteman by the British and their allies.³⁶

Although Horton favoured the decision to grant the British West African territories self-government, he contested some of the ways in which that decision was arrived at, particularly in relation to the contributions from the Anthropological Society that had prompted the Select Committee to propose withdrawal. Horton and The African Aid Society participated in these debates via *The African Times*.³⁷ In a little-known pamphlet titled “*The Political Economy of British West Africa*,” which he published in 1865 with Fitzgerald’s backing, and subsequently developed into “*West African Countries and Peoples*,” Horton questioned the scientific basis of the racial assertions the Anthropological Society had made.³⁸ One of Horton’s aims in these publications was to make recommendations for the attainment of effective self-government in each of the four British territories. Another aim was to undo what he perceived as the harm done by Burton and the Anthropological Society in convincing the British public and its parliamentarians that the African was racially inferior, and consequently handicapped by an innate inability to be as civilised as the European. Thus, he offered a wider audience an insider’s perspective on different pathways to achieving self-government in West Africa, while consciously presenting an African expert’s thoughts on the pseudo-

³⁴ Horton, *Letters*, p.28.

³⁵ Kimble, *A Political History*, pp. 205-209.

³⁶ British Charter, Providing for the Government of Her Majesty’s Settlements on the Gold Coast and Lagos, And Constituting those Settlements into a Separate Colony to be Called the Gold Coast Colony, And Providing For the Government Thereof, Westminster, July 24th 1874, in J. E. Casely Hayford, reprint, *Gold Coast Native Institutions with Thoughts upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and Ashanti*, 1903 (London: Frank Cass, 1970), p. 369.

³⁷ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 57.

³⁸ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 59. Horton’s views were presented as an address to the African Aid Society and published by the printer of the *African Times* as a 36-page pamphlet.

scientific racism of the Anthropological Society. Horton's thought, expressed in his numerous publications promoting self-government, vindicates Africans and invites professional Europeans to West Africa, while celebrating the virtues of Christianity. His writings should be read within a cosmopolitan and imperial context that engaged wider thinking about Africa.

The Asante factor was instrumental in the introduction of self-government into the political discourses of West Africa from 1865. Asante's second defeat in 1874 advanced British penetration of the interior. It also marked the onset of formal colonial rule of the Gold Coast in an expanded British sphere of influence. It contributed too to the need for Horton and Blyden to engage with theories about race that were espoused by the Royal Anthropological Society. Horton identified with the fears, hopes and aspirations of Britain's allies — the coastal peoples who made up the Gold Coast Colony, especially the Fanti. Perhaps this was on account of his participation in the wars of 1863 and 1874. Blyden, on the other hand, sided with Asante. When the British and their coastal allies rallied together to defeat the Asante in 1874, Blyden called this an error of judgement. He derided the British for believing that "it [was] necessary, in order to develop trade, to encourage the feeble and demoralised natives on the coast in hostility to the more industrious, more intelligent, and better organised races of the interior."³⁹ Blyden's position on the inland Africans *versus* the coastal Africans is consistent with his theory of a spoiled coast *versus* an unspoilt interior, which he developed during the course of his fifty-plus years of intellectual activity. The Asante question thus presented opportunities for Horton and Blyden to contemplate pathways to West African progress or regeneration, as they participated in debates about race and colonial rule that were sparked by the Anthropological Society. It also brought to the fore issues about self-government elsewhere in British West Africa, which Horton explored in his writings.

2.4 Horton and the Matter of Self-Government

It is nearly impossible to discuss the evolution of the idea of self-government in the Gold Coast without reviewing Horton's contribution to it. Yet Horton did not invent the

³⁹ Blyden to Sir George Barclay (Governor of Sierra Leone 1873-1874), Monrovia: 12th February 1874, in Hollis R. Lynch, ed. *Selected Letters of Edward Wilmot Blyden* (Millwood, New York: KTO Press, 1978), p. 464.

idea of self-government. Few people realise that discussions about self-government in West Africa occurred first in London, following the defeat of the coastal peoples and their British allies by Asante in 1863. With the exception of Horton, who had an interest in effective government, West African intellectuals did not comment on the British parliamentary Select Committee's report on self-government in any prominent publications during the 1860s. Nationalist historians fail to contextualise Horton's contributions to discourses about self-government in the 1860s, when, in the homoarchic narrative of nationalism, they celebrate or lambast him as a "proto-nationalist." Yet, in 1865, when talk of self-government took off, the British had not formally declared their West African territories as colonial spheres. This discussion was therefore a different kind of discussion about things not easily equated with what would come later, after colonial rule had actually been established.

Horton's understanding of "nation" and "country" differed from what these words would come to mean in the mid-twentieth century. He understood the different language families and political entities in West Africa as comprising different countries, hence the title of his 1868 publication, *West African Countries and Peoples*. At the same time, Horton imagined West Africa as an integrated community that he termed the "country" of British West Africa. The concentration in Freetown of the administrative functions of the British-ruled territories in West Africa explains partly why Horton constantly referred to British West Africa as a country. Another reason was his posting to all four British territories as an army medical officer. Horton's use of the words "country," "nation" and "race" in his publications suggests a different understanding of these terms in the 1860s, compared to what the nationalists of the post-WWII period imagined. His agenda, political activism and nationalism were therefore contextually different from that of later nationalists.

Horton's position on the issue of self-government is expressed in his two publications, *West African Countries and Peoples*⁴⁰ and *Letters*. In these publications, Horton advances the imperatives of effective government and security (against

⁴⁰ James Africanus B. Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples, British and Native. With the Requirements Necessary for Establishing That Self Government Recommended by the Committee of the House of Commons, 1865; and a Vindication of the African Race* (London: W. J. Johnson, 1868).

aggression from both Asante and Britain's European rivals) as the reasons for advocating his notion of self-government, which comprised a synthesis of local practice and Atlantic models. This explains his proposal for "a British Consular Agency [and a] consul [to] aid and advise the native government and guarantee it against European invasion."⁴¹ In *West African Countries and Peoples*, Horton divides West Africa into republics and monarchies, based on the political histories of the people. For instance, he divided the Gold Coast into two self-governing parts — east and west. The eastern part was to be developed into the Republic of Accra, administered by a governing body made up of educated indigenes. Horton explained this choice by pointing to the weakness of the institution of chieftaincy in the east. By contrast, for the west, where he perceived chieftaincy to be functional and effective, he suggested the establishment of a monarchy called Fanti. The Fanti monarchy was to be administered by an educated chief appointed by the Governor or elected by universal suffrage.

In *Letters*, Horton supported the Fanti Confederation, even as it faced opposition from British officials on the Gold Coast.⁴² The Fanti Confederation had been founded in 1870, after the British and Dutch exchanged forts and castles in 1867 — without consulting their allies on the Gold Coast.⁴³ In letters to the Secretary of State for War, the Rt. Hon. Edward Cardwell, and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Earl Granville, Horton provided evidence from resolutions passed by the Fanti Confederation, asserting that the Fanti people aimed to adopt "without delay, some measures for our self-government, and our self-defence."⁴⁴ Horton explained that British and Dutch allies on both sides of the Sweet River were extremely angry, and rightly so, that they were not consulted before the two European nations had agreed their exchange of properties. He sought also to offer suggestions for a resolution of the resulting tensions on the Gold Coast. In his letters, Horton chastised the British for their conduct during the 1869/ 1870 Anglo-Dutch exchange of forts and castles. As an avowed supporter of the Fanti

⁴¹ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. 105.

⁴² A colonial administrator, later Governor, H. T. Ussher, recommended Horton's transfer out of the colonial service in the Gold Coast because of his relationship with the editor of the *African Times* and members of the Fanti Confederation. See Kimble, *Political History*, p. 244n and p. 245.

⁴³ Horton, *Letters*, p. 18. Much to the dismay and anger of British and Dutch allies in the southern Gold Coast, by a treaty signed on 6th March 1867, and ratified on 6th July 1867, there was an Anglo-Dutch exchange of forts and castles.

⁴⁴ Horton, *Letters*, p. 31.

Confederation and a constitutional advisor to its members, he declared openly his belief that the Confederation pointed the way forward in the pursuit of self-government for the Gold Coast and West Africa. In what he called his concluding letter to Granville, Horton remarked of the Fanti Confederation:

Since the formation of the present Confederation, the whole of the Fante nation has been combined under one Government, whose status, although ill-defined, carries great weight and influence amongst the interior tribes... It is the pivot of national unity headed by intelligent men, to whom a great deal of the powers of the kings and chiefs are delegated ... through it, the whole of the Fante race, numbering some 400,000 souls, can now, for the first time, boast of a national assembly.

It is instructive that in his letters to British government officials, Horton referred to a “Fanti nation.” Indeed, Horton’s Fanti nationalism is more evident in *Letters* than in any of his other writings. In the end, the British were able to destroy the resolve of the Fanti by 1870 and, together with their allies, to neutralise the Asante threat by 1874. Horton’s passionate Fanti nationalism, which worked actively against Asante nationalism, is particularly interesting, because in Ghanaian history he is considered a leading nationalist figure.

One result of the tendency to equate Horton’s nationalism with the nationalism of the post-1945 era is the criticism levelled against Horton for his support of British colonial rule, even as he unveiled his plans for effective self-government in West Africa. For instance, Horton commended the British colonial effort when he said:

On this coast, the English element is unquestionably the best civilising agency. Their liberality in matters of Christianity, their sound and healthy judgment in colonisation, their profound legislative ability ... and their commercial policy, all greatly tend to foster the growth of civilisation in a young colony.⁴⁵

Critics like Ayandele have chastised Horton for having a “myopia about the nature and

⁴⁵ Horton, *Letters*, p. iii.

purpose of the British mission in West Africa.”⁴⁶ For Ayandele, “Horton was hypnotised by British political ideas to the extent that he lacked an understanding of [the] traditional African political system.”⁴⁷ Whether he did or not, the crucial point is Horton’s qualifier “on this coast ... the best.” Horton made this statement in relation to other would-be European colonisers and concluded that a West Africa that was militarily and financially weak would inevitably succumb to one of the European powers; therefore, it would be in West Africa’s interest to come under the British. Horton’s concept of self-government thus included a transition period under British rule, during which time West Africans would be protected against local and international aggressors, while perfecting their own governance structures.

2.5 West African Intellectuals, the Anthropological Society and the Race Question

A recent challenge of David Reich’s *Who We Are and How We Got Here*⁴⁸ by historian Gloria Emeagwali, re-centres the issue of race, which has been at the heart of many discussions since the mid-nineteenth century.⁴⁹ Emeagwali points to “contradictions, pitfalls and inconsistencies, as they relate to Africa’s history,”⁵⁰ to problematise Reich’s theoretical construct of African *versus* non-African, and to posit that even twenty-first century genetic research is not value-free. As Emeagwali points out, the ethics surrounding theories about race so far have proved that it is a complex subject. Thus, “making a theoretical and scientific distinction between Africans and other populations is not in itself a foolhardy or unwelcome exercise, but logical consistency, verification, justification and falsifiability must guide the analysis.”⁵¹ Emeagwali’s concerns are similar to those of educated Africans in the nineteenth century who contested theories about African difference. One significant development that precipitated efforts to engage with theories about race, was the birth in 1863 of the

⁴⁶ Ayandele, in Horton, *Letters*, Introduction, p. 20.

⁴⁷ Ayandele in Horton, *Letters*, p. 29.

⁴⁸ David Reich, *Who We Are and How We Got Here: Ancient DNA and the New Science of the Human Past* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018).

⁴⁹ Gloria Emeagwali, “Who We Are and How We Get Here: A Critique of David Reich’s Narrative on Ancient DNA and Africa’s Genetic Identity,” paper presented at 19th Annual Africa Conference, University of Texas at Austin, March 29-31, 2019; John C. Greene, “The American Debate on the Negro’s Place in Nature, 1780-1815, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 15, 3 (1954), pp. 384-396.

⁵⁰ Emeagwali, “Who We Are,” p. 15.

⁵¹ Emeagwali, “Who We Are,” p. 6.

London-based Royal Anthropological Society. Prior to this, nineteenth-century scientific racism had found scholarly approval in Europe with the publication of Robert Knox's *Races of Men* (1850), Arthur de Gobineau's *Essai sur l'Inégalité des Races Humaines* (1853) and Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* (1859), as well as Burton's *Wanderings in West Africa* (1861). James Hunt's "On the Negro's Place in Nature,"⁵² which was read before the Anthropological Society in 1863, could be said to have laid the firm foundation for studies about supposed physiological distinctions between Africans and other populations.⁵³

For Hunt, who was reacting to the suggestion of similarities between humans and apes, the problem with the theory was that the Negro race was closely related to apes, while the same affinity was not held to be true for the Caucasian race. Hunt argued that since Africans belonged in nature with apes and not Europeans, "we err in grouping all the different races of man under one generic name, and then comparing them with the Anthropoid Apes."⁵⁴ Hunt argued that since Africans were biologically inferior in intellect, stature and character, Islam was better suited for Africans than Christianity, as "European civilisation is not suited to the Negro requirements or character."⁵⁵ Moreover, "the Negro race can only be humanised and civilised by Europeans."⁵⁶ Hunt believed that Africans had demonstrated historically, in their encounters with superior civilisations, like those of the Egyptians, Carthaginians and Romans, an incapacity to be civilised.⁵⁷ In 1864, Hunt reaffirmed his theory when he translated into English *Lectures on Man*, the published lectures of the German scholar, Carl Vogt. Hunt's and Vogt's views were echoed and expanded upon by other members of the Anthropological Society, including Burton, philologist Frederic W. Farrar, and journalist Winwood Reade.⁵⁸ Another argument put forward by the anthropologists concerned the need for racial purity, not

⁵² James Hunt, "On the Negro's Place in Nature," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London*, 2 (1864), pp. xv-lvi.

⁵³ Theodore Cross, "Nineteenth Century Racism: The Anthropologist who First Defined the Negro's Place in Nature," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 58 (2007/ 2008), pp. 62-63; Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, pp. 54-58.

⁵⁴ Cross, "Nineteenth Century Racism," p. 62.

⁵⁵ Cross, "Nineteenth Century Racism," p. 63.

⁵⁶ Cross, "Nineteenth Century Racism," p. 63.

⁵⁷ Cross, "Nineteenth Century Racism," p. 63.

⁵⁸ Ayandele, *Educated Elite*, p. 21; Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, pp. 54 – 58; See also Minutes of the Anthropological Society in Hunt, "On the Negro's Place in Nature," pp. xv-lvi.

least because Africans and Europeans belonged to different places in nature. Naturally, the toxic views about Africans expressed by the Anthropological Society did not go unchallenged. Among the educated Africans who contested this new doctrine of scientific racism Horton and Blyden were the most prominent from West Africa.

Educated West Africans refuted the Anthropological Society's assertions by citing and analysing extensive literature that proved the hollowness of the arguments in support of biological difference between Europeans and Africans, the intellectual superiority of Europeans, and the inability of Africans to be civilised. Although some, like Blyden, had points of agreement with the Anthropological Society's position, educated West Africans were united in their belief that all human beings were of one biological species. A sample of Horton's and Blyden's engagement with the views expressed by the Anthropological Society, and on race in general, reflects the nuanced standpoint of educated West Africans. Horton and Blyden, like their European and American counterparts, had a fluid understanding of the term "race." This nineteenth-century understanding of the term differs from that of the twentieth century.⁵⁹ As is shown by the writings of prominent nationalist theorists, such as Renan and Fichte, for nineteenth-century Europeans too, race was a fluid term. Thus, they wrote about a variety of European races, not just one European race. Thus, Renan and Fichte referred to "the Germanic races," and Renan even postulated that race was conditioned by culture and could therefore be "made and unmade."⁶⁰ Another example of the use of race that is different from the current understanding of the term is evidenced in the writings of Blyden, particularly in *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, where he argues that there were three biblical races descended from the three sons of Noah, who survived the flood: Shem (Semitic race), Japhet (Japhetic race) and Canaan (Hamitic race). Other racial terms that had fluid meanings in the nineteenth century were the words "*Negro*" (used to mean the peoples of the coast) and "African" (used to mean the peoples of the interior).⁶¹

⁵⁹ Johann Gottfried Fichte, "Addresses to the German Nation" (German: "Reden an die deutsche Nation,") 1807-8; Joseph Ernest Renan, "Qu'est-Ce Qu'une Nation?" ("English: What is a nation?") Conférence (1882); Hunt, "On the Negro's Place in Nature," (contrary to the title of this entry, it is a record of the minutes of meetings of the Anthropological Society on 17th November, 1863 and 1st December, 1863); Robert D. Priest, "Ernest Renan's Race Problem," *The Historical Journal*, 58, 1 (2015), pp. 309-330.

⁶⁰ Renan, "*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*"

⁶¹ Cross, "Nineteenth-Century Racism."

2.5.1 Horton and the Anthropological Society

Hunt's paper, "The Negro's Place in Nature," provoked a reply from Horton, whose 1868 book was symbolically subtitled "*The African's View of the Negro's Place in Nature*." Thus, Horton's *West African Countries and Peoples* was written to "disprove many of the fallacious doctrines and statements of anthropologists."⁶² According to Horton, the abolition of slavery in the southern states of America had "produced so much bile among a small section in England"⁶³ that the "negrophobists"⁶⁴ had formed an association, the Anthropological Society, to "rake up old malice."⁶⁵ Horton wrote forthrightly:

I, amongst a great many others, appreciate every European element that enters Western Africa, whether in the capacity of merchants or pioneers of civilisation, or in that of missionaries; and whilst I hail their efforts, respect their talents and revere the civilisation they are capable of imparting, I will never permit any unjust abuse, any unfounded diatribe against the African race, to be ruthlessly lavished on them without repelling or exposing the calumny.⁶⁶

Horton contested the Anthropological Society's position by using evidence from submissions of the Society's members that were absurd or self-contradictory, or that admitted to deficiencies in the research on which they were based, as well as by citing extensively from scholarly literature that contradicted the Society's leading opinions.⁶⁷ Commenting on the submissions of Carl Vogt and Prunner Bey on the physical attributes of Africans, Horton charged that their views constituted "a base prostitution of scientific truth." Van Hensbroek has noted that his "unswerving attack on the biological assumptions of racist theory made Horton's an unusual antiracist argument for his time."⁶⁸ Horton pointed to the works of leading scholars, such as the Swiss anatomist Christoph Aeby, whose research, which was based on actual measurements, proved that

⁶² Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. iii.

⁶³ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. iii.

⁶⁴ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. i.

⁶⁵ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. iii.

⁶⁶ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. iv.

⁶⁷ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, pp. 34-43.

⁶⁸ Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 36.

there was “no material difference in the proportion of the limbs between European and Negro.”⁶⁹ Horton also cited the German physiologist Friedrich Tiedemann, who, after careful measurement, weighing, and other investigations, concluded that there existed “no material difference between the [brains] of the White and Black races.”⁷⁰

To contest Hunt’s claim that historically Africans had been incapable of responding to civilising missions, such as those of Egypt, Carthage and Rome, Horton and other educated Africans all pointed out the obvious fact that the Egyptian civilisation was founded by Africans. In order to not only confirm that the Egyptian civilisation was achieved by an African race, but also to provide incontrovertible evidence that Egypt was the cradle of all modern civilisation, Horton quoted from travel accounts of the ancient Greek historian Herodotus, in which he reported meeting Egyptian theologians, who were “woolly-haired Blacks with projecting lips.” In line with nineteenth-century Black scholarship, Horton argued that Egypt was the “nursery of science and literature from [whence Europeans] were taught in Greece and Rome.”⁷¹ Thereafter, Europe had overtaken Africa in science and technology because “nations rise and fall; civilised people degenerate [into] semi-barbarous states, whereas once barbarous states become enlightened.”⁷² This assertion of collective ownership of human knowledge was made widely by Africans in the New World, and by some Europeans. Such thinking reflected the universal counterargument made by people of African descent to refute attempts by Europeans to claim common knowledge as European or Western. It was a part of the theory of Ethiopianism⁷³ — or Zionism — which was by no means invented by Horton, although he advanced it and elaborated on it. The theory of a Christian regeneration of Africa evolved in the nineteenth century as a rallying concept for diverse groups of people in the Atlantic world, with divergent versions. Among scholars, it was first envisaged as occurring through the spread of Christianity and industrialisation, and was supported by various missionary bodies, and groups such as the American Colonization

⁶⁹ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. 43.

⁷⁰ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. 46.

⁷¹ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. 66.

⁷² Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. 67.

⁷³ Ethiopianism was a concept that existed among English-speaking Black Christians. For them, Ethiopianism was a Christian theological concept, derived from Psalm 68:31, that was inextricably linked to racial uplift. See: Andrew Barnes, *Global Christianity and the Shaping of African Industrial Education* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2017) pp. 18-19.

Society and the London-based Aborigines Protection Society, as well as by various pro- and anti-slavery organisations. Perhaps, though, no other group of people in the early nineteenth century took this idea more seriously than African American intellectuals. As shown below, the Christian regeneration of Africa by Africans (in some instances African American returnees) was a common theme in nineteenth-century American and African newspapers.⁷⁴

Horton did not only rebut the idea of African inferiority, he also insisted that Africans were intellectually capable of civilisation along the same lines as Europeans — through Christian regeneration. An unamused Horton charged:

... These anthropologists have still worse designs for Africa, since we find them seriously arguing in their meetings and proclaiming in the public press, that the Mohammedan religion, in all cases where Western Africa is concerned, should supplant that of Christianity; that the belief in the False Prophet is substantially better than the belief in Christ for the African ... What else can the negro expect but a complete falsification of every circumstance relating to his race?⁷⁵

Horton was unequivocal about the religion that was best suited to Africans:

I believe and firmly hold that it is not by Mohammedanising the inhabitants of Western Africa according to the present school of anthropologists, that they can or will be civilised; and I maintain that no civilisation would take root and bear fruit except that based on the principles of the Christian religion.⁷⁶

For Horton, the pushback against the Anthropological Society's use of religion as a tool to prove African mental inferiority could only occur if the African march to progress showed a mastery of the European method — ergo, a Christian regeneration.

Horton's background as a Sierra Leonean Creole,⁷⁷ an army medical officer and a

⁷⁴ Barnes, *Global Christianity*, pp. 14-30.

⁷⁵ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, pp. iii-iv.

⁷⁶ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. iii.

⁷⁷ As the son of a recaptive, although his parents raised him in accordance with some Igbo norms, Horton's attitudes to West African customs and practices were conditioned by the cosmopolitanism of his

Christian, who was also a beneficiary of a pioneer project of the Church Missionary Society and the War Office, influenced his vision of the civilisation (i.e. modernisation) of Africa. His prescriptions for African regeneration were thus drawn from his background in science and medicine, as well as his zeal for the Christian religion. Nevertheless, Horton's prescription that Africa should pursue the same pathway as Europe, using science, technology and Christianity, should be viewed within the context of his vindication of the African race during the era of scientific racism. On the claim that Africans could only be civilised by Europeans, Horton appealed to the prevailing idea of a Christian regeneration of Africa, noting that:

It has been so destined that with the exception of the aboriginals, no other nation has planted a sure footing in [Western Africa], and consequently, that from [Western Africa's] sons, and her sons alone, must her complete regeneration be sought The initiative must not be expected to come from within — it must come from without; and it is certain that genius, talent, and virtue will be honoured, whether clad in rags or in broadcloth, and the nobility of a manly nature will not always continue to be estimated according to the colour of the skin.⁷⁸

Van Hensbroek has referred to such thinking by Horton and his compatriots as “optimistic universalism,”⁷⁹ in which the theorists argued by appealing to the interconnectedness of the world and its resultant cosmopolitanism (Appiah's intelligent engagement with difference). As Ayandele's arguments illustrate, the Grand Narrative points to seeming inconsistencies in the views of Horton and others and concludes that the proto nationalists were deluded and deracinated. How can Horton be called deluded when — using the tools of his times — he challenged the prevailing views abroad that Africans were biologically inferior to Europeans and that they belonged in nature with anthropoid apes? Why should Horton have been accused of living in “a world of

Freetown upbringing. Creole culture was further enriched by travels within the Atlantic world, especially since the British preferred to use Creoles and Blacks from the West Indies in the administration of their West African territories.

⁷⁸ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. 273.

⁷⁹ Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 154.

fantasies”⁸⁰ just because he had a strong belief that Christianity was indispensable to progress, at a time when prevailing narratives claimed that, on account of their intellectual inferiority, Africans were incapable of being Christianised and therefore civilised? Why must writer intellectuals such as Horton be blamed for preferring a synthesis of African ways with European ways, at a time when West Africa was not provincial but cosmopolitan?

2.5.2 Blyden on the Race Question and the Anthropological Society

Blyden’s position on race is expressed in his two major publications, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, published in 1887, and *African Life and Customs*, published in 1908. In these publications, Blyden adopted a cosmopolitan concept of race that was simultaneously linked to his background in theology. He seems to have held throughout his intellectual career a religious conviction about his race — that the African, though different, was not inferior to the European. While his belief in African difference was consistent, Blyden’s justification for that belief evolved from a predominantly biblical basis in *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, to one of culture in *African Life and Customs*. Blyden was quick to show in *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* how his views were in sync with “some of the best European thinkers [who, like me,] deprecate any effort to cause the African to part with his special characteristics.”⁸¹ For Blyden, there was “a solidarity of humanity that required the complete development of each part in order to [realise] the effective working of the whole.”⁸² Thus, “if the African is part of humanity, there need be no fear — if his progress is normal — that he will not eventually come into thorough harmony with the laws of humanity.”⁸³ At the core of Blyden’s conception of race in *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, was his belief that humanity was plagued with the problem of cosmic imbalance, because Africans had not assumed their providential role as custodians of spirituality. This is why Blyden wished for each race to adhere to its predestined role.

Blyden believed there were clear differences between Africans and Europeans, and

⁸⁰ Ayandele, *Educated Elite*, p. 42.

⁸¹ Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, p. 66.

⁸² Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 66.

⁸³ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 66.

for that reason, each race had a duty to preserve its God-given traits; hence his call for racial purity. Blyden was not alone in this thinking, and although the doctrine of racial inferiority was generally condemned by liberals in the Atlantic world, a good number of them subscribed to the idea of racial purity. As Ayandele notes, educated Africans of the nineteenth century, such as Mojola Agbebi and James Johnson, “believed that mankind was divided into fixed cultural and racial groups — where people preserved [forever] their own unchanging physical and psychological attributes.”⁸⁴ Governor Pope Hennessy expressed similar beliefs in a letter to James Johnson, to which Blyden made reference in *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*. According to Hennessy:

In these times, when sceptical and irreverent inquiries have become the fashion in what are called the leading nations of Europe, it is satisfactory to know that your race is distinguished by a child-like capacity for faith. By keeping your race pure, you will preserve that all important characteristic. As a student and a clergyman, you cannot have failed to see that mixed races are in this respect inferior to your own.⁸⁵

Blyden was convinced that God endorsed the separate development of the different races, because this was the dominant view among nineteenth-century intellectuals. Thus, Blyden, like many in his day, had an aversion to racial mixing, and was highly suspicious and critical of mixed-race people, even as he criticized racism.⁸⁶ Blyden never wavered in his view on racial purity throughout his long career as a public figure from the 1850s until his death in 1912. For his attitude toward mixed-race individuals, scholars have sometimes condemned Blyden.⁸⁷ Others such as Harry Odamtten have pointed out how Blyden’s experiences of Americo-Liberian treatment of indigenous Africans, his tumultuous personal and political life as well as the pervasive disdain for miscegenation in the Atlantic world shaped Blyden’s race theories. Odamtten argues that those who

⁸⁴ Ayandele, *Educated Elites*, p. 50.

⁸⁵ Letter from Pope Hennessy to James Johnson, *Negro*, 1st January 1873, in Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 67.

⁸⁶ Harry Odamtten, *Edward W. Blyden’s Intellectual Transformations: Afropublicanism, Pan-Africanism, Islam, and the Indigenous West African Church* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press 2019), pp. 53, 78, 178-180. Odamtten’s interest in presenting Blyden’s views as evolving and not static leads to a more measured assessment of Blyden’s race theory than that of say Teshale Tibebu.

⁸⁷ See: Teshale Tibebu, *Edward Wilmot Blyden and the Racial Nationalist Imagination* (New York: University of Rochester Press 2012). See Chapter 5, “The Mulatto Nemesis.”

deride Blyden for his anti-mulatto stance ignore “Blyden’s prescient analysis of the racial gradations that those of partial white descent had constructed and imposed in Liberia.”⁸⁸

Although Blyden’s views on miscegenation were similar to those of some members of the Anthropological Society, unlike them, Blyden did not think Africans belonged to a different place in the natural order. He believed that Africans and Europeans were “not identical ... but unequal; they are distinct but equal.”⁸⁹ Blyden’s aversion to interracial mixing that led to the birth of mixed-race children was linked to his belief that each race had its divinely ordained role. It is safe to assume too that Blyden’s position on this topic was likely influenced by the fact that he was unhappily married to a “mulatto woman,” and was estranged from his children.⁹⁰ Blyden publicly and privately campaigned against the resettlement of mixed-race Americans in Liberia.⁹¹ He maintained that the Colonization Society had made a mistake in accepting what he called “the vicious theory that the Negro and the mulatto are one.” Noting “the bitterness which prevails in America between the *Coloured* and *Black*,”⁹² Blyden accused mixed-race Americans of being “half-Europeans”⁹³ who identified as Black “to secure some advantage for themselves.”⁹⁴ According to him, “scores upon scores [of mulattoes] upon whom money has been spent without stint have passed away. And I cannot at this moment think of a single mulatto adult who came to this country thirty years ago.”⁹⁵ Based on his personal experiences, Blyden genuinely believed that mulattoes were “troublesome” and unsuited to the Liberian weather.

Blyden’s Soviet biographer, Yakov Frenkel, argued that because of Blyden’s strong commitment to cultural nationalism, the preservation of “the distinctive culture and

⁸⁸ Odamtten, *Edward W. Blyden’s Intellectual Transformation*, p. 53.

⁸⁹ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 277.

⁹⁰ Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 183. Letter from Blyden to The Rev. John C. Lowrie (Member, Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions). Harrisburg: Alexander High School, 15th January 1875; Odamtten, *Edward W. Blyden’s Intellectual Transformation*. Odamtten makes much of Blyden’s relationship with his family in his book.

⁹¹ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, pp. 105-139.

⁹² Blyden to Coppinger, Monrovia: 19th October 1874, Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 176.

⁹³ Blyden to Coppinger, Monrovia: 19th October 1874, Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 177.

⁹⁴ Blyden to Coppinger, Monrovia: 19th October 1874, Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 176.

⁹⁵ Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 375. Letter from Blyden to William Coppinger (Secretary of the American Colonization Society), Sierra Leone: 6th June 1887.

features of [the African] race”⁹⁶ was more important to him than “all other goals, including political independence.”⁹⁷ This reading of Blyden, though useful, diminishes the theological underpinnings of his argument that Africans had to guard their culture and racial differences, because they had a distinct role to play as spiritual leaders. Blyden believed that since “imperial races [could not] do the work of spiritual races,”⁹⁸ it was critical for Africans to take up that role. Blyden believed that the Japhetic races, to whom he also referred as “the imperial races,” were destined to engage in politics, science and technology; and the Semitic races were used by God to gift the world the Eastern religions. Africa, he believed, was to serve as “the spiritual conservatory of the world,”⁹⁹ with the descendants of Shem and Canaan being destined to intervene primarily in spiritual matters.

Blyden and Horton both disagreed with the Anthropological Society’s views about the racial inferiority of Africans and the supposed African difference from the human species, but Blyden agreed with the Society’s view that racial purity was necessary for the survival of the African race. In *African Life and Customs*, Blyden was recalling the attempts to prove that Africans were a different species, when he derided:

The noisy and blustering anthropologists of forty or fifty years ago — the Notts and Gliddons, Burton, Winwood Reade, Hunt — *et id omne genus*, who invented all sorts of arguments based upon estimates of physical phenomena as conceived by phrenology or physiognomy, using signs and symbols taken from every part of the man — from the heel to the skull — to prove the mental and moral inferiority of [Africans].¹⁰⁰

For Blyden, writing in 1908, a major challenge to the survival of the African race was the pressure to adopt European ways, without due regard for the fact that “the African has developed a system useful to him for all the needs of life.”¹⁰¹ Thus he wrote, “There is no

⁹⁶ Frenkel, “Edward Blyden,” p. 284.

⁹⁷ Frenkel, “Edward Blyden,” p. 284.

⁹⁸ E. W. Blyden, *The Jewish Question* (Liverpool: Lionel Hart, 1898), p. 14.

⁹⁹ Blyden to Mary Kingsley, Monrovia: 7th May 1900, in Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 464.

¹⁰⁰ Edward Wilmot Blyden, reprint, *African Life and Customs*, 1908 (Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1994), p. 8.

¹⁰¹ Blyden, *African Life and Customs*, p. 10.

question now as to the human unity, but each section has developed for itself such a system or code of life as its environments have suggested — to be improved, not changed, by larger knowledge.”¹⁰² For Blyden, like Horton, therefore, as fluid a concept as race was, it must always accommodate both the essential equality of all humans; and inequalities in the abilities and capacities of humans that arose from geographical and historical circumstances.

2.5.3 The Project of African Regeneration

In envisioning their Africa projects, Horton and Blyden were influenced by their personal and professional backgrounds, their networks and their citizenship. Horton was a British subject and employee of the Crown, and this impacted his Africa project. Blyden’s project was inspired by his citizenship of Liberia, Africa’s only republic at the time; by his personal experiences in politics and marriage; and, most significantly, by his ability to speak several languages. Horton and Blyden had the same goal of a regeneration of Africa but proposed different means to that end. They prescribed a European-style classroom-based education system and recognised the need for an external stimulus to bring this to pass. They also proposed the adoption of scientific and industrial ideas from Europe. While Horton and Blyden both campaigned for the Christian regeneration of Africa, Horton stuck to that model, while Blyden eventually moved away from an African renaissance with Christianity as its chief religion, to one that also embraced Islam and African religions, expressed through its cultures. These two pioneer writer-intellectuals therefore envisaged the regeneration of Africa in different ways, with their divergent opinions on this subject reflecting the broad spectrum of thought engaged in by their contemporaries.

Another matter on which Horton and Blyden agreed was that there was no need for Africans to waste time reinventing technology that already existed. Thus, for Horton, the issue at stake was how Africa could appropriate European industrial knowledge to reinvent itself politically and economically, so that it would regain the preeminent position it occupied among civilisations during the Egyptian era.¹⁰³ Blyden argued too

¹⁰² Blyden, *African Life and Customs*, p. 10.

¹⁰³ Horton, *Letters*, pp. ii-iii.

that:

Africa can afford to hand over the solution of these problems to those who, driven by the exigencies of their circumstances, must solve them or perish. And when they are solved, we shall apply the results to our purposes, leaving us leisure and taste for the metaphysical and spiritual.¹⁰⁴

In Blyden's estimation, the physical environment of Europe necessitated solutions for which Europe needed science and technology, but the African's pre-ordained role in the world obviated such knowledge.¹⁰⁵ He articulated this view more clearly in *African Life and Customs*, when he challenged the notion that Africa needed Europe's missionaries to evolve spiritually, declaring:

What Africa needs from Europe is its imperial and scientific help, ruling from the "top of things," as Miss Kingsley said, and directing in the material development of the country. But for spiritual leadership in Africa, the events of a hundred years of effort [do] not justify her interference.¹⁰⁶

Horton and Blyden were aware of many of the innovative products of the Industrial Revolution and, like their educated counterparts across West Africa, were not opposed to the idea of appropriating existing knowledge.

Horton and Blyden agreed too that for it to regenerate, West Africa needed an outside impetus, even an invading one, as had been administered to Europe by the Romans. Thus, Blyden argued that "the African at home needs to be surrounded by influences from abroad ... not that he may change his nature, but that he may improve his capacity."¹⁰⁷ Like Horton, Blyden espoused the views of his generation on the recurrence in political history of external stimuli, typically in the form of invading races, such as the Romans in Europe. Thus, "the people, when assisted by proper impulse from without — and they need this help just as all other races have needed [an] impulse from without —

¹⁰⁴ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 110.

¹⁰⁵ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 110.

¹⁰⁶ Blyden, *African Life and Customs*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁷ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 277.

will live largely in contact with Nature.”¹⁰⁸ For Horton, the foreign stimulus was Britain. However, Blyden’s thoughts on the matter were more complex, evolving from African American colonisation to galvanisation from the African interior, and finally, ending up back alongside Horton, European (and preferably British) colonial rule.

2.5.4 Horton and the Project of African Regeneration

Horton's African regeneration agenda revolved around his conviction that Africa could rise again, if only Africans could learn from Europe. The lesson of history for Horton was in the fact that “[England], the proudest kingdom in Europe, was once in a state of barbarism, perhaps worse than now exists amongst the tribes chiefly inhabiting the West Coast of Africa.” Thus:

If in those parts of the earth which were formerly inhabited by barbarians, we now see the most splendid exertions of genius, and the highest forms of civil policy, we behold others which in ancient times were the seats of science, of cultivation and of liberty, at present immersed in superstition, and laid waste by despotism. After a short period of civil, of military and of literary glory, the prospect has changed ... the nations of Africa must live in the hope that in process of time their turn will come.¹⁰⁹

Van Hensbroek, who defined Horton’s philosophy as one of “universal modernity,” suggests that Horton’s West Africa project should be analysed as part of a “fiery and self-conscious discourse of a people who perceive themselves at the threshold of a new and better world.”¹¹⁰ They envisaged an African future in which Africans had successfully gained a “practical concept of civilisation”¹¹¹ from the European encounter.

The 1860s were a time of technological advancement and Horton, being a well-travelled and well-read man, was aware that West Africa faced an infrastructure deficit. As van Hensbroek notes, “for many African intellectuals, the flagrant development

¹⁰⁸ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 110.

¹⁰⁹ Horton, *Letters*, p. i.

¹¹⁰ Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, pp. 34-42.

¹¹¹ Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 35. For van Hensbroek, in Horton’s view, to be civilised meant “to be economically advanced, politically and militarily strong, and culturally sophisticated.”

deficit has been a more pressing intellectual challenge than culture.”¹¹² If Horton’s problem, as van Hensbroek states, was “how to organise and stimulate the modernisation process,”¹¹³ then a major solution was to assemble on the continent qualified and highly-trained European experts, who would impart the needed skills to Africans. This is why the project of keeping Europeans alive in Africa was an integral part of Horton’s agenda. Horton believed West Africans were ordained to do the actual work of regenerating Africa, but Europeans were needed in the beginning to teach the Africans. Western education up to university level at Fourah Bay College was also an integral part of Horton’s agenda.¹¹⁴

In 1861, barely two years after his return to West Africa, Horton discovered that the partnership between the War Office and the C.M.S. in the training of African medical officers, of which Horton was once a beneficiary, had been abandoned. After protesting to no avail, Horton proposed a scheme to the War Office in which West African students nominated for medical school could undertake introductory courses in anatomy, pharmacy and chemistry, in West Africa, preferably Sierra Leone.¹¹⁵ According to Fyfe, the Director-General of the Army Medical Department referred the proposal to the Principal Medical Officer in the Gold Coast, Charles O’Callaghan. The negative feedback from O’Callaghan and the commanding officer of the troops, Captain Bromwell, discouraged the War Office from supporting the project. Although Governor Pine and some African residents on the Gold Coast countered O’Callaghan’s and Bromwell’s views, the War Office decided not to support the Horton scheme. Horton’s networks within the African Aid Society also campaigned unsuccessfully for him by publishing his scheme in the *African Times* and making representations to the War Office.¹¹⁶ It would seem that Horton was making a desperate attempt to salvage a dying scheme, as he was aware that two students selected under it in 1857 had both been unable to take up positions as medical officers. One had been rejected because the War Office determined that he was not of “pure Negro stock.”¹¹⁷ The other had initially obtained a

¹¹² Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 153.

¹¹³ Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 37.

¹¹⁴ Horton, *West African Countries and Peoples*, p. 202.

¹¹⁵ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 46.

¹¹⁶ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 59.

¹¹⁷ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 46.

medical qualification, but the War Office had sent him home later because he was found to be “mentally unbalanced.”¹¹⁸

Apollos Nwauwa, commenting on Horton’s proposal for training African medical doctors in Sierra Leone, alleges that while Horton’s effort “appears to have been guided by patriotism, it also seems to have been tinted with some doses of self-interest.”¹¹⁹ Besides, Horton desired to be accorded “equal respect with his European counterparts” and “could not tolerate subordinate positions in the medical services.”¹²⁰ On the charge of Horton being intolerant of “subordinate positions,” Horton stated explicitly, in a letter to Henry Venn about the gross disrespect he had experienced from a certain Captain de Ruvignes, that he was mindful of Venn’s admonition against jeopardising the scheme. Horton noted:

I should not be too hasty in whatever I am about to undertake — not to give in to the dictate of passion, or take rash measures which the nature of the trials that I am suffering merited. I felt that it was the keystone of the continuance of that whole plan of educating young Africans and sending them in the coast. Should I give way, thousands of them here who are hostile to the plan will have grounds to complain; they will use every means to dissuade you and the government from going on in that noble cause, which is fraught with blessings for Africa.¹²¹

Nwauwa is not alone in this reading of the motives of activist West African writer-intellectuals as self-preservationist. Extant accounts by scholars follow archived opinions of nineteenth-century Europeans on the coast, questioning the motivation of West Africans who advocated the reform of official policy regarding the material and human development of West Africa.¹²² However, a close examination of Horton’s personal experience of medical school in England, his character and the historical context, would

¹¹⁸ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 46.

¹¹⁹ Apollos O. Nwauwa, “Far Ahead of his Time: James Africanus Horton’s Initiatives for a West African University and his Frustrations, 1862-1871,” *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, Vol. 39, Cahiers 153 (1999), pp. 107-121.

¹²⁰ Nwauwa, “Far Ahead of his Time,” p. 111.

¹²¹ J. A. Horton to Henry Venn 3rd February 1860, C. M. S. CAI/0117, in Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 42.

¹²² Farias and Barber, *Self-Assertion and Brokerage*.

suggest no self-interest. As Fyfe notes, on their arrival in Britain to pursue their medical education, Horton and his colleague Davies had to take extra courses to be at par with their British medical school counterparts. It stands to reason therefore that Horton would propose training for medical school candidates by individuals who had prior experience of the situation in Britain.

Horton's West African renaissance project, as he conceived it, was dependent on attracting European experts to West Africa. He believed sincerely that Africans had the capability to learn from and replicate new knowledge from Europe. For this to occur though, Africans needed to court the presence of desirable Europeans of a high calibre. Horton believed in courting skilled Europeans and dissuading undesirable Europeans — “the reckless and desperate”¹²³ — from settling on the continent. The project of keeping undesirable Europeans out while attracting high-calibre Europeans provided the motivation for Horton's 1867 publication titled *Physical and Medical Climate and Meteorology of the West Coast of Africa with Valuable Hints to Europeans for the Preservation of Health in the Tropics*.¹²⁴ This book sought to establish that the health of the inhabitants of West Africa, native and British, was inextricably linked to the state of sanitation in the colonies. A central concern was the identification, prevention and treatment of tropical diseases, which Horton saw as a major drawback to Africa's development. He bemoaned the fact that West Africa had gained notoriety among Europeans for being “the most deadly of the British possessions.”¹²⁵ According to Horton, he compiled the second part of his book — “*Valuable Hints to Europeans for the Preservation of Health in the Tropics*”¹²⁶ — because, “The death of every newcomer tells very much against the climate of the country. [Consequently, the country] is deprived of the civilising influence which radiates from them. It prevents others from attempting to reside in it; and generally, only the most reckless and desperate will venture to do so.”¹²⁷

¹²³ Horton, *Physical and Medical Climate*, p. 271.

¹²⁴ This was his first major publication. It was well received in Britain and placed him within the ranks of the intellectual giants of West Africa. He had already published his medical school thesis in 1859 and a 36-page pamphlet in 1864 titled *Political Economy of British West Africa: The African's View of the Negro's Place in Nature*. However, neither of those publications was as well received as *Physical and Medical Climate*.

¹²⁵ Horton, *Physical and Medical Climate*, p. v.

¹²⁶ Horton, *Physical and Medical Climate*, pp. 269-305.

¹²⁷ Horton, *Physical and Medical Climate*, p. 271.

Of all the colonial administration's shortcomings, none vexed Horton more than the deplorable state of sanitation across the four West African territories of the British Empire. As public health was inextricably linked to progress and development, Horton recommended legislation, alongside the institution of an organised system of sewage removal. He argued that poor sanitation was detrimental to the health of both Africans and Europeans. According to Horton, there was "nothing so necessary for the healthy growth of a community as the drainage and sewerage of the towns they inhabit, and the inefficient mode in which this is done in Western Africa shows that the general population, or their superiors, have set a limit to their own existence."¹²⁸ In a verbose diatribe, Horton painted a grim picture of everyday sanitation in the coastal towns:

The air we breathe, loaded with carbonaceous matter, sulphurous and sulphuric acid, sulphate of ammonia, and sulphuretted hydrogen, is deprived, by the absence of vegetation, of the revivifying principle, oxygen, and is hence less fitted for the necessary changes of the blood effected during respiration. The earth which we tread under our feet, loaded with the ashes of our forefathers, and rich with the remains of animal and vegetable matter of ages long gone by, saturated with the putrefying contents of cesspools and leaking sewers of our own day, emits, at certain seasons of the year, the poisonous emanations which generate typhus, diarrhoea, dysentery, and cholera; whilst the waters of our principal tidal rivers, converted into open common sewers, teem with pestiferous exhalations charged with the germ disease or the messenger of death.¹²⁹

The sanitation problem though seldom examined by scholars excited Horton because the survival of Europeans in the tropics was vital to his project of attracting desirable Europeans to West Africa. In Horton's words, "The maladies peculiar to tropical countries have the most mischievous effect in checking the progress of true civilisation in the tropics."¹³⁰ To achieve his agenda, Horton studied the meteorological records meticulously in order to provide information about diseases that was relevant to each of

¹²⁸ Horton, *Physical and Medical Climate*, p. 112.

¹²⁹ Horton, *Physical and Medical Climate*, p. 113.

¹³⁰ Horton, *Physical and Medical Climate*, p. v.

the four seasons he identified in the coastal climate. He concluded that in West Africa, “the higher the temperature unmixed with humidity, the more healthy is the climate; but if the temperature is high and surcharged with moisture, the climate becomes very deadly.”¹³¹ Since chronic disease and fevers were generally less prevalent during the “Harmattan” or cold season, for Horton this was the healthiest time of year. Conversely, the unhealthiest season was the rainy season, when “fevers of the most severe type are prevalent.”¹³²

Horton proposed that the regeneration of Africa had to be pursued on the basis of the Christian religion. In his message to West African youth, Horton encouraged them to:

Seek independence without bravado, manliness without subserviency; and let them put their shoulders to work, and prove by the efforts they themselves make that they, too, desire, and are striving, and will strive, for the Christian and industrial regeneration of Africa; and do this with the modesty not at all incompatible with manly self-reliance, and a due sense of the innate dignity which should characterise men who have been helped out of their degradation, and brought at once into the ranks of a Christian civilisation which has taken eighteen centuries to be developed.¹³³

Horton was convinced that the answer to West Africa’s development deficit was a Christian regeneration that targeted the youth. This explains his advocacy of a Western education that was steeped in Christianity. The core of Horton’s programme lay in this fundamental belief that “nations rise and fall.”¹³⁴ Africa had once been “the nursery of science and literature; from thence they were taught in Greece and Rome”¹³⁵ Yet, in the nineteenth century, Europe having learned from Africa, was more advanced.

Horton contended that his local and international travels had equipped him with knowledge and insight, which fuelled his pronouncement that:

¹³¹ Horton, *Physical and Medical Climate*, p. 210.

¹³² Horton, *Physical and Medical Climate*, p. 217.

¹³³ Horton, *West African Countries and People*, p. 274.

¹³⁴ Horton, *West African Countries and People*, p. 67.

¹³⁵ Horton, *West African Countries and People*, p. 66.

Although it took eleven hundred years to bring France and England to the high standard of civilisation which they now occupy, it will take far less time to bring a portion at least of Western Africa to vie with Europe in progressive development. Descended from the royal blood of Isuama Eboe, and having had ample opportunities, from close acquaintance with almost all forms of government exercised in the most important countries in the western part of Africa, of judging of the influence of civilisation in modern times on races of different and most opposite character, I have hazarded the above opinion, and I am certain that those who have made this view the subject of sober consideration will bear me out in the statement.¹³⁶

In the final analysis, what was relevant was that “Africa too, with a guarantee of the civilisation of the north, will rise into equal importance.”¹³⁷ Another pressing question for Horton therefore was how to persuade Europe to share its scientific and technological knowledge with Africa. Since Africa did not possess the military power to subdue Europe, Horton figured that belonging to an empire, as opposed to being a struggling republic [like Blyden’s Liberia], would guarantee Africa access to European science and technology. Horton imagined a world in which empire and nation were not opposed because African regeneration was at the core of his agenda. He imagined a West Africa freed from European control once West Africans had studied and imbibed Europe’s science, technology and Christianity.

2.5.5 Blyden and the Project of African Regeneration

As a beneficiary of the American colonisation scheme, Blyden initially endorsed the Christian regeneration of Africa with the help of African Americans because, like Horton and many educated Africans, he believed that Europeans were not destined to Christianise or civilise continental Africans. Before the 1890s, Blyden worked with other proponents of Ethiopianism, especially Alexander Crummell, to guide diasporic Africans toward Africa to take up the role of Christianising and civilising Africa.¹³⁸ Blyden’s contribution to this doctrine was in becoming Ethiopianism’s most articulate nineteenth-

¹³⁶ Horton, *Letters*, p. ii-iii.

¹³⁷ Horton, *Letters*, p. i.

¹³⁸ Barnes, *Global Christianity*, pp. 18-22.

century apostle, as he travelled across English-speaking West Africa and throughout the United States and the West Indies, acting jointly on behalf of the Liberian government and the Colonization Society in promoting the concept and recruiting candidates for the “Back to Africa” project.¹³⁹ It could be argued that Blyden’s 1887 publication, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, was as much about religion as it was a manifesto for the African American colonisation of Africa.

A significant portion of *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* is devoted to the colonisation of Africa by “one-tenth of the six millions”¹⁴⁰ of African Americans. Blyden entreated Africans in America to return to Africa and reinstate the “race to its original integrity,”¹⁴¹ so that “working by itself, for itself and from itself, it will discover the methods of its own development, and they will not be the same as the Anglo-Saxon methods.”¹⁴² In a letter to the American Colonization Society, Blyden articulated the position of leading men in Liberia, stating, “Nothing is more obvious than that the great necessity of Liberia is an increase of civilised population.”¹⁴³ Blyden thought of African Americans as Africans sent by Providence into slavery in America to learn new things that could inspire a reformation on the mother continent. He believed that formerly enslaved Africans were destined to return home to Africa, just like the Jews who went into exile in Egypt and later returned to Israel. Thus, “we must invite the exiled Africans who understand and sympathise with us, from all parts of the world, to come and unite with us in our great work.”¹⁴⁴ Blyden imagined:

The garden of the Lord; ... taken possession of by the returning exiles from the West, trained for the work of re-building waste places under severe discipline and hard bondage ... their brethren ... coming to catch something of the inspiration the exiles have brought — to share in the borrowed jewels they have imported, and to march back hand-in-hand with their returned brethren towards

¹³⁹ Barnes, *Global Christianity*, p. 22.

¹⁴⁰ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 108.

¹⁴¹ Blyden, *Christianity*, pp. 109-110.

¹⁴² Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 110.

¹⁴³ Blyden to The Secretary of the American Colonization Society, 8th March 1864, in Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 62.

¹⁴⁴ Blyden to The Secretary of the American Colonization Society, 8th March 1864, in Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 63.

the sunrise for the regeneration of a continent ... and then to the astonishment of the whole world, in a higher sense than has yet been witnessed, 'Ethiopia shall *suddenly* stretch out her hands unto God.'¹⁴⁵

Blyden believed America was destined, through its Black population and the American Colonization Society, to lead the civilisation of Africa. According to him, nineteenth-century exploration of Africa by Europeans had “turned the attention of Europe to Africa with renewed curiosity and interest.”¹⁴⁶ Yet, “they cannot send their citizens there from Europe to colonise — they die.”¹⁴⁷ Thus, “the United States is the only country which, providentially, can do the work which the whole world now wants done.”¹⁴⁸ According to Lynch, Blyden was not in favour of mass emigration; he preferred selective migration instead.¹⁴⁹ As his exasperation grew with the nature and pace of the African American colonisation of Liberia, Blyden revised his theory, claiming that some of the returnees were ill-suited to the task because they were of mixed-race.

Blyden’s initial Africa project was primarily for the *Negro* Republic of Liberia to be the nucleus of an African regeneration led by Africans. He envisaged the replication of the Liberia model, or for Liberia to be the centre of an African Republic comprising other states in West Africa, including, at least, the British Colony of Sierra Leone. Horton hotly contested this aspect of Blyden’s vision, believing that the external impetus Sierra Leone — and, indeed, the other British territories in West Africa — needed was not to emanate from Liberia, which was itself struggling with infrastructure and sanitation deficits. Although Horton and Blyden had a healthy respect for each other’s intellectual output, Horton had occasion to question Blyden’s agenda for Liberia. Horton wrote that “his friend Professor Blyden” of the Republic of Liberia, in an oration delivered in Syria in 1866, had proposed that Liberia should annex Sierra Leone, or peacefully negotiate with Britain for the handing over of Sierra Leone to the Republic of Liberia. Although Horton acknowledged Liberia’s unique position as Africa’s only republic, he denounced

¹⁴⁵ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 129.

¹⁴⁶ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 337.

¹⁴⁷ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 128.

¹⁴⁸ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 128.

¹⁴⁹ Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot 1832 – 1912* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 130.

Blyden's "remarks respecting the neighbouring British Colony, Sierra Leone, the seat of the British government in Western Africa."¹⁵⁰ Horton quoted Blyden as saying that Sierra Leone was:

A striking reminder of the inefficiency of European legislation as a civiliser of the Black race... The African element, so essential to African civilisation in Sierra Leone, is rendered subdued and silent, and hence that province has been, and under like circumstances will continue to be, of no marked avail as a pioneer of intelligent progress.¹⁵¹

Horton proceeded to point out "certain defects in the government of [the] Republic [of Liberia], which, if remedied, would greatly enhance social advancement and material progress."¹⁵² Horton wondered how a republic that had an entrance to its capital that reminded one of places where "the light of civilisation [had] never reached" could hope to colonise another territory, observing disparagingly that the entrance to the city of Monrovia had "a pile of stones put together helter-skelter, without any idea of masonry, and forming the commencement of a bridge, which is so rickety as to require a passer-by to keep Newton always in memory, as the least loss in the centre of gravity would lead to a fearful catastrophe."¹⁵³ In short, Horton did not see any benefit to Sierra Leone in being annexed by Liberia. His preferred vision for Sierra Leone was temporary membership of the unfolding British Empire, which could lead ultimately to an African regeneration.

