

SANKOFA: DISABILITY AND THE DOOR OF RETURN

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Abstract

This dissertation is organized as sets of related essays that explore the concept of Sankofa (return to the source) as a method to revisit, resurge and reclaim Nkrumah's ideology to better understand the structures that continue to create disablement in Ghana. Disability studies as a field has come to acknowledge that the majority of disabled individuals live in the global south, however, the field does not yet account for “how Europe underdeveloped Africa,” how it continues to do so, and the impact it has on Her children.

African Indigenous studies scholars such as Nana George Dei, charges new scholars to revisit the past in order to design the future of Africa for Africans. Heeding this call, I returned to the revolutionary anti-colonial ideologies of Julius Nyerere, Amilcar Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah and Frantz Fanon in order to center their approaches within the discourse of disability. Applying their ideologies, this dissertation draws particularly on Nkrumahism as a framework to engage and critique western biomedical approaches to disability and disablement. I argue for a Nkrumahist resurgence that views disability and disablement from a cultural-social-political-economic perspective, and examine their pre- and post-colonial historiographic contexts which allow for a critical engagement and a space to write Akan spirituality into critical disability studies.

Through ‘creative theorization’ this dissertation creates a Door of Return to Indigenizing African/Ghanaian ways of knowing and rewriting the histories which includes ancestors who were silenced due to several complex relationships; therefore, this dissertation partially concludes that, it is not “our culture” to stigmatize against persons with disabilities particularly those who are classified as ‘insane’; instead they should be viewed as being one with the spirit world, interpreting messages from ancestors which in itself is a gift that the Akan’s hold with pride. It also concluded the main argument of this dissertation that institutionalization of the Indigenes due to their African spirituality led to an increase in formalized confinement of Indigenous bodies. To further interrogate this inconclusiveness from the European archive, I propose further research that will allow the Indigenes themselves to speak on how, why and if those considered “insane/mad and not able’ were banished or erased during pre-colonial Ghana.

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It took an entire VILLAGE to get me through this stage and I cannot adequately express my gratitude to those within my Village. Yvonne Simpson, Onyinyechukwu Udegbe and Anita Ewan whom always reminded me of my strengths and supported my thinking through processes. To my one and only Historian, Professor Mary Owusu from University of Cape Coast, Ghana who guided me through the history of the Akan's, their encounters with the Europeans and archival books to find some of the answers that I seek for.

I would like to salute my Mother Alice Bewaji-Donkor and Father Christopher Yeboah Donkor who had no doubt in their minds that this day will definitely come. Most importantly, my partner Ransford who knew exactly what I needed when those doubting days started to slowly creep in and comforted me. I am blessed to be living through these experiences and this thing called life with you. My children, Jedidiah and Jeremiah you gave me something to hold on to. You both knew when I needed to be cheered for, when I needed a cup of water or when I needed a hug in order to refuel my spirit. I love you both dearly and looking forward to what the Creator has install for you both.

To the examiner team, your validation of my work speaks volume and I cannot imagine doing this work without you opening the door of the academy for my dissertation. I am looking forward to working in the paths that you have already created in the academy. MEDASE!!

Dedication

To my Ancestors, thank you for allowing me in and directing me.



Figure 1: Cape Coast Dungeon. Picture taken by Evelyn Kissi

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Chapter One—Introduction

Setting the Stage: Prologue

Researching and writing this dissertation was a humbling and emotional experience with several stages that required me to dig deeper into my own Africanness while also questioning my Western beliefs and ways of knowing. I am grateful to my Supervisor, Dr. Rachel Gorman, whom I believe was brought my way by my ancestors to support my methodology that addresses the making and unmaking of the lives, afterlives and enslavement of my ancestors in order to create a Door of Return through the telling of their lived experiences. She provided a space where critical scholars such as herself, Tiffany King, Roberta Timothy, Christina Sharpe and others could create “Wake Work.” This wake disrupts and ruptures the construction of writing and methodically makes path-breaking an intervention for Black academics to move away from inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary work, and instead supports the idea that “we must become undisciplined” (Sharpe, 2016, p. 13).

My committee advisor Dr. Geoffrey Reaume showed me ways of gathering evidence, formulating and laying out archival/historical documents and validated the ways in which I chose to creatively formulate primary sources to bring to life the experiences of the past through Sankofa. Dr. Roberta Timothy, you accepted to be on my committee at a very crucial moment and I am humbled and thankful for the opportunity to be guided by you. I remember when I was heading to Ghana to start the excavation of my dissertation, you lamented to me, stating, ‘make sure you do not force to find in the archive, but rather let the ancestors guide you. Let them direct what they want you to find, connect and let their spirit and yours be one.’ I did not understand your riddle until I entered into the archival space in Accra and felt a sense of heaviness that I could not shake off or ignore. By the end of my excavation, I was mentally unresponsive,

drained and could not find the language or words to explain the state that I was in. My state of mind was fragmented but this was just the beginning of what I now understand is my uncompleted journey. All your patience and late calls when I was confused about my archival and historical methodology was lifesaving. I cannot thank you all enough for your critical feedback, spiritual guidance, meticulous support and handholding throughout a project that brings the Akan Indigenous way of being into disability studies while also dismantling dominant structures as Meekosha, Soldatic, Jaffee, Gorman, Timothy and others have called for.

This uncompleted journey has shaped the way and ways I decided to present my dissertation defence. I acknowledge the sacred land that we are perching on today as we have and are still enjoying settler privileges. I must also recognize that I stand here with you this morning not by my own merit, but by the spirit of my ancestors who have asked permission to be part of this event today. My journey started 26 years ago to this month (August) when my father who struggled to “settle down as an exile” (Achebe, 2000, p. 92) in a foreign country due to a political uprising in Ghana during the J. J. Rawlings era; travelling through Nigeria to Libya before arriving in Canada. We followed six years later when my father gained landed immigrant status and could resettle his family in Canada. Our relocation was a very difficult time for me, particularly because I was uprooted from my comfort zone and my spirit felt disembodied. I was made fun of for my African accent, for my body physique, for my Africaness leaving me in a passing dark space; I could not find my center, nor myself, as Malidoma Some (1994) continues to allude to in his work. Finding your center defines your path and destiny (Some, 1994).

My circle of balance, as per Wane (2011), was disrupted and the social system here in Canada did not provide me with the context or space where I felt represented. The only space that I found ‘me’ and was accepted was in my secondary school Wrestling team where the coach

allowed me to ground myself as I navigated my new borrowed home. He showed me ways to channel my anger through wrestling. I bring back this time of my past because as Njoki Wane, George Dei, and Malidoma Some mention that we cannot move forward unless we know what lies beneath and behind us. My uncompleted journey continued in graduate school when a colleague and I created an African thoughts course supervised by Dr. Gorman. This course gave me life and as Wane (2008) elegantly puts it, an “ideological emancipation” or what I called “Purchasing Power” in Chapter 1 of my Dissertation (borrowing from Achebe). The opportunity to read Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, Julius Nyerere, Frantz Fanon and other Nationalist and Pan-African minds was the emancipation that I needed.

Dr. Dei’s call to Sankofa thoughts of our ancestors and to have uncomfortable conversations allowed me to focus my critical thought on Pan-Africanism and specifically Nkrumahism to further develop my found ideological emancipation where I drew and grounded my anti-colonial, anti-ableist lens. My chapter 3 is dedicated to this work. I was liberated as I did not have to use my dissertation for what George Dei (2012) called “Eurocentric Mimicry,” but the bad news, as stated by Henry Louis Gates, JR. (1988), was that I had no space to build on in the way of an established critical thoughts stream that views disability from the lens of disablement and Akan Personhood. The stakes for me were high but also a mixed blessing as I would have to “resurrect” text of tradition before I could analyze and reveal its meaning (Gates, 1988). A prominent Professor told me that this might not be allowed within Eurocentric disability studies and the academy.

Once I got over these fears with the guidance and validation of my committee members, I felt the worst was over, but little did I know that this is just the beginning of my uncompleted journey. I was born into a Christian home with a mother that was raised by a father who was in

the highest position as the Anglican Provost and Reverend Mothers because of the death of her mother during childbirth. At this point, it became a struggle to write leaving me with what is often referred to as ‘writers block’; I was questioning my existence, as my center was still not discovered. I called my parent and question them about their genealogy; I asked them to tell me about their grandfather, their father or anything about their spirituality, religion or their history.

My father finally shared that my great grandfather was a Okomfo (in Akan these will be the traditionalist, those who see and communicate with the spirit world; those who are in the position to stabilize and destabilize Sunsum). I finally found the source of my writers block, before that I myself did not believe in an ancestral spirit world that dwells within us as explained by Kwame Gyekye (1987). Understanding that this body that we occupy is just an assemblage to our Sunsum (Spirit) and Kraa (Soul) allowed me to better situate my thoughts in Chapter 4 of my dissertation and also to recognize that my path requires me to understand both worlds. I can just hear the voice of my mother saying, “Evelyn you have gone too far in these African spiritual witch craft.”

I needed to understand these two extremities of my being in order for those I write about (dead or alive) and the continent that I write for to be meaningful, and also for how the ancestors want their voices to be heard, even though it may make some uncomfortable due to generations of colonial damage that has erased and demonized our spiritual connections to our ancestors and the land that we dwell on. As a daughter of a forced African traveller in search of her own center, questioning if it is possible to find a space within both my spiritual extremities, I argue that my journey is incomplete because I have just started to walk the path that will lead me to my center and an understanding that hearing and being directed by the ancestors is a gift.

When I was in Ghana in 2003, at the beginning of my journey, I watched a woman being ridiculed for giving birth to a child with what they call in the Twi language, “Nsuo Ba,” or “water child” because the child was missing a limb and what looked like cerebral palsy. This was the beginning of my journey as a disability ally or as Nirmala Erevelles (2011) calls it, someone who is sometimes disabled. I started to question the elders around me about why such act was happening and I was told that “it is our culture”; I was not convinced that it was our culture that placed such punishment on those that deviated from the ‘norm,’ particularly because Ghana has been colonized by 5 or more European countries, namely: France, Holland, Spain, Portugal and Britain, at least from the 1600s. Chasing the past in order to understand the formation of the current state and future becomes my life project, as an elder in Ghana once told me that “You are a very young woman but you have an old soul.” I took it as a complement. To me an old soul means I yearn for wisdom beyond my time; but it can also mean that the spirit that dwells within me is of an elder whom I am still trying to own and embody. This yearning for wisdom, the space to understand the spirit within me is a lifelong journey; and I stand at crossroads of the ‘normalized’ white man’s religion and the ‘demonized/maddened’ African spirituality, hence my knowing that my journey is still incomplete.

My work used the concept of disablement by Gorman to situate the several ways that the Europeans have created disabling structures from 1600 pre-formation Gulf of Guinea to 1960 Nkrumah who provided some context to the state of the nation after he took over from the colonizers. I used the concept of disablement to unpack the ways in which pre-formation European interlopers in the Gulf of Guinea through to the formalized declaration of colonialism 1880 as per Adu-Boahen (1987) was a methodical way to madden our spirituality in order to invalidate our ways of being. My dissertation was used to research and examine how the

epistemology of mental health and institutionalization was used as a weapon for the purpose of civilizing. Bodies were commodified while our minds were taken ownership of. There was an increase of maddening labels after extensive research by Rattray and other European so-called anthropologists and researchers on the Akan Spirituality.

My dissertation therefore allowed me the opportunity to conclude that it is not our culture that created the disabling space of erasure of those bodies that deviated but rather a leftover from all five colonizing empires that have continuously controlled our ways of Being and knowing. Through the archival excavation, I found that the Akan's actually viewed what the Europeans termed 'madness' as being one with the spirit world, interpreting messages from ancestors which in itself is seen as a gift that they hold with pride. This was clearly laid out in Chapter 5 of my dissertation. Our spiritual ways of Being through rituals connects us to our ways of knowing and unlocks a direct line to Onyame our Creator and the spirit world of our ancestors and should be included in the dominant structures of disability studies, Pan-Africanism/Nkrumahism, and overall African Studies even as it further complicates the fields.

Boyce Davies (1999) cautions us that:

critical or creative work can assume colonizing postures and invasiveness in relation to the materials with which one works. . . . in redefining the critical and creative . . . it is necessary to foreground whether ones work is for reconnection, invasion or exploitation.

(p. 17)

Boyce Davies' work provides a space to acquire the 'power to recreate' while providing a template for a movement to re-connect and re-evaluate disability through the tangling forced relationship of North-South disablement (Davis, 1999); a conversation starter that employs Nkrumah's ideological perspectives (Dei, 2012).

Declaring Research Specificity: This dissertation acknowledges that the African continent and its diversity are vast, and due to the limitation and constraints of space and time, does in no shape or form intend to generalize the Akan spiritual systems as an umbrella for Ghana or Africa. Further, in no way am I declaring that the Akan culture was perfect; however, I employ the value systems that Boahen, Kwesi Wiredu, Kwame Nkrumah and J.B Danquah have shared in their writings. The dissertation situates pre-formation 1600 Ghana as the Gulf of Guinea; Nation State Ghana as my research setting; and the Akan nation as my site. The timeline that I am engaging with is from 1600 – 1960; I use the pre-colonial to contextualize pre-formation Ghana before 1880 as per Boahen (1987), and post-colonial to signify post independent Nkrumah (1960). Other important declarations are that the dissertation did not focus specifically on gender or sexuality, nor does it focus on trans-Atlantic slavery and its disabling techniques that held the continent back—including the valuable human resources that were stolen resulting in crucial gaps in the transmission of knowledge. Rather, I focus on some of the methodical European processes that created maddened Black bodies.

Also due to the lack of space within my dissertation, I focus on psychiatry and mental illness, madness and insanity within the broader scope of disability (but in chapter six, I use disability generally in some places). My work is fully grounded in Critical Disability Studies and argues for a Nkrumahist resurgence that views disability and disablement from a cultural-social-political-economic perspective, that situates them within the historical trajectory of pre-colonial African traditions and Nkrumah's anti-colonial policy.

Where and how I Locate Myself: An Emotional Journey

As a Ghanaian-Nigerian-Canadian within the academic space, I have struggled to find myself and find a language that I can use to express what and how I feel in a place and space that

sees me first as African then as Black and then as a woman before all my other embodied identities. An identity that has been fragmented over 1000 years of Atlantic trade enterprise, through transatlantic slavery, and now through contemporary migration; and as Njoki Nathani Wane (2008) states, my reflective self which is grounded in “my experiences as an African woman caught between a European education system” (p. 183) in search of my ancestral voices and traditional ways of knowing and being. This feeling and struggle resonates with Achebe’s (2000) words, when he states that, “experience of a traveller from the world’s poor places is very different, whether [they are] travelling as a tourist or struggling to settle down as an exile in a wealthy country” (p. 92) that wasn’t created with ‘my type’ in mind.¹ This struggle and search for a ‘purchasing power’ forces me to continuously question and second-guess everything that I do, my being, my positionality, my social location as a mixed identity ‘Nigerian and Ghanaian,’ and with my African accent.² All this questioning and identity politics drew me into a depressed state while also disembodying my ‘personhood’ as an Akan-Yoruba woman, a state that I could not have emerged from without my connection to a Supreme God, my Soul, my Lineage and the support of my whole village (both locally and within the African continent). My work within the academy would not be possible without these supports; people who continuously assured me that I am needed in this space to call out the white oppressors that dominate academia as the interlopers, colonials, neo-colonials, and oppressors that they are.

Almost three decades since my feet touched the land called Canada, I am still struggling with the same questions regarding my identity as an African/Black Indigenous woman. Taiwo

¹ This makes me pause to think through the concept of spaces for the traveller as the traveller doesn’t have to leave the shores of their own country in order to be a traveller, especially with neo-colonization (in the name of globalization) infiltrating the entire world.

² I became conscious of my accent after I immigrated to Canada during the time that I was navigating spaces, and identities between African continentals, Black/Caribbean’s and Whites.

Selasi's (2015) *TedTalk*, "Don't ask where I'm from, ask where I'm a local" resonates with me, as my locality is Nigeria, Ghana, and now Canada where my consciousness developed, but Canada is also where my 'Africanness' almost died due to the lack of spaces where I can find a local balance. Achebe (2000) states that one cannot balance one thing but rather, "you balance a diversity of things. And diversity is the engine of the evolution of living things" (p. 97); but what are the diversity of things that I need to balance to live in a stolen land where I occupy an identity as a Canadian enjoying 'Settler privileges'? My local is a place where I do not question my existence (Ghana/Nigeria), where I am accepted by my communities with open hands and where the land that I stand on holds me firm because I am recognized as one with them. My local is where my ancestors' spirits interact with mine in order to guide me through the spaces that I occupy and the body that holds and displays my soul and my identities. Balancing my diversity is a metaphor and an understatement as long as I remain in a land where I am known only as African, Black, and a Settler Colonial.

My historical baggage, as an ex-colony of my localities and my newly acquired positionalities, I am overly critical but also protective of my local. One area I pay particular attention to is the continued infiltration of Ghana through neo-colonization in the name of development as noted by Nkrumah (1962, 1963, 1964) and Escobar (1999). Such infiltration includes the west's continued critiques of my locality—as the worst place to be disabled—a critique that ignores pre-colonial, the colonial and contemporary connection to the country's new-imperial scheme, as Kwame Nkrumah (1964) and Chinua Achebe (2000) call it. Neo-colonialism relies on the continuous extractions of land and commodification of peoples,

creating several disablements³ for the local land and disability for the Indigenous. Imperialism, the new form of colonization, that Nkrumah (now an ancestor) warned Ghana/Africa about is in full effect, erasing what makes my locality; expanding the gap between the rich and poor, the abled and disabled; and creating new epistemological narratives that disembody us from our way of being on the land. Belonginess now becomes questionable.

On the creation of new epistemological narratives, a series of events/moments led to my journey as a Black disability scholar and advocate. The first was in 2003, when I was offered the opportunity to serve as the Country Director of a non-for-profit organization developing a Women's Resource Centre for the purpose of creating integrated, localized—but still Eurocentric training for women within the Koforidua, the Eastern Region community of Ghana. The position required me to start from the ground-up, developing community initiatives while engaging with local women and their husbands to convey how our program, that teaches basic accounting, literacy, mothering and community health training, will benefit the women. I was so 'green' in the career world and critical international development space that I happily accepted the position and hit the ground running; loving the fact that I was back home reconnecting with my roots while trying to empower my fellow women using learnt Euro-American ideologies.

One night a particularly heartbreaking news story caught my attention; on the TV were images of a woman with blood all over her face crying profusely. This woman had been beaten for giving birth to a 'river child/spirit child,' as the locals called it. A river child in Ghanaian society, specifically the Akan community, is a child with a disability, born with missing or extra limbs, cerebral palsy etc. (Avoke, 2002; Srem-Sai, 2015). This baby was torn away from his

³ Disablement is conceptualized as a social, economic, and political process connected to global inequities, and international development that exploit Africa and its people (Gorman, 2005, 2010; Farmer, 2005; Grech, & Soldatic 2016) This concept will be further unpacked in chapter three.

mother and taken to the side of the river to die because allegedly, his mother had in some way disobeyed/ defiled the gods of the land and was paying for it through the birth of a child from the spirit world; basically, the ‘gods were angry’ and this was, as the locals say, ‘our culture.’ This was happening in a rural area and broadcast on national television. I felt so disturbed, as I had thought that such inhumane practices were just stories told by adults to scare children, but here it was on the evening news.

After this wakeup call I started to question why these so called cultural and religious practices place the blame solely on the woman and inflict several levels of pain on her for giving birth to a ‘deviant,’ ‘river’ child. Does this river child not have rights, justice and protection? Do these river children ever get saved by Good Samaritans? What rights protect this child? How are they treated in their community if they are saved? What phenomena led to such forms of treatment? Whose culture condones this treatment? How did these cultural and religious practices emerge? Do these children lose what Nkrumah (1963) sees as their independent rights? Does it erase their African Personhood?

The second was reading the Human Rights Watch (HRW, 2012) report on Ghana “Like a Death Sentence: Abuses against Persons with Mental Disabilities in Ghana” and viewing the documentary by Sophie Morgan (2015) *The World’s Worst place to be Disabled*. Morgan argued that Ghana is the worst place to be disabled; she connected traditional Ghanaian cultural practices and the current treatment of persons with disabilities without any evidence of Ghanaian histories or current situations of such disabling treatments on the ground. The HRW report documents the barriers that people with mental health issues face. It provides an international lens to assess disability and treatment of people, which in turn politicizes the situation in order to create a platform for people with disabilities to reach the world. Their lens, free of local

historical context, created a single story of Ghana on the global stage that critically fails the individuals that they are creating the platform for. From a structural lens, how can a restructuring of international development reporting systems help to contextualize disability through a disablement framework? Can the current ways of knowing be re-written? In beginning to answer these questions I argue that the current erasure/stigmatization and silencing of disabled individuals in contemporary Ghana was fostered through encounters with Europeans during the pre-colonial period (see Boahen, 1987; Amenumey, 2018). This inhumane practice and the report from HRW (generally structural reporting systems of international agencies) on disability were the start of my journey for Southern disability justice – the right for persons with disabilities in Ghana to live a dignified non-violent life and the right to a reporting system that speaks to the truth/reality on the ground.

Even now as I try to navigate my way through contemporary human rights instruments, including the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD; 2008) the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁴ (1948) that Ghana ratified; and the Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana (1992), which clearly speaks to human rights and a dignified life for all, I come up short of answers as these universal and continental tools favour an “individualism which is the hallmark of the capitalist approach” (Biko, 2002, p. 42); a clearly westernized ideology that has been used to create an empire in Africa since the first European interlopers shored at the Coast of Guinea. But two questions that have driven me thus far are: why do persons with disability continue to be stigmatized and erased? And how have their

⁴ The United Nations defines human rights as: rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination (<http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/human-rights/>).

erasure and stigmatization become normalized in Ghana? The majority of those who occupy spaces of power that I speak to (through informal conversation) always resort to one answer, ‘it is our culture’; a culture that I argue has shifted and grown from over five colonial masters.

It is also important to note that many nations in the continent of Africa, including Ghana, have signed or ratified, at the African Union level, the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR; 1987), and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC, 1990) which Ghana has signed and ratified; however, Ghana has not signed nor ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (see African Union, 2019 for a list of countries that signed or ratified). Ghana also has the National Disability Act (2006), the Mental Health Policy (1994), and the Inclusive Education Policy (2013) that is specific to children with disabilities’ right to accessible school spaces. However, all these human rights tools have a sharp and caustic quality that does not take into consideration the pre-historicity of the African continent and the continuity of imperialist bondages. I argue that this is problematic because the majority of those tools are funded and ideologically driven by pre-colonial violent engagement and the neo-colonist (Nkrumah, 1962, 1963; Escobar, 1999).

Entering as an ally from an African Indigenous lens and understanding how a lack of structural supports can be debilitating for persons with disability, I have engaged with the ‘empire scheme’ in order to interrogate injustice from above even though I know that:

[Such] a tremendously potent and complex human reinvention of self—calling, as it must do, on every faculty of mind and soul and spirit; drawing as it must, from every resource of memory and imagination and from a familiarity with our history, our arts and culture;

but also from an unflinching consciousness of the flaws that blemished our inheritance—
such an enterprise could not be expected to be easy. (Achebe, 2000, pp. 79-80)

This complex interrogation of injustice is also why Achebe's (2000) proposal resonates with me:

For those who believe that Europe and North America have already invented a universal civilization and all the rest of us have to do is hurry up and enroll, what I am proposing will appear unnecessary if not downright foolish. But for others who may believe with me that a universal civilization is nowhere yet in sight, the task will be how to enter the preliminary conversations. (p. 104)

It is critical for this dissertation to enter a preliminary conversation of disability and disablement in order to interrogate the 'it's our culture' narrative that maintains a distance between abled and disabled bodies. As an entry into the preliminary conversation of disability and disablement, this dissertation stands to be used as a template to further discussions around the continent to mitigate the current experiences of persons with disabilities and identify commonalities leading to an African disability rights for ALL from an anti-colonial critical disability lens. The dissertation opens the door for the return of disabled ancestors allowing their stories to be added to the historical formation of today's Ghana. And finally, it expands and moves away from western discourses and praxis in critical disability studies and critical international development.

Purpose of Study

The goal is to account for the lived experiences of PWDs and how their bodies were produced, pathologized, silenced and stratified during the pre-formation colonial era and to connect past policies and politics to the present. Reaume (2012) notes that history can "influence public policies that have a direct impact on people with disabilities as policy-makers learn from the past while being influenced to improve practices in the present" (p. 39). History is also said

to help define and validate (MacMillan, 2009), in this way, understanding historical representation of PWDs becomes a starting point to address the erasure of PWDs in the historical imagination and allow for a more accurate discourse that includes them. This way, we can create a door of return using a southern disability justice lens that includes all persons of Ghana and welcomes ALL as Ghana declared The Year of Return and beyond in 2018. This dissertation is organized in the following way:

Organization of the Chapters

Chapter one: Literature review and methodology. This chapter includes the methodology/methods that drives this project. It also provides a thorough survey and analysis of both human rights and social justice from a western view while also interrogating its utopian overstatement of universality. It concludes with a section on critiques of African human rights.

Chapter two: The ontology of the African through the ‘lens’ of the European interlopers (1602 – 1823). Using an anti-colonial and anti-ableist lens and the concept of disablement, this chapter surveys the historical literature landscape on the “Negros” and how their bodies were produced (re-produced), pathologized (disability representation: sicknesses, the super human/physicality and the lazy) or were absent from the historical narratives. The majority of the historical literature within this chapter is pre-colonial European accounts of the Gold Coast.

Chapter three: Destabilizing critical disability studies—a door of return. This chapter interrogates and problematizes disability studies while also questioning historical accounts in order to create a space for critical Nkrumahist thought and laying the grounds to understand how European ideology has shaped discrimination towards those considered different. This chapter is critical to international development agencies working with the global

south as it interrogates development work and their ways of reporting, and leads the way to an African Disability Studies.

Chapter four: African spirituality. This chapter provides a bird's eye view of the epistemology of Akan ways of being in relation to their ontology as a whole within their community through their spiritual connections to Onyame (Supreme God), their deities (earthly gods) and the spiritual connection to their Ancestors.

Chapter five: Pathologizing African spirituality – a colonial gateway to mental and physical enslavement. Chapter five demonstrates the complex relationship between the colonial and the colonized leading to disablement and the erasure of their ways of knowing; it relies heavily on the colonizers accounts and archival materials in order to problematize while unraveling how they influence or constructed the institutions of disability/madness. The chapter leaves room for future research and unfortunately more questions.

Chapter Six: Epilogue. At the intersection of literature on social policy, disability policy, Nkrumah's approach to post-colonial social development and global south disability studies this chapter looks at whether pre-colonial/colonial European legacies shaped Nkrumah's post-colonial social policies.

Methodology and Method

Tamboukou (2014) states that, “[in] recent years, archival research in the social sciences is emerging as a vibrant field of qualitative research, with contribution from a range of disciplinary fields, epistemological standpoints, theoretical insights and methodological approaches” (p. 617). Valles et al. (2011) discuss the emergent of ethical issues in the rise of reusing and reanalyzing existing primary qualitative data which brings the question of “archival sensitivity” that goes “beyond archive material, namely written documents....visual sources and

data” (p. 4). A method that makes it necessary to continuously question oneself if one’s project is reconnecting, becoming invasive and or exploitive in order words colonizing (Boyce-Davies, 1999); such method is what I intend to employ in this research. This dissertation engages a qualitative framework leading to an epistemological standpoint and theoretical insights through a Sankofa anti-colonial critical lens while sifting through archival materials and existing qualitative data. My research is a chronological and thematic historical investigation on disability representation in Ghana using archival sources as most existing research has concentrated on the post-colonial Nkrumah era (see Agbeyaga, 2011; Avoke, 2001; Kassah et al., 2012; Srem-Sai, 2015).

An archival method of epistemological collection was utilized because as Stoler (2009) elaborates, “scholars need to move from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject” (p. 87). This approach looks at archive as knowledge producer, a “supreme technology . . . a repository of codified beliefs that clustered (and bore witness to) connections between secrecy, the law and power” (Stoler, 2009, p. 87). In the case of this research, it unveils the beliefs that have hegemonically defined and demonized disabled bodies by focusing on archives as lived subjects rather than simply documented sources. Duranti and Michetti (2017) noted that the archival research approach is “different from the historical approach because its theory and methodology are not an indivisible unit, or an inextricable tangle of threads. Rather, they constitute a coherent system in which the former, theory, guides the latter, methodology” (p. 87).

Duranti and Michetti (2017) “employ the interpretive framework of both archival theory (*what* archivists work with) and methodology (*how* they work) in conjunction with the tools of philological disciplines, because their purpose is to implement and further develop the science of the record” (p. 91). The said philological disciplines include a philological language for accuracy

and evidence and they are: “[Palaeography], chronology, sigillography, heraldry, codicology. . . . epigraphy, textual . . . among others” (p. 90). This approach to archival analysis allows the researcher to reconstruct relationships among “internal and external elements of the records, their structure and their context” (Duranti & Michetti, 2017, p. 90). Duranti and Michetti warned that for such research methods to be successful, one must:

[Simultaneously] nurture disciplinary archival scholarship and foster its diversity by keeping at its core the archival method of investigation, maintaining its traditional linkages with the methods of history and jurisprudence, and venturing onto the shores of both allied and distant disciplines to borrow from them what is needed to complement and integrate the archival body of knowledge” (p. 93).

This supports Dei’s (2012) argument for an anti-colonial lens that will allow scholars to revisit the past while also bringing in different disciplines to fit the modern knowledge/discourse, bodies and context. However, it is important to keep in mind that a researcher must see the reasons for archival research and its methodology in order to “be aware of its limitations, and be able to follow it, through all difficulties and seemingly endless amassments of material, consistently to a conclusion” (Bloomfield, 1922 as cited in Duranti & Michetti, 2017, p. 84).

Excavating the archival record is necessary to identify how colonial invasion influenced current treatment and understanding of PWDs, help find truth for justice, start a new conversation and provide a way out of the western lens of knowing/being and into an Indigenizing way forward. I argue that the current erasure, stigmatization and silencing of disabled individuals in contemporary Ghana was fostered through encounters with European interlopers, traders, and colonials. This form of erasure has created able-bodied dominance, labeling, and ostracizing through the use of institutions and criminalization. The

institutionalization and criminalization of those deemed insane increased after the British brought down the Ashanti kingdom between 1870 and 1950.

This is shown chronologically and thematically by locating statistics and reports of those classified insane within primary European accounts and archival documents from Christiansburg, other European Forts built located in Ghana and the 1904 asylum prison. I analyze the complicated relationship between European traders and indigenes during pre-colonial material exchanges that led to several social changes that demonized, demoralized and acculturated African ways of spirituality, socializing and being. I show how the pre-formation Ghana occupation in itself was a disablement to the fabric of African culture and spirituality that created a new form of imperialist apparatus that othered. Finally, I explore whether pre-colonial and colonial policies shaped Nkrumah's post-colonial social policy and then identify how Nkrumah's social policies dismantled the several disablements that remained in the social, political, cultural and environmental aesthetics of new Ghana.

As my research is entrenched within the Sankofa archival spaces, it allows me to use an anti-colonial and an anti-ableist lens to explore the following questions:

1. How are Indigenous Africans silenced, pathologized, depicted or produced during pre-colonial early European trading (super human vs. lazy)?
2. How did the Gold Coast interlopers and colonials influence or construct the institutionalization of disability, specifically madness? Has this impact created continuity or discontinuity in how Ghanaian disabled, particularly those who are classified as 'insane/mad,' people are produced and treated through the colonial and post Nkrumah period?

Sankofa. Employing Sankofa allows me to be guided by the ancestors. Sankofa is based “on the premises and belief that human beings are part of the past and that this past shapes the present. The present would also determine and greatly influence the future” (Quan-Baffor, 2008, p. 25). Sankofa is an anti-colonial critical term, it permits cultural reclamation with an emphasis on disrupting Euro-American neo-colonial knowledges of Africa (Dei, 2008) even though reclaiming the past “could hold sweet, bitter, positive or negative memories . . .” we can learn from it in order to begin moving forward (Quan-Baffor, 2008, p. 25). Sankofa is symbolized by a bird with its head turned backwards and an egg in its mouth; its backward head symbolizes the need to look to the pre-colonial past in order to understand present phenomena, while the egg represents the past knowledge that can inform the future (Quan-Baffor, 2008). Using Sankofaism as a method will provide new historical awareness and realities that will allow me to bring past knowledge to the present and future generations (Quan-Baffor, 2008).

