

Between Facts and Fiction: The Relationship between Journalism and Literature

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Abstract

The study investigated the relationship between literature and journalism, with reference to Ghanaian and, for that matter, African literary ethos, aesthetes and cultural heritage. The study dilated on this relationship between literature and journalism on one hand, and politics on the other, and how the three entities could be utilised in overcoming, or at least, ameliorating the development challenges facing Africa. This point is premised on the fact that an earlier use of the three entities helped the struggle against colonialism and later imperialism. Also, the study investigates how literary journalism can be used to highlight currents of thought with reference to contemporary political, cultural and economic experience in Ghana. Overall, the study supports the idea that literary journalism can be used as a veritable communication tool in overcoming some of the social, political and economic difficulties facing the African continent.

The essence of this paper is to demonstrate how journalism can be located within the canons of African literature. Expressly, this essay aims at outlining how the works of journalism do reveal patterns of thought and imagination significant to the development of literary and journalism culture in Ghana, and for that matter Africa. We shall seek to chart the interconnection between literature and journalism on one hand, and politics on the other, in order to arrive at an understanding of what the three entities are supposed to achieve in African societies.

Successively, the study will attempt to untie the productive relation between literature and journalism, to ascertain how these two concepts can be used in harnessing the language resources of the people to address the numerous challenges facing the African continent. To this end, we shall first attempt a definition of what constitutes literary journalism. Snyder (2005) defines the concept as the use of fictional techniques in writing a work of non-fiction. Put in another way,

Literary journalism is... a true, well-researched, journalisticly

sound story that might normally be written in a dry newspaperly manner that has been instead written with style, vivid descriptions, and narrative flow that immerses the reader in the story. (p. 1)

A general feature of literary journalism, also referred to by some scholars as the New Journalism, Wood (1998) notices, is its insistence on resemblances between fact and fiction, whereas proponents of the older journalism worked hard at playing down those resemblances. For the student of African literature, literary journalism is not an entirely new phenomenon. Of course there are variations between some of the concerns of the new drift compared to what existed previously. The point, however, is that there had been a very productive relation between literature and journalism in the past. During the colonial period, the phenomenon was deployed by the African intelligentsia in mobilising their people in overcoming the colonial yoke. Duodu (2007), for instance, points out that,

...The thoughts of the fathers of Pan-Africanism – such as W.E.B. Dubois, George Padmore and Kwame Nkrumah - were still alive today because they published journals such as *The Crisis* (Dubois) and *The New African* (Nkrumah) that propagated their message. The establishment of an *African Diaspora Journal* is therefore absolutely necessary if Pan-Africanism is to be properly resurrected. ('Letter from Afar' May 2007)

Duodu's suggestion in the above excerpt bears eloquent testimony to the necessity of the black race to marry literary techniques with journalistic devices to champion ideas about black people, and to serve as their artistic and cultural mouthpiece. This idea also finds resonance in Newell's (2006) study on the development of the creative heritage in West Africa.

The creation of cultural and political identities in West Africa has involved throughout a great deal of literary activity. Journalists, authors, poets and intellectuals have played especially prominent roles in the political history of the region since the 1880s... the involvement of writers in the production of resistant and oppositional identities is a key feature of West Africa's cultural history, emerging out of traditional griot and praise-singer roles. Political activism and cre-



224. ative writing have been inseparable in West Africa since at least the 1880s. (p.19)

Professor K. A. B. Jones-Quartey (1974), who investigated the utilitarian value of the Ghanaian mass media, concluded that the press in many African countries were also not only a forum for instigating social change, but equally, the press were the instrument for demanding social justice and fairness.

The West African press was undoubtedly the main instrument of agitation for social and political change at the disposal of the aroused leaders. And modern analysis has confirmed the reality of this organic and inevitable liaison between the elite and the press at the beginning of the process of change in the society. (p. xxi)

Passin (1963) makes a similar determination. He identifies a strong link between politics, social reform and the press, which he opines, enables people to create journals to express their views, trying to win public support, and to clarify ideas. These journals, Jones-Quartey explains, were employed by politicians to awaken people to current social demands. Critical for this study is Jones-Quartey's observation that colonial press journals had high literary content. He offers the example of the *Observer*, for its quality writing, including the brilliant Kobina Sakyi's exceptional columns.