Although Blyden's early Africa project was primarily for Liberia to regenerate Africa, he subsequently became prepared to turn Liberia into a British or French colony. This apparent *volte-face* occurred as it became obvious to Blyden that while he believed an African regeneration could come about through the affirmation of an African identity, neither the returnees to Liberia and Sierra Leone, nor the recaptives were interested in adopting, or even learning, the local customs. Thus, Blyden proposed a series of three avenues to discovering and nurturing an African identity. In the 1860s, it was through outside influence; in the 1880s, it was through the rediscovery of a providential role for

¹⁵⁰ Horton, *West African Peoples*, p. 270.

¹⁵¹ Horton, *West African Peoples*, pp. 270-271.

¹⁵² Horton, *West African Peoples*, pp. 270-271.

¹⁵³ Horton, *West African Peoples*, p. 271.

Africans; and in the 1900s, Blyden became wedded to the concept of procuring this regeneration internally through the use of African customs, while observing tolerance and respect for other religions, such as Islam. One major influence on Blyden in his growth and understanding of religions was his experience of interacting with the people of the Sierra Leonean interior while he was as an agent of the British government during the early 1870s, which led him to conclude that “the work of Africa’s regeneration [could occur] through the influence of the British settlements on the coast.”¹⁵⁴ Here, Blyden espouses the view that regeneration would necessitate using tools from outside. This position is made complex by the fact that Blyden amends his view in *African Life and Customs* where he unequivocally argues that Africans would lead the continent’s rebirth.¹⁵⁵ But, as Odamtten has pointed out, Blyden’s views were not static, they evolved over his long career.

Teshale Tibebu has argued that Blyden’s later support of European colonisation was because of his “belief in the need for Africa to move in the direction of modernity,”¹⁵⁶ and the fact that the modernity Blyden craved was Western. Tibebu appears scandalised by Blyden, like Horton, not only applauding “the positive impact European colonialism would have on Africa,” but also declaring in a 1905 publication that “Great Britain has done more to open up Africa and bring its inner secrets to the knowledge of the world than any other nation.”¹⁵⁷ Tibebu cites Blyden further as trumpeting that “more has been done for African development and progress during the last decade than during the whole period ... between 1807 ... and 1895.”¹⁵⁸ For Tibebu, if Blyden, with all his knowledge of history, could celebrate the British colonial enterprise, then this was “a remarkably revealing, indeed troubling, statement.”¹⁵⁹ Tibebu is shocked that Blyden, the “father of African nationalism” and author of the idea of the “African Personality,” pleaded with the European powers to “help” Africa.¹⁶⁰ Tibebu’s assessment of Blyden from this

¹⁵⁴ Blyden to the Earl of Kimberley (John Woodhouse, British Colonial Secretary in 1873), Monrovia: 22nd October 1873, in Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 141.

¹⁵⁵ Odamtten, *Edward W. Blyden’s Intellectual Transformation*, p. x.

¹⁵⁶ Tibebu, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, p. 126. Here, Tibebu makes reference to Blyden’s collection of articles titled: *West Africa Before Europe* (London: Philips 1905).

¹⁵⁷ Tibebu, *Blyden*, p. 128.

¹⁵⁸ Tibebu, *Blyden*, p. 129.

¹⁵⁹ Tibebu, *Blyden*, p. 130.

¹⁶⁰ Tibebu, *Blyden*, p. 127.

perspective oversimplifies the issues at stake in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It completely ignores other reasons behind Blyden's preference for European colonisation such as the fact that colonialism had not yet evolved its twentieth-century characteristics at the time Blyden wrote.

Serving as Liberia's long-term Secretary of State in two stints between the early 1860s and the late 1880s, Blyden's participation in politics and in the world of diplomacy influenced the way he understood power relations. In the 1870s, Liberia had disputes with Britain over what was to be the boundary between the Republic of Liberia and the Colony of Sierra Leone. From 1878 to 1895, while Britain unilaterally defined the Mano River as the boundary, Blyden tried unsuccessfully to reconcile Liberian interests with those of British traders.¹⁶¹ Another matter with which Blyden dealt was Liberia's indebtedness to Europe, which led in the 1890s to a scramble among the European powers for control of Liberia.¹⁶² France, Spain and Germany offered to liquidate Liberia's debt — if Liberia would cede land and sovereignty to them.¹⁶³ Faced with this looming danger, and disgusted by the Liberian government's lack of interest in the interior states, Blyden concluded, as Horton had before him, that British colonisation of Liberia was the radical event that would bring about the change he desired. Of the European countries, Blyden believed Britain and France were best suited to colonise Liberia and lead it out of poverty, while assuring its long-term future through an injection of modernity.

In pursuit of an African renaissance, Blyden advocated a liberal education *for* Africans *by* Africans. In his 1881 inaugural address as President of Liberia College (now the University of Liberia), he promised that this model college would have “African instructors, under a Christian government conducted by Negroes.”¹⁶⁴ Blyden's college would teach World History, Classics and Mathematics. He proposed the study of Greek and Latin and their literature, because, he claimed, in these languages “there is not, as far as I know, a sentence, a word, or a syllable disparaging to the Negro [— who] may get

¹⁶¹ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, pp. 175–184.

¹⁶² Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, p. 184.

¹⁶³ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, pp. 184–185.

¹⁶⁴ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 71.

nourishment from them without taking in any race-poison.”¹⁶⁵ Blyden’s educated Liberian youth would exhibit a “lofty manhood” to “build up a nation, to wrest from Nature her secrets, to lead the van of progress in this country, and to regenerate a continent.”¹⁶⁶ He envisaged the study of West African languages as a prerequisite to the uplift of the race, noting to Kingsley:

As a government and not a missionary Institution, Liberia College, like some of the Universities in India, may enjoy unlimited freedom in its curriculum. We may soon be able to raise up a Professor of West African Languages and religion. Such a chair seems to be absolutely necessary for the healthful development of an independent Negro state in West Africa, with millions of aborigines within its territory, who must be co-operated with and incorporated if the Republic is to have a permanent and useful place on this continent.¹⁶⁷

In the event, Blyden proved unable to put his curriculum into practice during his three years as College President.

From the 1890s, Blyden became convinced that his program for African regeneration was incompatible with Christianity. One problem Blyden had with Christianity was that it was a method used to spread European customs. Blyden believed that the translation of the bible into European languages had resulted in the “depreciation of its merits.”¹⁶⁸ Another reservation he had was with the representation of God as a physical human being — and as Caucasian. This was an area in which Blyden believed Islam and Judaism to be superior to the Christianity of the “Japhetic races.” According to Blyden, “the prohibition of all representations of living creatures of all kinds, not merely in sacred places but everywhere,”¹⁶⁹ ensured that Moslems and Jews did not accord the status of God to any living thing. Blyden was bewildered that this African American Christian pastor, presented a visual representation of Jesus Christ as a blonde-haired, blue-eyed White man, and even preached about the “lily white hands” of God. Another clergyman said to

¹⁶⁵ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 83-84.

¹⁶⁶ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 93.

¹⁶⁷ Blyden to Mary Kingsley, Monrovia: 7th May 1900, in Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 465.

¹⁶⁸ Blyden, *Christianity*, p.7.

¹⁶⁹ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 14.

his congregation, concerning 1 John 3 verse 2, “Brethren, imagine a beautiful White man with blue eyes, rosy cheeks and flaxen hair, and we shall be like him.”¹⁷⁰ For Blyden, the equation of the White man with God in the African’s conscious and subconscious mind caused him to lose his “sense of dignity of human nature,”¹⁷¹ and having received the adulterated word of God from a culture that belittled him, the African Christian convert “[learned] to depreciate and deprecate his own personal characteristics.”¹⁷² It was for this reason that Blyden questioned the suitability for consumption by Africans of a Christianity that was steeped in European culture. Blyden was not alone in this quandary. Ayandele has noted how the cultural renaissance of Blyden’s contemporaries in Nigeria, “centred on shedding ... the European aspects of the versions of Christianity brought to Nigeria.”¹⁷³ This explains partly Blyden’s subsequent research into African customs, and his prescription for an African cultural renaissance as the precondition for Africans to take up their place as spiritual leaders of the human race. From the 1890s, scholars such as Mary Kingsley joined Blyden in championing a model of modernisation grounded in an endogenous African Regeneration.¹⁷⁴

Mary Kingsley’s travels in 1893, and the subsequent publication of her book in 1897, gave Blyden an ally in his beliefs. As Deborah Spillman notes, “considering the work of Kingsley and Blyden together highlights how the production of knowledge about Africa placed Victorians and Anglophone Africans in dialogue, and often debate, with each other.”¹⁷⁵ Together they “complicated established anthropological methods.”¹⁷⁶ Spillman argues that to combat race prejudice, Blyden and Kingsley employed “dialogic strategies” that were different from the methodologies of anthropologists, which relied on “visually verifiable facts.”¹⁷⁷ Zachernuk argues that:

They agreed that African culture, once appreciated on its own terms, was not what both Europeans and African Americans thought, not a primitive

¹⁷⁰ Blyden, *Christianity*, p. 15.

¹⁷¹ Blyden, *Christianity*, p.21.

¹⁷² Blyden, *Christianity*, p.21.

¹⁷³ Ayandele, *Educated Elite*, p. 48.

¹⁷⁴ Blyden, *African Life and Customs*; Flint, “Mary Kingsley.”

¹⁷⁵ Spillman, “African Skin,” p. 314.

¹⁷⁶ Spillman, “African Skin,” p. 306.

¹⁷⁷ Spillman, “African Skin,” p. 306.

backwater. For Kingsley this was because she understood it to be inferior, but well-suited and well-developed in its own terms. For Blyden this was because it was a culture already connected to history, with a proven ability to develop in healthy ways, which needed to be harnessed and understood under wise leadership. To accomplish this, a new kind of knowledge about Africa had to be generated.¹⁷⁸

Kingsley articulated to a wider English-speaking audience what Blyden had known for years — that a close study of African customs led one to a deeper appreciation of culture and spirituality and that indigenous African religious practices were not necessarily less well suited to Africans than Christianity.¹⁷⁹

In a letter to Mary Kingsley, Blyden stated explicitly his belief that Africans were gifted with a natural religious ethos that was superior to the European's:

Very few, among races alien to the European, believe in the genuineness of the Christianity of the White man. For neither in his teaching nor [in] the practice of the lay White man do they see manifested, as a rule, anything of the spirit of Christianity ... The case is different among the so-called benighted Africans. They can and do, in their uninvaded solitudes, fulfil the law of love. All fair-minded travellers on this continent are forcibly struck with the decided superiority in morality which characterises the interior natives untouched by civilisation, compared with those in the seaports who have come under the influence of ... Christian civilisation.¹⁸⁰

Blyden believed, as did Kingsley, that African religions were authentic forms of worship. In his letter to Kingsley, Blyden noted too that her reference to African religions as a pantheistic form of Christianity was in line with his own thinking that “pantheism is nothing more than the [Christian] belief in Divine immanence.”¹⁸¹ Blyden and Kingsley both believed that African customs were endangered by the encounter with European

¹⁷⁸ Zachernuk, “Africans as Africanists,” p. 9.

¹⁷⁹ Blyden to Mary Kingsley, Monrovia: May 7, 1900 in Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 464; Flint, “Mary Kingsley,” p. 158.

¹⁸⁰ Blyden to Mary Kingsley, Monrovia: 7th May 1900, in Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 462.

¹⁸¹ Blyden to Mary Kingsley, Monrovia: 7th May 1900, in Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 464.

culture. As Flint notes, Kingsley became the advocate of the “African Personality” to an audience that Horton and Blyden could not reach. Kingsley insisted, as did Blyden, on studying African institutions “with a view to understanding their mechanism before any changes were made in them.”¹⁸² Flint notes further that Blyden, Horton and Kingsley had much in common with later nationalists, considering their insistence that the African had made, and continued to make, a contribution to human progress. The project of African regeneration that these pioneer nationalists embarked on could be summed up as a push for controlled contact and discriminatory engagement with different cultures and knowledges.

2.6 Conclusion

Horton and Blyden shared an interest in the progress of West Africa with the nationalists of the post-1945 era, as well as an interest in championing the cause of their people using print culture. However, they do not fit neatly into the category of proto nationalism, in the sense in which that tag has been most often applied to them, because they were both in favour of the imposition of colonial rule in West Africa. Horton’s programme was a call to action that involved appropriating European science and technology for African needs. Blyden’s was a call to reason, to retool the mind of Africans towards racial pride and progress. As distinct from the post-WWII nationalists, Horton and Blyden did not believe that being subject to empire would curtail African progress. Instead, they conceptualised a temporary belonging to empire that was within African control. They formed valuable international friendships with editors and publishers, leading to debates across the Atlantic. Horton was only active for about a decade, giving his thoughts more consistency than those of Blyden, whose programme evolved from the 1850s through to the 1910s, affording him the opportunity — and perhaps the reputational risk — of revisiting and revising his thoughts. His views on nation, colonialism and empire, espoused through his understanding of Islam, Christianity and West African religions, changed over the long period of his intellectual activism.

Horton was a British army medical officer, who participated in British wars of

¹⁸² Flint, “Mary Kingsley,” p. 158.

conquest, including the Ashanti wars of 1863 and 1873-74, for which reason he sits uncomfortably in nationalist discourses. Yet, Horton is indispensable to nationalist history, on account of the extant evidence — in letters, pamphlets and books — of his undeniable political, social and economic commitment to the idea of a regeneration of West Africa. Blyden comfortably occupies the position of foremost race nationalist and advocate of African regeneration. Yet, in the late nineteenth century, Blyden campaigned actively for Britain to colonise Liberia and West Central Africa. For all of these reasons, framing Horton's and Blyden's agenda away from the story about "the rise of the nation-state" could lead to a more textured analysis.

CHAPTER 3

Rethinking Cultural Nationalism as Debate (1887-1920)

3.1 Introduction

The idea that the writer-intellectuals who founded the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) were anti-colonial cultural nationalists has been central to Ghana's Grand Narrative. As Esperanza Brizuela-Garcia notes:

Scholarship on the lives and works of Gold Coast intellectuals has been largely dominated by the paradigm of cultural nationalism that was first established in David Kimble's seminal work, *A Political History of Ghana: The Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism 1850-1928*, published in 1963. Kimble speaks of the "essential continuity of the nationalist tradition" that had been developing in the Gold Coast since the nineteenth century. Most importantly, he links this tradition to the emergence and evolution of educated elites in the Gold Coast.¹

Kimble is not alone in his assumption that the anti-colonial movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is a historical continuum. Roger Gocking, who disowned the programme of "excessive concern with finding the roots of nationalism,"² nonetheless endorsed the idea of an anti-colonial continuum, alongside the perception that the Gold Coast intelligentsia were driven by self-preservation. Gocking alleged that "the scholars and members of the intelligentsia of the interwar years ... had their counterparts during the era of mass nationalism in the Convention People's Party organizers, who were similarly underachieving and underemployed school leavers."³ Another way in which Kimble's position has become the accepted view is with his identification of "Western education as the main formative influence upon [the educated nationalists'] leadership."⁴ Sammy Tenkorang, continuing in the tradition of Kimble, characterised the Gold Coast

¹ Esperanza Brizuela-Garcia, "Cosmopolitanism: Why Nineteenth Century Gold Coast Thinkers Matter in the Twenty-First Century," *Ghana Studies*, 17 (2014), p. 209.

² Roger Gocking, *Facing Two Ways: Ghana's Coastal Communities Under Colonial Rule* (New York and Oxford: University Press of America, 1999), p. 6.

³ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 206.

⁴ David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p.60.

intellectuals as a disgruntled elite group whose literacy conferred headship upon them.⁵ Tenkorang noted for example that the ARPS was founded mostly by literate traditional rulers and their educated subjects who “had become progressively aggrieved by certain political, economic and social measures taken against them by the colonial administrators.”⁶ Tenkorang did not present a homogenised story because he emphasised differences of opinion among the intellectuals; nonetheless, his account is limiting because it examines the members’ history and pursuits as a chronicle of anti-colonial protest and resistance. Although the intelligentsia were faced with racism, racist administrative policies, the decline of merchant princes and labour supply worries as slavery was dismantled, there was more to their challenge of the colonial order than resentment. They were motivated by their desire to see a regeneration of their region.

Another characteristic of scholarship on cultural nationalism is its emphasis on the dyad of Africa *versus* the West.⁷ In these accounts, white racism and exclusion from the “top levels of their respective spheres”⁸ forced a self-interested intelligentsia to embark on a “vigorous search for an authentic indigenous culture.”⁹ Ayandele has described those who embarked on this search as “repentant members of the deluded hybrids.”¹⁰ Farias and Barber describe cultural nationalists as “the West African ‘Victorians’ who wore top hats and high-necked dresses, yet vigorously asserted the dignity and value of indigenous African tradition.”¹¹ This juxtaposition of Western acculturation and African tradition shows apparent delusion. It also imposes fixity and a lack of dynamism on African cultures. The problem with such thinking is that it does not recognise the cosmopolitan milieu that nurtured so-called cultural nationalists while cementing the

⁵ Sammy Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society, 1897-1935,” unpublished manuscript, May 1975.

⁶ Tenkorang, “Gold Coast Aborigines,” p. 1.

⁷ Emmanuel Ayankanmi Ayandele, *The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society* (Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1974); P. F. de Moraes Farias and Karin Barber, eds., *Self-Assertion and Brokerage: Early Cultural Nationalism in West Africa* (Birmingham: Centre for West African Studies, University of Birmingham, 1990); Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992); Nana Kobina Nketsia V, *African Culture in Governance and Development: The Ghana Paradigm* (Accra and Cape Coast: Ghana Universities Press and Cape Coast University Press, 2013).

⁸ Farias and Barber, *Self-Assertion and Brokerage*, p. 1.

⁹ Farias and Barber, *Self-Assertion and Brokerage*, p. 1-2.

¹⁰ Ayandele, *The Educated Elite*, p. 50.

¹¹ Farias and Barber, *Self-Assertion and Brokerage*, p. 1.

view of an unchanging Africa. The assumptions of provincialism inherent in the term “cultural nationalism” thus project the non-existent history of a culture clash experienced by an intelligentsia that was in fact naturally open to engagement with difference.¹² Scholars who adopt Kimble’s claim that his cultural nationalist writers aimed at showing “that their own customs, ways of life and ideas were a sufficient basis for educational and constitutional advancement” have all discovered the practical difficulties that come with staking such claims. The so-called cultural nationalists could not be easily labelled. The scholars thus argued that the so-called cultural nationalism was self-contradictory.¹³ The cultural nationalists were thus noted to be a self-interested middle class “characterized by ambiguities and tensions”¹⁴ or suffering from “middle-class disillusion and [a] crisis of identity.”¹⁵ Another problem is that scholars have unconsciously assimilated the bias of nineteenth-century documents that denigrated educated West Africans. As John Mensah Sarbah noted in the nineteenth century, it was “fashionable to disparage the educated African, and no opportunity is missed by his unfriends to degrade, ridicule, or point the finger of scorn at him.”¹⁶ Although Sarbah targeted the attitudes of European settlers and visitors to the Coast, educated Africans were ridiculed by both Europeans and Africans.¹⁷ The pejorative presentation of local cosmopolitans in literary works by African and European colonial and post-colonial writers has been challenged by Stephanie Newell, who has argued against the “imperialist representations of the local”¹⁸ as mimicry. As Ayandele says of his “deluded hybrids,” they used “strong epithets to describe themselves – ‘community of counterfeit Englishmen’; ‘mountebank exhibitionists of

¹² Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: ‘How to Play the Game of Life’* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002).

¹³ Ayandele, *The Educated Elite*; Farias and Barber, *Self-Assertion and Brokerage*; Kwaku Larbi Korang, *Writing Ghana, Imagining Africa: Nation and African Modernity* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Farias and Barber, *Self-Assertion and Brokerage*, p. 1.

¹⁵ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 46.

¹⁶ John Mensah Sarbah, 2ed. *Fanti National Constitution: A Short Treatise on the Constitution and Government of the Fanti, Asanti, and Other Akan Tribes of West Africa, Together With A Brief Account of the Discovery of the Gold Coast by Portuguese Navigators; A Short Narration of Early English Voyages; and a Study of the Rise of British Gold Coast Jurisdiction, etc., etc.*, 1906 (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1968), p. 238.

¹⁷ Kobina Sekyi, *The Blinkards*, 1915 (London: Heinemann, 1974); Stephanie Newell, “Local Cosmopolitans in Colonial West Africa,” *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Vol. 46, 1 (2011), pp. 103-117.

¹⁸ Newell, “Local Cosmopolitans,” p. 105.

Western civilisation’.”¹⁹ Educated Africans thus contributed to scholars’ disappointment with their cultural nationalism.

Misreading the intelligentsia by applying the concept of cultural nationalism homogenises them and misses the perception of their intervention as simply necessary because they were responsible people living under a disorganised and ill-defined colonial system that was in need of intelligent reconstruction. The intelligentsia, as coastal residents, could not help but contemplate the administration of a future independent Gold Coast and project the kind of society it should form. John Mensah Sarbah said of their intervention, “Europeans come and go, their average stay barely exceeding seven years... But the African dwells here, this is his home. His interest in its welfare is not transitory but permanent.”²⁰ Readings of the so-called cultural nationalist intelligentsia as a self-seeking group have persistently been deployed to explain why and how they intervened in the disordered colonial system in which they were forced to live. This dominant perspective, which affirms the anti-colonial status of the ARPS by identifying the members’ debates about the progress of the Gold Coast as resistance, has been the bane of the category of cultural nationalism. Brizuela-Garcia’s alternative interpretation of the writer-intellectuals as cosmopolitans calls for a review of such conventional perceptions about the antecedents of the anti-colonial movement, and about the nationalists who founded the ARPS.

Challenging such negative representations, Brizuela-Garcia argues that the refusal to acknowledge and perceive the late nineteenth century as cosmopolitan has perpetuated the notion of an African culture that was different and in opposition to European culture.²¹ Brizuela-Garcia notes too that the use of the term “cultural nationalism” in this context oversimplifies the agenda of the Gold Coast intellectuals. She proposes an alternative to this narrow interpretation that is “firmly rooted in an understanding of the historical conditions that elicited and encouraged the ideas and works of these men,” pointing out that Gold Coast intellectualism was grounded in “a long tradition of cosmopolitan thinking that speaks to the challenges facing modern Ghana, and Africa

¹⁹ Ayandele, *The Educated Elite*, p. 47.

²⁰ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. xii.

²¹ Brizuela-Garcia, “Cosmopolitanism.”

more generally.”²² According to her, such an acknowledgement is necessary because:

African writers understood that they must not simply rethink the ways in which African communities related to Europeans. What was most important was how they related to one another. In that regard, their writings were deeply cosmopolitan. They tried to devise strategies of engagement with communities other than their own (both African and European), while at the same time re-examining their own identities and redefining their obligations.²³

Brizuela-Garcia notes further that members of the ARPS revisited old debates and started new ones. Sometimes they tried to revive past local practices that they thought were relevant to the present. However, they were not engaged in frantic efforts to preserve the past for its own sake. Nor were they seeking to end colonial rule, as their counterparts of the post-1945 era would do. Membership of empire provided access to a broad spectrum of audiences in colonial and international corridors of power for writer-intellectuals concerned with the future of the Gold Coast. And so, even as they explored new issues, differing historical contexts shaped discussions of old issues in new ways. Even as they advocated the preservation of some customs, they clamoured for change, demanding, for example, appropriate high-quality Western-type education for boys and girls. For them, the devil was in deciding what qualities were needed. In pursuit of their agendas, the print media became a nexus of local and international networks of writers who often saw Africa and Africans as “distinct but equal”²⁴ with their colonisers, and who recognised African customs as dynamic. They were equally alert to the dynamics of political, economic and social growth in West Africa’s cosmopolitan environment. This was because they contemplated the Gold Coast in relation to the world and sought to find a place for the Gold Coast in the world. Their Gold Coast was conceived of as spatially and intellectually cosmopolitan, located in Africa but in continuous interaction with the world. As is noted in Philip Zachernuk’s *Colonial Subjects*, the West African

²² Brizuela-Garcia, “Cosmopolitanism,” p. 204.

²³ Brizuela-Garcia, “Cosmopolitanism,” 220.

²⁴ Edward Wilmot Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (1887; rpt. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1967), p. 277.

intelligentsia had a habit of lively engagement with Atlantic ideas.²⁵ However, extant accounts about the ARPS, its members and their activities, beginning with David Kimble's, present this period as an anti-colonial moment that was characteristically preservative.²⁶ Why should they be assessed through the lens of the post-WWII movement as anti-colonial cultural nationalists (resisters) when the colonial state was so inchoate?

3.2 The Gold Coast Colony: Colonial Chaos and a Cosmopolitan Social Structure

In 1843, the British government took over the forts and castles scattered along the coastline of modern Ghana from the Committee of Merchants, which had hitherto controlled these buildings and exercised British rule within their walls.²⁷ The British appointed a Judicial Assessor and placed the Gold Coast under the Governor of Sierra Leone. The British legalised their presence through the signing of "The Bond of 1844."²⁸ In 1850, the Gold Coast was separated from Sierra Leone and assigned its own governor.²⁹ A Supreme Court with jurisdiction inside the forts and settlements was established by 1853 and the Judicial Assessor, J. C. Fitzpatrick, was appointed Chief Justice.³⁰ That same year, the educated African merchants pushed for and obtained the establishment of a native court under the headship of J. R. Thompson,³¹ a schoolmaster, to serve the whole of the Cape Coast city-state and replace the chiefs' courts.³² By 1856,

²⁵ Philip Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects: An African Intelligentsia and Atlantic Ideas* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000).

²⁶ Kimble, *Political History of Ghana*; Austin, *Politics in Ghana*; E. A. Ayandele, *The Educated Elite in the Nigerian Society* (Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1974); Tenkorang, *The Gold Coast*; Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992); Kwaku Larbi Korang, *Writing Ghana, Imagining Africa: Nation and African Modernity* (New York: Rochester University Press, 2004). Nana Kobina Nketsia V, *African Culture in Governance and Development: The Ghana Paradigm* (Accra and Cape Coast: Ghana Universities Press and Cape Coast University Press, 2013).

²⁷ Kimble, *Political History of Ghana*, p. 194.

²⁸ Kimble, *Political History of Ghana*, pp. 194 -5.

²⁹ Kimble, *Political History of Ghana*, p. 195.

³⁰ Kimble, *Political History of Ghana*, p. 196.

³¹ Kimble, *Political History of Ghana*, p. 196.

³² Kimble, *Political History of Ghana*, p. 196-8. The first officially sanctioned British intervention in local politics of Cape Coast occurred in 1854, when Thompson's court in concert with some Cape Coast chiefs deposed the traditionally elected Omanhene of Cape Coast, Kofi Amissah. After a standoff between the townspeople supported by the educated merchants, and the acting Governor, one Major Ord was appointed to investigate and mediate. In 1856, Ord deposed Omanhene Kofi Amissah, fined the opponents of the Omanhene and compensated all who had suffered because of the impasse.

the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court had been extended through an Order in Council to cover the protected territories between the Colony and Asante.³³ The Gold Coast was reincorporated with Sierra Leone in 1865, following the 1863 war with Asante. This was ostensibly to prepare the West African territories for self-government and a British withdrawal. As Francis Agbodeka argues, the British had vacillated between one strategy and the other because until 1874 British colonial policy had been dictated largely by the politics, allegiances and rivalries of the Gold Coast and its interior.³⁴ In the wake of Asante's defeat in 1874, British rule was in fact institutionalised, with the Gold Coast then being formally declared a British colony. Over the ten-year period from 1863 to 1873/74, Britain became increasingly imperialistic.

A combination of British military superiority, fears of an Asante invasion, and the advantages of their own middleman role in the Atlantic trade, shaped the immediate response of the Fanti and other coastal states to British imperialism, which was one of accommodation. Even so, the basis of the new relationship was ill-defined, thus creating tensions between the British and their Fanti allies in particular. For ten years, the British vacillated between a policy of withdrawal, as per the 1865 Select Committee Report, and a policy of full colonisation. This indecision from 1863 to 1874 was to cause disputes between British officials and Gold Coast chiefs, which contributed in turn to a lack of economic and social progress for the coastal communities, and general dissatisfaction with British policy.³⁵ Although the southern states had been drawn into a colonial relationship with the British through the 1860s and 1870s in pursuit of the promise of political and economic security, twenty years later, as we shall see expressed by Sarbah and Hayford below, these aspirations continued to elude them. For one thing, the colonial system of local government was ill-defined and disruptive. For another, there was little improvement in the social and economic lives of the coastal peoples, whereas they saw

³³ Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, p. 198.

³⁴ Francis Agbodeka, *African Politics and British Policy in the Gold Coast 1868-1900: A Study in the Forms and Force of Protest* (London and Evanston: Longman, 1971), p. viii.

³⁵ Kimble, *A Political History*, pp. 194ff.; Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines," pp. 52ff.; F. K. Buah, *A History of Ghana*, reprint (Oxford: Macmillan Education, 1998); Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longman, 1975); Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*; Kofi Affrifah, *The Akyem Factor in Ghana's History: 1700-1875* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 2000); D. E. K. Amenumey, *Ghana: A Concise History from Pre-colonial Times to the 20th Century* (Accra: Woeli, 2008).

European nations benefiting from the colonial system. Eventually, British vacillation, the lack of safeguards for African economic enterprise, and the disorderly and unsympathetic manner in which colonies were administered, gave rise to a culture of debate among African intellectuals about the progress of the Gold Coast and about its relations with the metropolis. The Gold Coast intelligentsia championed the cause of change via the print media of the time. As writer-intellectuals, they took it upon themselves to explain the problems of the Gold Coast to a wider audience, including the metropolitan public. Although the fear of an Asante invasion had subsided, the call to action was not aimed at breaking ties with Britain. Instead, the debate centred on how to make those ties mutually beneficial, even in the absence of an imminent security threat.

One of the major problems that precipitated the intervention of the intelligentsia and their chiefs was the absence of a clear-cut demarcation of powers between the emerging colonial state and the native states. The institution of chieftaincy would later be co-opted into the colonial administration, but during this inchoate period the chiefs' exercise of their traditional authority was not yet circumscribed and was thus a source of tension. It would appear from the writings of Sarbah and Hayford in particular that the southern states expected a well-structured colonial relationship reflecting their past, while foreshadowing a future in which various elements of African and Western systems of government were combined. An examination of resolutions passed by the Fanti Confederation, for example, suggests that the coastal peoples were more preoccupied with the need for an orderly government machinery than they were fixated on tradition.³⁶ The Fanti Confederation had been founded in 1869 with a constitution that provided for two "king-presidents" and an executive council. The majority of its founders were chiefs, yet they suggested a variation of local practice when they opted for synthesis in their proposals for a viable unified system of governance. Another noteworthy fact is that the

³⁶ Africanus B. Horton, *Letters on the Political Condition of the Gold Coast: Since the Exchange of Territory Between the English and Dutch Governments, on January 1, 1868 Together with a Short Account of the Ashantee War, 1862-4, and the Awoonah War, 1866*, 2ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1970); Trevor R Getz; Ehrisman, Lindsay; Yeboah, Tony, "'We Should Have Maintained This Unity, Then There Would Be More Development: ' Lessons from a Pop-Up Museum of the Fante Confederation," *History in Africa: A Journal of Method*, June 2019, Vol. 46, pp. 195-216.

Confederation was conceived of as having a well-defined administrative structure.³⁷ When it was replaced with formal colonisation in 1874, the Fanti states found themselves with no precise rules of engagement with the British.³⁸

The lack of consensus as to the delegation of powers to British appointees versus chiefs, as well as discrepancies in the British administration of justice and local government in the Fanti territories caused constant consternation and unrest among the coastal peoples.³⁹ Two cases involving chiefs in the 1880s highlight the absence of clear boundaries between colonial power and chiefly authority.⁴⁰ In one instance cited in Sarbah's *Fanti Customary Laws*, — *Oppon v. Ackinnie*⁴¹ — Nana Kofi Akyini, the Omanhene of Ekumfi, was sued successfully before the Colonial Court for the wrongful imprisonment of a subject, an action that was lawful under the native system of justice.⁴² In a separate instance, the Ga Mantse Nii Tackie Tawiah I, paramount chief of the people of Accra, was ordered during a colonial court hearing in Accra to “lower his cloth” — i.e. to bare his left shoulder — in the presence of the British District Commissioner, a gesture of deference that was a humiliation for a chief of such high standing.⁴³ Episodes such as these exemplified the conflict of precedence between the evolving colonial régime and the established pre-colonial systems of local government and jurisprudence. Following the *Oppon v. Ackinnie* case, James Hutton Brew,⁴⁴ an attorney and journalist, announced in his *Western Echo* newspaper a plan to send a delegation to London in 1885 to pursue the Omanhene's vindication.⁴⁵ According to Margaret Priestley and Tenkorang, Brew and Bannerman canvassed for self-government, to restore chiefs to their pre-colonial status.

³⁷ Horton, *Letters on the Political Condition of the Gold Coast*, pp. 159-160; Rebecca Shumway, “From Atlantic Creoles to African Nationalists: Reflections on the Historiography of Nineteenth Century Fanteland,” *History in Africa*, 42, 1 (2015): 139-164. <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/583528>.

³⁸ Horton, *Letters*; Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines;” John Mensah Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws: A Brief Introduction to the Principles of the Native Laws and Customs of the Fanti and Akan Districts of the Gold Coast with A Report of Some of Cases Thereon Decided in the Law Courts, 1897* (London: Frank Cass & Co Ltd. 1968).

³⁹ Lynch, “Introduction to Third Edition,” pp. vii – x.

⁴⁰ Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines,” pp. 52-3.

⁴¹ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 232-7.

⁴² Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines,” p.52.

⁴³ Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines,” p.53.

⁴⁴ C. F. Hutchison, *The Pen Pictures of Modern Africans and African Celebrities*, Vol. I (London: n.d), p.53. Hutchison described Brew as the pioneer of West African journalism. Priestley, *West African Trade*, pp. 158 – 173. According to Priestley, Brew established three successful newspapers: *The Gold Coast Times*, *Western Echo* and *The Gold Coast Echo*.

⁴⁵ Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines,” p.53.

Sarbah's focus on the *Oppon v. Ackinnie* case provides further proof of the problems associated with the absence of delineations between chiefly authority and the inchoate colonial order in the 1880s.

Another reason for the intervention of the African intelligentsia was that in the twenty years between 1874 and 1894, the inhabitants of the coast perceived that the colonial government exhibited a lack of concern for their social and economic development. By the 1890s therefore, the coastal people had been roused to action by what they perceived as the ambiguities surrounding governance structures and the extractive nature of the colonial system, which "exploited with all expedition primarily ... for the benefit and profit of Great Britain."⁴⁶ The chiefs and the intelligentsia highlighted continuously the major problem of sanitation in Cape Coast.⁴⁷ As Tenkorang notes, colonial officials ignored the repeated pleas from the inhabitants of Cape Coast for the strict enforcement of hygiene standards in the town, where, in his *Physical and Medical Climate*, Horton had noted the appallingly insanitary situation. Visitors to Cape Coast, including Sir Matthew Nathan, often complained about the poor state of sanitation there.⁴⁸ In an effort to deal with the environmental and juridical problems, the intelligentsia devised a blueprint for a municipal council system, but this was rejected by the colonial administration.⁴⁹ The system was based on the idea of the seven "*Asafo companies*" forming a council of seven representatives, of whom one would be designated mayor. Under the rejected scheme, the Municipal Council was to have been responsible for all matters concerning sanitation and "litigation between two African parties."⁵⁰ The rejection of the scheme without the suggestion of an alternative meant that the sanitation problem remained, as before, appalling and unresolved. Another issue that prompted the involvement of the intelligentsia concerned the reform of education. Gold Coast inhabitants wanted the benefits of European-type classroom education. As articulated by Sarbah, the problems were with the curriculum, the lack of government interest in secondary education, and the paucity of funds allocated to education, as well as

⁴⁶ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 226.

⁴⁷ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines," p. 68.

⁴⁸ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines," p. 66.

⁴⁹ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines," p. 64.

⁵⁰ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines," p. 63.

a disregard for local languages.⁵¹

Economic grievances were equally prominent among the complaints levelled against the colonial system. Issues of corruption and the conduct of the British merchant trading houses were conspicuous, as well as the careless and indiscriminate dissipation of funds.⁵² As Sarbah protested:

For many years, the Colony paid its way and had a handsome reserve fund, some of which was given on loan to other Crown Colonies. Since the fall of 1895 this position has been reversed, what with the Prempe expedition, and other excuses for questionable expenditure, including the scandalous cost and expense attending the construction of the Sekondi-Kumasi railway, which cannot be passed over in silence, unless one is determined to economize truth when discussing administrative acts.⁵³

From its inception, the colonial system's lack of accountability to taxpayers remained a sore point with the generation of writer-intellectuals, whose disapproval of this colonial failing is most clearly highlighted in the publications of Casely Hayford. Another economic grievance that was echoed throughout the colonial era, and became prominent in the post-WWII nationalist period, concerned the colonial administration's apparent lack of interest in protecting the businesses of local merchants. Following formal colonisation, local merchants were squeezed out of business by a combination of better-financed British trading houses, the colonial administration's bias toward the success of the British trading houses, and the absence of legislation backing the protection of African business interests. Numerous authors, including Freda Wolfson and Margaret Priestly, corroborate the experiences of Gold Coast merchants as described by Sarbah.⁵⁴ In a transparent reference to the plight of his own father and other Gold Coast merchants, Sarbah described how although "the African Christian convert, who had been educated

⁵¹ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, pp. 243-5; See also: Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines,"

⁵² Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 107.

⁵³ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 243.

⁵⁴ Wolfson, "Historical Records on the Gold Coast;" Freda Wolfson, *Pageant of Ghana* (London: Oxford UP, 1958); Priestley, *West African Trade*; Kwame Yeboah Daaku, *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast, 1600-1720: A Study of the African Reaction to European Trade* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970); John K. Fynn, *Asante and its Neighbours: 1700-1807* (London: Longman, 1971); Francis Agbodeka, *An Economic History of Ghana from the Earliest Times* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1992).

by the missionary,”⁵⁵ had introduced innovative ideas toward manufacturing goods for African markets, African success in business was short-lived because European trading houses, recognising the “paying possibilities,”⁵⁶ monopolised the trade in goods of African origin and in minerals, and eventually drove African merchants out of business.

As mentioned above, scholars have interpreted these concerns of the intelligentsia by adopting Kimble’s cultural nationalism perspective. Close to this interpretation is that of Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, who examined early Gold Coast publications as ethnographic texts, with variants of identity discourse.⁵⁷ The difference between the arguments of the proponents of cultural nationalism and that of Van Hensbroek is that the latter steers away from the framework of nationalism and anti-colonialism by not using the label of cultural nationalism for the African writer intellectuals that he studies. Van Hensbroek does this by studying the works of his intellectuals as valid and viable political thought birthed in an evolving African milieu. He argues that an examination of these texts indicates that “in most cases, it was not an argument to actually give back power to the chiefs or to actually institute a Pan-African state. . . . Rather, it was an argument for African control of the nation-state.”⁵⁸ He concludes that the publications were “concerned with the description of indigenous African political and cultural systems.”⁵⁹ Another way in which the dominant interpretations of the intelligentsia’s writings as cultural nationalist-inspired protest has been challenged is through the study of African newspapers. Derek Peterson et al. have used this method to point instead to the wide-ranging variety of editors’ concerns, as well as the sheer breadth of the geographic scope that newspapers covered.⁶⁰ While the print medium was sometimes a place of opposition, these historical actors often used it as a public forum in which they could share their ideas about how to synthesise the local and foreign cultures, and mobilise popular support for those ideas.

Roger Gocking notes that the West African coast, as a major participant in the trans-

⁵⁵ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. xv.

⁵⁶ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. xvi.

⁵⁷ Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses in African Thought: 1860 to Present* (Westport, CT; London Praeger Publishers, 1999), p. 153.

⁵⁸ Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, 76.

⁵⁹ Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 73.

⁶⁰ Derek Peterson, Emma Hunter and Stephanie Newell, *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and Their Publics in the Twentieth Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), pp. 3-5.

Atlantic trade, had developed continuously as a place of trade, of “cultural interaction” and of “political and judicial interchanges”⁶¹ between Africans and Europeans. John Parker, writing about the coastal Ga, to the east of Cape Coast, corroborates Gocking’s assertions that coastal states mediated a middleman role as economic and cultural brokers between the Gold Coast, its neighbours and its European visitors.⁶² Parker tells the familiar story of a lack of clear-cut lines in the early encounter between Europeans and Africans. *Making the Town* confirms that Ga chiefs and their educated subjects in the twentieth century actively attempted to construct their city on practical terms even as they negotiated the European encounter. As illustrated by Parker, “the point at which the Ga themselves began to perceive their long encounter with Europeans as having become a situation of colonial subjugation is difficult to discern.”⁶³ What Parker notes about the Ga could be applied to the coastal Fanti, whose intellectuals early on in the nineteenth century contested British practices in the Gold Coast Colony.

As Gocking has shown, the Gold Coast intelligentsia sought to mould the unfolding coastal culture into one that featured African values prominently, while reflecting the cosmopolitan environment of the coast. Gocking has characterised the extent of these messy processes as embracing “a wide range of social classes.”⁶⁴ Also, the intelligentsia had no means of anticipating the nation state at the time of their writing; that is why they demanded self-government within empire. For them, self-government meant continued membership of the British Empire, with their chiefs as heads of a thriving local administrative structure, and, for the avoidance of confusion in governance, the educated African as helpmate. The project of later nationalists, conceived within different historical circumstances, was necessarily different. Although control of the state was a feature of their writing, it must be pointed out that the first cohort of the Gold Coast intelligentsia never asked for African control of a nation state. Such a reading of the intelligentsia falls prey to the danger of projecting the nation state too far back in time. When they demanded self-government or representative government, the intelligentsia of

⁶¹ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 5.

⁶² John Parker, *Making the Town: Ga State and Society in Early Colonial Accra* (London: Pearson Education, 2000).

⁶³ Parker, *Making the Town*, p. xviii.

⁶⁴ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 105.

this earlier period meant African participation in governance within the British Empire.

Another way in which the intelligentsia intervened in the disorderly colonial system was to establish social clubs that offered a viable public sphere. Such spaces offered the intelligentsia the opportunity to discuss how to construct a cosmopolitan society. As shown by Jinny Prais in her study of West African students in London, print and social clubs facilitated the creation of a West African public sphere.⁶⁵ The students created a unique West African space for discourse about an imagined West African nation. As argued by Prais, travel played a key role in advancing the West African intelligentsia's agenda. Her arguments point to the fact that travel could be more important than education in the making of the West African intelligentsia. In the case of the Gold Coast, the sons of the wealthy and the intelligentsia, all educated abroad, returned as professionals with varied interests. When formal colonisation occurred in 1874, travel and a variety of networks played their part in preparing this well-travelled class to appreciate the complexities of the political, economic and social problems of their cosmopolitan world. Consequently, the Gold Coast intelligentsia founded the Mfantasi Amanbuhu Fekuw and the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS) to articulate their agenda and to mobilise. The effect of this mobilisation was to spark a debate about synthesis, effective colonisation and the ownership of Gold Coast land, as it related to the chaos that characterised colonial rule in its formative stages. Contrary to the commonly held belief about this period what was institutionalised was a Gold Coast debating culture, as opposed to a Gold Coast anti-colonial culture.

3.3 Rethinking the Publications of the Gold Coast Intelligentsia as Debate

The medium of print facilitated a debate among the colonised peoples of the British-ruled Gold Coast, and between the colony and the metropolis, that was not necessarily antagonistic. These debates were not pursued merely for the sake of argument, but with the aim of finding solutions to problems faced by the Gold Coast people. The debates revolved around three major themes: the problem of effective colonial rule; how to synthesise the local with the foreign; and the land question. By the

⁶⁵ Jinny Kathleen Prais, "Imperial Travelers: The Formation of West African Urban Culture, Identity, and Citizenship in London and Accra, 1925-1935," PhD. dissertation (University of Michigan, 2008), pp. 13-17.

1920s, a culture of debate had been firmly established, and this enables us to analyse the everyday processes of evolving a functional colonial administrative system. By looking at early colonial writings as debate, as opposed to anti-colonial resistance, this chapter argues that rather than being anti-colonial conservationists, the Gold Coast intelligentsia constructively critiqued African ways and British ways, and consciously worked to invent a structure based upon the best practice of both systems and from elsewhere. The Gold Coast writer-intellectuals were part of a coastal society that had evolved as a major trading centre and was therefore necessarily cosmopolitan.⁶⁶ For this reason, the debaters devised strategies reflecting aspirations that flowed from their lived experiences. This chapter focuses on key debates about the Gold Coast from 1887-1920. It posits from these debates that the participants understood culture as dynamic and sought therefore to intervene in the formation of a Gold Coast culture that reflected their turn of the century realities, instead of trying to preserve a fixed Gold Coast culture. Sarbah, who was arguably the Gold Coast's foremost intellectual of the 1890s, stated emphatically:

I am quite alive to the danger of reducing customary law to fixity ... the effect of which may hinder the gradually operating innate generation of law by a process of natural development, independent of accident and individual will, which best accords with the varying needs and spirit of a people so circumstanced as the inhabitants of the Gold Coast.⁶⁷

The involvement of the writer-intellectuals in the making of a Gold Coast debating culture was therefore not necessarily anti-colonial or preservative, but reformist and inventive. Thus, they envisioned a synthesis of what was good in both cultures.

The previous chapter examined the differing perspectives of James Africanus Beale Horton and Edward Wilmot Blyden, on how West Africa, including the Gold Coast, could progress. In contradistinction to these nationalists operating within a West African framework, the Gold Coast intelligentsia started off by confining their solutions more

⁶⁶ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*; Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001); Frederick Cooper, *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire and Nation-State* (Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2014); Toby Green, *A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the Rise of the Slave Trade to the Age of Revolution* (London: Penguin UK, 2019).

⁶⁷ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. xi.

narrowly to the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast intellectuals, similar to the universalist Horton, clearly saw no fixed binary of African *versus* Western. The difference is that while the Gold Coast intellectuals saw fluidity, Horton had envisaged a context in which fairly free invention was possible, engaging not in pointless alterity, but rather in overlap and confluence. Blyden's position differs from that of both the Gold Coast intelligentsia and Horton. Blyden saw a binary of fixed African *versus* Western order, which could nonetheless engage in overlap and confluence. While Horton's writings predated the onset of colonial rule, Blyden's continued through the commencement of colonial rule. Blyden's status as a member of the colonising mission in Liberia and his death in 1912, when European colonial rule was in its early stages, prevented him from any meaningful criticism of the colonial administrative machine. For Blyden, as for the Gold Coast intellectuals, the colonial state was nascent. However, the writings of the Gold Coast intellectuals were occasioned by their experiences as colonial subjects in an inchoate and chaotic colonial system.

As Roger Gocking has shown, when the British declared the formal colonisation of the Gold Coast in 1874, they had no blueprint for establishing an effective colonial system.⁶⁸ In Gocking's account, the colonised coastal Fanti, who had to bear the brunt of British unpreparedness, devised new and innovative ways to negotiate the messy state of affairs, re-interpreting the judicial and political processes set in motion by the colonial encounter. Expanding on Gocking's lead, this chapter proposes that instead of examining this period in terms of anti-colonial nationalist resistance, the actions of colonised peoples should be understood through the lens of the numerous coping mechanisms they employed to accommodate the ongoing changes, one of which was debate. At the forefront of debates about the Gold Coast were the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast Colony, whose views were often articulated in print by educated coastal dwellers, some highly educated -- lawyers, part-time journalists, clergymen and merchants. On the British side, the participants in these debates included colonial officials and merchants as well as British journalists, travellers and liberal parliamentarians. The debates were not formal in the sense of the conduct of debates in a public sphere and did not at all times

⁶⁸ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*.

have two opposing opinions. Instead, debates about the Gold Coast closely resembled solution-based conversations across borders. They are considered debates in this dissertation not for their contesting opinions, but for the ways in which the educated Gold Coasters engaged with the problems of their community and their colonisers, sometimes in opposition to, and sometimes in agreement with, the prevailing notions about the Gold Coast. Rather than adopting an attitude of helplessness, the Gold Coast intelligentsia used the print culture to participate in the public affairs of their day.

This chapter therefore examines the writings and networks of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Gold Coast writer-intellectuals within the context of their lived experiences as lawyers, clergymen and lay faithful, to demonstrate that their intervention in the administration of their geographical area was not only to be expected, but was also practically inevitable. The chapter focuses on key publications of writers in colonial Gold Coast and Britain from the 1890s, as they debated vexed questions of social, political and economic interest to both colony and empire. They contemplated strategies for the effective colonisation of the Gold Coast and suggested how Gold Coast customary systems could be recrafted to accommodate British ways, at a time when colonial rule in the Gold Coast and elsewhere was in its nascent stages. The 1890s were a decade of possibility during which colonised peoples and their metropolitan counterparts could influence the process of colonisation. This is why the intellectuals considered in their writings how colonial rule might be beneficial to the Gold Coast. The chapter will now turn to examining major publications of three Gold Coast writer-intellectuals: John Mensah Sarbah, the Reverend S. R. B. Solomon (also known as Reverend Attoh Ahuma) and Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford, all founding members of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society. It will also highlight debates and conversations between Gold Coasters and influential people in Britain, such as the British explorer Mary Kingsley and the journalist E. D. Morel.⁶⁹

The chapter examines major texts that have been used by scholars to build the Grand Narrative of Ghana's independence struggle as primary documents. The selected texts warrant a re-examination because they have been traditionally examined by

⁶⁹ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines," p.234.

historians as evidence of a continuous anti-colonial nationalism. The category of cultural nationalism on the second tier of the nationalist hierarchy has been sustained by showing how members of the ARPS resorted to the preservation of their local culture as a form of resistance against colonial rule. This chapter challenges such notions by re-examining the primary texts and the secondary texts that have critically intervened in nationalist historiography. This is to show that the problem is with the insufficiency of the category, not with the delusion of the writer-intellectuals or their betrayal of a non-existent pristine African culture, as some would have us believe. Although they recognised differences in African and Western ways, the Gold Coast intelligentsia were not playing between two fixed cultural and political alternatives, Western and African, but embraced fluidity. Ultimately, the writer-intellectuals and their networks shared a passion for nineteenth-century liberal theory. The Gold Coast intellectuals were attracted to the tenets of liberalism as proposed by theorists such as John Stuart Mill, including the idea of representative government. The Gold Coast intellectuals agreed with Mill that different persons needed different conditions and argued for Gold Coast customs to be recognised as useable in the governance of their colony. Thus, they affirmed the positive attributes of their local laws and customs. A major part of their agenda was therefore to synthesise the local with the international, as a solution to the broken colonial system that they were obliged to live with.⁷⁰

3.4 The Pursuit of Synthesis

The period from 1887 to 1920 marked the rise of the ideology of synthesis, which was premised on the assumption that the laws and customs of the Gold Coast's various native states were homogeneous. As described in the *Gold Coast Leader* by an unnamed columnist (probably the editor Attoh Ahuma), the underlying principle of this ideology was "a fusion of what is good in the traditions and customs inherited from our ancestors with the adaptation of what is good – and only what is good – of what we learn by contact with Europeans."⁷¹ At its core was an intellectual, cultural and political project by the Gold Coast intellectuals, their chiefs and people, as well as fellow travellers in the

⁷⁰ See below Appendix A for biographical sketches.

⁷¹ *The Gold Coast Leader*, April 20, 1907.

metropolis, most of whom were British liberals. The Cape Coast-based lawyer Mensah Sarbah and the clergyman-turned-journalist Attah Ahuma, as well as the Sekondi-based lawyer Casely Hayford, made significant contributions in print to the debates about synthesis and effective colonisation. For a time, their vision was the driving force of concrete planning for the future. They saw themselves as creating modernity by advancing proposals for political, social and economic policies that reflected the dynamism of their cosmopolitan environment. Thus, the period from 1887 to 1920 should be examined as one in which colonial subjects were engaged in creative and contentious intellectual discourse about how to do synthesis and pursued a complex construction of their nation as part of the British Empire, not apart from it. As colonial subjects, the Gold Coast intelligentsia were confronted with the complex issue of how to become modern and yet retain their Gold Coast identity. They engaged with the problem of modernity as colonised Africans through the founding of study groups and rights-based organisations, such as the Mfantasi Amanbuhu Fekuw and the Aborigines Rights Protection Society (ARPS).

3.4.1 Mfantasi Amanbuhu Fekuw: Colonial Reform and the Project of Synthesis

The Fekuw was founded in 1887⁷² by the Gold Coast intelligentsia as a study group to research into the laws and customs of the Fanti, in order to calm recurring tensions among the Fantis, their chiefs and the British administration.⁷³ The Gold Coast intelligentsia who founded the Fekuw sought to present Fanti customs to British officials as useable and useful in the exercise of their administrative duties, while instilling pride among Fanti people in their native customs. That the Fekuw agenda was largely successful is indicated by the fact that Sarbah's 1897 publication *Fanti Customary Laws* was received in Black Atlantic circles with critical acclaim. Commenting on the book, Booker T. Washington noted that it was, "one of the most interesting books in regard to Africa which I have been able to lay my hand on."⁷⁴ The *Lagos Weekly Record*

⁷² Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines," p. 62. Most historians follow Kimble in citing 1889 as the founding date of the Fekuw. However, Tenkorang provides incontrovertible evidence in support of 1887 as the correct date. See Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 150; Hollis Lynch, "Introduction to Third Edition," Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. x.

⁷³ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines," p. 63-4.

⁷⁴ *Gold Coast Leader*, December 17, 1910, p. 3.

commented that Sarbah's

“*Fanti Customary Laws*” is evidence of the direction he gave to his knowledge of English Law — evidence which stands out in prominent relief all the more because of its being the solitary instance where the African has employed his legal knowledge to the advancement of the interests of his people and not to the sole interests of his pocket.⁷⁵

As reflected in all of Sarbah's obsequies, his publications earned him the status of foremost patriot and leader. In his writings, Sarbah used the approaches of history, anthropology and law to clarify misunderstandings about Fanti (and, more generally, Akan) laws and customs, and to establish their admissibility in court. One important outcome of Sarbah's pioneering intervention was that it simplified the colonial administration's access to information about customary law. The problem this posed for future generations was that, as the first work of its kind in the Gold Coast, *Fanti Customary Laws*, with its focus on Akan culture, became the reference source for all native custom. Consequently, Sarbah contributed inadvertently to a complex homogenisation of Gold Coast laws and customs. In many instances, Akan culture was assumed by lawmakers and colonial administrators to be the culture of all the Gold Coast peoples. This overlooked the fact that there were many ethnic groups, and many local variations in the customs observed within each ethnic group. The most significant of these were regarding interpretations of the institution of chieftaincy, as discussed in Chapter 4.

A number of authors have explored the homogenisation of Gold Coast culture as the Akanisation of the local customs of the colony, and subsequently of Ghana.⁷⁶ Sarbah wrote, “It is a fact worthy of note that Fanti is the lingua franca of the Gold Coast and adjacent countries.”⁷⁷ This was the exaggerated assumption on which he sought to base

⁷⁵ *Gold Coast Leader*, December 17, 1910, p. 4.