Practicing Sankofa is a process of reclamation that can be likened to what Gorman and Udgbe (2010) indicate can be “found in specific histories that are being suppressed and in the specific political choices that arise out of these histories” (p. 324). This inclusive call to the past will enable the development of a framework that grasps and includes disabled folks within the general nation building rather than as an afterthought which has only othered and created an (un)mattered charitable body.

Data. Archival materials constituted the primary data for this research, including all published pre-colonial books and accounts from European interlopers stored at the Accra and Cape Coast Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) in Ghana; also included in the data are books by Nkrumah from the University of Ghana African Studies libraries. For my first Ghana fieldwork trip in February 2019, information was gathered from

documents ranging from medical, hospital and education reports under the classification of ADM 1, 5, 23 and 72 (both Accra and Cape Coast). I also sifted through data from the CSO 11 series (Prison, Medical and Hospital and Education, and Gazettes); and the RG 1 and 3 series, which contains more of the Common Wealth education, welfare trust and Lepper Settlement documents in Accra. My second trip in August 2019 allowed me more time to excavate archival material through the ADM and CSO 11 and 15 series (criminal lunatic case files, departmental files, prisons and medical files), keeping my search focused in the Reginal Archive Accra.

During the first fieldwork trip, I requested documents dating back to 1800 from the assistant archivist but was told that it was being digitized. During the gathering of information, I noticed that some of the documents had become “endangered species” making it extremely difficult to sift through for accurate information. The lack of existing pre-colonial disability research in disability studies or any field for that matter also made it very strenuous as I had to sift through every dusty document in order to gather any information relating or leading to disability, embodiment, institutionalization, Lunacy, medical/medicine and sanitation. This meant that I had to delicately sort through mountains of documents and examine for consistencies and inconsistencies. To gather primary records from early, pre-colonial, traders’ accounts, I had to be cautious of misrepresentations and exaggerations in their descriptions while also synthesizing all accounts for continuities and discontinuities between reports and communications from 1602 to the end of the colonial era in 1960.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria. My search on *Mental Health in Colonial Ghana* through Google Scholar populated almost 40,000 journals, and roughly 200 on topics such as *Lunatics in Pre-Colonial Gold Coast Ghana*. Such pre-colonial searches mostly provided scholarly journals and books that speak to the different trade forts that were built to facilitate

trading between Europeans and Natives and slaves trading (see Engmann, 2019; Hove, 2019; Tutu & Smith, 2018) and topics that stemmed from the colonial era (see Frankema & Waijenburg, 2010; Gundona, 1999; Patterson, 1979). Other searches on *African Primitive history* – produced results of 649,000; the search term *Witchcraft, Witches and Violence in Ghana* – generated 10,300 results; *Disability in Pre-Colonial Gold Coast* – generated 2,310 results; *Disability in Gold Coast* – generated 47,000 results; *Pre-Colonial Gold Coast and Disability* (No result found); *Ghana History and Disability* (4 articles). Searching for Akan yielded 22,058 results; Akan spirituality yielded 681, while Akan Personhood and Disability yielded 0 results; *Nkrumah* yielded 9,189 results.

An article by Akosua Perbi (2001), *Slavery and the Slave Trade in Pre-Colonial Africa* categorized ‘disabilities’ in relation to ways in which slaves were treated within the Akan context. Perbi’s disability context is limited to the ways slavery and traditional practices became a disablement to those captured or those who were considered slaves, but not specifically those with disabilities being victims of ritual sacrifices.

Background of Study

Disability Studies as a field has come to acknowledge that the majority of disabled individuals live in the global south. The World Health Organization (2011) concludes that, “80% of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) reside in developing countries” (n.p). According to a Census by the Ghana Statistical Services (2010) 3% of the population are PWDs, representing a 30.4% increase within a decade. A Human Rights Watch (2012) report shows that an estimated 2.8 million Ghanaians have mental disabilities, and 650 000 are diagnosed with severe mental health disabilities. Mental health disabilities within the African context are still considered to be the result of demonic forces (Avoke, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2012; Lord & Stein, 2013; Srem-

Sai, 2015). This belief has led to the stigma and torture of persons with disabilities, especially those with psychiatric disability; they are often chained to trees and subjected to all forms of treatments for ‘healing’ purposes and casting out of ‘mad-omens/demons’ and denied basic needs and education—with parental and guardian consent due to cultural practices and economic hardship (Human Rights Watch, 2012; Lord & Stein, 2013; Srem-Sai, 2015).

Despite ratifying human rights tools and enshrining protections and rights in Ghana’s constitution, individuals with disabilities in general are still struggling. They are erased from contemporary Ghana, excluded from education, given up to orphanages where they face abuse and premature death, and taken to the prayer grounds in order to cast out the demons that are believed to be holding them captive stripping away their dignity as human (Anas, 2010). These practices and exclusions are clearly used in an attempt to cast out and erase individuals that deviate from the European benchmark of able-bodied persons prompting me to invoke Dei (2018), as he reminds us that we need to “resist calls to divest ourselves and bodies from our histories and cultural experiences”.⁵ It is necessary to ask critical questions in order to find the root(s) of embodied erasure. To ask what led to the adoption of these disabling⁶ beliefs and practices towards disabled people in Ghana, despite changes to institutional mechanisms. To ask why a culture of disablement has developed stigmatizing and casting out PWDs? And finally, how can the rhetoric of othering be destabilized and divorced from the culture as part of The Door of Return?

⁵ George Dei (2018). African Liberation Month Lecture: *Black Theorizing in Academia: Towards and Anti-Colonial Reading*. OISE Library

⁶ Disabling is used to contextualize how disability representation tends to be methodically erased from pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial structures (Gorman & 2010, p. 310); the word is used within the context of policies and practices.

The above questions forces me to “have uncomfortable conversations ... about our history” (Dei, 2012, p. 44) as the intellectuals among us “have the responsibility to revisit some of [Nkrumah’s] pioneering ideas as we seek to design our future” (Dei, 2012, p. 42) for inclusion. It is with this call that my research seeks a return to the source, to ‘Sankofa.’ It is also “to listen, learn, and hear, that is ‘Sankotie’, and ‘Sankowhe’ to our ancestors . . .” (Aikins as cited in Dei, 2012, p. 42). Answering this call to revisit our history will allow the space to thoroughly “interrogate, validate and [disseminate what has] either been denied or have invalidated our humanity, self-respect and cultural sense of knowing” (Dei, 2012, p. 47) in order to put the cultural claim to rest.

Dei’s (2012) call to revisit history has been an enlightenment as I read in ways that I have never read before and dissected the writings of great critical Pan-African leaders with passion and in-depth connection to the issues uncovered. African thoughts, discussions and readings are a source of respite, a place where I can seek solitude away from the whiteness of knowledge production. Walking the shadows of my ancestors was invigorating, but why did it take so long to find this safe space? Why wasn’t I taught about my ancestors from childhood, why was this void left within me? Will it take this long for younger generations of African people to find these safe spaces in their academic journeys? Will they be subjected to the current debilitating intellectual bankruptcies, leaving them with only knowing, embodying and using emancipatory tools created by the white hegemony?

It is important to interrogate how humanness is constructed beginning in early childhood and carried on in oppressive post-secondary educational systems that continue to deny safe spaces in which to learn about or engage in revolutionary theories that could dismantle and break the yoke of white hegemony. However, it is equally important to engage within these non-safe

spaces – to call attention to the oppressive structure to prepare the next generation to stand in opposition to spaces that erase their bodies, knowledges and lineage. Critical Disability Studies is well situated as a door of return to allow African people to *Sankofa* some of their ways of knowledge emancipation and how to contextualize the person in relation to their community and land, and to the ever-growing disability discourse.

It is time to engage in a critical Nkrumahist Pan-African disability theory that views disability and disablement from a pre-colonial-cultural-social-political-economic context rather than from a biological or restrictive western social lens. Dei (2012) placed a particularly important call for African scholars to “have uncomfortable conversations sometimes about our history and what has happened to us long after some of these ideas’ of [African freedom fighters such as Nkrumah] were expressed” (p. 44). This call is important as several contemporary African philosophers and knowledge producers are “caught in the seduction of a post-modern, post-racial world” (Dei, 2012, p. 44), being lured away from the critical issues and continuous atrocities that Africa and African people face in today’s ‘neo-colonial’ context, contributing to the ongoing bankruptcy of our intellectual revolution. Dei (2012) also made African scholars aware that “given the post-colonial challenges facing African peoples today, African intellectuals have a responsibility to revisit pioneering ideas as we seek to design our own future” (p. 42). It is with this call that I seek to Sankofa, a return to the source, as the Twi language states, but not without a return to the roots to learn, hear and listen to what and how Pan-African nationalists, specifically Nkrumah, envisioned victory for African people and the Africa continent (Dei, 2012). This call is also important because “anti-colonial practice begin by asking new and critical questions [which brings] . . . certain questions to the foregrounding of radical African

scholarship [therefore] . . . the search for answers entails that we engage a critical Pan-African vision and radical African-centered scholarship” (Dei, 2012, p. 42).

As I started the journey to Sankofa our understanding of disability, disablement, Pan-African and Akan ways of knowing, I enlisted the use of pre-colonial primary accounts of the European interlopers, and visited the colonial archive in Ghana in order to understand how Black bodies and the bodies of persons with disabilities were produced and positioned; researching the origin of current cultural and religious norms, while examining how the epistemology of mental health and institutionalization was used as a weapon to disrupt the African peoples’ way of being for the purpose of “civilizing.” Especially knowing how:

Culture can be seen as a “construction” of reversible reaction. Culture constructs us, and we in turn construct it. Culture construction implies that not all thoughts, feelings and human activities are natural; but they are the result of historical experiences that become an integral part of culture. . . . culture is seen to be different across the globe. These differences emphasize the way and manner people with disabilities are, have been perceived and have been treated . . . (Eskay et al., 2012, p. 474)

Remembering that European traders who later became colonials, from the time they set foot and came in contact with Indigenes on the Coast of Guinea contaminated the social, culture, economic, and religious beliefs with their ways and the ways of Christian missionaries through forced acculturation (which will be further unpacked in a later chapter).

Literature Review

In the literature I explore how European traders accounted for the Akan culture and their Indigenous spiritual performances as ‘mad,’ particularly during spiritual offerings, rituals, and the callings of their Supreme heavenly God and earthly gods. Excavated primary archival

accounts from European records and archives not only allow me to engage with the past, but also to look at how the past has, and continues to shape disability in Ghana 63 years after independence from Britain. This research is particularly important for challenging the dominant discourses of disability studies which have largely engaged, up until now, in the creation of a single story of disability based on western biomedical and imperialist ideologies.

The lack of literature and research on how disabled Ghanaians have been included or excluded, socialized, written about, silenced and represented during the pre-colonial era from an anti-colonial critical disability lens has posed limitations to addressing the stigma and erasure of PWDs in contemporary Ghana today. This gap has kept silent how the concepts of disablement and disability have their roots in the pre-colonial era. Even though research on the concept of colonial disablement has been examined by scholars who have argued that structures imposed during the colonial era continue to be disabling to the African continent through pillaging the nations of their material resources (Gorman, 2016; Gorman & Ujoriri, 2010; Nkrumah, 1962, 1963, 1964; Rodney, 1981), it does not address how African cultural perspectives on disability differ and how these differences are deciding factors for the types of services provided, the displacements, and the lack of services for PWDs requiring health services (Eskay et al., 2012; Fanon, 2004, 2008). Research has not yet examined how pre-formation and colonial structures became disabling leading to the disability of bodies and the erasure of differently abled bodies. Research has also not yet directed critique to the pre-colonial disabling encounter, which represents a gap in what is considered fact, hence why my dissertation retraces the encounters of Europeans and how their contacts created a foundation for the emergence of a Ghanaian 'our culture' disability narrative that erases and demonizes difference.

The framework that currently exists has politicized the stigma that those with mental illness, and disability in general, face in Ghana—without putting into context how those stigmas materialized and evolved from the structures imposed by early European interlopers in Ghana. Out of the many historians who have dedicated their scholarships to colonial psychiatry and disability writings and the mental state of colonials (Grischow, 2011; see Sadowsky, 1996), only few have described acts of institutionalization as disablement (see Ernst, 2013; Fanon, 2004; Keller, 2009). Further, there are gaps in research that have used Nkrumah's approach to enter or speak of disability from a multi-scaler systems structure, including not analyzing Akan Personhood from a critical disability framework. Connecting Akan's Personhood with critical disability studies will hopefully provide an answer as to why the Akan culture has allowed for or created othering, and an examination of whose culture we are referring to when we claim 'it is our culture.'

Constructing disability of the body in Ghana must engage with 1) the epistemology of personhood from the Akan philosophy/spirituality way of being, 2) how several social pre-historical structures have spoken of and contributed to the formations of 'deviating primitive bodies' therefore culturally socializing the Indigenous within the western gaze, 3) how those constructs have left or constructively created social disabling systems that eliminated the realities of an underdeveloped country/continent, and 4) the culture that has allowed for the erasure and stigmatization of persons who deviate from the norm (Gorman & LeFrancios, 2017).

Understanding the epistemology of Akan personhood will create a space to use a critical Nkrumah approach of disablement to reject the western lens of disability while also seeking ways to examine how disability of the body and land can be looked at as a construction of pre-colonial/colonial ideologies of civilization methodically engineered in order to commodify the

body and rape the land for capitalist gain (see Fanon, 2004, 2008; Gorman, 2005, 2010, 2016).

As well as how the construction of disablement has led to a ‘crippling’ way of being through the othering of disabled peoples in Ghana, which will then provide an holistic method for an international framework of reporting.

Hadley Boster’s (2010) dissertation, *Unfit for Bondage: Disability and African Slavery in the United States, 1800 - 1860* states that “[we] cannot take for granted simplistic definitions of disability as an individual’s deviation from an imagined functional norm or physical ideal” (p. 5), an idea that excludes the “intersections and layers of meaning” (p. 4), particularly in a continent that has gone through several layers of socializing forces/agents with more than five European ‘so called’ traders before being forcefully colonized by the British empire. Hence the necessity of writing and understanding Akan Personhood and its traditional ways of being into disability studies; a chronological⁷ and thematic study of how the construct of the primitive is a form of disability that led to the disablement of the Indigenous African during the pre-colonial and colonial era leading to the institutionalization of those who were identified as deviant from pre-colonial European socialization through to post-colonial Nkrumah (1960), and finally, the construction of an anti-colonial Nkrumah framework on the concept of disablement that critiques structural oppressions through the lens of Sankofa.

Western pathologies of the body. European accounts, of the “Negros,”⁸ as pathology—sicknesses, the super human, animal like and lazy—permeated all western accounts. The majority of the historical literature within this chapter refers to known pre-colonial writers of the Gold Coast. As stipulated by Fanon (2004), Foucault (1988) and Ernst (2004), science had a

⁷ Chronological in this research context refers to a thematic historical narrative that presents a formalized flow to the narratives.

⁸ I use the word “Negro(s)” as it was the term used to speak of the Indigenous/natives in the European written archival accounts.

huge influence on the creation of colonialism as a civilizing empire. Science in Britain during this time “was the major yardstick for medical practice in the colony — not least because it had come to be linked up with what Britain perceived to be its ‘civilizing mission.’ It was seen as infinitely superior, enlightened and rational” (Ernst, 2004, p. 61).

European interlopers had been using their civilizing mission to apply western medicine or use African bodies as ‘lab rats’ since the 1600s. Tilley (2016) states that their mandate was to “‘civilize,’ ‘improve,’ and ‘develop’ the populations they ruled, setting up governance structures that invested officials, usually unfamiliar with the regions, with far more political and cultural power than most Africans possessed” (p. 744). Their curiosity for ‘primitive’ bodies provided them space to establish superiority while creating dependency empires over them (Curtin, 1992).

Evolution of psychiatry as a disablement. What psychiatry is and was during the primitive era was influenced by European thinkers who provided traders on the shores of the Gold Coast with an imperialist understanding of locals leading to the observation of them as other. The evolution of mental health experts is noted by Alexander and Selesnick (1966) in their book, *The History of Psychiatry: An Evaluation of Psychiatric Thought and Practice from Prehistoric Times to the Present*. Alexander and Selesnick, who are medical doctors, state that:

The effort began with witch doctors in the prehistoric past and has, since those primeval times, been embraced by philosophers, physicians, artists, clergymen, scientists, and at last, medical men specially prepared and dedicated to the effort—the psychiatrists.

Because mental illness strikes at the very essence of man’s nature, because we are all intimately involved in the problem of mental health and have been so from time immemorial, the struggle to understand and to deal with mental illness has encompassed

broad areas of our civilization. The evolution of psychiatry has been a central part of the evolution. (p. 3)

This complex evolution of the medicalization of mental illness was also visible within the colonial era on the Gold Coast. As experts on mental illness have changed over time, so have relationships to those considered mentally ill.

[The] mentally ill have always been with us—to be feared, marveled at, laughed at, pitied, or tortured, but all too seldom cured. Their existence shakes us to the core of our being, for they make us painfully aware that sanity is a fragile thing. To cope with their ills man has always needed a science that could penetrate to where the natural sciences cannot probe—into the universe of man’s mind. (Alexander & Selesnick, 1966, p. 3)

This witch-hunt throughout the history of mental illness was motivated by the fragility of human existence which sought to distance itself from madness by discrediting madness as part of human formation (Alexander & Selesnick, 1966; Foucault 1988). Foucault’s (1988) *History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* covers the periods during the Middle Ages when Leprosy was classified as an incarcerated disease, to the Renaissance Age when the focus was shifted to those disturbing the peace and the “deranged minds”; then to the classical era where:

Madness has ceased to be—at the limits of the world, of man and death— an eschatological figure; the darkness has dispersed on which the eyes of madness were fixed and out of which the forms of the impossible were born. . . . Madness will no longer proceed from a point beyond, on its strange voyage; Behold it moored now, made fast among things men. Retained and maintained. No longer a ship but a hospital. (Foucault, 1988, p. 35)

A hospital for confinement and medicalizing to try to cure “madmen the deranged mind,” psychiatry was focused on curing the possessed and returning them to sound minds. This evolution created a disablement that provided the justification to institutionalize and hospitalize those who were not functioning within the ‘white’ man’s mind. A disablement that led to the justification of western institutional universality of rights and justice.

Ghana mental health literature review. This section provides a review/context into pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial state of mental health research and realities in Ghana. For centuries now, the Global South has been subjected to imperial forces, inflicting extreme structural violence that has created a need for extreme intervention (Chernomas & Hudson, 2007). Some of these structures have made it difficult for colonized disabled bodies to fully participate as African Personalities and citizens of the world (Nkrumah, 1962). International instruments and organizations such as the UNCRPD (2006), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC; 1989) and the International Monetary Fund continue to enact colonial violence when they fail to acknowledge how colonially imposed restrictions combined with global expectations of universal policies that ignore culture and local context have created ‘tall orders’ through universality for what are effectively ‘limited governments.’ Unfortunately, “[northern] discourses of disability rights have strongly influenced” the lens of the UNCRPD (Meekosha and Soldatic, 2011, p. 1383), which has continuously received criticism from cultural relativist such as Mutua (1995) and Ibhawoh (2004).

Understanding the latter dilemma raises a question asked by Meekosha and Soldatic (2011) on why “many of the everyday experiences of disabled people in the Global South lies outside the reach of human rights instruments” (p. 1383). This question raises the issue of

whether global social policies can be ethically and equitably justified if the bodies within the Global South do not have access to the instruments that claim universality, especially during this stage of imperial occupation of Africa (Nkrumah, 1963). Such a conundrum places this literature review at the intersection of current western literature on Ghana's mental health/psychiatry, human rights and social justice, social policy, disability policy, and Ghanaian approaches to post-colonial social development and Global South disability studies.

Adjei-Amoako (2016) notes, "limited political will, limited capacity of development agencies, and lack of multi-agency coordination in the disability development sector were barriers to disabled people's inclusion and participation in development process" (p. 865) but fails to recognize the larger global structures that have created barriers to disabled peoples. Which one can argue resulted in a lack of accurate data and consensus on the number of persons with disabilities globally, and the causes of disablements particularly in the rural Global South as noticed by the United Nations Enable (2016) stating that "the lack of data and statistics on disability contributes to the invisibility of persons with disabilities. This presents a planning and implementation obstacle to improve the lives and well-being of persons with disabilities" (n.p). The World Health Organization (WHO; 2011) has concluded that, "80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries, and 150 million of them are under the age of 18" (p. 29). A Census by the Ghana Statistical Services (2010) states that roughly 3% of Her population identify themselves as having some form of a disability, 47.5% are males while 52.5% are female (p. 12). This equates to 737,743 of the 24,658,823 population, a 30.4% increase within a decade. The data collected shows statistics from Volta Region, Upper East, Eastern Central Region and Brong Ahafo but does not specify the smaller rural localities that makes up all the regions; raising the question of whether these data show a complete and accurate representation.

Several anti-colonial scholars have argued that the effect of colonialism has created not just an underdeveloped gap in the economy, social and cultural spaces, but also a psychological gap, which I argue has become the reason for the current state of mental health stigma in contemporary Ghana (see Fanon, Rodney, Nkrumah, Adjei-Amoako). Utsey et al. (2015) argue that the colonial systems “robbed Africans of their land and traditions, incited the devaluation of African peoples and cultural abyss struggling to recompose fragmented identities” (p. 196), which has created a gap and stigma within the different institutions of the countries (government, not for profit organizations and international agencies). However, it is visible that scholars are not looking at the impact of pre-historical structural disablement (so-called trading enterprise) and how such encounters have robbed Africans, devalued their Africanness and their culture leaving them with culturally and systemically oppressive recomposed fragments of identities that have erased certain bodies and their ways of being.

Ghana has a mental health policy that stems from several forms of structural colonial institutional force. Psychiatry research states that “[mental] health activities started with the enactment of the Lunatic Asylum Ordinance in 1888 by the colonial government of the Gold Coast” (Asare, 2010, p. 67; also see Walker & Osie, 2017). Such ordinance also allowed those caught roaming and wandering the streets to be arrested and confined in prisons that quickly became overcrowded (Asare, 2010). Overcrowding only created asylums that included corporal punishment leading to ‘curing’ within European medical ways of pathologizing. Research shows that the first and only official asylum was built in Accra in 1904 (which was later turned into a psychiatric institution), and Ghana did not build any psychiatric hospitals until 1965 which was under Nkrumah and another in 1975 after Nkrumah’s overthrown government (Asare, 2010;

Read & Doku, 2012). Leaving the mental health support systems in disarray and an asylum look alike.

As of 2011, Ghana only has 18 psychiatrists for more than 26 million citizens, 1256 nurses, 19 psychologist, 21 social workers, 4 occupational therapist, and 546 other mental health workers creating a huge gap in services delivery for those in dire need of mental health supports (Roberts, et al. 2014). This lack of resources pushes family members to turn to spiritual guidance alone which has left patients chained in prayer grounds waiting for healing from some form of omnipotent power (Asare, 2010; Read & Doku, 2012; Walker & Osie, 2017). Further, these 18 psychiatrists work from an Eurocentric curing standpoint without the inclusion of any Indigenous ways of assessment, healing or placing into context any African traditions⁹ which has led to the overrepresentation of those that are considered disruptive against colonial implanted projects or not normal as per ‘colonial regimes’ in psychiatric facilities. One can argue that such overrepresentation of those considered ‘insane/mad’ is a continuous “propagation of racist ideologies [and]...the casting of superior-inferior dichotomy” (Gorman & LeFrancois, 2017, p. 109) that was left behind from centuries of violent invasive relationship.

Another current challenge that Asare (2010) identified is the issues in retaining psychiatric nurses as the stigma attached to the profession deters them from entering the field in Ghana, which in turn encourages them to migrate to western countries to take on odd jobs. The shortage of psychiatric professionals in Ghana is also due to the paltry government funding allocated for salaries for professionals and the care of patients (including pharmaceuticals; Asare, 2010). In 2011 government funding for mental health was a mere 1.4% of the National Health budget of over 10% (Walker & Osie, 2017; Mfoafo-M’Carthy & Sossou, 2017). And since

⁹ Personal conversation from an informant at the Accra Asylum Institution, (August, 2019); and an informal conversation with Prof. Amponsah in the psychology department at the University of Ghana.

psychiatry services do not generate funds that can be put back into the institution for its maintenance, they cannot maintain the supports necessary to provide proper care to those in need of their services (Walker & Osie, 2017).

Read and Doku (2012) found that research data on the “epidemiology, treatment and outcomes” in psychiatric illness in Ghana is limited; they also identify that most research focusing on Ghana and mental health are by international researchers or by the few psychiatrists in the country but funded by expatriates on a small scale which has been the case since colonial times. The “first study of mental illness in the then Gold Coast was commissioned by the Colonial Office to study ‘the forms of neurosis and psychosis among West Africans’” (Read & Doku, 2012, p. 29). This history of colonial funded research has contributed to the negative response to mental health in Ghana an approach rooted in the labelling of the Indigenous as animals with bestial tendencies:

Their bodies are very black ... and when they speak they stretch out their necks just like turkeys. (De Marie, 1602, p. 12)

Their arms and legs are also thinnish and they are quite deformed, particularly the old Women with their long Breasts, which they show at that age and which droop from their bodies and look like old Pigs' bladders. (De Marie, 1602, p. 180)

These disabling accounts of the Indigenous by De Marie (1602) during his pre-colonial encounter with the natives not only shows that he does not consider the natives as human but he views them as ‘primitives’ with animalistic body features which is linked to mental illness (see Fanon, 2004; Foucault, 1988). This raises the issue that if one is seen and documented as an animal, how will the animal be treated and tamed by the rest of the interlopers and later colonials?

In the plain talk, [they are] reduced to the state of animal. And consequently, when the colonist speaks of the colonized he uses zoological terms. . . . the odours from the “native” quarters, to the hordes, the stink, the swarming, the seething, and the gesticulations. In his endeavors at description and finding the right word, the colonist refers constantly to the bestiary. (Fanon, 2004, p. 7)

Fanon (2004) situates the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized in terms of how the latter is viewed, classified, compartmentalized, and this relationship has informed current mental health institutions today.

The above literature review provides context for the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial state of the discourse on mental health in Ghana. My research seeks to understand how people with disability, particularly mental illness, were produced during the pre-colonial era through the untangling of the South-North disabling relationship. Through an anti-colonial Nkrumah lens I examined archival materials written by European interlopers from the 1600s to early colonial 1960 period while also engaging with Akan’s Personhood in order to interrogate the idea that the current oppressive culture is “our culture” and identify how European imperialism shaped the disembodiment and disempowerment of disabled individuals in Ghana.

Every chapter within this dissertation is driven by the politics of who is considered human and how we can de-colonize this political hierarchy of rights. The following section therefore examines the context of human rights as a tool for seeking justice.

Human rights and social justice. This section provides a thorough survey and analysis of both human rights and social justice from a western view while also interrogating it’s claim to universality. It concludes with a section on African legal human rights frameworks to create an opening for a return to African ancestors ways of Being which can replace western discourses

that call for universality under human rights propaganda. It also sets the stage and provides the background for my research.

The idea of human rights emerged in the seventeenth century but was kept at bay by those who did not see the relevance, delaying their formalization until the 20th century (Donnelley, 2013; Sen, 2004). When western human rights documents were first formulated they failed to account for inhumane conditions around the globe including, “colonialism, which involved the enslavement and denial of claiming form of human rights as Africans were not regarded as humans during this deadly time” (Mutua, 2008, p. 19). Further, the universal human rights document was developed during the colonial period, meaning Africans were not included in its development, raising questions as to how and if colonial atrocity crossed the minds of its developers (Mutua, 2008).

Human rights in traditional Africa was not a phenomenon, as Africans pre-colonization had their own social and cultural codes for showing humanity to their citizens. Africans “formulated their own rights in pre-colonial time to fit within their own community; their rights were divided based on criteria such as age, sex, lineage, achievement, or community membership” (Donnelley, 2013, p. 78). Africans practiced traditional forms of rights claims through communal membership, and such practice in traditional Africa can be linked to human dignity and distributive justice more than a universal form of justice (Donnelley, 2013; Ibhawoh, 2007; Mutua, 2008).

Wai (1980) states that, “traditional African attitudes, beliefs, institutions and experiences sustained the view that certain rights should be upheld against alleged necessities of state” (cited in Donnelley, 2013, p. 78). This Donnelly argues, “confuses human rights to limited government, [limiting such government] in divine commandment, legal rights, and extralegal checks such as

balance of power or the threat of popular revolt” (p. 78). Therefore, the question that I pose here, especially as Africa is still a continent with limited self-government and heavily controlled by neo-colonial systems, is: how can a limited government be held accountable for limiting or not providing their most vulnerable citizens with the right to inclusion and a dignified life?

Donnelley (2013), Ibhawoh (2004) and Mutua (2008) state that Africans had a form of dignified rights that existed among them before colonial invasion. This raises the question of how human rights and social justice were experienced by people with disabilities, specifically children, within a traditional African community. Were they included or excluded in the pre-colonial context? If they were included, how were they represented? If excluded, why and what was their fate?

Continuing with a historical search of human rights, Donnelley (2013) states that the Greeks of the classical era limited rights to the Hellenes and the barbarians, the non-Greeks who they believed were incapable and needing enslavement. At this point, slavery was “universal in the Greek world and central to the Athenian economy” which excluded women (Donnelley, 2013, p. 82). In medieval Europe and arguably during the pre-colonial trading era, Christianity had significant implications for one’s social, economic, or political status, Donnelley (2013) states that:

Medieval Christians saw themselves as surrounded by dangerous heathens. . . .

Christians combined contemptuous arrogance with savage violence. Those who resisted the one true faith were treated not as dignified beings who had made a most tragic error but as contemptible, degraded beings underserving of the least respect or consideration. . . . Within Christendom, both religious and secular life were hierarchically organized . . . [placing grades between] men and within a particular social stratum, of

men over women. (p. 84)

Such socially stratified and violent systems within the classical Greek era and Medieval Christianity clearly demonstrate the hegemonic lineage of political, social and economic power and oppression. Ibhawoh (2004) made it clear that the concept and creation of human rights was linked to the ideology of Christianity and was “essentially a modern western creation founded on historical developments of the Enlightenment period, the French and the American Revolutions” (p. 23).

The modern invention of human rights was triggered by “social processes and struggles that eventually transformed hierarchical polities” brought in by “capitalist markets and sovereign, bureaucratic states [which] gradually penetrated first Europe and then the globe” (Donnelly, 2013, p. 87). This system disrupted, destroyed, and created a globalized problem that human rights are designed to solve, leaving traditional ways of applying human dignity within continental context redundant. This strain created “a veritable battle-field where the tensions and contradictions of globalization have been elaborately played in the debate over whether human rights are universal or whether they are culturally relative” (Ibhawoh, 2004, p. 22). Such globalized tension also created an:

Ever-widening range of dispossessed groups advanced claims first for relief from legal and political disabilities, then for full and equal inclusion. Such demands took many forms, including appeals to scripture, church, morality, tradition, justice, natural law, order, social utility, and national strength. Claims of equal and inalienable natural or human rights, however, increasingly came to be preferred – and over the past couple of decades have become globally hegemonic. (Donnelly, 2013, p. 87)

Donnelly (2013) demonstrates how religiosity embedded in colonialism the universal human

rights/just tools are, and a form of capitalist market that has continuously disabled and placed ongoing restraints on the development of the African continent leaving its governments to beg and scramble for the leftovers of the West. Such disablement has led to the cultural, political, economic, legal and social disablement of Ghana/Africa leaving the limited government to provide ‘sprinkled rights’ to Her most vulnerable citizens without the proper resources in place because of the underdevelopment of the continent stemming from pre-colonial era and current global powers’ restraints (Nkrumah, 1963; Rodney, 1981).