From the foregoing, it is not an understatement to claim that politics, literature and journalism have once been indissoluble phenomena dominating the lives of African people. This point is even more explicitly made by Newell (2006) when she testifies that 'until recently, one of the central tenets of West African literature has been its political orientation, and the authors' concomitant reluctance to condone the idea of "art for art's" sake'.

West African creative writers and journalists have taken on leading political roles in anti-colonial and nationalist struggles. Senghor, the poet-President of Senegal from the 1960 to 1980, is perhaps the best-known example, but he is preceded by a long line of writer-politicians dating back to Casely Hayford, Azikiwe, and other nationalist newspapermen mentioned above. One needs to only consider the execution of Nigerian author Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 for his role

in the Ogoni people's struggle for land rights, or the continuing political harassment of Soyinka by successive Nigerian governments, to perceive the ongoing active role played by writers in West African politics. (p. 20)

Admittedly, the influence of literature has waned considerably after independence in most African states. This reason lies at the heart of complaints by some literary scholars about the performance of the media in Africa in recent times. Gone are the days of the Casely Hayfords and the Azikiwes. Tawana Kupe (1996), lecturer at the Department of English, University of Zimbabwe, diagnoses the ineffectiveness of African media in tackling headlong the problems confronting the people to the 'small urban phenomena' of most African media organisations. Moreover, she says,

Contrary to the desires of the media and development advocates, perhaps the media in Africa is used more for its entertainment value than its ability to inform or teach people how to improve their living standards. Certainly, most mainstream media which are dominant in Africa hardly contain the so-called development programmes; rather, they carry promises of development by politicians and threats against 'elements bent on destabilising the nation'. The material that is 'free' from the shallow promises and dire threats is entertainment. (p. 114)

Also, take the case of Ghana, where public discourse is now heavily weighed on by radio broadcasts, with almost no literary content. The proliferation of radio stations and newspapers in Ghana, like in many parts on the continent in recent times, has presented politicians with an added platform to target the people, hypothetically to buoy them up for development. But in their haste to churn out farcical information, most of these media organizations have relegated literature to the background. Sadly, the field of literature now plays a minor role in many African countries, which should not be the case. As a result of this poor state of affairs, there have been calls for a new order. An order, Zulu (1996) explains in his 'Rebuilding Africa through the Media', is meant to restore a sense of self-awareness among African people, a vision shared by practitioners such as Duodu.

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Accurate self-awareness enables a national population to share the languages and values that allow people to objectively understand the predetermined elements of their existence. With this understanding, people become active and productive members of society, contributing to progress and development. The failure to restore the functional and dynamic aspects of African cultures has further undermined African people. The energy and spirit that drove the struggle for independence did not transform themselves into a post-independence force to forge new destinies in which African cultures were equal to other cultures of the world. (p. 67)

Though journalism and politics do dominate the lives of Africans, nonetheless, the real potency in transforming people is realised when the two are yoked with literature. For it is 'through creative writing, newspapers, and politics', Newell (2006) observes, that 'West Africans have worked hard in the decades since the 1960s to fill out their boundaries and imagine new national communities for themselves' (p. 21).

Perhaps, the sterling performance of the media during the colonial period is due to the fact that the media's role in national development was explicitly stated and zealously pursued. As acknowledged by the National Media Commission (2000), 'newspapers played an important role in Ghana's independence struggle in the late 40s and early 50s'. The *Accra Herald*, in an article in its October 5, 1957 issue, was explicit as to the role of African journalists in the fight for independence, calling this responsibility 'unmistakable.'

However, it is not only in Africa that the performance of the media with regard to the growth and spread of literature has slackened. It is not surprising then that literary scholars are among the most strident critics of the mass media. Some of these scholars, for instance, berate mass media practitioners as being responsible for the 'death of good literary criticism'. Professor R. D. Trivedi in his *Compendious History of English Literature* attributes the fall in what he calls 'great literary material' especially in the area of literary criticism, to 'modern journalism.' Mass media practitioners, he says, are to blame for the creation of 'popular materials' which have mass appeal, but are also 'inane, trivial and sensational.'