⁷⁶ Paul Jenkins, “Problems and Perspectives,” *Akyem Abuakwa and the Politics of the Inter-War Period in Ghana*, Contributions from R. Addo-Fening et al. (Basel: Afrika Verlag der kreis (joint publication with Historical Society of Ghana), 1975), pp. 142-166; Maxwell Owusu, “Rebellion, Revolution, and Tradition: Reinterpreting Coups in Ghana,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 2 (1989): 372-397; Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*.

⁷⁷ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 2.

his argument against the position held in both official and unofficial circles that “native laws and customs are foreign matters which, unless proved, cannot be recognised or noticed by a judge.”⁷⁸ In Sarbah’s defence, the Gold Coast population in 1897 did comprise mainly Fanti speakers, and as seen below in the writings of Hayford, Sarbah was not alone in his homogenisation of Fanti, Akan, and subsequently Gold Coast, laws and customs. The problems associated with these assumptions, which is a subject of the next chapter, became evident a generation later. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in perspective that Sarbah did not intend to create problems for future generations. Rather, his actions were motivated by the need to intervene in the colonial chaos of his times. For Sarbah, and indeed the Fekuw, the way to make colonial rule effective was to educate both the colonial administrators and the colonised peoples about local customs. This was not so as to oppose the application of British law, but to initiate a dialogue with Britain that might result in local law being synthesised with British law.

One way in which the intelligentsia targeted Gold Coasters was to promote the use of Fanti names and the wearing of indigenous costume, albeit with functional modifications, such as the “cover shoulder” (“cabasroto”)⁷⁹ for Christian women. This particular fashion trend, promoted by King Ghartey IV of Winneba, gained traction with the “gone Fante” movement. While women were encouraged to cover up all of their upper body, men proudly bared their right shoulder while wearing the native toga-style cloth, which they argued was similar to “the garb of the Grecian and Roman,”⁸⁰ and therefore, in their estimation, more civilised than any European fashion. As indigenisation gained momentum among Fanti people, it was Attoh Ahuma who co-opted the term “gone Fante,” which had been coined by British residents of the coast to refer to the phenomenon of Europeans affecting African behaviours, but was previously used in a pejorative sense.⁸¹ The fact that it was Christians, Ahuma and his fellow Methodist minister William Fynn Penny, who championed the “*gone Fante*” movement, is

⁷⁸ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 18.

⁷⁹ Bartels, *The Roots of Gold Coast Methodism*, p. 82, 86. King Ghartey was known in private life as R. J. Ghartey. He was a successful businessman, ardent Methodist and first president of the Fante Confederation when its constitution was announced in 1871. Ghartey acceded to the Winneba stool on 11th June 1872.

⁸⁰ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. xvii.

⁸¹ Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines,” p. 63.

significant. In 1888, they each chose to drop their anglicised Christian names in favour of their Fanti “house names.” Thus, the Reverend Samuel Richard Brew Solomon rebranded himself S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma, and his colleague W. F. Penny became Fynn Egyir-Asaam. Attoh Ahuma lobbied the Synod of the Methodist Church to officially recognise the right of Gold Coast Methodists to formalise their house names.

Magnus Sampson⁸² opines that Ahuma’s and Penny’s experiences of racial discrimination in Britain and the United States of America accounted for the decision to change their own names, but Bartels⁸³ advances the more credible assertion that the primary motivation was their association with the Reference Group of the Cape Coast Methodist Mission. According to Bartels, the Reference Group comprised of educated converts of the Methodist Mission and their African clergy leaders who founded this organisation to study local customs and practices. Although it was significant, the Gold Coast’s “gone Fante” movement was not unique. As Ayandele attests, local intelligentsias elsewhere in West Africa also substituted local names for European and Hebrew ones, adopted African dress and argued in favour of polygamy,⁸⁴ although they did not reject European culture outright. Are we to interpret such actions by nineteenth-century West African intellectuals as deluded hybridism, as Ayandele proposes and Nketsia et al. support? Developments such as the “gone Fante” movement are best explained by recognising the practicality of the historical actors. Going Fanti was a necessary first step to establish the local (Akan) part of the dialogue. It was therefore an attempt to establish the necessary behaviour for a fruitful conversation. The Gold Coast intelligentsia, like their Nigerian peers, merely exercised their right to engage intelligently with foreign cultures as well as their own, and to cherry-pick what was best of each.

Sarbah’s 1897 *Fanti Customary Laws* was a product of the collective agenda to establish debates about Fanti customs, and to reform colonial rule in Fanti and Akan areas. Reverend Carl Christian Reindorf of the Eastern Province had given form to interest in the Gold Coast past with the publication two years earlier of his *History of the*

⁸² Sampson, *Makers of Modern Ghana*, p. 78.

⁸³ Bartels, *Roots of Gold Coast Methodism*, p. 124.

⁸⁴ Ayandele, *The Educated Elite*, p. 48.

Gold Coast and Asante.⁸⁵ Reindorf's book did not attract as much recognition as Sarbah's, but it set a precedent for respecting the oral tradition of the Gold Coast as a trusted source. *Fanti Customary Laws* was the compilation of a series of published articles that Sarbah had written at the instance of the Fekuw. Thus, he was motivated by the collective dissatisfaction of Gold Coast intellectuals with the inefficacies of the British colonial administration, which they all perceived as stemming from the total ignorance of Gold Coast custom on the part of colonial appointees, "who, having no intelligent person to explain things to them, would fain say there were no Customary Laws."⁸⁶ Sarbah was of the view that some of the confusion in the colonial administration was primarily the result of frequent personnel changes, complicated by the fact that the native laws and customs were not codified, which rendered them effectively invisible to the colonial justice system. Ultimately, Sarbah and the Fekuw membership perceived that the colonial system was a potentially useful, but broken, structure that needed to be fixed by means of disseminating relevant information to both the colonialists and their subjects. This was because the destiny of "the Akan nation as a whole – Ashanti, Fanti, Twi and all Gold Coast tribes"⁸⁷ was tied to Great Britain's.

Sarbah also sought to define customs and laws, as they pertained to the Gold Coast. Although he was "alive to the danger of reducing customary law to a condition of fixity,"⁸⁸ he nonetheless felt it was better to do so than to leave colonial administrators uninformed. Sarbah contended that Sections 19 and 92 of the Supreme Court Ordinance of 1876 recognised "native laws and customs"⁸⁹ implicitly by permitting the use in colonial courts of "Referees on native laws."⁹⁰ Furthermore, "outside India and the great East, the Gold Coast, which formerly included Lagos, is the only Crown colony in the British Empire"⁹¹ where there was "recognition of native law or custom or any local

⁸⁵ Rev. Carl Christian Reindorf, *History of the Gold Coast and Asante, Based on Traditions and Historical Facts, Comprising a Period of more than Three Centuries from About 1500 to 1860* (Basel: Missionsbuchhandlung, 1895).

⁸⁶ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. vii.

⁸⁷ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 254.

⁸⁸ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. xi.

⁸⁹ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 16.

⁹⁰ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 16.

⁹¹ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, pp. 17-18.

usages.”⁹² Sarbah maintained that the Gold Coast and India had a shared characteristic of possessing indigenous customs. Hence, the Gold Coast could lay claim to the conclusions that emanated from studies affirming that Indian customs were justiciable under colonial law. He cited British authorities such as Henry Maine, who had “pursued his researches and studies in jurisprudence”⁹³ in India. As Karuna Mantena and Mahmood Mamdani have argued, the ideological foundations for indirect rule, which became Sarbah’s preferred colonial model, can be credited to Henry Maine.⁹⁴

Sarbah’s attitude to custom was no different from that of other Feku members. It was a reflection of their philosophical outlook, and of their cosmopolitan nationalism. In a reflective moment, Sarbah posed and answered a direct, yet often overlooked, question: “What is native custom? The answer is usage – which, developed into custom, becomes law ... native law.”⁹⁵ Sarbah did not only seek to establish that what was labelled custom was derived from frequent use. He also sought to establish that custom was susceptible to change, and that it was therefore being continually recreated. The key here is that Sarbah and the intelligentsia considered change as a given and were thus looking to invent a model that was flexible, yet characteristic of the Gold Coast. Thus, he proposed a synthesis of Gold Coast customary law with British law as the basis for effective colonial rule. The intelligentsia sought ultimately to create in West Africa what Sarbah referred to as “a higher national character, racy of the soil, strong, independent, able to stand changes, worthy of imitation, and admired.”⁹⁶ They realised that this mission demanded that their agenda should appeal to the British public as much as to the Gold Coast public. They believed that this was possible “if we can make [the British people] understand the facts of the case.”⁹⁷ The use of print media as a forum in which to engage with both the colonial administration and the African and European publics was therefore critical to the agenda of the Feku and its allies in the metropolis, such as Mary Kingsley.

⁹² Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 18.

⁹³ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 17.

⁹⁴ Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010), p. 1; Mahmood Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 43.

⁹⁵ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 24.

⁹⁶ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 253.

⁹⁷ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, pp. xix-xx.

The dialogue the intelligentsia sought with the colonial power materialised after Mary Kingsley published her well-received ethnography in 1897, the same year as Sarbah's *Fanti Customary Laws*. Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* connected her in a very special way to West Africans who felt British rule had alienated them by its disregard for local customs. As Deborah Spillman notes, "The production of knowledge about Africa placed Victorians and Anglophone Africans in dialogue, and often debate, with each other."⁹⁸ Spillman argues that Kingsley employed "dialogic strategies"⁹⁹ that were different from the methodologies of anthropologists who relied on "visually verifiable facts"¹⁰⁰ to combat "race prejudice."¹⁰¹ Kingsley's characterisation of African customs as sound and useable offered her European audience a different viewpoint from the one they had been exposed to repeatedly in earlier accounts, written mainly by missionaries and travellers, of the barbarism, childishness and incomprehensibility that ostensibly typified Africans. The fact that she could present her African subjects authoritatively as relatable and intelligent, at a time when the conventional wisdom among Europeans conformed to the views of craniologists and other so-called "experts," such as Sir Richard Burton and Augustus Henry ("A. H.") Keane, made Kingsley's contribution crucial. Kingsley opined matter-of-factly, "The whole attempt to make out that the African is a child-form, an 'arrested development', is not supported by facts."¹⁰² Kingsley communicated to a wider English-speaking audience what pioneer West African writer-intellectuals, such as E. W. Blyden, had articulated for years — that a close study of African customs led one to a deeper appreciation of culture and spirituality.¹⁰³

For modern-day critics, the sticky point with Kingsley's views about Africans concerns her declaration that

I own I regard not only the African, but all coloured races, as inferior — inferior in kind not in degree — to the white races, although I know it is unscientific to

⁹⁸ Deborah Shapple Spillman, "African Skin, Victorian Masks: The Object Lessons of Mary Kingsley and Edward Blyden," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 39 (2011), p. 314.

⁹⁹ Spillman, "African Skin," p. 306.

¹⁰⁰ Spillman, "African Skin," p. 306.

¹⁰¹ Spillman, "African Skin," p. 306.

¹⁰² Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 673.

¹⁰³ Blyden to Mary Kingsley, Monrovia: May 7, 1900 in Hollis R. Lynch, ed. *Selected Letters of Edward Wilmot Blyden* (Millwood, New York: KTO Press, 1978), p. 464.

lump all Africans together and then generalise over them, because the difference between various tribes is very great.¹⁰⁴

The first-generation scholar John Flint's assessment of such readings of Kingsley continues to be relevant. As Flint notes, when the whole sentence is read against her views expressed in *Travels in West Africa* and her times, Kingsley's acceptance of African inferiority differs from the opinions of the Darwinists and anthropologists of her day. For Kingsley, as for Blyden and other nineteenth-century thinkers, there were different races within one colour group, and each had a different role to play in the world. Hence, there was a "distinction between Negroes and Bantu, and on the subject of this division I may remark that the Negro is superior to the Bantu. He is both physically and intellectually the more powerful man, and although he does not Christianise well, he does often civilise well."¹⁰⁵ Kingsley contested the views of anthropologists of her day that Africans could not be civilised, but she did not think Africans and Europeans should pursue the same pathway to civilisation. She concluded, "It is by no means necessary, however, that the African should have any white culture at all to become a decent member of society at large."¹⁰⁶

In Kingsley's opinion, effective colonial rule could be attained through enhanced trade. Affirming the intelligence and potential of Africans, Kingsley, who subscribed to the view that the Crown Colony system was inefficient, proceeded to suggest an alternative model for effective colonial rule. She argued that the imposition of certain aspects of European culture could have a destructive effect on the "lower races;" many of which had indeed been decimated by European religions and systems of government. However, trade, when it was disassociated from government and religion, had never damaged any race, and it had certainly brought no ill effect to tropical Africa.¹⁰⁷ For Kingsley, the colonial question was all about economics. The problem was the failure of the British administration to take the West African trade seriously. Instead, British colonial officials and missionaries were using "ruinous instruction"¹⁰⁸ to change the

¹⁰⁴ Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 669.

¹⁰⁵ Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 669. John Flint, "Introduction to the Third Edition" pp. vii-xix.

¹⁰⁶ Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 680.

¹⁰⁷ Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 675.

¹⁰⁸ Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 680.

African, and to impose European culture and Christianity on him. For example, she lamented, the British government was seeking to clamp down on the lucrative liquor trade, based on misinformation provided by missionaries and colonial officials. For Kingsley, there was a greater need for regulation of the liquor trade in Europe than in Africa, because “Europe is more given to intoxication.”¹⁰⁹ She argued that the issue of liquor use in Africa was complex because, aside from drinking for pleasure, Africans used European liquor in their cultural and religious rituals. Kingsley insisted that “the development of trade is a necessary condition for the existence of the natives.”¹¹⁰ Apart from trade, Kingsley proposed technical training as the most suitable form of instruction for the majority of Africans. She argued that although “there will be ... individual Africans who will rise to a high level of culture,”¹¹¹ the example of Sierra Leone, after one hundred years of British training, proved that the imposition of European culture had failed.¹¹²

The appearance of Sarbah’s *Fanti Customary Laws* and Kingsley’s *Travels in West Africa* gave structure to the debates about how to reform colonial rule. While Kingsley critiqued empire and asked for its ineffective administrative machinery to be adjusted, Sarbah equipped empire with tools for good governance. Meanwhile in Europe, E. D. Morel, an authority on West Africa and a champion of free trade, discovered gross human rights violations in King Leopold’s Congo Free State by studying the trade statistics.¹¹³ Morel’s campaign for the rights of the people of the Congo Basin, which he waged for years in public speeches, newspapers and books, rubbed off positively on the Gold Coast. The crusade gained traction when Morel came under the patronage of Mary Kingsley, who helped him with his fundraising and connected him to the colonial affairs network.¹¹⁴ Morel’s *African Mail* newspaper became a resource for the dissemination of information about Gold Coast affairs to an international audience. Morel contributed

¹⁰⁹ Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 675.

¹¹⁰ Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 675.

¹¹¹ Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 679.

¹¹² Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa*, p. 680.

¹¹³ For an extensive description of the Congo scandal, see: Cocks, *E. D. Morel*, pp. 59-169; Wm. Roger Louis; Jean Stengers, *E. D. Morel’s History of the Congo Reform Movement* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968); Cline, *E. D. Morel*, pp. 19- 97; Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1998).

¹¹⁴ Flint, “Mary Kingsley,” p. 159.

articles to Gold Coast newspapers, such as the *Gold Coast Leader*, signing his articles with his initials “E. D. M.” Together, Kingsley, Morel and their networks contributed to the agenda for effective and mutually beneficent colonial rule, an agenda that was similar to that of the Gold Coast intellectuals.

Debating how to reform the nascent colonial system through synthesis was a major device the intellectuals and their allies used to resolve problems associated with the inchoate colonial order. The founding of the Fekuw and the ARPS, created a public sphere for the Gold Coast intelligentsia. Fekuw members, both as colonial subjects and as lawyers and advisers to their chiefs, found themselves in the middle of the messy colonial situation of the 1880s. The aim of this study group was therefore to understand and intervene in the relationship between the British and the Fanti, represented by their chiefs, and to bring a semblance of order to an anarchic colonial system. The members inevitably became problem-solvers and inventors, pulled into debates that had the potential to shape the future. Hollis Lynch records that Sarbah “had always admitted that the British could be a force for good, the more so if they respected the culture of the Gold Coast and cooperated fully with the traditional rulers and the educated élite.”¹¹⁵ In the same way, J. E. Casely Hayford’s 1903 publication *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, written after the founding of the ARPS, reflects the expanded world of colonised peoples that pushed them to champion effective colonial rule of the Gold Coast Colony. These significant aspects of the Gold Coast intellectuals’ writings would however be rendered in nationalist history as self-contradictory, because of the teleology that characterises such accounts. In their publications, the intelligentsia called for reform, suggested ways to reform and proactively moved to reform the colonial system. They scrutinised every piece of legislation that was proposed and every Ordinance that was passed into law, with a view to either contest it or improve upon it. One such Bill was the Crown Lands Bill, which catalysed the formation of the ARPS in 1897.

3.4.2 The Aborigines Rights Protection Society and Pro-Synthesis Liberalism

The ARPS was formed in 1897 to expand the Fekuw membership to include non-

¹¹⁵ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. xviii.

Fanti colonial subjects, and to reform colonial rule.¹¹⁶ The trigger for the establishment of the ARPS was the passage into law of the Crown Lands Bill. As with the Fekuw before it, the ARPS membership expressed through their writings in newspapers, books and letters, a growing sense of frustration with the arbitrary nature of colonial rule. Beyond articulating their views in print, the society sent a delegation to London in 1898 to protest the Crown Lands Bill, and to demand representation in the highest decision-making body of the Gold Coast.¹¹⁷ They drew on liberal democratic arguments to insist that, as was the practice elsewhere, there could be no taxation without representation. They argued further that representation would ensure effective colonisation and make colonial rule mutually beneficial. They made a case too for the integration of chieftaincy into the colonial governance structure. The Lands Bill was subsequently withdrawn by the Colonial Office and replaced with the Concessions Bill, which retained a number of contentious provisions but was less objectionable.¹¹⁸ However, the request for political representation did not receive immediate attention.

In their individual publications, as well as in their deliberations, both as a group and with their networks, the ARPS used history, ethnographic texts, customary law and a rights-based discourse to make their case. They also used what Matthew Norton has described as the language of “emotional mobilization.”¹¹⁹ The interest of the intelligentsia was in fashioning a unique new Gold Coast governance structure by drawing on the knowledge of viable alternative models of colonial administration that they had gained from their lived experiences, from travel and from their networks. The solution they crafted was a controlled synthesis of what was familiar to West Africa, as a result of its cosmopolitan history, with an infusion of new ideas from the colonisers and the Atlantic world. They had a common agenda of transforming the mindset of both the coloniser and

¹¹⁶ Nana Kweku Osam II (Dr. J. W. de Graft Johnson), “The Aborigines Jubilee and the Convention,” *The Gold Coast Observer*, August 1, 1947. According to the author, who was a prominent Gold Coast intellectual, “the Society started its beginnings in 1895 in the days of Governor Griffith and became firmly established in 1897, when Governor Maxwell revived the Lands Bill and forced it through the Legislative Council.”

¹¹⁷ For further information, see: Kimble, *A Political History*; Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines.”

¹¹⁸ Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines,” p. 120-22.

¹¹⁹ Matthew Norton, “Narrative Structure and Emotional Mobilization in Humanitarian Representations: The Case of the Congo Reform Movement, 1903-1912,” *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 10, 2011 – Issue 3, pp. 311-338.

the colonised by educating them about the past, the present and the possibilities for the future. Thus, the Gold Coast intelligentsia were neither preservative nor disillusioned; they were consciously inventive.

Hayford published *Gold Coast Native Institutions* in 1903, Sarbah published *Fanti Law Report* in 1904 and Attoh Ahuma published *Memoirs of West African Celebrities* in 1905. Sarbah's second book was an extension of the first in that it aimed at a "clear intelligence of the laws of the land,"¹²⁰ which was a major item on the ARPS agenda in the wake of the Crown Lands Bill. The other two books addressed a second declared goal of the ARPS, which was to educate both the locals and outsiders, especially the British, about the Gold Coast people's history. Until then, Reindorf's *History of the Gold Coast and Asante* was the only history book written by a Gold Coaster. Hayford and Ahuma invoked history to educate their readers, albeit differently. *Memoirs of West African Celebrities* used a historical approach to present accomplishments of continental and diasporic Africans that inspired racial pride. Its purpose was to offer Gold Coast people the hope — as the ancestors referred to in the book had offered their compatriots who were departing for the Americas — that the journey they had embarked on would end in success.¹²¹ Hayford used history to show how Africans had been compelled by geographical circumstance to participate in European rivalries on the continent.

Hayford's rise within the ARPS fraternity extended the frontiers of intellectual and cultural dissent further west from Cape Coast to Sekondi. Of all the ARPS members, Hayford's writings engaged the most with the demand for representation. From Hayford's perspective, and indeed that of the ARPS, the idea of taxation without representation was a major anomaly in the Crown Colony system. As Brizuela-Garcia notes, Hayford's views in *Gold Coast Native Institutions* were:

Clearly directed to what he saw as the negligent and ignorant policies adopted by the British colonial administration [and] earned Casely-Hayford a reputation as one of the most articulate representatives of cultural nationalism in the Gold Coast. They, however, also capture what modern observers could

¹²⁰ *The Gold Coast Aborigines*, January 1, 1898.

¹²¹ Kimble, *Political History*, p. 540.

see as a central contradiction in the thought of cultural nationalist writers who did not outright oppose British rule, but looked at the way in which it could be reformed and adapted to better serve the interests of both Crown and people.¹²²

Yet, the seeming paradoxes complicate his nationalism by reflecting the historical context and period within which he made his submissions. The concept of cultural nationalism, with its assumption of a continuum and its expectation of “posed opposites,”¹²³ thus emerges as an inadequate frame for examining the agenda of Hayford and his ARPS compatriots. Hayford’s concern was with the ineptitude of British imperialism. He found one reason for this to be that colonial ministers got their information at second hand from a colonial governor who had an “uncertain” tenure of office.¹²⁴ Meanwhile, the governor was “surrounded with officials not always best qualified to inform him accurately concerning the significance and hidden meaning of Native institutions.”¹²⁵ This forced the Governor to supplement his knowledge by relying on authors who “in writing, seek not the making of history, but that of their own ephemeral fame.”¹²⁶ Hayford was definitely referring to publications by missionaries, traders, soldiers and explorers who were usually not academically inclined. Particularly important to Hayford was the fact that the Gold Coast people had “distinctive institutions, customs, and laws, which, now and again, European writers may attempt to portray, but which they can never fully interpret to the outside world.”¹²⁷ Eventually, the Governor, in his dispatches to London, passed on questionable information, which was used by the Colonial Minister in the House of Commons as grounds for serious debates and decisions. “Thus, between the Colonial Minister and the local Governor, ignorance at times reigns supreme as to the merits of a given issue.”¹²⁸ Hayford worried that colonial government officials were “wrecking the Empire”¹²⁹ and spoiling “the chances of Imperialism in West Africa”¹³⁰ by their lack of knowledge of Gold Coast ways and their insensitivity to local customs. Like

¹²² Brizuela-Garcia, “Cosmopolitanism,” pp. 204-205.

¹²³ Zachernuk, *Colonial Subjects*, p. 4.

¹²⁴ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, pp. 10-11.

¹²⁵ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 11.

¹²⁶ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 11.

¹²⁷ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 10.

¹²⁸ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 11.

¹²⁹ Chapter VIII of Hayford’s *Gold Coast Native Institutions* is titled: “Wrecking the Empire.”

¹³⁰ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 263.

Sarbah, Hayford was convinced that the dissemination of accurate information to the colonial authority would lead to effective modernizing governance.

Another impediment Hayford identified to the growth of imperialism was the inaccurate historical record and gaps in the British institutional memory of their relationship with the Gold Coast. Hayford argued, as did the ARPS, that:

The relations between Great Britain and the Gold Coast originated in friendship, mutual trust and commercial alliance..., Great Britain being merely a Protecting power, and only properly concerned with their relations with the outside world. It will be also seen that at no time have the people divested themselves of their right to legislate for themselves. Before the spread of education in the land, they did these things for themselves, sometimes in co-operation with their Friends and Protectors.¹³¹

Hayford's conviction was born of the fact that his research for the ARPS mission to London during the agitation over the Lands Bill, had led him to understand that the British had no legal basis for declaring the Gold Coast a colony. Hayford was the first to confirm in print, using primary written sources, the oral accounts circulating around the Gold Coast that the erstwhile equal relationship between coastal peoples and the British had been transformed into an unequal one. Hayford argued that the practice of taxation without representation, a hallmark of the Crown Colony system, existed because of misleading historical accounts of the British-Gold Coast relationship. He mused: "A curious arrangement this, surely, by which the Governor is not responsible to the taxpayers, who keep the machine going and who do really know what is good for them."¹³² Hayford concluded that taxation without representation did not allow for "healthy imperialism,"¹³³ as it was a source of unnecessary tension between Gold Coasters and the British.

Another point of Hayford's *Gold Coast Native Institutions* is to present a history of the Gold Coast that clarifies the ties of kinship between the coastal Fanti and the

¹³¹ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 129.

¹³² Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 125.

¹³³ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 126.

interior Asante, while recounting the causes of the wars between them. Hayford argues that Asante had been driven more by trade interests than belligerence in its dealings with its southern neighbours. Here he echoes Blyden, who had suggested in 1874 that trade could be enhanced if the British allied with Asante.¹³⁴ Hayford desires an “ideal of Imperial West Africa”¹³⁵ — “the Gold Coast and Ashanti flooded with knowledge and culture of the best order, and the several states of the two countries federated together in one Union... all flying the Union Jack, not by coercion in any shape or form, but by free choice, as becomes a free people.”¹³⁶ Hayford thus suggests an amalgamation of the Gold Coast Colony with Ashanti to address the incompetence that characterised early British colonial rule. Ultimately, Hayford yearned for “Imperial West Africa, with federal Fanti and Ashanti as a basis.”¹³⁷ More importantly, he placed as central to the success of this project the hope that “the Aborigines may now be allowed to take part in the work of legislation for their native land.”¹³⁸ It is not surprising that Hayford proposed a union of the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti, since his maternal family, the Brews, had a long history of trade dealings with Asante, and had acted in the past as political brokers between the coastal people, Asante and the British.¹³⁹ Viewed in the light of his political activities during the 1920s, which culminated in the founding of the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA), Hayford’s advocacy of West African unity as far back as 1903 reveals his consistency.

Sarbah contributed to debates about effective colonisation with the publication of his third book, *Fanti National Constitution*, in 1906. This publication could also be read as a blueprint for indirect rule. According to Sarbah “a governor of one of the British West African possessions” had stated that it was better for Britain to “rule the people through their chiefs, because they are ruled far more willingly in that way.”¹⁴⁰ Based on his personal convictions and on what he knew of the Japanese colonial model, Sarbah made a proposal “to govern the African through his natural rulers under the direction of

¹³⁴ Blyden to Sir George Barclay (Governor of Sierra Leone 1873-1874), Monrovia: February 12, 1874 in Lynch, *Selected Letters*, p. 464.

¹³⁵ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 269.

¹³⁶ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 254.

¹³⁷ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 259.

¹³⁸ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 270.

¹³⁹ Priestley, *West African Trade and Coast Society*.

¹⁴⁰ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 227.

the British Government.”¹⁴¹ For Sarbah:

To rule the people through their chiefs successfully demands knowledge, more or less intimate and accurate, of their country, and the principles of the constitution of their own government; the sympathetic encouragement and support of whatever in their institutions is sound; the gradual elimination of what is injurious, or has the tendency to hinder or suppress the sturdy and vigorous development or growth of a national character racy of the soil to a higher standard; some attempt to understand the common language of the people.¹⁴²

Although Sarbah proposed a model of governance based on local customs, he acknowledged that some of the customs had to be phased out. Within the context of the times, Sarbah had no inclination to advocate the preservation of an imagined pristine coastal culture, or to declare an end to colonial rule.

Arguably, it was in *Fanti National Constitution* that Sarbah identified in concrete terms the model he proposed for effective colonial rule. Unimpressed with the British administration of the Gold Coast, he touted the superior policy of the defunct Fanti Confederation, which he compared with that of Japan. Thus:

Fanti patriots, and [the] Japanese Emperor with his statesmen, were both striving to raise up their respective countries by the proper education and efficient training of their people. The same laudable object was before both. The African’s attempt was ruthlessly crushed, and his plans frustrated. Japan was not under an unsympathetic protection; she has succeeded, and her very success ought to be an inspiration as well as an incentive to the people of the Gold Coast Territories to attempt again, keep on striving, until they win in the twentieth century what was sought for thirty-five years ago.¹⁴³

Sarbah argued that the French and Japanese colonial systems were better than the chaotic

¹⁴¹ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 230.

¹⁴² Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 235.

¹⁴³ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 254.

British colonial system. He was convinced that the French and Japanese practiced what he termed “scientific colonisation.”

Sarbah railed against exploitative colonial rule but supported “scientific colonization in which the guiding spirit is sympathy.”¹⁴⁴ He believed that “science and the scientific method alone can effect a successful and permanent reformation,”¹⁴⁵ and considered that:

A study of the Franco-Japanese system leaves the impression on one that it seeks to raise up and make the aborigines efficient through their co-operation, by scientific means. On similar lines should Gold Coast be administered.¹⁴⁶

He argued that the colonial policies of Japan and France challenged and disproved the “theory of racial superiority” that underpinned British colonialism.¹⁴⁷ Also, the colonised peoples under Japan and France had acquired new skills as a result of being colonised, whereas in the Gold Coast, the British were only interested in exploiting the people and denigrating their ways. Sarbah regarded Japan’s colonial system in Formosa as the best model for indirect rule. In fact, if Sarbah looked outside the Gold Coast for inspiration, it was to neither Europe nor the Atlantic world, but to the East. While he advocated for Britain to implement policies in the Gold Coast that had been applied successfully in India, such as respect for customary law, he regarded Japan as a superior colonial power, but still willed Britain to emulate Japan’s example, saying, “What she has done, surely, surely British statesmen can accomplish.”¹⁴⁸ According to Sarbah, during Japan’s colonisation of Formosa “the national customs of the inhabitants were not meddled with unless barbarous and inhuman. At the same time that she was introducing some of her own enlightened laws, Japan respected the prejudices of the people, and tried rather to guide than to drive and coerce them to civilization.”¹⁴⁹

The Sarbah and Hayford texts had similar agendas, but with significant differences.

¹⁴⁴ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. xx.

¹⁴⁵ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 234.

¹⁴⁶ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 242.

¹⁴⁷ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 240.

¹⁴⁸ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 255.

¹⁴⁹ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 240.

Like Hayford, Sarbah believed in critiquing colonial rule constructively. The overriding problem they identified and attempted to fix was ignorance. They judged that the lapses in the colonial administration emanated from the want of information, definition and planning. While both proposed a national education policy,¹⁵⁰ Sarbah, who was instrumental in the establishment of Mfantsipim College in 1905, emphasised this more forcefully.¹⁵¹ A major difference between the Hayford and Sarbah texts is in their choices of terminology. While Hayford referred to the Gold Coast people as “aborigines” or “natives,” Sarbah opted for the term “Africans.” In fact, Sarbah pointedly refused to use “the word ‘native’ in connection with men and things African,”¹⁵² in order to avoid the “absurdity of always describing in Africa everything non-European as *native*.”¹⁵³ As Kimble notes, Sarbah was not alone in this thinking; there was a general feeling on the coast that the word “native” had to be discarded, or else spelt with a capital letter, because it had connotations of African inferiority *vis à vis* Europeans.¹⁵⁴ Although Hayford and Sarbah craved an African regeneration through local customs, Hayford, like his mentor Blyden, looked to the Asante hinterland for the coast’s salvation, while Sarbah espoused the view that the coast had the ability to regenerate itself, if given the chance. Thus, Sarbah privileged Fanti culture, even in the titles of his publications. While they both homogenised Akan ethnicity, by insisting that Fanti culture was synonymous with Akan culture, Hayford nevertheless distinguished between the coast and the interior, advertising his personal bias toward the interior.

In his 1911 publication *Ethiopia Unbound*,¹⁵⁵ Hayford critiqued the Crown Colony system again, questioning “its putatively superior claim to be rationalizing, modernizing, and civilizing.”¹⁵⁶ While most scholars have examined *Ethiopia Unbound* as a work of cultural nationalism, it was perhaps in this book, more than in any of his other writings, that Hayford exhibited his preference for synthesis. Although *Ethiopia Unbound* is often

¹⁵⁰ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. 252.

¹⁵¹ Bartels, *The Roots of Gold Coast Methodism*, p. 165; A. Adu Boahen, *Mfantsipim and the Making of Ghana* (Accra: Sankofa Educ. Publishers, 1996).

¹⁵² Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. x.

¹⁵³ Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, p. x.

¹⁵⁴ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 540-41.

¹⁵⁵ J. E. Casely Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation*, 2ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1969).

¹⁵⁶ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 229.

classified within the genre of autobiography,¹⁵⁷ it could be considered Hayford's manifesto for the youth, in which he urged every young man to "preserve his national identity and race instincts."¹⁵⁸ In projecting the form of society that the Gold Coast should be, Hayford, like his ARPS counterparts, cautioned Africans to be selective in their acceptance of Western culture. He did not ask Africans to be preservative because he believed in flexible, intelligent engagement with different cultures. This explains why he called on the African youth to imitate the Japanese, by appropriating useful Western ways, while upholding his own culture. According to Hayford,

The Japanese, adopting and assimilating Western culture, of necessity commands the respect of Western nations, because there is something distinctly Eastern about him. He commands, to begin with, the uses of his native tongue, and has a literature of his own, enriched by translations from standard authors of other lands. He respects the institutions and customs of his ancestors, and there is an intelligent past which inspires him. He does not discard his national costume, and if, now and again, he dons Western attire, he does so as a matter of convenience, much as a Scotch, across the border, puts away, when the occasion demands it, his Highland costume.¹⁵⁹

The philosophical underpinnings of *Ethiopia Unbound* are as firm an anchor of the text as its striking endorsement of Blyden's thinking. Hayford believed, as did Blyden before him, in the cultural superiority of the African of the interior. Accordingly, he envisaged that his future National University would be situated in a suburb of Kumasi, the Asante capital.¹⁶⁰ He argued, "Ashanti is my type, for the reason that Ashanti is yet unspoilt by the bad methods of the missionary."¹⁶¹ Hayford echoed Blyden's argument in favour of the superiority of the African in religious matters, declaring, "The African, in his system of philosophy, gives place to none."¹⁶² He endorsed Blyden's opinion that indigenous

¹⁵⁷ See: Kimble, *A Political History*, pp. 524-525; Robert July, *The Origins of Modern Thought*, pp. 433-457; van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, pp. 78-84; Korang, *Writing Ghana* pp. 204-237.

¹⁵⁸ Hayford, *Ethiopia*, p. 194.

¹⁵⁹ Hayford, *Ethiopia*, p. 170.

¹⁶⁰ Hayford, *Ethiopia*, p. 194.

¹⁶¹ Hayford, *Ethiopia*, p. 186.

¹⁶² Hayford, *Ethiopia*, p. 187.

African religions suited African needs best and warranted serious study. Following further in Blyden's footsteps, Hayford explored the theme of race emancipation as a product of Africans realising their own sacred role, and not merely mimicking Europeans. However, he pointedly differentiated between Blyden and other thinkers such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington,¹⁶³ when he wrote

In the Afro-American school of thought, the black man is seeking intellectually and materially to show himself a man along the lines of progress of the white man. In the African school of thought, represented by Dr. Blyden, the black man is engaged upon a sublimer task, namely, the discovery of his true place in creation upon natural lines. That is the striking difference between the two great schools of the thinkers of the race.¹⁶⁴

Hayford foreshadowed Blyden's later conviction that the agendas of African Americans and Africans diverged, and that African Americans had to learn from Africa.

Accordingly,

Afro-Americans must bring themselves into touch with some of the general traditions and institutions of their ancestors, and, though sojourning in a strange land, endeavour to conserve the characteristics of the race. Thus and only thus, like Israel of old, will they be able metaphorically, to walk out of Egypt in the near future with a great spoil.¹⁶⁵

Hayford's talk of conserving race characteristics did not preclude selective engagement with Western culture. What he sought to convey was that African Americans, and indeed Africans, should realise that they had a different methodology and purpose for their race

¹⁶³ While Du Bois argued for African American adoption of intellectual education, Washington believed that material means were the route to racial uplift; hence his emphasis on industrial education.

Hayford's position is a curious one, since many educated Africans of his day supported Washington's position and advocated the adoption of vocational education in Africa. Andrew Barnes who examined African attitudes to the views of Washington and Du Bois on the best education for people of African descent concludes that contributors to African newspapers mostly sided with Washington against Du Bois. See: Andrew Barnes, *Global Christianity and the Black Atlantic* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press), p. 146.

¹⁶⁴ Hayford, *Ethiopia*, p. 164.

¹⁶⁵ Hayford, *Ethiopia*, p. 165.

progress from that of the white man.

Another publication that exemplified the synthesis sought by the Gold Coast intellectuals was Ahuma's *The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness*, a compilation of articles he had published in the *Gold Coast Leader*, discussing the need to establish a Gold Coast nation. This book exemplified Ahuma's own purpose of inspiring the youth – "the rising generation."¹⁶⁶ As had been the vision expressed in earlier publications by Hayford and Sarbah, Ahuma foresaw that the Gold Coast would remain in the British Empire. Crucially though, his new nation was to be built by a culturally aware cosmopolitan people, unashamed to be different and discriminate, even as they engaged with European culture. Written in support of the "gone Fante" crusade, *Gold Coast Nation* claimed to usher in "an era of Backward Movement,"¹⁶⁷ during which Ahuma proposed a deeper and more selective engagement of the present with the past, persuading his Gold Coast readers that "intelligent retrogression is the only progression that will save our beloved country."¹⁶⁸ Ahuma explained that this "perfect paradox" was essential to "rid ourselves of foreign accretions and excrescences."¹⁶⁹ He bemoaned the ridiculing of "the thoughtful, judicious and discreet African, naturally versed in the principles of Selection — who differentiates and discriminates between essentials and inessentials, who studiously rejects and selects."¹⁷⁰ Although the desire to rid the Gold Coast of the foreign seemed to affirm his cultural nationalism, Ahuma's concept of selection suggested otherwise. For him,

If therefore, by reason of our irregular, imperfect and extraneous training, we must learn from [the Europeans], it is absolutely necessary, for our own good and in the higher interests of our Country, Nation and Race, that we imitate them in those excellencies that make for genuine progress and advancement.¹⁷¹

Here, Ahuma demonstrates that he is neither preservative nor parochial; he is a

¹⁶⁶ Rev. S. R. B. *Attoh Ahuma, The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness* (Liverpool: Marples & Co., 1911), *Foreword*.

¹⁶⁷ Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation, Foreword*.

¹⁶⁸ Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation*, p. vii.

¹⁶⁹ Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation, Foreword*.

¹⁷⁰ Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation*, p. 38.

¹⁷¹ Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation*, p. 39.

pragmatist who is also a cosmopolitan.

Invoking his knowledge of Napoleon and Julius Caesar, Galileo and Milton, Sir Walter Raleigh and Thomas Spencer Baynes, as well as Beethoven and Edison, Ahuma argued that these “great Heroes of Ages,”¹⁷² who sacrificed for the benefit of their countries and people, were worthy of emulation.¹⁷³ Thus, Ahuma stated categorically that “history is cosmopolitan, and its lessons are of international application.”¹⁷⁴ For him, there was no shame in borrowing. What was unacceptable was “to be so civilised as to be ashamed of one’s own Name, and Country and Nation, and all that these principal factors connote is to betray the possession of principles and things that in Pandemonium are worshipped, adored and glorified.”¹⁷⁵ Unlike Sarbah and Hayford, Ahuma wrote specifically for a Gold Coast audience. He did not care to explain the Gold Coast *to* the world, although he invoked ideas and concepts *from* the world in addressing issues relating to the progress of the Gold Coast. It is because Ahuma can be read as both a cultural nationalist and a cosmopolitan that scholars such as Ayandele, Korang and Nana Nketsia interpret Ahuma and his contemporaries as deluded. Korang argues that Ahuma’s quest for intelligent retrogression in the making of the nation, exemplifies the self-contradictory nature of the colonised “middle class.”¹⁷⁶ However, contextual readings of Ahuma would suggest that his wish for a fusion of the local with the European is a function of his cosmopolitan nationalism.

Ahuma was well aware that the historical processes that had created the colonial Gold Coast could guarantee some continuity, but not a seamless continuation of the past. Ahuma’s Gold Coast was an ongoing project, because “we are being welded together under one umbrageous Flag.”¹⁷⁷ His central argument was that sixty years of belonging to Empire had prepared the different nations that made up the British Gold Coast for the ultimate – the invention of a Gold Coast nation.¹⁷⁸ Ahuma’s understanding of the nation resonates with Renan’s concept of the nation, expressed in “*Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?*,”

¹⁷² Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation*, p. 25.

¹⁷³ Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁷⁴ Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation*, p. 24.

¹⁷⁵ Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation*, p. 41.

¹⁷⁶ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 155.

¹⁷⁷ Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation*, p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ Ahuma, *Gold Coast Nation*, p. 2.

as a vehicle driven by the will of the people. Ahuma is therefore prophetic and futuristic. He invokes and provokes that will to belong to an imagined, but as yet unwelded, Gold Coast nation comprising the full complement of its past and present. On account of his pragmatism, Ahuma's call for a Gold Coast nation is inventive and necessarily cosmopolitan, and not preservative.

One argument of this chapter is that a history that examines synthesis as the ideology of a historical movement could enrich our knowledge and understanding of the ARPS and, by extension, of the interwar years. Appreciating the context of colonial inefficacy, and the intelligentsia's burning desire to help fix this problem by applying an innovative concept of synthesis, leads to an understanding of the development of an ideology of synthesis. (It would eventually collapse, as explored in the next chapter.) The discourse about synthesis has substantially laid the foundation for politics in Ghana, particularly in the emergence of the nation-state as an ideal and in the practice of local government, yet this aspect of the history remains unexplored. Rathbone has noted how the critical story of the making of local government in Ghana has been submerged beneath the alluring history of nationalism and its labels.¹⁷⁹ As Rathbone has shown, Gold Coast intellectuals critically debated the structure and form of a suitable local governance system — a fusion of Akan culture with British colonial practice. In the process, they asked questions about their local situation, but sought answers that were not provincial but cosmopolitan. The members of the ARPS adopted the Fekuw agenda of research into the adoption and adaptation of local culture. Although the Gold Coast intellectuals did exhibit some conservative tendencies, pinning the label of cultural nationalism on them can be misleading, since they sought consciously to modify the local culture.

3.5 Defining Friendships: The ARPS, E. D. Morel and the Land Question

The 1894 Crown Lands Bill, which was premised on the assumption that the Gold Coast had unoccupied land, unclaimed land and wasteland, posed what came to be referred to as the “West African Land Question.” The Gold Coast intelligentsia and their chiefs contended that this assumption was not applicable to the Gold Coast Colony, because of its indigenous system of communal land ownership. After the Fekuw was

¹⁷⁹ Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 8.

transformed into the ARPS, and with the success of the mission to London in 1898 to fight the Lands Bill, the relationship between the West African interpreters of culture and their counterparts in Britain, such as Kingsley and Morel, reached an all-time high. The death of Mary Kingsley in 1900 made E. D. Morel the premier lobbyist in Britain on the Land Question. Morel's *Affairs of West Africa* was released to the public in 1902. This was followed up in 1903 with *The British Case in French Congo*, another informed view of Africa, expressing Morel's conviction that colonialism should be the pursuit of economic expansion tempered by empathy for local populations.

Affairs of West Africa directed European public attention again toward colonial rule. Citing the example of the oil palm industry, the mainstay of Southern Nigeria's economy, Morel first highlighted its labour-intensive production methods, and challenged the erroneous perception that Africans were lazy, as had been reported by missionaries, "palm-oil ruffians,"¹⁸⁰ and colonial administrators.¹⁸¹ He then waded into the sensitive issue of land, its ownership and its distribution in the colonised territories, explaining that issues concerning land in West Africa were intertwined with those of culture and governance, and charging:

Although evidence is accumulating on all sides which corroborates in the most ample manner the statements of Ellis, Sarbah and Mary Kingsley, it is nevertheless unhappily true that the tendency on the part of the European Powers, not only to interfere with the native law of land tenure, but to frame legislation without regard whatever for its importance in the relationship between the European and the Negro, is increasingly manifest.¹⁸²

Despite the early synergies, the positions of the intelligentsia and their British allies on the land question diverged increasingly after Sarbah's death in 1910,¹⁸³ culminating in the eventual severance of Morel's working partnership with the ARPS. Hayford and Ahuma soon became Morel's leading critics in the Gold Coast press, and Morel

¹⁸⁰ Europeans who traded in palm oil were commonly referred to as palm oil ruffians. See Sarbah, *Fanti National Constitution*, pp. xiv.

¹⁸¹ E. D. Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, 2ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968), pp. 74-82.

¹⁸² Morel, *Affairs of West Africa*, p. 171.

¹⁸³ Editorial Notes, *The Gold Coast Leader*, December 17th, 1910, p. 2; Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines," p. 197.

reciprocated their criticism in his newspaper *The African Mail*, in an apparent effort to alienate the Gold Coast intelligentsia from the British public.

The initial cause of the rift was the Forest Bill, which the colonial administration proposed in 1910 as a measure to check the rapid growth of a speculative land market in the Gold Coast Colony. The ARPS opposed the Forest Bill because it contained references to “unoccupied land” and “wasteland.” Having previously written extensively in defence of West African indigenes’ right to maintain their own land tenure system, Morel abruptly changed his stance and began advocating Crown control, arguing, “Unless the British over-lord steps in, the future of the aboriginal population of the Gold Coast is a very dark one.”¹⁸⁴ Morel spoke forcefully in defence of the Forest Bill, agreeing that the Crown needed the powers to supervise all concessions and to expropriate land, in order to protect “unlettered” chiefs against unscrupulous local and international mining interests. He contended that the ARPS leaders had erred in 1898 when they had opposed Governor William Maxwell’s Crown Lands Bill, writing,

It behoves such men as Mr. Casely Hayford and Mr. Attoh Ahuma, prominent at that time in offering to Sir William Maxwell’s Bill the most strenuous opposition, to put their shoulders with equal strength to the wheel to-day, when the very perils which that Bill, despite its imperfections and crudities, was designed to avert, have actually descended upon the community.¹⁸⁵

Morel presented the British government’s position on the land question as pure logic, in clear contradiction of his earlier posture. So, what had changed? Tenkorang argues that Sarbah had written a letter to Morel, revealing that the European land speculators were in cahoots with some educated Gold Coasters.¹⁸⁶ Be that as it may, it seems equally plausible that Morel was merely articulating his idea of effective colonial rule, which was based, as was Kingsley’s, on effective economic control by the British of the West African trade and factors of production.

For their part, the ARPS argued, as they had in 1897, that since the Gold Coast was

¹⁸⁴ E. D. M., “The Future of the Gold Coast. A Warning and an Appeal,” *The Gold Coast Leader*, December 10th, 1910, p. 7.

¹⁸⁵ E. D. M., “The Future of the Gold Coast,” p. 7.

¹⁸⁶ Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines,” pp. 197-201.

not conquered territory, expropriation of its land was the exclusive prerogative of the chiefs, acting as trustees for their respective peoples. Thus, since “Trusteeship is not Exploitation,”¹⁸⁷ they could not consent to the vesting of Gold Coast lands in the British monarchy. They argued that, notwithstanding Morel’s finding that the unbridled granting of concessions had reduced the forest cover, “It is better to put up with our losses than to run the risk of losing all, or the major possessions, by going to legislation.”¹⁸⁸ The ARPS viewed Morel’s position as a betrayal, all the more so because he belonged to a group that claimed to be protecting West African lands from concession mongers,¹⁸⁹ but in concert with other members of this group, Morel had written letters discrediting the ARPS team that was sent to London in June 1912 to lobby against the Forest Bill.¹⁹⁰ The war of words continued until 1917, when Morel was jailed in England for his anti-war propaganda.¹⁹¹

For Morel’s part, he had visited Nigeria and witnessed the workings of indirect rule at first-hand. This had led him to conclude that it was in the interest of both the Crown and the colonised for the Northern Nigeria Lands Proclamation to be replicated in all of British West Africa.¹⁹² Accordingly, Morel and his supporters lobbied successfully for the formation of a West African Lands Committee to consider the imposition of Crown lands administration across British West Africa, as part of a process of consolidating indirect rule.¹⁹³ To the annoyance of the ARPS leaders, the Colonial Office included Morel in the membership of this Committee. In the end, Morel got his wish with the passing into law of the Forest Bill in 1912, and the Palm Oil Ordinance in 1913, both of which regulated the granting of concessions. Although neither law vested Gold Coast lands in the Crown directly, the granting of concessions to businesses was brought firmly under the control of the colonial administration.

Despite this setback, Hayford continued his campaign against British control of

¹⁸⁷ Editorial Notes, *The Gold Coast Leader*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁸ Editorial Notes, *The Gold Coast Leader*, p. 2.

¹⁸⁹ Kimble, *A Political History*, pp. 366-371.

¹⁹⁰ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 369.

¹⁹¹ A detailed account can be found in Sammy Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines.”

¹⁹² J. E. Casely Hayford (Ekra-Agiman), *The Truth about the West African Land Question* (1913; rpt. New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969), pp. 20-21, 77-79.

¹⁹³ Hayford, *West Africa Land Question*, pp. 75-76.

Gold Coast lands, and published in 1913 a third book, entitled *The Truth About the West African Land Question*, in which he explored his old themes of the validity of African customs and the rights of the colonised, and re-examined the history of Britain's relations with its West African territories. Judging by its repeated references to "Mr. Morel and his friends,"¹⁹⁴ it was apparent that Hayford's new book was an attempt to roll back the gains of the West African Land Committee. He argued in it that the form of indirect rule Governor Frederick Lugard had instituted in Northern Nigeria, under which all land was vested in the colonial government, had succeeded there because that province was conquered territory.¹⁹⁵ This had empowered Lord Lugard to issue the Northern Nigeria Lands Proclamation, giving the British Crown ultimate ownership and control of the land, while declaring the people to be "mere users."¹⁹⁶ Hayford warned that Morel was advocating for the same exceptional interpretation of indirect rule to be applied to all British West African territories, under the guise of "land reform," and that this would amount to West Africans being lawfully dispossessed of their land. Thus, although Morel, Hayford and the ARPS all endorsed "Indirect Rule," there was "a small but radical difference" between them as to its meaning. Of Morel's understanding, Hayford wrote, "He offers us *pax Britannica* in exchange for our lands; 'indirect rule' in exchange for Government land control. Indirect Rule is good. But [the African being a] mere user of land is bad. West Africa will have none of it."¹⁹⁷

In the event, on his appointment as Governor of the Gold Coast in 1912, Sir Hugh Clifford showed an earnest interest in the implementation of indirect rule on the Gold Coast, and Hayford redirected his thinking and writing energies toward his other hobbyhorse — representation without taxation. Quoting Morel in *The Truth About the West African Land Question*, Hayford wrote: "the West African Dependencies are, in combination, incomparably the most important of our [British] tropical and semi-tropical sphere of Imperial activity."¹⁹⁸ Hayford continued "these things being so, West Africa calls for a treatment suitable to her condition. And the first thing which she may

¹⁹⁴ Hayford, *West Africa Land Question*, p. 75.

¹⁹⁵ Hayford, *West Africa Land Question*, p. 23.

¹⁹⁶ Hayford, *West Africa Land Question*, p. 20.

¹⁹⁷ Hayford, *West Africa Land Question*, p. 23.

¹⁹⁸ Morel, *The African Mail*, March 21st, 1913 in Hayford, *West Africa Land Question*, p. 104.

reasonably demand is efficiency in her service.¹⁹⁹ Further, “the future of West Africa demands that the voice of the taxpayers should be more and more heard in the councils of West Africa.”²⁰⁰ Thus, “the claim for representative Government on the part of a West African Dependency is not based on imitation of what has been learnt from others. The idea is indigenous; so, at the least, with the Gold Coast.”²⁰¹

As the land question had assumed regional proportions, the Gold Coast intelligentsia focused their attention on collaborating with their counterparts in the sister colonies. Hayford’s own educational background made him especially well-suited to this project. He was an alumnus of Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, which served all the tertiary educational needs of British West Africa. This meant that Hayford had strong ties with fellow schoolmates scattered across the British West African territories. During the remaining years until his death in 1930, Hayford was to pursue actively the project of an Imperial West Africa, leading to the establishment in 1920 of the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA). The history of the NCBWA is well-documented in the literature and need not be recounted here.²⁰² Hayford’s travels in West Africa and across the Atlantic enabled and inspired him to forge a united front among British West Africans, which forcefully articulated West African problems, suggested solutions to them, and championed colonial reform more broadly. The activities of the NCBWA are further examined in Chapter 4.

3.6 Conclusion

The label of “cultural nationalism,” as it is used in the nationalist historiography, has connotations of both parochialism and the want of invention. This limits the program of the first generation of Gold Coast intellectuals by rendering a partial reading of the

¹⁹⁹ Hayford, *West Africa Land Question*, p. 105.

²⁰⁰ Hayford, *West Africa Land Question*, p. 112.

²⁰¹ Hayford, *West Africa Land Question*, p. 113.

²⁰² Kimble, *A Political History*; G. O. Olusanya, "The Lagos Branch of The National Congress of British West Africa." *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* (1968): 321-333; J. Ayodele Langley, "The Gambia Section of the National Congress of British West Africa," *Africa* 39, no. 4 (1969): 382-395; Gabriel I. C. Eluwa, "Background to the Emergence of the National Congress of British West Africa" *African Studies Review* 14, no. 2 (1971): 205-218; Agbodeka, *African Politics and British Policy*; LaRay E. Denzer, "The National Congress of British West Africa, Gold Coast Section, 1915-1930," PhD diss., University of Ghana, 1979; John D. Hargreaves, *Decolonization in Africa* (London: Routledge, 2014).

past. In addition, the assumptions of anti-colonial nationalism and of a historical continuum, which are inherent in the label, are misleading. In fact, the Gold Coast's nineteenth- and twentieth-century intellectuals were anything but parochial in their thinking or in their recommendations for progress. Although one overriding aim of their publications was to identify the major contemporary problems of the Gold Coast Colony and to advance solutions to them, they never limited themselves to locally sourced instruments. It would appear that, contrary to the recurring academic theme that sets the late-nineteenth-century Gold Coast as a scene of cultural nationalism and of opposition to colonialism, it was in fact a stage for constructive criticism of an inchoate colonial system, inspired by nationalism and by cosmopolitanism. The Gold Coast intelligentsia were motivated by a deep affection for, and loyalty to, their local customs, as well as a duty to make their communities globally relevant by applying strategies for cultural and political modernisation that were both organised and focused. They did not pretend that a pristine Gold Coast culture existed, or that such a thing could be salvaged from centuries of migration and cultural cross-pollination. They were just as favourably disposed to generating culture as to preserving it. Their willingness to engage in conversations across borders, in which they articulated their own views, and challenged opposing views, made the ARPS moment a time of invigorating debate. The cultural question they grappled with in that debate was not whether to repudiate either African or European culture, but how to synthesise the positives from each into a new Gold Coast hybrid. Thus, when Sarbah, Ahuma or Hayford defended the African race, it was not to oppose colonial rule, but to oppose European racial prejudice and ignorance. Ultimately, at their core, the Gold Coast intellectuals were not anti-colonial resisters. Instead, their thought processes were driven by the need simply to make the government of the Gold Coast more efficacious.