Based on historical discourses, it is obvious that human rights were created to provide oppressed groups in the West a political voice. A voice they can use against their state; “the human rights project is to erect barriers between the individual and the state, so as to protect human autonomy and self-determination from being violated or crushed by government power,” (cited in Mutua, 2008, p. 30) but what about the global empire? Mutua (2008) also posits that “human rights do not have a holy writ, nor could they, because like all rights regimes, they are just a genre of socially constructed tenets that have come to define modern civilization” (p. 19). A social construction that is arguably a Eurocentric project (Donnelly 2013; Ibhawoh, 2004; Mutua, 2008), with norms linked to practices that ignore the autonomy of individual states: “antibiotics that must be administered to the sick, in this case the Global South, even if they are unwilling to cooperate” (Mutua, 2008, p. 26). I argue that international human rights tools are a form of manipulation based on a set of norms that do not fit within the cultures and the shores of Africa. An antidote that Africans have become immune to as they await for droplets of development grants and loans that come with their own agenda (Konadu, 2007, p. 3); an agenda and a propaganda with its own politics that erases bodies, souls/minds, and spaces for cultural inclusion.

Rights have two central moral and political senses – rectitude and entitlement (Donnelley, 2013). Rectitude, “speaks of the right thing to do [while] entitlement is owned and belongs to an individual” (Donnelley, 2013, p. 8). Therefore, rights are not usually claimed unless one’s entitlement and dignity are threatened or denied, and only then is an individual in the position to use their legal authority—if they are aware of it. In this case, the right to Being is an entitlement, and when that entitlement is threatened, the individual can employ the necessary steps to take the person/groups/government to court. Rectitude and entitlement links the right “thing to do morally and the obligated thing to do in a systemic way” (Donnelly 2013, p. 8).

If rights claimed by an individual can be ignored, then human rights claims are subjective, as its focus is on the individual rather than the standardized “norm”; unfortunately, it is for the subjectivity of a hegemonic group/human. Therefore, individual’s access to rights requires knowledge of those rights, that knowledge can then be used to claim rights when they are ignored or violated. However, accessing this process can be especially difficult for those who live in rural regions, countries or continents with limited or disrupted governments. But how then can Donnelly’s (2013) argument be accurate when he claimed that rights are not reducible or shared but rather distributed equally; distributed equally, how, by who, locally, nationally or internationally? How can a distributive claim of resources be applied to rights that are innately human particularly in the case of a limited government?

Rights, according to Donnelly (2013), are enacted through four principles: exercise, respect, enjoyment and enforcement. Donnelly claims that there are three major ways rights interact socially: *Assertive exercise*, which is where the rights bearer activates their rights that the duty-bearer (state) has violated leading to enforcement (through the human rights instruments). *Active respect* is where the duty-bearer takes the rights holder into account by determining their

duty without the rights holder having to claim it. And the third is *Objective enjoyment* where rights are never thought of because the rights holder is and has enjoyed their rights because the duty bearer has created a space where rights of difference become the norm or there exists no ‘othering’ of its citizens (Donnelley, p. 9). This is the ideal situation, principally for people with disabilities living on the margins in poor situations where they do not have access to actively assert their human rights. It is also the ideal situation for those living through violence due to the disabling global structures that create limited governments. However, Sen (2009) argues that it is fruitless to advocate for a perfect world, but rather we should seek the best situation based on one’s capabilities. The next section engages in justice seeking and what this looks like through Sen’s capabilities framework.

Sen’s (2009) *The Idea of Justice* examines how a theory of justice can be used as a beneficial ground for enjoying an entitled right. As Sen argues, a theory of justice because of its broadness, “can serve as the basis of practical reasoning [which] must include ways of judging how to reduce injustice and advance justice” but not for a perfect and just society, which he claims is impossible (p. ix). Secondly, Sen indicated that if there are distinct arguments, there could be several reasons that allow for a “divergent conclusion” which can and should emanate from the society or from the person seeking justice for themselves. Sen is arguing for an individualistic self-agency justice as he claims that, “there is a need for reasoned argument, with oneself and with others in dealing with conflicting claims, rather than for what can be called “disengaged toleration” (p. x). His third and core argument is that, “the presence of remediable injustice may well be connected with behavioral transgressions rather than with institutional short comings” (p. x). Meaning that, an individual’s access to freedom outweighs institutional claims that seek perfection leading to more shortcomings. This is because the fundamental

grounds of justice are and should be the connection with individual lives and the way such lives are lived rather than “the nature of the institutions surrounding them” (Sen, 2009, p. x).

Sen (2009) heavily critiques justice theories, including Rawls, stating that Rawls’ argument for a ‘just institution’ gives too much power to institutions, especially in the case where such institutions are put in place to “constitute the basic structure of the society” (p. xi). As such, institutionalization of justice only emanates inadequacies because it focuses on compliances rather than with the ways in which ordinary people live and define their own lives. With such inadequacies in Rawls just institution, Sen argues for a comparative perspective, which allows for “going well beyond the limited – and limiting – framework of social [global] contract” (p. xi). To better understand Sen’s argument, he defines justice as “the lives and freedom of the people involved” rather than how it has been seen through the institutional lens. Sen contends that such definition has a critical way of enriching justice while contributing directly to the ways people live and especially to what they have value for (p. xii). Such institutions can be scrutinized through the facilitation of public discussions and education on how its value can be beneficial to a society through things such as freedom of speech and the right to information, and arguing for what works for their embodiment (Sen, 2009, p. xii). He claims that such interaction is self-governing because it should be judged not just by the information that it provides but rather by the diversity of lives and voices of diverse groups and their ways of being; therefore, a democratic society can be attainable if after the facilitation, public reasoning can be democratically reached rather than trying to reach for global perfection that is intertwined with several political erasures (Sen, 2009).

Sen (2009) claims a comparative democratic perspective as it allows for fluidity within the lives of those in search of justice making his reason against the traditional transcendental

theory of justice valid. His exit call away from transcendental perspectives is due to its identification of a just global social arrangement, which he argues does not exist and can never exist. As a point of departure from the transcendental, Sen (2009), states that the question that should be asked when engaging the comparative perspective is “how will justice be advanced” rather than what would be a perfectly just institution (p. 9). His second point of departure relates to a Pan-African perspective, which requires a look at the actual realizations in society working from a bottom up approach (Cabral, Nyerere, Nkrumah). An ethnographic ontological framework that again brings the voices of the community and individual rather than looking only at the infusion of institutional rules viewed from top down will, he claimed, require a “radical change in the formation of theory of justice” (Sen, 2009, p. 9).

Sen’s realization permits a stepping away from the normalized universal ways of engaging with justice while also arguing for the contextualization of justice derived through societal behavioural norms and rules, their institutions, regulations and so on; in that case, a context question is:

Whether the analysis of justice must be so confined to getting the basic institution and general rules [and] should we not also have to examine what emerges in the society, including the kind of lives that people can actually lead given the institutions and rules, but also other influences including actual behavior that would inescapably affect human lives? (Sen, 2009, p. 10)

Sen’s question allows for a blank slate and an open dialogue to better understand the reasoning behind the “importance of human lives, experiences and realizations [and why it] cannot be supplanted by information about institutions that exist and the rules that operate” (Sen, 2009, p. 10). This actual realization should include individual embodiments, and how their lives are being

managed or not managed. It provides a political freedom of voice to individuals as they construct how they would rather live comfortably which Sen argues will make a meaningful impact to an individual's well-being. This he termed freedom and capabilities.

Sen (2009) defines capability as “the power to do something, the accountability that emanates from the ability – that power – is a part of the capability perspective, and this can make room for demands of duty – what can be broadly called deontological demands” (Sen, 2009, p. 19). It is a framework to help guide distributive justice when considering policy, a “social contract traditional, and at least some account of human rights” (Nussbaum, 2003, p. 33). Sen's capabilities approach is used and adopted by the Human Development Index (HDI) by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP; 2016). The HDI was created to emphasize that “people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone” (UNDP, 2016, n.p.).

The report also indicates that the HDI is used to question “national policy choices, asking how two countries with the same level of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita can end up with different human development outcomes. These contrasts can stimulate debate about government policy priorities” (UNDP, 2016, n.p.). It shows that the HDI has brought about some form of transparency especially if the comparative GNI per capital have some wide data disparities, it allows for a space where disability policies, indicators and data can be questioned. But I question if a comparable GNI per capital alone is enough to gauge the capabilities of human development as the different governments, within the African continent for example, have different international affiliations and strings attached to global funds and grants that are allocated to limited governments. Furthermore, using the GNI per capital goes against Sen's capabilities approach as it still looks at the economics of the nations as a way to understand

commodity of countries through commodified bodies while also comparing countries on their GNI to develop their human development outcome; therefore limiting the power for one to do something as per their capabilities.

The HDI refuses to take account of the different limitations that are disabling individual African countries while also leaving out the different conditions from international financial agencies such as the International Monetary Fund. Also missing from the equation are the different ways mining companies have continuously disabled the continent as a whole leading to Nkrumah's (1963) fear of the last stage of imperialism and leading to the disablement of both the land and bodies of those living in mining communities. A critical analysis that needs to be included with Sen's capability processes. As argued by Mitra (2018) the HDI "does not consider impairment/health conditions as individual characteristics; instead, they are themselves determined by resources, structural factors . . . and thus the model is informed by the socioeconomic determinants of health literature" (p. 9). Therefore, one can argue that the HDI, which stemmed from the capability perspective/framework, is ableist and requires an anti-colonial and anti-ableist analysis to become inclusive to global southern conditions.

The above therefore allows for an exit from the capability approach as it leaves out very critical starting indicators that allow for the questioning of the disablement of the region, and of a nation which then leads to the disablement of the body and land. I argue that inquiring and/or reporting from all four levels, international, continental, regional and local, will allow for clearer layers of transparencies that permit the African continent to equally contextualize, while also breaking free in order to take hold of their own nations, continent and citizens. This is the goal of a Pan-African and Critical Nkrumahist justice. This is justice, and such arguments have been brought forth by nationalist Pan-Africanists including Nkrumah, Cabral, Nyereye and Escobah,

hence the call for a unification of African borders that places control and measures in Africans' hands. Cultural relativists and international human rights scholars who have dedicated their work to Southern knowledge, human rights and social justice such as Mutua, Ibhawoh, Gathii, Okafo and Gyekye would concur with the latter.

Even though Sen's (2009) capability approach has been widely used and accepted, it has also received its fair share of criticism and scholars such as Mitra (2018), Nussbaum (2003) and Gasper (2002) have reformulated his work to fit within their arguments. Nussbaum (2003) argues that the freedom perspective in Sen's capability approach is too vague because some "freedoms limits others; some freedoms are important, some trivial, some good, and some positively bad" (p. 34) therefore, commitment about substance is required especially for gender equality and disability justice. Gasper (2002) on the other hand argues that the capability approach is too primitive in some ways as it provides insufficient base to argue for well-being and human development "[amongst] possible weakness are: its extreme emphasis on choice; obscurities in key concepts; and its emergence from a dialogue between economics and philosophy without the involvement from psychology, sociology and anthropology" (p. 436). And I add child development because of its obsession with choice leading to one's freedom and capability. Amongst all these criticisms, several scholars also agree that Sen's theory has helped create spaces to rethink inequality and among other things, justice (see Alkire, 2005; Gasper, 2002; Mitra, 2018; Nussbaum, 2003; Robeyns, 2005).

Ibhawoh (2004) made a very profound statement that becomes a way forward to acquiring or rethinking the space of human rights and social justice for Africans and the continent:

Thus, in spite of the vast theoretical and conceptual divergence on the theme, it is useful

to realize that the object of human rights discourse should be the quest for a reasonable and balanced approach to human rights, which recognizes the interplay between various cultural factors in the construction and constitution of human rights. There remains an urgent need to adopt a broader view of human rights, which I incorporate diverse concepts and moral experiences. It will be easier to find some harmony around the globe under a particular human rights rubric once the existence of human pluralism has been recognized, understood, and accepted. (p. 39)

I agree with the pluralistic approach as it allows for a more divergent universality that provides for multiple points of entry for diverse bodies seeking justice. With the latter calling for a more pluralistic approach, this dissertation provides a contextualized identity of the African Personality focusing on the Akan as the largest tribe in the Ashanti (Gyekye, 1995; Konadu, 2007). The next section shows African human rights instruments and critiques from African scholars on how it de-centers the African due to several foreign influences.

Critiques of African human rights instruments. African human rights tools are made up of several instruments to create the tradition that cultural relativist scholars have so yearned and argued for while trying to eliminate the individualistic ideology that permeates western human rights tools (Gittleman, 1982; Ibhawoh, 2004; Gawanas 2009; Keetharuth, 2009). However, African Union (AU) human rights instruments still employ individualistic language. It can be argued that maintaining the African Person throughout the AU human rights tools with a vision to create an “Africa with a viable human rights culture” is progressive (ACHPR, 1981, n.p.). The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (1981) legitimized the colonial struggles making it an anti-colonial Human Rights instrument. Article 20 specifically states that “[colonized] or oppressed peoples shall have the right to free themselves from the bonds of domination by

resorting to any means recognized by the international community” (p. 6). How can oppressed and colonized people free themselves from modern technologies of bondage particularly when it is methodically ingrained in a system that is beyond the reach of the oppressed?

The AU has not only created a human rights tool that links the historical cultural context of African nations to the prevailing political, social, economic and cultural conditions of the continent, they have also created space for other African groups to produce human rights tools specifically linked to their culture and embodied struggles (Gawanas 2009; Gittleman, 1982; Keetharuth, 2009). Instruments such as the Protocol on the establishment of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2005); the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC; 1999); the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (1969); and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa (2019) and roughly 20 other instruments.

The critics of these instruments such as Gawanas (2009), Gilleman (1982), and Keetharuth (2009) argue that the AU adopted instruments have some flaws. Gawanas argues that the AU’s focus has been primarily on civil and political atrocities but calls on the AU to find a balance in “including the effective implementation of the right to development and to social, economic and cultural rights [which] would promote people’s active participation, thereby giving them a voice and a platform from which to asserts their rights” (p. 136). This she claims is more effective and could be achieved through a rigorous self-governing process. Gawanas also suggested that instead of the AUs creation of more human rights instruments, they should focus on using a lens that integrates diverse moral experiences, multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary concepts; this concurs with Ibhawoh’s (2004) thoughts on rethinking spaces for rights and justice

for Africans and the continent. Change of lens, Gawanas argues, can be a strategic way forward to address vulnerability and exclusion of marginalized groups. She concluded that the AU should create fewer instruments in order to strategically mechanize their already limited resources while providing effective oversight and mechanisms to enforce those who violate the rights of already marginalized groups (Gawanas, 2009).

Gilleman (1982) on the other hand argues that Article 55 of the AU Charter, which speaks of the open-door communication for filing a case, is contradicting Article 56, as it requires the heads of states and governments to mandate and direct the Commission to undertake an investigation of any injustice (p. 712). This, Gilleman claims, is problematic as most human rights claims are filed against the state, therefore he suggests that this process needs to be modified because it incites fear and discourages people from filing a claim when their rights have been violated by their state (Gilleman, 1982). Gilleman suggests that in order to fully realize a more equitable and fair judgement as the “African Charter is as much a political document as it is a legal one” (p. 713), the Commission should be an independent authority. But Gilleman did not specify if this independent authority should be African or a foreign entity, leaving his recommendation vague with a break for a way forward. I argue that the independent authorities should be African in order for the AU to continue with the African Unity for Africans by Africans.

Keetharuth (2009) concurs with Gawanas (2009) on the lack of focus on economic, social and cultural rights that are supposed to set the AU instruments apart from the universal conventions. This, she argues, have made “[the] concept of group rights [to still be] in an embryonic stage” (p. 163). Keetharuth further states that AU’s challenges “translating commitments to human rights at the regional level into tangible rights for individuals” requires

attitudinal changes of decision makers, educating the continent about the existence of all the instruments, and finding ways to be creative in decision making be it legal or not (p. 166). She then noted that having an AU human rights court is in itself a significant way forward for the continent, but rather pessimistic on the structural weakness, shortcomings and imperfection of the court as the challenges are many. The first challenges facing the AU human rights system she states are its principles of indivisibility, universality and the exclusion of collective rights; the second challenge is the tangibility of all the documents for all; while her third argument is to avoid “toothless watchdog” (p. 226) syndrome. If these challenges are not fixed, then those sets of tools risk being labelled propaganda.

In spite of several faults within universal human rights instruments, Ibahwah (2004) and Sen (2009) provide perspectives calling for a pluralistic balance to human rights that allows for self-governing fluid perspectives but not without asking how justice seeking will be advanced and contextualized. A way forward that requires one to go back in order to move forward.

Conclusion

This research recognizes the need and call for an African disability studies during this neo-colonial era as even the AU has been heavily criticized as a ‘toothless watchdog’ (Keetharuth, 2009). This chapter has set the stage for other sections within this dissertation while also providing some methodological framework that makes the researcher reflexive. Using an anti-colonial and anti-ableist lens and the concept of disablement, the next chapter is a historical literature landscape on the “Negros” and how their bodies were produced (re-produced), pathologized (disability representation: sicknesses, the super human/physicality and the lazy). The majority of the historical literature within this chapter is pre-colonial European accounts of the Gold Coast.

Chapter Two—The Ontology of the African through the lens of European Interlopers (1602-1923)

Africa has seen centuries of European interlopers forcefully and totally dominated the Indigenous social-political-cultural-economic structures, land and humans.¹⁰ This domination led to “scanty records of the ancient history” of the continent from the lens of the interlopers (Blyden, 2018, p. 5). The Gold Coast had flourished with its forests, clans, cultures and spirituality until European interlopers arrived in the name of friendly trading enterprise and exploration (see Bosman, 1705; Bowdich, 1819; Cruickshank, 1853; Claridge, 1915; de Marees, 1602; Rattray, 1923). Several disabling descriptions of the Coast of Guinea by European interlopers are landscaped in this chapter. Their accounts of the Gold Coast provide vivid descriptions painting the shores of the Coast of Guinea with dark imageries, describing the environment as gloomy, the air as poisonous and sickening, and the people as sick and skinny. The people were described as less than human: naked with large male penises and long female breasts hanging, strong like trees, lazy, primitive, savages, negroes, barbaric, idling around, animal like, tree worshipers, and idol worshipers. They were seen as illiterates who are not capable to speak nor write the white man’s English. (Bosman, 1705; Bowdich, 1819; Cruickshank, 1853; Claridge, 1915; de Marees, 1602; Rattray, 1923).

These descriptive accounts provide the justification for European intervention; the people are considered as in need of saving, teaching, control and taming, they need to be ‘civilized.’ The Europeans stayed under the premise that the Coast of Guinea needed them, and this came with the added benefit of the exploitation of the land and its people mentally, spiritually and physically (Fanon, 2004).

¹⁰ Humans in this sense is from the context of the Akan spirituality—the body (material) and soul (immaterial).

European knowledge produced about the continent still leaves the African with missing pieces of their humanness and to what their realities are (Fanon, 2004). These incomplete and biased accounts of Africa and Africans combined with the processes of exploitation and violence over centuries has created disablement for Africans and all Her children as they search for truth as to who they really are, what their culture, livelihood and mental wellness was before. Pre-colonial accounts of African ancestors are constructed for the masses through the systematic negations of interlopers/colonial accounts, which Stoler (2009) explained as a political process that can never be erased. In the sense that it creates an:

[Epistemic of] uncertainties . . . [which] unsettled the imperial conceit that all was in order, because papers classified people, because directives were properly acknowledged, and because colonial civil servants were schooled to assure that records were prepared, circulated, securely stored and sometimes rendered to ash. (p. 1)

The destruction of documents is another way that Europeans control(ed) the narrative of African history. A thousand years process starting with friendly trading leading to forcible trading of not just material goods, but also bodies, souls and minds of the Indigenous wherein “social reform, questions of rights and representation, and liberal impulses and more explicit racisms played an increasing role” (Stoler, 2009, p. 3); such process also erased and re-wrote their ways of Being.

Rattray (1923) was a colonial government anthropologist sent to the Gold Coast to document spiritual ontologies (customs, gods and social systems) so that they were not forgotten; but not forgotten by who? Despite European assumptions about knowledge, African’s are known to be walking libraries as knowledge is passed down through oral tradition and history. Oral history is defined by Daaku (1971) as stories that are historically designed “to teach the history of the people, which are passed on by word of mouth. [It has] been the main method of teaching

the history of many African peoples,” (p. 115) and also seen as a way of knowing, and relationship building. Such traditional ways of knowing and *record keeping* are handed down verbally with a number of mnemonic devices in order for the past to be “scrupulously re-enacted” through several methods “to aid them in the transmission of their tradition” (Daaku, 1971, p. 115).

Oral histories are also handed down through proverbs, symbols, songs and drums, which translate memory data about individual and social experiences (Daaku, 1971; Klein, 1989). Retelling history is essential to the lives of the Akan and therefore could also be a way to transmit current/contemporary ways of emancipating justice. As the Bakuba of Congo, the Akan’s also pass on history “through play and songs [and storytelling] thus unconsciously learn what they considers must be known by all” (Daaku, 1971, p. 125). Through these methods knowledge becomes available to all, including children. Such forms of passage create a “historical conscience, through the feeling of cohesion [it] constitutes the safest and the most solid shield of cultural security for a people” hence why the transmission of history is important to every African (Diop, 1991, p. 212).

In the 17th century, de Marees (1602), a predecessor to and a source that Rattray accessed, recorded that the Indigenous are walking libraries:

They have a very good memory and retain their knowledge for a long time. . . . Although they are wild, very useless and unmannered people in many things, herein they show a piece of great wisdom. (de Marees, 1602, pp. 32 & 99)

Understanding this way of creation and transmission of a body of knowledge allows for the critique that Rattray’s (1923) account of the Gold Coast was for no one else but the colonials in order to understand the Africans’ bodies and cultural epistemologies and ontologies. Even

Rattray (1927) referred to Africans as, “reference books [which are] human beings [and who] need to be handled delicately” (p. vii). It can also be argued that Africans do not need reference books nor anthropological accounts to remember their histories as this is done through their Indigenous symbols. Despite African traditions of knowledge transfer, there remain written accounts left by Europeans that can be critically dissected with an anti-colonial analysis to understand how Europeans influenced the development of current beliefs about persons with disabilities in Ghana.

This chapter attempts to understand how African/Black bodies were pathologized and the colonial need to pathologize the African. With the use of early European interlopers’ accounts, I first survey the archives to demonstrate how bodies of the African Indigenous were pathologized under the medical model. Secondly, who was doing the production and how was the production of bodies painted for the readers? These accounts are political as they validate the classification of Africans as paradoxically both inhuman and superhuman needing to be controlled and ruled while also capable of building an entire colonial empire (Fanon, 2004). Also political in the sense that interlopers were in the business of validating and comparing bodies, knowledge, lived experiences to their own white race and dominating through colonizing/othering the bodies for commodification and land for materials (Fanon, 2004). While also making sure that their newly ‘discovered’ environment was safe enough for their European bodies to thrive. This section will also include the different ailments listed by early European writers within the Gold Coast.

Pathologies and the Production of African Disease/Disability (Pre-Colonial)

The earliest European author on the African people and continent is de Marees (1602) who is credited with providing the earliest detailed accounts of the West African Society. His account is taken as a primary source and as the first written documented description of West

Africans (Dantzing & Jones, 1987). His account was translated into English, French, German and Italian making it one of the widest read accounts of the Coast of Guinea. However, the translators note that de Marees appeared to be “misinformed about certain minor matters” (Dantzing & Jones, 1987, p. xvii). Despite the acknowledgements of some errors, de Maree’s book provides “material culture, religious beliefs, political and social organization, economic system and general life-style of the people of the Gold Coast” (Dantzing & Jones, 1987, p. xvii) making it a point of reference for other authors on the gold coast such as Bosman, Rattray, Claridge, Cruickshank, Bowdich, and Blyden; and also for African Indigenous writers/scholars such as Boahen, Amenumey, and Danquah.

One issue regarding de Marees’ (1602) illustration of the Africans is how it presents Africans as animalistic. de Marees describes Africans during a festival: “At these Festivals they indulge in a lot of Monkey-games such as fencing and drumming, singing and jumping” (p. 95). This, Nkrumah (1964) explains, is a way to validate their ideological standpoint that visually showcases the basic primitive African needing tutelage and “impression . . . that African art resorted to distortion of forms” (p. 65); a way to validate the claim that Africans were in need of saving.

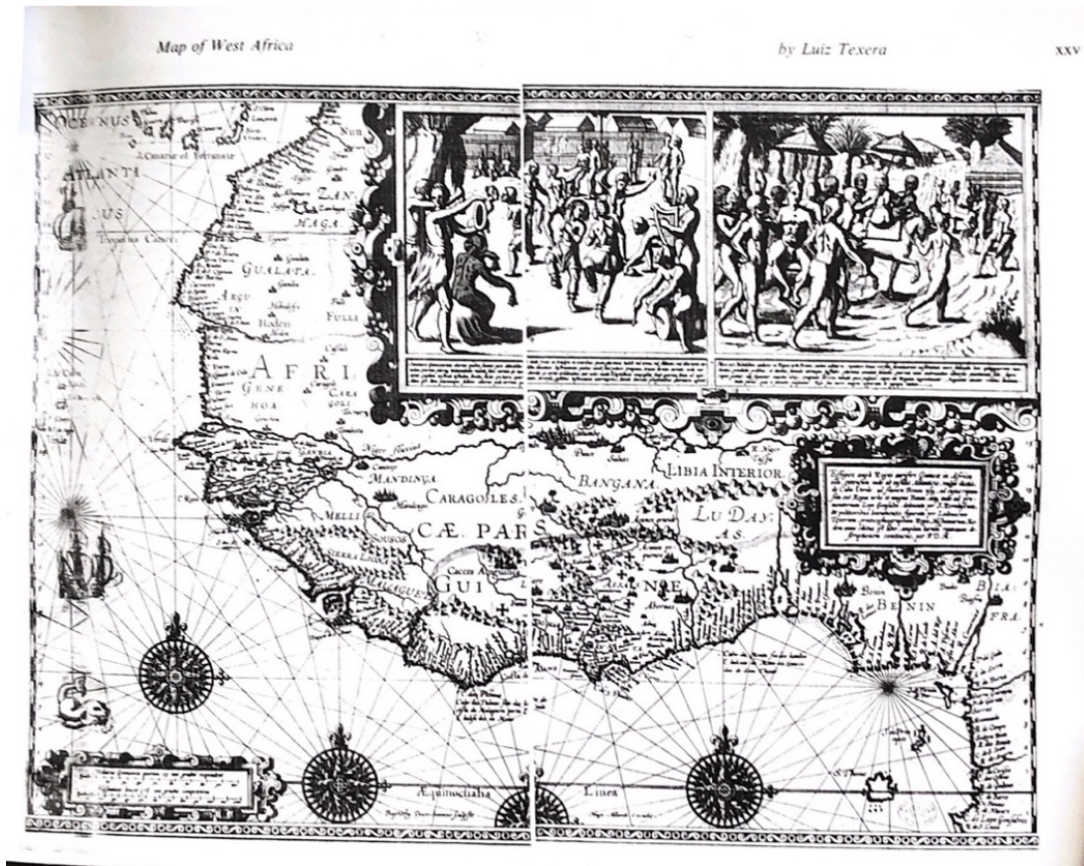


Figure 2: Illustration of Africans as animal like. (de Marees. p. xxv)

During his time in the Gold Kingdom of Guinea, de Marees (1602) only accounted for five illnesses, namely: headaches, yellow fever, blindness, maimed/cripples and albinos. The maimed/cripples consisted primarily of men who had fought in battles, while the albinos were said to be “othered.”

The second account I explored is Bosman (1705), which was more popular as per the translators of de Marees’ (1602) book and was used as validation for other European interlopers. Bosman, a Dutch citizen navigator in the Gold Coast, began his career as an author when he took up an apprenticeship with the Dutch West Indian Company allowing him to stay on the Coast of Guinea for 14 years starting at the age of 16 in 1698 moving from one township to another in order to immerse himself in the lived experiences of the Indigenous people. He stated that he had

an opportunity to fulfill his desires, “there being few or scarce any places upon off the Coast, where I have not stay’d for some time, and can now speak of this experience” (Bosman, 1704, preface n.p). He started to write in 1704 providing accounts in letter format to his friend. His writing includes 20 letters on the Dutch and French fort, and the slave trading occupation, which was at its peak during the early 18th century. Also included were accounts of the Ivory Coast, and the rise and settlement of the Europeans occupying the Coast of Guinea.

His account is said to be more carefully written (according to the translators) as he was in an unfamiliar territory that was still arguably under the control of the African Indigenous and also the Portuguese. Bosman, in his accounts of the Coast of Guinea, also reported on the afflictions of small pox and distemper a disease that is usually found in dogs which Beineke, Baumgartner and Wohlsein (2015) state has similarities to measles on humans; he also reported war wounds and gangrene.

Bowdich, born in England in 1791, was a scientist by profession who died of malaria at the age of 32. Bowdich’s (1819) book on the Ashantee Kingdom mentioned Bosman as the first European to venture and give an account of the Ashantee empire. Bowdich’s accolades include his peace negotiations with the Ashantee empire on behalf of the African Company of Merchants (headed by the British) in 1817; he facilitated in the peace talk between the Ashantees and the Fantees, a feat that has been credited to his charming way of approaching the Ashantee King. Such charm and persistence also bought the British an Embassy located in the capital of Ashantee, which allowed them a closer access to the greatest powers in the Gold Coast. As a British scientist, Bowdich’s account provided the most medical pathologies that were present in the Coast of Guinea during his time; his account states that the Coast of Guinea had disease, sickness, and bodies which ‘deviated from the norm’ during this period. He accounted for:

dysentery, inguinal hernia, yellow fever, mortal illness/leprosy, stricture of the urethra, ankylosis of the knee, maimed/cripples/lame, suicide, syphilitic disorder, lingering disorder, war wounds/gangrenes, albino, gonorrhoea and crawl crawl.

Bowdich (1819) mentioned another earlier interloper Issert, a physician in the Danish service who wrote that the “king has a piece of gold, as a charm, more than four men can carry; and innumerable slaves are constantly at work for him in the mountains, each of whom must collect or produce two ounces of gold per diem” (as cited in Bowdich, 1819, p. 3), showing the richness in the Gold Coast. Such knowledge was said to have propelled the British government, sending Bowdich with three other men for political reason and to propitiate an extension of commerce. His mission to the Gold Coast was to spy and to document everything about the people and the material richness of the land and to validate Bosman’s and Issert’s accounts on commerce of both gold and the availability of slaves. Below is the specific directive from the British Committee to Bowdich and two others on the voyage to the Ashantee Kingdom. Such direction makes clear the methodical entry plan of the British empire to overtake the Ashantee empire during the latter part of the nineteenth century:

They should collect the most accurate information possible of the extent, population, and resources of the Ashantee dominions, and should report fully their opinion of the inhabitants, and of the progress they may have made in the arts of civilized life: They should be directed also, to procure and bring away (with the consent of the chiefs) any specimens of vegetable and mineral productions they may be able: and to ascertain where and how the natives collect the gold, and the extent to which the trade in that article, and in ivory, might be carried on. (as cited in Bowdich, 1819, pp. 5-6)

Cruickshank's (1853) account was the closest to an official role within the Gold Coast. In relation to health he wrote of smallpox as one of the epidemics in the Gold Coast. However, his accounts focus more on the social and economic situation and resources, ranging from slave trading, religion, superstitions and injustice within the nation. Cruickshank's (1853) account of the Gold Coast started while approaching the continent. His first observation stated that:

The African continent—its appearance from the sea—Objects of interest on approaching the shore—Unhealthiness of the climate—Interest in the elevation of the people—Ill—success of the efforts hitherto made for this purpose—The failure not attributable to the absence of any improvable quality in the negro race—Necessity of avoiding wild and fanatical schemes, and proceeding by progressive steps—Gold Coast prepared for the reception of civilizing influences— The great requisites necessary. (p. 1)

Cruickshank's explanation as to why his work is extremely important demonstrates the 'white savior' ideology, which is connected to the process of disablement of the continent through 'civilizing the natives'. His account provided a picture of the 'barbarous race' and a call that created the philanthropic baseline for development technology—which, as Nkrumah and Escobar state, was created for Europeans. Their argument was validated by Cruickshank's quote:

[From] the description about to be given, that there is abundant room for the philanthropist to build his hopes of their elevation as a race, he cannot allow himself to believe that Christian England will refrain from the noble attempt to cultivate and improve them. It is the mission of civilized nations to carry the banner of civilization into barbarous and heathen land. (Cruickshank, 1853, pp. 6-7)

Cruickshank's account of the Africans demonstrates how the English positioned themselves as obligated to save the "barbarous and heathen" through Christianity and in their minds this

necessitated a rearrangement of the African's social-cultural fabric. This process of "civilizing" is a form of disablement that undermined and erased African spirituality and traditions.