But at the same time, the mass media has played a noticeable role in the expansion of literary culture globally. Hvid (2007), who studied the fields of journalism and literature extensively, even describes the talk of differences between them as 'false dichotomy'. Globally, there was a perceptible relation between the two fields as evidenced in the works of Addison and Steele, extending up to the eighteenth century. Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe*, was a journalist before becoming an accomplished prose writer.

This is to say that journalism played a significant role in the establishment of prose as a form. Professor Trivedi (2001) acknowledges this fact when he singles out Defoe as the 'first conspicuous example of a writer graduating from journalism to literature'. Another writer who successfully made that transition is Charles Dickens. After a brief service as a legal clerk, Dickens entered the world of letters as a reporter for *The True Sun*, and later became a parliamentary reporter for the *Mirror of Parliament*. In many of his books, particularly *A Tale of Two Cities* and *David Copperfield*, Dickens was said to have used a uniquely detailed documentary style, the style of a reporter, to expose contemporary social evils.

In like manner, Mark Twain found his fictional voice almost twenty-five years after beginning his newspaper career. Among the papers he worked with are the *Hannibal Journal*, Walt Whitman's *New Orleans Crescent*, the *Keokuk (Iowa) Post*, and San Francisco's *Weekly Courier*. It is generally believed that Twain's experience in journalism helped establish him as the master-folk writer of his era and secured the place of colloquial voice of the Western frontier in American literature.

In modern times, many literary scholars have combined the practice of fiction writing with journalism. Noted practitioners of creative non-fiction include Norman Mailer who won the Pulitzer Prize for two non-fiction books: *The Executioner's Song* and *Armies of the Night*. Others are Virginia Woolf, author of *A Room of One's Own*, James Baldwin, who wrote *Notes of a Native Son*, and Truman Capote, whose novel, *In Cold Blood*, is often regarded as an invention of a new genre of the creative non-fiction novel.

The significance of these works partly resides in the ability of the writer to combine a journalistic endeavour with a literary one and, in the process,

use the newfound medium as a forum for demanding reforms in the public sphere. Hence, literary journalism has always been at the forefront in inspiring people to take meaningful actions that would better their lives. However, despite their good aspects, the media unfortunately can be employed for evil intent as well. In Africa, the media was used by the colonists in imposing 'imperial propaganda' on the people during the colonial and the postcolonial period.

But even years after independence, the media is now being used as a tool by the new bureaucratic and political class in exploiting state property for private gain. It is in this light that Zulu (1996) describes the media as a lost opportunity in Africa because they have failed in helping their citizenry share 'the languages and values that allow people to objectively understand the predetermined elements of their existence'. Zulu wants Africans to develop a capacity to assimilate modern ideas and technologies within their own cultural contexts. This, he says, means that African languages (literature), norms, values, and spirituality must be the basis for growth and development.

On the positive side, however, the mass media has aided in transforming African orature into written literature. Kerr (1995) in *Popular African Theatre* points out that although the original purpose by the colonist in introducing the media in Africa was to make 'an ideological link between the colonialist and the core metropolises in Europe', it did not prove that easy to keep the media as the preserve of whites.

The colonial government realised the potential of radio as an ideological tool, a fact reflected in the 1937 report to the British Colonial Office by the Plymouth Committee which envisaged the expansion of broadcasting,

Not merely as an instrument of entertainment for Europeans ... but also an instrument of advanced administration ... and perhaps not even primarily for the entertainment but rather for the enlightenment and education of the more backward sections of the population. (p. 29)

The above quotation illustrates the fact that development of the media

sometimes precedes the development of certain forms of literature. In many African countries, written forms of literature emerged after the establishment of the colonial press. Angmor (1996) traces literary activity in Ghana to two things: British education and the media.

The germ of Ghana's literary writing can be found in the British education that brought Ghanaians into contact with European literature and secondly to the press which was the earliest substantial literary activity in Ghana. The press has from its beginning stimulated literary initiative in the country and they have contributed to the evolution of modern Ghanaian literature. (p. 14)

Thus one can say that despite the sometimes tenuous relationship between practitioners of the two fields, there is also substantial proof that shows commonality between them. With particular reference to Africa, literature and journalism can be said to possess kingly space in the imagination of quite a number of the people. It will not be far-fetched to say that there could never have been any political independence without the combine letting of the two, of course, in addition to politics.