CHAPTER 4

Misreading Conservative Nationalism (1920–1945)

4.1 Introduction

Are the interwar years critical to Ghanaian nationalist history? Was this period a serious nationalist moment or a period of irrelevance characterised by conservatism, passivity and self-serving competition for office among Gold Coast leaders? The history of Ghana from the end of World War I to the end of World War II is either touched upon lightly or ignored completely in most historical narratives, because historians and politicians tend to jump from the ARPS moment of the 1890s and early 1900s to the post-WWII era of ostensibly radical nationalism.¹ First, the interwar years are traditionally regarded in nationalist historiography as a period of political inaction. Second, the tendency to interpret the interwar years from the perspective of the failure of the UGCC's agenda as a political party has meant that the period has not been studied separately or in its own right. What is more, opponents of the successful nationalist leader, Kwame Nkrumah, are lumped together with interwar thinkers and labelled collectively "conservative nationalists," by contrast with the winning "radical nationalists." Since there was no interwar victory, the thinkers of this era are easily undervalued.

Extant understanding of the interwar era is premised on the assumption that the conservatives were preservative. This period is seen either as a continuity of Blydenesque nationalism or as a passive period of inaction. Kweku Larbi Korang, who credits Blyden as the founder of conservative nationalism in West Africa, asserts that the conservatives possessed "a conservative nationalism of culture — or nativism."² Korang notes further that conservative nationalism was the dominant form that shaped the intellectual landscape of the Gold Coast. Either way, nationalism in the interwar period is often dismissed as irrelevant to the later "real" and victorious "radical" nationalism, and is not explored in a way that sustains the continuity from earlier thinkers (the so labelled

¹ Roger Gocking, *Facing Two Ways: Ghana's Coastal Communities Under Colonial Rule* (New York and Oxford: University Press of America, 1999), p. 279.

² Kweku Larbi Korang, *Writing Ghana, Imagining Africa: Nation and African Modernity* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press and Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2003), p. 16.

cultural nationalists) or appreciates its ongoing relevance, the theme here being questions of local government. To overcome this narrative break, the category of conservative nationalism has to be revisited and revised. Why is this category insufficient, and what would facilitate a more complex story of these decades? Accounts that see a homoarchic progression from the cultural nationalism of the ARPS intellectuals to the conservative nationalism of interwar and post-war intellectuals, narrate the agenda of the nationalist writer-intellectuals as conservative primarily because of the nationalists' continued interest in answering questions about how to integrate chieftaincy with liberal tenets, i.e. the local institutions with global political ideas. They assume that both sets of nationalists supported the institution of chieftaincy unconditionally and unquestioningly.

As Richard Rathbone notes, “the conservative nationalists were widely perceived by formal scholarship as both wrong and unromantic.”³ Although Rathbone stops short of questioning the capacity of this term to render the complexities of the period, nonetheless his quest for a more complex story strengthens the argument that, rather than dismiss this period as a time of passivity and conservatism, historians should pay attention to the voices of those who have been airbrushed out of the Grand Narrative. Rathbone argues that successive generations of nationalist historians have established a disjuncture between one era and another, matching the binary categories that underpin the “conservative” and “radical” labels. He argues further that chieftaincy is presented in these accounts as a retrogressive institution, allied with colonialism and dangerous to the nationalist project. He thus calls for a re-examination of the way scholarly works have appraised such historical actors and institutions, radically revising the criteria for selecting nationalists so as to include in that list the educated chief, Nana Sir Ofori Atta I. For Rathbone, the exclusion of Nana Ofori Atta and the debates about chieftaincy that occurred in the interwar years obscures the critical story of the making of local government in Ghana.⁴ We must take Rathbone's concern seriously about the master narrative's omission of a variety of actors from outside of formal politics — notably

³ Richard Rathbone, “An Anti-Colonial Monarchy: Nana Sir Ofori Atta and the Conservative Nationalist Tradition in Ghana,” in Toyin Falola ed., *Ghana in Africa and the World: Essays in Honour of Adu Boahen* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 624.

⁴ Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah & the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana, 1951-60* (Athens, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2000), p. 8.

chiefs, who were typically not Western-educated. Rathbone's intervention points to the interwar years as being critical to our knowledge about nationalism and nationalists. The broad point noted in earlier chapters — that a major part of the library is inaccurate, incomplete or obscured on account of the Grand Narrative of nationalist history — applies to both the interwar and post-war periods. As Rathbone notes, the critical story of the making of local government in Ghana — a pressing concern in the interwar years — has been subordinated to the allure of later nationalist victories.⁵

Historians and textbook authors examine interwar intellectuals and the opponents of the CPP as simply politically conservative, with little to no mention of the intellectual and inventive projects that they envisioned. The fact that so-called conservatives were debating a major issue — local governance — that remains relevant well into the twenty-first century is lost on both the politicians and the scholars who have written about the period. For these politicians and scholars, debates about the role of the institution of chieftaincy in local governance only confirm the interwar intelligentsia's backwardness, notwithstanding the fact that the intelligentsia advocated reforms in the institution of chieftaincy to suit the needs of a cosmopolitan people. Therefore, against the dominant tendencies to either overlook the interwar period or dismiss it as dead-end conservative nationalism that is irrelevant to the important history that unfolded after WWII, the interwar years represent a moment in time that future historians will have to deal with in whatever characterisation of the period they attempt. As we shall see below, the interwar intellectuals engaged in a project of developing important ideas of continuing relevance. They were not separate from earlier or later nationalist thought; on the contrary, they were critically involved in developing a broader panoply of liberal ideas.

This chapter revisits the writings and networks of J. W. de Graft Johnson and J. B. Danquah, as well as the thought and activism of J. E. Casely Hayford, J. E. K. Aggrey and Nnamdi Azikiwe, the Nigerian intellectual and one-time Gold Coast resident and influencer. It also explores how the intellectual pursuits of the British liberal imperialist Sir Frederick Lugard contributed to colonial knowledge-making, and so to the colonial policy of indirect rule. Lugard's ideas about ruling West Africans through their chiefs —

⁵ Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, p. 8.

in effect the synthesis of local custom with colonial policy—provoked intense debate when Governor Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg attempted to implement them during his tenure from 1919 to 1927. A central figure in this period was Nana Ofori Atta I, the Omanhene of Akim Abuakwa, who was both a participant in and a topic of debate, until his death in 1943. The Gold Coast intellectuals, plus Lugard and Azikiwe, were all liberal cosmopolites, engaged with the question of how to make the colonial system more effective and inhabiting an intellectual environment that was rooted in the wider liberal discourse. Though they all supported liberal imperialism, Lugard's mindset fitted into the genre of liberal justifications of imperialism that placed the interests of the British Empire first and those of colonial peoples second, while the position of the Gold Coast-based intellectuals could be described as advocacy for a form of constitutional liberalism that ranked Africa first and empire second. As key characters in this debating environment, the thinkers mulled existing local governance structures and their liberal beliefs in democracy and the rule of law, in an effort to fashion an ideal political system. They imagined a system that was both centralised and functional at the grassroots level. The Gold Coast-based intellectuals viewed this objective through an Akan cultural lens. This chapter therefore investigates how the intellectuals' thoughts about fusing Akan culture with aspects of liberalism can be used to rethink the dominant perception of the interwar years as a period of political and intellectual passivity in nationalist history.

Studies done by Roger Gocking and Richard Rathbone, and the Basel Africa-edited work *Akyem Abuakwa and the Politics of the Inter-War Period in Ghana*, show that the interwar period was critical to Ghana's future. This chapter expands on Gocking's *Facing Two Ways* and related studies of the coastal peoples of the Gold Coast; Rathbone's publications on Akyem Abuakwa and its most prominent chief, Nana Ofori Atta II; and studies that affirm the interwar years as a period of relevant intellectual action. The core aim of this chapter is therefore to narrate, analyse and reveal the relevance of these interwar debates. At the same time, the chapter invites a critical review of Gocking and Rathbone. Gocking's title, *Facing Two Ways*, focuses on coastal society and therefore leaves out a substantial amount of information involving interior societies, to which major interwar thinkers such as Danquah and Nana Ofori Atta I belonged. The coast-*versus*-interior debate among Gold Coast-based thinkers is part of the richness that a

focus on the cosmopolitanism of the intellectuals' ideas exposes. *Facing Two Ways* also conjures up a binary image, which is an oversimplification of the intellectual debates that occurred during the period. Not surprisingly, Gocking examines the issues “within the context of facing two ways”⁶ even as he focuses on “how the twin forces of Europeanisation (mostly Anglicisation) and Akanisation interacted.”⁷ Although Gocking notes that “the interchange between indigenous cultures themselves was also of profound importance in shaping the identity of these coastal societies,”⁸ he nonetheless chooses an analytical method that buttresses the dyad of African and European, and thus points to the intellectuals' debates as facing two ways. Thus, Gocking gives us a history that sees the interwar years and their debates as relevant, but he falls into the habit of casting the debates as a tension between African ways and Western ways. Predictably, he highlights local debates that culminated in the invention of tradition only because, he contends, previously “historians have tended to emphasize the European component.”⁹

Rathbone counts one chief, Nana Ofori Atta I, among the community of intellectuals. This chapter expands the class further to include other participants in the debates of the period, such as Kobina Sekyi and the Nigerian Nnamdi Azikiwe, who worked as a journalist in the Gold Coast from 1934 to 1937. Although these figures do not feature in popular or textbook accounts of Ghanaian political history, they shaped the future of the Gold Coast through their writings and their activism. In other scholarly works, Sekyi is cited only in connection with his social satire, *The Blinkards*, thus establishing his literary prowess but doing nothing to credit his role in the interwar debates. The Basel collection, *Akyem Abuakwa and the Politics of the Inter-War Period in Ghana*, provides much-needed insights into indirect rule in the interwar years, but because of its narrow focus on Akyem Abuakwa, the contributors do not engage meaningfully with the cosmopolitan context that is of interest to this research. Indirect rule lacked the liberal tenet of representative government and was thus challenged from the 1920s. By the 1930s, a universalistic and individualistic kind of liberalism had emerged, popularised by Azikiwe. Like Nkrumah, Azikiwe arrived on the Gold Coast

⁶ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 4.

⁷ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 4.

⁸ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 3.

⁹ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 3.

scene after spending many years in the United States, followed by a brief but eventful stay in Britain. Azikiwe and Nkrumah were both exposed to Black Atlantic ideas and in particular African American conceptions about Africa. Azikiwe's brand of liberalism presages Nkrumah's, which was to dominate the Gold Coast in the 1950s.

To be sure, not all scholars are dismissive of the interwar period. Some, like Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, who takes the scholars' agenda seriously, adopt the problematic frame of modernisation as a lens through which to examine the past. An example of this framing of the interwar years is van Hensbroek's proposition that the intellectuals did not belong to different camps, but were all engaged in a discourse about how to modernise Africa.¹⁰ Thus, for van Hensbroek, intellectuals such as Horton, Sarbah and Hayford, Sekyi and J. B. Danquah, as well as Azikiwe and Nkrumah, belong to one family, offering variants of the same solution to the problem of African modernity. Van Hensbroek does, however, distinguish between one group, typified by Sarbah, Hayford and Danquah, who believed modernisation was central to Africa finding its place in the world — even as they argued strongly that modernisation had to come “from our own roots”¹¹ — and another group, epitomised by Azikiwe and Nkrumah, who trusted in “basic liberal democratic values and ... rapid industrialisation.”¹² Van Hensbroek's narrow focus on the search for modernisation does not allow for a broader picture. The view that the intellectuals were pursuing modernity necessarily obscures their primary preoccupation, which was with the quest for synthesis. The writer-intellectuals' trajectory was not a linear march toward the modernisation of Africa. It involved instead a complex amalgam of issues around the question of how to invent a local governance system that was deeply rooted in the Gold Coast, yet equally in touch with global trends.

Although they have been largely subsumed or simply ignored, the thoughts of Aggrey, de Graft Johnson and Nana Ofori Atta I, as well as those of Sekyi, Danquah and Azikiwe, inspired and shaped the intellectual culture of the Gold Coast from the 1920s to the 1940s. These intellectuals used the medium of print to debate issues related to local governance, Akan culture and chieftaincy on the Gold Coast, and substantially modified

¹⁰ Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses in African Thought: 1860 to Present* (Westport, CT; London Praeger Publishers, 1999), p. 71, p. 153-157.

¹¹ Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 154.

¹² Van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 154.

the course of events during their own times and in the future Ghana. The interwar years and the early 1940s were full of tension, contestation and compromise, arising from the complex processes involved in defining Indirect Rule for the Gold Coast. The contestation was over how to weave liberal cosmopolitan ideals into existing precolonial institutions, in order to invent a new synthetic Gold Coast local governance system. Yet the nationalist historiography of Indirect Rule narrates these events as nothing more than a dead-end leadership contest between an educated elite and domineering chiefs. In order to refute this conventional assertion about the inactivity and irrelevance of this era, the rest of this chapter adduces evidence from debates about Akan culture that were waged between the most prominent interwar intellectuals. The complex and intense debates of this period saw shifts in alliances that will be explored below.

4.2 Liberalism as a Project of Interwar Writer-Intellectuals

Scholars of liberalism and the British Empire, such as Karuna Mantena and Mahmood Mamdani, argue that liberal ideas about empire shaped British colonial policy through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and ultimately produced Indirect Rule as we know it.¹³ Mantena argues that Henry Maine's intervention in India produced a novel ideology of empire for British liberals that sought to protect and rehabilitate so-called “native institutions.”¹⁴ Mamdani, contemplating indirect rule, also credits Maine as “the originator of a new technology of rule.”¹⁵ For Mantena, Maine’s alibi for empire was the ideological and theoretical foundation on which liberal imperialism was established, as a variant of liberalism. As Mantena points out and Mamdani upholds, Maine’s analysis of the 1857 Indian Rebellion posited a theory that recognised the admissibility of indigenous religion in the governance of India, while insisting that the civilising mission of empire threatened such organic development of that colony’s political culture.

Mamdani expands Mantena’s thesis to distinguish Indirect Rule as a unique policy

¹³ Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Mahmood Mamdani, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

¹⁴ Mantena, *Alibis of Empire*, p. 6.

¹⁵ Mamdani, *Define and Rule*, p. 43.

that deviated from known systems of control. Mamdani argues that, unlike the previous ways in which empires governed, Indirect Rule shifted the focus from control of the elite to control of all sections of the colonised population, including those in the countryside.¹⁶ Mamdani notes too that indirect rule was focused not on assimilating the elite, but on protecting and shaping the difference between colonised people and their colonisers.¹⁷ Thus, for Mamdani, “indirect rule was about the understanding and management of difference.”¹⁸ Robert Stone’s observation of indirect rule in the Gold Coast confirms Mamdani’s thesis, highlighting the way an “over- centralised view of Ghanaian political history”¹⁹ elides the changes in colonial administrative practice from the 1920s that pursued an interfering policy — indirect rule through legislation on the native administration — with a view to controlling the rural areas.²⁰ Stone points out in his accounts that educated Gold Coast chiefs, led by Nana Ofori Atta I, were instrumental in the shaping of indirect rule in Ghana. This observation calls into question some dominant perceptions, such as those of Mantena and Mamdani, that liberal imperialism was exclusively the invention of British colonisers. As Stone notes, a more balanced way to examine the interwar years is to view “national issues through the eyes of the participants in, and leaders of, local political struggles.”²¹ When looked at this way, liberal imperialism is seen as having been in fact an ideology espoused by a wider intellectual corps that comprised colonisers and colonised, such as Lugard and the Gold Coast-based intellectuals discussed in this chapter, all of whom believed in a mutually beneficial imperialism that admitted some form of local participation.

As seen in Chapter 3, in the Gold Coast, Sarbah drew on Maine to establish his case for the recognition of the justiciability of Fanti laws and customs. Emma Hunter’s thesis about other liberalisms that had a community-centred approach is therefore useful in studying the Gold Coast. As did liberals elsewhere, Gold Coast-based writer-intellectuals

¹⁶ Mamdani, *Define and Rule*, pp. 1.

¹⁷ Mamdani, *Define and Rule*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁸ Mamdani, *Define and Rule*, p. 43.

¹⁹ Robert Stone, “Rural Politics in Ghana in the inter-war period: some comparisons between Akyem Abuakwa and the States of the Central Province,” *Akyem Abuakwa and the Politics of the Inter-war Period in Ghana* (Basel: Basel Africa Bibliography & Historical Society of Ghana, 1975), p. 140.

²⁰ Stone, “Rural Politics in Ghana,” p. 119.

²¹ Stone, “Rural Politics in Ghana,” p. 140.

agitated for elections and representation.²² Their liberalism was akin to that expressed by Lugard in his 1922 publication *Dual Mandate*,²³ which became the unofficial policy handbook for colonial administrators. *Dual Mandate* was in such great demand that it was reprinted in 1923, 1925 and 1929. Although they are typically separated, Lugard and the Gold Coast-based writer-intellectuals are discussed together in this chapter because they shared elements of liberalism, common ground that should not, or at least *need* not, be overlooked. Influenced by the British Liberal Party's conception of the colonial economy as part of a global free market, Lugard proposed a colonial relationship that was of mutual, albeit unequal, benefit to Africans and Europeans. Explaining the concept of the dual mandate to colonial officials, Lugard admitted that:

European brains, capital and energy have not been, and never will be, expended in developing the resources of Africa from motives of pure philanthropy; that Europe is in Africa for the mutual benefit of her own industrial classes, and of the native races in their progress to a higher plane; that the benefits can be made reciprocal, and that it is the aim and desire of civilised administration to fulfil this dual mandate.²⁴

Lugard's *Dual Mandate* is therefore a political treatise to explain and justify the colonial enterprise from the point of view of British liberals. Lugard's proposition did not differ in principle from the one made by members of the ARPS — that colonial rule should be mutually beneficial to Africans and Europeans alike.²⁵ Lugard and the Gold Coast-based intellectuals are also aligned in their “portrayal of native society as simultaneously intact and vulnerable.”²⁶ Although Lugard's belief in the viability of African cultures may have stemmed from his being a racialist, like the interwar liberals of the Gold Coast, he believed that African cultures could be adapted to liberal principles. As Mantena argues, this presentation of local societies as simultaneously vulnerable and inviolable informed

²² See Chapter 3. Members of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society frequently argued against taxation without representation. See also: David Kimble, *A Political History* and Sammy Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society.”

²³ Lord Lugard, rpt. *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 5 ed. 1922 (London: Frank Cass, 1965).

²⁴ Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 617.

²⁵ Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 617.

²⁶ Mantena, *Alibis of Empire*, p. 6.

both the policy of indirect rule and the theory of liberal imperialism, of which Lugard was a leading proponent.²⁷

Emma Hunter queries the tendency to highlight only one brand of liberalism in African history.²⁸ According to Hunter, the label of conservatism prevents an exploration of the varied agendas of historical figures labelled “liberals”²⁹ Although the binary of radical and conservative may seem intuitive, actors of those tendencies used different languages of freedom to profess different visions of freedom, which, when contextualised, belonged nevertheless within a larger common liberal discourse. Hunter notes that the dominance of mid-twentieth-century liberalism, which highlights individual rights, has eclipsed other forms of liberalism, such as the communal liberalism proposed by supposed conservatives. Hunter observes that liberals who stressed individual rights “supported elections and universal suffrage, the abolition of chiefship and individual rights. Many were part of transnational networks, linked by socialism, organised labour and other elements of an emerging global society.”³⁰ On the other hand, community-centred liberals professed an “explicit recognition of and respect for hierarchy, defended sometimes in a language of culture, and at other times in a language of tradition.”³¹ Hunter argues that these latter liberals were “concerned with freedom, but freedom within society and existing social bonds, rather than freedom as constituted through individual rights and the rejection of existing hierarchies.”³² In Hunter’s estimation, contrary to the tendency for liberalism to be explained as a Western ideal with a fixed definition, it is an idea that evolves over time and possesses various contextualised meanings.³³

Hunter’s suggestion that we accept Michael Freeden’s proposal to think in terms of “liberalisms in the plural”³⁴ may well point the way to a better appreciation of the actors in Gold Coast history who have been labelled “conservative nationalists.” Hunter prescribes the reintegration of “marginalised ideas that had once sat more or less

²⁷ Mantena, *Alibis of Empire*, p. 7.

²⁸ Emma Hunter, “Languages of Freedom in Decolonising Africa,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 27 (2017), pp. 253-269.

²⁹ Hunter, “Languages of Freedom,” p. 261.

³⁰ Hunter, “Languages of Freedom,” p. 259.

³¹ Hunter, “Languages of Freedom,” pp. 259-260.

³² Hunter, “Languages of Freedom,” p. 261.

³³ Hunter, “Languages of Freedom,” pp. 257-258.

³⁴ Hunter, “Languages of Freedom,” p. 258.

comfortably within a liberal tradition,”³⁵ arguing that:

Hegemonic understandings of liberalism eclipsed alternative modes of thinking about individual and community, equally embedded in a more expansive liberal tradition or traditions. In particular, [they] obscured the intellectual inheritance of the liberal idealism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with its emphasis on the individual as a member of a community, whose ability to flourish depended on social relationships within that community.³⁶

Hunter’s concept of other liberalisms helps to establish the relevance of debates about local government and connects them to contemporary historical threads. As she argues, the labels “conservative” and “reactionary” limit our understanding of the liberal agenda. The failure to take an integrated view of the wider tradition has meant that liberalism in the name of community, which was the preoccupation of interwar intellectuals — versus liberalism focused on individual benefit, remains marginalised in Ghanaian historiography.

Thus, this chapter’s examination of the period from 1920 to 1946 as a period of creative and contentious intellectual projects of synthesis, is relevant to our understanding of the interwar writer-intellectuals, as they prosecuted their liberal project. These intellectuals sought a complex construction of nation as part of the British Empire, not apart from it. The sections below show how the interwar writer-intellectuals and their counterparts were part of this more broadly conceived, empire-wide, cosmopolitan liberal moment. In the Gold Coast, there were at least three strands of liberalism that engaged the attention of the writer-intellectuals — communal liberalism, constitutional liberalism and the liberal imperialism that underpinned indirect rule. As Korang notes, the liberalism of the Gold Coast writer-intellectuals was of the “liberal-constitutionalist variety.”³⁷ Empire-builders like Lugard adhered to the brand of liberalism that espoused the virtues of the British imperialist project. The issue that divided these liberals, all of

³⁵ Hunter, “Languages of Freedom,” p. 258.

³⁶ Hunter, “Languages of Freedom,” p. 258.

³⁷ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 225.

whom were cosmopolitan — as shown in the arguments of the NCBWA, the ARPS and Azikiwe on one side and Nana Ofori Atta I and Danquah on the other, was the question of what should be the position, privileges and powers of the chief within the emerging colonial order of Indirect Rule. The question of what to do with the hierarchical chieftaincy system then constitutes the major debate of the interwar period. It is a nationalist debate, not least because it concerns the nature and form of the leadership structure that is most suitable for the Gold Coast people, imagined as a nation.

4.3 Indirect Rule on the Gold Coast: An Overview

Indirect Rule was an ambiguous policy that promised more than it delivered. The problem it posed derived from its mission to rule colonised people through their own leaders and according to their own customs. Consequently, colonial administration became entangled with questions about which leaders and which customs should be recognised. In Britain as in the colonies, the advocates of indirect rule favoured customs that did not conflict with British legal norms or offend against British moral values, particularly those regarding human rights. This invariably led to a preference for the customs that could be most easily identified, verified and codified. By the start of the 1920s, the intellectual pursuits of the ARPS had precipitated the identification of a body of practices that could be called “Gold Coast customs and laws.” Sarbah et al. had formulated their homogenous conception of Akan society and consolidated its disparate customary practices into a proxy for “Akan culture” that could serve as the reference source for Indirect Rule. Thus, in what has been termed the “high colonial period,” the race to identify, systematise and codify customs and leaders led to the colonial administration’s bias toward the Akan system. As Gocking notes, the process of “Akanisation” by intellectuals was accelerated by the “partiality that the colonial government demonstrated for the Akan model of statecraft.”³⁸ In consequence, the Akan model of government came to be the archetype for legislation on native administration throughout the Gold Coast Colony.

Thus “Akan” became practically synonymous with “Native” in all Gold Coast discussions about the content of Indirect Rule. Colonial administrators under Indirect

³⁸ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 4.

Rule were typically liberal imperialists, who assumed African inferiority and differentiated Africans. In Britain's colonies, local difference, connoted by use of the word "native," was not merely acknowledged; the colonial administration also worked hard to protect and preserve this perceived distinction through the enactment of laws. As Christopher Lee shows, in spite of attempts by the British Colonial Office to come up with a uniform definition for the "Native" category, there was no easy way to define either "the Native" or his opposite number "the non-Native."³⁹ Yet, a system of government and a body of laws were produced nevertheless for the administration of "Native" subjects.

Although Sarbah and his compatriots endorsed Indirect Rule as a pragmatic solution to the Gold Coast's governance problems, the idea was not a uniquely Gold Coast one. Indirect Rule had been employed in India, Uganda and Northern Nigeria. Chief Justice David Chalmers and Governor Freeling were the first British colonial officials to contemplate the nature and extent of local administration and chiefly authority in Ghana.⁴⁰ This occurred in 1877, when the Chief Justice and Governor were confronted with the problem of how to administer the Protectorate, a territory situated between the Colony and Ashanti. However, it was Governor Herbert Ussher who proposed the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance (NJO) of 1878, which, Kimble reports, was never effected.⁴¹ Then in 1883, Governor Sir Samuel Rowe passed the NJO with limited applicability until 1898.⁴² The NJO substantially curtailed chiefly authority, by limiting the political and judicial role of chiefs and entrusting functions previously exercised by chiefs to the British Crown and its functionaries in the colony. In 1916, Governor Hugh Clifford introduced a new constitution that enlarged the membership of the Legislative Council

³⁹ See following for detailed assessment of how the colonial category of Native was defined and interpreted in the enactment of colonial policy in both British and French colonies. Christopher J. Lee, "The 'Native' Undefined: Colonial Categories, Anglo-African Status and the Politics of Kinship in British Central Africa, 1929- 1938," *Journal of African History* 46, 3 (2005): 455 – 78; Ruth Ginio, "Negotiating Legal Authority in French West Africa: The Colonial Administration and African Assessors, 1903-1918," in Benjamin Lawrance, Emily Osborne and Richard Roberts, eds., *Intermediaries, Interpreters and Clerks: African Employees in the Making of Colonial Africa* (Wisconsin: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2006), pp. 115-38; Gregory Mann, "What was the Indigénat? The 'Empire of Law' in French West Africa," *Journal of African History* 50, 3(2009): 331-53.

⁴⁰ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 138.

⁴¹ Kimble, *A Political History*, pp. 460.

⁴² Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 113; Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 462.

from 9 to 21. Clifford's nominees to the Legislative Assembly included Casely Hayford, E. J. P. Brown and T. Hutton-Mills — all ARPS members. Although the new constitution prescribed an increase in the number of African legislators from two to six (three chiefs, three educated), the ARPS was dissatisfied with both the allocation of seats and the absence of elections.⁴³ The Clifford Constitution remained in operation until the introduction of Governor Gordon Guggisberg's Constitution in 1925, which provoked a flurry of publications from Gold Coast intellectuals.

For British officialdom, the enactment of the NJO and the companion 1927 Native Administration Ordinance (NAO) was an attempt to satisfy repeated requests from cosmopolitan nationalists on the Gold Coast, who, from the 1880s, had allied themselves with British counterparts of similar liberal conviction, in demanding official recognition for Gold Coast customs and for the authority of chiefs.⁴⁴ However, British indirect rule, as expressed in the twin ordinances, did not meet the expectations of the cosmopolitan nationalists, because it ignored their most important demands relating to representation. From Sarbah to Hayford, the nationalists consistently argued for these liberal tenets: (a) an administrative structure that synthesised local customs with international practice; (b) an electoral system to replace the Legislative Council structure of official and unofficial members appointed by the Colonial Secretary through the Governor; (c) a prominent role for educated subjects in the Colony's local government; and (d) self-government within the British Empire. Yet, in overhauling the system of local administration, the colonial government did not make adequate provision for representation. Besides carving out a subordinate role for chiefs and local customs in the governance of the territories, few concessions were made to the ARPS's calls for basic liberal tenets, such as the extension of the franchise to the majority, to be reflected in the colonial system.

The activism of the NCBWA and ARPS suggests that the feeling in West Africa during the transition to indirect rule was that under the new régime, the local leadership would be widened to accommodate both chiefs and educated elected representatives. In the event, indirect rule left unfulfilled the dream of Gold Coast liberals for full-fledged elective representation, along with their desire for the resolution of contests over exactly

⁴³ Kimble, *A Political History*, pp. 460-462 and 494-497.

⁴⁴ See Chapter 3 above.

which body of local customs should be legalised. Indirect rule, as the colonial government's response to calls for the incorporation of local customs into the administrative setup, met from its very onset with stiff opposition from members of the intelligentsia who claimed superior knowledge of customary law and questioned colonial administrators' interpretations of it. The intellectual battles of the interwar years were fought not because other ethnic groups resented the colonial administration's imposition of Akan customs on them, but because urbanised and educated Akan from the coast opposed the project of Akanisation to the extent that it involved the specification of a homogenised corpus of customary law that leaned toward the customs of the Akan from the interior. Following the introduction of the Guggisberg Constitution and Nana Ofori Atta's local government reforms, which culminated in the NAO, the Akan of the coast and the interior debated the rights and wrongs of the practice of Akan chieftaincy more intensely than any other topic. Their disagreements took the form of debates waged in publications across overlapping timespans. From 1920 to 1927, Hayford and the NCBWA on one side were pitted against the ARPS and Nana Ofori Atta on the other; and from 1925 until the start of WWII, the colonial administration, Nana Ofori Atta and Danquah locked horns with the ARPS, which was supported by allies such as Azikiwe.

4.3.1 NCBWA and the Question of Representation

At the end of WWI, Casely Hayford presented to the ARPS a proposal for a conference of British West Africa, with the overarching objective for the Gold Coast of advocating the amalgamation of British West Africa.⁴⁵ Tenkorang notes that majority of the ARPS executive voted against Hayford's suggestion, proposing instead that the Gold Coast should champion its interests separately, through the ARPS. Refusing to accept the ARPS executive's decision, Hayford organised a West African Congress in alliance with like-minded opinion leaders from Nigeria and Sierra Leone. Hayford then founded the National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA) in 1920, to press for reforms of the British colonial administration across its West African territories. Although the NCBWA did not survive its founder's death in 1930, the public sentiments it aroused lived on, especially those that concerned the powers and privileges of chiefs. Flush with their

⁴⁵ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines" pp. 276-277.

initial success, Hayford and his followers, claiming to speak for all British West Africans, sent a deputation to London to press their case.⁴⁶ Nana Ofori Atta I questioned the NCBWA's right to speak even on behalf of the Gold Coast Colony, let alone all the peoples of British West Africa. Citing tradition, Nana Ofori Atta contested the NCBWA's standing on the grounds that chiefs alone were customarily entitled, and providentially chosen, to represent the views of the people. Predictably, Nana Ofori Atta was joined by the ARPS in this position.

The NCBWA capitalised on its access to newspaper outlets in charging the ARPS leadership and Nana Ofori Atta with what it described as narrow-mindedness.⁴⁷ Tenkorang finds that from 1918 to 1922, Hayford and his supporters discarded any semblance of decorum in the debate, resorting to invective through the medium of *The Gold Coast Leader*.⁴⁸ Confirming this reading, Gocking notes that the Hayford camp derided both the chiefs and the colonial government, protesting in the press that the colonial government had taken advantage of "ignorant chiefs" to invent tradition.⁴⁹ The NCBWA's substantive argument was that it was in fact customary for the people — and not the chief — to speak in public about issues that concerned them.⁵⁰ The NCBWA was uncompromising in this conviction, arguing that only traditional councillors, most of whom were non-chiefs, could speak for the people. This assertion is corroborated partially by the fact that among the Akan, the chief speaks in public through his linguist. However, the composition of a chiefs' council is complex, and the rules governing the public utterances of the chief are equally opaque.

How should Hayford's vituperations against Nana Ofori Atta and the ARPS be construed, considering that he was not anti-chief and that he propounded a theory of Akan homogeneity? In 1907 for example, Hayford had opposed the NJO (Amendment) Bill, which sought to vest in the Governor the absolute power to depose chiefs. In 1910,

⁴⁶ Across board in British West Africa, Hayford's supporters included a majority who could be described as youthful. He was also supported by Rev. Mark Hayford (his brother), businessman Henry Van Hein and the proprietor of the *Gold Coast Leader*, J. P. Herbert Macaulay, all of whom could not be described as young men. See Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines" pp. 283-288.

⁴⁷ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines" p. 282.

⁴⁸ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines" p. 285.

⁴⁹ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, p. 167.

⁵⁰ See July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought*, p. 452. Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines, pp. 288-294."

this bill was passed into law. Hayford had railed against the amendment because he believed that chiefs should be the sovereign leaders of their people. It would seem that Hayford's principled opposition emanated from his knowledge of coastal Akan culture and his assumption of Akan homogeneity. His challenge of Nana Ofori Atta I, who reigned over a different Akan jurisdiction, should therefore not be misconstrued as an anti-chieftaincy action. Hayford's 1903 publication, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, acknowledged differences among the Akan. Nevertheless, it would seem that his desire to espouse a uniform Akan culture supplanted the application of his knowledge of Fanti culture to the problem. In 1922, Hayford and the ARPS executive settled their differences,⁵¹ probably on account of one of Hayford's supporters, Henry Van Hein, being elected president of the ARPS.⁵² However, this reconciliation did not end the ongoing debate about the place and power of the chief, as the dispute resumed after the passing into law of the 1925 Constitution and the 1927 NAO.

4.3.2 The Guggisberg Constitution and the Native Administration Ordinance

Governor Guggisberg's reforms of the Native Administration, which implemented faithfully Lugard's *Dual Mandate* prescription, led to the passage of the 1925 Constitution and the 1927 NAO. The enactment of these ordinances effectively split the ARPS, triggering a protracted debate about what constituted Gold Coast customary law. Yet the disagreements over the form indirect rule should take show that although they were all adherents to liberalism, Lugard and Guggisberg were one kind of liberal and the Gold Coast intelligentsia were a different kind. Guggisberg's government of the Gold Coast, with its inclusion of the educated local elite, its economic development programme, and its system of Native Administration, could be described as the manifestation of paternalistic imperialism at its best. Yet the Governor failed to satisfy a section of the population because of the difference between his philosophical outlook and theirs. De Graft Johnson, who was a member of both the ARPS and the NCBWA, noted that the wider populace was so unhappy with the application of Indirect Rule, as

⁵¹ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines" p. 300.

⁵² Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines" p. 150.

expressed in the two basic laws, that “much doubt has been expressed as to the real object and motive of Sarbah’s participation in their passage.”⁵³ Another complaint de Graft Johnson made was that the actual practice of indirect rule was left to the discretion of individual governors and colonial administrators, making its application inconsistent. Although *Dual Mandate* had been published in 1922, evidently no serious attempt had been made to systematise the practice of indirect rule prior to Guggisberg’s assumption of the Gold Coast governorship.

Lugard’s intention in writing *Dual Mandate* was to inform colonial officials of the history and purpose of their mission in Africa. As Mantena notes, Lugard influenced several generations of colonial administrators and policy, particularly regarding the theory and practice of Indirect Rule in West Africa.⁵⁴ Lugard proposed a system of administration that would evolve from ruling through the chiefs, as proposed by the self-proclaimed British nationalist and imperialist Lord Alfred Milner, to self-government premised on democracy, as practiced in Europe and America.⁵⁵ He envisaged “representative institutions in which a comparatively small educated class shall be recognised as the natural spokesmen for the many.”⁵⁶ Though representative democracy was the ultimate goal, Lugard did not believe in revolution. Thus, he proposed a system of native administration with limited powers for a Native Ruler and a defined Native Authority.⁵⁷ Lugard believed that, as had occurred in India, the development of self-government should begin with the Panchayat or “Village Council.”⁵⁸ Lugard’s idea of simply replicating in one corner of the empire what appeared to work in another reflected the standard British colonial *modus operandi*.

Guggisberg’s 1925 Constitution proposed three Councils of Chiefs, one for each of the two provinces of the Gold Coast Colony — Eastern and Western, plus a Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs (JPC), comprising delegates from both provinces. The major source of the ARPS’s discontent was the modification of customary practice in the Gold

⁵³ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 80.

⁵⁴ Mantena, *Alibis of Empire*, p. 6.

⁵⁵ Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 194.

⁵⁶ Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 194.

⁵⁷ Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, pp. 202-203.

⁵⁸ Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 202.

Coast, which, until then, had upheld the particularity of the different chiefdoms. The ARPS accused the British administration and African members of the Legislative Council — particularly Nana Ofori Atta I — of inventing tradition as the rationale for the creation of shared forums for distinct polities. For the ARPS, the representation of the proposed Councils of Chiefs as “traditional,” rather than as a novel colonial bridge to a more modern system of government, was unacceptable. In 1927, as this matter continued to enrage members of the ARPS, Nana Ofori Atta I led members of the Eastern Province Council of Chiefs in tabling a Native Administration Ordinance Bill before the Gold Coast Legislative Council. The NAO provided disgruntled ARPS members with further evidence to support their suspicion that Guggisberg had colluded with some chiefs in deliberately misrepresenting local custom concerning the powers and privileges of chiefs. While Nana Ofori Atta and his brother chiefs argued that they were each empowered by “natural law” to make laws for governing their subjects, the ARPS argued that according to tradition, it was the people, through the Oman Councils, and not the chief, who held the prerogative of legislation. Led by Hayford, the ARPS cited Akan customary law in challenging the legitimacy of Nana Ofori Atta’s enactment.⁵⁹

In a dramatic turn of events in 1927, Kobina Arku Korsah brokered a truce between Hayford and Nana Ofori Atta.⁶⁰ The colonial administration subsequently appointed Hayford and two others, Nana Hima Dekyi XII of Upper Dixcove and J. Glover-Addo, to the Legislative Council as extraordinary members to participate in the debate on Nana Ofori Atta’s local government reform bill.⁶¹ The Governor agreed further to amend the 1925 Constitution by including a proviso for the chiefs to be joined on the Provincial Councils by eight of their Oman councillors.⁶² In the light of these developments, Hayford accepted both the 1925 Constitution and the NAO as imperfect but workable.⁶³ His conversion divided the ARPS into factions of “co-operators” and “non-co-operators” — supporters and opponents of the 1925 Constitution — led respectively by Hayford himself and by Kobina Sekyi. Hayford’s supporters included Danquah, who, reflecting on

⁵⁹ For detailed by precise information about of this impasse and the arguments put forth by both parties, see: Kimble, *Political History*, pp. 494-497.

⁶⁰ Ofori-Appiah, *The Life and Times of J. B. Danquah*, p. 26.

⁶¹ Kimble, *Political History*, p. 494.

⁶² Ofori-Appiah, *The Life and Times of J. B. Danquah*, p. 146; Kimble, *Political History*, p. 494.

⁶³ Kimble, *Political History*, pp. 494-497.

this era, wrote: “I joined forces with Casely-Hayford to accept the Provincial Councils as tools for the work of saving chieftaincy and our basic culture.”⁶⁴ However, Hayford’s death in 1930 left the compromise faction without a strong leader, and through the 1930s and early 1940s, Sekyi’s position on the matter became the dominant view on the coast.

The official position of the ARPS, articulated by Sekyi, was to challenge the Guggisberg constitution, hence its members were advised not to put themselves forward as candidates for the three municipal seats that were provided for under the new constitution. In defiance of this advice, the co-operators formed the Ratepayers’ Association, on whose ticket they contested the municipal elections, fielding J. Glover-Addo in Accra, Korsah in Cape Coast, and Hayford in Sekondi. Sekyi and Nana Kojo Mbra III, the Omanhene of Cape Coast, argued that Hayford had not only disobeyed the ARPS executive’s order to boycott the Sekondi election, but had also interfered in the Cape Coast election by tacitly supporting the winner there. Consequently, Hayford was expelled from the ARPS in 1927 at the instigation of Sekyi and Nana Mbra.⁶⁵ This decision of the executive committee fractured the unity of the Aborigines, spawning the Hayford and Sekyi factions. Sekyi refused to allow the Governor and Nana Ofori Atta I to fully operationalise the NAO, projecting the attitude of a purist in opposition to the new constitutional order, from which he never wavered until his death in 1956. Although Sekyi was not elected president of the ARPS until the 1940s, his personal philosophy of non-cooperation with the colonial administration and its machinery, the JPC, became the ARPS’s official position following Hayford’s expulsion. For Sekyi, the Guggisberg Constitution and the NAO had subverted local custom by over-empowering the chief at the expense of the institution of chieftaincy. Stone shows how Sekyi deliberately sabotaged the JPC architecture by promoting litigation against the Councils and targeting the practice of native administration “at the grassroots level.”⁶⁶

The ARPS position under Sekyi toward Guggisberg’s brand of indirect rule is often

⁶⁴ Ofosu-Appiah, *The Life and Times of J. B. Danquah*, p. 148.

⁶⁵ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, pp. xxvi; Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, pp. 177-206. Roger Gocking’s account of their struggles in the three municipalities point to the formation of new political parties in Accra like Kojo Thompson’s Mambii Party, and K. Quartey-Papafio’s Asere Koowulu Party. As is demonstrated years later, J. W. de Graft Johnson was a supporter of Casely Hayford who believed that Sekyi and company had erred in dividing the Aborigines by expelling Hayford.

⁶⁶ Stone “Rural Politics in Ghana,” p. 132.

presented as a leadership struggle between the chiefs and a monolithic group of educated Gold Coasters.⁶⁷ This is an inaccurate reading of events. The debates that emerged were not binary — between educated commoners and non-educated chiefs. By the standards of the times, Nana Ofori Atta I was a well-educated chief. Like his opponents, he was also protective of Akan customs, but not all of them. Sekyi was both highly educated and a cultural purist, whose avowed aim was to protest against the application of laws that he considered to be subversive of authentic Akan tradition. As Stone notes, the debaters often held multiple positions.⁶⁸ As we shall see below with de Graft Johnson's publication, the educated group recognised the chiefs as leaders, and were not seeking to usurp their role. Some of them accepted the Ofori Atta reforms, as evidenced by Danquah's writings and by Hayford's *volte-face*. For those who opposed Guggisberg's new constitutional order, both customary practice and the checks and balances within the Akan model of governance, such as the right of subjects to legislate for the community, provided the basis for their dissent. Their agenda was not to challenge the chief's position as leader; it concerned the duties of a chief as established by local custom and reified by precedent. It was not a struggle for power; it was a struggle over the interpretation of Akan laws and customs. Both the Sekyi-de Graft Johnson-ARPS tendency and the Ofori Atta-Danquah tendency were upholding the constitutional principles that animated liberalism broadly, while articulating a particular community-based liberal inclination.

4.3.3 Azikiwe's *Renascent Africa* as a Commentary on Indirect Rule

Another important commentary on chiefly power in the Gold Coast came, ironically, from the Nigerian Nnamdi Azikiwe. The brief period from 1934 to 1937 during which Azikiwe worked as a journalist in the Gold Coast was pivotal in the discourse about native administration. Azikiwe's criticisms of Nana Ofori Atta I, the most influential chief in the Gold Coast Colony, impacted how Gold Coasters perceived the institution of chieftaincy and imagined their political future. Nana Ofori Atta was critical of some colonial laws and policies, even leading protests against the 1934 Sedition and Water Works Ordinances, then personally organising and supervising the 1937-38 cocoa hold-up in the Eastern Province. He chastised the colonial administration for the Native

⁶⁷ Kimble, *Political History*, p. 561; July, *Origins of Modern African Thought*, p. 450.

⁶⁸ Stone, "Rural Politics in Ghana," p. 125.

Administration Treasury Ordinance of 1939.⁶⁹ However, Nana Ofori Atta was never able to shake off the charge of “inventing tradition” that had been levelled against him by the opponents of his 1927 reforms of native administration, and his reputation suffered further as a result of Azikiwe’s press attacks.⁷⁰

Even though Azikiwe made numerous references in *Renascent Africa* to the Gold Coast debate about the position, privileges and powers of chiefs — particularly those of Nana Ofori Atta I — the work has not been explored as a contribution to that debate within the historical context of its own time. Instead, it has been appreciated most often as an exemplar of radical nationalist-inspired writing.⁷¹ The inspiration for some of the newspaper articles that were collated to form *Renascent Africa* came from comments attributed to Nana Ofori Atta I during a sitting of the Legislative Council in 1936.⁷² Azikiwe was roused to action because he suspected that Nana Ofori Atta’s ambiguous statement about the negative effects on the youth of “the dissemination of unwholesome foreign doctrines by some unnamed persons” targeted “the philosophy of the New Africa,”⁷³ Azikiwe’s brainchild. Azikiwe seized this opportunity to reignite the debates provoked by the passage of the Guggisberg Constitution of 1925, and the 1927 and 1935 Native Administration Ordinances, accusing Nana Ofori Atta of “lowering his dignity from that of an Executive to that of a Legislator.”⁷⁴ Azikiwe aligned himself with the views of the ARPS in citing resolutions from Dutch-Sekondi and British-Sekondi “to make non-chiefs eligible as Legislative Council representatives of Provincial Councils,”⁷⁵ arguing:

In the Gold Coast law and custom, as in African law and custom, generically speaking, the people make the law, and the Chief administers the law. If an African Chief prefers to make the law instead of administering the law, there

⁶⁹ Rathbone, “An Anti-Colonial Monarch.”

⁷⁰ Rathbone, “An Anti-Colonial Monarch.”

⁷¹ James Smoot Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: Univ of California Press, 1958), pp. 220ff.; van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses*, p. 83; Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 28, 169, 225.

⁷² Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, p. 21.

⁷³ Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, pp. 21-24.

⁷⁴ Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, p. 23.

⁷⁵ Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, p. 23.

might or might not be revolution.⁷⁶

Azikiwe framed his interpretation of the times within the binary of old versus young, old Africa versus new Africa. Writing as, and on behalf of, the young man, Azikiwe believed that what was at stake was the innate tendency of “Old Age to becloud the aspirations of Youth.”⁷⁷ He saw himself as the apostle of a New Africa, entrusted with the task of announcing to the Old Africa that it was time to yield centre-stage, or risk being ejected from it forcibly.⁷⁸ Azikiwe identified the Native Administration chiefs as part of the Old Africa that must give way, and proclaimed that the philosophy of New Africa rested on the five pillars of spiritual balance, social regeneration, economic determinism, mental emancipation and national risorgimento.⁷⁹ This was a call to trade in the existing hierarchical political, economic and social structure for a cosmopolitan one that embraced the best practice from elsewhere. Challenging Danquah’s negative perception of socialism, Azikiwe advocated the appropriation of the Soviet Union’s successful socialist economic and political model, arguing that since African societies were essentially communalist, socialism was a force for good in Africa.⁸⁰ Notwithstanding the radical tone of *Renasant Africa*, Azikiwe’s wish was for a humane kind of imperialism.⁸¹ Drawing on Lugard and echoing Hayford, Azikiwe argued that, as a natural product of interaction between different races, imperialism was inevitable:

It is desirable, from the standpoint of universal order, for the stronger races to rule the weaker races, provided that the rulers will act merely as guides and guardians, on the *dual mandate* principle — exploitation for development, trusteeship and tutelage — and provided that the ruling Power is willing to surrender its suzerainty, if and when the ward is convinced that he is fledged for political independence.⁸²

Renasant Africa was therefore a call for colonial reform, but more so the reform of

⁷⁶ Azikiwe, *Renasant Africa*, p. 23.

⁷⁷ Azikiwe, *Renasant Africa*, p. 15.

⁷⁸ Azikiwe, *Renasant Africa*, pp. 39-49.

⁷⁹ Azikiwe, *Renasant Africa*, pp. 38-49.

⁸⁰ Azikiwe, *Renasant Africa*, pp. 128-131.

⁸¹ Azikiwe, *Renasant Africa*, p. 300.

⁸² Azikiwe, *Renasant Africa*, p. 67.

African local governance structures, which would make way eventually for the infusion of new ideas from spiritually balanced and socially regenerated New Africans.

Azikiwe rejected the synthesis-inspired liberalism proposed by the ARPS, Nana Ofori Atta, Danquah and de Graft Johnson. As Hunter notes, Azikiwe's brand of liberalism "advocated a transformation in social relationships, breaking down old hierarchies and offering new opportunities to the young, women, trade unions and educated elites."⁸³ The differing opinions and personality clashes notwithstanding, Azikiwe's position in the debates about Akan laws and customs amounted to a serious intellectual engagement with the problems of local governance and chieftaincy, providing a new perspective on the debate that questioned why young Africa should synthesise the local with the foreign. His anti-synthesis stance had a following, as the careers of many members of Nkrumah's CPP would later prove. Because Azikiwe's ideas prefigure Nkrumah's, his place among the interwar liberals — or his dissonance with them — although unmentioned in popular accounts, is valuable, as it underscores the cosmopolitan context and relevance of the debates. Azikiwe's prominence as a model for the likes of Nkrumah shows that this era cannot be treated as a period that is unconnected with the development of nationalism in Ghana. Indeed, if the haste with which the colonial administration moved in 1937 to deport Azikiwe is anything to go by, then he was an influencer whose impact on the Gold Coast deserves further study.⁸⁴

4.4 Reflagging the Debates About Akan Culture

The previous chapter noted how John Mensah Sarbah and his compatriots in the ARPS made the mistake of assuming an Akan homogeneity, and thereby began the Akanisation of Gold Coast customs and laws. Sarbah and Hayford formulated a theory of

⁸³ Hunter, "Languages of Freedom," p. 259.

⁸⁴ In 1936, Wallace-Johnson wrote an article titled "Has the African a God?" which was published by Nnamdi Azikiwe in the *African Morning Post*. The two were tried in court leading to a deportation order for Wallace-Johnson, while Azikiwe voluntarily departed from the Gold Coast in 1937. See: Leo Spitzer and Laray Denzer, "I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1973), pp. 413-452; L. H. Ofori Appiah, *The Life and Times of J. B. Danquah* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1974); Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1998), p. 33; Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Africa: 'How to Play the Game of Life,'* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 97n.

⁸⁴ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 15.

Akan uniformity in their writings that was propagated by the intellectuals of the interwar period. In his 1897 publication *Fanti Customary Laws*, Sarbah stated erroneously that “Fanti laws and customs apply to all Akans and Fantis, and to all persons whose mothers are of Akan or Fanti race.”⁸⁵ Hayford went beyond Sarbah’s exaggeration to invent an unvarying culture for all the peoples of southern Ghana, when he suggested that “in the Gold Coast proper we have, for example, the native states of Fanti, Ahanta, Insima, Ga, Wassa and others, having more or less the same laws and customs.”⁸⁶ The publications of de Graft Johnson and Danquah in 1928, while professing different beliefs about the Akan, reinforced notions of the uniformity of Akan customs, laws and chieftaincy practices, to the detriment of the ideology of synthesis.⁸⁷ As de Graft Johnson’s writing exemplifies, ARPS members in the 1920s envisaged the “amalgamation of the administrations of the countries.”⁸⁸ Accordingly, “when that auspicious moment arrives, Ashantees, Akims, Akwapims, Fantees, Gas, Ewes, Ahantas, and all, would be drawn together in one great Akan organisation, such as would have naturally evolved if Britain had not intervened too early in the history of the Gold Coast and Ashanti.”⁸⁹ While de Graft Johnson’s declaration of a utopian Akan nation and his suppositions about a monolithic Akan culture seem simplistic, his views are reminiscent of Sarbah’s and Hayford’s positions. It appears that it was only after the conquest of Ashanti in 1874, and its subsequent incorporation into the British Empire, that references to Akan unity became fashionable. Even so, until Sarbah and Hayford laid claim to Akan homogeneity, the interpretation of the Akan thesis differed from what it would become in the twentieth century. A. B. Ellis’s *Tshi-Speaking Peoples*, written in 1887, drew a distinction between the southern or coastal people, whom he identified as Fanti, and the northern or interior peoples, to whom he referred as the Akan.⁹⁰ Ellis made the claim that speakers of the “Tshi” (i.e. Twi) language “may be conveniently divided into two dialects, viz. that of the

⁸⁵ Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws*, p. 15.

⁸⁶ Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions*, p. 21.

⁸⁷ J. W. de Graft Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa: Thoughts of Young Africa Addressed to Young Britain*, 2. ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. 1971); J. B. Danquah (Odehve of Adadentem), *Gold Coast: Akan Laws and Customs and The Akim Abuakwa Constitution* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1928); ---, *An Epistle to the Educated Youngman of Akim Abuakwa* (Accra: Palladium, 1929).

⁸⁸ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 127.

⁸⁹ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 127.

⁹⁰ A. B. Ellis, *Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa: Their Religion, Manners, Customs, Laws, Language* (London: Chapman and Hall 1887).

northern tribes and that of the southern. The former is termed Akan, and the latter Fanti.”⁹¹ Earlier written works, for example C. C. Reindorf’s, acknowledged that there were differences among the southern peoples.⁹² Reindorf distinguished between the coastal Fanti and the Twi of the interior, and used the term “Akan” in reference to the Twi speakers alone, as in his citation of “the Twis (Akan) in the interior.”⁹³ Other accounts of the southern territories of modern-day Ghana, by Europeans like T. E. Bowdich,⁹⁴ followed the same practice of assessing the coastal and interior Akan as different peoples. The novelty in the ARPS intellectuals’ intervention lies in their refusal to denote the Akan of the interior as different from the coastal Akan.

One of the problems the material presents is that these debates become ensnared in what seems on the surface to be factional rivalry and personality squabbles. This has allowed scholars and textbook authors to dismiss the debates as pointless infighting, and thus, as evidence of the debaters’ irrelevance. Another problem with the material emanates from scholarly interpretations that overemphasise the dyad of African *versus* Western and coloniser *versus* colonised. In this binary approach, which is exemplified in the writings of Ayandele and Gocking,⁹⁵ advocacy for indirect rule by West Africans is an anomaly, and liberal imperialism is presented as an imposition of British colonial policy, not as a joint effort between African thinkers and like-minded British colonial counterparts. Thus, the story is lost of how, together with their chiefs, Gold Coast-based intellectuals — from Sarbah to Hayford and from de Graft Johnson to Azikiwe — thought through, debated and proposed ways to achieve liberal imperialism. As Gocking notes, there was a “gradual ‘Akanisation’ of the southern Gold Coast” that dominated the pre-colonial and colonial period, and to which scholars have paid scant attention.⁹⁶

⁹¹ Ellis, *Tshi-Speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa*, p. 306.

⁹² Rev. Carl Christian Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante: Based on Traditions and Historical Facts Comprising a Period of More Than Three Centuries from About 1500 to 1860* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1966).