Cruikshank's account in my dissertation was the closest to an official role out of the colonial institutions within the Gold Coast. In his account, Cruikshank also accounted for smallpox as one of the epidemics in the Gold Coast and a European who (Mr. John Swazy a governor to Accra) suffered "from a mortal illness, which soon afterwards terminated in death" (p. 85).

Claridge (1915) wrote two volumes during the inception of British colonialism on the Gold Coast. The first volume covered the period from 1364 to 1872 while the second volume accounted from 1871 to 1900 (the start of colonial invasion). Claridge started with an ancient account of the Gold Coast to the settlement of the Dutch, this provided detailed information from the 'discoveries' of the Akan, settlements, to the rise and fall of smaller nations through wars. The second volume ended with the disillusion of the Ashanti kingdom to the British. His account depicted neither a reduction nor a step-down excuse of the conduct of the British towards the Gold Coast Indigenes. On the contrary, his account still showed traces of elevating and reasoning of the British government while condemning the Gold Coast Indigenes, particularly the Ashantees. His account also included that "Elimina and Cape Coast, too, had suffered greatly in their wars, and the former had, moreover, been decimated by an epidemic of small-pox in 1686" (Claridge, 1915, Vol 1, p. 155). His account demonstrates the longevity/continuity of the smallpox epidemic and the reoccurrence of those maladies that had lingered around the Gulf of Guinea for quite a period of time.

This March, therefore, proved quite as trying as those that had preceeded it, and small-pox once more broke out amongst the soldiers and carrier. . . . There have been several outbreaks of yellow fever, notably in Sekondi in 1910, when a number of Europeans

died. . . . For several years, too, epidemics of Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis occurred in the Lobi country in the north-western province of the Northern Territories, and caused the deaths of enormous number of people, decimating the population over and over again, until the disease died out in 1908. (pp. 562-575)

A thorough account that showcases continuity for some maladies and discontinuity of others; it also shows emergence of new maladies that were also recorded in colonial reports.

Rattray's (1923) account of the Ashanti has been widely used and referenced. Rattray's account opened what "is largely a new ground, or perhaps rather, an old ground treated in new way" (p. 5). His account and methodology was based on the influences and inclusion of the locals. His was a part of an anthropology department that said to be created in the colonies. Colonialism during Rattray's account was already in full effect and roughly 30 years into the institution of civilization with an influx of diverse missionaries entering to save the souls of the primitive Africans. Also during his time, the Akan's were still fully practicing their spirituality, leaving the colonials no choice but to call for the expertise of Rattray in order to have it documented and understood from an European lens. According to Rattray, the Royal Commission on University education and the British Association headed by Chief Commissioner Mr. C. H. Harper in 1913 concluded after solicitation of creating a location that will harness the "people who are classed as 'backwards' or 'primitive'" with fast changing conditions (Rattray, 1923, pp. 5-6). Rattray also produced an account focusing on some religious aspects of the Ashanti's Rites de Passages with an emphasis on artistry of the Ashanti (technology of weaving, stamped clothing, wood carving and other rituals).

His writing was deemed important to the Gold Coast spirituality and ways of living due to its wide use and as a validation of the Ashanti's written knowledge of their gods and way of

worship (Boahen, 1987). Rattray (1923) depicted African spirituality is similar to madness; his account, which he claimed was shared with him by the locals showed illnesses such as leprosy were connected to spirituality:

Very, very long ago, long before Akrobompi found the lake, there lived near the site of the present village of Hantase a very old woman. Her name is not even known, but she is spoken of as Abrewa, i.e. the old woman. She was a leper, had no mate and no children, and lived alone. One day out of the lake stepped an obosom (god) in the form of a man. He was called Twe (or Otwe, with the prenominal prefix). He made love to the old woman, but she remonstrated with him, saying should she become a mother, she would, living alone as she did, be unable, when the time came for her delivery, to get her own food, firewood, or water. Twe overcame her scruples by saying that any time she wanted anything she had only to crawl down to the lake shore and knock upon the water, when fish would come to her as food. The old woman eventually bore a son called Twe Adodo, the son of the lake spirit, and the first human being to have the Bosomtwe ntoro. Every Sunday Twe would come forth out of the lake and sit amid his followers who came with him, while once a year Twe Adodo, the son, would descend into the lake to ask his father about the fishing and if the lake would that year 'explode its gunpowder.' (Rattray, 1923, p. 56)

His account does not confirm if leprosy was still around during the time of his reporting, but it demonstrated the connection the Indigenous had with the spirit/other world.

In another space, Rattray (1923) also mentioned the full inclusion of other forms of body deviating such as hunchbacks as Heralds of the Kings:

On the first occasion upon which I was privileged to visit the sacred grove I was guided to the spot by the okyeame (spokes-man), the osene (herald),¹¹ a little hunchback, and the Abena Firi, the dear old Queen Mother—the custodian and priestess of the sacred grove—and several other elders from the little village of Asubengya. (Rattray, 1923, p. 122)

He also wrote of madness and how it was connected to spiritual influences and labelled as ‘depression’:

A spirit may take possession of a man and he may appear to have gone *mad*, and this state may last sometimes even for a year. Then the priest of some powerful god may be consulted and he may discover, through his god, that it is some spirit which has come upon the man (or woman). The one upon whom the spirit has come is now bidden to prepare a brass pan, and collect water, leaves and 'medicine' of specific kinds. The possessed one will dance, for sometimes two days, with short intervals for rest, to the accompaniment of drums, and singing. Quite suddenly he will leap into the air and catch something in both his hands (or he may plunge into the river and emerge holding something he had brought up). He will either case fold this thing to his breast, and water will be at once sprinkled upon it to cool it, when it will be thrust into the brass pan and quickly covered up. (Rattray, 1923, p. 147)

The priest tell me that at times, when this greater emanation of God is not present, that the spirits of some of the lesser ones will flash forth for a moment and disclose their presence. For example, a priest will suddenly burst forth, singing, *odoma e, die odo me*

¹¹ Rattray stated that “This little man and I had become great friends since one day, when on meeting him for the first time, I had greeted him in Ashanti with ‘Good morning, O herald, who drinks first of the wine cup’. (I had hazarded a guess at this profession, as in olden times hunchbacks were usually heralds). His amazement was delightful to behold and he became my staunch friend and advocate among his villagers. It is such trifling incidents that make things easy for the anthropologist. (p. 122)

omera ('I am the odoma tree, let him who loves me come hither'). It seems that the priests and priestesses, when in ecstatic condition, are subject to many spirit influences. I have heard a priestess begin to talk in a different dialect from her own. This did not at all surprise the onlookers, who merely said, 'Oh, that is the spirit of So-and-so'—a dead priestess of the same god, who had come from another district, and had used that dialect. (Rattray, 1923, p. 150)

As I was passing the spot a few hours later on my way to another village, I saw an okomfo (priest sitting upon the apa beside the shrine). He was covered with white powdered clay and heavily adorned with suman (fetishes) and was attended upon by a woman carrying a basin containing powdered clay. He sat upon the logs beating his odawuru (gong) and singing the following song: My words reach far away. O Ame Yoa. My words reach peoples. I who am the son of the god Ta Kese, King of Aban. My words reach peoples. . . . Father, help me for I am miserable. Father Ta Kese (a god), help me for I am unhappy. Ati Akosua, help me for I am unhappy. (Rattray, 1923, pp. 201-02)

Rattray writes in Twi (the dialect of the Ashantees) then translates to English but in this case with the priest singing, it was written in English and he never explained if the priest was singing in English or Twi, so it is unclear whether the priest singing that he is depressed and in what language he received such information. It is also visible that earlier writers such as Bowdich (1819) also connected religion to madness.

On the death of a King, all the Customs which have been made for the subjects who have died during his reign, must be simultaneously repeated by the families, (the human sacrifices as well as the carousals and pageantry) to amplify that for the monarch, which is also solemnised, independently, but the same time, in every excess of extravagance and

barbarity. The brothers, sons, and nephews of the King, affecting temporary insanity, burst forth with their muskets, and fire promiscuously amongst the crowd; even a man of rank, if they meet him, is their victim, nor is their murder of him or any other, on such an occasion, visited or prevented; the scene can scarcely be imagined. (Bowdich, 1819, p. 288)

Bowdich's description demonstrates that the European's viewed body possession by a spirit as "insanity" and the actions of the temporarily (lasting up to one year) insane often resulted in death – to which the insane were not held accountable. This explanation of spiritual possession as insanity or madness may have legitimized colonial imposition of asylums, and colonial intolerance for violence during spiritual possession may have resulted in increased incarceration. More on madness and connection to European connection to institutionization will be discussed further in another chapter.

Survey of Reported Illness, Diseases and Deformities on the Gold Coast from 1602 - 1923

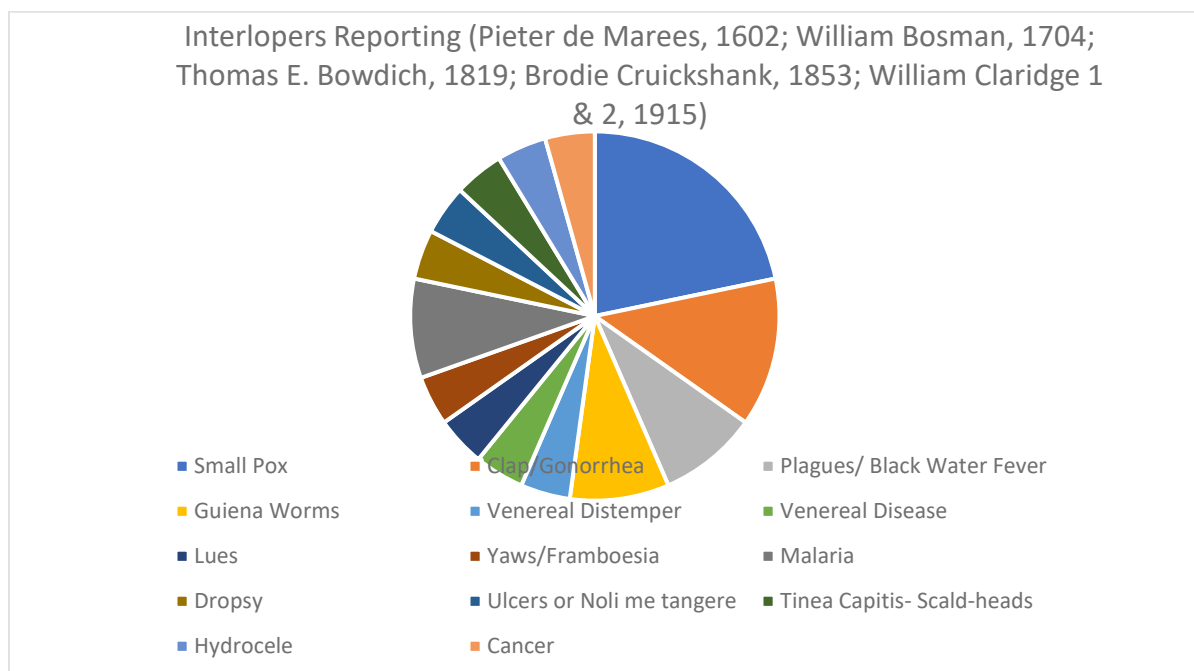


Figure 3:Precolonial Disease

Illness/Disability/Deformity Reported 1602 - 1923

Interloper	Year	Headaches	Dysentery	Inguinal Hernia	Yellow Fever	Ravenous Appetite	Disease/Disability	Mortal Illness (measles)/Leprosy	Stricture of the Urethra	Anchylolysis of the knee	Maimed/ Criminals/Lame	Suicide	Syphilitic Disorder	Lingering Disorder	War Wounds/ Gonorrhea	Albino	Hunch Back	Blindness	Madness
Pieter de Marees	1602	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗		✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
William Bosman	1704	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Thomas E. Bowdich	1819	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Brodie Cruickshank	1853	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
William Claridge 1 & 2	1915	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
CAPT. R. S. Rattray, M.B.E	1923	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗		✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓

Figure 4: Illness/Disability/Deformity Reported 1602 – 1923

Conclusion

Through historical literature landscape, this chapter has provided surveys on how bodies were pathologized through sickness, the super human/physicality from the lens of European interlopers. It showcased the continuity of certain sicknesses such as small pox as the most recorded by the Europeans, gonorrhea and black water fever. Rattray's (1923) account was the only one that reported on madness/insanity which was during formalized colonization. Below is an exclusive list from Bowdich in the chapter labeled *Materia Medical and Diseases*, which provides both diseases and/or illness that affected the Ashantees. He also provided in detail a list of local medicines with descriptions of how the local/tropical plants were used by the locals to

heal/cure some of the maladies found in the tropics. The next chapter destabilized and informs my theoretical framing and analysis.

Figure 5: Bowdich List of Diseases in the Gold Coast (p. 379-80)

A List of the Diseases which I have seen in the Ashantee country.

Febris remittens	-	2 cases	Scrophula	-	- many cases
Hepatitis	-	1	Syphilis	-	- many
Dysenteria mucosa	-	6	Gonorrhoea	-	- 2
Colica	-	1	Stricture	-	- 3
Anasarca	-	3	Cataract	-	- 2
Ascites	-	3	Staphyloma	-	- 5

380 MISSION TO ASHANTEE.

Ectropium	-	1 case	Umbilical (hernia)	-	many
Bronchocele	-	many	Dracunculus	-	7
Cephalagia	-	many	Tinea capitis	-	many
Odontalgia	-	10 to 15	Hydrocele	-	many
Ulcers	-	8	Cancer	-	1
Framboesia	-	many	Elephantiasis	-	1
Psora	-	many	Lepra	-	7
Hernia inguinal	-	1			

380 MISSION TO ASHANTEE.

Ectropium	-	1 case	Umbilical (hernia)	-	many
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Ulcers	-	8	Cancer	-	1
Framboesia	-	many	Elephantiasis	-	1
Psora	-	many	Lepra	-	7
Hernia inguinal	-	1			

Figure 6: Plant Based Medicines Used by the Ashantees (Bowdich, 1819)

Latterly, when better impressions succeeded, and our walks were unrestrained by limits or attendants, the rains not only checked, but generally disappointed my researches, by presenting the subject flowerless, (or in an unfit state for preservation,) and consequently not admitting their classification, as is too evident in the following list of such plants as are used as medicines by the Ashantees.

1. Cutturasuh. (*Chrysanthellum procumbens*. Persoon. syn. 2. p. 471, *Verbesina mutica* Willd.) A small plant, a decoction of which is purgative, before boiling it should be bruised.
2. Adumba, (a species of *Ficus*.) The bark and fruit are pounded with Mallaguetta pepper and a small plant called awhinteywhinting, boiled in fish soup: two doses in the third month of gestation are said to cause abortion.
3. Koofobah (*Gloriosa superba*. Linn.) is bruised with Mallaguetta pepper (lesser cardamom seeds) and applied to the ankle or foot when sprained.
4. Tandoorue (perhaps a *Cupania* or *Trichilia*.) The bark is pounded and boiled with Mallaguetta pepper; used for pain in the belly, and acts as a purgative.
5. Bissey. (*Sterculia acuminata*. Palis. de Beauvois, *Flore d'Oware* 1. p. 41. tab. 24.) The fruit is constantly chewed by the Ashantees, especially on a journey; it is said to prevent hunger and strengthen the stomach and bowels; has a slight bitter aromatic astringent taste, and causes an increase of the saliva while chewed.
6. Attueh. (*Blighia sapida*. Hort. Kew. ed. 2. vol. 3, p. 350. *Akeesia africana* Tussac Flor. des Antilles 66.) A decoction of the bark is said to be anti-venereal. The fruit is eaten.
7. Ricinus Communis Linn. Castor oil nut tree, 30 feet high here, and not a bush as on the coast: not used as medicine by the natives.

* I am indebted to Mr. Brown's knowledge for the names and references in the parentheses.

8. Apooder. (Two species of *Leucas*, of which one is hardly different from *L. Martinicensis* Hort. Kew. ed. 2. vol. 3, p. 409, the other is perhaps new.) A mixture of the bruised leaves with lime juice is applied to inflammations.
9. Hooghong. (A species of *Urtica*) is bruised, mixed with chalk, and drank by pregnant women to correct acidity in the stomach, heartburn, &c.
10. Accocottocotorawah. (*Heliotropium indicum*. Linn.) The juice expressed from this plant is snuffed up the nostrils in cases of severe head-ach. They also inhale the smoke of it into the nose.
11. Crowera (*Acalypha ciliata*. Willd. sp. pl.) is bruised with lesser cardamom seed, and rubbed on the chest and side when pained.
12. Enminim (a species of *Vitis*.) A climbing plant. The juice expressed from the leaves is dropped into the eyes when affected with ophthalmia or pain.
13. Secoco. (*Leptanthus*?) A small marshy plant. Is pounded with lime juice and rubbed on the body to cure the crawcraws; a severe and obstinate species of itch.
14. Ammo.—The juice is applied to cuts and bruises.
15. Petey (possibly a *Piper*.) The leaves are pounded and applied as a plaister to inflammatory swellings and boils.
16. Abromotome.—The bruised leaves are used to discuss boils.
17. Yangkompro. (A syngenesious plant related to *Cacalia*.) The pounded leaves are applied to cuts and contusions.
18. Oeduema. (*Musanga cecropioides* Br. See *Tuckey's Congo*, p. 453.) The hairy sheath or stipule of a large palmated leaved tree; it resembles a skin, is boiled in soup, and used as a powerful emmenagogue.
19. Semeney, (probably a species of *Ancilema*.) The leaves are pounded and applied as a plaister to favour the discharge of boils and collections of pus.

20. Wowwah (perhaps a *Sterculia*.) The inner bark of this tree is scraped fine and mixed with Mallaguetta pepper, and drank for colic and other pains in the belly.
21. Anafranakoo.—The bruised leaves are applied to discuss boils and other inflammatory swelling.
22. Kattacaihen (*Leca sambucina*.) A decoction of the leaves is drank every morning by pregnant women when they experience any uneasiness in the abdomen. The bark of the tree powdered is rubbed on chronic swellings.
23. Aserumbdrue (a species of *Piper* related to *umbellatum*.) The leaves are used in soup to allay swellings of the belly.
24. Ociseeree.—The bark of this tree is used to stop the purging in dysentery and diarrhoea.
25. Gingang. (*Paulinia africana* Br. See *Tuckey's Congo*, p. 427.) The bark of this tree is used internally and externally, mixed with Mallaguetta pepper for pain in the side.
26. Cudeyakoo.—A very small plant. The leaves and stalk pounded are applied to eruptions on the head. A mixture of it with lime juice is applied to the yaws.
27. Affeah (unknown) and Nuinnuerafuh (*Hedysari* species.) A mixture of the bruised leaves of these plants with Mallaguetta pepper, is rubbed on the body and limbs when swelled or pained: a decoction of them, with an addition of the plant Comfany (*Alternanthera*, sp.) is used internally in the same cases.
28. Adummah. (*Paulinia africana*. The same as No. 25.) A decoction of the bark of this tree, reduced to powder with Mallaguetta pepper, drank once a day, stops the discharge of blood and cures the dysentery.
29. Tointinney (probably a *Menispermum*.) Is chewed with Mallaguetta pepper as a cure for a cough.
30. Apussey. (A leguminous plant, probably allied to *Robinia*.)

The bark of this tree pounded with Mallaguetta pepper is applied to the head in cases of head-ach.

31. Thuquamah.—The bark is pounded and drank in Palm wine, with Mallaguetta pepper, for pain in the belly.
 32. Conkkoney, a dark purple coloured Toadstool, the size of a hazel nut, rubbed with Mallaguetta pepper and lime juice, it purges briskly. To stop the purging, a mess of boiled Guinea corn meal and lime juice should be eaten.
 33. Suetinney.—(*Brillantaisia owariensis*. Palis. de Beauvois *Flor. d'Oware*, 2. p. 68 tab. 100, fig. 2.) A decoction of the leaves is drank for pain in the belly.
 34. Soominna, (*Tetandria Monogynia*.) is bruised with lime juice and used to abate cough.
 35. Thattha (*Scoparia dulcis*. Linn.)—The expressed juice of this plant is dropped into the ears when pained.
 36. Aquey (*Melia Azedarach*. Linn.) A decoction of the leaves of this tree is used with Palm wine as a corroborant.
 37. Dammaram (*Mussaenda fulgens*. nov. spec.)
- The diseases most common in the Ashantee Country are the Lues, Yaws, Itch, Ulcers, Scald-heads, and griping pains in the bowels. Other diseases are occasionally met with, I should suppose in the same proportion that they occur in civilized countries; but I do not know to what cause to assign the prevalence and frequency of one of the most unsightly diseases that can occur in any country: it is an obstinate species of ulcer, or, Noli me tangere, which destroys the nose and upper lip; it attacks women chiefly, although men are not exempt from it; there are more than 100 women in Coomassie who have lost the nose or upper lip from this cause alone: it commences with a small ulcer in the ala nasi, or upper lip, the size of a split pea, excavated, with the edges

Chapter Three—Destabilizing Critical Disability Studies, A Door of Return

This chapter interrogates and problematizes the field of disability studies while also questioning historical accounts in order to create a space for my theoretical approach—critical Nkrumahist thought. It then provides an account of how Europeans have discriminated against those that were deemed different or deviating from European norms. This chapter interrogates development work and ways of reporting leading to a space for a critical African Disability Studies. It also informs my theoretical anti-colonial, anti-development and anti-ableist framing and analysis. It starts with theorizing the concept of disablement then ends with a multi-scalar diagram/framework that contextualizes Nkrumah's continental framework for analysing and creating international development reports for reality accuracies.

Interrogating Western Disability Studies

The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD, 2006) defines disability as “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (p. 3). This definition departs from the highly disputed medical model of disability and employs the social and human rights model of disability. The social model of disability, which has been transformative in the lives of disability groups, mostly in the North, was first established within the Union of the Physical Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS; 1972). UPIAS states that “the problem faced by disabled groups were not caused by personal impairments but by the way society was exclusively arranged for able-bodied living” creating an ableist world (as cited in Finkelstein, 2004, p. 16).

Finkelstein (2004) citing UPIAS provided some contextualization, “disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and

excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are therefore an oppressed group in society” (p. 16). Interpreting the declaration by UPIAS, Oliver (1981, 1983), simplified the social model of disability and emphasized the disabling effects of societal discrimination on impairments. Disabling effects in general are structurally implemented systemic barriers that the majority of disabled individuals have fought to overcome for centuries, such as, inclusive access to education and employment, but above all, respect and dignity (Finkelstein, 2004; Oliver 1981, 1983; UPIAS, 1972). However, the social model and disability studies do not adequately account for how human rights and social justice are conceptualized and claimed within Africa. Any understanding of social justice and human rights in Africa must be grounded in “African Personality, African Personhood and African Unity [which] are cornerstone of Nkrumah’s ideas, vision and philosophies” (Dei, 2012, p. 44); but the challenge for such vision as Dei (2012) asserts is how the intervention of a comprehensive concept of Pan-African/Nkrumah Personality will reflect the “distinct cultural character of African aspirations” within the continent (Dei, 2012, p. 45). I argue that such intervention will require a comprehensive and complex space for the uncomfortable conversation, only then will it be possible to propose an African disability rights framework. This is why my dissertation is dedicated as a platform to focus on Ghana but centered in revisiting and reawakening Akan Personality through Nkrumah’s Unity philosophical ideas.

Situating the Concept of Disablement

Gorman and Udegbe (2010) in their article, *Disabled Woman/Nation: Re-narrating the Erasure of (Neo) Colonial Violence in Ondjaki’s Good Morning Comrades and Tsitsi Dangarembga’s Nervous Conditions*, interrogate the violent erasure of disabled individuals within postcolonial scholarship for its failure to include the material conditions that contribute to

disablement in post independent and contemporary Africa. They argue that the use of disabled women's bodies as a signifier for post-colonial violence "creates a catharsis through which knowledge of the violence of (neo)colonial relations—the impact of which has been experienced as civil war and economic exploitation—is erased or suppressed" (p. 309). One of the main components within this article is that if our political consciousness and nation building does not include disabled individuals in the construction of the African Personality, then we will continue to fail to include their material needs as part of the nation's criteria. Postcolonial literature uses disability and the disabled individuals as signifiers of a failed state/continent without providing the contextual realities that contribute to disabilities (lack of access to health care, lack of inclusion in education, stigma, land and body erasure and underdevelopment) (Gorman & Udegbe, 2010). Such complex erasure tends to lead to a faulty narrative of an Africa in need of nation building and development.

Gorman and Udegbe's (2010) use of disablement in the post-colonial Nkrumah Ghana context provides the space to ground critical Nkrumahist thought from a structural disablement approach. Employing such approach, creates a space to account for the years of colonial violence that continues to exploit the bodies and control behaviour of Black Indigenous Folks leaving them in a state of 'madness,' a label that interlopers and colonials have attached to their spiritual practices. The call to Sankofa is a way forward toward unified nation building and development (spiritual, social, structural) that weaves in the narratives of African Indigenous ancestors, including those whose bodies, souls/minds and ways of being were maddened.

Unpacking a New Layer of Disability Studies

The truth is that colonization, in its very essence, already appeared to be a great purveyor of psychiatric hospitals. . . . Because it is systematized negation of the other, a frenzied

determination to deny the other any attribute of humanity, colonialism forces the colonized to constantly ask the question “Who am I in reality.” (Fanon, 2004, pp. 181-182)

Fanon argues that colonization undermined the humanness of the people of Africa which I argue dates back to pre-colonial entry of the Europeans onto the shores of Africa. Understanding colonization as disablement, and as a process that constantly undermines the reality, existence and embodiment of the colonized has created space for a complex conversation on the idea of ‘disablement’ within the fields of disability and post-colonial studies. Disablement is now being conceptualized as a social, economic, and political process connected to global inequities, and international development that exploit Africa and its people (Gorman, 2005, 2010; Farmer, 2005; Grech & Soldatic, 2016). It is necessary to trace the disablement of Africa back to the pre-colonial entry of the Europeans; this section utilizes Gorman’s (2010) concept of disablement as a process that begins with material disablement leading to bodily debility and contributing to deteriorating forms of embodied identities. Opening up the discussion on disablement to reflect social, political and economic processes has also caused chaos within critical disability studies, critical race, and Black disability studies highlighting the need for an African disability/ global perspective (Gorman, 2010, 2016; Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011; Schalk, 2018).

With such a complex dialectic, Gorman (2016) proposed that focusing on “disability-disablement may provide a way out of the closure of context and the collapsing of social relations that occurs in current formations of disability identity” (p. 251). Gorman’s analysis also helps to contextualize the complex global disability studies discourses affirming that the attention to a neo-liberal framework has unfortunately over-simplified the problem by using “mystical forms of biopolitics in which bodily capacities are mobilised and constrained by the

invisible hand of an abstract capitalism; ‘postcolonialism’ as a dematerialized spirit wafting through the diffuse global ether” (p. 251). To better unpack this idea of capitalism as abstract actions of an invisible hand and a mystical form of bio-politics, it is necessary to first understand the existence of the mystical invisible hand through western Christian religion.

The American Standard Bible, Version 2, Thessalonians 3:6-10, clearly commands Jesus Christ’s followers:

Now we command you, brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to imitate us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; neither did we eat bread for nought at any man’s hand, but in labor and travail, working night and day that we might not burden any of you: not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an example unto you, that ye should imitate us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, if any will not work, neither let him eat.

The ethics of Christianity and/or followers of Jesus Christ are taught daily to have faith; work hard and have faith in Christ that is never seen but He sees everything that one does and He hears every believer’s prayers. It clearly drives the modern capitalist agenda that if one does not work, they should not be allowed to eat; ingraining in Christ’s followers that they have the obligation to work before food can be provided to them; which emulates that one should satisfy the bodily before the inner self.

In the Good News Bible of the same verse, chapter 6, it states that “Our brothers and sisters, we command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to keep away from all believers who are living a lazy life and who do not follow instructions that we gave” (p. 263). This quote

connects religious belief and productivity. A critical question then is, whose bodies are depicted as lazy or idling?¹² In the context of the colonization of Africa and Africans, this question brings forth the discourse on race as Africans continue to be constructed as backwards, incapable, ‘savage,’ and in need of saving. This has fed the rhetoric of the global African in the continent that cannot get their ‘shit’ together but are always asking for ‘aid’ or loan forgiveness to supplement for the loss of material extractions from the continent, a process which has arguably created a disablement and left disabled bodies deteriorating, living on the margins and at the feet of international development agencies.

Schalk (2018), in her book *Bodymind Reimagined: (Dis)ability, Race, and Gender in Black Women’s Speculative Fiction* states that the term ‘bodymind’ is useful to theorize the discourses of the mental stress that erases places on coloured people; particularly how racialized peoples historical experiences of continental and transatlantic oppressions have physically and mentally affected their Being which also aligns with Fanon’s (2004) quote about questioning one’s existence. Noting this complexity, Schalk used a creative speculative fiction that allows her to reference and interrogate using “magical realism, utopian and dystopian literature, fantasy, science fiction, voodoo, ghost stories and hybrid genres” (p. 17) to interrogate and tell untold stories of Black people. Such a non-restrictive creative scope of imagining and interrogating brings in to the macroscopic lens the historical and real time narratives of Black people; I argue that it also allows for a broader creative theorization without the erasure that has ‘othered’ different embodiments and different spaces. Schalk’s theorization permits disability discourses to move beyond embodiment analysis by approaching it as a metaphor—because it provides the

¹² These labels of lazing and idling of the Indigenes will be further unpacked with some examples from European accounts.

space for a “mutually constitutive discourses that inflect text even in the absence of explicit embodied representations” (p. 25) of these socially constructive identities.

Schalk (2018) uses slavery to explain how disablement is constructed, stating:

[Refusing] to read disability as a metaphor ignores the mutual constitution of (dis)ability, race, gender as social categories and cultural discourses which have material effects on people lived. Reading disability as both metaphor and materiality, therefore is essential to those produced by people of colour. Using the history of slavery as an example, I contend that scholars must read representations of disability in neo-slave narratives as constitutive of both the discursive use of (dis)ability to justify the enslavement of black people and the physical and mentally disabling repercussions of racism for black subjects . . . [it] allows for an understanding of the representation of disability as simultaneously material experience and as a metaphor for other mutually constitutive and intersectional experiences of oppression, both in the past and today. (pp. 34-35)

This conceptualization of disability allows those of us in the critical disability space to know and understand the global phenomena of colonialism that has continued to ‘underdevelop’ the African arena creating a southern disability injustice. While also allowing us to be metaphorically creative in our work (Gorman 2010, 2016; Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011; Rodney, 1981; Schalk, 2018;).