From the foregoing, it is clear that journalism is relevant to literature. In this regard, it stands to reason that if literature was once employed to effectively wage war against slavery initially, and colonialism later, then there could be no better sociological tool in ridding the continent of poverty and penury than to use the realm of creative writing.

Obviously, the Africanists who established publishing houses in Africa and elsewhere in the Diaspora had the aim of using the medium as an exchange of ideas, and to mobilise the people for the anti-colonial cause. Of course, we do recognise the attempt by some missionary groups who also set-up press houses during the period which spurred the development of written language in African languages. But our concern here is with the anti-colonial efforts by the African intelligentsia especially after the Second World War.

In the case of literature, it was seen as a vital political force. This realisation led to the emergence of a powerful group. This group exploited the ends of literature and journalism for political aims. This blend of literature and jour-



nalism for the anti-colonial effort lasted until that yoke was dismantled. As noticed by Wauthier (1978) in *The Literature and Thought of Modern Africa*, the development 'was instrumental in fuelling pan-African feelings on the continent and in the black Diaspora'.

In the fullness of time, these press houses began to produce works in local African languages. Xhosa, a South African language, was, for instance, used in recognition of the high illiteracy rate that prevented the political agitators from reaching a wider audience for their obvious intentions. *Imvo Zabantsundu* (Native Opinion), published in South Africa by Tengo Jubava, is often considered one of the first newspapers to appear on the continent under African direction.

Other newspapers and journals also appeared over time. The appearance of the *Weekly Advertiser* in 1855 in Sierra Leone played an important role in the spread of both literature and journalism in West Africa. Talking about Ghana's leading mainstream newspaper, the *Daily Graphic*, said it 'was so successful' in its mission to the extent that the 'word Graphic' became the generic word for newspaper in Ghana.

An observed feature of some of the earliest papers and journals was the blending of the practice of literary journalism with politics. Often, there was an active politician, who was also a literary scholar cum journalist. Notable Gold Coast politicians, J. B. Danquah, J. E. Casely Hayford, Kobina Sekyi and Attuh Ahuma, were practitioners of this exemplar. To demonstrate, Casely Hayford was not only a politician, he was the Editor-in-Chief of the *Echo* and later the *Gold Coast Leader*. The *Accra Herald* which burst onto the scene in 1857, owned by James Bannerman, is another such paper harnessing the resources of journalism and literature for political expediency. In essence, these newspapers helped in firing off an African imaginative force by using the media in attacking colonialism. This point is well-exemplified in Newell's *West African Literatures*:

Up and down the West African coast, educated Africans made use of the printing press to exchange ideas: thus the Ghanaian nationalist and writer J.E. Casely Hayford absorbed the ideas of his mentor, the Liberian-based race activist, Edward Wilmot Blyden, and in 1920s

he founded his own newspaper, the 'Gold Coast Leader', for the development of ideas; meanwhile, 'troublemakers' like the outspoken Sierra Leonean secretary of the West African Youth League, I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson plus the cantankerous writer and leader of the Aborigines Rights Protection Society in Ghana, Kobina Sekyi and also the American-educated nationalist in Nigeria, Nnamdi Azikiwe all gave continual headaches to British colonial administrators by publishing 'libellous' and 'seditious' articles in the English Language. (p.19)

Under the banner of Congress of Negro, an amalgamation of Black journalists, literary scholars and politicians collectively spearheaded a vociferous campaign that eventually led to the shredding of colonialism. To demonstrate, during a meeting held at France's prestigious Sorbonne University in 1959, these scholars re-echoed a commitment to use their writings in the service of their people. The Congress of Negro, according to Wauthier (1978), thrived on the notion that 'nations aspiring to freedom should seek to reaffirm their contribution to the domain of arts and letters'. To be sure, these revered scholars indeed put their commitment to test. The publication of *Presence Africaine* by Alioune Diop of Senegal in 1947 came to represent a crystallisation of the collective vision of the African intelligentsia at the time. Consistent with Claude Wauthier's study, *Presence Africaine* was considered the most important periodical by Black Negro intelligentsia at the time and its writings, according to some experts, led to the evolution of the concept of Negritude. It is no wonder that some scholars clearly link the emergence of a literary concept such as Negritude evenly to literary journalism.