⁹³ Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, p. 19.

⁹⁴ T. E. Bowdich, *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, reprint (London: Griffith and Farran, 1873).

⁹⁵ See also: Basil Davidson, *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (New York: Times Books, 1992) and Nana Kobina Nketsia V, *African Culture in Governance and Development: The Ghana Paradigm* (Accra and Cape Coast: Ghana Universities Press and Cape Coast University Press, 2013).

⁹⁶ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, pp. 3-5.

Focusing on imperialism alone leads to a one-sided narrative that misreads the times and the salient basis on which such thinkers anchored their propositions. At the very least, it does not take the agenda of these thinkers seriously.

The term “Akanisation” is used to specify three broad strands — the project of Sarbah et al., which homogenised the Akan on paper; the British colonial administration’s indirect rule project; and a socio-cultural historical process of homogenisation that predates both of these. The first strand is the special concern of this chapter. Gocking’s analysis of scholarly interpretations of the three broad Akanisation processes points to a collaborative effort by colonial subjects in the Gold Coast and their colonisers, who found such a homogenous Akan identity useful.⁹⁷ The effects of this homogenization were felt during the interwar period, as it hindered the practical application of synthesis, due to intellectual disagreements among the advocates of synthesis. Though Gocking recognises Akanisation as a problem, his oppositional framing of the period prevents his full appreciation of how assumptions of homogeneity made debates about Akan culture more difficult and complex.⁹⁸ The intellectuals agreed largely on what they should borrow from European liberalism, but disagreed vehemently about what constituted local customs and laws, as elements of an imagined homogenous precolonial Akan society. The cosmopolitan qualities of these debates emerge, as the intelligentsia incorporate global liberal ideas into arguments about how an ideal Gold Coast local governance structure should look.

As the debates over the 1925 Constitution and the 1927 NAO show, encumbered by the ARPS intellectuals’ flawed definition of Akan, the interwar intelligentsia embarked on a project to synthesise Akan ideas and liberal governance systems. The assumption of Akan homogeneity led the interwar intelligentsia to embark on a programme of reviving Akan culture, as opposed to inventing a more viable blend that took consideration of the variations in Akan cultures. This chapter has focused on the rich history of debates about local government, because the very same topic is in fact the subject of ongoing lively public debate in Ghana in the early twenty-first century. The research and analysis presented below details and describes the hitherto unexplored treasure-trove of printed

⁹⁷ Gocking, “Indirect Rule in the Gold Coast; Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*.

⁹⁸ Gocking, *Facing Two Ways*, pp. 3-5; Gocking, “Indirect Rule in the Gold Coast.”

matter published on the topic during the interwar years, to show that the debate then was a structured one that fits the characterisation of Gold Coast intellectual life established in the foregoing chapters. The interwar period is in effect a bridge. It is cosmopolitan, well aware of contemporary thinking in the wider world, and based on different ideas as to how to progress, resting on different opinions about Akan culture, political ideology, and global trends. Acknowledging these cosmopolitan qualities allows historians to see the continuity *forwards and backwards* from this period. If the period from 1887 to 1920 was marked by intellectuals and chiefs who imagined and suggested synthesis of Gold Coast customs with liberal tenets and railed against taxation without representation, the years from 1920 to 1946 were characterised by contestation over the practice of this synthesis. While the interwar intellectuals were more inventive than preservative, they were nevertheless locked in a static premise, which explains why they failed. This oddity of the period best illustrates the richness of Gold Coast intellectual history, which, in this case, unfolds from a strange tension.

4.5 Contestation over Akan Culture: The ARPS *versus* Nana Ofori Atta

This section is premised on the argument that a major difference between the thoughts of Sarbah, Hayford and the ARPS on one hand, and those of Nana Ofori Atta I and Danquah on the other, is that the first school interprets Akan culture from the perspective of the coast, while the second school takes its cue from Akyem (formerly Akim) Abuakwa, an Akan state situated in the interior. This is not a simplistic account of urban versus rural. It is about variations in Akan culture and its interpretation by an intelligentsia that is vested in overlooking those variations. The debate between the ARPS and Nana Ofori Atta I did not pit the lettered against the unlettered, as, by the standards of the time, the Omanhene of Akyem Abuakwa was well-educated. It was equally not between young and old, since, by the early 1920s, Nana Ofori Atta was already into his forties, while Hayford, who could be said to have started it all, was still in his mid-fifties. Although Sekyi and de Graft Johnson were in their thirties, they articulated a position that was supported by the older ARPS executives, such as Henry Van Hein. Nor was the debate strictly between chiefs and their subjects, as witnessed by the fact that some prominent chiefs, notably Nana Mbra of Cape Coast, sided with the ARPS. It was a debate that escalated because of fundamental differences between Akan

cultural practices of coastal and interior peoples. The leading intellectuals of the ARPS were mostly Akan from the coast, while Nana Ofori Atta and Danquah were Akan from the interior. De Graft Johnson's and Danquah's publications on the subject of how Akan culture could be a basis for indirect rule reflect the views of the majority on their respective sides of the debate. As shown in Danquah's report of Nana Ofori Atta's achievements, in the rural areas, chiefs were seen as the development agents who effected most improvements in the lives of their subjects. On the coast, the colonial authorities, and not the chiefs, were perceived as the source of development. What emerges from the views of de Graft Johnson and Danquah on the subject of Akan laws and customs, and their applicability to the indirect rule system, is a contest between different notions of Akan culture held by coastal and interior peoples.

De Graft Johnson's exploration of the struggles over Guggisberg's implementation of the indirect rule concept provides a contemporary first-hand account of the views of a cohort of the intelligentsia on this issue. For de Graft Johnson and the ARPS, there was a need to explain Akan culture, because the local conventional wisdom regarding the position, power, privileges and duties of the chief had been diluted by a European interpretation of monarchy. The ARPS intellectuals invoked Sarbah and Hayford to substantiate their claims. De Graft Johnson explained that the difference between the Akan system and that of the British was that in the Akan system "it is the people who exercise jurisdiction over the Chief by reserving to themselves through their representatives, the Councillors, the right to elect, reject, and eject Chiefs, and not vice-versa."⁹⁹ De Graft Johnson and his supporters interpreted the colonial administration's design for indirect rule as a deliberate attempt by the government and some chiefs, led by Nana Ofori Atta I, to engage in what Terence Ranger has called "the invention of tradition," in pretending that chiefs were endowed with legislative and judicial powers that they had in fact never possessed.

From the outset, Danquah styled himself as an authority on the subject, whose credentials were rooted in the fact that his version of Akan culture was "by an Akan from the purely African standpoint,"¹⁰⁰ and therefore untainted by "preconceived ideas or

⁹⁹ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁰⁰ Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*, p. 5.

theories of what Akan customs probably are or ought to be.”¹⁰¹ Danquah made a distinction between his work and that of Sarbah and Hayford, claiming that although Sarbah and Hayford were Akan, “Mr. Sarbah’s book teems with learned legal discussion and Mr. Casely Hayford’s with well-argued and eloquently presented political theories.”¹⁰² By contrast, Danquah claimed to offer “a plain and simple presentation of Akan customs by one from within.”¹⁰³ Unlike Sarbah and Hayford before him, or even de Graft Johnson, it appears that Danquah did not feel the need to make a case in his writings for the usefulness of Akan culture. He took that as given; his task was simply to show how Akan culture was practiced and how it embodied intrinsically all the liberal tenets the coastal intelligentsia espoused. Danquah touted the Akyem Abuakwa paramountcy as the epitome of Akan chieftaincy culture — complete with a constitution. He sought to represent the Akan governance system as democratic and as “[an] ancient, but by no means archaic, form of self-government.”¹⁰⁴ For Danquah, notwithstanding the controversy surrounding the constitutional and legislative enactments of Guggisberg and Nana Ofori Atta, the Akan governance system exemplified the “democracy of limited monarchy,” based on constitutions in which “the chiefs who govern are controlled and checked by the people who are governed.”¹⁰⁵ Danquah’s argument was that the chiefs and their people continued to enjoy the legislative and judicial powers they held before the two pieces of legislation were passed. He sought to mimic Sarbah and his *Fanti National Constitution*, in presenting the unwritten Akyem Abuakwa constitution as both authentic and the pre-existing embodiment of liberal tenets that could provide the legal underpinnings of a future Gold Coast local government system.

A major reason for the unresolved debate between the coastal and interior Akan thinkers is the nature of Akan chieftaincy. Akan chiefs derive their power from both God (Onyame or Nyame), the Supreme Being, and the people. As earthly representatives of God, chiefs were seen as personifying both godly and human attributes. An illustration of the deification of a chief is found in reference to Nana Ofori Atta I, after whose death in

¹⁰¹ Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*, p. 5.

¹⁰² Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*, p. 5.

¹⁰³ Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁴ Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁵ Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*, p. 20.

1943 it was announced to his subjects throughout the Akyem Abuakwa chiefdom that “Awurade ko Bansa,” meaning, “The Lord God has gone to Bansa.”¹⁰⁶ This reverence for chiefs applies to the Akan in general, but in the early twentieth century chiefs in the typically rural interior were more revered than coastal chiefs, on account of the central role chiefs played in the daily lives of rural people. By the 1940s, it could be said that the mystique surrounding most chiefs on the coast had been eroded, but many chiefs in the interior retained their super-human aura.

4.5.1 The ARPS Position as Expressed by J. W. de Graft Johnson

Although in his 1928 *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, de Graft Johnson’s stated purpose was to speak directly to British youth about his blueprint for an “African State Government on the Gold Coast under the aegis of the British,”¹⁰⁷ the book also weighs in on the contemporary discourse back at home in the Gold Coast, concerning “the position, influence and authority of the Chief.”¹⁰⁸ De Graft Johnson argued that Guggisberg had “missed the issue by confusing the status of the Chief (administrator) with that of the Begwafu (legislators),”¹⁰⁹ and he posited that chiefs had been granted more power than was traditional — at the expense of Begwafu — because the 1925 constitution and 1927 NAO were rooted in a misunderstanding of Gold Coast laws and customs regarding the institution of chieftaincy. Reiterating the position shared by Sarbah and Hayford, de Graft Johnson explained that although the chief was the head of the Oman,¹¹⁰ he was not an authority on his own. Ultimate authority in the Akan native state was represented by the Begwafu or Oman Council.¹¹¹ Therefore, de Graft Johnson wrote, “The Chief is *primus inter pares* and exercises jurisdiction strictly in accordance with the wishes of the Council.”¹¹² But “it was the province of the people, through their representatives, the

¹⁰⁶ Awurade is an Akan appellation for God, meaning literally, “the owner of all things.” Bansa is the mythical citadel of Akyem chiefs in the afterlife.

¹⁰⁷ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 96.

¹⁰⁸ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 35.

¹⁰⁹ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 107.

¹¹⁰ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 35. As explained by Johnson, “Oman means state or metaphorically, the people; Ohene (or Ohin) means King or metaphorically ‘Head.’ Hence Omanhin, the king or head of the state or people.”

¹¹¹ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 35.

¹¹² Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, pp. 74.

Councillors, to introduce legislation and say what law shall direct their conduct.”¹¹³

De Graft Johnson contended that membership of the Oman Council was extended “on account of personal character and intelligence; not every councillor is a stool-holder, nor is every stool-holder a councillor.”¹¹⁴ From his perspective, the intelligent subjects of a chief ought to have been allowed to participate meaningfully in governance. If so, then educated Gold Coasters, many of whom sat on chiefs’ councils anyway, ought to represent their people on the Legislative Council. On the basis of their argument that chiefs did not make laws for their subjects, de Graft Johnson and his ARPS compatriots concluded that it was improper for Nana Ofori Atta and other chiefs to have drafted the 1927 NAO or to sit on the Legislative Council.¹¹⁵ Consequently, he demanded, “the seats of six Provincial Members (who are Paramount Chiefs) should be vacated and filled ... from elections by the State Councils.”¹¹⁶ ARPS members like Sekyi, who did not agree fully with Hayford’s *volte-face*, challenged the appointment of Nana Ofori Atta and other chiefs, such as Nene Mate Kole I, to the Legislative Council, on the basis that it was illegal for chiefs even to debate the motions that would be tabled, since they were barred by tradition from speaking in public. Assertions such as this were presented by some debaters as proof that the powers of chiefs were circumscribed by higher powers derived from other sources.

As did Sarbah and Hayford before him, de Graft Johnson injected his liberal beliefs about representative government into his conception of local governance, hence his ideal African State Government comprised “three distinct and separate bodies:”¹¹⁷

1. The Executive Committee, which would be the Cabinet, responsible for the formulation of policy and the initiation of legislation.
2. The Legislative [Assembly], with the rights and privileges of a Lower House, by which all legislation should be approved.
3. The House of [Chiefs], with powers to advise the Executive, and to amend or delay legislation.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 36.

¹¹⁴ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, pp. 74-75.

¹¹⁵ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 84fn.

¹¹⁶ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, pp. 105.

¹¹⁷ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 112.

¹¹⁸ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 112.

De Graft Johnson's ideal government was to be a synthesis of his notions of liberalism, the British monarchical system and his understanding of Akan chieftaincy. Hunter's thesis is that this model was both communal and constitutional. It is also evident that de Graft Johnson recognised chiefs as leaders, because he gave them a supervisory role in his synthesised governance structure. However, he wanted Gold Coast chiefs to perform functions close to those of the British House of Lords. Thus, for de Graft Johnson, "the House of Chiefs would act in an advisory capacity in matters of legislation. It should be restricted to Paramount Chiefs, who would take seats thereon or appoint representatives thereto, as by right."¹¹⁹ What de Graft Johnson and his compatriots wanted therefore was not absolute leadership of the local governance structure by non-chiefs, but the participation of non-chiefs in the leadership. They also seem to have had a fixed notion of customary practice, judging by their insistence that the emerging governance structure should not permit the colonial government — or chiefs — to change customs.

Like Hayford, de Graft Johnson envisioned the Gold Coast as the nucleus of a united British West Africa, as can be seen in his governance model:

The president would be the head of this wide stretching Republic, and the State Councils the medium of popular representation. In due time, the Northern Territories may stretch out their hands and join the group. And where does British West Africa come in? Her place is sure and reserved. With progress in Native constitutions, Education, and Wealth, the citizens of these territories, the land of radiant energy and sunshine, would be welded into one federal unit, each colony retaining its individual local autonomy but joining together in one unbroken chain to glory!¹²⁰

In his examination of *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, Korang sees de Graft Johnson, a protégé of Hayford, as "the modern African who has gained the social wherewithal and cosmopolitan credentials to acquire visibility and speak in a worldly context."¹²¹ Thus, de Graft Johnson's concerns were part of a "popular nativity"¹²² that represented a "middle

¹¹⁹ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, pp. 101.

¹²⁰ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 127.

¹²¹ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, pp. 223-224.

¹²² Korang, *Writing Ghana*, pp. 223-225.

class.” Korang comments that, in contrast to Nkrumah, the writer-intellectuals of note, such as de Graft Johnson and Hayford, were “no revolutionary anti-imperialists.”¹²³ He sees the debate over the Native Administration as peripheral to “the fiery rhetoric of protest,” and therefore endorses the conventional reading of history — that the interwar years were a time of conservatism and passivity.¹²⁴ Korang trivialises the contested process that de Graft Johnson engaged in, and its continuing centrality to policymaking regarding local governance and rural development in Ghana, because of the privileged position he accords so-called radical nationalism. In contrast, Gocking’s examination of this period in *Facing Two Ways* shows that these tensions of empire and the struggles over the institution of chieftaincy were significant, if only for their invention of tradition. Gocking shows that the phenomenon of invention was widespread on the coast, engaged in by the educated and the uneducated alike. By his account, the attempts to invent tradition exposed the weaknesses of the colonial order, even as they reinforced the pre-colonial past.

Paradoxically, the ARPS members seem to have bought into the very proposal that they were seeking to undermine. In many ways, Sarbah’s fears about “the danger of reducing Customary Laws to a condition of fixity” were materialised through the debates about local government.¹²⁵ The intelligentsia were applying a fixed notion of customary practice in their argument about the Oman Council to censure chiefs who supported indirect rule, berating the chiefs for pursuing flexibility in their interpretation of custom. De Graft Johnson’s liberal constitutionalist group desired a connection to the Gold Coast’s pre-colonial past, but the fact that they engaged in these debates with the representatives of the very institution they wanted to protect demonstrated contested notions of variability and invariability. As de Graft Johnson articulated, they cherished their connections to their pre-colonial past, insisting on the invariability of Akan laws and customs, yet they desired variability in the form of the introduction of liberal tenets into the emerging local governance structure.

¹²³ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 225.

¹²⁴ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, p. 225.

¹²⁵ J. M. Sarbah, *Fanti Customary Laws: A Brief Introduction to the Principles of the Native Laws and Customs of the Fanti and Akan Districts of the Gold Coast with a Report of Some Cases Thereon Decided in the Law Courts*, 3ed. (London: Frank Cass 1968), p. xi.

Identifying with the liberal views of John Stuart Mill, de Graft Johnson opined that “the class government, as represented in the Crown Colony System, may be good, but it is static. Self-government may start from bad beginnings, as Stuart Mill avers, but it is dynamic and progressive. It brings development to a standard that the static cannot reach.”¹²⁶ In effect, de Graft Johnson and his allies saw Guggisberg’s system of indirect rule as static, although they accused the new system of changing customary practice and therefore being “untraditional.” Their brand of indirect rule, of the liberal constitutional variety, sought limits on the invention of tradition. At the same time as they argued for fixity, they wanted political changes. Apparent disagreements notwithstanding, both de Graft Johnson and the chiefs, as the liberal constitutionalist group, wanted change that preserved some aspects of the pre-colonial past, while taking into account new political and social realities.

The position staked out by de Graft Johnson in the debate did not go unchallenged. As exemplified by the publications of Danquah that are analysed below, there was a section of Gold Coasters from the interior who supported the 1925 Constitution and the 1927 NAO.

4.5.2 Nana Ofori Atta’s Position as Expressed by J. B. Danquah

J. B. Danquah joined the heated debates about Akan laws and customs, penning four books — *Gold Coast: Akan Laws and Customs* and *The Akim Abuakwa Handbook*, published in 1928; *An Epistle to the Educated Youngman of Akim Abuakwa*, published in 1929; and *Akan Doctrine of God*, published in 1944.¹²⁷

Danquah’s *Gold Coast: Akan Laws and Customs* and *Akim Abuakwa Handbook* were written to affirm the importance of the stool occupied by Nana Ofori Atta I, and thus his authority, and also to document what an authentic Akan chieftaincy system looked like. Danquah stated that his *Gold Coast: Akan Laws and Customs* was “a fairly accurate

¹²⁶ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. 112.

¹²⁷ J. B. Danquah, *Gold Coast: Akan Laws and Customs and the Akim Abuakwa Constitution* (London: Routledge and Sons 1928); ---, *Akim Abuakwa Handbook* (London: Forster Groom, 1928); ---, *An Epistle to the Educated Youngman of Akim Abuakwa* (Accra: Palladium, 1929); ---, *The Akan Doctrine of God: A Fragment of Gold Coast Ethics and Religion*, 2.ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1968).

description of Akan customs as witnessed in practice.”¹²⁸ Danquah had done rigorous academic work and was acquainted with the literature on his subject, noting, for example, that before writing this book, he had studied the publications of a number of international authorities on the subject, “including Mary Kingsley’s *West African Studies*, Ellis’s *Two-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, and Bosman’s *Letters*.”¹²⁹ Nevertheless, he was insistent that his intimate personal knowledge of Akan laws and customs was superior to any interpretation arising from scholarship in the field. Yet, Danquah endorsed the flawed theory of Akan homogeneity in his book, even as he promoted the Akyem Abuakwa brand as the quintessence of unadulterated Akan culture, asserting that “Akim Abuakwa is a democracy of limited monarchy, controlled by three councils of hereditary and elected chiefs and councillors.”¹³⁰

In *Akim Abuakwa Handbook*, Danquah hoped to dispel what he considered to be a false narrative about the status and authority of the Omanhene of Akyem Abuakwa, as well as the widespread public perception that Nana Ofori Atta I had acted independently of his subjects and courtiers in championing the passage of the 1927 Native Administration Ordinance. Danquah lauded Nana Ofori Atta as a transformative leader, who cherished and nurtured consensus-building and teamwork, and he narrated how the NAO had ostensibly been drafted jointly by the Chiefs of the Eastern Province, under Nana Ofori Atta’s leadership, but not by the Omanhene alone. Danquah claimed too that thanks to its leader, Akyem Abuakwa had sponsored some chiefs from the Eastern Province as members of the ARPS. He credited Nana Ofori Atta’s effective, progressive leadership for transforming Akyem Abuakwa from obscurity into one of the leading states in the Gold Coast Colony. Throughout the *Handbook*, Akyem Abuakwa was presented as a well-organised, functional indigenous state that, under Nana Ofori Atta’s leadership, had embraced progressive changes such as record-keeping, the establishment of schools and scholarships, cash-crop agriculture and responsible mining. Danquah portrayed Nana Ofori Atta in this publication, as in all the others, as inventive and non-preservationist, in the sense of not being overly protective of outmoded cultural practices

¹²⁸ Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*, p. 4.

¹²⁹ Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*, p. 5.

¹³⁰ Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*, p. 20.

of the precolonial past. Thus, in Danquah's image-making, Nana Ofori Atta was the personification of synthesis.

In his *Epistle*, Danquah advanced his counter to the main thrust of the Sekyi-de Graft Johnson group's argument. The *Epistle* is styled primarily as a manifesto, with the secondary objective of rallying the support of the Abuakwa people behind their leader in his public disagreement with the rump of the ARPS. Danquah advocates a pro synthesis position. He contends that "we in Abuakwaland are prepared to accept the conditions of advance imposed upon us by enlightened culture, but we are not prepared for a wholesale sacrifice or disregard of the basic principles of our traditional forms of rule and government."¹³¹ Danquah argued that the ARPS's "objections are wide off [*sic*] the mark, ignorant, and for the most part indicative of a primitive mentality still lurking behind the minds of some of our *soi-disant* leaders in the Colony."¹³² He stated that reports that the proposed native administration reforms expanded the executive and juridical powers of chiefs were baseless in the first place because the colonial system had vested all such powers in the British Crown.¹³³ Secondly, he argued, because the people had the right to destool chiefs, there was already a check on any possible abuse of their powers.¹³⁴ Danquah submitted further that as the NAO granted the Chief's Council as much authority as it did the chief himself, the coastal uproar over the purported marginalisation of the Oman Council was unfounded.¹³⁵ Far from enlarging chiefly authority, Danquah argued, the NAO had either limited or entirely revoked some of the chiefs' pre-existing "major and capital powers,"¹³⁶ including the power to impose fines in the native courts, the power of arrest, and the ultimate power over the life and death of their subjects in the form of capital punishment.¹³⁷ Unsurprisingly, one of Danquah's "*soi-disant* leaders" dismissed these arguments out of hand.¹³⁸ Sekyi retorted that the customary powers of the chief were far less broad than Danquah had made them out to be, and insisted that chiefs had indeed gained more power than they were entitled to. Ofori-Atta and the members of

¹³¹ Danquah, *Epistle*, p. 2.

¹³² Danquah, *Epistle*, p. 17.

¹³³ Danquah, *Epistle*, p. 17.

¹³⁴ Danquah, *Epistle*, p. 17.

¹³⁵ Danquah, *Epistle*, p. 19.

¹³⁶ Danquah, *Epistle*, p. 19.

¹³⁷ Danquah, *Epistle*, pp. 19-20.

¹³⁸ Baku, "Kobina Sekyi," p. 375.

the JPC exposed themselves to such contests by their participation in the indirect rule system. The Asantehene, Prempeh II, was not on the JPC but the institution of chieftaincy in Asante experienced similar challenges. The point is that the indirect rule system was the preceptor to widespread contestations.

Events in the annexed territory of Asante from 1931 to 1937 demonstrated how chiefs had become simultaneously more and less powerful under the NAO. In Ashanti, the educated class were divided into two camps: the Asante Kotoko Society, which supported a restoration of the Ashanti Confederacy, and a dissident group, the Friends of Ashanti Freedom, founded by a section of the educated Asante youth to protest the restoration of the Ashanti Confederacy.¹³⁹ Under the leadership of Owusu Sekyere Agyeman, described in official circles as a political agitator, the Friends, like their coastal peers, were engaged in battle on two fronts. On the one hand, they did not want to empower the institution of chieftaincy to the detriment of their liberal democratic values; on the other hand, they professed to be watchdogs against the invention of tradition. Shortly after the restoration of the Ashanti Confederacy in 1935, the Friends allied themselves with a group of dissident Asante chiefs and initiated proceedings in 1937 for the destoolment of the Asantehene Prempeh II, on the grounds that he was circumcised, which was a taboo among Asante royals. The destoolment petition was dismissed, but Owusu Sekyere Agyeman and a number of the Friends protested the ruling in the West African Court of Appeal on the grounds that the Asantehene had erred in holding himself up as a “Native Authority,” since the Native Authority (Ashanti) Ordinance clearly designated the Ashanti Confederacy Council, and not the Asantehene personally, as the native authority in Ashanti.¹⁴⁰ Owusu Sekyere Agyeman and his Friends resorted to the West African Court of Appeals. In the court of public opinion, they found an ally for their cause initially in the *West African Sentinel*'s Wallace-Johnson, a Sierra Leonean journalist working in the Gold Coast, who canvassed support for them within the anti-chief

¹³⁹ For details of this movement and its activities see: Ivor Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: The Structure and Evolution of a Political Order* (Cambridge, New York, NY, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 124. For full details of the trial and the anti-Chief group see Mary Owusu, *Prempeh II and the Making of Modern Asante* (Accra: Woeli Publishing, 2009).

¹⁴⁰ For a copy of the Ordinance see: K. A. Busia, rpt, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti: A study of the Influence of Contemporary Social Changes on Ashanti Political Institutions* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), p. 222.

constituency.¹⁴¹ In its ruling, the West African Court of Appeals determined that Prempeh II had indeed erred, but that he had done so on the advice of his lawyers and the Chief Justice, and therefore could not be charged as an impostor. Nevertheless, the Court ruled in favour of Owusu Sekyere Agyeman and the dissidents. This episode highlighted the problems of ambiguity that attended the transition from the old customary practice to the new native governance régime, namely the NAO's constitutionally appropriate recognition of stools, as opposed to individual chiefs, as native authorities.

Danquah's vested interest in promoting the idea of a homogenous Akan culture is exhibited in his 1944 publication, *Akan Doctrine of God*. For Yaw Twumasi, Danquah's concept of Akan homogeneity rests on Danquah's conviction that the Akan were "a nation as well as a brotherhood. And if this is true, then the Akan should accept one moral standard."¹⁴² *Akan Doctrine of God* was written to correct what Danquah saw as the wrong notions about Akan religion presented in the works of Robert Rattray, an anthropologist employed by the colonial authority to document Ashanti culture, and of the German missionary Diedrich Westermann. Danquah sought also to contribute to the knowledge abroad of the Akan that was exemplified by the works of J. G. Christaller.¹⁴³ He contrasted his knowledge as an insider with that of Rattray in *Ashanti*,¹⁴⁴ and opined that some of Rattray's conclusions about Ashanti's political institutions and land tenure system seemed to "betray an incomplete grasp of the real nature of our non-religious institutions."¹⁴⁵

While Danquah sought to explain Akan laws and customs to the Gold Coast people and to British colonial officials, he also set himself up as an authority on the subject of Akan culture in order to contest the ARPS's claims about the precolonial governance culture of the Akan. Danquah addressed the subject of Akan government and law by reference to the governance practices of the interior Akan peoples. He focused on illuminating the authority, duties and entitlements of the various personalities both within

¹⁴¹ Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 124.

¹⁴² Twumasi, "J. B. Danquah," p. 83.

¹⁴³ Danquah, *Akan Doctrine of God*, pp. 5-18; Robert Sutherland Rattray, G. T. Bennett, Vernon Blake, H. Dudley Buxton, R. R. Marett, and C. G. Seligman, *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927).

¹⁴⁴ Robert Sutherland Rattray, *Ashanti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923).

¹⁴⁵ Danquah, *Akan Laws and Customs*, p. 5.

Akyem Abuakwa and among Akan royalty more generally. Gocking captures, in a hilarious but yet sobering account, how competition for customary positions in Cape Coast assumed a frenzied pitch with the publication of Danquah's *Akan Laws and Customs*.¹⁴⁶ As Gocking notes, an unintended outcome of Danquah's publication was the adoption of hitherto unknown stool titles by Cape Coast people, as ambitious personalities combed through the book to find justification for their claims to chiefly office based on records of lineage that sometimes included fictitious ancestors.¹⁴⁷ This mini-trend demonstrated both the fluidity of tradition and the spirit of inventiveness within Gold Coast society. It also revealed how the opportunity for political participation presented by the indirect rule system advanced mendacity on the coast.

Danquah's spirited support of the 1925 Constitution and the NAO must, however, not be construed as bereft of complexity. Although he maintained his belief in Akan homogeneity throughout his intellectual and political career, as will be showed in the next chapter, he eventually modified his stance on the legislative powers of chiefs in a future self-governed Gold Coast, bringing them into alignment with those of the ARPS intellectuals. This switch in Danquah's consistent support for Nana Ofori Atta's brand of community-based hierarchical government was prompted by amendments to the NAO in 1931 and 1936, which Nana Ofori Atta endorsed. Danquah joined then with other non-chiefs in protesting Nana Ofori Atta's support for these amendments, and resigned from his position as Secretary to the Abuakwa State Council in 1936, after being accused of insulting Ofori Atta.¹⁴⁸ Although peace was brokered between them before Nana Ofori Atta's death in 1943, the political partnership between the two brothers never returned to its pre-1935 zenith.

4.5.3 Summary of ARPS versus Nana Ofori Atta I

Nationalist history interprets the contestations over Akan culture that occurred in the interwar years as a leadership struggle between chiefs and their educated subjects. This interpretation should be revised to accept at face value the ARPS's own account that it

¹⁴⁶ Gocking, "Indirect Rule," p. 439.

¹⁴⁷ Gocking, "Indirect Rule," pp. 421-446.

¹⁴⁸ Richard Rathbone, *Murder and Politics in Colonial Ghana* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 1993), p. 50; Ofosu-Appiah, *The Life and Times of J. B. Danquah*, pp. 29, 34.

was not involved in a leadership contest. The challenge the ARPS intellectuals mounted against the changes that were occurring in the institution of chieftaincy was principled. They had contested the appointment of Nene Sir Azu Mate Kole I to the Legislative Council in 1911 because they believed in principle that a chief must never debase his high office by engaging in the mundanity of retail politics.¹⁴⁹ It can be assumed that they applied the same principle in their reaction to the appointment of Nana Ofori Atta I to the Legislative Council in 1916. Tenkorang notes that traditionally, a chief did not attend meetings outside his own jurisdiction, but was represented by an emissary, who would report the outcome.¹⁵⁰ Robert Addo-Fening, who has examined Akyem Abuakwa's stool history, is emphatic that, based on his findings, the 1927 NAO and earlier Acts that regulated chieftaincy — the Chiefs' Ordinance of 1904 and the NJO of 1910 — altered chieftaincy as an institution.¹⁵¹ Rathbone and Arhin Brempong are in agreement that the institution experienced significant changes throughout the colonial and post-colonial eras.

The ARPS intellectuals witnessed these changes and this accounts for their strident disapproval. In the end, all of the debaters at this critical moment of trial wanted to synthesise the positive attributes of Akan ruling systems with liberal ideas about representation, but they could not articulate an authoritative common position because of irreconcilable differences over the position, privileges and powers of chiefs. Consequently, their joint project of indirect rule, which was premised on a synthesis of Akan culture with liberal ideals such as the democratic franchise, faltered at the crucial implementation stage. However, the rich debate about chieftaincy and Akan culture continues to be a legacy of the debaters' times that has ongoing relevance to local government in Ghana. One result of the unresolved debate, which frames the discussion for the next chapter, was that in the post-WWII era, the project of synthesis was phased out by liberals, who adopted the nation-state ideal and promoted individual rights over community-centred and hierarchical forms of government.

¹⁴⁹ Interview with Elsie Arata Sowah (Mrs), granddaughter of Manya Konor Nene Sir Azu Mate Kole I.

¹⁵⁰ Tenkorang, "The Gold Coast Aborigines" p. 141.

¹⁵¹ Robert Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa 1700-1943 from Ofori Panin to Sir Ofori Atta* (Trondheim: NTNU 1997), p. 278.

4.6 Conclusion

While scholarship focused on the nation-state project dismisses the interwar period as a time of inaction, other scholars depict the interwar intellectuals as having been constantly engaged with the problem of becoming modern. This chapter departed from the dominant method that seeks evidence of either the nation-state project or the modernisation project. It looked at how the interwar intellectuals and their chiefs, armed with the research of the earlier ARPS intellectuals Sarbah and Hayford, found ways to liaise via print with colonial policymakers, in the implementation of a shared inventive project that aimed at synthesising chieftaincy and liberal ideals. At its core was a political and cultural project launched by Gold Coast-based intellectuals and their chiefs, drawing inspiration from both British liberalism and their assumption of the homogeneity of Akan laws and customs. One result of their efforts was the promotion of the Akan model of local governance as the representation of Gold Coast indigeneity. For a time, their vision was the driving force of concrete planning for the future.

As the Gold Coast public engaged with questions about the institution of chieftaincy, its powers and its limits, J. W. de Graft Johnson, Kobina Sekyi, J. B. Danquah and Nnamdi Azikiwe all aired their views in print, and in so doing shaped the local governance of the Gold Coast. This critical moment in the colony's history, fraught with controversy, influenced the implementation of indirect rule. Dominant perspectives, as represented in the works of Mantena and Mamdani, define indirect rule exclusively in terms of British engineering. This chapter has argued that indirect rule was in fact the shared agenda of a wider liberal community, comprising both colonisers and colonised. When viewed as the realisation of a pro-synthesis intellectual project, with both Gold Coast and British actors, the binary axis of African *versus* Western gives way to the real issue that was at stake for all the historical actors — how to make colonial rule more effective by means of synthesis. Although the Gold Coast writer-intellectuals exhibited a degree of conservatism, the label can be misleading because they were equally supportive of change by means of blending chieftaincy with representative liberal democracy — the local with the foreign. Thus, these so-called “conservative nationalists” were in fact liberal-minded cosmopolitan nationalists, whose radical attempt to superimpose a synthesized local government structure on the fluid colonial configuration of the Gold

Coast during the interwar period failed only on account of their misperception of Akan culture as homogeneous. Ultimately, the interwar years were a time of neither conservative nationalism nor passivity; they were a time of active engagement by a cosmopolitan nationalist intelligentsia with the implementation of indirect rule, a policy they understood as a synthesis of Akan culture with their liberal ideals.

CHAPTER 5

Rethinking the Monopoly of Radical Nationalism (1946-1958)

5.1 Introduction

The idea that the conservatism of chiefs and the intelligentsia gave way to the radicalism of commoners and young men in the post-1945 era has been central to the Grand Narrative of Ghanaian nationalism.¹ Do the binaries of radical/conservative and resistor/collaborator capture completely and adequately the story of the post-1945 writer-intellectuals and their engagement with the colonial system? Do the activities of the so-called radicals of the post-WWII period constitute a complete break with the interwar writer-intellectuals? What are we to make of the repertoire of strategies that Gold Coasters employed during this transition in order to engage with the colonial system? And what separates the vaunted radicals of the CPP from their much-criticised conservative opponents?

The CPP is presented as Pan-African and pro-synthesis because of Kwame Nkrumah's leanings toward Black Atlantic concepts about Africa and his association with socialists such as George Padmore, W. E. B. Dubois and I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson. The CPP is also labelled as anti-chief and anti-tribalism² because of its caustic criticism of chiefs, most especially after the founding of the National Liberation Movement, which was backed by prominent chiefs in the cocoa-producing areas of Asanteman and Akyem Abuakwa. Another belief about the CPP that stems from its rhetoric is that it was

¹ The following are examples of publications that perpetuate the Ghana Grand Narrative. David E. Apter, *The Gold Coast in Transition*, 1955 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959); Thomas Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (GB: Frederick Muller 1956); F. M. Bourret, *Ghana: The Road to Independence 1919-1957* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press 1960); A. Adu Boahen, *Topics in West African History* (London: Longman, 1960); Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana 1946-1960* (London: Oxford University Press 1964); F. K. Buah, *An Elementary History for Schools. Book One: Ghana* (London: Macmillan, 1967, 1968); Adu Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longman, 1975); F. K. Buah, *A History of Ghana* (1980; rpt. Oxford: Macmillan Education, 1998); J. K. Fynn & R. Addo-Fening, *History for Senior Secondary Schools* (Accra: Safeway Printing Works Ltd., 1991); Vincent Okyere, *Ghana: A Historical Survey* (Accra: Vinojab Publications, 2000).

² The word tribalism is used because it formed a basis for CPP propaganda. Otherwise, this dissertation identifies with scholarship that challenges the use of tribe in reference to Africans. See: Chris Lowe, *Talking About Tribes: Moving from Stereotypes to Analysis* (Washington: Africa Policy Information Centre 1997).

trenchantly anti-colonial.

These dominant accounts present the celebrated radicalism of Nkrumah and the Convention People's Party as a complete break from the conservative past mediated by chiefs and the old guard interwar intelligentsia. The formation of the CPP in 1949 under Nkrumah's leadership is posited as the historic moment of delineation between conservatism (older folk, tradition bound, territorial) and radicalism (youth, modernist, Pan-African).³ Austin notes for example that by 1950 "earlier arguments for and against indirect rule, for and against the chiefs and the intelligentsia, were no longer heard: they belonged to a seemingly vanished colonial order."⁴ In the narrative, the "radical commoners' party"⁵ (CPP) is accorded the status of a nationalist party engaged in an anti-colonial struggle, while its opponents are portrayed as factions with local interests who were in collaboration with the colonial system.⁶ Thus, Austin states, and other scholars repeat, variants of the observation that the colonial administrators were "too closely allied with the chiefs and the intelligentsia; and — like them — they became victims of not only a national, but a social, revolution."⁷ Accordingly, radicalism is touted as the new way in which Gold Coasters contested colonial rule under Nkrumah's leadership. However, his uncompleted Ph.D. thesis on Akan culture reveals that, in the early 1940s at least, Nkrumah himself had one foot in the project to underscore the viability of Akan culture, before he shifted definitively to his known radical leanings.⁸

Austin recognises that the new ways in which so-called common people contested colonial rule had their roots in the intellectual and activist programs of so-called conservatives, yet he ignores or misreads this insight. Austin notes for example that "the Ghana nationalist movement had its roots in the villages, among the commoners of the native authorities, many years before it found expression in a national People's Party;"⁹

³ Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change*, p. 170. For Boahen what was at stake was the generation gap between the intelligentsia and professional elite on one side and an unvariegated youth on the other side.

⁴ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 91.

⁵ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 27; See also: Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, pp. 161-168.

⁶ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 29; Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa*, pp. 156-161.

⁷ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 27; Buah, *A History of Ghana*, pp. 156-157; Boahen, *Ghana: Evolution and Change*, pp. 166-172.

⁸ Marika Sherwood, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Years Abroad 1935-1947* (Accra: Freedom Publications, 1996), pp. 62-65. Nkrumah's draft PhD thesis was titled: *Mind and Thought in Primitive Society: A Study in Ethno-Philosophy with Special Reference to the Akan Peoples of the Gold Coast, West Africa*.

⁹ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 1.

yet he nevertheless asserts the apparent contradiction of seeing the CPP program as sudden, unforeseen, and therefore new and radical.¹⁰ This limited view of Ghana's past has been antithetical to a textured historical analysis. As noted in the previous chapter, the often-overlooked years from 1920 to 1945, loosely the interwar years, were full of debates and events pregnant with ideas about how to transform the Crown Colony system, all of which culminated in a succession of failed attempts to institute indirect rule. The failure of indirect rule in turn opened up new questions about the Africanisation of local government in the Gold Coast Colony, but it was not a clean break from earlier attempts. It grew from the past, not away from the past. This is because in the cosmopolitan environment of the Gold Coast, the nationalists continued to look to liberalism for inspiration. Thus, they persisted with the demands for representative government that were started by the ARPS and continued by the interwar nationalists — for elections, a more robust Legislative Assembly and eventual self-government along the model of the British Dominions.

The category of radical nationalism simplifies the complexities of the nationalist landscape of Ghana from 1945. The effects of this simplification are that the numerous contentious debates about whether to achieve self-government by proclamation or negotiation have been lost. Debates such as those about federalism, regionalism and a unitary government remain unexplored because the grand narrative rebukes the opponents of Nkrumah's socialist agenda, while granting him hero status. Having lost all the elections of the 1950s, Nkrumah's opponents remained rejected; judged wrong, politically and morally; and described as uninterested in the Gold Coast's drive to attain independence. Yet, a close study of published eyewitness accounts given by leading intellectuals such as Danquah and Nkrumah highlights a more nuanced version than the perspectives and memories derived from the grand narrative. This chapter proposes that the widely accepted division of nationalists into so-called radical nationalists and conservative nationalists is to blame for the homoarchic, exclusionary and binary grand narrative.

This chapter looks at the statements and actions of CPP, UGCC and other

¹⁰ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 1.

opponents of the Nkrumah regime from 1940s through the 1950s when the idea of exclusive CPP radical victory rests most thickly. Two related arguments are made in this selective treatment of the period: that the CPP was not consistently radical and distinct compared to opposition and other actors, and that much of what the CPP did, or stated and believed in fits within the Gold Coast broad liberal/ cosmopolitan tradition rather than being a radical break. In some aspects of their dealings the so-called radicals were rather patient, and they exhibited sentiments and promulgated laws that were inconsistent with accepted views about them as pan-African and African centred. In many instances Nkrumah and the CPP were not pan-African and were anti-synthesis in philosophy and outlook. The sweeping narrative about the triumph of radical nationalism necessarily forgets the numerous times so-called radicals cooperated with colonial authority. Consequently, scholarship about the evolution of nationalism in Ghana has undermined the quest for a more textured narrative by obscuring the complexities that characterised the choices and compromises made by the historical actors of the post-WWII era. Yet the so-called conservatives were as anti-colonial as their so-called radical counterparts, and at times even more radical, as shown below in their demands for self-government. Additionally, the nationalism of the so-called conservatives and radicals is problematised by the ways in which both tendencies were driven by their cosmopolitan outlook to engage with liberalism as espoused in Europe and the Americas.

The CPP and its opponents¹¹ were indeed British Fabian-type welfare liberals, therefore cosmopolitan, but they diverged in their brands of liberalism after 1954. While the CPP's liberal agenda shifted away from this welfare orientation of 1951-1957 and reached a decidedly socialist orientation by 1960, its opponents' agenda remained welfare oriented. The differences emanated from the fact that Nkrumah and the CPP "sought to highlight the common cultural and political history of Africa;"¹² while a majority of the opponents of Nkrumah's agenda pointed to an organic cultural and political past. Unlike the rooted synthesis proposed by his so-called conservative opponents, Nkrumah makes

¹¹ Northern Peoples Party (NPP), was the second largest in terms of numbers in the Legislative Assembly, Moslem Association Party (MAP), NLM, Togoland Congress, Anlo Youth Organisation, Ghana Congress Party, Ghana Nationalist Party (GNP) and Ghana Action Party (GAP) as well as the Oman Party, the Federated Youth Organisation (FYO) and Wassaw Youth Association (WYA).

¹² Fuller, "*Civitatis Ghaniensis Conditor*," p. 522.

general assertions about African culture. Perhaps due to his association with the Black Atlantic world with its African American homogenisation of Africa, Nkrumah, as he asserted his socialist beliefs, began to promote a monolithic Africa, seemingly undifferentiated by culture or race. Nkrumah notes of his national agenda in 1963 that Ghana was geared towards becoming “a welfare state based upon African socialist principles.”¹³ Then in 1964, he contends in *Consciencism* that African society was historically egalitarian; thus, Africa was best suited to socialism.¹⁴ As noted by John Munro in his examination of African-American liberals and their entanglements with their African liberal counterparts, in the decolonisation process, “the liberal activists [African-Americans and Africans] at once undermined and abetted Empire.”¹⁵ Munro places the anti-colonial front within its transnational networks of America, Europe and Africa, as does Penny von Eschen,¹⁶ and establishes the instrumental role of the alliance of these Black internationalists as they forged transnational opposition to European and US imperialism. Munro highlights the liberalisms of leftist-minded intellectuals as he expands our knowledge of Empire-inspired liberalism, and of the aspirations and networks of cosmopolitan African nationalists such as Nkrumah. What emerges from studies of the networks that include African Americans and Africans as anti-colonial counterparts is the marginalisation of the voices of British-type cosmopolitan liberals who were not leftist leaning, such as the ARPS and interwar liberals mentioned in earlier chapters.

By affirming their cosmopolitan qualities and complicating the categories traditionally used to define them, this chapter argues that nationalists of the post-1945 era are not easily labelled, because they adopted and adapted tactics to suit the moment. Additionally, like their pre-war forerunners, the post-1945 intellectuals were both cosmopolitan and nationalist, not one or the other. In fact, it could be argued that what was radical about the much vaunted CPP nationalists was that they instituted a so-called African-centred form of government that broke faith with the pro-synthesis agenda of

¹³ Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, p. 163.

¹⁴ Nkrumah, *Consciencism*, p. 75.

¹⁵ John Munro, *The Anticolonial Front: The African American Freedom Struggle and Global Decolonisation, 1945-1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017), p. 4.

¹⁶ Penny M. von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937–1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).

earlier nationalists and lacked organic roots in Ghana. Thus, so-called radicals are best described as anti-synthesis liberals who were cosmopolitan. Their brand of African-centredness was more a Black Atlantic or transatlantic Pan-African cosmopolitan reminiscent of Edward Wilmot Blyden's career but lacking his organic African consciousness. In the same way, so-called conservatives of the post-1945 era possessed the British/British Empire cosmopolitanism of Horton but differed from the ARPS and the interwar intellectuals in their commitment to using the institution of chieftaincy as a vehicle of political change.

The prominent writer-intellectuals studied in this chapter are J. B. Danquah, Kwame Nkrumah, and Richard Wright. The chapter also uses newspaper publications and Legislative Council debates to analyse the period. It complicates some of the dominant characteristics of the Grand Narrative as it relates to so-called radicals and conservatives of the post-1945 period, in order to challenge common notions about resistance and collaboration, as well as the pan-Africanist or provincial leanings of historical actors. In the dominant narrative, the so-called conservatives are presented as parochial, while the radicals emerge as pan-Africanist. However, in debates such as those about citizenship, the so-called pan-African radicals adopted a provincial position, while the supposedly locally minded conservatives applied a more inclusive definition of who was Ghanaian. The CPP and its leaders are, for example, presented as anti-chief in the grand narrative when in fact they were not always critical of chiefs or so-called tribalism until after the emergence of the National Liberation Movement in 1954. By exploring debates about self-government from 1946 to 1957 and citizenship in 1958, and by tracing how the founder narrative was constructed in the Nkrumah years, this chapter focuses on how post-WWII events can be better understood and narrated.

5.2 Self-Government: When and By Whom?

In the dominant account, the framework of analysis for the debates that led up to self-government asserts that the CPP was impatient in its demand, anti-imperial and not rule bound, while its opponents were tolerant of colonial rule, pro-imperial and constitutionally minded. Thus, while the CPP demanded "self-government now," its opponents asked for "self-government in the shortest possible time." For popular

textbook author Vincent Okyere, the pre-CPP nationalists were “composed mainly of the educated elite, who resided in the urban centres; they relied on diplomacy and constitutional means in addressing their grievances [against] the shortfalls in British Colonial Administration. To them, independence was a long-term goal.”¹⁷ Whereas the slogans and events leading up to the election of 1951 partially corroborate the non-procedural, impatient narrative, events from 1951 to 1957 prove otherwise. After the CPP won the 1951 election, they became procedural and patient with the process of cooperating with the colonial system, while their opponents became non-procedural, impatient with the process and uncooperative with the colonial system. So, what are we to make of the CPP’s many compromises after 1951, on the road to full self-government?

Frederick Cooper’s assertion that any serious study of colonialism and decolonisation must focus on “the range of possibility and constraint facing different political actors at any moment, and the different trajectories of possibility and constraint that follow upon acting in one’s own time,”¹⁸ calls for a review of the dominant narrative about so-called radical nationalism. Using Cooper’s argument about possibilities and constraints, one can better situate the collaboration between the CPP and the colonial administration after 1951. One can agree with Apter that the CPP’s cooperation with the colonial administration occurred because “the legitimacy of the government of the Gold Coast, as set up [by] the Order in Council of 1950 ... amended in 1953 and operated by the Convention People’s Party,”¹⁹ was dependent on the Crown. Nkrumah’s new position meant he and his CPP had to engage with the imperialists to formulate progressive policies for the Gold Coast. In his study of how the CPP balanced its anti-colonial activities with its membership of the colonial system, Apter concluded then that:

The aggressive focus of the nationalists has in many respects shifted away from the British and [onto] the secular opposition. The British are used as symbols of imperialism on the one hand, and as standards for behaviour on the other.

The former attitude toward the British is for the arena, for the crowd, and for

¹⁷ Okyere, *Ghana*, p. 128.

¹⁸ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), p. 236.

¹⁹ Apter, *Gold Coast in Transition*, p. 218.

the political rallies; the latter is in the daily routine of government business.²⁰

As Apter notes, once thrown into leadership, the Nkrumah administration navigated the colonial system through collaboration in practice and resistance in rhetoric and public performance. Despite making this observation, Apter, as other architects of the Grand Narrative, presents the CPP as continuously opposed to British colonial rule and constantly working to end it.

So-called radicals and so-called conservatives both used a variety of survival techniques to steer the system. The accounts of Nkrumah, Danquah and Wright prove that the Gold Coast nationalists and the British all navigated the colonial system using strategies that included compromise and non-cooperation. The misconception that so-called radicals were ever-resisting, and never-compromising is challenged when one examines debates in the period leading up to the attainment of full self-government in 1957. Davidson's *Black Star*²¹ recognises the many compromises Nkrumah made to the British on the road to full self-government. For example, he identifies "the years of full-blooded compromise in the spirit of 1951-52."²² In Davidson's account, Nkrumah compromised his principles, unwillingly or unwittingly, for the goal of full self-government.²³ Even so, Davidson argues that the ineptitude and moral degeneration of the opposition and Nkrumah's party members presented a major barrier to Nkrumah's vision. Proponents of the CPP as disjuncture support their claims of Nkrumah's impatience with colonial authority by citing a range of examples. Prominent among these are Nkrumah's position on the Coussey Constitution and his "Motion of Destiny" speech. As shown below, a focus that includes the pronouncements of Nkrumah's main opponent Danquah proves that the resistance/ collaborator and the radical/ conservative divides were not so clear cut. This segment examines prominent positions on the constitutions that guided the push for self-government from 1946 to 1957. It examines reactions to the 1946 Burns Constitution, the 1950 Coussey Constitution and the "Motion of Destiny" speech to complicate the dominant but simplistic accounts that have been reinforced

²⁰ Apter, *Gold Coast in Transition*, p. 293.

²¹ Basil Davidson, *Black Star: A View of the Life and Times of Kwame Nkrumah* (1973; Oxford: James Currey, 2007).

²² Davidson, *Black Star*, p. 144.

²³ Davidson, *Black Star*, p. 147.

particularly by pedagogy through the publications of textbooks and some memories of the 1950s accessed via interviews.

As Gary Kynoch suggests in his study of the Marashea criminal gangs of South Africa, the phenomenon of collective memory in oral testimony has a profound effect on the perception of events, and therefore on the written material concerning such events.²⁴ Kynoch notes that “larger societal perceptions influenced how people remembered and related their stories.”²⁵ In the Ghanaian situation, post-1945 discussions about nationalism have perpetuated the notion that the CPP radically rejected the colonial system of rule, such as its constitutions, while the CPP’s opponents, particularly the UGCC, fully supported the colonial structure, including its constitutions. An examination of the recorded reactions of educated non-chiefs to the 1946 Burns Constitution and the 1950 Coussey Constitution confirms that a collective memory of the CPP as radical has led to a misreporting of facts about nationalist activities in the post-1945 period. As shown below, the CPP and its opponents both rejected colonial constitutions and worked with the colonial administration to write constitutions. It is apparent too that following the unrest of 1948 and the UGCC’s demand to be recognised as an Interim Government because “the hour of liberation [had] struck,” Danquah and his UGCC colleagues adopted a position of incessantly demanding full self-government.²⁶ By contrast, the CPP urged caution after they entered government in 1951, and its leaders berated their opponents for being reckless and irresponsible in their demands.

5.2.1 Amalgamation of the Colony and Asante: J. B. Danquah *versus* Governor Burns

Before 1946, the Colony, Ashanti, Northern Territories and the Mandated Territory of Trans-Volta Togoland had been administered separately. It could be argued that there would have been no UGCC or CPP without the amalgamation of the Gold Coast Colony,

²⁴ Gary Kynoch, *We are Fighting the World: a History of the Marashea Gangs in South Africa, 1947-1999* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), pp. x-xii.

²⁵ Kynoch, *We are Fighting the World*, p. x.

²⁶ For detailed information about the 1948 unrest, see: See: CO 964 Colonial Office: Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast (Watson Commission, 1948); Colonial No. 231, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*; Telegram from UGCC to Secretary of State for the Colonies; Nkrumah, *Ghana*; ---, *I Speak of Freedom*; Austin *Politics in Ghana*; Oforu-Appiah, *Life and Times*; “The Hour of Liberation Has Struck,” in H. K. Akyeampong, ed. *Historic Speeches and Writings on Ghana by Dr. J. B. Danquah*, pp. 55-57.

Ashanti and the Northern Territories into one administrative unit. The 1946 Constitution — named for Governor Sir Alan Burns, who presided over its drafting and promulgation — is most significant because it formally amalgamated the Colony and Ashanti. This was done at the request of the Joint Provincial Council and the Ashanti Confederacy Council. As Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo argues, although the UGCC denounced the 1946 Constitution, credit should be given to the Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs, the Asanteman Council and the non-stool-occupying leaders such as Danquah, who were instrumental in the successful pursuit of amalgamation.²⁷

In 1943, the Colony’s Joint Provincial Council of Chiefs and some of its non-stool-occupying leaders were alarmed when Burns oversaw the passage of a law that provided for an “Ashanti Advisory Council,” a body that would legislate separately for Asanteman, instead of a unitary Legislative Council.²⁸ Danquah, who feeds us with this information in *The Ghanaian Establishment*, published posthumously, may have provided us with a self-interested account of how he was elected to lead the delegation that secured the support of the Asanteman Council. Be that as it may, it is safe to conclude that the establishment of the “Ashanti Advisory Council,” sufficiently threatened the self-government aspirations of the Colony’s chiefly leaders.²⁹ The Provincial Council appointed a delegation of three — comprising Danquah, the linguist Nana Amanfi III, and the Secretary to the Joint Provincial Council, John Buckman — and tasked it with the responsibility of seeking a union with Asante. The delegation travelled to Asanteman in that same year to convince the Asanteman Council to back a joint legislature.