Using the word ‘underdeveloped,’ Rodney (1981) unpacks how the European and American capitalist and imperialist hold on Africa continues to create deeper degrees of economic, social and cultural gaps which also includes the concept of development as ‘social violence.’ He states that in some political arenas, it has been requested to “substitute the term ‘developing’ for ‘underdevelopment’” in order to avoid “any unpleasantness which may be

attached to the second term, which might be interpreted as meaning underdeveloped mentally, physically, morally, or in any other respect” (Rodney, 1981, p. 14). He went on to dispute such commentary stating that if:

[Underdevelopment] were related to anything other than comparing economies then the most underdeveloped country in the world would be the U.S.A [and I add European countries], which practices external oppression on a massive scale, while internally there is a blend of exploitation, brutality, and psychiatric disorder. However, on the economic level, it is best to remain with the word ‘underdeveloped’ rather than ‘developing,’ because the latter created the impression that all the countries of Africa . . . are escaping from a state of economic backwardness relative to the industrial world, and that they are emancipating themselves from the relationship of exploitation. That is certainly not true, and many underdeveloped countries in Africa and elsewhere are becoming more underdeveloped in comparison with the world’s great powers, because their exploitation by the metropolises is being intensified in new ways. (Rodney, 1981, p. 14)

I agree with Rodney’s argument for the term ‘underdevelopment,’ and highlight that use of the term “developing” has been intentionally used to invoke the idea that Africans were and are ‘mentally, physically, and morally’ incapable in order to justify ongoing exploitation and forced dependence on international aid. Therefore, the word ‘underdeveloped’ will be used as both to depict exploitation of the land for economic gain and the bodies of Africans.

Gorman (2016) asks, “what frameworks can we mobilise to analyse the ways in which disablement appears” in our works and “[what] archival resources can we mobilise in order to historicise narratives of disablement that emerge” from our works (p. 258), a question that supports this dissertation. These two questions stimulate critical discussions while also

interrogating the means of knowing about (un)mattered bodies outside of the North American European aura. Providing space to critically stimulate and interrogate allows an unveiling of the imperialist systems (the invisible hands) that continue to cause social murder through an ongoing ‘pimping’ of bodies and land. Gorman’s question, Rodney’s explanations and Schalk’s creative theorization provide an easier path to mobilise for the use of disablement and ‘Southern Disability Justice’ while understanding the south-north relationship. To do so, I respectively Sankofa the Akan ways of Being from Gyekye’s (1987), Akan conceptual scheme of Personhood in order to historicise the disablement narratives of the ‘underdeveloped’ rather than from the ‘developing’ of bodies, mind, soul and lands of Africa and Africans (Rodney, 1981).

Thinking Through my Theoretical Lens

Pan-Africanists such as DuBois, Garvey, Padmore, Nkrumah, Nyerere, Cabral, Thiong’o, Lumumba, among many others, have shaped Africa and African lives (both in Africa and the Diaspora) through their struggles to bring independence, social, cultural, economic and political justice, African unity, and decolonization of the mind to people of indigenous Africa. The core critical lens of Pan-Africanism is ‘One Africa, Unity,’ especially the unification in economics, culture, spirituality and collective consciousness of the African people. This section unpacks Pan-Africanism in order to place into context how disablement and its effect causing disability of the body was represented within Pan-African Nkrumah’s thought; and specifically, the relevancy of Pan-Africanism and Nkrumanist ideas in terms of disability and the disablement of Ghana/Africa.

To further my research in Pan-Africanism as a critical thought within the critical disability studies discourse, I specifically draw on Nkrumahist thought and its significance in Ghana and Africa. The goal in this section is to explore the history of critical Pan-Africanism

while unpacking the work of some of its key theorists in order to clarify how we can Sankofa, reading *Sankokin*, listening *Sankotie*, and embracing and anchoring “our analysis in how Euro-colonial processes of knowledge production, interrogation, validation and dissemination has either denied or invalidated our humanity, self-respect and our cultural sense of knowing” (Dei, 2012, p. 47). The hope is that this will lead to Nkrumah’s thoughts, in relation to disability, and the concept of structural disablement. To start this reflective journey, I begin by contextualizing the emergence of Pan-Africanism, its founding Fathers and its historical mapping leading to critical Nkrumahist ideology.

Such analysis is needed as critical Pan-Africanist and critical Nkrumahist theory allows for African people to reclaim their humanness, within a ‘neo-Colonial’ globalized Africa which exploited Her material and intellectual resources creating material, economic, cultural and intellectual bankruptcy today. While also creating “violent inter-state and intra-state conflicts, still-born pluralistic governance systems, rapidly deteriorating social services, all of which have culminated in spiraling poverty” (Oduor, 2009, p. 1) due to disembodied identity leading to disability of both lands and body. Oduor (2009) prompted African intellectuals with the question: “how does [Africa] ensure [She] is a formidable player in the global scene, without [Her] culture being swamped by foreign worldviews that often encourage ravaging individualism in the place of constructive communalism,” (p. 2) an individualistic approach that depicts the survival of abled bodiedness from the lens of a northern Christian view.

The continuous westernization of Africa and African countries has brought nothing but a dystopic new-colonial state that has enveloped Africa while draining Her blood through the exploitation of Her land and people. The failure to acknowledge the impact of the actual draining through the exploitation of bodies and extractions of material has unfortunately left Africa in a

state of emergency. These disablements of the continent reflect on African disabled bodies, creating several layers of socially constructed embodied erasures. In particular, from the extraction of material resources and the appropriation of body and lands stemming from the pre-colonial era is disabling especially as African spirituality is connected to the lands and a necessity for survival. This dissertation seeks to ‘Sankofa’ Nkrumah’s critical Pan-African vision as it allows for an “epistemological query, an intellectual and political journey through which the geo-African body comes” (Dei, 2012, p. 52) to be the central focus for thinking through the complexity of a neo-colonial door of a no return ideology.

Critical Pan-Africanism/critical Nkrumahist theory allows ‘Africanness’ to be centred while decentering Eurocentric colonial constructions and conclusions of the African and Africa identities. However, Dei (2012) cautions, “there is a challenge for scholars who embark on such journey, stating that they should . . . intervene with a more comprehensive concept of Pan-African Personality that reflects the distinct cultural character of African aspirations globally” (p. 45). With this knowledge, it is my privileged position to enter academia to engage with critical disability studies within critical Pan-African and critical Nkrumahist theory especially, to understand how pre-colonial and colonial disablement violently affected our ancestors. And how policies have been systematically structured affecting the continent, the countries within, Her governments, Her people and the knowledge production of Her people, leading to the disablement of the entire continent. Understanding the above, contextualizes how a Pan-African “personality embodies the historical memory . . . collective consciousness, artifacts, social institutions, innovation and creative vision of the composite African people” (Dei, 2012, p. 45).

The question then becomes, how can the claim of an ‘African Personality’ exist within critical Pan-Africanism when the disablement of the continent is afflicted through structural

atrocities led by a larger system of imperialism that extends beyond the continent? This analysis of Pan-Africanism creates a lens that provides a ‘multifactorial’ vision of the African people; meaning their social institutions and collective consciousness is relevant to the ‘humanness or one-ness’ of critical Pan-African and critical Nkrumahist ideology while being open to the creativity and fluidity of carefully merging with the critical disability lens from a disabling point of view in order to find a way forward to better theorize disableism from an African disability lens; a centralized location that produces fecundity which allows for total liberation of the mind, body and soul as it attaches to the land of the continent.

The Invention of Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism has seen its fair share of discord within academia and across the continent, even down to whether the word ‘Pan’ should be capitalized. Shepperson (1960) provided some context of when and why the interchangeable lowercase or uppercase letter can be used. He states that Pan-Africanism should be capitalized because it refers to a movement. Writing pan-Africanism with a lower case ‘p’ does not refer to a recognizable movement, but Shepperson (1960) suggested it would be helpful to declutter all the inconsistencies that have been written about a nationalist Pan-African movement if upcoming scholars can trace the “origins of ‘Pan-African-ism’ employing the term accurately in studies. . . . But if a collective term is required, ‘all-African’ [should be] used” (p. 346). I answer Shepperson’s call in writing Pan with a capital ‘P,’ as this dissertation is a form of reawakening the movement.

Researchers have claimed that the theory of Pan-Africanism was started by enslaved in the diaspora (Esedebe, 1994; Nkrumah, 1963; Shepperson, 1960), while others claim that its inception dates back to Egypt B.C. (Legum, 1965; Nantambu, 1998; Wiredu 2004). To further

the claim that Pan-African evolution began 15th century B.C., Nantambu (1998) presents some evidence of its evolution from ancient Kemet:

In the B.C. era, African peoples in ancient Kemet (Egypt) resisted and fought against the following conquerors:

Hyksos or “Sheperd Kings,” in 1783 B.C

Assyrians, now known as the Syrians, in 666 B.C.

Persians, now known as the Iranians, in 552 B.C. and 343 B.C.

Greeks, the world’s first Europeans, under Alexander the Great in 332 B.C.

Romans, Europeans, in 30 B.C.

Arabs in 642 A.D.

French, Europeans, under Napoleon Bonaparte on May 19, 1798

British, Europeans, in 1881. (p. 568)

Such an account raises the question of where Pan-African ideology really emerged from and how it has been contextualized as a tool of resistance, emancipation and centering African people and Africa. But these differences in the timelines of Pan-Africanism also bring to question who the founding Fathers are and what their real vision/framework was. For these reasons, it is important to Sankofa the relationship between Ghana’s Nkrumah (acclaimed founder of Pan Africanism and African Union) with Pan Africanism as a movement that rose to resist white domination and the enslavement of African peoples.

Appiah (1992), Nantambu (1998), and Williams (1961) argued that Pan-Africanism as a tool of emancipation, contrary to popular portrayal, was not racially motivated. It was driven by economic exploitation of African people through slavery, a process justified by European imperialism. Nantambu (1998) provided some clarification explaining that:

Slavery was an economic institution of the first importance. . . . The origin of Negro slavery . . . was economic, not racial; it had to do not with the color of the laborer, but the cheapness of the labor. As compared with Indian and white labor, Negroes slavery was eminently superior. In each case. . . . It was a survival of the fittest. Both Indian slavery

and white servitude were to go down before the blackman's superior endurance, docility, and labor capacity. The features of the man his hair, color, dentifrice, his "subhuman" characteristics so widely pleaded, were only the later rationalizations to justify a simple economic fact: that the colonies needed labor and resorted to Negro labor because it was cheapest and best. (p. 565)

Williams (1961) makes clear that the original formation of Pan-African nationalists, "resisted European economic exploitation as embodied by slavery, not racialism, and because slavery was initially based on economic, culture and class struggle. It is [therefore] historically incorrect to conclude that the Pan-African Nationalist movement was born as a reaction to racialism" (as cited in Nantambu, 1998, p. 564). Nkrumah (1963) concurs with Williams stating that this distortion "invented the myth of colour inferiority . . . which supported the subsequent rape of our continent with its despoliation and continuing exploitation under the advanced forms of colonialism and imperialism" (p. 1). Understanding both Nkrumah and Nantambu (1998) are especially important because European domination over Africa's economy and politics is not a recent development, rather one that dates back to 15th century B.C. (Nantambu, 1998).

It is important to note that this myth of the invention of Pan-Africanism changed over time especially within the context of contemporary South Africa. Domination went beyond the theft of resources and cheap labour to extend to the construction of a racial hierarchy in order to justify the domination of Black men by white men. This was clearly outlined by Mandela (1978) when he stated, "[white] men regard it as the destiny of the white race to dominate the man of colour. The harshness of their domination, however, is rousing in the African feelings. . . . And these can no longer be suppressed" (p. 12). Hence why Mandela warned Africa that it is "imperative for the African to view [their] problems and those of [their] country through the

perspective of Race” (p. 13), if not, he argued the world will be misled that the “[white] men . . . is helping the African on the road to civilized life . . .” (p. 13), creating a ‘white man savior’ mentality. While from different eras, Nkrumah and Mandela’s ideas still fall under the hegemony dominating Africa and African people as the “lesser race.”

The Nationalist “Pan-African Movement [is used] as an aid to the promotion of national self-determination among Africans under African leadership for the benefits of Africans themselves” (Nantambu, 1998, p. 561). The Pan-African movement was for the benefit of African people looking to end European domination in Africa through a diasporic and collaborative effort. According to Esedebe (1977), critical Pan-African evolution was created with a manifesto that embodies a fraternal solidarity for Indigenous African people in the diaspora and Africa for the sole purpose of breaking free from political, economic, spiritual and cultural oppression (p. 561). Chrisman (1973) depicted the movement for liberation and the progress of African people and nations as:

The Pan-African vision has as its basic premise that we the people of African descent throughout the globe constitute a common cultural and political community by virtue of our origin in Africa and our common racial, social and economic oppression. It further maintains that political, economic, and cultural unity is essential among all African people, to bring about effective action for the liberation and progress of the African peoples and nations. (p. 2)

The vision of critical Pan-Africanism is summarised below as embracing a collaborating arrangement that seeks for a ‘United Africa and African’:

The sense that all Africans have a spiritual affinity with each other and that, having suffered together in the past, they must march together into a new and brighter future.

In its fullest realization this would involve the creation of an African leviathan in the form of a political organization or association of states. . . . It might involve an almost infinite variety of regional groupings and collaborative arrangements, all partial embodiments of the counter-embracing unity which is the dream of the Pan-Africanist. (Emerson, 1970 as cited in Nantabutu, 1998, p. 562)

Similarly, Mbiti, a Kenyan-born Anglican Priest, in his book *African Religions and Philosophy*, provides a thorough overview of the collective and binding nature of African traditional religions. For Mbiti (1990), to be human in Africa “is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community” (p. 2). These communitarian principles provide the driving force for the critical Pan-Africanist movement. This call for unification of both Indigenous African people and diasporic African people was complex; this is because their vision was to shield Africa, setting Her free from political, cultural and economic bondage through spiritual affinity while using both an African lens and a diasporic western lens.

As stated above, a united Africa and African was to protect Africa’s political, cultural and economic borders. It was a way of reclaiming sovereignty through ending colonialism and the later enslavements and the displacements of African peoples around the globe; this call for an all-African critical thought was a weapon for emancipation. But this all-African emancipation has been debated by researchers such as Romero (1976), Wiredu (1980), Appiah (1992), Nantambu (1998), Imbo (1998), and others who argue that the founding Pan-Africanist was by diaspora African people in the Caribbean and United States of America (USA) such as: DuBois, Padmore, Millard, Makonnen, James, Blyden, Crummell and Garvey. Specifically, Appiah (1992) provides clarity by stating that “Alexander Crummell and Edward Blyden began the

intellectual articulation of a Pan-Africanist ideology, but it was W. E. B. DuBois who laid both the intellectual and practical foundations of the Pan-African movement” (p. 28).

It is important to note that Garvey is known among Pan-African groups as an idealist and the head of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA). Garvey advocated for a radical response to racism in the US with “the return of black people to their African homeland” (Warren, 1990, p. 18). An almost impossible solution to imagine as the task of mapping each African diaspora’s lineage after centuries of transnational slave trade alone would be prohibitive. What processes would need to be put in place to make Garvey’s appeal materialize? And could this call still be possible today or could this set Africa up for failure? Asking such questions today allows a better understanding of what is possible to reclaim and revisit within a contemporary critical Pan-Africanism.

Warren (1990) explained that “Garvey’s plan appealed to the masses because it addressed African diaspora’s concrete needs, offering a way out of poverty and showing them how to leave the land of racism, violence . . . [and] deceit” (p. 18). Warren also explained that DuBois opposed Garvey’s call, claiming that, “it was bombastic, wasteful, illogical, and ineffective and almost illegal” (as cited by Warren, 1990, p. 18). DuBois would rather fight for equality in a land that they were brought into to build, and toil rather than “willingly accept the position that . . . United States belong to white people” (as cited by Warren, 1990, p. 18). DuBois and Garvey have different visions for achieving Pan-Africanism, I argue that both their positions could have been materialised, creating a middle ground that fulfills the same goal, especially with current contemporary scholars seeking some form of belonging to a place called home, with an open door for their return. Could Garvey’s dream of diasporan African people returning to Africa be accomplished without any conflict, and if so, how can both African people in Africa and

diaspora African people be mentally and physically prepared for such unification? Especially knowing that the President of Ghana publicly declared 2018 the ‘Year of Return.’

Unwrapping Critical Pan-African

In *The Weapon of Theory*, Cabral (1966), the then leader of Guinea Bissau, presents a radical theory that takes a stand against oppressors by refusing to surrender to oppressors’ and their language. Cabral provides an emancipating tool for countries seeking nationalist liberation and those who have already been liberated and are having “doubts . . . about the solidity, strength, maturity and validity” of their liberation (Cabral, 1966, p. 1). He argues that national liberation is more or less a facade because of the influence of external neo-colonial factors. Therefore, other African countries should not be ignorant “of the historical reality which their movements claim to transform” (Cabral, 1966, p. 3). Cabral (1966) warns of class as a form of imperialism and presents Cuba as an example of a nationalist revolution done well. Cabral explains that “classes within one or several human groups is a fundamental consequence of the progressive development of the productive forces and of the characteristics of the distribution of the wealth produced by the group or usurped from others” (p. 4). Therefore, a revolutionary consciousness leading to the decolonization of the mind and the awareness of such imperialistic social structure is required (see Cabral 1966; Nkrumah, 1962, 1963, 1965; Nyerere, 1964; Thiong’o, 1986). For a country to fulfill the “role in the national liberation struggle, the revolutionary petite bourgeoisie must be capable of committing suicide as a class in order to be reborn as revolutionary workers, completely identified with the deepest aspirations of the people to which they belong (Cabral, 1966, p. 15).

With such insight, one can conclude that Cabral’s (1966) call to “commit class suicide” is a heavy call as committing class suicide in order to become a revolutionary worker will

necessitate entering uncomfortable and possibly dangerous spaces, an idea which resonates with Dei's (2012) discussion about entering uncomfortable spaces. Cabral's call pushes academics to consider their privilege and provide a conscientious lens for reading between the lines of imperialist intentions while also understanding the power of embodying the 'peoples' lens of revolution.

Nyerere (1964) questions the power of becoming free from Eurocentric ways of knowing and knowledge production, stating that "the feeling of unity which now exists could, however, be whittled away if each country gets its independence separately and becomes open to the temptations" (p. 40). However, continental unity can only be acquired through the "decision of the people expressed through their elected representatives" (p. 40). This analysis can be extended to understand the danger of working in silos; Julius Nyerere argues that fighting in silos does not work, as such structures open up the temptations of conforming to larger systemic structures of the hegemony. Nyerere (1964) further highlights that one of the dangerous tools used by the colonizers was the 'Balkanisation of Africa' (divide and conquer) in order to weaken the strength of the continent, that this separation opened the borders for neo-liberalism and different forms of imperialism to penetrate African countries; and is why the unification of the continent is desperately needed for the survival of the continent and the people (see Cabral 1966; Nkrumah 1963; Nyerere 1964). So, the question is, has Nyerere's fear of whittled independency become an unfortunate reality in contemporary Africa?

Thiong'o's (1986, 2012) writings awaken intellectual senses. Thiong'o connects imperialism with the loss of languages to demonstrate how imperialist control over Africa is still embedded in Africa's knowledge production system. Thiong'o therefore argues for the return of the use of the "Mother tongue." Thiong'o (2012) cautions scholars to question their writing,

especially if they are trying to become revolutionary workers writing for and on behalf of the people, and to be cautious of using the oppressor's language to disrupt their methodical colonial bondages as it can become convoluted. This is similar to the 'class suicide' that Cabral (1966) speaks about. Letting go of the oppressors' language and becoming a coder of messages that can only be picked up by Indigenous African people of the continent/country could be a start on the long journey of decolonizing mindsets. It is time for revolutionary academics to stop translating Africa's rich Indigenous ways of messaging into the oppressor's language so it can end up in the oppressor's repository resulting in intellectual bankruptcy for the continent. But is this possible?

Younger generations can be taught earlier to write/code in their mother tongue in order for writings to become accessible to those without academic privilege. In that sense, this can become a new form of unification and process for freedom and disrupting imperial neo-colonial spaces. This validates, Cabral's (1966) earlier call for revolutionary and class suicide. If this revolution were to happen in the way that Cabral envisioned, Nyerere's (1964) fears of a weak independence would be nullified. In Addition, Thiong'o's decolonization would naturally materialize. Therefore, I argue that the way forward to emancipation and the reversal of intellectual bankruptcy is to start seeding the revolutionary mindset early in a child's development in order to make it easier for them to navigate their environments, especially the uncomfortable spaces, this can also help with reclaiming the African way of knowing while grounding critical Pan-African theory in the minds of the future of African.

Thiong'o (2012) asked a very provocative question to those willing to carry out the revolution "[what] is the difference between a politician who says Africa cannot do without imperialism and the writer who says Africa cannot do without [Euro-American] languages?" (p. 124). This question cannot be answered within this dissertation but should be used as a starting

point for all Euro-American trained African people and African scholars including me, to open dialogue that allows for the question of if and how it can be possible to carry on the revolutionary stand.

Nkrumah's (1963) idea of a revolution appears to be radical and transformative. Given that some of his ideas materialised during his political leadership in Ghana, it is important to focus attention on Ghana as an experimental case in Pan-Africanism. In this section, I review Nkrumah's vision of the weapon of critical Pan-Africanism to take Ghana to independence, his frame to unite and decolonize the minds of African people of new subtle forms of colonial mentality; reclaiming African politics, culture, spirituality, bodies, and borders. Approaching Nkrumah's work through a critical disability lens to the entirety of the colonial enterprise and to Sankofa in order for the nation and its people to unite. He rationalises that the colonial experience has violently disabled Ghanaian people structurally (culturally, economically, and socially) which then led to their mental and physical disability, while the way to emancipation is through a methodological eradication of such disablement of the African/Ghanaian people and the creation of material and economical wealth. Critical Nkrumahist theory, in this way, can be read as a Pan-Africanist intervention to the field of critical disability studies.

Critical Nkrumahism

Biney (2008) argues that the unity and the reclamation of African dignity through decolonization of the mind after colonial rule was Nkrumah's major argument and goal. Therefore, to better understand how Nkrumah's structural disablement method can be applied within critical disability studies leading to critical Africa disability studies, this section explores some of his major discourses within disability construction. Gleeson (1998) contextualizes disability as a "term which has many different uses in various places and is therefore impossible

to define objectively” (p. 6). Gleeson continued by stating that “[disability] may refer to a considerable range of human differences – including those defined by age, health, physical, and mental abilities, and even economic status – that have been associated with some form of social restriction material deprivation” (p. 6). In other words, the “social restriction and material deprivation” (p. 6) that African people face due to centuries of European domination, which in turn led to bodily disability. In the case of Nkrumah, disability is conceived of from macroscopic-structural terms with several layers of material constraints. This knowledge can use Nkrumahist thought as a systems thinking framework to analyse the different ways that disablement hovered and hovers over the African continent (macrosystem), a nation (exosystem), community/society (mesosystem) and the individual (microsystem) and can be decolonized as such framework can be used to critique international development and research work in the name of saving Africa and Africans.

Nkrumah’s zeal to lead Ghana out of years of colonial rule was realized through his association with the Founding Fathers of Pan-Africanism and his love for Ghana and Africa. Research shows that Nkrumah was heavily influenced by Garvey’s radical stand for the mass political movement of peasants, his dream to unite Africa, and his work on building solidarity (see Reed, 1975; Romero, 1976). Both Padmore and Mekonnen encouraged and aided Nkrumah to accept the “invitation to return to Ghana and begin the action for independence” (as cited by Romero, 1976, p. 327).

As a way to understand Pan-Africanist movements, the dreams of Nkrumah and his new administration, Nantambu (1998) highlighted the various ways Pan-Africanists specialized within the association that is comprised of, “intellectual, geopolitical, scientific, and cultural” Pan-Africanists (p. 570). He identified DuBois, Williams and Casley-Hayford as the intellectual

Pan-Africanists; “their research advance the analytical course to achieve liberation” (p. 570). The geopolitical Pan-Africanist nationalists such as Nkrumah, Garvey and Biko relate linkages to global liberation freedom fighters. The scientific Pan-Africanist nationalists are those whose works on revolution is linked to science, including Fanon and Toure. The cultural Pan-Africanist nationalists on the other hand are known to focus on challenging the oppressive Eurocentric status quo who seek to liberate the “African Personality,” and continue to seek for the relocation of African people and their knowledge back to Africa, such as Cabral, Cesaire, and Thiong’o (Nantambu, 1998). Overall, I argue that their Pan-African association roles can also be interchangeable as Nkrumah can also be seen as a cultural Pan-Africanist particularly because of his fight to liberate and reclaim the African Personality.

With the above account, especially on the different ways each Pan-Africanist has contributed to the Pan-African movement, one can argue that Nkrumah dreamt and fought to geopolitically and culturally revolutionize Ghana and nationalize his push for the unification of Africa through the resurgence of the African personality ideology. Knowing the above is relevant in order to better situate the strengths that each Pan-Africanist brought to the table for liberation. In his book, *Africa Must Unite*, Nkrumah (1963) shared his vision to not only unite Ghana through decolonizing their minds, but also to create a self-sustaining sovereign Africa “to live free from the shadows of fears which cramp their dignity when they exist in servitude, in poverty, in degradation and contempt” (n.p). Nkrumah believed that to be free, people/African people must live free with dignity, without poverty and humiliation. Simply put, Nkrumah’s revolutionary fight sought for the ‘Humanness’ of the Ghanaian and African people “[the] ideology of Nkrumahism, reflected in the writings, speeches and policies of Nkrumah, [it]

provides a coherent body of ideas. . . . It addresses the concerns of African centeredness, empowerment, economic independency, cultural liberation and vitality (pg.149).

His drive leading to Ghana's independence became a bedrock for freeing other neighbouring African countries from colonial rule and this, Nkrumah (1963) claimed, was the "voices of Africa" and its rebirth (p. x). As a geopolitical and a cultural revolutionist, Nkrumah made an early declaration that "not all the ramparts of colonialism have yet fallen" (p. x). But at this point, his Pan-African dreams were being actualized in Ghana once it gained independence. With his goal of "Africa must Unite" he was very vigilant of western imperialists resurging and recolonizing the continent while it was still vulnerable, in the immediate post-independence era. He referred to this as "neo-colonialism," a more dangerous form of imperialist empire.

This section provides in-depth research on the works of Nkrumah to better contextualize his relationship to the colonials during the colonial era allowing one to link his awareness of what is to come with positioning his life for the unification of 'one-Africa.' Nevertheless, Nkrumah in his fight for emancipating Africa from the bondage of economic, social, education and cultural imperialism, provided an extensive account of his view on the objectives of the most powerful force, imperialism. In his book *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1964) he argues that neo-colonialism in contemporary Africa is imperialism and the final and most dangerous stage of requiring territorial militarization of an independent state in theory but unfortunately not reality; in principle, neo-colonialism, he states "is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty" (p. ix).

Such controlled trappings leave one to question the Human Rights Watch's (2012) report that concluded that Ghana is the worst place to be disabled in the world. How can such a claim

be placed on a supposedly independent nation if in reality they have to oblige their masters as they are not in control of their economic and monetary means? Such trappings obviously contribute to the structural disablement of the country, hence the need for a continental framework. Nkrumah, (1963) illustrates that:

[Imperialism] controls our economics. It operates on a world-wide scale in combinations of many different kinds: economic, political, cultural, educational, military; and through intelligence and information services. In the context of the new independence mounting in Africa, it has begun, and will continue, to assume new forms and subtler disguises. It is already making use, and will continue to make use, of the different cultural and economic associations which colonialism has forced between erstwhile European masters and African subjects. It is creating client states, which it manipulates from the distance. It will distort and play upon, as it is already doing, the latent fears of burgeoning nationalism and independence. It will, as it is already doing, fan fires of sectional interest, of personal greed and ambition among leaders and contesting aspirants to power. . . . (Nkrumah, 1963, p. xvi)

Nkrumah (1963) continued warning that:

These and many others will be the devious ways of the neo-colonialism by which the imperialists hope to keep their stranglehold on Africa's resources for their own continued enrichment. To ensure their continued hegemony over this continent, they will use any and every device to halt and disrupt the growing will among the vast masses of Africa's populations for unity. Just as our strength lies in a unified policy and action for progress and development, so the strength of the imperialists lies in our disunity. We in Africa

only can meet them effectively by presenting a unified front and a continental purpose.

(Nkrumah, 1963, p. xvi)

Nkrumah's analysis of imperialism brings into context how methodical the imperialist forms of oppression are and how such a plan will be the future of Africa if care is not taken and the only remedy to be liberated from such a 'crippling' system is to build a united Africa. One can also see how this vision is echoed by Thiong'o's (1986) cultural imperialist warning, Mandela's (1978) call for the unification of Africa, and Cabral's (1966) and Nyerere's (1964) appeals to decolonize the several systems imposed through imperialism.

The obvious mechanisms of the last stage of imperialism is the creation of widening gaps between the rich and poor, abled and disabled, and the balkanization of African countries in order to disrupt a united front that will tip the scale through the use of military and financial 'aids' with a dominant interest that continues to control political, economic and social policies (Nkrumah, 1964). Nkrumah's (1963) claim that different structural controls will be used to continue colonial control over Africa's economy appears to be materialising through various development initiatives and programs, a process that he claims has been used as a form of domination for centuries:

For centuries, Europeans dominated the African continent. The white man arrogated to himself the right to rule and to be obeyed by the non-white; his mission, he claimed was to 'civilize' Africa. Under this cloak, the Europeans robbed the continent of vast riches and inflicted unimaginable suffering on the African people. (Nkrumah, 1961, Preface)

For instance, the African Millennium Development Grants created to tackle development challenges, or the 'crippling' impacts of the International Monetary Fund, or the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are in place to "end poverty, protect the planet and

ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity” (Sustainable Development Knowledge, 2016, n.p.). In a neo-colonist state, programs of ‘aid’ that allow for the manifestation of their individual interest create a “revolving credit, paid by the neo-colonial master, passing through the neo-colonial States and returning to the neo-colonial master in the form of increased profits” (Nkrumah, 1965, p. xv). Such form of entrapment also infiltrates the religion, education and cultural fabric of the colonies through the use of old colonial tactics that “. . . expatriate teachers and cultural ambassadors [to] influence the minds of the young against their own country and people (Nkrumah, 1965, p. 34).

Escobar (1999) in the *Invention of Development* agrees with Nkrumah on the disabling development program created in the name of eradicating African poverty, which was and is created through several structural adjustments and inventions of several aiding bodies/projects:

Development was—and continues to be for the most part—a top-down, ethnocentric, and technocratic approach that treats people and cultures as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of progress. . . . It comes as no surprise that development became a force so destructive to the third world cultures, ironically in the name of people’s interests. (Escobar, 1999, p. 382)

Vigilance is therefore required as the ‘white hegemonic race’ is not in the business of returning wealth to where it was extracted, which has affected the dignity, peace and prosperity that development organizations claim to have set as universal goals (Nkrumah, 1961). This is because it objectifies African peoples for the benefit of the hegemonic countries and leaves the disabled African in a state that is othered and (un)mattered.

Nkrumah (1963) was clear that the colonizer’s new form of penetration will be subtler and will use “. . . every devise to halt and disrupt the growing will among the vast masses of

Africa's populations for unity" (p. xvi). His warning to African people not to fall for hegemonic imperialist plots as Africa's ". . . strength lies in a unified policy and action for [their own] progress and development" by their own unified African people, and will therefore bring peace for all people to enjoy (Nkrumah, 1963, p. xvi). He warned that their imperialist plot can only materialize and take over Africa through 'disunity' of the continent. Such an intense geopolitical approach to Pan-Africanism could have painted a different Africa today if he was given the opportunity to actualize his dream. Nkrumah (1963) states:

We have to be constantly on the alert, for we are steadfastly resolved that our freedom shall never be betrayed. And this freedom of ours to build our economics, stands open to danger just as long as a single country on this continent remains fettered by colonial rule and just as long as there exist on African soil puppet government manipulated from afar. Our freedom stands open to danger just as long as the independent states of Africa remain apart. (p. xvi-i)

Unfortunately, Africa is now home to puppet governments being manipulated from afar by invisible neo-colonist or camouflaged hands that have tied the continent with the violent effect of 'barbwires,' which has left "Mother Africa" bleeding for their own self-interest. A camouflage that has created an illusion using the word 'developing' rather than 'underdeveloped' "that all the countries of Africa . . . are escaping from a state of economic backwardness relative to the industrial nations of the world, and that they are emancipating themselves from the relationship of exploitation" (Rodney, 1981, p. 14). It is obvious that such "blood draining" neo-colonial mechanisms and camouflage of economic empowerment of African and Africa's resources are still very much visible as the call for the unification of Africa for African people without any influence or domination of the outside world has not yet materialized leaving several

in a state of disarray and improvised. One can see such political and violent instability in many of Africa's natural resource producing nations such as: Libya a country that gained independency in 1947 but is currently in shambles; and Sudan, a nation that gained independency in 1956 but still had to face the genocide in Darfur DRC and is still being ruled by a 'puppet government' which "have not helped to foster confidence in the United Nations [and/or any other instruments] in the face of Great Power interest" (Nkrumah, 1961, p. x).