Like the *Presence Africaine*, the *Black Orpheus*, an Ibadan-based newspaper, complemented the efforts of similar other papers in sensitising their people to resist the imposing colonists. The quality of the *Black Orpheus* was said to be so high that it engrossed the fascination of some prominent white literary scholars such as Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre and Michael Leins.

By the same token, Newell (2006) traces the emergence of productive journalistic and literature work in West Africa to the 1880's when elite educated Africans set up their own English language papers with the object of using their publications as mouthpieces for region-wide, anti-colonial organisa-

tion such as Aborigines Rights Protection Society. The publications connected Africans to anti-colonial groups in India and anti-racism activists in North America like W. E. B. DuBois because of their shared experiences. Thus, provocative materials from North America and India spread through African newspapers and oral networks and made impact on both literate and illiterate people.

Writing in West Africa, Newell puts forward, has a clear inherent ethos, which is to move the people in support of political and social actions. She illustrates this point with an insight into the conduct of the Negritude writers.

The proponents of negritude were interested in poetics (emphasis supplied) as much as in politics: they set up salons, soirees, and a number of literary journals in Paris, the most famous being the *Presence Africaine*, founded by Alioune Diop ... and went on to become the artistic and cultural mouthpiece of the francophone black world. From these literary platforms, Senghor and his colleagues produced a powerful theory of racial difference ... Journals like *Presence Africaine* demonstrated the manner in which, Caliban-like, black writers from the colonies used their literacy subversively to glue themselves together into a coherent group, to produce a binding mythology, an aesthetic, and a shared past to authenticate their new community. They used print to establish a public forum for anti-colonial action, protesting in the name of the black man's culture against colonial racism and the lack of equal rights throughout the imperial world. As in anglophone West Africa where the international circulation of English-language newspapers and pamphlets helped to inspire anti-colonial protest at the local level, so too the activity of printing, writing, and reading in the French language-zone helped generate African identities that were oppositional and worldwide, connecting Martinique with Senegal, Paris with Cameroon, the West African oral griot with the poets of the Harlem renaissance. (p. 28)

Simply stated, the above illustration demonstrates that despite Trivedi's accusation that journalism 'lowers standards of literary taste', there is also sufficient evidence to show that the two fields have always existed side-by-side. Clarke (2006), in his 'Between Fact and Fiction', reveals that journalists have

in the past taken inspiration from novelists to become great authors of literature; and there were times when novelists were also inspired by journalists to address specific concerns of their society. Inspiration is therefore not a one-way street patronised only by the literati or literary scholars.

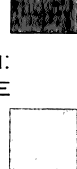
Hvid (2007), another researcher into this field, roundly supports Clarke's propositions. Hvid says journalists can be inspired by great authors of fiction who in turn are allowed to borrow techniques and facts from journalists. In his 'Fiction, Facts and Storytelling', Hvid argues that the traditional distinction between literature and journalism has often served to blur areas of accord between the two, focusing more on the differences.

According to Hvid (2007), literary genres like realism, naturalism and particularly social realism, construct reality in the sense that their portrayal of contemporary society offers an outline for debate and in that sense such works move 'literature closer to journalism'.

In terms of its fundamental nature, the role of the media is similar to the mission of literature in many respects. A key tenet of Ghana's 2000 constitutional framework is the duty imposed on the media to help promote developmental issues. As captured in Ghana's Media Policy (2000), a fundamental goal of the policy is for the media to serve the well-being of the disadvantaged.

The well-being of all our people and the continuing vitality of our culture animate our vision of communication... the exclusion of large segments of our population in the communication process weakens the foundations of this dwelling... our policy regards communication as a dynamic continuum – guided by the past, responsive to the present and anticipatory of the future. Throughout, it upholds the principles of national unity, cultural pluralism, equality, freedom of expression, access and participation. (p. 1)

Similarly, in Duodu's 'Letters' we see how the author appropriates his art to attack the imperialists for the harm they have caused Africa's economy by means of their wanton depletion of the resources of the people. Aside from the economic marauding, there was also linguistic plundering, which



enables the colonists to supplant the culture and language of the people in favour of a foreign language.

Over the years, one sees a widespread notion of the artist being a spokesperson of some sort for his people in the philosophical ideas of many African creative scholars. Altogether, a number of eminent African scholars reflect this philosophical bent in their writings.