According to Danquah:

Upon hearing our message at the open meeting of the Confederacy Council, the Asantehene did not, there and then, give his nation’s reply. He invited the delegation of three to a secret meeting at the palace, at which alone those in ancient Ashanti days [who] were entitled to take part in the declaration of war were present, namely, the Paramount Chiefs of the Ashanti Confederacy and

²⁷ Interview with Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, Accra, July 2014.

²⁸ Joseph Boakye Danquah, *The Ghanaian Establishment: Its Constitution, its Detentions, its Traditions, its Justice and Statecraft, and its Heritage of Ghanaism* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1997), p. 54.

²⁹ Danquah, *The Ghanaian Establishment*, pp. 54-56.

the Clan Chiefs of Kumasi. It was there, at the solemn conclave, the decision was taken: that Ashanti and Southern Ghana were to stand together in the struggle for liberation and self-determination.”³⁰

Danquah connects the positive response of the Asantehene and his Council to the liberation struggle because in 1943 the colonial administration was unwilling to permit a union of the four territories that became Ghana. As Ivor Wilks notes in *One Nation, Many Histories*, Chief Commissioners of Ashanti were wont to defend the territorial integrity of Ashanti and to challenge the Governor over the application to Ashanti of decisions made in the Colony’s Legislative Council.³¹ As Wilks notes, Chief Commissioners of Ashanti prevented governors from applying to Ashanti any law that was enacted by the Legislative Council. Francis Fuller, Chief Commissioner of Ashanti from 1905 to 1919, was so protective of Ashanti autonomy from the coast that Governor Clifford complained about being kept in the dark about Ashanti affairs.³² Therefore, some like Fuller, H. S. Newlands and C. H. Harper, engaged in bitter quarrels with governors over the autonomy of Asante from coastal control.³³

Moreover, Governor Burns and the colonial administration had blacklisted the major proponents of amalgamation, Danquah and his Gold Coast Youth Councils, as political agitators. This meant that without the Asantehene’s backing, the colonial emphasis on coastal differences would have held sway and stagnated the unification process. From Danquah’s account of the delegation’s dealings with the Asanteman Council, there was a yearning, both on the coast and in the interior, for unity and greater autonomy within the British Empire. The Asantehene raised the issue of union with the Colonial Secretary Sir Oliver Stanley during Stanley’s 1943 visit to the Gold Coast as part of his official tour of the four British West African territories. Stanley consented to a union after his conversation with the Asantehene. Thus, Sir Arku Korsah, a Legislative Council member who drafted the Burns Constitution, made provision for a united Legislative Council. The coming into force of the Burns constitution on 29th March 1946 extended the reach of the

³⁰ Danquah, *The Ghanaian Establishment*, p. 56.

³¹ Ivor Wilks, *One Nation, Many Histories: Ghana Past and Present* (Accra: Anansesem Publications, 1996), pp 64-68.

³² Wilks, *One Nation*, p. 65.

³³ Wilks, *One Nation*, pp. 65-67.

Legislative Council's powers further inland. For the first time since it was conquered in 1901, Ashanti was subject to routine colonial administration but was also now firmly situated to become part of a Ghanaian nation.

Although the Burns Constitution enlarged the number of elected representatives from three to eighteen, non-chiefs, led by Danquah, rejected the constitution, describing it as outmoded at birth. In Rathbone's considered opinion, Danquah's spearheading of the rejection of the Burns Constitution was motivated by the Colonial Office's hostile attitude to him following the 1944-1947 trial of eight accused persons in the Akyem Abuakwa murder case, which gripped the Colony in the wake of the death of Nana Ofori Atta I.³⁴ Danquah's own explanation is that he believed the constitution left too much power in the hands of the Governor, although there was for the first time an African majority in the Legislative Council. The failure of the Burns Constitution to live up to the expectations of the Colony and Asante led to the formation of the United Gold Coast Convention in August 1947 at the instigation of George Pa Grant, a successful, self-made timber merchant, who had been a member of the Legislative Council under Guggisberg in the 1920s.³⁵ In the final analysis, the JPC, the Asanteman Council and Danquah are responsible for the provision in the Burns Constitution that codified the unification of the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti. Nevertheless, the tensions that marked the implementation of Indirect Rule remained.

5.2.2 The UGCC and Gold Coast Chiefs

The major achievement of the Burns Constitution, though it bears the name of the Governor, cannot be assigned to Burns. Credit for the amalgamation of the Gold Coast and Asanteman, which paved the way for the eventual union of the four British territories into what is now Ghana, belongs to the chief's councils — the JPC and Ashanti — and to Danquah. The unforeseen outcome of their success was the formation of the UGCC to address the many political and economic questions that the ARPS was unable to solve. The 1948 uprisings instigated by a Ga chief, the Osu Alata Mantse, Nii Kwabena Bonney III and the shooting of unarmed ex-servicemen bearing a petition, at the orders of the

³⁴ Rathbone, "Murder in the Colonial Gold Coast," p. 445.

³⁵ Ofose-Appiah, *Life and Times*, p. 45.

British Police Superintendent, Captain Imray, are but two examples of the import of dissatisfaction with the political and economic situation.³⁶ The UGCC sent a cable to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on February 28th, 1948 detailing the chaos. They declared that:

Working Committee United Gold Coast Convention declare they are prepared and ready to take over interim Government ... We ask in name of oppressed, inarticulate, misruled and misgoverned people and their chiefs that Special Commissioner be sent out immediately to hand over Government to interim Government of Chiefs and People and to witness immediate calling of Constituent Assembly ... Governor Creasy, unfortunate inheritor of aftermath of Governor Alan Burns oppressive and window-dressing Administration, to be recalled and relieved of his onerous and impossible burden.³⁷

Governor Creasy responded by organising an alliance with the JPC and the Ga Native Authority to denounce the UGCC as a “clique [of persons] working for their own selfish ends” in a broadcast to the colony the Monday following Danquah’s telegram.³⁸ Danquah responded with a general publication on March 3rd in all the newspapers titled “The Hour of Liberation Has Struck.” He explained the actions of the UGCC and challenged the JPC and Ga Native Authority for allying with the colonial administration. One effect of this impasse on the UGCC was that the colonial administration (in alliance with some chiefs) concentrated its efforts on discrediting UGCC leaders as shown by Creasy’s address to the colony, so that by the time of their split with the CPP, the UGCC’s reputation had suffered a major dent from which it never recovered. Buah’s textbook states for example that “another factor helping the cause of the new nationalist movement led by the CPP were the lives of some of the political leaders who at the time, unlike the elitist UGCC group, presented themselves as selfless men and women, dedicated solely to the

³⁶ See: Colonial No. 231, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*; Telegram from UGCC to Secretary of State for the Colonies, February 28th, 1948 in Akyeampong, *Historic Speeches*, pp. 50-53; “The Hour of Liberation Has Struck,” March 3, 1948, in Akyeampong, *Historic Speeches*, pp. 55-57.

³⁷ Telegram from UGCC to Secretary of State for the Colonies, February 28th, 1948 in Akyeampong, *Historic Speeches*, p. 52.

³⁸ “The Hour of Liberation Has Struck,” p. 56.

liberation of the people from colonial repression and oppression.”³⁹ Here Buah revisits Creasy’s labelling of the UGCC leaders as selfish by describing Nkrumah and the CPP as selfless.

Scholarly accounts about the rise and fall of the UGCC and conservative nationalism reflect the misconceptions about the relationship between the intelligentsia and chiefs. Extant accounts insist that the UGCC was supported by a united front of chiefs and intelligentsia, without exploring the complexities of the UGCC’s relationship with the chiefs. Thus, the UGCC is often presented as pro-chief. The UGCC’s history has been told elsewhere by many authors and needs no retelling, but it is important to point out the differences of opinion that existed in the camp of the intelligentsia and the chiefs, as shown in the previous chapter. The UGCC comprised the intelligentsia like Danquah, who supported the 1925 constitution and the NAO of 1927, as well as those like J. W. de Graft Johnson who with Kobina Sekyi opposed these two legislations. It also comprised chiefs who supported the legislations and those who spoke out against them. Contrary to the general impression conveyed by textbooks and scholarly accounts, in many instances there was no clear-cut alliance between the chiefs and the intelligentsia. As Austin points out, at their first meeting on 20th September 1947, UGCC members resolved:

- a) That the Convention is of the opinion that the contact of chiefs and government is unconstitutional; and
- b) That in consequence [the chiefs’] position on the Legislative Council is anomalous.⁴⁰

The UGCC’s position on the participation of chiefs in the legislative process remained the same as that articulated by the leaders of the interwar intelligentsia, led by Sekyi and Johnson. The UGCC did not adopt the position of Danquah and Casely Hayford, noted in the previous chapter, that the colonial situation necessitated a change in local customs about chieftaincy. Johnson became a founding member of the UGCC but Kobina Sekyi, who also opposed the legislations, refused to join.⁴¹ For Sekyi, the UGCC had illegally

³⁹ Buah, *A History*, p. 157.

⁴⁰ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 53.

⁴¹ Interview with Vincent Cyril Richard Arthur Charles Crabbe, Justice of the Supreme Court of Ghana, 93 years, Accra: 15th June 2017.

usurped the role of the ARPS, which was still in operation.⁴² Significantly, the UGCC leaders had planned to inaugurate the organisation on the 4th of August, to coincide with the commemorative date for the founding of the ARPS. In a message targeted at Sekyi and G. E. Moore, the most prominent members of ARPS to refuse Pa Grant's invitation, Johnson noted:

The Aborigines Society has served its day and its ends. ... But its organisation is effete and impaired. Its backbone was the Chiefs. That back is broken. The Convention comes to give such orientation to its perspectives as would make it a real live and effective instrument in the hands of our people for the protection and preservation of National life.⁴³

Here, Johnson reiterates the position of the interwar ARPS intellectuals on the conduct of chiefs under the governorship of Guggisberg. Johnson's assertion points to the similarly more complex relationship between the ARPS and chiefs. As the ARPS before it, the UGCC attracted chiefs and non-chiefs as members but it was not a party that comprised a monolithic group of chiefs and intelligentsia. In fact, Danquah changed his opinions about the role and position of chiefs in a self-governing Gold Coast. This is reflected in the draft constitution Danquah sent to A. Aiken-Watson, Chairman of the Commission of Enquiry into the 1948 disturbances.⁴⁴ Although Danquah proposed two Chambers with elected members, he was emphatic that chief's councils would be reconstituted to include elected non-royals so that "the elected members in a paramount Chief's or State Council should be in the majority and must be representative of all interests in the State."⁴⁵ Danquah debarred Paramount Chiefs but not lower ranking chiefs from membership of the House of Representatives. Even so, Danquah suggested that "a chief elected to the House of Representatives must resign his office as chief before he can take his seat."⁴⁶

If there was a straightforward alliance between chiefs and the intelligentsia, it existed during the Sarbah years when in fact the ARPS mainly comprised the intelligentsia and

⁴² Interview with V. C. R. A. C. Crabbe.

⁴³ Nana Kwaku Osam II (Dr. J. W. deGraft Johnson), *The Gold Coast Observer*, Friday, August 1, 1947.

⁴⁴ Danquah to Aiken Watson, 15th April 1948, "A Basic Constitution for Ghanaland," in *Historic Speeches*, pp. 81-85.

⁴⁵ "A Basic Constitution for Ghanaland," p. 83.

⁴⁶ "A Basic Constitution for Ghanaland," p. 84.

coastal chiefs from the Western Province of the Gold Coast. Aside from its fight for the liberation of the Gold Coast from colonial rule and its competition with the CPP, the UGCC had to contend with chiefs. As noted by Cooper, this was a time of possibility when it seemed that synthesis was still tenable. Chiefs were hopeful that they would play a major role in the governance of the Gold Coast after gaining self-government and were unwilling to yield their political clout to the UGCC. From 1947 and in fact until roughly 1954, the chiefs and the UGCC made odd bedfellows. What changed the political fortunes of chiefs in the future self-governing Gold Coast was the Coussey Constitution, which by its refusal to create two chambers thwarted the plan of synthesis that the educated group had championed from the ARPS era.

5.2.3 The 1950 Coussey Constitution

The Coussey Constitution was a response to the demands made by the UGCC for a new constitution and an attempt by the colonial administration to control the political climate. The constitution changed the Legislative Council to a Legislative Assembly, with a mix of elected members and members appointed by the Chiefs' Councils (JPC and Asanteman Council). As is well known, a little over a year after becoming the Secretary to the UGCC, Nkrumah successfully launched his own party, the Convention People's Party, which won all the elections during the 1950s: 1951, 1954 and 1956. New constitutions were drafted for each of these elections. The Coussey Constitution is highlighted here because it was the only one drafted by the colonial administration during the 1950s without the active participation of the CPP. Thus, a consistent feature of textbook accounts is the emphasis on the rejection of the Coussey Constitution by Nkrumah and the CPP, with the implicit message that the UGCC leaders and their rank and file embraced it. Another reason why the Coussey Constitution is relevant is because of the intense debates that the drafting of the constitution engendered about the position and role of chiefs in the structure proposed by the UGCC and its opponent the CPP.

The Coussey Constitution was denounced by the leaders of both the UGCC and the CPP. Led by Danquah, the UGCC, opposed the Coussey Constitution because their demand that it should chart a clear course to full self-government was not accepted. On

the basis of this disagreement, the Coussey Committee produced a Majority Report and a Minority Report.⁴⁷ Austin notes in his account that “the UGCC members (and Nana Ofori Atta) also added a minority rider to the *Report*,”⁴⁸ but the convention of imposing a radical/ conservative binary prevents the complex analyses of post-1945 engagements with the colonial system that he aspired to. Danquah’s speech before the Legislative Council on 22nd March 1950, following the publication of the Coussey Committee Report, corroborates Austin’s submission that the UGCC and its leaders, as well as prominent chiefs, were dissatisfied with the report that birthed the Coussey Constitution.⁴⁹ Danquah notes in his Legislative Council speech of 22nd March 1950 that out of thirty-nine African members of the Coussey Committee, eight, including himself, had called for “the nearest approach to complete internal autonomy, complete self-government within our Gold Coast limits.”⁵⁰ However, thirty-one had “asked that colonial status should be continued for a little longer.”⁵¹ On those thirty-one committee members, Danquah commented:

They cannot believe their own eyes that self-government is really coming, and they are apprehensive that it should come. I have, in my heart, no sympathy for such men. Our business from now on, is not, however, to vilify them, but to try to convince them that although half a loaf is better than none, a whole loaf is better than half.⁵²

Here Danquah is emphatic that the Coussey Constitution fell short of the expectations of the UGCC leadership, because it did not chart a course that would allow for the Gold Coast to declare self-government.

However, in all the textbook accounts of Gold Coasters’ reactions to the Coussey Constitution, the authors present the CPP as the only organisation that rejected the majority report. The textbook authors rather point out that of all the members of the Big

⁴⁷ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 86.

⁴⁸ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 86.

⁴⁹ “The Coussey Report: A Speech to the Legislative Council, 22 March 1950,” in Akyeampong, *Historic Speeches*, pp. 101 – 105.

⁵⁰ “The Coussey Report,” pp. 102.

⁵¹ “The Coussey Report,” p. 103.

⁵² “The Coussey Report,” p. 103.

Six, Nkrumah was the only one who did not collaborate with the colonial authority to draft the Coussey Constitution. Implicit in their silence is the allegation that the UGCC leaders and chiefs had no inhibitions about the constitution. In his textbook, Albert Adu-Boahen, asserts that “the battle between the rebel CPP and the UGCC and the colonial government, both of which accepted the [Coussey] Constitution then began in earnest.”⁵³ Boahen’s reading of the times suggest that while the CPP resisted the Coussey Constitution, the UGCC allied with the colonial administration and chiefs to ensure its promulgation. Boahen is not alone. Commenting on the reaction of CPP supporters to the Coussey Constitution committee members, the other prominent textbook author, Francis K. Buah, claims that “to these people, the Coussey Committee was an elitist group picked to sing the tune of the colonial masters!”⁵⁴ On the CPP’s position regarding the constitution, Buah notes that “the CPP condemned its recommendations as falling far short of what the people really wanted, namely self-government.”⁵⁵ As Boahen, Buah fails to add that the UGCC, not least its leader Danquah, opposed the majority report that was in essence the Coussey Constitution.

The CPP and the UGCC held the same position vis-à-vis chiefs and chiefly authority up to the early 1950s. Both organisations identified with the position of the interwar thinkers of the ARPS that chiefly authority was relevant but should be kept separate from non-chiefly authority. Although the UGCC and the CPP identified the institution of chieftaincy as a viable local government system, they envisaged a political space that allowed for chiefs and non-chiefs, in the hope of inventing something better suited to their cosmopolitan ethos. Both parties in their early days therefore proposed governance structures for the Gold Coast that comprised separate levels of authority for chiefs and non-chiefs. Contrary to the popular notion that the CPP was anti-chief, the CPP recognised the relevance to Ghana of the institution of chieftaincy, and in its early days the CPP supported the idea of a bicameral legislature. Austin notes that the CPP held a “Ghana People’s Representative Assembly” in Accra on 20th November 1949, which proposed “immediate self-government — that is, full Dominion status within the

⁵³ Boahen, *Ghana in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, p. 170.

⁵⁴ Buah, *A History of Ghana*, p. 159.

⁵⁵ Buah, *A History of Ghana*, p. 159.

Commonwealth of Nations, based on the Statute of Westminster.” However, it also approved a moderate draft constitution featuring a bicameral legislature (with a Senate for chiefs and elders).⁵⁶ As leader of the UGCC, Danquah’s proposal to the Coussey constitution drafting committee had two levels of authority for the Gold Coast — one chamber for chiefs and an Executive Council of elected members for non-chiefs.⁵⁷ The final draft of the Coussey Constitution did not incorporate the suggestions of either the CPP or Danquah for chiefs to have an oversight responsibility. In many ways, the synthesis project became moribund with the coming into force of the Coussey Constitution because the Nkrumah Constitution and subsequent ones treated the Upper Chamber of Chiefs concept in much the same way.

The position of the two parties in their early days is reminiscent of the ARPS pathway that was promoted in 1928 by Johnson in *Towards Nationhood* and described in Chapter 4 above. Both organisations were, in fact, unopposed to the principle of chiefly authority, but both opposed the representation of chiefs in elective office. To this extent, the UGCC and the CPP shared a liberal agenda that excluded chiefs from elective office, but neither party was anti-chief.⁵⁸ Yet, the complexity of the relationship between the UGCC and the CPP on one hand and chiefs on the other, is often simplified to read that the CPP was anti-chief, while the UGCC was pro-chief. By so doing, extant accounts commit the offence of flattening time by “doing history backwards,”⁵⁹ as charged by Cooper. Austin, commenting on the relationship between the chiefs and the UGCC, notes for example that in January 1950 just before the elections “the intelligentsia and the chiefs were so sure (in Danquah’s words, that ‘the wolf had been driven away’), that they began to quarrel again.”⁶⁰ Here Austin categorically states that there was division between the intelligentsia and the chiefs that predated 1950 yet throughout the book he refers to an alliance between the chiefs and the intelligentsia. He seems confused by the popular notion of chiefs and intelligentsia as allies and his own knowledge that by 1950 the

⁵⁶ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 87.

⁵⁷ “The Coussey Report,” p. 105.

⁵⁸ Here I refer to the rump of the UGCC because the UGCC ceased to exist as a political party after 1952.

The rump of the UGCC that remained politically active joined K. A. Busia’s Ghana Congress Party.

See: Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and Tragedy*, p.108

⁵⁹ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, p. 18.

⁶⁰ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 90.

educated members of the UGCC like their CPP counterparts had a complex relationship with chieftaincy. He downplays the extent of the division between the chiefs and the intelligentsia dating to the interwar era disagreements over the implementation of indirect rule. Although he makes references to the initial support given by the chiefs to the CPP, he does not stress this fact because of his attachment to the grand narrative depiction of the CPP as anti-chief.

Nkrumah states in *I Speak of Freedom* that:

On 20 January 1949, we published a copy of the Constitution drawn by the C. Y. O. at the end of 1948. The main proposals were universal adult suffrage without property qualifications; a Board of Ministers (from the Assembly) with collective responsibility, and itself responsible to the Assembly; a fully elected Gold Coast Assembly; A House of Chiefs, and Self Government ‘this year’ (1949).⁶¹

Nkrumah admits to an initial commitment to a communal hierarchical liberal structure in his writings, but this fact is often overlooked in favour of the Grand Narrative position of his uncompromising posture. In his study of Nkrumah’s brand of nationalism, Harcourt Fuller presents Nkrumah as unchanging in his dealings with the institution of chieftaincy. Without acknowledging the evolution of Nkrumah’s thoughts, Fuller opines that Nkrumah denounced chiefs because he abhorred the institution and saw it as backward-looking.⁶² For Fuller, Nkrumah rejected the chiefs because he was neither Akan nor Ga. Thus:

[He] did not have the option of pursuing an “ethnic” or backwards-looking nationalism; he had to opt for the “civic” or forward-looking one. Consequently, instead of resurrecting a glorious past, he chose to propagate a new national narrative for the present and future, promoting himself as the nation’s sole Founding Father, and focusing on modernisation and

⁶¹ Nkrumah, *I Speak*, p. 16.

⁶² Harcourt Fuller, “*Civitas Ghanaensis Conditor*: Kwame Nkrumah, Symbolic Nationalism and the Iconography of Ghanaian money, 1957 – the Golden Jubilee,” *Nations and Nationalism* 14, no. 3 (2008), p. 523.

development through African Socialism.⁶³

Although Fuller's reasons are tenable, it is important to note that the CPP was initially pro-chief in its proposals for a suitable local governance structure. The CPP's shift away from the idea of co-opting chieftaincy into the governance structure occurred only after the rise of the NLM in 1954, when many prominent chiefs supported and financed its political opponents.

The Coussey Constitution was amended in 1952 on a vote of 45 to 31 by the Nkrumah administration, primarily to change Nkrumah's position from Leader of Government Business to Prime Minister, pending a new constitution.⁶⁴ In a speech delivered in the Legislative Assembly on 5th March 1952, congratulating Nkrumah, Danquah called for the Legislative Assembly to declare full self-government status, instead of waiting for the British to do so. Danquah notes that though the upgrade of Nkrumah's title was important:

It does not give us what we want, "Full Self-Government" ... I will call upon the Gold Coast, call upon Kwame Nkrumah the Prime Minister to call all the country together, sit down and get our constitution ready and present it to the British Government as a fait accompli. We will not wait any longer because they have no right to keep it from us any longer. If he is prepared to wait, I will not wait; if he is prepared to go ahead, I will go ahead with him.⁶⁵

Here, Danquah makes a suggestion that the Gold Coast had the prerogative to declare self-government. This readily available piece of evidence and many more are however silenced because of the binary nature of the grand narrative with its radial *versus* conservative format. Danquah's suggestion that the newly appointed Prime Minister should lead a Gold Coast declaration of self-government pending an agreeable constitution is similar to the sentiments he expressed with respect to the limitations of the Burns Constitution and in the UGCC Minority Report that accompanied the Coussey

⁶³ Fuller, "Civitas Ghaniensis Conditor," pp. 523-524.

⁶⁴ Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*, 1957 (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. 169.

⁶⁵ Danquah in Legislative Assembly, "Election of Kwame Nkrumah as Prime Minister," March 5, 1952, Akyeampong, *Historic Speeches*, p. 106.

Constitution. It is a radical statement that shows that the leader of the opposition was impatient about self-government and thus contradicts dominant notions that Danquah and the UGCC were tolerant of British colonial rule while the CPP continuously contested colonialism. Another instance in which Danquah and the UGCC showed their impatience with the colonial situation occurred in the Legislative Assembly in 1953 when Nkrumah presented the ‘Motion of Destiny.’

5.2.4 The “Motion of Destiny”

The Motion of Destiny is the title given to a statement read by Nkrumah on the floor of the Legislative Assembly in 1953. It is an important speech not least because Nkrumah continuously touts this speech as an important undertaking by him and his government on the road to independence. As such, Nkrumah quotes copiously from this speech in his books. Nkrumah recalls in *I Speak of Freedom*:

On 10 July 1953, I placed before the Assembly the historic ‘Motion of Destiny’, which called on the British Government to give the Gold Coast its independence as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made. The Motion has been quoted in full in my Autobiography. However, I consider it of such importance that I make no apology for quoting parts of it again.⁶⁶

The speech was not simply a request for self-government or independence. Instead, Nkrumah sought to “introduce an Act of Independence into the United Kingdom Parliament declaring the Gold Coast a sovereign and independent State within the Commonwealth.”⁶⁷

At Nkrumah’s request, the “Motion of Destiny” was a petition to the British Parliament to promulgate a law that would grant the Gold Coast self-governing status. The opposition protested the notion that the Gold Coast’s legislative body should petition another law-making entity for its sovereignty. Danquah challenged the motion on the grounds that it was the prerogative of the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly to declare self-government and then to inform the British of their decision. The Opposition

⁶⁶ Nkrumah, *I Speak*, p. 30.

⁶⁷ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, 1971, p. 189.

therefore introduced an amendment to Nkrumah's motion to:

Notify her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom that in pursuance of the general demand of the Chiefs and people of the Gold Coast for a sovereign independent State within the Commonwealth, a Declaration of Independence of the Gold Coast shall be made by the Legislative Assembly on March 6, 1954.⁶⁸

Here, Danquah and the UGCC are more radical than the CPP in vesting the right to sovereignty in the Gold Coast people, not the British Crown. The radical notions of sovereignty underpinning Danquah's speech are one of his longstanding principles that emerge at different times in the 1940s and 1950s. As showed in his reaction to the Burns and Coussey constitutions discussed above, Danquah consistently put the Gold Coast nation above empire. Such beliefs in the right of the Gold Coast to govern itself led him to urge the Gold Coast legislative Assembly to "get our Constitution ready and present it to the British Government as a *fait accompli*" in March 1952."⁶⁹ Such embedded beliefs that Danquah exhibited are inconsistent with the rubric "conservative" or "preservative." What was Nkrumah's reaction to this radical suggestion? Nkrumah characterised the proposed amendment as reckless and dismissed it without due consideration.⁷⁰ By refusing to consider the opposition's impatient demand for the Legislative Assembly to declare self-government, Nkrumah and the CPP maintained the gradual and procedural approach to full self-government that textbook authors charge the UGCC with. If resignations and statements of CPP members between 1951 and 1952 are anything to go by, then Nkrumah had a well-established habit of resisting fast change and such unilateral declarations of self-government at this time.

Austin notes that Jonathan Kwesi Lamptey, chairman of the CPP in Sekondi and a member of the Legislative Assembly, was the first person to resign from the CPP in August 1951 "in protest against the rate of advancement towards self-government."⁷¹

⁶⁸ Danquah, *Ghanaian Establishment*, p. 60.

⁶⁹ Election of Kwame Nkrumah as Prime Minister, March 5th 1952, in Akyeampong, *Historic Speeches*, p. 52.

⁷⁰ Danquah, *Ghanaian Establishment*, p. 60; Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, pp. 57-64.

⁷¹ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 167.

Other CPP notables protested at the slow pace to independence, and for their radical views were expelled from the party on 12th April 1952. They were Dzenkle Dzewu, H. P. Nyemitei, Mate Kole, K. A. Twumasi Ankrah, Sydney Brown, and E. S. Nartey.⁷² Ashie Nikoe, J. G. Swaniker, K. G. Kyem, Kojo Nkrumah and Saki Scheck were also expelled for their impatience in May 1952.⁷³ These CPP dissidents had some clout because they were regional leaders of the party. Austin reports that in August 1952 there was further criticism of the party leadership from the Sekondi chapter — led by lawyer Kurankyi Taylor, extramural teacher de Graft Johnson, and two journalists, Cecil Forde and Eric Heymann — “for having compromised over the issue of immediate self-government.”⁷⁴ These large-scale resignations and dismissals that hit the CPP between 1951 and 1953 support the position that the CPP under Nkrumah opted for compromise and collaboration as a tool to achieve self-government.

One of the ways in which Nkrumah’s supporters have consistently misread the debate over the “Motion of Destiny” is to simply refer to his speech as a radical call for independence from the British, and to castigate the Danquah-led opposition for not wanting independence.⁷⁵ In Austin’s account, the Government White Paper, referred to by Nkrumaists as the “Motion of Destiny,” was tabled in response to the protests against Nkrumah’s adoption of a slow pace to self-government after 1951, which caused the resignation and dismissal of leading members of the CPP. Although Austin records reactions of CPP members to the CPP’s gradualist approach, he does not include in his account Danquah’s statement on the floor of the Legislative Assembly. Perhaps Austin did not identify the speech as a radical one, but his silence on the radical amendment proposed by the opposition reifies the perception of the radical tag as something to be monopolised by the CPP in the 1950s. The UGCC’s reaction to the “Motion of Destiny” cannot be interpreted as a statement of opposition to independence in 1953. It was an expression of impatience with the slow procedural process adopted by the CPP after

⁷² Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 167.

⁷³ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, pp. 167-168.

⁷⁴ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 168. Dennis Austin as David Kimble, Thomas Hodgkin and William Tordoff were all extramural teachers who went on to become pioneer historians of Ghana. They had personal relationships with the leading political figures of the times and a deeper insight than most about the relevant issues of the day.

⁷⁵ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, 1971, pp. 189 - 207.

1951. Aside from the UGCC and the CPP dissidents, the African American intellectual Richard Wright, who visited the Gold Coast in 1953, recorded his impressions of the politics of the day, the politicians and the “Motion of Destiny.” His candid opinion of the speech is assessed below.

5.2.5 Richard Wright on the “Motion of Destiny”

Richard Wright was an American citizen, a Pan-Africanist civil rights leader and one-time member of the Communist International, who, like George Padmore, had lived and worked in Europe for many years. He visited Ghana in 1953 at the instigation of George and Dorothy Padmore, and ended up writing an insightful book, *Black Power*, about everyday life and politics in the Gold Coast during the 1950s. In *Black Power*, Wright affords us an outsider’s first-hand report on debates over the attainment of self-government in the Gold Coast, including the “Motion of Destiny.” Throughout his account, Wright is not only unimpressed with both Nkrumah and the opposition; he is worried about the Gold Coast’s future. Wright thinks Nkrumah’s “Motion of Destiny” speech underscores his government’s close collaboration with the British, while no effort is made to court the brainpower evident within the opposition. He comments:

I could not escape the feeling the speech implied an almost formal understanding with the British. ... There was nothing inherently shameful in that; any smart politician would have done it. But I could not help but ask myself if it should have been done now – with the national front broken, with the most able men of the country sulking in their corners...?⁷⁶

Here, Wright opines that Nkrumah had opted to collaborate with the British to achieve his end goal of self-government.

To Wright, the alienation of highly educated Ghanaians and the Nkrumah government’s reliance on British expertise was at the heart of the irony of Nkrumah’s leadership of the Gold Coast. He observed that during Nkrumah’s presentation of the “Motion of Destiny” speech to the Legislative Assembly, there were “almost as many

⁷⁶ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 169.

Europeans as Africans” in the gallery⁷⁷ because “Nkrumah, so far, has had to rely, ironically enough, mainly upon the British for the burden of administering most of the departments of government. The black intellectuals from Oxford and Cambridge were, almost to a man, with the opposition and were, therefore, unacceptable.”⁷⁸ Wright therefore wondered if Nkrumah had “accepted these responsibilities too soon.”⁷⁹ In Wright’s estimation, the British “would not have been able to rule the Gold Coast without force.”⁸⁰ Thus, the British were willing to work with Nkrumah because they knew he would need British technical and administrative support. Wright pondered cynically whether the British secretly believed that “the new political party and its leadership were not yet quite ripe to rule.”⁸¹ Also, the British supported the CPP’s rise, and worked against the UGCC, because “the black brother [Nkrumah] who had been invited into the partnership was a weak one, inexperienced.”⁸²

In other words, the victory of the Convention People's Party, as astounding and unheard of as it was, had not been really and truly decisive. The British, having their hand on the money and the police, and having the right to say who could or could not enter the colony [*sic*].⁸³

Here, Wright questions the genuineness of the CPP victory based on his conspiracy theory that the British tactfully sided with the least intelligent of the Gold Coast nationalists to perpetuate themselves in the Gold Coast without the primary responsibility for its failings.⁸⁴

If he questioned the motives and competence of Nkrumah and his CPP, Wright had no high regard either for the political skills of the opposition or its leader, whom he saw

⁷⁷ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 168.

⁷⁸ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 168.

⁷⁹ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 169.

⁸⁰ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 169.

⁸¹ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 169.

⁸² Wright, *Black Power*, p. 169.

⁸³ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 169.

⁸⁴ Perhaps of interest here: John E. Flint, “Managing Nationalism”: The Colonial Office and Nnamdi Azikiwe, 1932-43,” *Journal of Imperial & Commonwealth History*, 1999,27 (2): 143–58. Flint writes about how the colonial office intentionally invited opinion leaders from Africa to a meeting in London as a measure to keep the office informed and in touch with potential rubble rousers.

as lacking political dexterity and tact.⁸⁵ An unimpressed Wright sneered, “Dr Danquah gave only his spare time to politics!”⁸⁶ He concluded that Danquah was a political novice who had no “idea how hard and cold were both the White and the Black men with whom he was dealing, men who were professional politicians and who [laboured] at their craft every waking hour.”⁸⁷ Yet it seems Wright’s and Danquah’s views about the British, and about the relationship between the British and Nkrumah, were closer than Wright appreciated. According to Wright, Danquah held adamantly that there were really no differences between himself and Nkrumah, because “we are one in our aim of self-government for the Gold Coast.”⁸⁸ When Wright pressed him on why they were not acting together, Danquah opined that Nkrumah “split the national front, then made a filthy deal with the British ... One day he said that he wanted national freedom, and the next day he compromised with the British.”⁸⁹ Danquah, like Wright, interpreted Nkrumah’s actions after winning the 1951 election as evidence of his collaboration with imperialism.

Wright believed Danquah’s challenge to Nkrumah’s motion exemplified his political immaturity. Later, when he had a chance to interact with Danquah, Wright pointed out to Danquah that he had missed a political opportunity in opting to contest the “Motion of Destiny” instead of capitalising on it by better articulating the will of the masses. Danquah explained to Wright that he was unwilling to court the masses by playing politics with his words.⁹⁰ Danquah took this position on the grounds that he could not utter words to the people that he did not believe.⁹¹ Wright interpreted Danquah’s position as evidence of his patrician inclination to tell the masses what to do. To Wright, Danquah “was not a politician and would never be one.”⁹² He concluded:

The good doctor’s grasp of life was essentially poetic; it was close to that which our fantasies and daydreams would have reality be; its essence was woven out

⁸⁵ Wright, *Black Power*, pp. 171–172.

⁸⁶ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 172.

⁸⁷ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 172.

⁸⁸ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 219.

⁸⁹ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 220.

⁹⁰ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 220.

⁹¹ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 221.

⁹² Wright, *Black Power*, p. 220.

of what we call human traits. Yet, if he would pit himself against his political adversaries, if he would win a struggle for the liberation of his country, he would have to lay aside such poetic preoccupations and adopt more realistic measures.⁹³

Here, Wright interpreted Danquah as politically unrealistic on account of his deeply held convictions. For Wright, the irony of the matter was that Danquah was intelligent about British imperialism but “unable to weigh and know the forces [the impact of the industrial West] that were shaping the modern world.”⁹⁴ After meeting Danquah, Wright sadly observed that “what amazed me was that men like Danquah saw and knew each day what the British wanted from the Gold Coast; they knew that the hunger for raw materials and the opportunity to sell merchandise at higher prices constituted the crux of British imperialism.”⁹⁵ For Wright, what he interpreted as Danquah’s lack of appreciation of the economics of imperialism and his idealism explained the failure of Danquah’s politics. Wright’s views about politics in Ghana before independence could be summed up as a complex amalgam of CPP tactics, UGCC political tactlessness and British imperial tact.

The views of Wright and the UGCC’s opposition of the “Motion of Destiny,” on account of the Nkrumah-led government’s failure to assert the right of the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly to declare full self-government erodes the Grand Narrative’s claims that the UGCC was procedural in its dealings with the colonial system. As Austin notes of the “Motion of Destiny,” “a certain ambiguity was retained over the actual timing of the stages proposed.”⁹⁶ Such ambiguities were wont to be protested against by those who were impatient with the pace, such as Nkrumah’s opponents. Interviews with a broad spectrum of self-declared Nkrumaists prove that Nkrumah’s followers remain unanimous in their belief that the opposition sabotaged Nkrumah’s radical demand for independence from the British in the “Motion of Destiny” speech, and that Danquah and the UGCC were opposed to the grant of independence.⁹⁷ Kwesi Pratt Junior, for example, declares

⁹³ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 222.

⁹⁴ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 222.

⁹⁵ Wright, *Black Power*, p. 222.

⁹⁶ Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, p. 170.

⁹⁷ Interviews: George Panyin Hagan, 79 years, young pioneer, professor of African Studies and CPP presidential candidate, Accra: 8th July 2017; Kwasi Adu, young pioneer and rtd. social worker, student

that “Nkrumah used the ‘Motion of Destiny’ to ask for independence from the British, but the opposition delayed it; they did not want independence.”⁹⁸ Professor Agyeman Badu Akosa contends that “the opposition did not support Nkrumah when he demanded independence in the ‘Motion of Destiny’ speech.”⁹⁹ Although Nkrumah and his followers castigate the opposition for not supporting the “Motion of Destiny,” an examination of the published debates surrounding the speech do not support a simple for and against the “Motion of Destiny,” but complexity.

5.2.6 Summary of Self-government: When and By Whom?

As showed in his statements in the Legislative Council discussed above, for Danquah and the UGCC the declaration of self-government was the prerogative of the Gold Coast, not the British; and of Gold Coast not British legislators. This was a radical view, predating the UGCC’s loss to the CPP in the 1951 election. Danquah constantly demanded for a full self-government that was to be declared by the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast, as opposed to waiting for the British to grant self-government. But Danquah’s speeches and statements that challenge the label of conservativeness and procedural pace of the UGCC are omitted in the textbooks and scholarly accounts. From 1948, Danquah and his counterparts consistently demanded in political statements and in the Legislative Assembly that self-government should be determined by a Gold Coast Constituent Assembly and the timeline organised along lines that suited the Gold Coast.¹⁰⁰ Danquah made the same demand when Nkrumah presented his “Motion of Destiny” proposal to the Legislative Assembly in 1953. Although independent observers

activist, Accra: 10th July 2017; Nana Paddy Steven Acheampong, 83 years, rtd. Captain and pharmacist, Deputy Minister of Health 1997 -2000 and Akwamuhene of Chirapatre, Accra: 17th July 2017; Kwamena Ahwoi, 65 years, Young Pioneer and rtd. Minister for Local Government, Accra: 19th July 2017; Agyeman Badu Akosa, 63 years, Young Pioneer, Professor of Pathology and CPP presidential candidate, Accra: 20th July 2017; Kwesi Pratt Junior, 64 years, Young Pioneer, socialist and activist journalist, Accra: 24th July 2017; Charles Heymann, 88 years, socialist, CPP member and composer of the Trades Union Congress (TUC) anthem and ambassador to Algeria 1964-1966, Accra: 26th July 2017.

⁹⁸ Interview with Pratt.

⁹⁹ Interview with Badu Akosa.

¹⁰⁰ Declaration of Readiness to Govern, Telegram to Secretary of State for the Colonies, February 28 1948; “The Hour of Liberation Has Struck,” March 3, 1948; “A Basic Constitution for Ghanaland,” 15th April 1948; “Election of Kwame Nkrumah as Prime Minister,” March 5 1952; Opposition’s Amendment to the Motion of Destiny proposing March 6 1954 as Independence Day.

such as Wright interpreted Danquah's position as political tactlessness, Wright believed that such seemingly unsound political choices occurred because Danquah was beholden to certain beliefs. On the other hand, Nkrumah viewed this period as a transitional period where he had to court the British and use constitutional means to gain independence. Nkrumah notes that "this was, one might say, a probationary period wherein we had to prove our worth and demonstrate ability to manage our own affairs."¹⁰¹ Contrary to dominant perceptions about the 1950s, so-called conservative nationalists, often depicted in popular narratives as adopting a constitutional approach, were the least interested in pleasing the British; while the CPP, since it was the party in power, courted and cooperated with the colonial authority.

5.3 Tactical Action: Compromise and Contestation in Nation Framing (1951-1957)

Prior to the 1950s, the idea of the nation was a distinct reality for nationalist writer intellectuals. The appointment of Nkrumah as Leader of Government Business in 1951 and his subsequent elevation to Prime Minister in 1952 changed the situation from remote possibility to a certainty and this affected how the nation was imagined. As the reality sank in, so too did the urgency about how the nation should be framed. Questions about what to do with chieftaincy dominated earlier discussions, but from 1954 the pertinent question concerned what kind of global liberal framework would be suitable for a fully self-governed Gold Coast. Competing visions of the future led to the formation of other political parties besides the UGCC and the CPP. There were as many competing interests as there were many interest groups but the immediate cause of division that pushed the nation framing question to the forefront came from cocoa price adjustments. The question of how far decentralisation should be carried out took centre stage after the 1954 budget reading that suggested cuts in the monies paid to cocoa farmers.¹⁰²

The contestations and compromises from 1951 to 1957 are captured in Nkrumah's *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*. Although Nkrumah presents a one-sided

¹⁰¹ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, 1959, p. 142.

¹⁰² See: Austin, *Politics in Ghana*, Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine* and Mary Owusu, *Prempeh II and the Making of Modern Asante* (Accra: Woeli Publishing 2009), for a sense of the effects of cocoa politics on the making of Ghana.

account in this text, it is nonetheless informative, and is a primary source for both the Grand Narrative and counter narratives. *Ghana* was released on 6th March 1957, timed to coincide with Ghana's independence. Its purpose was to affirm the point made in the title — that Nkrumah's life was inextricably linked to Ghana's through his purposeful choices. It presented his life experience as a sacrificial struggle that ultimately benefitted Ghana. Implicit in this presentation of Nkrumah's story was the notion that without his struggle there would have been no Ghana. Most contemporary reviewers in 1957 found it remarkable that Nkrumah had been able to write the book while campaigning for office.¹⁰³ One early review by Kenneth Bradley arrives at a conclusion with which most scholars agree — that Nkrumah's *Ghana* was the “self-portrait of a single-minded man dedicated to one idea relentlessly pursued.”¹⁰⁴

The reader of *Ghana* follows the author on his journey to the United States and Britain in pursuit of the tools necessary to liberate Ghana. From the courses he studied to his extracurricular encounters, such as meeting C. L. R. James, and acquiring the skill of organising an underground movement, Nkrumah juxtaposed key elements of his personal struggle with Ghana's struggle for independence, to show that he was intent on independence from as early as 1935, when he left Ghana to study abroad.¹⁰⁵ Nkrumah's travel experiences are placed alongside the equally anguished experience of Ghana as a colonised nation, before Nkrumah's return and subsequent breakaway from the UGCC in 1949. For Nkrumah, Ghana, like he, had endured a long and tortuous road to freedom, an experience that must be appreciated and harnessed for the future liberation of Africa.

Nkrumah emphasises the difficulty of pursuing Ghanaian independence, which was

¹⁰³ A. M., Review, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 27, No. 4 (1957), pp. 409 – 410; Kenneth Bradley, “Review,” *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs), Vol. 33, No. 3 (1957), p. 383; Rayford W. Logan, “Review,” *World Affairs*, Vol. 120, No. 3 (1957), p. 92; Robert July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought: Its Development in West Africa During the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968); Pieter Boele van Hensbroek, *Political Discourses in African Thought: 1860 to Present* (Westport, CT: London Praeger Publishers, 1999); Kwaku Larbi Korang, *Writing Ghana, Imagining Africa: Nation and African Modernity* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2003); Kwame Botwe-Asamoah, *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought and Policies: An African-Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution* (New York & London: Routledge, 2005); Ama Biney, *The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

¹⁰⁴ Bradley, “Review.”

¹⁰⁵ Credible rumours point to Nkrumah's British secretary, Erica Powell as the ghost writer of his autobiography.

won only because of his instrumental role as liberator. He narrates how he triumphed over local opposition through organised politicking, coining catchy slogans, and a policy of peaceful protest that he styled “Positive Action.” Nkrumah notes in the preface to his book that Gandhi’s principle of non-violence and Nehru’s successful use of strong organisation to achieve such ends, inspired him to adopt “Positive Action.” Nkrumah’s instrumentality is seen too in how he got himself elected to the Accra Central parliamentary seat in place of Komla Gbedemah, even though Nkrumah was imprisoned.¹⁰⁶

Once he became Leader of Government Business in 1951, Nkrumah embarked on a policy of “Tactical Action,” recommitted himself to his election slogan and tabled the “Motion of Destiny” in 1953.¹⁰⁷ According to Nkrumah’s account, he cooperated with the British and the Opposition from 1951 to 1957 in order to achieve his dream of self-government for Ghana. Independence occurred in 1957 as the product of a long battle with the Opposition in which many compromises had to be made. Nkrumah styled the strategy that guided this period of collaboration as “Tactical Action.”¹⁰⁸ Thus, in his own words, he used the strategy of compromise in these years, not radicalism. What emerges therefore in Nkrumah’s account of these six years is an opposition that is unruly, reckless and irresponsible, thus radical while the CPP is presented as organised, rational and collaborative, thus moderate. Although Nkrumah readily confided to his readership the compromises he made on the road to independence, historians, by sticking rigidly to an unnuanced radical-conservative dichotomy, have maintained a teleological account and obscured the history of the period.¹⁰⁹ The period of tactical action (1951-1957) was a time of agreement with some British and global systems, such as the welfare state model and the Commonwealth — thus cosmopolitan. It was also a time of compromise and collaboration, in which the Gold Coast nationalists drew on global concepts of federalism and unitary government to fashion out a Gold Coast governance structure that by 1957 precluded the ARPS-inspired agenda of synthesising chieftaincy with global liberal

¹⁰⁶ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p. 133.

¹⁰⁷ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, pp. 189 - 207.

¹⁰⁸ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p. 122. Tactical Action is the title Nkrumah used for the 13th chapter of his autobiography, which was released on Independence Day.

¹⁰⁹ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p. 122-148; ---, *Africa Must Unite*, pp. 62-64.

forms.

5.3.1 Gold Coast Nationalists and the Welfare State Model

Nkrumah and his opponents were all supporters of the British welfare state model of the 1945-1951 Labour Party government.¹¹⁰ Although the Labour Party lost the election of 1951, its progressive colonial policies were sustained through the work of bodies such as the Colonial Development Corporation. Sir Arthur Creech-Jones, who was Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1946 to 1950, had a working relationship with many of the West African intellectuals who had studied in London, particularly those who, like Danquah, were founding members of the West African Students Union (WASU). The activities of WASU in collaboration with the Fabian Colonial Bureau of the Fabian Society fostered a close relationship that made the socialist based policies of the Labour Party attractive to colonial people.¹¹¹ Hakim Adi notes that

colonial rule and racism did indeed lead many West African students to seek radical solutions to the problem of colonialism, and they did come into contact with anti-colonial forces in Britain such as the League Against Imperialism (LAI) and the Communist party of Great Britain (CPGB), as well as those whose aim was to reform the Empire such as the Fabian Colonial Bureau (FCB).¹¹²

At the same time, men like Creech-Jones empathised with the nationalist sentiments of colonised peoples, because of their interactions on platforms created by associations such as WASU.¹¹³

As Colonial Secretary, Creech-Jones organised the first African Conference of African Legislative Councillors in London in September 1948. This was a consultative conference that explained the socialist policies of the Labour Party to participants and offered welfare-based models of development to the legislators. In a 1949 publication of

¹¹⁰ J. B. Danquah, *Friendship and Empire: Colonial Controversy Series No. 5*, Gold Coast Edition, pp. 3-17; Nkrumah, *I Speak of Freedom*, p. 163.

¹¹¹ Hakim Adi Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1998), pp. 99, 13-135.

¹¹² Adi, *West Africans in Britain*, p. 4.

¹¹³ Adi, *West Africans in Britain*, p. 71, 105.

the Fabian Colonial Bureau, titled “Friendship and Empire,” Danquah communicated his thoughts on the conference and his understanding of how socialism could serve the interest of the Gold Coast and Africa. In his endorsement of British socialism for the colonies, based on democracy, friendship and development, Danquah argues that

if socialism with all that it implies is good for Britain, it must be good enough for the Gold Coast. And mark my words, socialism without democracy – free government, a government authorised by the people, and governing in the name of the people, and, what is more important, for the people - democracy without representative institutions is a sham.¹¹⁴

For Danquah and his fellow travellers, the Labour Party’s welfare-based colonial system, with its promise of friendship, was attractive in so far as it guaranteed representative government. Danquah’s UGCC, like Labour, lost a general election in 1951, but the UGCC endorsed the development model that formed the basis of representative government in both Britain and the Gold Coast from 1951 to 1957.

In a recap of the Labour Party’s agenda for the colonies that was delivered to participants in the Africa Conference on 30th September 1948, Creech-Jones announced that the British Government wanted “the extension of higher education; the establishment of training colleges, trade and regional schools; welfare and housing schemes; the expansion of educational facilities and of preventive medicine; and campaigns against diseases,”¹¹⁵ as well as “bold and imaginative schemes for power and other forms of development, improved systems of transport and communications, a great transformation in agricultural methods and cultivation.”¹¹⁶ On assuming office in 1951, Nkrumah, in collaboration with the colonial authorities, developed Gold Coast-specific development plans fashioned on the British Labour model. It resulted, in the area of education for example, in physical projects whose effect was that “the number of primary schools

¹¹⁴ Danquah, *Friendship and Empire*, p. 17.

¹¹⁵ “Address by the Rt. Hon. A. Creech-Jones, M. P., Secretary of State for the Colonies,” *Friendship and Empire*, p. 28.

¹¹⁶ “Address by the Rt. Hon. A. Creech-Jones, M. P., Secretary of State for the Colonies,” *Friendship and Empire*, p. 29.

trebled from 1,000 to 3,000 in five years.”¹¹⁷ The use of the development plan model became a distinct feature of the Nkrumah system of government from 1951 to 1966. He speaks fondly of his Development Plans in *I Speak of Freedom* and *Africa Must Unite*. In *I Speak of Freedom*, Nkrumah recalls his presentation of a “new deal” for cocoa farmers as part of the CPP’s economic planning and how all this leads to the birth of the first Development Plan, on 15th August 1951.¹¹⁸ Nkrumah notes in an address during the tenth anniversary of the birth of the CPP that:

In the past two years since we have become the absolute masters of our fate, we have been able to complete and consolidate the first Five-Year economic and social development programme and to plan on a more ambitious scale for the tasks ahead. Today we stand on the threshold of the Second Development Plan which will usher in the economic revolution.¹¹⁹

The second Development Plan lasted from 1959 to 1964 and the third, the Seven Year Development Plan, which was launched on 11th March 1964, lasted until Nkrumah’s overthrow on 26th February 1966. In view of his leanings towards socialism and Leninism, Nkrumah probably found the development plan model relatable because it had been a major feature of the rapid modernisation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics during the 1920s. Development planning also had global precedents in the British Labour Party; in the Colonial Office under Tory and Labour governments; and in the Indian National Congress.

5.3.2 Agreement with Britain on Membership of the Commonwealth

The CPP and the UGCC both agreed on the principle of continued membership of the Commonwealth. In this, as in other instances, the Gold Coast nationalists showed that they are better understood as cosmopolitan nationalists and not one or the other. But what did it really mean to have independence or self-government within the Commonwealth? The Order in Council made and laid before the British Parliament on 22nd February 1957

¹¹⁷ David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and Tragedy*, Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007, p.122. See Nkrumah’s account of achievements of his government from 1951 to 1957, in *Africa Must Unite*, p. xi ff.

¹¹⁸ Nkrumah, *I Speak*, p. 26.

¹¹⁹ Nkrumah, *I Speak*, p. 162.

that granted permission to the Gold Coast to become a self-governed state within the Commonwealth stated that “the executive power of Ghana is vested in the Queen and may be exercised by the Queen or by the Governor-General as her representative.”¹²⁰ The UGCC’s position, as Danquah explained, cited the assurance given by Creech-Jones that the new relationship Britain sought to establish with its former colonies was one premised on friendship among a Commonwealth of Nations. As Danquah noted of the Commonwealth idea, any ambition some in Britain might have harboured of clinging on to the Empire had been “smashed by the British Socialist Government, not because they love the African more and Britain less, but because, as Mr. Creech Jones said, ‘We all want a stable and peaceful world’.”¹²¹ Thus Danquah promoted the Commonwealth as a progressive body that a self-governed Gold Coast should aspire to join. In their telegram to the Colonial Secretary, the UGCC reiterated this belief when they stated, “We speak in name of inherent residual sovereignty in Chiefs and People in free partnership with British Commonwealth.”¹²² In his “Motion of Destiny” speech, Nkrumah provided us with another way to interpret this wish to remain within Britain’s sphere of influence, arguing that there were “intangible bonds holding together the British Commonwealth of Nations in which we hope to remain.”¹²³ Thus, Nkrumah’s government applied, and waited, for British approval of Ghana becoming a fully self-governing nation within the Commonwealth. The cosmopolitan nationalist leaders disagreed on many issues but their views about the Gold Coast’s continued membership in the British Commonwealth aligned. As discussed below, a major source of disaffection among the nationalist leaders in the mid 1950s concerned the form of government, federal or unitary, that would be better suited for the Gold Coast.

5.3.3 Federation *versus* Unitary State

Debates about the Cocoa Duty and Development Funds (Amendment) Bill which was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on 10th August, 1954 generated an economic conflict that in turn provoked a major political battle that lasted two years.¹²⁴ Nkrumah

¹²⁰ *The Ghana Order in Council*, 1957 (reprint), Accra: Ghana Publishing Company Limited (Assembly Press), p.6.

¹²¹ Danquah, *Friendship and Empire*, p. 7.

¹²² Telegram from UGCC to Secretary of State for the Colonies, p. 52.

¹²³ Nkrumah, *I Speak*, p. 32.

¹²⁴ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p. 179.

refers to the cocoa conflict as the “Ashanti Problem” in his accounts but it was not that simple.¹²⁵ The economic conflict was started by cocoa farmers who were later joined by other interest groups all of whose livelihoods were linked to the cocoa industry – labourers from the Northern Territories, farm owners and cocoa *krachie* (clerks) from Ashanti and the Colony.¹²⁶ The ensuing crisis engulfed majority of the Gold Coast because the special interest groups in the cocoa industry stretched all the way from the north to the south of the colony. The epicentre of the cocoa crisis was among the farming communities in Asante and the Akyem areas; but, the nature of the cocoa farming system meant that one of the most affected communities were those from the Northern Territories. Thus, the Northern Peoples Party and the Muslim Association Party led the verbal attack on the government for people from the Northern territories while the National Liberation Movement, founded by the Ashanti Youth Association articulated the position of cocoa farm owners and clerks in Asante and Akyem. In time, the Togoland Congress joined the cocoa movement not to fight for farmers but to support opposition against Kwame Nkrumah and his CPP. By 1955, the colonial government had agreed to disregard the results of the 1954 elections and conduct a new election that took into account the rivalry and rancour that the adjustment of cocoa prices effected. Another pertinent issue that emanated from the cocoa price crisis was the question of a federal system for independent Ghana. By April 1955, the Nkrumah government had suggested to the Legislative Assembly to appoint a Select Committee to investigate the federal issue.¹²⁷

Politically, the cocoa crisis pushed the majority of chiefs in Ashanti, the Eastern Province and the Northern Territories into one camp against the CPP government. The CPP in turn adopted the language of vendetta against its opponents, including the chiefs. The leading opposition party, the NPP, initially favoured a federal union, and was the first, in concert with the NLM, to propose and declare a breakaway from the amalgamated Gold Coast Colony. Nkrumah notes that his opponents demanded “the

¹²⁵ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p. 179-184.