These are the moments Nkrumah (1961) feared so much; this fight for unity, economic control for and by African people, the policing of Africa's borders and policies requiring one to Sankofa in order to "foment the revolt of the majority of the world's inhabitants against their oppressors" (p. x). And until the latter strategy can be materialized, it will only "destroy us one by one," turning bodies and lands into ashes (Nkrumah, 1961, p. xvii). Nkrumah foresaw the poisonous neo-colonial plot that awaits a 'disunited Africa' through the use of the African bodies and land which has enlarged the capitalist empires of both European and North American countries. As the worst form of imperialism, one needs to be aware that, for "those who practice it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it [such as the different cases of disablement within the continent], it means exploitation without redress" (Nkrumah 1964, p. xi). An exploitative nature that leads to several forms of disabilities through neo-colonial social, political and economic policies that allow illegalities such as mining, and others which possess an inevitable danger to the health of those within the rural ridings leaving them in close proximity to their death. Leaving those with disabilities at the mercy of a so-called cultural practice while also creating disablement and bodily harm to those who are at their mercy due to economic reasons.

Understanding Nkrumah's Ideological Framework

In Nkrumah's (1964) *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization and Development* he tables a philosophical ideology leading towards the decolonization of Africa as a self-governing journey to freedom. In the introduction Nkrumah provides a clear statement arguing that, "the lines of the partition of Africa naturally affected the education of the colonized African" (Nkrumah, 1964, p.1). His statement provides the foundation for the need for de-colonization as he claims that the partition/balkanization of Africa and the African sent some of Her citizens to Britain and the United States while others from French speaking countries to France in order to be educated which created an even larger gap between the educated class confined in the colonial system and the educated outside of the colony. He stated that this education transition outside the colonial system provided him a space for evaluating his own social circumstances leading to the analysis of fact-finding and events and its "relations between philosophy and society as any other" (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 2). In this process of fact-finding and realizations of social circumstances, he states that philosophy and the understanding of the human experiences:

. . . calls for an analysis of facts and events, and an attempt to see how they fit into human life, and so how they make up human experience. In this way, philosophy, like history, can come to enrich, indeed to define, the experience of man. (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 2)

An experience he was introduced to during his education journey at the University of Lincoln and Pennsylvania where the awakening of his intellectual conscience began. Knowing this part of Nkrumah is extremely important to the de-colonization stage as it provides space to understand the horizon of his intellectual journey.

At this stage of his intellectual prospect, he was introduced to philosophical systems of the European and American past such as Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer,

Nietzsche, Marx and he could not see his kind from the colony which he claimed agitated him due to several conflicting attitudes (Nkrumah, 1964). Such conflicting attitudes through the acquiring of these western philosophical systems he claims can be troubling as it is then spread to the society particularly if the student from the colony decides to return to Africa to pursue politics. Being privy to such western thought that is not representative of a colonial student is problematic as:

The colonial student can be so seduced by these attempts to give a philosophical account of the universe, that he surrenders his whole personality to them. When he does this, he loses sight of the fundamental social fact that he is a colonial subject. In the way he omits to draw from his education and from the concern displayed by the great philosophers for human problems, anything which he might relate to the very real problem of colonial domination, which as it happens, conditions the immediate life of every colonized African. (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 3)

Omitting facts and events leading to the human problems, domination and the conditions of every colonized African in Nkrumah's analysis defeats the purpose of intellectual awakening in the first place. Essentially stating that not using the masters tools to demolish the masters house creates single minded wandering colonial students who, during the intellectual awakening, lose their "vital power which they had at their first statement, their dynamism . . ." and hostility towards the colonial situations; a ". . . defective approach . . . [and an] enlightened servants of the colonial administration" (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 3). Such processes have created an idea of intellectual superiority within colonial students and an acceptance of universal intellectualism, a gain that has also created a loss for their Africanness, their tradition and the continent as a whole (Nkrumah, 1964).

These losses of African tradition created a universalism but do not signify the realities and the struggles of the people of Africa, rather they create a complex delicacy of intellectual reality and conflicts allowing them the contextual basis to form “not a concrete environmental view of social political problems, but an abstract, ‘liberal’ outlook, [which] began to fulfil the hopes and expectations of their guides and guardians” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 4). A situation that intellectually bankrupted and contributed to the erasure of the African traditional ways of knowing and being, which now requires a radical intellectual and practical revolution that needs their thought to assist in dismantling colonial and neo-colonial systems. Such radical intellectual and practical revolution he argues can only be introduced as a philosophical ideology; but a philosophical ideology that centers the African way of knowing and being.

Nkrumah (1954) provided some context of the evolution and enlightenment positioning the experiences of the western world, which was grounded in theology, particularly in Christianity and the greatness of God, soul, and destiny leading to human existence through morality. This Nkrumah mentioned created a philosophical bias that created and allowed for the erasure of the African traditional spirituality:

. . . it was sincerely believed that man’s cultivation of the gods at the same time as his crops was one of his major purposes on earth. Religion and worship were preoccupations of day-to-day life, they were the ways in which man conducted himself in his privacy, before others and in the presence of his gods. (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 29)

This form of preoccupied life also led to economic concerns, greed and the confinements of those whose daily lives deviated from the Christian norm. Such deviation which lead to the confinement of those who deviated from religion and economic empowerment was clearly laid out in Foucault’s (1988) *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* as

needing some form of saving from god and the church intersecting on their behalf. This also concurs with Gorman's (2016) argument on the invisible hand that has disembodied the human and created a classified (un)ruly, (un)worthy and/or (un)mattered body; a mystical form of bodily capacities placed within a neo-liberal and neo-colonial system.

Nkrumah argued that a person's philosophy is affected by their social milieu and their social milieu is also affected by philosophical ideology. The biases that are entrenched within philosophical ideologies from the west have created a centre of learned ideologies driving programs and principles in the neo-colonies. Knowing this, he states that in a society "where there are competing ideologies, it is still usual for one ideology to be dominant" (p. 57); in the case of Africa, several competing ideologies dominate the various societies and their moralities due to different colonial masters, leaving the path to a united front much more arduous. This is problematic because the dominant ideology decides the forms, channels, and ways in which society will be shaped and directed. Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism therefore becomes the dominant ruling ideology that continues to shape the post-colonies; it cannot coexist peacefully with other ideologies and so requires a nationalist force and an "alliance of progressive forces [to] hasten its end and destroy its conditions of existence" (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 57).

The ingrained and competing transferred ideologies within the continent only have one motive which is to profit from the bodies, "capitalist deadly sins" (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 76) while promoting happiness and 'classlessness' with God. In doing so it takes away the human from the process of exploiting bodies while leaving those who are unable to participate in such form of exploitation further marginalized. This separation from humanness and materialist path to happiness simultaneously creates the haves and the have-nots while alienating all. Nkrumah

(1964) emphasized that the competing ideologies that are present in Africa and require social cohesion are:

- 1) African society has one segment which comprises . . . traditional way of life
- 2) It has a second segment which is filled by the presence of the Islamic tradition in Africa
- 3) It has a final segment which represents the infiltration of the Christian tradition and culture of Western European into Africa, using colonialism and neo-colonialism as its primary vehicle. (p. 68)

Knowing these competing ideologies allows for a space where a new ideology which centers and genuinely caters for the “need of All African” (Nkrumah 1964, p. 68). But not without a traditional African core that allows for inward and outward dignity and values the African Personhood, this is Nkrumah’s call to Sankofa African tradition in order to move forward with African-centric philosophical ideologies.

The question then becomes, how can the three competing social ideologies be fused in a way that does not erase the humanistic communal tradition that grounds Africanness within African society rather than in the Christian notion of being born into sin? Here Nkrumah (1964) calls for an ideology that accommodates “experiences of the traditional African society” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 79). If one fails to accommodate, Africa will have a malignant society without any treatable cause because of failure to center their realities. Nkrumah went beyond philosophical speculation stating that:

[The] first step is a body of connected thought which will determine the general nature of [Africa’s] action in unifying the society which [Africans] have inherited, this unification to take account, at all times, of the elevated ideals underlining the traditional African society. Social revolution must therefore have, standing firmly behind it, an intellectual

revolution, a revolution in which our thinking and philosophy are directed towards the redemption of our society. Our philosophy must find its weapons in the environment and living conditions of the African people. It is from those conditions that the intellectual content of [Africa's] philosophy must be created. The emancipation of African continent is the emancipation of man. This requires two aims: first, the restitution of the egalitarianism of human society, and second, the logistic mobilization of all our resources towards the attainment of that restitution. The philosophy that must stand behind this social revolution is . . . philosophical consciencism; consciencism is a map in intellectual terms of the disposition of forces which will enable African society to digest the western and Islamic and the Euro-Christian elements in Africa, and develop them in such a way that they fit into the African Personality. The African Personality is itself defined by the cluster of humanist principles which underlie the traditional African society. (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 78-9)

An ideology he defined and explained as being based on materialism¹³, an ideology that does not signify difference but rather accepts the multifaceted nature of Africanness, one that requires the mobilization of resources for its people and is based on restoration of dignity to all. This “guiding ethical principle of philosophical consciencism is to treat all [persons] as an end in himself and not merely as a means” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 94). This he states, is the fundamental foundation of humanistic conceptions of humans (Nkrumah, 1964).

Philosophical consciencism thrives on the tenet of individual development in ways that creates communal ethics and practices within society which then develops a social-political

¹³ Which Nkrumah defines as that “philosophical standpoint which, taking its start from the present content of the African conscience, [which] indicates the way in which progress is forged out of the conflict in that conscience” (p. 79) with its basis in materialism.

practice that “seeks to co-ordinate social forces in such a way as to mobilize them logistically for the maximum development of society” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 98) along an equitable framework. One way that can create and logically maximize individual development through and within collective society is through positive action, which will “represent the sum of those forces seeking social justice in terms of the destruction of oligarchic exploitation and oppression” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 99). Seeking action not in abstraction but rather through the centering of the social realities on the ground while creating necessary “positive action to be backed by a mass party, and qualitatively to improve this mass so that by education and an increase in its degree of consciousness, its aptitude for positive action becomes heightened” (Nkrumah, 1994, p. 100). In effect, any proposed action must be backed by those who they are being proposed for. Such education requires a political stage for political action to create self-awareness, self-image and inclusion into all aspects of nation building and nation belongingness. The creation of such space also forms a radical common purpose backed by millions of radical informed revolutionaries, which Nkrumah argues is a liberated territory stemming from a socialist ideology.

When such an ideology is entrenched in society with an equitable and social justice force, it should create a centering of the people which one can arguably term the ontological and epistemological way of knowing the people. The creation of such ideological social evolution therefore seeks to allow for creativity within the social-political and cultural arena while embracing materialism that is equitable without erasing one’s dignity and Africanness. A fluid creativity that Nkrumah calls for before any form of reformation can be possible.

Towards Nkrumahist decolonization.

From the point of view of political tactics and History, the liberation of the colonies poses a theoretical problem of crucial importance at the current time: When can it be said that

the situation is ripe for a national liberation movement? What should be the first line of action? Because decolonization comes in many shapes, reason wavers and abstains from declaring what is a true decolonization and what is not. We shall see that for the politically committed, urgent decisions are needed on means and tactics, i.e., direction and organization. Anything else is but blind voluntarism with the terribly reactionary risks this implies. (Fanon, 2004, p. 21)

Fanon (2004) asks, “when can it be said that the situation is ripe for a national liberation movement? What should be the first line of action?” (p. 21). These questions can be answered through consciencism, which allows for a humanistic conception as the fundamental foundation that Nkrumah (1964) speaks of. Knowing that disablement creates and allows violence to happen to oppressed people and their land, it is necessary to be aware of the type of decolonization being called for. Decolonization, as understood by Fanon, appears in diverse shapes and forms and therefore an abstinence of declaring total decolonization is the key to the project of decolonization for liberation.

Nkrumah (1963) provided direction on how to attain freedom as a de-colonizing framework for concrete action, and as Tuck and Yang (2000) bluntly made us aware that decolonization is not a metaphor. Nkrumah’s first step in decolonization and African emancipation from internalized slavery requires every Indigenous person to conceive and embody a mental attachment to the struggle, to decolonize their minds from colonial ideologies as they have disconnected Africans from African ways of being. Ways of being that have disconnected and focused more on the body while leaving the Sunsum (spirit) lingering and displaced. He explained that “[a] people subjected to foreign [structural] domination however,

does not find it easy to translate [their] wish into action,” therefore, creating an eternity of material disablement (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 50).

First the revolutionist will need to “center their mind” back to their pre-colonial traditional identity in order to reclaim an indigenous identity that allows for the decolonizing of the mind to become a reality. In this case, the revolutionary needs to be ready to recoil from intellectual ‘strait-jacketing’ in order to accommodate while centering the traditional African society (Nkrumah, 1964). How is this possible after so many years of domination and several structural disablements caused by several colonial European bondages? Setting the ‘self’ free from western acedia and fostering traditional faith while encouraging them “to take part in the freedom struggle” (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 50).

Nkrumah’s words had spiritual undertones, however, his spiritual undertone aligns with Mbiti’s (1990) survey and analysis of African Spirituality, which claims that every African is spiritual and cannot exist without their community. It also validates Rattray’s (1927) colonial archival account of African religion, which states:

For Ashanti to divorce religion from any of these would be well nigh impossible and it is hardly an exaggeration to say that any such estrangement would lead to an illegality.

Religion, indeed in this sense, runs like a silver, thread, even though their arts and crafts, and thus tends to become the real inspiration of the craftsman. (p. v)

Mbiti and Rattray’s accounts provide a vivid understanding of how African spirituality cannot be separated from African culture and Her people. Rattray also posited that “primitive law and primitive religion are interwoven inseparably as weft is laid upon warp, and that we shall eventually understand Ashanti Law and Constitution only because, and when, we have obtained a clear exposition of Ashanti religious beliefs” (p. vii). This is congruent with Grischow et al.

(2018) who state that the beliefs behind mental health stigma requires an understanding stemming from the roots. The 'root' in this case refers to 'Sankofa,' which is of crucial importance to a critical interrogation of disability stigma that results in an embodied silence in Ghana and the continent.

To further accomplish a thorough critical African decolonizing of the mind towards emancipation, Nkrumah (1963) proposes that a 'Resolute Leadership' is the next stage required to fully abolish neo-colonial rule. A leader that will,

Go to the people
Live among them
Learn from them, Love them
Serve them
Plan with them,
Start with what they know,
Build on what they have." (p. 55)

A resolute leader is someone who will defend their security, respect the dignity of their people in order to understand their struggles leading to the attainment of their main goals. This third stage of Nkrumah's decolonizing is similar to Cabral's (1966) revolutionary call for committing suicide to remove any lingering colonial particles from their past positions of privilege which stand in the way of becoming the people's revolutionary servant. Such a revolutionary call on decolonization will require a larger structural form of demolition that goes beyond the boundaries of Ghana. Nkrumah believed that "foreign-imposed disruptive influences are to be extirpated and 'natural' social harmony restored" (as cited in Reed Jr., 1975, p. 95). He argued that:

The basis of colonial territorial dependence is economic, but the basis of the solution of the problem is political. Hence political independence is an indispensable step towards

securing economic emancipation. This point of view irrevocably calls for an alliance of all colonial territories and dependencies. (as cited in Biney, 2011, p. 24)

Acquiring structural territorial independence can be accomplished using a multi-scalar framework (see figure 4) that is sensitive to the complex interconnectedness of the global, continental, country, and local realities and how they have been historically underdeveloped by a violent macro-level structure. Using a multi-scalar framework to analyse structural violence problematizes “global forces and their local effects” which can then be used to identify issues of nation-state (Williamson, 2015, p. 17).

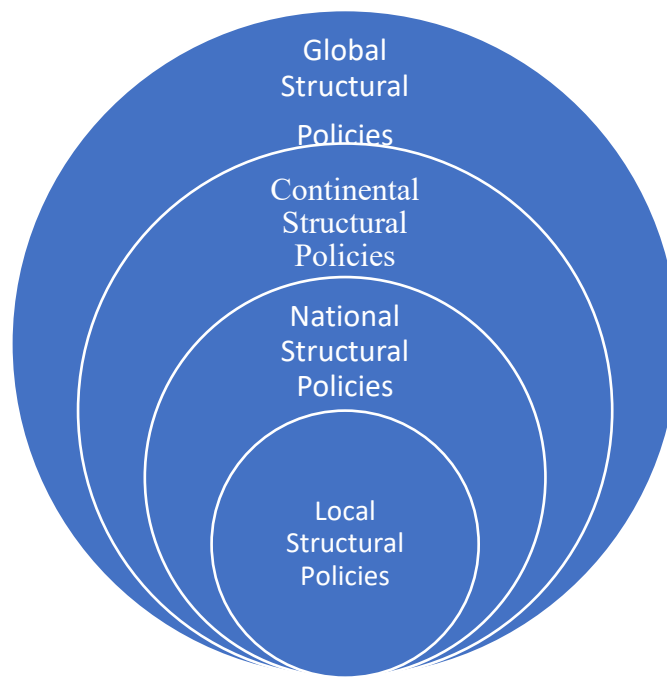


Figure 7. Multi-scalar Analytical Framework

Using a multi-scalar framework requires an understanding of the global policies that create disablement at the continental, national and local levels; nation state disablement and its effect

on the locals (which can lead to the unsettling of the minds of the local Indigenous), before it is possible to tackle political independence and nation building; and then build an alliance of continental territories for economic, political, cultural and spiritual emancipation. Emancipation through decolonizing disabling structures can deconstruct disability of the body and land in Africa/Ghana.

Post Script Disclaimer

To further the critical analysis of Pan-Africanism and Critical Nkrumahist thoughts, it is clearly important to insert that the lack of women's voices within such an historical emancipated journey can be understood as the result of a disabling structure that left women behind. It can be argued that such erasure of women Pan-Africanists is due to the unfortunate traces of western knowledge that places men over women, who are equally nationalist fighters. In *Invention of Women*, Oyewunmi (1997) clearly outlined the difference between the visualization of western theories and African subject as a structural amnesia. One can conclude that such structural erasure of women Pan-Africanists, is a reaction to their western education and the influx of western knowledge within African education systems. As Oyewunmi (1997) states, "[reaction], in essence has been at once the driving force . . . [as it] does not matter whether any particular scholar is reacting for or against the West; the point is that the West is at the centre of African knowledge-production" (p. 18). And for this, I argue that contemporary Pan-Africanism has a long road ahead to fully decolonize their minds from traces of western knowledge and the centering of western education in order not to replicate that theory/thought that leaves and erases years of women's ontology in nation building.

The next section of Nkrumah's (1963) analysis of disablement outlines the concept of disablement using European accounts from the pre-colonial through to the post-colonial

Nkrumah Era. It outlines how pre-colonial and colonial systems became a disablement for Africa and African peoples leaving them without a way to return. However, with Sankofa, door of return can be created to allow for the rebuilding of the African continent for ALL African people.

Grounding Nkrumah's Theory in Disablement

A humanistic ideology ingrained in Sankofa that allows for a revisiting of some pioneering ways of Africanness in order to design Africa's future through Nkrumah's thought, in relation to disability and the concept of disablement is needed. Sankofa is an Akan concept that has not entered into the discourse of critical disability studies; and it's quite obvious that reclaiming in order to move forward was definitely a priority for Nkrumah's vision. 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 (see Sherwood, 1996).

As already shown, Nkrumah's ways of thinking through disability and the global policies creating disablement at the nation-state and local levels was visible when he identified the magnitude of the structural effects of colonial administrations on the mental and physical health of African peoples. For example, poor economic conditions and limited access to health care created a debilitating effect, including: sterility in women, diseases such as "tuberculosis, yaws, and kwashiorkor [which took] a shocking toll of life and energy, and are immediately ascribable to poor nutrition . . . [leaving] . . . infant mortality rates appallingly high, and many surviving children . . ." debilitated (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 35) and these are due to the fact that the ". . . administrative policy did nothing to eliminate the economic conditions which assisted the incidence of death-dealing and energy-depriving diseases and maladies" (p. 35). It is visible that

these disablements were a result of the colonial administration's deliberate withholding of health care for 4,000,000 Ghanaian bodies (Nkrumah, 1963).

Below are some quotes (in chronological and thematic order) from pre-colonial European penetration using trading, an institutional apparatus of disablement and process that led to the current disabling framework and to the disablement of the Ghanaian peoples including the underdeveloped economy, cultural erasure, and ongoing exploitation of the Indigenous people. It is laid out to show how the Europeans positioned themselves in relation to the Indigenous; the methodical study directed by colonial administration of both the indigenous and their land and their ways of Being from how they conducted themselves or were conducted by the Europeans through their economics, education, child development, and labour creating feelings of inferiority and social-cultural-economic-political stability for the European; a disablement which led to colonization.

The mind of the penetrator.

When God our Saviour, beloved Reader, created Man to possess the Earth, he called each into his own state and gave him the intelligence to direct it, exercise himself with it and be concerned with it during his lifetime. Thus some [are called] to a Spiritual state, others to a Wordly one; a third person may be destined to be a workman, the fourth a great, ingenious Mind, able to reveal great arts, etc. (de Marees, 1602, p. 3)

European Penetrators believed highly in their superiority within the eyes of God the Savoir; that they were created to possess the Earth with their God given intelligence. A God given talent that was not available to the Blacks.

Administration

“ . . . In particular, it will be necessary for them to observe, and report upon, the nature of the country; its soil and products; the names, and distances, and the latitude and longitude of the principal places; and its most remarkable natural objects: the appearance, distinguishing characters, and manners of the natives; their religion, laws. Customs, and forms of government, as far as they can be ascertained; and by whom each place is governed. . . . They should collect the most accurate information possible of the extent, population, and resources of the Ashantee dominions, and should report fully their opinion of the inhabitants, and of the progress they may have made in the arts of civilized life. They should be directed also, to procure and bring away (with the consent of the chiefs) any specimens of vegetable and mineral productions they may be able: and to ascertain where and how the natives collect the gold, and the extent to which the trade in that article, and in ivory, might be carried on. . . . Besides the escort of which we have spoken, we think it necessary, or at least extremely important, that the Embassy should be accompanied by natives of character and consequence, conversant with the Ashantee language, in whom you have perfect confidence, selected, one from each of the towns of Cape Coast, Accra, and Apollonia, to whom you may make reasonable allowances for their time and trouble. . . . (Bowdich, 1819, p. 5-8)

This quote illustrates Nkrumah's (1961) statement that when 'white men' started to arrogate themselves for their own gain it was through a methodical plan that involved the documentation of the African 'inhabitant,' their culture, populations, and resources, and whether the white man can navigate safely while civilizing and raping their materials. A structural disablement that started long before the colonial era.

Economics.

What is most commendable amongst the Negros, is that we find no poor amongst them who beg; for though they are never so wretchedly poor they never beg: the Reason of which is, that when a Negroe finds he cannot subsist, he binds himself for a certain Sum of Money, or his Friends do it for him; and the Master to whom he hath obliged himself keeps him in all Necessaries setting him a sort of task, which is not in the least flavish [*sic*] being chiefly to defend his Master on occasion, and in sowing time to work as much as he himself pleases. So that, as I have before told you, here are no Beggars obliged to be so by Poverty . . . (Bosman, 1705, p. 141)

While Bosman's account conveys the communal bond that allows for no one to go without, he accounts the relationships between a hierarchy of Master and subordinate, the disabled and abled which might have created an entry point for a European hierarchy and relationship to labour and resources.

Not having beggars among them as Bosman (1705) stated shows that economically, the natives had their own legitimate indigenous commerce; this is also evident in Bowdich's (1819) account:

The power and resources of your own country should be quoted to illustrate this truth; and you will impress that it is the experience of it, which has imposed the benevolent anxiety of the British Government, to improve the condition of the people of Africa, through legitimate medium of commerce... (Bowdich, 1819, p. 142)

The people of Adda think it derogatory to cultivate land, and live by fishing, and making salt, which they sell to the people of the interior. (Bowdich, 1819, p. 173)

This shows that some of the Indigenes lived and sold fish but considered the land a sacred place for them, a belief that was regarded as superstitious by the Europeans. In the context of decolonizing, it shows that legitimizing commerce requires a connection to the land; in a closeness and sacred way of living in order to maintain their holy grounds.

Education.

Social erasure through European education was available to the Ashantee elite, “. . . we conceive, be a most important advantage, if the King of Ashantee, and some of his chiefs, could be prevailed upon to send one or more of their children to the Cape, to be educated” (Bowdich, 1819, p. 6). Education was also used during the pre-colonial era to implement a foundation of European superiority: “. . .the establishment of a school at Cape Coast was solely in anticipation of the King’s committing some of his children to your care for education, as the foundation of the pre-eminence of Europeans” (Bowdich, 1819, p. 84). This use of education for the purpose of civilizing the indigenous for European purposes was also validated by Cruickshank’s (1853) account: “school established for the education of native children, and an incipient attempt made to improve the moral, social, and political condition of the people” (p. 129). The European education system, implemented pre-colonial era, became the foundation for erasing the Africanness in the Indigenous. This system is still prevalent in Ghana/Africa today as the education systems from kindergarten to university are still imported, and value migration outside of Africa in order to support neo-colonial globalization. And I argue that such ‘stilled’ Eurocentric education system was due to the fact that Nkrumah was not provided the space and time to fully actualize his vision of finding the philosophical weapon in the environment and lived experiences of his people.

Culture.

Africans were forced to trade in European languages, leading to the “process of deliberate bastardisation” (Biko, 2002, p. 45): A process that Biko states allows a dominant culture to devour the native culture while leaving “behind a bastardised culture that can only thrive at the rate and pace allowed by the dominant culture” (Biko, 2002, p. 46), creating a space of gain for their exploited commerce. Fanon (2008) in this case reiterates this sentiment stating that, “to speak is to exist for other,” in this case, to exist in several languages in order to accommodate the foreigner while “assuming a [disabling] culture and bearing the weight” (p. 1) for the beginning of civilization. Below are some accounts of how such processes of bastardization and assimilation devour the Indigenous cultural language:

On the mainland, however, live many Black people who trade with all nations. And because they trade and communicate with many foreign nations, they are able to speak many languages, such as Spanish, English, French and Dutch. (de Marees, 1602, p. 10)

[The] people of the Gold Coast are also willing to speak a little Portuguese, because the Portuguese traded there a lot in the past. (de Marees, 1602, p. 15)

This erasure of indigenous languages still dominates contemporary Ghana. The disablement that linguistic hierarchies create is violent as it assimilates the youth for the white man’s plan (Biko, 2002; Diop, 1991; Fanon, 2008). It disables, as older generations are unable to communicate with younger generations leading to the erasure of Indigenous languages, culture, and knowledge transfer. This is problematic as it also starts to signify difference rather than accepting the multifaceted complexities within the diverse cultures, language and ways of Being; a complication that makes human rights and justice seeking farfetched.

de Marees (1602) describes the natives as “cruel and evil but better in some places” (p. 15). He continued with a more disabling description of the natives stating:

From their early years they are very prone to Whoredom, in chastity etc.; for, having gone around for a time with their private parts uncovered . . . felt little modesty, once they begin to cover themselves, they develop a sense of shame; and so it comes about that they are seized by the lusts of the flesh, to which they are very prone from an early age. Until the Dutch and also the Portuguese came to this Country. [They] did not allow their women to be so haughty or to dress so splendidly. But they have learnt much of this from us; and, seeing that we went rather to a pretty Girl than to an ugly or unkept one, they made it a point to be loved by the Dutch too; for they consider themselves lucky if they have had intercourse with a Dutchman. . . . But in the olden days they used to walk around entirely naked till they had quite grown up . . . (de Marees, 1602, p. 37)

The idea that the Indigenous began to seek the sexual validation of the European creates a disablement by devaluing the indigenous body, creating a hierarchy and an inferiority complex which has also been connected to economics (Fanon, 2008). African dress and sexuality deviating from the white man becomes problematized and institutionally pathologized (Fanon, 2004) as de Marees (1602) states that the Indigenous are ‘prone’ to lust of the flesh from an early age.

Below, de Marees (1602) speaks of indigenous behaviours that deviate from European ways of being. Linking a lack of knowledge of the Christian God with their behaviour as thieves and greedy ‘whore-monger’ primitives living in sin. While those who interact with foreigners are seen as much more civilized than those who do not; praising the interaction that leads to the erasure of the indigenous way of being:

They have little knowledge of God, but those who converse and associate much foreigners are a little better bred than the common people. They are very greedy when they eat, and not less so when they drink. They are Whore-mongers and Thieves, and are very much inclined to in chastity. . . . Their belief and education are in the manner of Mahomet, and in many ways not dissimilar in the matter of circumcision and other foolish practices of that kind. They are also untruthful and should not be believed at all, for they do not keep their word and can often be detected lying and cheating. (de Marees, 1602, p. 11)

The following is further evidence of how the indigenous were likened to animals which “represent the Black man as the missing link in the slow evolution from ape man” (Fanon, 2008, p. 1) that their bodies need to be accounted for as inferior to them (Europeans): “Their [Indigenous] bodies are very black and well proportioned, and when they speak they stretch out their necks just like Turkeys” (de Marees, 1602, p. 12).

The men of this country are of fine stature, with beautiful limbs, strong legs and well chiselled bodies, which one can observe easily enough, as they go around with most of their body naked. . . . They are also blessed with a large Male member, which they esteem highly, considering it a great privilege to be allowed to work with a good tool. Generally they are well endowed below the belt, surpassing our Dutch Nation in this respects, and being fully conscious of this . . . (de Marees, 1602, p. 28-9)

The above quote reveals a reverence for the Indigenous male body, and a possible fascination with the male body part, noting that they have larger ‘male member’ than the Dutch men. This fascination has continued as Black men’s large male members have been used to pathologize the Black male leaving them to need approval from the white man (Fanon, 2007). Such

objectification of Black men in regards to their male members is a process that creates a “withdrawal of [their] ego as a successful defence mechanism . . . [which will require him to] need white approval” (Fanon, 2007, p. 34). Again creating the powerful/superior as the white man and a mental disablement leading to a sense of self embodied hatred for Black men and a continued questioning of normality within the white man’s racial biological acceptance tools.

de Marees classifies the indigenous behaviours as “[by] nature they are warm and hot-blooded” (de Marees, 1602, p. 32), in terms of their anger and again their behaviours; a disabling label which was later linked to institutionalized the natives during the colonial era. He also claimed that the indigenous “always show a stranger great honour and reverence, in order that you may treat them in the same way” (de Marees, 1602, p. 35); “Although they are wild, very useless and unmannered people in many things, herein they show a piece of great wisdom” (de Marees, 1602, p. 99). de Marees’ quote clearly shows the extent to which Europeans went in order to maintain superiority over Indigenous peoples while praising certain practices and validating the need to tame and control leading to deculturation of indigenous ways of being (Fanon, 2008).

The next quote shows the degrading and ridiculing of Indigenous spirituality, their connection to their ancestors, earth gods and their ways of knowing;

A'most all the Coast Negros believe in one true God, to whom they attribute the Creation of the World and all things in it, though in a crude indigested Manner, they not being able to form a just idea of a Deity. They are obliged to themselves nor the Tradition of their Ancestors for their Opinion, rude as it is, but to their daily Conversation with the Europeans, who from time to time have continually endeavoured to implant this Notion in them. . . . They tell us, that in the beginning God created Black as well as White Men;

thereby not only hunting but endeavouring to prove that their race was as soon in the World as ours; and to bestow a yet greater Honour on themselves, they tell us that God having created these two forts of Men, offered two forts of Gifts, viz. Gold, and Knowledge or Arts of Reading and Writing, giving the Blacks the first Election, who chose Gold, and left the Knowledge of Letters to the White. God granted their Request, but being incensed at their Avarice, resolved that the Whites should for ever be their Masters, and they obliged to wait on them as their Slaves. (Bosman, 1705, p. 146-7)

By 1705, Bosman's account shows how the imposition of Christianity and European notions of superiority had already begun to have disabling effects. Bosman goes so far as to claim that the Black man sees themselves as inferior to the white man and in need of White masters. Over 100 years after Bosman's account Bowdich (1819) writes about the king thanking his god for seeing faces of white men: "The King thanks his God and his fetish that he made the Governor sent the white men's faces for him to see, like he does now" (p. 68).