Osundare (2002) in his poem, 'Telling Gifts', which is about the role of the artist in modern society, notes: This pen breaks bread with beggars ... stirs little storms in the stomach of eating chiefs, and 'confronts the emperor with the monster in the mirror.' Moreover, Achebe and Soyinka agree that the writer must focus on society. For Achebe (cited in 'The Novelist as Teacher' essay), the writer is both 'a teacher and a guide', while for Soyinka (cited in *Art, Dialogue and Outrage*), he is an 'artist' who must 'function as the recorder of the mores and experience of his society and as the voice of the vision of his own time'. In any event, this philosophy finds resonance in the *New West African Literature*, a collection of essays on African literature edited by Professor Kolawole Ogungbesan (1979). In an introduction to that collection, Professor Ogungbesan makes it clear that 'the primary concern (of African literature) right from its inception is politics'.

This is a position that Duodu (2007) takes in the 'Letters from Afar'. He places ordinary people at the heart of his writings. There is some strong sense of vehemence in favour of ordinary people in his writings and at no point is there any impression that Duodu writes for himself. His writing is basically an articulation of the views of vulnerable people whose interests are not being catered for by African governments. All of Duodu's writing spring from the position of a spokesperson for a marginalised people as expressed by other African scholars.

Consequently, the student of African literature will be right to assert that the grandeur of the creative enterprise plied by writers such as Duodu is partly due to the medium's doggedness to confront 'other' literatures frontal, and on its own terms and merit. Perhaps, this position was adopted by black scholars as a result of the illogical attempts by the generality of European writers to demean the cosmos of the black race in their works.

The profoundly racist and bigoted undertone of most European writers with regard to African issues has instigated a response from their African counterparts. This is a retort which is meant to contest the issues in order to right the wrongs as evidenced in Duodu's writings. Irele (2001) sums up the main pre-occupation of the African literature as follows: African literature helps to unravel, unwrap the insidious and sometimes horrifying power of certain works of art to obscure with their very brilliance, the moral zones they impinge upon.

In his well-received work, *The African Imagination*, Irele explains that African scholars' preponderance to use home-grown rhetorical strategies in the formulation of their work is the result of being forced to come up with something different from what the 'other' literatures possess, which often seek to play down the effectiveness of African literature. African literature, Irele contends, is a distinctive area of expression, along with its promotion, not merely as an academic discipline, but also as a cultural form (p. xii).

Duodu's writing firmly aligns with Irele's position. His experiment with the African verbal art, his lodging of Akan words in the structure of the English language is not aimed only at cultural hybridism. It is also to illustrate his work as a distinctive mode of expression that reflects the political and cultural expressions of his people.

This attempt to forge a body of creative artefact peculiar to Africa which has the object of correcting the ordeals of wronged humanhood is a concern for many African artists, and this viewpoint is particularized in Duodu's 'Letters'. This is so because such a viewpoint affords the African scholar the opportunity to document the history of his people as authentically as possible, to serve as a reminder for the next generations of the steps they have to maintain in preventing the recurrence of the wanton abuses and to ensure their own independence. Ghanaian academic, Kwabena Nketia, the highly respected Emeritus Professor at the university of Ghana states that


African countries must value culture and the performing arts not only for their traditional role as a source of aesthetic enjoyment and as a medium of communication, 'but also for their creative potential and the contemporary role they play in national development.' (Ghana News Agency, 2009).

One of the major creative elements the African scholar uses in crafting his art is oral rhetoric materials, also variously called orature or the African verbal art. Irele (2001) describes the concept of orature as the 'central point of African literature'. Irele concludes that orality is the basis of African languages, culture, history and the literature itself which, he added, makes it impossible to isolate language from the total field of cultural experience. Irele observes quite an 'intimate relation between language, consciousness, expression and experiences' (p. 28), in that they help vivify and empower the people's efforts to create meaning.