¹²⁶ For details about the NLM, see Austin, *Politics in Ghana*; Joseph Appiah, *Joe Appiah: The Autobiography of an African Patriot* (New York, London: Praeger, 1990); Akoto, Baffour Osei Akoto, *Struggle against Dictatorship: Autobiography of Baffour Osei Akoto* (Kumasi: Payless Printing Press, 1992); Allman, *Quills of the Porcupine*; Rooney, *Nkrumah*; Owusu, *Prempeh II*.

¹²⁷ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p. 198.

virtual secession of Ashanti, the Northern Region, and what was formerly British Togoland.”¹²⁸ The NLM and its supporters received financial and tactical advice from the Chiefs’ Councils of Ashanti and the Eastern Province, because the cocoa farms were located in those areas. The NPP however changed its position from seeking a federal system to advocating a middle way that they called regionalism. According to a founding member of the NPP, C. K. Tedom, in 1956, the NPP opted instead for a policy of regionalism, out of concern over the burden of revenue generation associated with federalism.¹²⁹ Representatives of the forest belt and the eastern corridor, led by those from Asante and the Akyem areas, with support from the Anlo Youth Organisation (AYO)¹³⁰ and the Togoland Congress (TC),¹³¹ advocated a federal union, which, they argued, guaranteed autonomy and was more in tune with the administrative practices of the colonial administration. The leading voices for regionalism and federalism comprised opposition intellectuals and the chiefs of the affected areas, while the CPP’s support among chiefs came mainly from those in the Western Province and those from West Ashanti, who were dissatisfied with their membership of the Ashanti Union. Thus, it was not a clear-cut case of the CPP against chiefs. However, as Rathbone has shown in *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*, what started as CPP antagonism toward individual dissident chiefs soon turned into legislation that impacted the institution as a whole after Independence.

The CPP favoured a centralised government, not unlike the colonial system, with powers to distribute national resources. Nkrumah, as his party’s lead theoretician, explains in *Africa Must Unite* that he wanted a system of executive control based on the

¹²⁸ Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 71.

¹²⁹ Interview with C. K. Tedom, founding member of NPP and NPP parliamentarian, Accra: 19th July 2017. Tedom explains that the leadership of the NPP believed that a regional architecture would guarantee a greater budgetary contribution from the central authority to fund local development than could be expected in a federation. The Northern Territories, being the poorest region in the union, would thus be able to pursue a separate development programme without necessarily having to generate all the required revenues from its own meagre resources.

¹³⁰ See: Austin *Politics in Ghana* for information about AYO. It was founded by Modesto Apaloo (later Chief Justice of Ghana 1977 – 1986 and Chief Justice of Kenya 1993-1995) who won a seat on the Party’s ticket in the 1956 election.

¹³¹ For details about the Togoland Congress and the fate of its members see Austin, *Politics in Ghana*; Skinner, *Fruits of Freedom*.

United States model.¹³² Nkrumah notes that:

We pondered for many months whether we should establish the system followed in such countries as India and the Soviet Union, whereby the titular Head of State is the holder of an honorary position without power; or give the highest position in the land to the effective leader of the nation, as in the United States. We decided upon the latter formula, making our necessary adaptations.¹³³

Although he preferred the power that a presidency such as the United States one conferred on its president, Nkrumah was against the federal system practiced in the United States. He wanted the executive system in the United States without ceding power to the regions. He had a dichotomy of thought as he chose to cherry pick from the global systems but did not commit fully to any one system. That said, the British favoured Nkrumah's unitary proposition because of the geo-political similarities between the two territories – the United Kingdom adopted a unitary government even though a federal system could have been embraced. In the end, a compromise was reached with the British, whereby the unitary model was adopted with safeguards for the proponents of federalism.

The British coerced Nkrumah into making concessions to the proponents of regionalism and federalism by establishing alternative modes of decentralisation such as regional assemblies and guaranteeing the Asantehene's position as leader of his region.¹³⁴ In 1958, the CPP induced the newly established assemblies to vote themselves out of existence on their first day of meeting.¹³⁵ In defending this action, Nkrumah argues that “a new country needs to initiate central nation-wide planning fitting the required activities of each region into the over-all programme. It cannot allow the programme to

¹³² Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 82.

¹³³ Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 82.

¹³⁴ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, pp. 220-232, 238-240; ---, *Africa Must Unite*, pp. 61-65. Nkrumah mentions this concession to the British in his 1957 publication, *Ghana*, but does not denounce it as forcefully as he does in *Africa Must Unite*, which was released in 1963, a year before Ghana was declared a one-party state.

¹³⁵ Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 65.

be held up by a dilatory or backward or obstructive Regional Assembly.”¹³⁶ The CPP also carved a vast new Brong-Ahafo Region out of Asanteman. The new region accounted for two-thirds of the old Ashanti region. In the long run, actions such as stripping the Asantehene of a large part of his prestige and power by carving out two-thirds of the Ashanti region and creating a new region, the Brong Ahafo region, did not erode the institution of chieftaincy or reverence for it. If anything, chieftaincy as an institution reinvented itself to exist side by side with the adoption of liberal forms of governance, as practiced internationally (United States and the Soviet Union). Ghanaians under the CPP’s leadership inserted their chiefs into a discourse that also looked to the USA and the Soviet Union.

On the one hand, these actions could be said to demonstrate how Nkrumah bowed to British demands, only until he could escape them and pursue his own agenda. On the other hand, it could be interpreted as CPP abuse or betrayal of a compromise. Nkrumah welcomed the British-brokered compromise in his 1957 publication, *Ghana*, but in *Africa Must Unite*, which was released in 1963 — the year before Ghana was declared a One-Party State under the CPP — he condemned it as evidence of imperialist arrogance. He states in *Africa Must Unite* that he interpreted these compromises as “so openly a device to concede to the opposition party the opportunities they had been deprived of by their defeat at the polls.”¹³⁷ This, according to Nkrumah, explains why he and his government determined to “divest ourselves of the objectionable clauses as soon as we were in a position to do so.”¹³⁸ In so doing, Nkrumah sealed the debate on unitary and federal government and with it the opportunity to have a semblance of decentralisation in the new Ghana. That notwithstanding, decentralisation is of on-going relevance to debates about local governance in Ghana.¹³⁹ And the debates continue to be very cosmopolitan

¹³⁶ Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 64.

¹³⁷ Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 63.

¹³⁸ Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 59.

¹³⁹ See: Kwamena Ahwoi, *Local Government & Decentralisation in Ghana* (Accra: Winmat Publishers Limited, 2017), S. K. Asibuo, “Decentralisation in Ghana--Myth Or Reality,” *Indian Journal of Public Administration* 38, no. 2 (1992): 122-138; John Kwasi Nsarkoh, *Local Government in Ghana* (Accra: Ghana U. P., 1964).

and drawing on global practices.¹⁴⁰

5.3.4 From Gold Coast to Ghana: Naming the Nation and Choosing Dates

Seemingly inconsequential things such as the name Ghana and the date for independence were all arrived at through debate and cooperation. Between 1928 and 1944, Danquah embarked on a crusade to change the name Gold Coast to New Ghana on the attainment of independence.¹⁴¹ As noted by Kimble, before he settled on Ghana, Danquah's campaign included a suggestion for Gold Coast to be ditched for Akanland, a proposal which earned Danquah the chagrin of his critics, who took exception to Danquah's disregard for non-Akan peoples in the Gold Coast.¹⁴² Danquah took the opportunity to present his proposed name, Ghana, to British officials when he was asked by the chairman of the Commission of Enquiry into the 1948 Disturbances, Aiken-Watson, to provide a draft constitution. Danquah notes in paragraph three of his draft constitution that: "the first act of the constitution-making body will be to make a clean break away from the memories of the days of exploitation and imperialism, and the colonial adjective Gold Coast will give way to the substantive name of the people and country, Ghana and Ghanaland."¹⁴³ There is no evidence that aside Danquah's Ghana, there were other suggestions to replace Gold Coast. Choosing Ghana as a replacement for Gold Coast was both anti-colonial and cosmopolitan. Ghana as a symbol was linked to the old world, the Soninke kingdom of Ghana, located to the west of modern Ghana with its cosmopolitan connections to the trans Saharan trade.

Danquah also consistently reminded the British of the symbolic meaning of 6th March in Gold Coast history.¹⁴⁴ Danquah claimed the title of originator in a letter to

¹⁴⁰Interview, Kwamina Ahwoi, 65 years, member of the Young Pioneer Movement and Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government, also lawyer and rtd. Minister for Local Government as well as architect of current local government system.

¹⁴¹Kimble, *Politics in Ghana*, pp. xvii-xviii; "A Correction to Kwame Nkrumah," 30th December 1957, in Akyeampong, *Historic Speeches*, p. 134.

¹⁴²Kimble, *Politics in Ghana*, pp. xvii-xviii.

¹⁴³"A Basic Constitution for Ghanaland," in Akyeampong, ed, p. 82.

¹⁴⁴Danquah states in his 3rd March 1948 article, "The Hour of Liberation has Struck," that "Our one and only concern is liberation of our country from the old thralldom imposed by a treaty, chiefly one-sided, and altogether misapplied or unapplied. That treaty was made exactly 104 years ago, on March 6th, 1844. In effect we ask for a freely negotiated Bond of 1948, a constitution which will regulate the affairs between us and Britain in the day-light of freedom."

Nkrumah titled “A Correction to Kwame Nkrumah,” and dated 30th December 1957, which sought to set the record straight about many of the events Nkrumah described in his autobiography, *Ghana*. Danquah pointed out how the UGCC and its members had provided the anti-colonial movement with the date for independence (6th March), the colours of the Ghana flag (red, gold and green), and the choice of the gendered designation of Ghana as the “motherland.” Danquah took a swipe at Nkrumah by pointing out that the map provided in *Ghana* had misrepresented the location of the ancient Ghana kingdom. Danquah reminded Nkrumah too that the name Ghana was his intellectual property. He argued that “this name, as you are aware, was discovered by me in 1928 and put forward by me in 1944 for adoption by the Gold Coast when liberated.... There is no acknowledgement in your book as to who discovered Ghana, and when.”¹⁴⁵ Danquah contends that Nkrumah deliberately falsified information in his book or perhaps Nkrumah’s memory of events faltered because Nkrumah arrived on the nationalist scene very late in the game to reap the benefits of the labour of earlier nationalists.

Although Nkrumah never credited Danquah with this finding, he proposed Ghana to the British in his request for the Gold Coast to be granted independence. One reason may well be that the name Ghana was already in common use, including, significantly, in the name of K. A. Busia’s Ghana Congress Party, which inherited the UGCC’s rump after it ceased to exist as a political party in 1952.¹⁴⁶ A less likely reason is that Nkrumah did not know that Danquah was the originator of that name. Danquah’s proposals on the country’s name change and the date for Independence received official acceptance when the British Parliament declared, via the Ghana Order in Council of 1957, that the name “Ghana” would be used in place of “Gold Coast” after 6th March 1957.¹⁴⁷ The early nationalist organisations, the ARPS and UGCC, considered 6th March as the date on which the Gold Coast had lost its sovereignty, since it was on this date in 1844 that Fanti chiefs first signed a Bond with the British. However, Danquah, more than any other individual, identified with 6th March and insisted constantly on this and no other date as the date that was most symbolic of liberation. Aside from bringing this date to the notice

¹⁴⁵ “A Correction to Kwame Nkrumah,” p. 134.

¹⁴⁶ Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and Tragedy*, p.108.

¹⁴⁷ *The Ghana Order in Council*, p.1.

of the British as the preferred date of independence in the UGCC telegram following the 1948 riots, the UGCC asked Nkrumah to declare 6th March 1954 as the day of full self-government when the Motion of Destiny was presented to the Legislative Assembly. The British acceptance of 6th March is therefore significant among the long list of agreements and concessions that were negotiated along the Gold Coast's road to Independence.

Danquah's activism in researching the name Ghana and pushing forth 6th March as the date for independence are all omitted from the textbook accounts about independence. With the exception of Kimble, who mentions Danquah's search for the name Ghana and the challenges he faced, extant accounts neglect this information. Danquah's "A Correction to Kwame Nkrumah," is also not taken into account in scholarship on how Ghana became independent. By giving insufficient attention to such fine details about areas of agreements and accommodation, extant accounts about Ghanaian nationalism contribute to the notion that only one person, Nkrumah, through radical contestations won independence for Ghana on 6th March 1957.

5.3.5 Summary of Compromise and Contestation in Nation Framing

In the end, none of the political parties participating in the elections of 1954 and 1956, which heralded the Independence Act, contested the British monarch's continued sovereignty over Ghana after independence.¹⁴⁸ For Kwame Nkrumah of the CPP; S. D. Dombo of the Northern People's Party, the largest opposition party; and K. A. Busia of the Ghana Congress Party, who became the official Leader of the Opposition, compromise was a necessary evil if the ultimate goal of full sovereignty was ever to be attained. All parties, including the CPP, collaborated with the British in the advance toward 1957. The turning point in the relationship between the political parties and the institution of chieftaincy occurred after 1954, when the CPP became decidedly anti-chief in its language, while the CPP's opponents adopted a pro-chief stance. All of the CPP's

¹⁴⁸ The contesting parties for the 1954 elections were: the Convention Peoples Party won the elections (CPP), Northern Peoples Party (NPP), was the second largest in terms of numbers in the Legislative Assembly, Moslem Association Party (MAP), NLM, Togoland Congress (TC), Anlo Youth Organisation (AYO), Ghana Congress Party (GCP), Ghana Nationalist Party (GNP) and Ghana Action Party (GAP), as well as the Oman Party. The 1956 election featured: the CPP, NPP, MAP, NLM, TC, AYO (aka AYA), and GCP as well as the Federated Youth Organisation (FYO) and Wassaw Youth Association.

opponents rallied together with the chiefs behind the goal of federalism or regionalism.

In formulating a suitable structure of government, the Ghanaian nationalists as cosmopolites looked globally, first to Britain, and then to the USA and the USSR. The CPP and its major opponent, the UGCC, both supported the British welfare state model and membership in the Commonwealth after Independence. They had to contend with different visions of the nation state -- federalist, regionalist and unitary, but they cooperated among themselves because of their shared vision of independence. When independence materialised, it was a shared victory. Nkrumah notes in his autobiography that “the whole country was celebrating ... the supporters of the NLM were more wild with excitement than even the C.P.P.-ists.”¹⁴⁹ Collaboration, accommodation and compromise were tools used by all the Ghanaian nationalists — and by the British. Independence occurred as scheduled, but the acrimony that characterised politicking in the 1950s and the unclear lines between so-called radicals and so-called conservatives continued into the post-independence period. Ghana’s first Parliament undertook a number of actions that fuelled acrimony. Some of these were the “Lawlessness in Trans-Volta Togoland Region” motion of 1st May 1957; the Emergency Powers Bill, introduced in November 1957; and the Avoidance of Discrimination Bill, introduced in December 1957.¹⁵⁰ But perhaps the most contradictory and yet defining of the legislations was the Ghana Citizenship Act. Debates about this Act, which are examined below, underscore the problem of assigning fixed labels to the nationalists.

5.4 Debates about the Ghana Citizenship Act

In a newspaper compilation on the first anniversary of Independence in 1958, a columnist, K. Y. Attoh, observed that it had been a year of “Debates and Decisions.”¹⁵¹ Attoh notes:

The first big debate in the Parliament of Independent Ghana came on April 30 and May 1 and 2, and with it, the return of suspicion. ... It was the debate on the Ghana Citizenship Bill. Opposition members felt that Commonwealth

¹⁴⁹ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, pp. 237.

¹⁵⁰ *Parliamentary Debates: First Series, Vol. 6, National Assembly Official Report, First Session of the First Parliament of Ghana, Sixth year of the Reign of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Session 1957-58.*

¹⁵¹ K. Y. Attoh, “The National Assembly ... Debates and Decisions,” *Ghana: One Year Old*, p. 11.

citizens and people born in Ghana should automatically become Ghana citizens; ... The Government, on the other hand, were of the view that only those whose parents, or at least one of them, are themselves Ghana citizens, could be depended upon for loyalty to Ghana.

What is striking about the citizenship arguments is the seemingly contradictory positions adopted by the political parties. The debates about citizenship complicate the CPP's Pan-African credentials and the territorial label given to its opponents. Nkrumah's writings and his speeches cemented the image of himself and the CPP as Pan-Africanist. While contemplating the significance of the first Conference of Independent African States that occurred in Ghana in April 1958, Nkrumah notes that "I felt that at last Pan-Africanism had moved to the African continent where it belonged."¹⁵² Nkrumah records elsewhere that:

When I returned to West Africa in 1947, it was with the intention of using the Gold Coast as a starting-off point for African independence and unity. ... the Gold Coast secured its freedom and emerged as the sovereign state of Ghana in 1957. I at once made it clear that there would be no meaning to the national independence of Ghana unless it was linked with the total liberation of the African continent.¹⁵³

While Nkrumah used the language of Pan-Africanism and called for African unity, his government pursued legislative policies that restricted membership of other African nationals to Ghana. The supposedly Pan-Africanist CPP advocated a rigidly territorial definition of Ghanaian citizenship that kept other Africans out. On the other hand, the purportedly territorial nationalists in the opposition proposed a de-territorialized alternative.

Barely a month after Independence, the Minister for Interior, Ako-Adjei, introduced a Bill to create a restricted and regulated "Ghana Citizenship or Nationality within the

¹⁵² Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 136.

¹⁵³ Nkrumah, *Africa Must Unite*, p. 136.

Commonwealth.”¹⁵⁴ The CPP proposed that, as in other Commonwealth countries, citizenship could be acquired through registration and naturalisation, but this would be subject to the approval of the Interior Minister or the Governor-General, and the draft Bill stipulated that “the decision of the Governor-General or the Minister on any such application shall not be subject to appeal to or review in any court.”¹⁵⁵ The CPP sought to exclude dual citizenship and regulate the presence of other West African nationals in Ghana. In supporting the proposal, the CPP Minister for Local Government, A. E. A. Ofori-Atta, contended that “we do not want anybody who owes dual allegiance” because “when a citizenship bill is being modelled, loyalty is the first thing to be taken into account.”¹⁵⁶ Additionally,

if we include Nigerians who are British subjects as Ghanaian citizens, what it implies is this: once Ghana falls flat they are entitled to fall back on their mother country. ... We are simply saying this: let us know today the people who can be looked upon to save this part of Africa known as Ghana, and that if it is blown out of this earth those people will get nowhere else to live.¹⁵⁷

The CPP member for Eastern Nzima, W. Baidoe-Ansah, argued further that “indiscriminate citizenship”¹⁵⁸ would weaken Ghana.

On their part, the parliamentary opposition contested unsuccessfully the clause that effectively gave the Nkrumah government unchecked powers to grant and revoke Ghanaian citizenship to and from any person without assigning a reason and with no right of appeal. Another argument advanced by the opponents of the Nationality and Citizenship Bill articulated by Victor Owusu was that the Bill disenfranchised “a lot of our brethren from Gambia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria who have lived in this country for many years.”¹⁵⁹ Owusu suggested to the CPP government to no avail that “all persons who are resident in Ghana before or on March 6, 1957, and who were British subjects and

¹⁵⁴ Ako Adjei, “The Ghana Nationality and Citizenship Bill,” 30th April 1957, *Parliamentary Debates: First Series, Vol. 6*, p.63. Ako Adjei was one of the members of the Big Six.

¹⁵⁵ Victor Owusu, “Ghana Nationality and Citizenship Bill,” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁶ A. E. A. Ofori-Atta, “The Ghana Nationality Bill,” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 77, 78.

¹⁵⁷ Ofori-Atta, “The Ghana Nationality Bill,” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 77.

¹⁵⁸ W. Baidoe-Ansah, “The Ghana Nationality Bill,” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 73.

¹⁵⁹ Victor Owusu, “The Ghana Nationality Bill,” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 69.

had been living here for at least the past twelve months, should automatically acquire citizenship of Ghana.”¹⁶⁰ The opposition’s Wala North representative, Jato Kaleo, invoked Pan-Africanist principles in noting that:

The significance of the Independence of Ghana must not be viewed narrowly. First of all, we have our brothers in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, who have stayed with us for a long time. Many of them are staying with us permanently. We should not take a narrow view of this matter. We should think in terms of Africa as a whole, with all the Africans coming together as a unit.¹⁶¹

Kaleo echoed Nkrumah’s own declaration that Ghana’s independence would be meaningless if it was divorced from Africa’s independence. He was unsuccessful because the CPP-dominated Parliament passed the Ghana Nationality and Citizenship Act, one effect of which was to denationalise long-term residents of Ghana who were born to non-Ghanaian parents before the Independence Act was passed.

The CPP’s enthusiasm for excluding other Africans from Ghanaian citizenship seems to contradict its overhyped Pan African ideals. Moreover, as later events would show, the CPP agenda was to deport prominent members of the opposition who were British Commonwealth citizens and permanently domiciled in Ghana but who could not claim automatic citizenship under the new law, and whom the Minister could deny citizenship using his newly acquired legal authority. As Attoh notes, the citizenship dispute reached a bitter peak in August 1957 when, at the Prime Minister’s instigation,¹⁶² the Minister of Local Government introduced a Special Bill “to determine the deportation to Nigeria of Alhaji Amadu Baba and Alhaji Alufa Larden Lakmie.”¹⁶³ These two were known financiers of the NLM and long-term residents of Ghana, living in Kumasi. The citizenship issue re-emerged in July 1958 with the Government’s introduction of the Deportation Bill, which cost the CPP its member for Builsa, A. Afoko, who “crossed the

¹⁶⁰ Owusu, “The Ghana Nationality Bill,” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 69.

¹⁶¹ Jato Kaleo, “The Ghana Nationality and Citizenship Bill,” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 172-173.

¹⁶² The Prime minister announced the imminent introduction of the Bill after demonstrations on parliament grounds by some young men and women citing hooliganism in Accra and Kumasi as the reason for the special Bill.

¹⁶³ Attoh, “The National Assembly,” p. 11.

carpet and joined the Opposition.”¹⁶⁴ The CPP justified its closed view of citizenship by pointing to national security as the reason for deporting its political rivals.

The attainment of independence thus ushered in a period of heated and divisive debate in the Ghana Parliament, particularly during the new nation’s first year. The Citizenship Act created a citizenship of Ghana within the Commonwealth that excluded other Africans and showed Nkrumah’s and the CPP’s readiness to jettison radical pan-African ideals for political expediency. In this debate about citizenship, the CPP retreated to defend a national fortress against their opponents’ openness to a cosmopolitan agenda. As showed in the arguments of Adjei, Baidoe-Ansah and Ofori-Atta, the CPP chose to prioritise national allegiance, at the expense of its oft touted radical Pan African ideals.

5.5 Conclusion

Nkrumah contributed to the narrative about the radicalism of the CPP in his publications such as *Ghana*, by referring to his opponents as “reactionary intellectuals and chiefs”¹⁶⁵ and presenting his choices as the most radical. Yet, in that same publication Nkrumah points out numerous instances when he reasoned that “some inducements would have to be offered to make it worth their [British colonial service officers] while to stay, otherwise there would be a general exodus which would not be in the interests of the country.”¹⁶⁶ According to his own account, after he won the election of 1951, Nkrumah eschewed the radical option and chose “tactical action” to endear himself and his party to the British. *Ghana* therefore provides us with both a justification and a *raison d’être* for Nkrumah’s actions. The most critical contemporary review of *Ghana* came from J. B. Danquah, who addressed the issue in public speeches and in a letter to Nkrumah and his publisher. Danquah demanded that changes be made to passages in the book that he believed were fabrications about the anti-colonial movement and defamatory of Danquah and the Ofori-Atta name.¹⁶⁷

As against the radical *versus* conservative standard account, the CPP and the UGCC were both liberal from 1949-1960. The two groupings cannot be distinguished on

¹⁶⁴ Attah, “The National Assembly,” p. 11.

¹⁶⁵ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p. 89.

¹⁶⁶ Nkrumah, *Ghana*, p. 123.

¹⁶⁷ “A Correction to Kwame Nkrumah,” pp. 124-134.

the basis of radical/conservative, because they were both variously radical or conservative, depending on the issue at stake. In the end, a re-characterisation of post-1945 politics and thinking away from the dyad of radical/conservative shows that the CPP agenda and that of its opponents, as well as the ARPS and interwar intellectuals, were no more than different liberalisms. In many instances, Nkrumah's opponents are characterised as an unvariegated conservative opposition, with a mission to thwart Nkrumah's radical anti-colonial agenda, regardless of the fact that after 1949, the decolonisation project was as much about the contest over how to frame the emergent nation-state as it was in the 1950s about ousting the coloniser. As was shown by the pronouncements of Danquah and the UGCC, Nkrumah's opponents were often more radical in their demands and expectations than Nkrumah and the CPP. The fact that Nkrumah is accorded the status of a radical hero and allowed to monopolise that label in these accounts underscores the bias of the grand narrative.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

6.1 *Civitatis Ghaniensis Conditor: Iconography and the Founder Debate*

In his maiden address to Ghana's Parliament in February 2009, President John Evans Atta Mills proposed Nkrumah's birthday as a holiday. Mills stated:

Madam Speaker let me also acknowledge our first President, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, that illustrious Founder of our nation. His selfless leadership serves as a point of reference in our determination to build a better Ghana. Incidentally, this year marks the 100th anniversary of Dr. Nkrumah's birth and, as a country, we should commemorate the event in an appropriate and befitting manner. ... We intend to honour Dr. Nkrumah's memory with a national holiday to be known as "Founder's Day," and we will be presenting legislation to Parliament to this effect.¹

Although President Mills did not present his proposal as such, it was a restoration of an old narrative and an old practice of the Nkrumah administration. As noted earlier in Chapter 1, a "Founder's Day" holiday was reinstated in 2013, to be marked on 19th September, Nkrumah's official birthday. Since 2017, the Founder's Day holiday on Nkrumah's birthday has been replaced by statute with a new "Founders' Day" holiday on 4th August, the shared anniversary of the inauguration of the ARPS and UGCC, Ghana's earliest political organisations. However, Ghanaians continue to be embroiled in debates about where to place the apostrophe. President Mills's proposition treated the "Nkrumah-as founder" narrative as a given. When viewed in its broader context against Mills' personal background, it exemplifies the deliberate actions the CPP and Nkrumah have employed to cement this narrative. Mills was an Nkrumaist, a member of the socialist forum of Ghana and a former member of Nkrumah's Young Pioneer Movement.² He was

¹ See: siteresources.worldbank.org/INTGHANA/.../State_of_the_Nation_address_Feb_2009.

² Interview with Kwamena Ahwoi, lawyer and politician, born in 1951, who was a Young Pioneer. He served as Secretary and Minister respectively in the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) régime and the NDC government, with responsibility for Local Government, and is the architect of Ghana's current local government system; Accra: 3 July 2017; Interview, Kwesi Adu, 63 years, member of the Young Pioneer Movement (1963-66), student leader and activist (1974-1978), Accra: 7 July 2017.

admitted to Achimota School in 1957, the year of Ghana's independence, and therefore grew up with the Nkrumah-as founder narrative that the CPP promoted in the 1950s.³

What is missing from the running debate is the role Nkrumah and the CPP played, and how their participation in the historical processes affects the history of nationalism in Ghana. Felix Müller interprets the debates that the restoration of Founder's Day engineered as the resurrection of an old argument between Nkrumah's supporters and his opponents.⁴ Müller, as other investigators of the Nkrumah legacy, does not treat the "Nkrumah as the sole founder of Ghana" proposal as a restoration of an old, entrenched and dominant narrative that marginalises many historical actors. Rather Müller simplifies the times by casting it as a binary of a competing narrative of nation-founding between Ghana's liberal Danquah-Busia tradition and the Marxist-Socialist Nkrumaists.⁵ In examining the works of popular textbook authors Albert Adu Boahen and Francis K. Buah for instance, Müller notes that liberals such as historian Boahen promoted "negative interpretations" of Nkrumah to "pave the way for a democratic and more market-oriented future."⁶ On the other hand, Buah had an agenda to rehabilitate Nkrumah "to strengthen the legitimacy of the newly elected Nkrumahist government' of which he was a part.⁷ The textbooks ignore the enormity of the intervention of Nkrumah and his CPP in the emergent narrative about the making of the nation. The lack of appreciation of how iconography and Nkrumah's own publications were for instance used by the CPP to construct a narrative underscore the lack of complexity that accompanies nationalist history. The survival of such concrete materials as sites of pedagogy and historical memory are evidence of a skewed nationalist archive. Thus, President Mills' proposal refocused attention on the Nkrumah legacy and historical memory about the making of Ghana, but the new debates rarely traced how knowledge about nationalism was mediated and skewed in favour of radical nationalism believed to be the brand of Nkrumah and his CPP.

³ Interview with Gabriel Owusu, rtd. banker, human resource consultant and classmate of J. E. A. Mills in Achimota Secondary School, 77 years, 21st July 2017.

⁴ Felix Müller, "Ghanaian Intellectuals and the Nkrumah Controversy 1970-2007/08" in *Kwame Nkrumah 1909-1972; A Controversial African Visionary*, ed. B. Lundt and C. Marx (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2016), pp. 137-152.

⁵ Müller, "Ghanaian Intellectuals and the Nkrumah Controversy," p. 152.

⁶ Müller, "Ghanaian Intellectuals and the Nkrumah Controversy," p. 151.

⁷ Müller, "Ghanaian Intellectuals and the Nkrumah Controversy," p. 152.

From 1957, Nkrumah and the CPP consciously constructed a narrative that proclaimed Nkrumah as founder of Ghana. As has been noted by Fuller, this narrative was created using a range of the tools of iconography, such as the issuance of commemorative postage stamps bearing Nkrumah's image to mark Independence Day celebrations on 6th March 1957, the erection of a statue of Nkrumah in the capital, and the minting of his image on currency notes and coins.⁸ Nkrumah's books equally intervened in de-colonial knowledge-making by providing tailored information about Nkrumah's actions, and categorising his intentions as radical, intentional and longstanding. It would seem that Nkrumah (re)published *Towards Colonial Freedom* in 1962 to contradict such insinuations that questioned the longevity of his anti-colonial activism and establish Nkrumah's reputation as a longstanding and unrelenting opponent of colonial rule. As exemplified by Danquah's neglected corrections to Nkrumah's *Ghana*, Nkrumah's publications did not go unchallenged, but scholarship that promotes the founder narrative does not consider the interventions that show other important contributions to the founding of Ghana. Perhaps the most effective contribution of Danquah's letter was the way it challenged Nkrumah's nationalist credentials by emphasising that Nkrumah had jumped on the Ghanaian anti-colonial bandwagon very late in the game.⁹ Nkrumah's interest in mediating accounts about Ghana's independence and nationalism is shown in how he responded to accusations of being a late starter on the nationalist scene through his primary weapon of publication. Thus, he re-issued *Towards Colonial Freedom* to safeguard his radical anti-colonial credentials.

Towards Colonial Freedom established a pre-1947 past for Nkrumah's activism and nationalist vision. It was conceived as a manifesto to invoke a revolution through organised action by well-informed cadres. What is striking about *Towards Colonial Freedom* is the importance Nkrumah attached to the date of publication of this text. Nkrumah was at pains to prove that although the book was first published in 1962 by a reputable printing house, its planning (while he was in the US in 1942) and its first

⁸ Harcourt Fuller, *Building the Ghanaian Nation-State: Kwame Nkrumah's Symbolic Nationalism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

⁹ Nkrumah's direct participation in Gold Coast politics began more or less in 1945 in London. Even so, his interest was in Black Atlantic Internationalism rather than Ghana specific. From his own account, he considered not coming home when he received the UGCC invite for the sake of continuing his London pan African work.

introduction to the world (from England in 1946) predated the period of active pursuit of his dream. This timeline is questionable because one of Nkrumah's major claims in 1962 was that the work as published was unedited. Yet the unedited original preface was signed "Kwame Nkrumah, London, October 1947," meaning the first distribution could only have occurred between October and December 1947 when he left England for Ghana. It is evident from the book's tone that Nkrumah was under the influence of George Padmore and Wallace Johnson at the time of its writing. This confirms his claim that the manuscript was written before 1962. However, it does not explain why he wanted to make this point so forcefully, especially since his two books *Ghana* and *I Speak of Freedom* had been so well received. Could it be that Nkrumah felt the need to re-establish his deeply rooted anti-colonial stance because of the challenges posed by his local opponents, not the least being Danquah's contention that the obvious mistakes in the dates and details of *Ghana* were because of Nkrumah's newness to the scene of the anti-colonial struggle?

The CPP under its leader consciously established the Nkrumah as the founder of Ghana narrative through legal enactments and the use of visual imagery. Kofi Baako, a Minister without Portfolio, explained that this aggrandisement of Nkrumah through visual imagery was necessary as a simplified way to explain self-government to the highly unlettered Ghanaian population of 1957, since:

Anybody who sees his image will begin to think about it, for after he has seen it and there is a change, he will begin to ask questions. "Three months ago it was this man's or that woman's head that was on the coin; why is it that there has now been a change?" And then those of us who know the truth will begin to interpret it correctly to him that the change has come across because there is a change in the status of Ghana.¹⁰

As Baako attests, Nkrumah and the CPP consciously employed visual images to craft a simplified story of heroism that focused on Nkrumah and his radicalism. The same alibi, citing illiteracy among the masses, was offered by the Communist Party of the Soviet

¹⁰ Kofi Baako, "Prime Minister's Statue," *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 1176.

Union for its use of iconography to glorify its leaders, most especially Lenin. Nkrumah and the CPP were cosmopolitans in search of progress and this Soviet practice was their guiding principle -- as they established Nkrumah as an icon of anti-colonial radicalism and the symbolic figure around whom the nation revolved.

And then on 21st June 1957, the Minister of Information, Kofi Baako, confirmed a *Daily Graphic* issue of that same day that stated that Nkrumah had stated in London that his head would be put on the Ghana coinage because many Ghanaians could neither read nor write and “they’ve got to be shown that they are now really independent. And they can only be shown by signs.”¹¹ Baako argued that such a move was necessary because Nkrumah “is the man who has successfully led the people of Ghana from the shackles of imperialism to independence.”¹² Such statements, focusing on Nkrumah’s tact and leadership, served to simplify the broad processes involved in the attainment of independence, while obscuring the fact that the Queen of England continued to be the Head of State of Ghana after independence. Another case of the CPP’s use of iconography occurred when the CPP decided to fund a twenty-foot statue of Nkrumah in Accra using public funds.¹³ Once again Baako argued in parliament that “the decision to erect this statue was taken by the Prime Minister’s ministerial colleagues as an appreciation and in commemoration of his services to the country by leading us from the colonial status to dominion status. The Government therefore do not consider that the funds provided for that project are a waste of Government revenue.”¹⁴ Baako argued further that iconography-related expenses were justified because “independence is a very important thing,”¹⁵ Moreover:

In order that the man who may be born tomorrow will grow up to see that in 1957 Ghana was born, and that this is the monument which was erected when Ghana achieved her Independence; so that the child who will be born tomorrow will grow up to see that this is a statue of the man who led the people of this

¹¹ Baako, “Ghana Currency and Coin (P. M’s. Head),” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 1172.

¹² Baako, “Ghana Currency and Coin (P. M’s. Head),” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 1172.

¹³ Dombo, “Prime Minister’s Statue,” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 1174.

¹⁴ Baako, “Prime Minister’s Statue,” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 1175.

¹⁵ Baako, “Prime Minister’s Statue,” *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 1176.

country to Independence.¹⁶

As noted by Baako, the CPP's aim was to shape the historical narrative by focusing on Nkrumah as founder.

Ghana opted out of the West African currency system that had tied together the economies of the four British West African territories and launched its own currency, the Ghana pound, a year after independence. Ghana pound notes and coins were made available to banks and post offices nationwide on 14th July 1958.¹⁷ There were three paper notes with face values of ten shillings, one pound and five pounds.¹⁸ All the notes had the Bank of Ghana building and inscription on the front side. On the reverse, the ten-shilling note sported a star. The pound note depicted a cocoa nursery unit, with cocoa pods and seedlings. The five-pound note showed a cargo ship and timber logs on the reverse. There were also two bronze coins (with face values of a penny and halfpenny) and four copper/ nickel coins (worth threepence, sixpence, one shilling and two shillings). All the coins had on one side a five-pointed star with the inscription "Ghana 1958" and the coin's face value. On the reverse, all the coins featured Nkrumah's head, his name and the Latin words: "*CIVITATIS GHANIENSIS CONDITOR*," which translate to "Founder of the Ghanaian nation." The Ghana pound was legal tender in Ghana from 1958 to 1967, although it was officially replaced with the Ghana cedi in 1965. Kwabena Amoah Awuah Mensah recalls that "on 19th July 1965, the Ghana cedi was unveiled to the public on the newly-launched Ghana Broadcasting Corporation television service, sustaining the wave of sycophancy that had accompanied the celebration three weeks earlier of the fifth anniversary of the First Republic, with full-page adverts in the State-owned press extolling Nkrumah's boundless virtue."¹⁹

Nkrumah's opponents in parliament protested the use of Nkrumah's head on the

¹⁶ Baako, "Prime Minister's Statue," *Parliamentary Debates*, p. 1177.

¹⁷ <https://www.bog.gov.gh/bank-notes-coins/evolution-of-currency-in-ghana/>, accessed on 5th December 2019.

¹⁸ Interview with Gabriel K. Owusu, 75yrs, rtd. Banker and human resource consultant, Accra: 15th June 2017.

¹⁹ Interview with Kwabena Amoah Awuah Mensah, computer systems consultant and son of J. H. Mensah, who went into exile the same day, having previously led the drafting of the Nkrumah Seven-Year Development Plan, Accra: 28th June 2017.

Ghana pound, but the loudest opposition came from Ga leaders in Accra.²⁰ Fuller reports that the Ga Aborigines' Society sent protest letters to various organisations, including one to the British Prime Minister. They made it clear that they were not against the replacement of Queen Elizabeth's head. Their problem was with Nkrumah's head on the coins, as well as the creation of a particular brand of historical memory implied in the Latin phrase "*Civitatis Ghaniensis Conditor*." The Ga Aborigines' Society, citing the enterprising feats of "worthy [Ga] patriots throughout the years,"²¹ argued that self-government had been achieved for the Gold Coast through teamwork. While they agreed that Queen Elizabeth remained Ghana's Head of State, they were in favour of having neither her head nor that of the Prime Minister on the coins. Instead they favoured a neutral symbol, such as the "Ghana Emblem and Coat of Arms."²² The protests notwithstanding, the coins remained in circulation until the Ghana cedi replaced the Ghana pound in July 1965.²³

Finally, on 22nd August 1958, the Minister of Interior, Krobo Edusei, read a statement in Parliament after prayers were said.²⁴ It is important to quote this document extensively because it laid the foundation for the current debate over whether Ghana should recognise a single founder or multiple founders. The statement titled "National Founder's Day" read:

I wish to inform the House that the Government have decided that the 21st day of September — the birthday of the Prime Minister, Dr. Nkrumah — will be observed as a public holiday in appreciation of his services and leadership, which made the peaceful achievement of independence for our country

²⁰ Harcourt Fuller, "*Civitatis Ghaniensis Conditor*: Kwame Nkrumah, Symbolic Nationalism and the Iconography of Ghanaian money, 1957 – the Golden Jubilee," *Nations and Nationalism* 14, no. 3 (2008): 520-541.

²¹ Fuller, "*Civitatis Ghaniensis Conditor*," p. 531.

²² Fuller, "*Civitatis Ghaniensis Conditor*," p.532.

²³ Nkrumah's head never graced Ghanaian currency notes or coins after his overthrow in 1966 — until the New Patriotic Party government of President John Agyekum Kufuor reintroduced it in 2002 on the 10,000-cedi denomination, in a group image with the five other members of the Big Six. The Big Six remained on the new cedi note when it was redenominated in July 2007. This was a significant gesture made by the Kufuor administration to employ the use of iconography to assert that Ghana had founders and not one founder. As noted by Fuller, although it is significant, the currency as a symbol of nation-building is noticeably absent from many accounts, including the textbooks that have informed Ghanaian history pedagogy.

²⁴ *Ghana Official Report, Parliamentary Debates*, Friday, 22nd August 1958, p. 1785.

possible. Dr. Nkrumah — the Founder of the new State of Ghana — has, through his devotion to the cause of Freedom and Justice, won not only the hearts of the people of Ghana but also the admiration and respect of other countries of the world. To lead successfully a country in a struggle for independence is a very remarkable achievement. But the achievement is even more remarkable when the independence [*sic*] is waged without violence and without bloodshed. The record number of visitors, including some of the most outstanding personalities of the world,²⁵ who came to witness the celebrations of our independence, was a tribute to Dr. Nkrumah’s wise leadership, and an acknowledgement of the role young Ghana can play in world affairs. It is in honour of this great son of Africa and his loyal services that the Government have decided to make the 21st of September every year a public holiday.²⁶

The Nkrumah-as-founder holiday was only one in a series of acts of erasure and omission embarked upon by the CPP in government that produced the Grand Narrative. The CPP also reinforced this brand of history by altering of the national anthem and the formation of the Young Pioneer Movement as well as the founding of the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological School at Winneba in 1962.²⁷

On 1st July 1960, Ghana became a republic and Nkrumah its first President. The founder narrative reached its apogee with the establishment of the one-party state. Following the example of other post-independent states such as Touré’s Guinea, Nkrumah inaugurated a one-party state in Ghana on 1st February 1964. Nkrumah argued that a one-party state was ideal in a post-colonial state, as it was the necessary precondition for socialism. Thus:

A people's parliamentary democracy with a one-party system is better able to express and satisfy the common aspirations of a nation as a whole, than a multi-

²⁵ One of the outstanding personalities was Dr. Martin Luther King of the American Civil Rights Movement fame.

²⁶ *Parliamentary Debates*, Friday, 22nd August 1958, pp. 1785-1786.

²⁷ The Ghana anthem from 1957-1960 was “Lift High the Flag of Ghana.” The lyrics were changed to include Nkrumah and the CPP in 1960. In 1966 [after the coup] a completely new tune and new lyrics replaced the old one. The 1966 anthem, “God Bless our Homeland Ghana” is currently the one in use. Interview with Ahwoi; Interview, Kwesi Adu, 63 years, member of Young Pioneer movement (1963-66) and student leader and activist 1974-1978, Accra: July 7, 2017.

party parliamentary system, which is in fact only a ruse for perpetuating, and covers up, the inherent struggle between the 'haves' and 'have-nots'.”²⁸

The tensions and constraints involved in the quest to establish the socialist state have been explored in Ahlman's *Nkrumahism*, in which the author finds that an important key to understanding Nkrumahism is to view the broad processes involved as a quest to establish a cosmopolitan socialist society. The one-party state as a cosmopolitan agenda deviated substantially from the pro-synthesis agenda pursued by earlier nationalists. In terms of the vision of synthesis of chieftaincy with liberal ideals of the franchise and parliamentary democracy at the highest level of governance, the British and the nationalists opted to lean away from the much hated indirect rule system in their march towards Independence Day, and by so doing, jeopardised the project of synthesis. In the end, the CPP's anti-chief language and its socialist leanings erased any chances of synthesis with its assumption of a founder narrative that elevated Nkrumah above all others and revisited the anti-synthesis discourse of Nnamdi Azikiwe in the interwar years. The one-party state model further reinforced the anti-synthesis structure adopted by the state earlier in 1957 and 1960 so that by the time of Nkrumah's overthrow in 1966, Ghana had substantially deviated from synthesis to a more global structure of government.

Even before Ghana was declared a one-party socialist state in 1964, one could recognise the Soviet origins of the Nkrumah administration's use of iconography. Several authors have examined Soviet iconography and how it served as a counter-narrative to Western narratives and a rallying concept for imagining the Soviet Union.²⁹ The similarities between Nkrumah's pursuit of iconography as a rallying concept for imagining the nation-state and that of the USSR under Stalin and Lenin has been

²⁸ Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution* (New York: Monthly Review Press 1964), pp. 100-101.

²⁹ Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (California: Univ of California Press, 1999); Andrew Jenks, "Iconography, Power, and Expertise in Imperial Russia" *The Donald W. Treadgold Papers in Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies* (2004); Marion G. Müller, "Iconography and Iconology as a Visual Method and Approach," Eric Margolis and Luc Pauwels, ed., *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods* (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage Publishers 2011), pp. 283-297.

discussed by other authors and needs no repetition.³⁰ Most scholars recognise the ways in which iconography contributes to acrimonious contestations over the framing of the nation, not least because the simplified story perpetuates a homoarchic and exclusionary grand narrative. The reactions of Nkrumah's opponents and supporters, as well as those who deserted him or critiqued him on his obsession with creating a visual and mental image of himself as the founder of Ghana, are part of the enigma that surrounds Ghana's nationalist history. The CPP mediated the birth of a mental and visual Nkrumah archive in Ghana from 1957, when it devised its plan for Ghana to issue its own currency notes and coins, and to erect Nkrumah's statue in Accra even as it invented an exclusionary narrative about the anti-colonial movement. The narrative was further entrenched with the conferment on Nkrumah of the title of Founder and the institutionalisation of a Founder's Day holiday, which was observed each year from 1957 to 1965.³¹ Jean Allman, writing about the postcolonial archive, notes that "in Ghana, these records constitute, in many ways, an accidental archive for the state has been far less involved in shaping how we can and will remember Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah."³² While this observation applies fully to the post-Nkrumah archival sites of the Ghana state, this thesis has argued that in some instances the archive was mediated at the national level in the Nkrumah era.

6.2 Narrating Ghana through Cosmopolitan Nationalism

This thesis critically examined the categories of proto-, cultural, conservative and radical nationalism, to deconstruct the assumptions that have shaped existing accounts about nationalism in Ghana. Scholars who study Ghanaian nationalism used these accepted labels without appreciating how the hierarchical treatment of radical nationalism

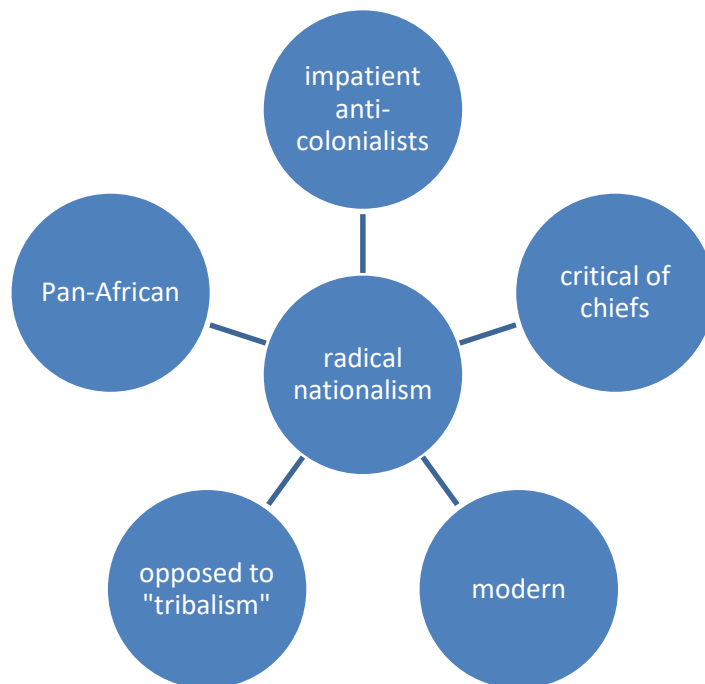
³⁰ Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah*, Basil Davidson, *Black Star, The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State* (London: James Currey, 1992); Ahlman, *Living with Nkrumahism*; Kodzo Gavua, "Monuments and Negotiations of Power in Ghana," in Derek Peterson, Kodzo Gavua and Ciraj Rasool, eds., *The Politics of Heritage in Africa: Economies, Histories, and Infrastructures* (London: International African Institute, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Carola Lentz, "A Lasting Memory: The Contested History of the Nkrumah Statue," Lundt and Marx, *Kwame Nkrumah*, pp. 153 – 184.

³¹ Nkrumah was overthrown in a coup d'état on 26th February 1966.

³² Jean Allman, "Phantoms of the Archive: Kwame Nkrumah, a Nazi Pilot Named Hanna, and the Contingencies of Postcolonial History-Writing," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 118, No. 1 (2013), p. 128.

displaces other nationalisms. Unlike earlier periods, when intellectual debates were waged by a variety of people on a variety of subjects, the reading public was treated to heavy doses of Nkrumah-inspired information in major publications, including books and newspapers from 1957 to 1966. Consequently, the Nkrumah narrative set out in his autobiography and numerous other publications became the dominant narrative. As noted by Richard Rathbone, the corollary of the print legacy from this period is that the emergent narrative mostly adopted the language and perspectives of the victors, Nkrumah and his party.³³ The problem as explained by Rathbone is that for many scholars, the so-called radical nationalism of Nkrumah and the CPP became “the major expression of nationalism in the Gold Coast.”³⁴ The language about conservatives and radicals thus obscured the agenda of the nationalists without exploring their writings and activism within the broader context of their times. The diverse opinions and characters of the pre-1950s era were divided into two — conservative and radical -- in extant literature as shown in the figures below.

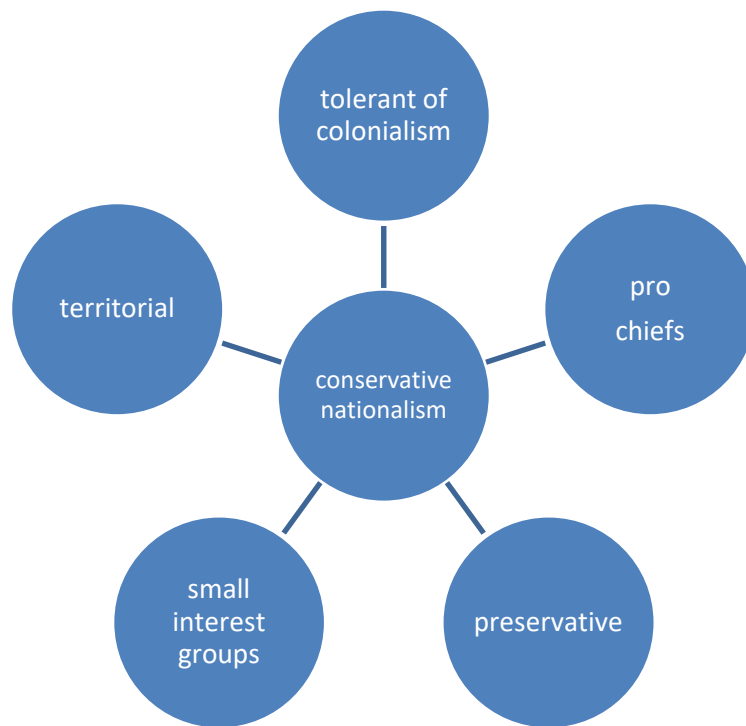
Figure 6–1 Attributes of Radical Nationalism in the Grand Narrative



³³ Richard Rathbone, “An Anti-Colonial African Monarchy; Nana Sir Ofori Atta I and the Conservative Nationalist tradition in Ghana” in Toyin Falola ed., *Ghana in Africa and the World: Essays in Honor of Adu Boahen* (Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press 2003), pp. 623-639.

³⁴ Apter, *Gold Coast in Transition*, p. 292.

Figure 6–2 Attributes of Conservative Nationalism in the Grand Narrative



The figures above show how the grand narrative ascribes fixed attributes to historical actors. As noted by Cooper in *Colonialism in Question*, when basic narratives are built around fixed labels, the emergent story lacks texture and remains oversimplified. One way that this dissertation mediates in the Grand Narrative is to examine the intellectuals in the broad context of their times as cosmopolitans who were also nationalists. By tracing the simplistic narrative to the tendency to interpret earlier nationalisms through the lens of radical nationalism that is assumed to have characterised the post-1945 era, the dissertation shows how such pillars of nationalist history are often contradictory in their suppositions and consequently erased many writer-intellectuals and misinterpreted their programs.

Unlike earlier periods between 1860 and 1948 when intellectual debates were carried out by various people on many subjects, post-1945 accounts are predominantly Nkrumah-inspired information. The emergent account, which has survived as the grand narrative, mostly adopted the language and perspectives of the victors, Nkrumah and his

party. Consequently, the Nkrumah narrative set out in his autobiography became the national narrative and has been promoted in scholarly works and history textbooks about Ghana since 1957. The history textbooks in particular facilitated the development of a Ghanaian history pedagogy and memory making, which passed moral judgement on the historical actors of the interwar period by labelling them in unattractive terms.³⁵ The word conservative became a pejorative reference to interwar intellectuals and their debates. Paradoxically, the argument of Olufemi Vaughan that “the postcolonial state project requires – indeed, cannot avoid – an imaginative integration of antecedent structures with the agencies of the modern state”³⁶ is considered radical in the twenty-first century, perhaps, because of the “disconcerting tenacity of chieftaincy.”³⁷ Nevertheless, those who made such suggestions about synthesizing local ways with modern ways during the interwar years were labelled conservative. The result of all this is that a flawed dominant account remains the bedrock of Ghanaian history.

While the grand narrative is homoarchival, teleological and tendentious as well as divisive and simplistic, what occurred from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century was in fact diverse and unpredictable. This study has focused on writer-intellectuals whose publications have shaped Ghana’s history and by extension her more proper grand narrative. The making of that history however involves a broad spectrum of contributors, lettered and unlettered, writers and non-writers. What the intellectuals shared in common was their belief in the ability of their publications to change their times and impact the future they envisaged. They also believed in the power of the schoolroom to effect the changes they desired. All of them without exception prescribed schoolroom education as a prerequisite for moulding their differing concepts of the future. As argued by Oluwatoyin Oduntan, “flexible and adaptive local cultures

³⁵ A. Adu Boahen, *Topics in West African History* (London: Longman, 1960); ---, *Ghana: Evolution and Change in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Longman, 1975); F. K. Buah, *An Elementary History for Schools. Book One: Ghana* (London: Macmillan, 1967, 1968); ---, *A History of Ghana* (Oxford: Macmillan Education, 1998); J. K. Fynn & R. Addo-Fening, *History for Senior Secondary Schools* (Accra: Safeway Printing Works Ltd., 1991); Vincent Okyere, *Ghana: A Historical Survey* (Accra: Vinojab Publications, 2000).

³⁶ Olufemi Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s - 1990s* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000), p. 1.