Cultural disablement during the trading era as shown from 1602 – 1705 in the case of the excerpts that I have chosen demonstrates the types of psychological erasure that Fanon (2004) refers to when he argues that colonialism itself was an institution. From the archival accounts I demonstrate that pre-colonial trading was also an institution that created the labels of insane animals in order to validate European social, cultural, religious and economic control. Their position in relation to the Africans' elevated their western knowledge, body and cultural superiority over the indigenous, leaving the indigenous to continuously question their identity, 'who am I in this white man's world? 'Who am I in this glocalization¹⁴ neo-colonial era that has since pathologized my body, my mind, my soul and my ways of being?'

¹⁴ Ayeleru (2011) defines 'Glocalization' as a "means of 'globalization' (p. 11).

Child Development.

Children were also victims of this pre-colonial erasure. African ways of raising and supporting their child's development was considered detrimental to the child's brain and growth. Nature and independent play was depicted as damaging to the child and demonstrating a lack of care and nurture. Today, playing in nature has been valorized within the western world but not credited to the African Indigenous.

They grow up as savages running about together, Boys and Girls, beating and fighting one another and stealing one another's food, beginning right from their youth to be very jealous of one another. . . . the Parents not teaching their children any virtues or allowing them to be taught anything, leaving them to walk around as naked as they were brought into the world by their Mother, Girls as well as Boys, walking with their private parts exposed and without any sense of shame. They also thrash and chastise their children terribly, striking their loins with sticks, so that we are surprised that they do not beat the loins of their children to pieces. . . . It should be added that children do not respect their parents, because whereas they are chastised by their parents for nothing in particular, they are seldom chastised as a form of punishment. Thus, they easily forget, because they do not receive good training from their Parents but grow up like wild trees. (de Marees, 1602, p. 26)

de Marees, condemns how children were left alone in nature to explore their environment from the age of three; in today's child development discourse, this is seen to be promoting child's independence, resiliency, emotional development, speech and language, fine and gross motor skill development; which western theories (see Piaget, Vygotsky) have adopted as an appropriate way to raise and evaluate the 'normal' child.

Bosman also shows that children are breast fed to the age of three, which contradicts the lack of nurture mothers were depicted as showing in de Marees' earlier account.

Let us see how they educate their Children; with which the Men never trouble themselves in the least, nor the Women much indeed: The Mother gives the Infant Suck for two or three years; which over, and they able to go, then 'tis, turn out Brutes; if it be hungry she gives it a piece of dry bread, and sends it abroad where ever it pleases, either to the Market, or to the Sea-side to learn to swim, or anywhere else; no Body looks after it; nor is it any Bodies business to hinder its Progress. . . . When, on the other side, if our Children can but go alone, we are continually perplexed with Thousands of Fears of some or other ill Accidents befalling them. (Bosman, 1705, p. 121)

Indigenous ways of child raising and development are compared with European standards stating that adults will be perplexed with fear for seeing a child play in nature without parental supervision. This shows how the idea of play that has been credited to several child development so called 'trailblazers' such as Reggio Emilia the Montessori creator; and the famous child development theorist Piaget (the Swiss developmental psychologist) was and is African.

The irony is that, play (nature play, rough and tumble play, associative play, corporative play, solitary play, exploratory play, etc.) is one of the interventions 'introduced' by international development organizations such as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) *during* colonial rule. African child development should be indigenized without any western influences such as the Montessori schools and Euro-American curriculum systems that dominate the education system in Ghana and the western world today so that educators are able to center the Black/African child without imposing western pathologizing frameworks on their ways of being.

Childbearing is here as little troublesome as the Men . . . I once happened to be near the place where a Negroe Woman was delivered of two Children in the space of one quarter of an Hour; and when she seemed most unease I found 'twas not sufficient to urge any Shrieks or Cries from her; but the very same Day I saw her go to the Sea-side to wash herself without ever thinking of returning to her Bed. . . . Here is no Provisions made for Linnen or any Necessaries for the New-born Infant; and yet its Limbs grows Vigorous and Proportionate as in Holland; except only that they have larger Navels than ordinary with us: But this is the Mother's fault. (Bosman, 1705, p. 122)

Body comparison, blame of child's growth of a larger than 'normal' navel is placed on the mothers, showing that the European has a set norm for the perfect child, a culture that continues to permeate and dictate what is considered normal.

Labour

The next section provides some positive and problematic accounts of the Indigenes on how they earn their living: "[they] are a decent kind of people, working diligently to earn a living. They are mostly engaged in farming, sowing Rice and grain. Their principal wealth is in the Cows" (de Marees, 1602, p. 11). de Marees (1602) continued with a descriptive account on the types of labour that the natives engaged in:

They make very fine iron-work, and large quantities of, Iron can be sold there, especially fine long bars on which they are keener than anyone else in the world. They use them to make Tools for fishing and Agriculture, and also weapons such as Bows, Arrows, Harpoons and Assegais. (p. 11)

The men are all that a fine, upright Man should be. They are good workers and have bodies as strong as Trees. They learn easily, understand quickly and, when they see

something demonstrated, will copy it as quickly as one could wish. They have very good eyesight and can see even further than we Dutchmen; for if there are Ships out at Sea, they will catch sight of them long before we do. They are very clever at trading, which they still learn daily from the Dutch, so they will yet become cleverer than the Dutch themselves; for they have a good understanding of business (and knowledge of the goods which are being sold to them). They have a tough constitution and a hot stomach; for they can digest such raw and indigestible food that it sets us wondering, [and] even if they had virtually the shape of a Sturdy stomach they could digest such rough food (as they often consume) . . . (p. 31)

How could men who are good workers with descriptions such as “strong like a tree,” hardworking and clever become in Bosman’s account and post-colonial Nkrumah Ghana considered to be lazy and sick, worn out both mentally and physically?

. . . I told you the Negroes were very idle and not easily prevailed on to work, as well as that they had very few Manual Arts all which indeed are employed chiefly in the making of Wooden or Earthen Cups, Troughs, mating of Chairs, making of Copper Ointment Boxes, and Arm-Rings of Gold, Silver chief Handicraft, with which they are best acquainted being the Smithery; for with their furry Tools they can make all Forts of War-Arms that they want, Guns only excepted; as well as whatever is required in their Agriculture and House-keeping. They have no notion of Steel and yet they make their Sables and all cutting instrument: Their principals tolls are a kind of hard Stone instead of an Anvil, a pair of Tongs, and a small pair of Bellows, with three or more Pipes: which blow very strong and are an Invention of their own. There are most of their Arts, besides that of making of Fetiche’s. . . . But their most artful Works are the fine Gold and Silver

Hat-bands which they make for us; the Thread and Contexture of which is so fine, that I question whether our European Artists would not be put to it to imitate: And indeed if they could, and were no better paid than the Negroes, they would obliged to live on dry Bread. (Bosman, 1705, pp. 128-129)

One hundred years later, Bosman's (1705) descriptive account paints a very different picture than de Marees' (1602). How did they deteriorate from being praised as good workers and physically strong to being very idle and lazing around some 100 years later? Bosman's (1705) quote also depicts their plot to steal and imitate indigenous arts for their own profits without any emotional remorse or compensation.

Again, one can see a continuity of the European documenting as they observe the Indigenous in order to appropriate their ideas/knowledge for their own gain. Meanwhile, Bosman (1705) is writing on the Indigenous lack of integrity describing them as born and bred villains:

A man of integrity is as rare among them as a white Falcon, and their Fidelity seldom extends farther than to their Masters; and it would be very surprizing if upon a scrutiny into their Lives we should find any of them whose perverse Nature would not break out sometimes; for they indeed seem to be born and bred Villains. . . . These degenerate Vices are accompanied with their Sifters, Sloth and Idleness; to which they are so prone that nothing but the utmost Necessity can force them to Labour: They are besides so incredibly careless and stupid, and are so little concerned at their Misfortunes. (p. 117)

Born corrupt lazy criminals, a debilitating account of the indigenous by Bosman even though he admits to stealing and coopting Indigenous arts and crafts for their economic gain.

Penetrator's Plan to Officially Colonize

Over 100 years after Bosman's (1705) account, Cruickshank (1853) provided a disabling and disturbing account of the European plans to destabilize and officially exercise control over the indigenous. He starts by stating:

But in the Primeval stages of a race of men living among wild and uncultivated forest lands, beyond the reach and without the knowledge of human beings differently circumstanced from themselves, there would be little or no scope for the development of many of their natural tendencies, which would only become known to themselves as circumstances called them into existence. . . . The first care would be to satisfy the cravings of hunger and thirst, for they would long depend solely upon the spontaneous bounty of nature; and even in the selection of their food from the natural products of the earth, they would be guided by an instinct of the earth, they would be guided by an instinct less valuable than that of many of the inferior animals. . . . The next would be to obtain some security against the hostility of the most savage of these, which they would find best attained by herding together in as great numbers as possible. The effect of this association would soon increase the difficulty of subsistence, and induce them to extend the circuit of their roaming's in quest of food. As privations began to press heavily upon them, contentions would arise; but there as yet would differ little from those of a herd of cattle goring each other for the best tuft of grass. They would also lead to the same result—the separation of the gang into detached parties, who would seek a scanty and miserable means of support apart from each other. (Cruickshank, 1853, pp. 291-292)

This particular account suggests that the Europeans were preparing to formally institutionalize the indigenous through a gruelling plan that would require them to turn against each other by “goring each other for the best tuft of grass” (Cruickshank, 1953, p. 292), leading to separation

of communal gangs the strength that holds the natives together.” This is similar to the balkanization process that Nkrumah (1961) identified as necessary for the domination of Africa. Cruickshank (1853) continues stating that:

When they could no longer find nourishment in the roots of the earth, and famine began to make havoc among them, dire necessity, that stern but most useful teacher of man in his natural state, would suggest some rude method of trapping birds and beasts for the purposes of food. The inventive faculty once called into action, created facilities and improvements would soon be discovered for carrying on their warfare with the brute creation; so that, from being at first their helpless victims, seeking an insecure protection in the services of the rocks and the clefts of the trees, and endeavouring to keep them at bay by their wild clamours, they would become in their turn the assailants, gradually advancing from the stealthy and timid trapper to the bold and expert hunter. (pp. 292-293)

By 1880 (30 years after the penetration plans were crafted), the new Africa emerged, Africa was said to have “appeared to be in its dying throes (Boahen, 1987, p. 1); the partition and divide of the African peoples and states creating “new social as well as cultural and linguistic patterns” (Boahen, 1987, p. 7) and the road to industrialization also began with several changes to the Indigenous infrastructure, growth in educating the primitive with European knowledge was also implemented (Boahen, 1987).

Before official colonization, Boahen (1987) also noted that the “introduction of new diseases and the increased mobility of people into unfamiliar disease environments” occurred due to an increase in the population of Africa “from about 104 million in 1840 to 120 million in 1880” (p. 13) leading to several “atrocities and depredation of colonialism, especially between

1890 and 1910” (p. 13). These debilitating atrocities were accounted for even before the 1800s; this is where Nkrumah’s (1963) argument that these debilitating methodical groundings also created “superstition” among the people leading to resistance of “white man’s medicine” (p. 36) which was visible between the first European encounters through to the colonial period. Below are excerpts from European accounts of Africans resisting medicine due to their superstition or suspicion that the medicines were a form of debilitating mechanisms therefore, resorting to their traditional form of healing which the Europeans made a mockery of:

Any Negros falling sick here is diligently enough attended, in proportion to his Circumstances: For, as I have formerly hinted, they are all very much afraid of Death. . . . In Sickness (in which they agree with all the rest of the World) they first have recourse to Remedies: However, not thinking them sufficient alone to preserve Life and restore Health, they apply their false and superstitions Religious Worship, as more effectual to those Ends: And what contributes to the promotion of this Custom, is, that he who here acts the part of a Doctor, is a Feticheer [*sic*] or Priest; who consequently does not find it very difficult to persuade the Patient's Relations, that he cannot be recovered without some offerings made to the False God in order to appease him. (de Marees, 1602, pp. 221-222)

Child is no sooner born than the Priest (here called Feticheer or Confoe) is sent for, who binds a parcel of Ropes and Coral, and other Trash about the Head, Body, arms and Legs of the Infant: After which he Exorcises, according to their accustomed manner; by which they believe it is armed against all Sickness and ill accidents. (Bosman, 1705, p. 123)

The diseases most common in the assantee Country are the Lues, Yaws, Itch, Ulcers, Scald-heads, and griping pains in the bowels. Other diseases are occasionally met with, I should suppose in the same proportion that they occur in civilized countries; but I do not know to what cause to assign the prevalence and frequency of one of the most unsightly diseases that can occur in country: it is an obstinate species of ulcer, or *Noli me tangere*, which destroys the nose and upper lip; it attacks women chiefly, although men are not exempt from it; there are more than 100 women in Coomassie who have lost the nose or upper lip from this cause alone. . . . it seldom cicatrices before the *alae nasi* and lip are completely destroyed; when it does cease, the skin is the only remedy which the natives use, is an external application of bruised leaves; they seem to let it take its course, without being very anxious about a cure. (Bowdich, 1819, p. 374-375)

This claim of the Indigenous being superstitious or anxious can be arguably linked to the surge of several diseases and strained relationships between the Europeans and the Indigenous.

Such debilitating and complicated relationships were also exploited to rearrange their spiritual beliefs and to create an inferiority complex that identified them as lazy “many parts of native agriculture were discouraged in favour of cash crops; soil was ruthlessly exploited, sometimes causing erosion [death of the land]; and millions were turned into low-paid workers” or obsolete as they were not able to compete with the colonial plantations (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 37). The latter therefore created a representation that “Africans are poor, idlers, and lazy because they do not produce enough,” and cannot be convinced to work (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 37); but the exploiters failed to account for the actual cause of their lack of motivation and capacity to work.

This is also where Western exploiters and international development fail to acknowledge the different forms of disablements that were/are placed to underdevelop both the bodies and the

land leading to the violent negated livelihood of the Indigenous. Such form of amnesia only benefits those within the macro/global systems (the north) who are actors placed to continue the disablements using 'Aids, and structural Adjustments' as a new form of creating a justified empire that continues to colonize the so called independent African states (see Nkrumah, Escobar, Rodney, Fanon).

During the post-colonial era (as already shown above), Nkrumah witnessed that Africans were also debilitated when the colonialist failed to "enlarge our intellectual and social horizons" to reflect the continent's histories and need for structural growths" (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 36). Their reason was that the African was "incapable of education beyond certain limits; he would not respond to the incentives of higher standards of life . . . [creating] slander and calumny" (Nkrumah, 1963, p. 36). Nkrumah (1963) also placed into context some of the disabling administrative acts that maltreated African peoples and contributed to the theft of Her physical, intellect and economy, as "African worker under colonial rule . . . only served to enrich non-Africans" (p. 37), leaving African people with nothing to "eliminate the economic conditions which assisted the incidence of death-dealing and energy-depriving diseases and maladies" (p. 35). These early atrocities by the colonial/imperialist administrative policies have persisted, hence the call for a new mode of inquiry that encapsulates emancipation as its foundation of critical theory.

European representations of the intellectual capacity of Africans has resulted in the state of intellectual bankruptcy, and at the mercy of European education systems driven by development technologies for capitalist gains not contained within the continent. This dissertation validates that African knowledge production and the different ideologies that have since penetrated Africa's school systems were not created for the African to benefit nor was it

created to assist Africa (Appiah, 1992; Biko, 2002; Diop, 1991; Nkrumah, 1962, 1963, 1964; Oduor, 2009; Wiredu, 1980).

Therefore, answering Nkrumah, Nyerere and Dei's appeal to the reclamation of African ways of knowing, I argue that critical Nkrumahist thought is necessary, regardless of the traces of westernized education that Nkrumah was privileged to. Reclamation is necessary as it allows for Sankofa indigenized education systems. It can also be argued that even though Nkrumah's (1964) higher educational knowledge was highly westernized, he was first and foremost an African and he used his acquired western knowledge to destabilize the disabling structures that othered his people and underdeveloped his country and the African continent. This makes it difficult to fully ignore Nkrumahist thought but rather demonstrates the need to filter through the western influences to extract and customise the knowledge that best stands against oppression and assimilation while being critical during reclamation. A reclamation that makes me ponder how the global/macro structures will react. Can one work from within the macro structures to decolonize and risk assassination once those controlling the global/macro structures become aware? This to me becomes the 'committing suicide' (as a scholar) that Cabral (1966) described; but what is considered a necessary risk when the goal is to decolonize from above in order to indigenize and center an African indigenous in their epistemology (Njoki, 2005)?

Conclusion

This chapter answers the question of how the penetrators methodically maddened and constructed their institutionalized epistemology in a way that de-centered the Personhood from Africans. It is time for a critical Nkrumahist Pan-African disability theory that views disablement not as just a component of colonialism and neocolonialism metaphorically but as violence and a disabling of the body-culture-social-political-economy; one that disrupts and interrogates

disability as a biological, or social and biological phenomenon, and instead understands it as a simultaneously material experience that creates violence (Gorman, 2010, 2016; Nkrumah, 1962, 1963, 1964; Rodney, 1981; Schalk, 2018). A critical Nkrumahist disability theory will allow for a critical engagement of all levels of global structures in order for one to Sankofa traditional knowledge of Being while also purging current disability rhetoric and debilitating cultural narratives that continue to drain the blood, while killing the land and the people of Ghana/Africa. Such entry will permit for a twenty-first century emancipation that Nkrumah, Nyerere, Cabral and all other African revolutionary nationalist ancestors fought for while also allowing them to finally rest in perfect peace.

With the above laying out of Africa's Pan-African nationalists particularly coupled with critical Nkrumahist thought, it is therefore visible that nationalism and revolutionism leading to a Pan-African Disability perspective is a needed weapon to conquer the disablement that Nkrumah outlined, especially within this current flow of globalization leading to what Nkrumah calls "The Last Stage of Imperialism" (1965). In this chapter, I have shown the disabling structures that were put in place by the Europeans leading to the captivity of the Indigenous minds, borders and lands. I have also provided a framework that can be used to question western reports and analysis that seems to demonize the African continent. It has also been illustrated that the culture of demonizing and stigmatizing the African as deviating from the white 'norm' originates from pre-colonial interactions with the European interlopers.

This next chapter demonstrates how Personhood is contextualized within the Akan group. Knowing and understanding the dynamics of personhood within the Akan culture can become a starting point to Ibhawoh's quest for a reasonable and balanced approach to a universality of rights and justice seeking. And also as a grounding point for deviating from both the social and

medical model instruments of disability into a cultural/traditional way of understanding the body in connection to the land and the spiritual ontological nature of Being. It provides a path away from the western gaze that pathologizes Indigenous Bodies and institutionalizes its borders through the use of western development technologies.

Chapter Four—African Spirituality

This chapter begins by unpacking the discourses surrounding African cultural studies while also inserting perspectives of African scholars on African religion. It provides a bird's eye view of Akan epistemological ways of being in relation to their ontology as a whole in connection to their spiritual influences, to Onyame (Supreme God), their deities (earthly gods) and the spiritual linking to their Ancestors. The chapter centers African knowledge through the understanding of African Personhood from Kwame Gyekye, Kwasi Wiredu, J. B. Danquah and provides some of the methodological issues that African ways of knowing have encountered over time. The chapter will be used as a way to Sankofa the epistemology of Akan Spirituality while also providing the ontological encounters that changed the Akan forms of knowing through European enterprise engagement to colonial imposition. It will provide chronological/thematic evidence from the archives drawing on how their spirituality was discounted and seen as a form of idol worshiping leading to madness and institutionalization. This provides a way of understanding and centering the African Unity Personality that Nkrumah calls for.

African/Cultural Studies and the need for a Spatial Junction with Critical Disability Studies

It is said that “African culture has suffered serious neglect overtime” particularly after colonization, leaving African ways of being within their land with glocalized knowledge (Ayeleru, 2011, p. 165). Such an “appalling [...] situation has therefore made some Africans Aliens to their cultures” (Ayeleru, 2011, p. 165) as the preservation of European ways of knowing have created an amnesia resulting in a loss of their African traditional culture which was precipitated by the imposition of English, Dutch, French, Portuguese, Spanish and other

languages and cultures (Gates Jr., 1988, p. 4). Konadu (2007) states that culture and indigenous ways of knowing “constitutes as analytical as well as interpretative” alliance (p. 19); culture he continues includes one’s language, politics, economics, society, traditional governance and spiritual systems (religion). He defined culture as:

[A] composite of the spiritual, ideational, and material-physical dimensions of reality.

Culture is a process that provides a procedural framework for living as well as ways to engage, interpret or make sense of reality. In this regards, culture and history affect each other in reciprocal ways. (Konadu, 2017, p. 19)

In the case where culture and history are reciprocal to each other, he posits that history develops over time through the engagement of “specific locale—with or without interactions of other locals—endangers culture and culture, in turn, shapes the development of that history” (Konadu, 2017, p. 19). As culture influences and is the precursor of history, then how can one place the spiritual system as constitutive of an alliance formation? Spirituality/religion was defined as the “material aspect of culture that is subject to the most relentless change due to its concreteness and its vulnerability,” which has unquestionably lived through several volatile interactions of other cultures leaving the locals in a vulnerable state that has created a question of being and a hierarchy of worshiping (Abraham, 1962 as cited by Konadu, 2007, p. 19).

The importation of Christian religion and abrupt disconnect of African spirituality was used to “soften the heart of the colonized black man, to make him amenable to exploitation and oppression. The doctrines of this imported religion encourage its followers to believe in its tenets without questioning” (Ayerelu, 2011, p. 165). Such “agenda [also influences the Africans] outside of the continent. At the same time, the field of African Studies has come under increasing criticism for its marginalization of African voices, interest, and agendas” (Nolte, 2018, p. 296).

Biko (2002) terms such disruption a “process of acculturation . . . which implies a fusion of different cultures . . . but extremely one-sided” which began the process where Africans “began to lose a grip . . . on [themselves] and their surroundings” (pp. 40-41).

Biko (2002) also states that such disruptive ways of the African Being creates a notion that “somehow Africans are not expected to have any deep consciousness of their own culture or even of themselves” leaving other people outside of the continent to “become authorities on all aspects of the African life” (p. 41). Diop (1991) states that each person to their own cultural identity with its own way of functioning, claiming that culture defines ones being which includes “components of the collective personality” (p. 211). These collectively embody three formations which are: their historical factor, their linguistic factor, and their psychological factor (Diop, 1991); any attempt to shift or shape these collective cultural personalities requires a careful study of the people. Diop’s (1991) cultural collective formation juxtaposes with Biko (2002) as it allows one to understand that the process of acculturation of a group or even an individual, requires some form of constructive process for it to become materialized. Hence it hypothesizes that the abrupt infiltration of colonization on the Gulf of Guinea did not happen overnight, but was engineered before the declaration of formal colonialism. Such engineering processes can be normalized and ingrained in the everyday livelihood of the collective group and becomes representative overtime through the erasure of their ways of knowing, their languages, and their historical bindings (Ayeleru, 2011; Biko, 2002; Diop, 1991).

Diop (1991) justifies that it is a peoples’ historical conscience that allows them to be distinguished from others as it makes them whole and unifies them while also creating some form of security blanket. A unification blanket he states, allows the collective people to “live their true history well, [and] to transmit its memory to their descendants” (Diop, 1991, p. 212). In

his interpretation, essentially, for the cultural collective to be rediscovered during an abrupt volatility from a foreign outside world, the whole collective community will need to revive using their culture as a weapon while reclaiming and pursuing continuity (Diop, 1981). One way to revive is through the use of cultural weapons, which can include staging the classrooms for the young people with their cultural artifacts and I insert, also through curriculum content in order to be reminded and for the creation of the historical continuity as:

It is these possibilities of cultural aggression, linked to the vital importance of this subject matter, that have led the developing nations coming out of the colonial night . . . to make the teaching of history a national activity . . . One sees that what is important for a given people is not the fact of being able to claim a more or less grandiose historical past, but rather to be simply pervaded by this sense of continuity to characteristics of the historical conscience. (Diop, 1981, pp. 212-213)

This method of owning and reclaiming is what the British have continually perpetuated around the world, and even more so within their own people creating that unified bondage to the monarchy. But how can Africans create a sense of continuity that characterizes their traditional historical conscience of Being?

Knowing the definition of culture, history and religion from Konadu (2007), Diop (1981) asks, “what is African History?” This question he positions in two echelons stating that African history is the immediate of:

[Local] histories, so dear, deeply lived, in which the African peoples, segmented by diverse exterior forces the principal one of which is colonization, are shriveled up, find themselves trapped, and are vegetating today. A second level, more general, further off in time and space and including the totality of our peoples, comprises the general history of

Black Africa, insofar as research permits resorting it today from a purely scientific approach: each history is thus pinpointed and correctly situated in relation to general historical coordinates. (Diop, 1991, pp. 213-214)

Diop's definition of African history suggests that written history is based on scientific data collected from a superior position of researchers, which generalizes the cultural identity of the people. He then continues by defining pre-history, as being left "behind from the moment that it becomes conscious of the importance of the historical event to the point where it invents a technique—oral or written— for its memorization and accumulation" (Diop, 1991, p. 214). His profound definition therefore contradicts or destabilizes, but in a way acts as a reminder that pre-history whether oral or written needs to be read carefully as it is an accumulation of linguistic hegemony with premeditated amnesia.

As a result, this section creates the need to "rediscover the thread that connects them to their most remote ancestral past" (Diop, 1991, p. 212), in order to integrate the epistemology of being within the evolving mostly white way of knowing in disability studies (Bell, 2011; Gorman 2010, 2016). It will unravel the African epistemological framework that predates the European trading, colonization and post-colonial Nkrumah era. I draw from Gyekye's (1987) Akan conceptualization scheme of Personhood while also drawing on other accounts including Danquah, Mbiti, and Rattray in order to create a door of entry into disability studies outside of the western way of knowing. The chapter will also use archival documentation to make vivid the acculturation techniques that have been employed to lessen the cultural distinctness within Akan's way of Being particularly through the violent infiltration by five European countries who themselves "do not have any cultural bond with each other" (Diop, 1991, p. 212) and were also figuring out their way of being and becoming (Foucault, 1988). The use of archival documents

validates the start and continuity of erasure and infiltration of colonial religious culture that left the African/the Akan in a state of disablement and disembodiment.

The question now becomes, what was our true self as our pre-colonial Personhood was erased through the process of acculturation and disruption leaving the African continent and Her people in shambles as we try to find this truth? And how can we deal with the contradictions within the narratives of our spirituality (or Christian influences) that demonizes and curses its own into European definitions of madness and being? But before delving into the African traditional conception of personhood and trying to unravel this abrupt violent erasure of African culture, I must unpack my connection and standpoint to religiosity both within the European Christian faith and African tradition. I believe this will provide readers with some context of how and where I position myself within these two complex extremes.

Situating My Spiritual/Religious Extremities

I was recently engaging with my parents regarding the family lineage. I did this because of the difficulties I encountered while trying to situate and Sankofa Akan Spirituality as a socialized Christian. I was looking for both spatial, time and spiritual connectivity that can legitimize and validate my entry point; while also creating a space for why my work is extremely important and requires a platform to bring about different forms of ontological knowledge within the academy. My patrilineal line is Okomfo (Akan diviner) while my matrilineal line is Anglican. My father's grandfather, an Okomfo, converted to Catholicism in his later years due to the influx of missionaries during colonial Ghana. He was said to have brought Catholicism to the Nwso Atre (Brong Ahafo Region, Ghana), he got married but his wife was barren because of her mother's disagreement of their union—his wife's mother was labelled as the village witch.

Boahen (1987) provides us with the context of missionary revolution by the 1880 stating that “[the] greatest social impact on the missionary revolution by 1880, however, was the further stratification of African societies . . . particularly in western and southern Africa, and a large traditional and illiterate group” (p. 17). But it has also been proven within this dissertation that such missionary revolution stemmed before the pre-formation of colonization.

My grandfather later reverted to his original African spirituality and way of knowing in order to allow him marry more than one wife for procreation purposes; he was married to seven (7) women and fathered up to 60 children. During his time married to his first wife, his mother in-law sent a python snake to kill him, but the snake was captured trapped and killed by a family member with a shotgun. When the python was shot, it fought and tried to free itself creating a tornado of dust in the air; both the dust and the bullets which were used to kill the python were later found by a spiritualist in the head of my grandfather and they were washed away spiritually before he was able to regain both his physical and spiritual health. He later died after his second conversion to Catholicism. The question that I grapple with is, can more than two spirits dwell in one body? If not, could both Gods be angry?

My mother’s father on the other hand, died as an Anglican Provost in Kumasi Mampong who, during the colonial era had several interactions with colonials with privileges over others because of his commitment to spreading the ‘white mans’ gospel to the Indigenous Akan’s allowing him also to marry the daughter of a colonial from the Taylor family. My grandmother, his wife, died at a very young age leaving my mother to be raised from age five at a missionary boarding school, St. Monica, by the Reverenced Sisters. During this time my mother was ‘well taken care’ of by an assigned Sister who provided her with a “mother’s love.” After she out grew the school at St. Monica she volunteered at an orphanage before writing her nursing exam which

she passed and headed for nursing school. My genealogy could be considered complex but I consider my ancestors responsible for my ontological drive to deconstruct disability in the context of colonialism and Africa. I have two spirits that dwell within me and blood ties to two ancestries, the Akan Onyame and the western Supreme God. Is there really a difference between the two? Being connected to two different worlds allows me the privilege of combining my ontological understanding while arguing that Indigenous contact with western ways of being and knowledge became their downfall as it did with my Okomfo ancestor, a disablement and a dismemberment from their spirituality which led to the classification of ‘madness’ that has continued in Ghana at 63, the year after the return.

Centering African Tradition

The revival of the Akan ways of knowing and being provides answers that can be used as a starting or maybe an ending point for the stigmatization of persons with disabilities and the erasure or break from historical continuity (Biko, 2002; Diop, 1991). Before delving into the Akan conceptual schema of personhood, Gyekye (1987), who is now an ancestor (passed on in the year 2019), provided some methodological problems regarding “[false] impressions about the unwritten character of African traditional philosophy” (Section 3.1 p. 44) that faces the African way of knowing. He states that such false impressions are due to the lack of and the orality claim of an African historical past (Gyekye, 1987). He suggests that this denial and form of erasure of the African cultural philosophical material have brewed up questions from colleagues such as “Does it exist? Where are the philosophical texts?” to which he always answers, “is philosophy to be found only in written texts?” (p. 44) This questioning whether anyone other than Europeans are capable of philosophical thought validates and concurs with Nkrumah’s (1963, 1964), Biko’s (2002) and Diop’s (1991) argument on the careful normalization of western ways of knowing

and pre-meditated amnesia which in turn discounts everything else within the continent (also see Fanon, 2008).

Gyekye (1987) went on testifying that the claim of orality has also created a label that states that African traditional thought “is rigidly monolithic, offering no divergent positions and therefore no alternative metaphysics” (p. 44). Such claim he states derived from the fact that the conclusion of African traditional thoughts being rigid and monolithic is because they lack worldview and is not rigorously promoted within western academic walls. This I contend to be true as the majority of African scholars use Eurocentric theorists or theory even when dedicating their writing and fight to Africa and Her people. Nkrumah also concurs that the Eurocentricity within knowledge acquisition that has stemmed from a colonial education system has erased and discredited the African traditional way of knowing due to the lack of written analysis.