As far as the African situation is concerned, if it (orality) illustrates anything, it is the impossibility of isolating language from the total field of social and cultural experience that orality conditions... it provides that the use of language for imaginative purposes, it represents a fundamental component of the symbolic structures by which the individual relates to society and by which society itself relates to its universe of existence. This observation leads to a major issue at the heart of African expression, one that must count in any consideration of orality in relation to African literature: faith in the primacy of language as a vector of experience upon which all this experience rests. (p. 27)

Similarly, in Duodu's 'Letters' (2007), we see copious use of oral techniques that succinctly depict his mode of expression. Duodu utilises oral devices such as repetition, piling, parallelism, and idiophones and blends them with journalistic techniques to make a comment about the Ghanaian society, particularly the direction of politics in his homeland.

Collectively, these efforts have aimed at situating African literature in relation to a global experience, embracing both the pre-colonial and the modern frames of reference. African literature exists and has meaning primarily in the context of a recognizable corpus of texts and works by Africans. In addition, many proponents of African literature, more or less, see it as a medium for contesting the colonial enterprise. For such writers, therefore, literature is a medium for transcribing Africa's authentic history. The use of the term African literature, Irele notes, presupposes an attention to the complex of determinations that have endowed the term African with real meaning, with



a special significance for us as black people.

Agyekum (2007) attests to the fact that literature is an aspect of language and a cardinal part of all societies. Commenting further, he says literature, as in the case of journalism, should 'reflect the experiences of the entire society over a certain period of time', which enables the writer to 'catalogue... lively experiences, hardships and encounters in life.' Agyekum's argument that literature 'can transform society' is well articulated in Ghana's media policy which requires journalists to promote public accountability, as well as fair, accurate and comprehensive information to enable citizens make intelligent decisions.

This means that the media, like literature, reflects society. Both primarily use language to capture and convey human experience. Also, both journalism and literature provide glimpses of not only events of a particular time period but also the general mentality of a people as well. Like literature, journalism capitalises on the human interest. In addition, both journalism and literature seek to effect change. Journalism's core duty is to 'raise hell', which is in many ways, similar to Wordsworth's dictum of literature being the moral umpire of society.

According to Professor Mark Canada (2001) of the University of North Carolina, Pembroke, although journalism and literature are different at their core, these differences are not always distinct.

Both (journalism and literature), after all, primarily use languages to capture and convey the human experience. Someone has famously proclaimed that journalism is 'history in a hurry,' suggesting that news reporters record events that ultimately tell the story of people on earth. Similarly, literature often provides glimpses of not only the events of a time period, but the general mentality of its people. Both journalism and literature also capitalize on human interest. In his essay, 'The Philosophy of Composition', Edgar Allan Poe emphasised the value of originality in creating a poem, and someone else defined news as something with an unusual quality, noting that a dog biting a man is not news, but a man biting a dog is. Finally, both journalism and literature seek to effect change or move the audiences. A newspa-

per's job, it has been said, is to 'raise hell'. Some literary works, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, also raise hell. Others, such as the satires of Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope, may effect a different kind of change by making us aware of the weaknesses in our personalities. Still others – the lyric poems of Poe and William Shakespeare, for example – heighten our awareness of the world or perhaps merely entertain us. In any case, all literature has some kind of impact. In short, journalism and literature are similar in many respects. In fact, we might consider journalism as a literary genre – that is a type of writing with its own set of conventions. (p. 2)

Hvid (2007) is convinced that although 'good literature' will not always have to 'mirror or put a perspective on contemporary events as in journalism', this does not in any way widen the gulf between the two tenets. Tom Wolfe, (2006), co-editor of the anthology, *The New Journalism*, supports this view. He explains that journalism and literature were once very closely related up to the 1950's when literary authors 'gave up realism and started experimenting with modern forms of story-telling'. Wolfe (2006) writes:

As writers of fiction no longer seemed to have courage to describe contemporary events in fiction, young journalists took up the challenge. As journalists, they stimulated debate on contemporary events but they used literary techniques in journalism. (p. 3).

Flowing from Hvid's argument is the fact that journalism can be used to accomplish the aims of literature, in essence, to work out a society which will lift up the people to realise their potential. The truth in Hvid's assertion is particularly true of Africa.

Altogether, a clear pattern has emerged over the years of African writers, literary scholars and journalists working to rein in threats to cultural and social stability.

In brief, both literature and journalism are important communication tools which can serve as a catalyst for change and, through this organised effort, bring about social and economic enhancement. This is possible because a similar synergy was employed in bringing about the concept of Negritude

that helped challenge Western racist notions about Africa, and fought against colonialism in general.

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