³⁷ Richard Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana 1951-1960* (Accra, Athens, Oxford: Reimmer, Ohio University Press, James Curry, 2000), p. 4.

appropriated elements of European culture, including those the colonizers thought they were forcing on Africans.”³⁸ Thus, Africans made “affirmative choices from local and global resources.”³⁹

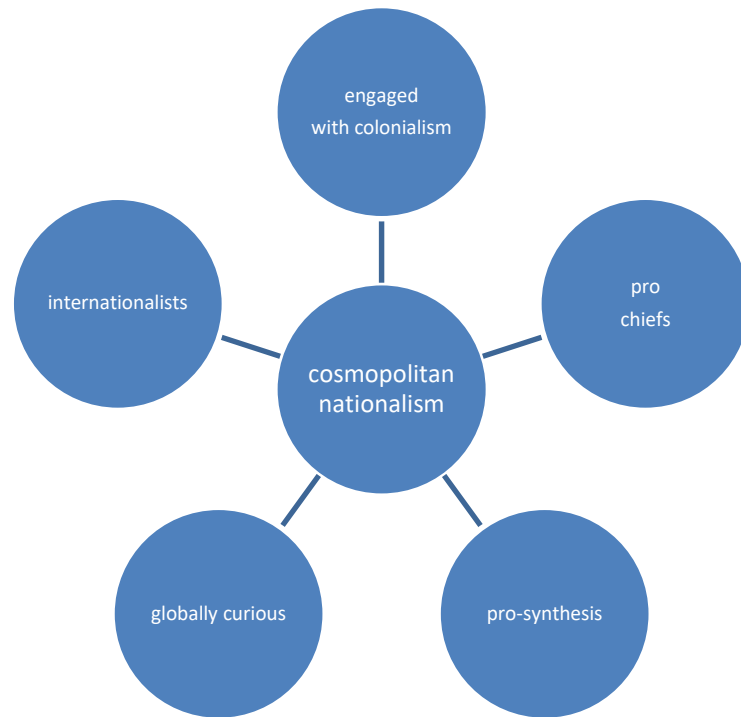
From Horton to Blyden, Sarbah to Hayford and Sekyi to Danquah as well as Azikiwe to Nkrumah, 19th- and 20th-century writer-intellectuals who engaged with the progress of West Africa and the Gold Coast were consciously and subconsciously shaped by their cosmopolitan nationalism which in its different contexts is best understood as a committed engagement with the question of synthesis. While Horton and Blyden imagined Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively as the epicentre of West African progress, the Ghanaian intellectuals promoted the Gold Coast then Ghana as the nucleus of advancement. The questions they engaged with more or less placed them in a quandary -- how to synthesise, what to synthesise and how to recruit converts to their cause. While they approached these issues differently, their motivations and interests were similar. One thing they shared was that the writer-intellectuals did not shy away from adapting liberal models to local circumstances and by so doing approached such local issues from cosmopolitan perspectives.

The Grand Narrative discounts relevant historically grounded cosmopolitan results of travel, interaction and knowledge-making, which are traceable to before the fifteenth century CE. Although this dissertation does not deal with the unwritten intellectual legacies of Ghana and West Africa, it is important to acknowledge the cosmopolitan connections that facilitated the evolution of Ghana and West Africa’s philosophical and intellectual developments from oral to written systems. Ample Arabic sources have established the cosmopolitan nature of West Africa from at least medieval times. The cosmopolitan connections problematise the grand narrative’s dyad of African *versus* Western and its teleology. The figure below shows how a concept of cosmopolitan nationalism, with its flexible features, can expand the Grand Narrative.

³⁸ Oluwatoyin Oduntan, *Power, Culture and Modernity in Nigeria: Beyond the Colony* (London; New York: Routledge, 2018), p. 167.

³⁹ Oduntan, *Power, Culture and Modernity in Nigeria*, p. 167.

Figure 6–3 Cosmopolitan Nationalism: A Solution to the Grand Narrative



The figure above takes into consideration the fact that the intellectuals engaged with different ideas across the Atlantic including colonial rule. Their major preoccupation was how to make colonial rule beneficial to the colonised people. In thinking through the problems of the Gold Coast and West Africa, they adopted and adapted globally inspired best practices as a solution to the problems of the Gold Coast and West Africa. They interrelated with different peoples from Europe, the Americas and Asia, building networks all the while considering and debating how to synthesise Gold Coast ways with the new. Their interactions were therefore not binary but plural and interactive, thus promoting cross-cultural borrowings as argued by Anthony Kwame Appiah about his cosmopolitans.⁴⁰ The findings of this dissertation confirm the scholarship of Stephanie Newell and Esperanza Brizuela-Garcia that show the prism of cosmopolitanism as a viable tool in assessing Ghanaian writer-intellectuals.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); ---, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006).

⁴¹ Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Ghana: How to Play the Game of Life* (Bloomington and Manchester: Indiana UP, Manchester UP 2002); ---, *The Power to Name: A History of Anonymity in Colonial West Africa* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2013); ---, "Local Cosmopolitans in Colonial West Africa," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, Vol. 46(I): 2011, pp. 103-117; Esperanza Brizuela-

The questions this dissertation sought to answer as well as its findings necessitated an expansion of Appiah's cosmopolitans to include Stephanie Newell's concept of local cosmopolitans.⁴² Newell defines local cosmopolitans as:

The "colonised" who have not travelled, who are bound primarily to local power structures and loyalties, sometimes in oppositional or resisting modes, whose gestures towards English clothing and language are a source of derision only to those who have travelled. Repositioned as local cosmopolitans, the apparent failure of their attempted mimicry becomes a positive sign of the cosmopolitan's capacity to take on and exploit imported products for new local ends.⁴³

Newell's nod to local cosmopolitans essentially recognises the effects on untravelled locals of international trade, geopolitical forces and migration, all of which have shaped West Africa as argued by other prominent scholars such as Frederick Cooper and Achilles Mbembe.⁴⁴ This expanded concept of cosmopolitanism that takes geography into consideration form the bedrock of this dissertation, not Appiah's representation of the cosmopolitan as well travelled. Other approaches adopted to arrive at the dissertation's findings include Cooper's call for an approach that deconstructs conceptual categories while allowing for plurality through the acknowledgement of multiple imaginings of the state, and Philip Zachernuk's intellectual history approach that emphasises context-specific analysis.

Using the above-mentioned approaches as guidelines, this thesis demonstrates that in Ghana, cosmopolitan writer intellectuals often reacted to issues confronting their society and proposed ways to deal with them by publicizing their views in newspapers and monographs. Their views once expressed elicited responses thus creating a culture of debate. My research therefore investigated key debates in Ghana from 1860 to 1965 as

Garcia, "Cosmopolitanism: Why Nineteenth Century Gold Coast Thinkers Matter in the Twenty-First Century," *Ghana Studies*, 17 (2014): 203-221.

⁴² Newell, "Local Cosmopolitans."

⁴³ Newell, "Local Cosmopolitans," p. 110.

⁴⁴ Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001); ---, "Afropolitanism" trans. Laurent Chauvet, *Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent* (Johannesburg: Jacana Media, 2007), pp. 26-29; Frederick Cooper, *Africa in the World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

part of this culture of debate. This culture of debate that predates the UGCC/ CPP period has been lost in recent scholarship because of the bitter rivalry among the supporters of these two political camps. Although the debates continued after the onset of party politics from 1947, the overarching reach of political history and politicking obscured this aspect of Ghana's history. This dissertation has therefore restored to view the culture of debate in intellectual circles that was and should continue to be a Ghanaian culture by exploring key debates that engaged the attention of Ghanaians, all of whom were cosmopolitan from 1860 to 1965. The discoveries of this thesis demonstrate that it is incorrect to single out a sole founder of Ghana, because there are many founders. Hence, not *Civitas Ghanensis Conditor*, but *Civitas Ghanensis Conditores*.

The findings of this thesis prove that Ghana's history involves a multiplicity of actors and theatres of engagement, and this invalidates the theory of one founder of Ghana. A lack of appreciation of the effects on public memory of various sites of Nkrumah mediated pedagogy – scholarly works, textbooks, monuments, museums and archives, which continuously enact the grand narrative -- has obscured knowledge about decolonization in Ghana. This has been exacerbated by the reference to and usage of the categories of conservative and radical nationalism in existing accounts. Major publications since the 1950s have served as mediators in the process of knowledge making about decolonization in Ghana. The intellectual and political histories of Ghana in the 1950s, marked as they were by heated and divisive debates about how to frame the nation, remain obscured because of attachments to the Grand Narrative. Focusing on how the CPP and Nkrumah consciously worked to dominate post-independence publications and politics with the Nkrumah narrative, contextualises the accounts by pointing to biases. In this way, the grand narrative is complicated and expanded upon.

At the core of Ghana's foundation debates lie issues of national identity and belonging, legitimacy and power. A founder theory communicates the end result while excluding the multiplicity of actors and their debates. The evidence indicates that the interventions of Gold Coasters, their West African contemporaries and their Atlantic networks shaped the outcome of many events in Ghana, which resulted in the making of the nation. Such information is useful in the Founder *versus* Founders debate. By showing what continues to be missing in the stories that nations tell, this dissertation

contributes to revisionist scholarship that challenges hegemonic histories by deconstructing such simplistic narratives to show how stories that have been suppressed in dominant accounts can be rebuilt and retold in diversified, inclusive and equitable ways. The dissertation makes a conceptual contribution in that it suggests a more flexible, mutable, inclusive approach which assumes a cosmopolitan setting, highlights the centrality of inquiry and debate, and opens a vista for much richer understandings of Ghanaians' longstanding and ongoing questions about how to best thrive in the world.

APPENDIX A Biography

A.1 Biographical Sketches for Chapter 2

A.1.1 Ferdinand Fitzgerald (1807-1884)

Ferdinand Fitzgerald is believed to have been born in Liberia in 1807.¹ By all accounts, Fitzgerald was a firebrand, and his journalistic practices mirrored his personality. He was known to have “spared no sentiment in taking up the case against maladministration in West Africa.”² It is no surprise that a Gold Coast newspaper, *The Gold Coast Leader*, proclaimed, “We have seldom heard of or known a better, honester (*sic*), and more pronounced friend and guardian of African interests than the editor of the African Times ... On the pages of the history of the nineteenth century, the name of Ferdinand Fitzgerald deserves to be placed in the foremost rank of philanthropic champions.”³ No wonder that “persons who constituted the butt of Fitzgerald's attacks succeeded in closing the Society and the paper in 1866. However, Fitzgerald took over the journal himself as proprietor and editor until his death in 1884 at the age of 77.”⁴ The African Aid Society promoted African economies through collaboration with prominent Africans such as J. A. B. Horton.

A.1.2 Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912)

Edward Wilmot Blyden, believed to be of Ibo descent, was born in 1832 on the Danish Island of St. Thomas,⁵ in the modern-day US Virgin Islands. A White American pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, Rev. John P. Knox, assumed the leadership of the St. Thomas congregation in 1845, and took a keen interest in Blyden.⁶ In 1850, in the company of Mrs. Knox, Blyden departed from St. Thomas for the United States of America, intending to study Theology. After failing to gain admission to Rutgers Theological Seminary, on account of America's system of racial discrimination, Blyden

¹ Steffen Runkel, “The Perspectives of African Elites on Slavery and Abolition on the Gold Coast (1860–1900): Newspapers as Sources,” *Postcolonial Studies Across Disciplines*, p. 244n.

² Jones-Quartey, “Anglo-African Journals,” p. 48.

³ Jones-Quartey, “Anglo-African Journals,” pp. 48-49.

⁴ Omu, “The Dilemma of Press Freedom in Colonial Africa,” p. 288.

⁵ Hollis R. Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden: Pan-Negro Patriot 1832-1912* (London: Oxford University Press 1967) p. 4.

⁶ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, p. 4.

immigrated to Liberia under the auspices of the American Colonization Society,⁷ arriving in Monrovia on 26th January 1851. He enrolled in Alexander High School, which was run by the Presbyterian mission. Blyden became a lay preacher in 1853, began tutoring at his *alma mater* in 1854, and was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1858.⁸ According to Hollis Lynch, Blyden served three years as the headmaster of his *alma mater*, then was elected a Professor in 1862 at the newly-founded College of Liberia. He was appointed Secretary of State by President Benson in 1862 but continued to teach, eventually becoming the College's President in 1881. He served again as Liberia's Secretary of State between 1878 and 1888.

Blyden was a proud citizen of the Republic of Liberia and made his permanent base in West Africa, but he was also a travel enthusiast. His interest in religion cultivated an equal interest in the Holy Lands that transcended mere curiosity.⁹ In 1866, Blyden travelled to North Africa and the Middle East, specifically, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Palestine for two years, during which time he studied Arabic.¹⁰ On his return, he taught Arabic at Liberia College. He resigned from the College in 1871 and after a brief visit to Europe spent two years in the neighbouring country of Sierra Leone. From the 1870s Blyden rarely resided for long periods in Liberia as he embarked on a self-imposed exile. During this time Blyden worked with the British colonial service and was posted to Sierra Leone and Lagos. He travelled extensively in the United States and Europe, where he served as a diplomat for the government of Liberia in Britain and France. Blyden had the language skills to match his personality. He could write and speak Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Arabic and a host of European and West African languages. Although he did not live or work in the Gold Coast, Blyden's protégés included the Gold Coast writer-intellectual, J. E. Casely Hayford and the Nigerian intellectual Mojola Agbebi.

⁷ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, p. 4.

⁸ Lynch, *Edward Wilmot Blyden*, p. 13.

⁹ Jacob S. Dorman, "Lifted Out of the Commonplace Grandeur of Modern Times: Reappraising Edward Wilmot Blyden's Views of Islam and Afrocentrism in Light of his Scholarly Black Christian Orientalism," *Souls*, vol. 12:4 (December 2010), pp. 398-418.

¹⁰ Christopher Fyfe, "Introduction," Edward Wilmot Blyden, reprint, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1967), p. xiv. Blyden's biographer, Hollis Lynch does not mention Palestine as one of the places Blyden visited on his maiden journey to the East.

A.1.3 James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1883)

Horton was born in Gloucester, Sierra Leone, to Ibo re-captive parents,¹¹ James and Nancy Horton, in 1835.¹² The Reverend James Beale, a C. M. S. missionary helped Horton to gain admission in 1847 at the C. M. S. Grammar School, Freetown.¹³ Horton continued to Fourah Bay Institution in 1853 and in 1855 upon request from the War Office, the C. M. S. recommended Horton and two others, Samuel Campbell and W. B. Davies, to pursue medical studies in London.¹⁴ By 1858, Horton and Davies had qualified as medical doctors and Horton went on to become a researcher and writer-intellectual. His medical thesis, titled *The Medical Topography of the West Coast of Africa, with Sketches of its Botany*, had been accepted for publication before he left England in September 1859 for his first posting in West Africa. Horton relied on his background in meteorology and geology to study the physical environment of West Africa. His geological surveys and his belief in capital accumulation led him to engage in gold prospecting as a business after he retired from the army.¹⁵

Horton conducted research exercises on all of his official travels and used the information he gathered to write two more medical books and two political treatises as well as several pamphlets and newspaper articles. He also visited London regularly, sometimes for long periods when he was on leave, and used such opportunities to do research, find publishers and conduct business. Horton became a member of the Society through the recommendation of the Society's chairman, Lord Alfred Churchill.¹⁶ In line

¹¹ After Great Britain abolished the slave trade in 1807, British naval ships were commissioned to patrol the Atlantic Ocean and recapture Africans from slave ships bound for the Americas. The recaptured people were sent to the British Colony of Freetown now Sierra Leone where they were settled on lands close to the coast to start a new life. Later, they were joined by Black Loyalists (left in 1791) who had been promised freedom and land for fighting on the British side during the American War of Independence, and Jamaican Maroons (left in 1801) from Nova Scotia. The Loyalists and Maroons who were discriminated against because of their colour also discovered when in Nova Scotia that they could not get titles to land. Along with this, climate was a major factor for the Maroons in their decision to leave for Sierra Leone.

¹² Christopher Fyfe, *Africanus Horton 1835-1883: West African Scientist and Patriot* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 22.

¹³ Africanus B. Horton, *Letters on the Political Condition of the Gold Coast: Since the Exchange of Territory between the English and Dutch Governments, on January 1, 1868 together with a Short Account of the Ashantee War, 1862-4, and the Awoonah War, 1866*, 2ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1970), p.7.

¹⁴ Horton, *Letters*, p.7.

¹⁵ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, pp. 149-152.

¹⁶ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 58.

with the dream of the spiritual and economic uplift of the African, Horton worked with the African Aid Society to explore schemes related to agriculture and business in West Africa with potential financial benefits. He consequently wrote *African Times* articles about agricultural reform and the prospects of economic agriculture in West Africa.¹⁷ He also collected money for subscriptions to the newspaper in West Africa.¹⁸ Horton's relationship with the editor of the caused tensions with colonial officials. A colonial administrator, later Governor, H. T. Ussher recommended Horton's transfer from the colonial service in the Gold Coast after the 1874 war with Asante, because of Horton's relationship with the editor of the *African Times* and members of the Fanti Confederation.¹⁹

Although he was stationed on the Gold Coast, Horton served in all the four British dependencies on the West African coast: Gold Coast (1859-1863; 1867-1868; 1869-1879), Gambia (1863-1866), Nigeria (1868-1869) and Sierra Leone (1879).²⁰ Horton married twice, first to Fannie Marietta Pratt,²¹ and later to Selina Beatrice Elliot, whose family had migrated from Nova Scotia.²² He had two daughters, May Marietta (a.k.a. Mrs. Turpin) with his first wife, and Nannette Susan Adelina (a.k.a. Mrs. Bouchard) with his second.²³ Horton rose to the rank of Surgeon Major before retiring to Sierra Leone in December 1880 and died after a short illness on 15th October 1883.²⁴

A.1.4 Mary Kingsley (1862-1900)

Kingsley was publicly active as an intellectual from 1896 to 1900, after the death of her parents.²⁵ However, her influence on public debates in London and West Africa far outweighs her short life as a writer and public figure. Kingsley came to the fore with the publication of her 1897 book, *Travels in West Africa*, which established her as an explorer with deep insights about African life and customs. Kingsley was the quintessential Victorian spinster who nonetheless broke down barriers to attain

¹⁷ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 59.

¹⁸ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 59.

¹⁹ Kimble, *Political History*, p. 245.

²⁰ See: Fyfe, *Africanus Horton* for all Horton's official postings.

²¹ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, pp. 49-50.

²² Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, pp. 124-5.

²³ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, pp. 152-3.

²⁴ Fyfe, *Africanus Horton*, p. 148.

²⁵ John Flint, "Mary Kingsley," *African Affairs*, 64, No. 256 (1965), pp. 150-161.

international recognition as an explorer and writer, something that was the preserve of men. She hoped to abolish the Crown Colony system and substitute in its place “a scheme of rule in West Africa in which traders supported by African chiefs, would rule through a governing council.”²⁶ In this respect, she allied with prominent scholars, politicians and British traders (including the so-called palm oil ruffians), becoming by 1900 a mouthpiece for the mercantile group. She counted the Liberian writer and orator, E. W. Blyden and the Gold Coast intellectual, John Mensah Sarbah amongst her contacts in West Africa.²⁷ As Blyden, Kingsley believed that Africans were endowed with the gift of spirituality that transcended human understanding. Deborah Spillman as Flint points to the importance of Kingsley to the agenda of West African writer-intellectuals. As noted by Spillman, “Blyden leaves behind a legacy analogous to that of Kingsley and simultaneously reaffirms her influence on West African authors.”²⁸ Kingsley became by the time of her death the articulator of the African standpoint to Britain and Europe. The Royal African Society was founded in honour of her work and vision.

A.2 Biographical Sketches for Chapter 3

A.2.1 The Gold Coast Writer-Intellectual Community

The Gold Coast intelligentsia comprised the children of the coastal “merchant princes”,²⁹ agents for British merchant houses and clergymen, as well as medical doctors and educationists. The fathers of the men who became known as the Gold Coast intelligentsia had mostly received their education in the 1830s and 40s from the Wesleyan and Basel missions stationed in the Eastern and Western provinces of the Gold Coast.³⁰ A good proportion of these parents, especially those who were of mixed race (born to African mothers and European fathers), had themselves travelled to Britain for further studies.³¹ They were typically well-to-do and therefore able to invest in a British preparatory school education and professional training for their children. Sammy

²⁶ Flint, “Mary Kingsley,” p. 157.

²⁷ Deborah Shapple Spillman, “African Skin, Victorian Masks: The Object Lessons of Mary Kingsley and Edward Blyden,” *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 39 (2011), 305-326.

²⁸ Spillman, “African Skin, Victorian Masks,” p. 321.

²⁹ Wolfson, “Historical Records on the Gold Coast.”

³⁰ Ray Jenkins, “Gold Coasters Overseas, 1880-1919: With specific Reference to their Activities in Britain,” *Immigrants and Minorities* (London: Frank Cass November 1985), pp 5-52.

³¹ Jenkins, “Gold Coasters Overseas,” p. 13.

Tenkorang opines that by the turn of the twentieth century “the practice [of sending children abroad] had become almost a fashion, or even a competition”³² in Gold Coast society. By Ray Jenkins’s estimate, between the years 1880 and 1919, no fewer than 163 Gold Coasters from the “small communities of the coastal townships situated between Elmina and Accra and the hinterland of Akropong” visited Britain.³³ Kimble gives the opposite interpretation to a similar estimate, arguing in terms of the paucity of Gold Coasters educated abroad, which, he writes, “could not have exceeded 200” by 1897.³⁴ Considering the limits of the geographical area from where the members of the Gold Coast intelligentsia all originated, spanning the coastline of modern-day Ghana but projecting only a few miles inland, Jenkins's perspective seems more reasoned than Kimble’s.³⁵

A closer study of the lives described individually below shows that the Gold Coast intelligentsia were critical of both African and European ways. They drew from a diverse palette of ideas, conceptualising Africa, the West, development, empire, governance and history in ways that the extant approaches have been unable to capture, perhaps on account of particular blind spots that have persistently obscured a clear-sighted view of how the intelligentsia thought about and understood the universe of their times. When the intelligentsia debated “Africa” or “custom,” they were not treating these subjects in terms of what was to come later, but in terms of what made sense in their time. Both Africa and the British Empire were concepts in historical flux, and the job of the intelligentsia was to blend those currents. They did so with a sense of possibility that we need to recreate and appreciate. The intelligentsia saw Empire during these decades as both oppression and opportunity. The binary of African *versus* Western did not matter then for relevance or allegiance in the ways it would after 1945, and recognising this can help resolve some of the confusions and contradictions that arise when we follow scholars such as Kimble, Korang and Nana Nketsia, and assume that the problem all along was finding a way to resist colonial oppression. As shown in the debates about the West African land question, for the intelligentsia, actors like Morel and Kingsley could just as easily have been allies

³² Tenkorang, “The Gold Coast Aborigines,” p.15.

³³ Jenkins, “Gold Coasters Overseas,” p. 5.

³⁴ Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana*, p. 92.

³⁵ Jenkins, “Gold Coasters Overseas.”

as enemies, based not on racial or imperial membership criteria, but on utility.

A.2.2 John Mensah Sarbah (1864-1910)

John Mensah Sarbah was born in 1864 to The Honourable John Sarbah, Member of the Legislative Council, and Sarah Sarbah. The elder Sarbah was a Gold Coast-educated one-time teacher; a preacher in the Methodist church; and, as Freda Wolfson put it, a “merchant prince”³⁶ of the Gold Coast. As a boy, Mensah Sarbah was sent to Dzelukope (“Jellah Coffee”), in the modern-day Volta Region of Ghana, to live with his father’s friend, James Ahuma Solomon.³⁷ On his return to Cape Coast, Sarbah was enrolled in the Wesleyan Methodist School, which was under the management of the Sierra Leonean Rev. J. Decker. Sarbah later studied for three years at the Wesleyan High School, during the administrations of Principals James Picot, a Frenchman, and James Jenkin, an Englishman.³⁸ In 1880, his father sent him to Worthing, in the English county of Sussex, to continue his basic education. A year later, he transferred to Taunton College (later known as Queen’s College) in Somerset.³⁹ Sarbah was subsequently admitted to the University of London and returned to the Gold Coast after earning his law degree in 1884. After a few months back in the Gold Coast, Sarbah left for England again to be called to the bar at Lincoln’s Inn. He then apprenticed at a solicitor’s firm in London, before returning to the Gold Coast in 1887 to practice. According to his contemporary Attoh Ahuma, John Sarbah Sr. significantly influenced his son’s intellectual and political outlook.⁴⁰

Mensah Sarbah’s death in 1910 was described as “a national calamity,”⁴¹ not least because he was a senior unofficial member of the Gold Coast Legislative Council and a senior member of the Gold Coast Bar. Perhaps far more important was the fact that his peers considered him to be someone whose life’s work had contributed ultimately to their racial uplift. Telegrams and letters of sympathy published by the Gold Coast Leader

³⁶ Freda Wolfson, “Historical Records on the Gold Coast,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, Vol. 24, 1951, pp. 182-186.

³⁷ “The Gold Coast Leader,” December 10, 1910, p.4. The newspaper further notes that James Ahuma Solomon was the first West African to study at the University of London.

³⁸ “Gold Coast Leader,” December 10, 1910, p.4.

³⁹ “Gold Coast Leader,” December 10, 1910, p.4.

⁴⁰ “The Gold Coast Leader,” December 10, 1910, p.4.

⁴¹ “The Gold Coast Leader,” December 3, 1910 p. 3.

referred to Sarbah as “Our lost Patriot and Leader.”⁴² Pointing to his networks and influence, a contemporary at the bar assessed the impact of Sarbah’s death as follows:

The loss of Mr. Sarbah is not only a loss to the Gold Coast but to the Sister Colonies as well; he certainly did his best and no man ever worked harder to lift up the race and to prove that the Black Race can hold its own among the nations of the earth. His fame and reputation as an Author are not confined to the Gold Coast and those of you who have read “Affairs of West Africa” by E. D. Morel; “At the back of the Black Man’s Mind” by Dennett; “West African Studies” by Mary Kingsley and, last but not least, the “Story of the Negro” by Booker T. Washington of America, must have felt some pride that our friend’s literary attainments were considered by these Authors of a high order and he was a black man with unmixed blood and wrote in a language not his own.⁴³

The Lagos Weekly Record took as much pride as the Gold Coast newspapers in Sarbah’s accomplishments, particularly his 1897 publication *Fanti Customary Laws*, which was considered by many Africans as both an indication of Sarbah’s selfless nature and a vindication of their race. The newspaper celebrated the fact that Sarbah had declined to profit from his legal services and had chosen instead to use his knowledge of the English law to benefit his people by advocating the equal validation of Fanti customary law.

A.2.3 Samuel Richard Brew Solomon aka Attoh Ahuma (1864-1921)

Samuel Richard Brew Solomon was the son of a Fanti mother and a Ga minister of the Wesleyan Mission, Rev. James A. Solomon.⁴⁴ Rev. Solomon was from the royal house of James Town, Accra. After his secondary education at the Wesley High School in Cape Coast, Samuel Solomon was sent to Richmond College, London, in 1886, for

⁴² *The Gold Coast Leader* (Supplement), December 3, 1910 p. 1.

⁴³ *The Gold Coast Leader*, December 17, 1910 p. 3. A speech delivered by G. H. Savage during The Aborigines Memorial Service held at the Wesley Chapel, Cape Coast on December 7, 1910 to mark the death of John Mensah Sarbah, a founding member of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society, founded in August 1897.

⁴⁴ Magnus Sampson, *Makers of Modern Ghana*, Vol. I (Accra: Anowuo Educational Publications, 1969), p. 75.

further instruction under the auspices of the Wesleyan Mission.⁴⁵ He returned to the Gold Coast in 1888, whereupon, together with his Richmond College mate William Fynn Penny, he soon found himself spearheading what came to be known as the “*gone Fante*” movement within the Methodist Church and the Cape Coast community.⁴⁶

However, it was in the practice of journalism that, as Attoh Ahuma, S. R. B. Solomon made his deepest mark on the emerging culture of debate in the Gold Coast. The most striking aspect of his public service record was the breadth of his role in the editorship of newspapers. He started out as the editor of the *Methodist Times* and later became editor of *The Gold Coast Nation*, the mouthpiece of the Aborigines movement. He also edited *The Gold Coast Leader* at one time. Attoh Ahuma was forced to leave his job as editor of the *Methodist Times* because of his fiery writing style, although this was precisely what endeared him to his readers,⁴⁷ most notably the youth, as was noted in his obituary.⁴⁸ In 1898, Attoh Ahuma and Egyir-Asaam left the Methodist Church to join the African Methodist Episcopal (AME Zion) Church, which was established in that same year by Bishop B. J. Small.⁴⁹ Attoh Ahuma and two others, J. E. K. Aggrey and Frank Arthur (also known as Frank Ata Osam-Pinanko), were sent to the United States of America for higher education, while Egyir-Asaam became the Gold Coast representative of AME Zion’s American mother church.⁵⁰ Attoh Ahuma reverted to his orthodox conviction in 1914, and remained a Methodist minister until his death in 1921.

A.2.4 Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford (1866-1930)

Joseph Ephraim Casely Hayford was the son of Reverend and Mrs. Joseph de Graft Hayford.⁵¹ His maternal family was well known for their role in merchandise trading and their penchant for pursuing higher education abroad. His mother, whose maiden name was Mary Brew, was the daughter of Samuel Collins Brew, a merchant and public

⁴⁵ F. L. Bartels, *The Roots of Gold Coast Methodism* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 121.

⁴⁶ Bartels, *The Roots of Gold Coast Methodism*, p. 123.

⁴⁷ Robert July, *The Origins of Modern African Thought: Its Development in West Africa during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968), p. 342.

⁴⁸ Sampson, *Makers of Modern Ghana*, p. 78.

⁴⁹ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 163.

⁵⁰ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 163.

⁵¹ Sampson, *Makers of Modern Ghana*, p. 131.

official employed by the British.⁵² Hayford's maternal grandfather was a one-time Justice of the Peace (1857-1868), stipendiary magistrate (1868-1877) and District Commissioner (1877-1879).⁵³ According to Priestley, the Brew family had years of profitable trade dealings with Asante, dating back to Hayford's great grandfather, Samuel Kanto Brew, in 1817.⁵⁴ This background is significant when situated in the context of Hayford's favourable view of Asante, as expressed in his *Gold Coast Native Institutions*. He attended the Wesleyan Boys' High School in Cape Coast and then Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone.⁵⁵ Before training as a lawyer in England, Hayford worked for his maternal uncle, James Hutton Brew,⁵⁶ first as assistant editor of the *Western Echo* and later as editor of Brew's third newspaper, the *Gold Coast Echo*.⁵⁷ Casely Hayford's public life started almost immediately after he returned from studying abroad in 1896, when the Aborigines Rights Protection Society engaged him to help prepare a legal brief contesting the Crown Lands Bill of 1897. After the death of Mensah Sarbah, Hayford assumed unofficial leadership of the ARPS. Together with Attoh Ahuma, he articulated, through letters and newspaper publications, the movement's position on key debates.

A.2.5 Edmund Dene Morel (1873-1924)

Edmund Dene Morel was born in Paris to a French father and an English mother.⁵⁸ After his father's death in 1877, Morel's mother sent him to school in England between 1881 and 1889. After leaving school, he worked in 1890 as a shipping clerk for the Liverpool-based Elder Dempster Company,⁵⁹ whose involvement in the Atlantic trade gave Morel valuable insights into matters relating to international trade, especially those that pertained to Africa. Being bilingual enabled him to appreciate international affairs

⁵² Margaret Priestley, *West African Trade and Coast Society: A Family Study* (London, Ibadan, Nairobi: Oxford University Press 1969), pp. 143, 187.

⁵³ Priestley, *West African Trade*, p. 153-4.

⁵⁴ Priestley, *West African Trade*, p. 133.

⁵⁵ Kimble, *A Political History*, p. 84n.

⁵⁶ James Hutton Brew and Edmund Bannerman, previously mentioned, organised an unsuccessful deputation to London in 1885 to protest the treatment of Gold Coast chiefs and to ask for self-government.

⁵⁷ J. E. Hayford, *Gold Coast Native Institutions with Thoughts Upon a Healthy Imperial Policy for the Gold Coast and Ashanti* (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1970), p. 176-7.

⁵⁸ F. Seymour Cocks, *E. D. Morel: The Man and his Work* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1920), p. 15. See also Catherine Ann Cline, *E. D. Morel 1873-1924: The Strategies of Protest* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1980), p. 1.

⁵⁹ Cocks, *E. D. Morel*, p. 23.

more broadly and contributed in no small way to his rise through the ranks of the company. By 1901, when he resigned from Elder Dempster, Morel had risen to the position of head of the Congo department.⁶⁰ According to Seymour Cocks, Morel had a passion for writing and a keen interest in investigative journalism. While working for Elder Dempster, Morel published a number of pieces that were both newsworthy and sensational.⁶¹ Morel's amateur journalistic eye led him to expose the atrocities that were being committed against Africans in the Congo Free State by rubber traders acting in the name of Belgium's King Leopold. Cocks records that the upheaval Morel's revelation caused across Europe soon became a source of concern to his employers. Even after he left Elder Dempster to become a full-time journalist, Morel continued to monitor the conduct of international trade, and campaigned for Britain to focus on building an ethically sound economic empire.⁶² He founded the *West African Mail* in 1903,⁶³ and as editor of the *Mail* from 1903 to 1915, he used the newspaper to canvass empire reform,⁶⁴ which endeared him to the liberal-minded publics of Britain and the colonies.

Morel is best known for his involvement in the Congo Reform Association (CRA), the British pacifist movement, and the campaign against the Treaty of Versailles, as well as for his treatment of the Irish question. He is simultaneously infamous for the prejudiced view of Africans that he expressed in an article denouncing the French use of African soldiers against Germany on the Rhine during World War I.⁶⁵ Morel's engagement in Gold Coast affairs, however, is less well known. His involvement with the British Aborigines Protection Society first endeared him to members of the Gold Coast Aborigines Rights Protection Society, especially Sarbah, with whom he maintained communication. Morel was an advocate of economic imperialism, ethical consumption

⁶⁰ Cocks, *E. D. Morel*, p. 76.

⁶¹ Cocks, *E. D. Morel*, pp. 23-31.

⁶² Jonathan E. Robins, "Slave Cocoa and Red Rubber: E. D. Morel and the Problem of Ethical Consumption," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 2012; 54 (3), pp. 592-611.

⁶³ Cocks, *E. D. Morel*, p. 31.

⁶⁴ Sheldon Spear, "E. D. Morel: The Union of Democratic Control and the Labour Party, 1918-1924," unpublished Ph. D. thesis, New York University, 1975.

⁶⁵ E. D. Morel, "'Black Scourge in Europe: Sexual Horror Let Loose by France on the Rhine.'" *Daily Herald*, April 10 (1920). See also: Robert C. Reinders, "Racialism on the Left ED Morel and the 'Black Horror on the Rhine,'" *International Review of Social History* 13, no. 1 (1968): 1-28; Keith L. Nelson, "The 'Black Horror on the Rhine': Race as a Factor in Post-World War I Diplomacy," *The Journal of Modern History* 42, no. 4 (1970): 606-627.

and indirect rule. While he campaigned for the humane treatment of colonised Africans by Europeans, he did not believe Africans were civilized enough to govern themselves. He therefore supported a paternalistic colonisation of the African continent, and believed Britain was the ideal colonising power for Africa. In this respect, he was a firm believer in Mary Kingsley's ideas concerning the viability of African customs, laws and political systems, which is what most likely sustained his friendship with Sarbah.⁶⁶ Jonathan Robins has noted that Morel leveraged his friendship with the Cadbury family, through the firm's buying manager, William Cadbury, to prosecute his campaign for ethical consumption.⁶⁷ Morel thus shifted from his exclusive obsession with rubber from Leopold's Congo to include among his interests "slave cocoa" from Portuguese São Tomé. William Cadbury supported Morel's CRA campaign financially, and in turn enlisted Morel's support to broadcast the Cadbury firm's campaign to force Portugal to end "slave cocoa" production in São Tomé. The eventual boycott of São Tomé cocoa by Cadbury and other British cocoa buyers resulted in the diversion of British cocoa purchases to the Gold Coast Colony from 1909.⁶⁸ In an intriguing turn of events, following Sarbah's death, leading members of the Gold Coast intelligentsia found Morel's advocacy for Africa to have been disingenuous.⁶⁹ They accused Morel of self-interest, citing his open support for economic imperialism, ignoring the fact that this was typical of British liberals in the early twentieth century. As Tenkorang notes, this resulted in a falling out between Morel and the members of the intelligentsia, and a spirited revisionist debate of his views in the Gold Coast press.⁷⁰ Tenkorang's extensive study of Morel's interactions with the ARPS has shown that while Morel had given the published works of Gold Coast intellectuals, including Hayford, Attoh Ahuma and Sarbah, consistently favourable reviews from 1903 to 1911, after the relationship soured, neither side had anything good to report of the other.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa: Congo Français, Corisco and Cameroons*, 3ed. (London: Frank Cass, 1965).

⁶⁷ Robins, "Slave Cocoa and Red Rubber," p. 605.

⁶⁸ Robins, "Slave Cocoa and Red Rubber," p. 605.

⁶⁹ Tenkorang, "*The Gold Coast Aborigines*," pp. 234-241.

⁷⁰ Tenkorang, "*The Gold Coast Aborigines*," pp. 234-241.

⁷¹ Tenkorang, "*The Gold Coast Aborigines*," pp. 197-201.

A.3 Biographical Sketches for Chapter 4

A.3.1 Frederick Lugard (1858-1945)

Frederick Lugard was born in 1858 in India,⁷² where he grew up with his missionary parents until 1863, when his mother took him to England. He trained as a soldier at Sandhurst, before joining the Colonial Service. At the instance of the Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain, Lugard formed the Royal West Africa Frontier Force between 1897 and 1899. He recorded over thirty years of experience working in various capacities to promote the British colonisation of Africa. Lugard is indispensable to issues of local governance on the Gold Coast because of the contribution of his *Dual Mandate* to the practice of Indirect Rule in British African colonies. He wrote this book at a time when the governing British Liberal Party faced serious political challenges from both its Labour and Conservative opponents and was in danger of losing ground to one or the other. *Dual Mandate* bore all the hallmarks of the British liberal justifications of colonial rule “as a humanitarian duty” and simultaneously as an opportunity for Britain and Europe to advance their project of economic imperialism.⁷³ Lugard espoused the belief of British Liberals in individual liberties, including free speech and laissez-faire economics.

A.3.2 James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey (1875-1927)

James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey was born at Anomabo on 18th October 1875. When the Aborigines Rights Protection Society was founded in 1897, Aggrey was its Recording Secretary, later becoming its Chief Secretary.⁷⁴ Aggrey received his higher education in the United States of America, studying at Livingstone College in Salisbury, North Carolina, where he earned Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees and qualified as a teacher and a clergyman.⁷⁵ He taught for twenty years at Livingstone College, then returned to the Gold Coast, where he taught and was Vice-Principal at Achimota College from 1925 until his death in 1927. He was a member of the travelling Phelps Stokes Education Commission that visited African colonies to push for industrial education of the

⁷² Margery Perham in Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 5. ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1965), pp. xxvii-xlix.

⁷³ Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 4.

⁷⁴ Edwin W. Smith, *Aggrey of Africa: A Study in Black and White*, 6 ed. (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1930), p. 52.

⁷⁵ Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, p. 55.

Hampton/Tuskegee model for Africans in 1920-21. Scholars have examined Aggrey's impact by situating him between the United States and the Gold Coast. Thus, Sylvia Jacobs referred to Aggrey as "an intellectual created by two worlds, living in two worlds; an African intellectual living in America."⁷⁶ In Ghanaian history, Aggrey is better known for his support of education, particularly female education, than for his political and intellectual agenda. Aggrey took an integrative approach to education. For Aggrey, a good education policy had to target both males and females in order to achieve "the development of the socially efficient individual."⁷⁷ Although he never published a book, Aggrey's thoughts were expressed through his oratory and copious correspondence. During the interwar years, he intervened in the debates about Akan culture that occurred between Nana Ofori Atta I and the rump of the ARPS led by Kobina Sekyi. Between 1924 and his death in 1927, Aggrey's role in Gold Coast politics was as a mediator between leaders of the Gold Coast interior, led by Nana Ofori Atta I, and those of the coast, who were led initially by Hayford and later on by Sekyi.

A.3.3 Nana Ofori Atta I (1881-1943)

Nana Ofori Atta I was the Omanhene (Paramount Chief) of Akyem Abuakwa from 1913 to 1943. He was born Kwadwo Fredua Agyeman and christened Aaron Emmanuel Boakye Danquah.⁷⁸ Nana Ofori Atta I and J. B. Danquah were half-brothers, sharing the same father.⁷⁹ Nana Ofori Atta I was undoubtedly one of the most influential Amanhene in the pre-Independence Gold Coast, and arguably the most controversial.⁸⁰ Magnus Sampson opines that Nana Ofori Atta's eloquence, philanthropy and deep thinking accounted for his emergence from rural Ghana to a position of dominance, steering the course of historical events during his reign and thus shaping the future of Ghana.⁸¹ Nana Ofori Atta rose to prominence in Gold Coast affairs after he was appointed to the

⁷⁶ Sylvia M. Jacobs, "James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey: An African Intellectual in the United States," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 81, No. ¼, *Vindicating the Race: Contributions to African American Life and History* (Winter-Autumn 1996), pp. 47-61 p. 59.

⁷⁷ Jacobs, "James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey," p. 47.

⁷⁸ *Amantiremanntienu, Nana Ofori Atta, Okyenhene: Akyem Abuakwa 1912 – 1943* (75th Anniversary Planning Committee, 2018), p. 7.

⁷⁹ L. H. Ofori Appiah, *The Life and Times of J. B. Danquah* (Accra: Waterville Publishing House, 1974), p. 17.

⁸⁰ Sampson, *Makers of Modern Ghana*, p. 155.

⁸¹ Sampson, *Makers of Modern Ghana*, p. 159.

Legislative Council in 1916. In some quarters, Nana Ofori Atta is regarded as the architect of Indirect Rule on the Gold Coast, as he is credited with practically scripting the Bill for the Native Administration Ordinance of 1927.⁸² The rivalry and rancour engineered by this piece of legislation impacted his image negatively. Even though he challenged the colonial administration on numerous occasions, the debates over his facilitation of Indirect Rule have overshadowed the accounts of him presented in history books. For example, he visited London in 1934 to protest the Sedition and Water Works Bills, and unsuccessfully mediated in a dispute between the West African Students Union (WASU)⁸³ and the Gold Coast Students' Association. This trip led to a chance encounter with the Nigerian journalist and nationalist Nnamdi Azikiwe, who had secured a job with Ocansey Press of the Gold Coast. Upon arrival on the Gold Coast, Azikiwe became the spokesperson for opponents of synthesis, and one of Nana Ofori Atta's major critics.⁸⁴ Azikiwe's criticism of Ofori Atta I forms a major part of his well-known book *Renascent Africa*. As Rathbone notes, the unfavourable views of Nana Ofori Atta I expressed by Azikiwe and other revered nationalists have prevented his recognition as a Ghanaian nationalist.⁸⁵

A.3.4 Kobina Sekyi (1892-1956)

Kobina Sekyi, also known as William Essuman Gwira Sekyi, was born in Cape Coast on 1st November 1892. Sekyi obtained his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in Philosophy from the University of London and was admitted to the bar at the Inns of Court in 1918. Sekyi was an influential lawyer, writer and politician, whose major fault perhaps was his unflinching belief in the supremacy of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society, of which he was a member. From 1920, when Casely Hayford founded the National Congress of British West Africa, until 1924, Sekyi was an active member of that organisation. Sekyi parted ways with Casely Hayford in 1927. Sekyi's newspaper

⁸² Robert Addo-Fening, *Akyem Abuakwa 1700-1943 from Ofori Panin to Sir Ofori Atta* (Trondheim: NTNU 1997), p. 138.

⁸³ Hakim Adi, *West Africans in Britain 1900-1960: Nationalism, Pan-Africanism and Communism* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1998), p. 32. WASU was founded at the request of Dr. Herbert Bankole-Bright, a member of the Sierra Leonean Legislative Council and the National Congress of British West Africa. While on a visit to Britain, Bankole-Bright appealed to West African students to establish a union modelled on the Congress.

⁸⁴ Nnamdi Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa*, 3. ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1968), p. 22.

⁸⁵ Rathbone, "An Anti-Colonial Monarch."

publications were influential contemporaneously, but the recognition of his influence waned after his death. However, his play *The Blinkards*, which was written and first performed in 1916,⁸⁶ and his short story *The Anglo-Fanti*, written and serialized in the Gold Coast press in 1918,⁸⁷ were published posthumously in 1974, whereafter Sekyi regained currency as an intellectual and activist.⁸⁸ During his lifetime, Sekyi was known for his fierce criticism of the Gold Coast's colonial administrators, his challenge of their attempts at synthesis, and his disagreements with Nana Ofori Atta I. He was also known for his disapproval of the divisiveness of party politics, which he believed represented a threat to the ARPS's mandate as the voice of the Gold Coast people. Sekyi is well known for his opposition to the Anglicisation of the Gold Coast, which he satirised in his most notable work, *The Blinkards*. Most scholars who recognise Sekyi's politics prefer to pursue their studies of him within the dyad of coloniser/colonised and Western/African.⁸⁹ What is different in this study is that Sekyi's politics and intellectualism are examined as a debate about Akanisation. This allows for a contextualised interrogation of his arguments, as opposed to merely highlighting a binary that ignores the fact that, in many instances, Sekyi's concern was exclusively with the local. Arguably, Sekyi was more influential in his lifetime for his politics and his unique liberalism than for his literary output.

A.3.5 J. W. de Graft Johnson (1893-1970+)

J. W. de Graft Johnson was born in Cape Coast on 28th June 1893.⁹⁰ He was persuaded by Aggrey to pursue higher studies in Britain and arrived in Britain in 1926 to train for a teaching career at Achimota College. However, Aggrey's death in 1927 motivated de Graft Johnson to change career his path and take to reading law.⁹¹ He was a

⁸⁶ Kofi Baku, "Kobina Sekyi of Ghana: An Annotated Bibliography of His Writings," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1991), p. 372.

⁸⁷ Baku, "Kobina Sekyi," p. 373.

⁸⁸ Baku, "Kobina Sekyi," p. 369.

⁸⁹ Korang, *Writing Ghana*, pp. 131-136; Daniel Kofi Baku, "An Intellectual in Nationalist Politics: The Contribution of Kobina Sekyi to the Evolution of Ghanaian National Consciousness," Ph.D. diss., University of Sussex, 1987; S. K. B. Asante, "The Politics of Confrontation: The Case of Kobina Sekyi and the Colonial System in Ghana." *Universitas* 6, no. 2 (1977): 17-38; J. Ayo Langley, "Modernization and its Malcontents: Kobina Sekyi of Ghana and the Restatement of African Political Theory," *Research Review* 6, no. 3 (1970): 1-61.

⁹⁰ J. W. de Graft Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa: Thoughts of Young Africa Addressed to Young Britain*, 2. ed. (London: Frank Cass & Co. 1971), p. xxiii.

⁹¹ Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, p. xxiv.

member of the ARPS and also supported the NCBWA. In 1947, he joined the UGCC and was its first Secretary. As a student in Britain, de Graft Johnson gave lectures on West Africa, and became a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Meteorological Society. His most celebrated publication, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, was a compilation of his lectures to British audiences. In his writings, Johnson advocated an African State government that combined British liberalism with Akan law and custom. Although he was a prominent and influential intellectual in his day, Johnson is one of the least well-known of the ARPS intellectuals.

A.3.6 J. B. Danquah (1895-1965)

Joseph Kwame Kyeretwie Boakye Danquah was born on 21st December 1895 at Bepong, in the Kwahu area of the Ashanti Protectorate.⁹² Between 1921 and 1927, he successfully pursued a law degree while studying for a bachelor's degree and a Doctorate in Philosophy at the University of London. He was prominent in the public affairs of the Gold Coast from the time of his return to the Gold Coast until his death in detention at Nsawam Prison on 4th February 1965. He was a founding member and the first President of the London-based West African Students Union (WASU).⁹³ He was also a founding member of the UGCC and the foundation officer of the Gold Coast Youth Conference. Danquah was also the most prominent intellectual from the interior of the Gold Coast Colony, whose writing spans the period from the interwar years through to post-Independence. Danquah's writings include the staunchest defence of the Akan peoples, their laws and their customs. He rose to fame for his research on the Akan conducted from 1928 to 1944, which led to his recommendation of the name Ghana in place of the colonial term, Gold Coast. However, he is better known as the leading opponent of the politics of Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah.

A.3.7 Nnamdi Azikiwe (1904-1996)

Benjamin Nnamdi Azikiwe was born in 1904 to Rachel and Obed-Edom Chukwuemeka Azikiwe,⁹⁴ an educated clerk. Nnamdi dropped out of secondary school and worked in the Civil Service before leaving Nigeria in 1925 to pursue higher

⁹² Appiah, *Life and Times*, p. 17.

⁹³ Adi, *West Africans in Britain*, p. 33.

⁹⁴ K. A. B. Jones-Quartey, *A Life of Azikiwe* (London: Penguin Books, 1965), pp. 43-45.

education in the United States of America, where he remained until 1934.⁹⁵ In America, Azikiwe was inspired by the oratory of Kwegyir Aggrey and by the activism of Marcus Garvey. He formed his economic worldview while studying socialist thought before returning to Africa, where he found employment as an editor with Ocansey Press in the Gold Coast capital, Accra. This press house was more critical of the colonial administration, and prominent Gold Coasters, than its Cape Coast-based peers, such as the one for which Attoh Ahuma worked. Azikiwe's style of journalism catered to liberals with socialist leanings. Not surprisingly, he became a mentor to socialists like the Sierra Leonean journalist and labour activist Isaac Theophilus Akunna Wallace-Johnson,⁹⁶ whom Azikiwe met in Accra and helped to establish the West African Youth League as a vehicle for Sierra Leone's freedom from colonial rule. Azikiwe and Wallace-Johnson were both convinced that independence was necessary, but Azikiwe's approach was more procedural.⁹⁷ In 1936, Wallace-Johnson wrote an article titled "Has the African a God?" After the article was published in Azikiwe's *African Morning Post*,⁹⁸ both men were charged with sedition and tried by the colonial government.⁹⁹ A deportation order was served on Wallace-Johnson, but Azikiwe was acquitted on a technicality.¹⁰⁰ Subsequently, Azikiwe left the Gold Coast for Nigeria in 1937. The arrest and

⁹⁵ Jones-Quartey, *Azikiwe*, p. 24.

⁹⁶ Leo Spitzer and Laray Denzer, "I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson and the West African Youth League," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1973), pp. 413-452. Wallace Johnson was born in 1895 in Wilberforce, Sierra Leone, to Creole parents. He completed his primary education in 1911 and started secondary school, but never graduated. He worked variously in Sierra Leone as a lay preacher, in the Customs Division, and as a clerk in the British army in East Africa during the First World War. From 1926, he was an active member of the Communist Party, and received training in Moscow. Wallace-Johnson arrived on the Gold Coast in 1933 and worked with various trades unions to clamour for better conditions of work. Although *Vox Populi* was his principal media outlet, Wallace-Johnson also published articles in the Gold Coast press. He eventually established the *West African Sentinel*, which later became the *African Sentinel*. Wallace-Johnson founded the West African Youth League, which was supported initially by prominent people such as the Ga Mantse Tackie Obilie, Kobina Sekyi and Kojo Thompson, as well as K. A. Bosman and Nnamdi Azikiwe. After he was deported from the Gold Coast for writing a seditious 1936 newspaper article, Wallace-Johnson travelled to London in 1937 to fight the deportation order. He stayed in London until 1938, when he returned to Sierra Leone to lead the local branch of his WAYL. He was imprisoned by the Sierra Leone government for the most part of WWII. He died in a car accident in Accra in 1965.

⁹⁷ Spitzer and Denzer, "Wallace-Johnson," p. 432.

⁹⁸ Adi, *Pan-Africanism*, pp. 186-189.

⁹⁹ Appiah, *Life and Times of J. B. Danquah*, p. 28. See also: Stephanie Newell, *Literary Culture in Colonial Africa: 'How to Play the Game of Life,'* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002, p. 97n.

¹⁰⁰ Appiah, *Life and Times of J. B. Danquah*, p. 28.

deportation dramatically increased membership of the local branch of the West African Youth League, and the Communist International used its press to cultivate the minds of the Gold Coast people.¹⁰¹

As John Flint notes, Azikiwe's critical writing could at times be misleading, because although he disapproved of the colonial administration and was desirous of freedom from colonial rule, his articles prioritised dialogue and he was a firm believer in the attainment of independence by constitutional means.¹⁰² Azikiwe counted among his networks Margery Perham, who lectured on Colonial Administration at Oxford, and Hans Vischer, the Colonial Office's Education Adviser.¹⁰³ Azikiwe's relatively brief stay in Ghana was influential, as he used the instrumentality of the print culture to sway debates about local governance and the institution of chieftaincy against Gold Coast stalwarts such as Nana Ofori Atta I, J. B. Danquah and the ARPS members who advocated synthesis.

A.4 Biographical Sketches for Chapter 5

A.4.1 Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972)

Kwame Nkrumah was born in 1909 at Nkroful in the Gold Coast. He was educated at Achimota College, worked as a teacher and then left the Gold Coast in 1935 to pursue a degree in the United States of America. The cosmopolitan and liberal nature of Nkrumah and his similarities with the other Gold Coast intellectuals is highlighted in his travels and networks, political and philosophical orientation as well as the diverse subjects of his degrees. He obtained a first degree in economics and sociology in 1939 and a Bachelor of Theology degree in 1942 from Lincoln University. He went on to do a Master of Arts and a Master of Science degree in Education at the University of Pennsylvania where he graduated with both degrees in 1943. He left the United States in 1945 to pursue a doctoral degree in London. Although he was unable to fulfil the requirements for his degree, he participated in several high-profile anti-colonial activities, including the 1945 Pan-African Conference in Manchester. Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast in December 1947 and started work as Secretary to the United Gold Coast Convention in

¹⁰¹ Adi, *Pan-Africanism*, pp. 188-189.

¹⁰² John E. Flint, "Managing Nationalism": The Colonial Office and Nnamdi Azikiwe, 1932-1943," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol 27: 2 (1999), pp. 143-158.

¹⁰³ Flint, "Managing Nationalism," p. 145.

January 1948. In June 1949, Nkrumah founded the Convention People's Party with prominent youth leaders, and the CPP won a parliamentary majority in the 1951 election. Nkrumah was Leader of Government Business from 1951 to 1953, Prime Minister from 1953 to 1960, and the first President of Ghana from 1960 until 1966, when he was overthrown in a coup d'état. The Grand Narrative of Ghana's history is structured around the victory of Nkrumah and the CPP in all three pre-Independence elections — 1950, 1953 and 1956. These successes, alongside Nkrumah's prolific writing and the progressive exclusion of his opponents from the political process after 1957, contribute to the widely held belief that Nkrumah is the sole founder of Ghana.

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