Ayeleru, (2011) concurring with Nkrumah, (1963, 1964), Biko (2002), Dipo (1981), Fanon (2004, 2008) and the analysis laid out in chapter 3, states that this “appalling situation has been caused by the imposition of the colonial master’s foreign language” (p. 165) and culture creating an alienation for even African scholars themselves. But as already shown and will be further revealed, the process of devaluing Africa or African traditional knowledge and acculturation started during the pre-colonial era. Gyekye (1987) clearly debunks the myth of African traditional knowledge as rigidly monolithic because it lacks awareness and is not widely taught within western academic walls stating that they “are by no means equivalent and cannot logically be substituted for one another . . . One must acknowledge the existence of alternatives before deciding whether or not they were competing” (Gyekye, 1987, p. 45). Their attack on African traditional knowledge is baseless, as it has no plausible grounding.

Gyekye (1987) also states that the characterization of African traditional thought as rigid is due to being labelled collective, which he claims is “implausible and erroneous and has unfortunately stemmed from the lack of ‘doxographic tradition’ from those who in the name of documenting African way of being created demeaning accounts” (p. 46). His answer to those claims was that though, wherever it is produced, is always the reduction of an individual, not of a group” as being supposed (Gyekye, 1987, p. 46). The collectivity argument he claims never included how it was originally produced, from or where its existence originated because it is thought that a communal society means a community that does everything together without individualistic thinking. He reverted affirming that “in the African case, that the author is interpreting and elucidating a conception of a Person produced or put forward originally by individual . . . on the basis of ideas that have survived in proverbs and other sources” (Gyekye, 1987, p. 47).

In his conclusion, Gyekye’s (1987) answer to the critics of the African traditional thoughts was that the blame for such disruptions should be partly placed on earlier researchers, anthropologists and sociologists such as Rattray and Meyerowitz as they in their accounts provided two different versions of the *Sunsum* and the *Okra* which were acquired from single perspectives of informants while ignoring to fact check what is narrated to them. He continued with an argument and conclusion that shows that all the different ideas of Akan thought, “may be regarded as forms of a single basic ideas – that there is an immaterial aspect of the human being” (Gyekye, 1987, pp. 47-48).

The understanding of the Akan personhood as including both immaterialism and materialism continued for Gyekye, which took him into the field to better study and understand the varying forms or perspectives of others. During his time in the field collecting data, one of

his participants, a traditionalist, provided claims that disform and denied the Sunsum and the Okra stating that it is just an “onipa n’adwen’ meaning construction of a man” (p. 48) that Akan’s think of humans as both material and immaterial. But one cannot move on without questioning if Gyekye’s participant’s answer was based on the *mental enslavement* and *brain washing* of religious conversion that was caused by the early pre-colonial enterprising and colonial mayhems; I am speculating that it might be.

Below, I provide several excerpts from earlier European traders which contributed to the disablement that disrupted the belief systems of the Indigenous leaving them doubting their own spiritual principles and for most, fully erasing their traditional past which then led to the so-called oppressive culture that has continued to linger within contemporary Ghanaian society. de Marees (1600) was one European interloper who in his account painted the indigenous as *lost souls* worshiping the devil and deities claiming that they are ‘Fetisso’ (fetish).

Others have great faith in certain Trees; and if they want to know something, they go to their Trees, where the [devil] often appears to them in a form of a black [dog] or suchlike, often also in invisible form, and answers what they ask¹⁵ . . . If one asks them about their religion, *they do not give a straightforward answer* [italic, my own emphasis] which sounds like any belief or agrees with the truth of God's word, but say: 'Fetisso' has spoken thus and ordered us to do this; *for they regard him as their God, showing great folly and childishness when they worship and serve him*, thinking, alas, that it helps them and that they thereby gain much. But it cannot help them, and they generally find

¹⁵ This statement may rest on a misinterpretation of some observations. The Atwamba asafo company of Cape Coast has as its emblem a black dog: its members are ‘children of the dog.’ The tree referred to may be the one shown on plate 4. It is true, however, that trees are often sacred and that priests sometimes use them to hide while making oracular pronouncements. Some clans or families abstain from certain foods, such as pork and perhaps tuna-fish: but there is certainly no ban on catching tuna-fish, which is one of the most widely consumed fish in Ghana (Translated by translators of P. D. M’s book, p. 71).

themselves disappointed; for they have dealings with the [devil] and put their trust in him, and so they are also rewarded with the [devil] . They do not like to hear about people talk about him, but they fear him and are much in awe of him. . . . They make each other believe such nonsense, and once they got something into their heads, it cannot be got out again; for they stick to their opinion about this Fetisso as obstinately as could be. *If the Dutch see them observing such customs and laugh and mock them because they look so foolish, they are much ashamed and no longer dare to make their Fetisso in our presence . . .* (de Marees, 1602, p. 71)

This quote from de Marees from the so called trading enterprise era clearly depicts how natives worshipping their Gods/gods were perceived; comparing their ways of worshipping to ‘childishness and foolishness’ while laughing and making mockery of the African ways of worship and culture, leaving them ashamed of who they are and how they communicate with their Onyame and their Africanness; leaving them to retreat to worshipping in private or discarding totally their ways of knowing and being altogether.

It is not worth bothering to discuss their religion further; firstly, because it is difficult to learn anything from them, and because those who are acquainted with the Portuguese and converse with them every day are ashamed of telling anything, pretending to be Christians because they are acquainted with Christians, and not wanting to be associated with their friends in their Fetisso and Madness. (de Marees, 1602, p. 72)

Pretending to be Christians because of their acquaintances with the Portuguese’s who were also very present in trading and encroaching and forcefully using their cultural/religious beliefs to ‘civilize the primitive’ and wash their unclean ‘mad’ souls.

The Blacks who live with the Portuguese, however, are able to say much about God and birth of Christ, the Last Supper, his bitter passion, death and resurrection, and other points related to our Christian religion. One in particular whom I knew very well and who was also my good friend, could read and write Portuguese very well and was well versed in the Scriptures. (de Marees, 1602, p. 74)

de Marees, using the case of one particular Black native ‘who sold his soul to the masters’, learned about the Portuguese God denouncing his ‘primitive’ ways of worshiping; and can now read and write in Portuguese which suggests that he was fully converted and accepted, assimilated and saved through the acceptance of the western religion in the name of civilization. However, this acceptance could have been a method to escape the ridicule of the ‘white man’ while he continues to worship in secret. What could this form of disembodied relationship do to an individual? Can it anger the Gods of the African Sky and the Gods of the land?

What is more, if one were having discussion with him and said something against the Catholic belief or what the Portuguese taught him (because he had lived with a Monk in the Castle de Mina), he would argue against it and prove that in such-and such a Gospel or Epistle of the Apostles something different had been written and it must be understood in such-and-such a way. From this one can see they are beginning to acquire some understanding of the Christian faith and that they are very sharp-witted and can quickly understand something. But it seems that God has not seen fit to call them into our Christian faith; and we may thank and praise god that He has given us the ability to understand his Divine scriptures, which tend to the salvation of our soul. (de Marees, 1602, p. 74)

Even with the disembodiment from their African spirituality to the point of arguing with their peers to prove the Gospel, and learning/acquiring Catholic beliefs or what the Portuguese taught them, de Marees still does not think that the Indigenes are human enough to be accepted by his god stating that “It seems that God has not seen fit to call them into our Christian faith” (de Marees, 1602, p. 74). And he is thankful for it. But ironically, he sees the Indigenes as sharp-witted because they are quick to assimilate to the Christian faith, which he might take as progress; progress to the fact that the devil in them is being driven out, they are being saved by the white man and their god.

de Marees’ (1602) rant on the ways of being of the Akan clearly outlines a couple of things which might have led to Gyeke’s (1987) participant concluding that the belief systems of the Akan are just imaginings from man’s mental construct. Such insider and outsider accounts that place African spirituality as inferior to western Christianity have not only created a misunderstanding of indigenous but it also created a ‘taboo’ relationship and disembodied them from their Onyame and gods of the land. de Marees states that the people do not give straight answers when asked about their way of religious being, but he never states in his account if those asked are being questioned in their Indigenous languages or in English or if they were ridiculed, laughed at and or mocked when and if they answered. During this era, western languages were also used as indicators for knowledge and those who are receptive to civilization even though it was supposed to be the era of ‘just’ trading (Biko, 2002; Diop, 1991).

Therefore, understanding that language also places an inferiority complex on insider and outsider relationship and in this case, a muted or an episodic amnesia to denounce cultural identity creates a disablement and a detriment to Africanness (Diop, 1991). This episodic amnesia also resulted in the later pre-meditated amnesia that Diop (1991) spoke about which has

led to the denouncement of the rigidity of African knowledge or Africans as knowledge producers. The denouncement of their spirituality led to the natives casting “away their indigenous clothing, their customs, their beliefs which were all described as being pagan and barbaric” (Biko, 2002, p. 56); a description that left African Spirituality tainted and taboo, even within the indigenous Africans themselves creating a divide and making Christianity and Christian Africans superior and African Spirituality as the devil’s way to worship.

Such denouncement of knowledge of being and casting away of African Spirituality in order to forcefully make space for western Christianity has made “countless other silent influences [and] have all made an indelible impression upon African society” even during the colonial era (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 70) requiring a new centering to be forged; one that combines and reclaims African’s pre-colonial traditions, Islamic African and Euro-Christian Africa in order to regain full “original humanistic principles of Africa” (Nkrumah, 1964, p. 70). The following section focuses on reclaiming, creating and centering the ontological Akan spirituality and the epistemology of Being that can be used as a starting point to entering into disability studies.

The Epistemology of Akan Nature of Being: Akan Concept of Personhood

It cannot come through delegations, gift, charity, paternalism, grants concessions, proclamations, charters or reformism, but only through the complete . . . united effort to unscrambled the. . . Last [500] years, a complete break of the colonial dependencies from their ‘mother countries’ and the establishment of their complete independence. (Nkrumah, 1962, p. xviii)

The people, the body and the soul of the nation, the final sanction of political decisions, and the inheritors of sovereignty, cannot be fooled for long. . . . Just as in the physical universe, since the moving object is always impressed upon by external forces, any motion is in fact a resultant, so in society every development, every progressive motion, is a resultant of unharmonious forces, a resultant, a triumph of positive action. (Nkrumah, 1964, pps. 101 & 103).

Nkrumah's above quotes clearly state the complexities that need to be unscrambled in order for certain bodies' narratives to be included in the historiography of Ghana's pre-colonial to present nation building. It also clearly states that such reclamation or unscrambling must not be accomplished through charity or handout as every people, soul and body is inevitably due a triumph of positivity as this is their inheritance for sovereignty. In order for such unscrambling to happen and for the centering of African tradition to intersect with current waves of being, it is necessary to be aware that African religion "permeated into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it" (Mbiti, 1989, p. 1) from their daily life. Meaning that, to understand Africans and their ways of being, it is necessary to understand that religion "is the strongest element in traditional background, and exerts probably the greatest influence upon the thinking and living of the people concerned" (Mbiti, 1989, p. 1). If this then is the case, to "ignore these traditional beliefs, attitudes and practices can only lead to a lack of understanding of African behaviour" (Mbiti, 1989, p. 1) and ways of being. Therefore, an entry point to understanding the concept of personhood, which needs to be scrutinized and "reckoned within modern fields of life like economics, politics, education" (Mbiti, 1989, p. 1) is definitely required as a way forward.

This understanding must be reckoned with as it de-pathologizes the body, while it creates a double edged sword to speak of an holistic healing relationship, as acknowledged by Gyekye (1995) "[the] dynamics of human interactions plainly disclosed to us by the history of the development of human cultures can hardly be disregarded" (p. xxxi). Such acknowledgement provides context to this section for a re-definition, de-pathologizing and/or a balancing approach of universality that does not ignore human traditions (Ayerle, 2011; Gyekye, 1995; Ibhawoh, 2007). An African traditional religion that is spoken of in the "plural because there are about

three thousand African peoples (clans), and each has its own religious system” (Mbiti, 1919, p. 1).

The origin of the Ashanti

As already mentioned elsewhere, this dissertation focuses on the Akan Ashanti as they populated the majority of European accounts and were one of the four regions that remained standing pre-colonial to pre-independent Gold Coast:

Among the most celebrated regions in the history of West Africa is Ashanti, whose belligerent behaviour in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, not only enabled it to dominate its neighbours, but also to prevent the British from colonizing it for years. Its indigenous high culture has made it very famous in the anthropological world. (Sarpong, 1967, p. 1)

The Akan’s were documented to have been created through several folk stories told by every European anthropology/interlopers with a focus on the Ashanti empire stating that:

[The] different Opinions of some of them concerning the Creation; for a great part of the Negroes believe that Man was made by Anansie, that is a great Spider: the rest attribute the Creation of Man to God, which they assert to have happened in the following manner: They tell us, that in the beginning God created Black as well as White Men; thereby not only hinting by endeavoring to prove that their race was as soon in the World as ours; and to bestow a yet greater Honour on themselves, they tell us that God having created these two sorts of Men, offered two sorts of Gifts, viz Gold, and the Knowledge of Arts of reading and Writing, giving Blacks the first Election, who chose God, and left the Knowledge of Letters to the White... God granted their request, but being incensed at their Avarice, resolved that the Whites should for ever be their Masters, and they obliged

to wait on them as their Slaved.... Others in the Gold Coast would persuade us, that the first Men came out of Holes and Pits, like that at present in a great Rock on the Sea, near our Fort of Accra. (Bosman, 1705, p. 146-147)

Ashanti myth declares, the first human beings, belonging to certain of their ruling clans, came forth from the ground, and settling nearby, increased and multiplied, learned to use fire and other arts, till eventually, compelled by increasing numbers, that scattered and became the clan or 'blood' from which the rulers of the united nation later chose their kings and queens. (Rattray, 1923, p. 121)

After independence, Ashanti was said to have been divided into what is now “Ashanti proper and Brong/Ahafo regions” (Sarpong, 1967, p. 1).

Akan Concept of Personhood—What makes a Person?

One purpose of Gyekye's (1995) book, *African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, was to critically analyze and dissect Akan traditional philosophical thought. Gyekye unpacked the *concept of a person* when he asks, “[what] is a person? Is a person just the bag of flesh and bones that we see with our eyes, or is there something additional to the body that we do not see?” (p. 85). These questions were used as a guide for Gyekye to conclude that “a human being is not just an assemblage of flesh and bone, that he or she is a complex being who cannot completely be explained by the same laws of physics used to explain inanimate things, and that our world cannot simply be reduced to physics” (p. 103).

Gyekye (1995) not only concluded with the above, but also stated that the Akan concept of a person is dualistic and interactionist (p. 102). Meaning that Akan's conceptualization of personhood is first a spiritual immaterial component that consists of the okra (soul) and the Sunsum (spirit); and the second honam (body) is the material (physical) component of the Akan

conception of person. Okra he deduces as the “embodiment and transmitter of the individual’s destiny. . . . described as divine and as having an antemundane existence with the Supreme Being (Onyanme) . . .” this he argues “may have been the basis of the Akan proverb, All Men are the children of God; no one is a child of the earth (nnipa nyinaa yē Onyame mma, oibara nnyē asase ba”; Gyekye, 1995, p. 85). The Okra he continues is seen as a “spark of the Supreme Being (Onyame)” in human therefore, described as ‘Devine’ and “having an antemundane existence in a human being” (p. 85). His explanation led to a conclusion that the Okra is comparable to the soul within the metaphysical systems (Gyekye, 1995, p. 85).

Dr. J.B. Danquah (n.d), in a pamphlet West African Affairs titled *Obligation in Akan society* a lecture given in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies (No. 8 in the series), explained that each:

....Akan has a soul. But there is no idea that each Akan should save his own soul, for the soul of the Akan is not tinged with the original sin, but is born pure. He does not think of the soul as ‘fallen.’ It is born or ‘given,’ pure to expand in a certain direction to realization of, or unity with God. (p. 14)

Danquah’s (n.d) explanation of the Akan and their connection to the soul and the Supreme God simply allows one to understand that the soul is a relevant immaterial part of the Akan born free from sin. His explanation clearly differs from Christianity’s view that all men are born sinners. Danquah’s explanation which separates the Akan’s soul from sin therefore concurs with Gyekye’s (1995) argument that the soul is the ‘embodiment and transmitter’ of one’s individual destiny.

Sunsum he explains is another fundamental component of the existence in a human, in the English language, it is defined as ‘spirit’ (Gyekye, 1995). The Sunsum is said to be part of

the soul, making it constitutive of the spiritual system and never loses its individuality after death (Gyeke, 1995); which is logical as it supports the Akan belief of the reincarnation of ancestors after death within the spirit world. The Sunsum is responsible for molding “the child’s personality and disposition. It is what determines [a child’s] character and individuality” among their community (Gyeke, 1995, p. 89). Such explanation of the Akan proverb provides that if all are the children of God, then there is no body politics that can be used to stratify humans in the Akan culture. Gyekye therefore makes it clear that a person within the Akan culture is a complete person by innate properties such as their soul and spirit before their body, and this person is a product of their environment/community. Therefore, if we are all created by the Supreme Being (Onyame) embodying a soul and spirit, then our individuality and embodiment is of Onyame and should be accepted not as one but as many; not universal but as diverse. Consequently, each body type is to their own Supreme Being because their human according to the Akan.

Wiredu (2004) argues for a different conception of the okra (soul). Wiredu’s argument is that the okra is quasi-physical because of the Akan’s claim to be able to communicate and see one’s soul (p. 16). But Gyekye (1995) argues that the only persons among the Akan that can communicate with the soul is the Spiritual Medicine Man (Okomfo) hence making the okra quasi-physical as per Wiredu’s argument. This Gyekye deduced stating that:

. . . these phenomena do not take place in the ordinary spatial world; otherwise anyone would be able to see or communicate with the okra (soul). This must mean that what those with special abilities see or communicate with is something non-spatial. Thus, the fact that the okra can be seen by such people does not make it physical or quasi-physical . . . (p. 86)

With such knowledge and the argument against Wiredu's okra definition, unless one has spiritual powers such as the Okomfo to communicate with one's soul, it is harmless to agree with Gyekye's Akan concept of personhood that sees a person beyond the physical.

Gyekye (1995) also argues that Claridge's (1915) anthropological account on Kra and Sraman creates a conceptual blunder:

The belief held by all the Akan peoples is that every man has a dual personality, the actual corporeal man and a tenanted and to some extent protecting spirit known as "Kra." When the Man dies, an intangible shadowy man or "Sraman," in all respects similar to the man himself during life, is evolved, and the kra is liberated and becomes a "Sisa" or kind of wandering spirit. This idea of kra closely corresponds to the European conception of a soul, and the sraman to that intangible form, a belief, in which still persists among many, commonly called a ghost. Among the Akan peoples however, it is the sisa that is believed to remain on earth and have the power of annoying the living in various ways, while the sraman goes to the spirit world (Sramanedzi), where it continues its existence in the same social position as that held by the individual during life. (Claridge, 1915, p. 437).

Claridge's anthropological accounts on the kra and Sraman create a conceptual blunder because a man/person does not have to die in order to have their kra and Sraman interact with each other because every living thing has consciousness, and consciousness is related to the soul (Gyekye, 1995). Understanding that the Akan believe that both the Okra and Sunsum are constitutive of the spiritual system and the body as the assemblage of the immaterial (Okra and Sunsum) is crucial to understanding the Akan way of being and the knowledge that this dissertation introduces to the critical disability studies human rights field. This to the Akan

translates as “[what] happens to the soul takes effect or reflects on the condition of the body” (Gyekye, 1995, p. 101), which was explained using Busua’s (1969) translation of the Akan:

They (that is, the Akan’s) believed also that spiritual uncleanness was an element of ill-health and that the cleansing of the soul was necessary for health. When, for example, a patient was made to stand on a broom while being treated, it was to symbolize this cleansing. The broom sweeps filth away from the home and keeps it healthy: so the soul must be swept of filth to keep the body healthy. (Busua, 1969 as cited in Gyekye, 1995, p. 101)

Busua suggests that the Akan believe that both the material and the immaterial system of humans must be treated if ill-health of the material system translates to the world through the conditions of the soul. An example that Gyekye used to provide a more visualized explanation of the body depicting the ill-health to the world was that “if the physical behaviour of a man suggest that he is happy” the Akan translates it as “ne ’kra aniagye” (meaning their soul is happy) and it is vice-versa if the body transmits sadness (p. 101). On the Akan concept of person, their belief allows:

The belief in psychophysical causal interaction is the whole basis of spiritual or psychical healing in Akan communities. . . . There are certain diseases [illness] that are believed to be spiritual diseases (Sunsum yare) and cannot be healed by the application of physical therapy. In such diseases [illness] attention must be paid to both physiological and spiritual aspects of the person. . . . Unless the soul is healed, the body will not respond to physical treatment. (Gyekye, 1995, p. 101)

Unless the spiritual healers and medical forms of healing can be integrated, the Akan’s believe that the rehabilitation of just the assemblage will be unsuccessful, as these form of complex way of Personhood cannot be understood through the lens of western medicine alone.

Conclusion

Therefore, arguing for a more fluid form of human rights instrument would do justice if only it can accommodate how the various different cultures in Africa contextualize their persons, this way commonalities can be drawn in order to find a center that favours the African body (on the continent and outside of it) that does not include a stratified body politics nor does it pathologize the complexity that deviates from the western laws of physics and biological (Gyekye, 1995). Such a fluid integrative form answers the call of Nkrumah to Sankofa the ways of knowing as it has significant pragmatic implication to moving forward within nation building, international development resource/material discourses and critical disability studies.

This chapter has created spaces that can be used as entry points to include and bring forth more conversation of other African ways of de-pathologizing the complexities of the Being. It showcases the different ways in which some scholars within the global context have disapproved while others have also approved of African traditional knowledge; while also concluding that such knowledge is also a way of knowing and therefore should be accepted as such. It also provides a chronological understanding of how the western missionary revolution took place in Ghana which became problematic as it began erasing the Indigenous cultures and traditions leading to the historical erasure of the Akan spiritual traditions. It can therefore conclude that interactions with the Europeans shifted the Akan culture, which was embedded in their ways of being through radical shaming and the Christian missionary imperative to save the primitive from the devil they see as Onyame.

Chapter Five—Pathologizing African Spirituality: A Colonial Gateway to Mental and Physical Enslavement

As the previous chapter provides some contextualization of the concept of personhood within the Akan culture, this chapter demonstrates the colonial engagement leading to the disablement of Africans that was created through the use of institution, ostracizing and criminalizing their ways of knowing. Leaving me to ask: “What if”? What if the Europeans did not show up on the Shores of the Coast of Guinea? What if Africa was still untouched? What if the traditions, cultures and its people were left alone to manage their own affairs as they see fit? Would Africa or the other global colonized southern countries have the most disabled individuals experiencing the most inhumane violence while still being politically silenced? What if African Spirituality was still the core and at the center of the African continent or perhaps was allowed to be fully integrated through the recognition of African traditional healers? Would Humans require the unreachable international human rights court/laws to prove their existence or that they also deserve to share the space, materials and be part and parcel of nation building? Would the world be learning about their ontological history from the lens of western interlopers or a western archive? These are questions that I grapple with as I sit down to construct this chapter at this early hour.

Cultural/Religious Contamination Leading to Claiming Insanity: A Disablement

Colonial mental health systems in the Gold Coast contradict Indigenous social norms while forcefully embedding colonial norms re-creating, destabilizing, and disempowering the indigenous. These will be visible through several discrepancies from apprehension/confinements based on social behaviours that went against the civilizing goals to medical reports and laws governing the institutionalization of the Indigenes. This chapter focuses on discourses of Akan

spirituality from the archives; showcasing some discrepancies from court documented cases that led to, destabilized or contributed to the oppressive culture that still permeates Ghana today.

The structural adjustment for civilizing the barbaric did not acknowledge or find ways to integrate African religion/spiritual practices but rather maddened their cultural/spiritual practices. The chapter seeks to interrogate by asking what role civilization played in forcing ‘insanity/madness’¹⁶ on those that do not conform or behave in line with colonial goals particularly during the periods of 1920 – 1950s on the Gold Coast.

Madness and insanity are labels that were imported by the Europeans during the trading enterprises (see Foucault, 1988). This language stemmed from 1600 upwards when the Dutch and other European interlopers arrived at the Gulf of Guinea. Gathering already extensive knowledge on the pre-colonial classifications of the Indigenous, I start with the narration of some of the insane or not insane cases that made it to the courts for judgement.

Narrating Madness

The questions the colonials continuously asked in various communication reports between the colonial office and head office in Britain were: Who is a criminal and who is a criminal lunatic? Who is insane and who is not? What do we do with someone who was insane and confined as a Criminal Lunatic and then became sane during their time in confinement? What should be done to someone who showed to be insane during the act of a crime but seems sane after? As they believed that there was a high probability of lapsing back to insanity because the colonials considered Black madness hereditary. They found conflicting answers or found no answers to these questions, leaving them to use their non-medical judgement or turn a ‘blind eye’

¹⁶ “‘Insanity’ and ‘lunacy’ were the standard eighteenth-century terms for mental disorder and remained so through the nineteenth century, while the eighteenth-century ‘madhouses’ gradually became ‘asylums’ before eventually being transmogrified into ‘hospitals for the insane’ (Scull, 1993, p. 2).

to the maddening illegalities; leaving it open to speculate that the colonials used the Indigenes of the colonies as 'lab rats' particularly because of several discrepancies when it came to institutionalizing those they classified as mad. It is these questions that guide this chapter ending with how individuals were classified, socialized and institutionalized.

I outline the processes then provide analysis after linking accounts of pre-formation colonials such as Bowdich (1819) who used language such as temporary insanity, but particularly Rattray (1923) as he was said to provide a more accurate depiction of the Gold Coast (Gyekye, 1987) and because his accounts also depict languages such as episodic madness during spiritual gatherings and offerings:

On the death of a King, all the Customs which have been made for the subjects who have died during his reign, must be simultaneously repeated by the families, (the human sacrifices as well as the carousals and pageantry) to amplify that for the monarch, which is also solemnised, independently, but the same time, in every excess of extravagance and barbarity. The brothers, sons, and nephews of the King, affecting temporary insanity, burst forth with their muskets, and fire promiscuously amongst the crowd; even a man of rank, if they meet him, is their victim, nor is their murder of him or any other, on such an occasion, visited or prevented; the scene can scarcely be imagined. Few persons of rank dare to stir from their houses for the first two or three days, but religiously drive forth all their vassals and slaves, as most acceptable composition of their own absence. . . Here human sacrifices are frequent and ordinary, to water the graves of the Kings. (Bowdich, 1819, p. 288-89)

In such case, I explore the charges placed on the Indigenous as it relates to the descriptions of Bowdich and Rattray and if the labels placed on them are related to their religious drive to

“water the graves of the Kings” (Bowdich, 1819, p. 289) or if the natives are acting insane in order to destabilize the civilization process and as a way of resistance? Or are they actually experiencing an episodic madness and were the madness labels they were given justified?

Rituals in the Akan Custom/Tradition/Culture/Religion

Rites of Passages is defined by the “passing through or crossing over a threshold; formalities in dealings with strangers; rites in connexion with adoptions, initiation, ordination; with the changes of the seasons of the year; and lastly . . . rites practices at birth, puberty, marriage, and death” (Rattray, 1927, p. 48). Malidoma Some (1994) also defined ritual as a way to “create harmony between the human world and the world of the gods,, ancestors and nature” (p. 32). This section looks at the Rites of Passage rituals that have required the life of humans in the Akan tradition, in order to create a special entry that provides better understanding of the sacrificial killings that possess an individual to enter into a state of episodic madness, even though the colonial era labeled it as ‘insanity’:

A very large proportion of the so-called human sacrifices that are always adduced as evidence . . . were really nothing more than public executions of criminals who, after condemnation, had been reserved until victims were required for some religious ceremony in which the sacrifice of human life was considered essential . . . but it must not be forgotten that it is only within comparatively recent times that the death penalty has been reserved for cases of wilful homicide even in England. Formerly, and at a time too when the English were infinitely more civilized than the Ashanti’s, men and women were hanged or burned almost daily for offences that would now be considered trivial. (Claridge 1915, pp. 188-189).

These offerings can be seen during religious festivals, Rites of Passages such as the death of a king, chief or queen-mothers, paying tribute to the gods of the land and Onyanme. Ashanti's reverence for their religion to the ancestral spirit particularly to the Supreme Being (see concept of personhood by Gyekye, 1987), the lesser gods which are those "certain powers quite beyond those of any human being" (Spiritual Medicine Man/Okomfo) and the spirit of the dead who they believe have some form of influence over the living being (Sarpong, 1967, p. 2). Claridge's (1915) quote also provides us with some insights in line with Foucault on the triviality of offences leading to burning or one being hanged within civilized England.

This systemic study by earlier anthropologist titled *Les Rites de Passage* was to observe the different ceremonies among the "primitive people" (as cited by Rattray, 1927). One aspect of the funeral rites of passage dedicated to the King of Ashanti are said to be 'blood-lust' and the "consequent apparently indiscriminate slaughter of victims" (p. 104) a ritual that Rattray claims "Europeans seems to have an innate fear of . . . this, psycho-analyst calls *thanatophobia*" (Rattray, 1927, p. 105). But I disagree with Rattray's latter comment as to the Europeans having a fear of thanatophobia because earlier interloper Claridge (1915) accounted for some blood thirst violence performed by his European counterparts:

Captain Harding apparently considered the two chief actors in this scene to be of greater value on account of their courage and strength and sentenced them to be flogged and scarified, but, with utmost barbarity, caused the women to be hoisted up by her thumbs and flogged and slashed with knives until she died. (Claridge, 1915, p. 175)

Another form of cruelty that was also accounted for was during the transportation of the enslaves in cases where they were trying to revolt during their voyages (see Claridge, 1915 both volumes 1 & 2).

The slaves are said to have believed that mutilation would prove a bar to their entry into the spirit world, and some inhuman captains of ships did not hesitate to amputate the limbs of a few in order to terrorize the remainder. (Claridge, 1915, p. 175)

To inflict hopelessness, stripping them of their humanness, dying without dignity and breaking their connecting path to the spirit world, their ancestors and their land—a disembodied barbaric act. Claridge's accounts lay bare the inhumane activities employed by his European counterparts that Rattray was trying to cover up; an attempt to erase colonials' barbaric tendencies. This is another reason why Nkrumah's, Diop's and Dei's call to Sankofa with a critical lens is necessary while sifting through historical claims and knowledge as these omissions can create a damaging identity moving forward.

Earlier European accounts also state that:

Several Slaves of the Deceased are killed and sacrific'd on his account, in order to serve him in the other World; as are also and especially the Bossum, or those which he in his Life had dedicated to his False god, being one of his Wives, and one of his principal servants: But what is most abominable, is that several poor wretched Men, who *through* Age or Inability become incapable of Labour, are sold on purpose to be made Victims in there accursed Offerings. 'Tis a most deplorable Spectacle to see these miserable Creatures killed in the most barbarous Manner in the World; what with Hacking, Piercing, Tormenting they endure a Thousand Deaths. (Bosman, 1705, p. 231)

It is with Bosman's (1705) quote that we see that those who are deemed incapable of Labour or the aged are sold as victims for sacrificial purposes. This raises new questions as Claridge (1915) mentioned that the victims were criminals while Bosman states otherwise in his earlier account. Such claims will require an oral traditional research providing clearer insights and to validate

Bosman and/or Claridge' accounts. Bosman's claim is also contrary to earlier Europeans account; de Marees (1602) who indicated that:

Furthermore, people who are blind or have some other physical defect, such as being Crippled or Lame, and who, because of their infirmity cannot earn their living, are appointed by the King to work the Bellows for Blacksmiths. Others are sent to help people to press [extract] Palm Oil, or to grind Paint, which such deformed people are able to do, or to perform such trades as they can manage in order to earn a living. Thus no poor people (I mean people who beg for their bread) are found here: they are appointed to [do work by which they may] earn living; so that the inhabitants do not live on food from others, following the same custom as those of China. (p. 177).

Receiving three very different accounts stemming from a span of 300 years makes it difficult to conclude whether those who are deemed 'incapable, crippled' or in today's term disabled were used as human sacrifices during the King's Rites of Passages. Again, this will be treated in my ongoing future research through oral traditional history interactions with Indigenous elders.

Moving forward with Claridge's account, he states that:

[The] slaughter of prisoners that always follows a victory does not arise from wanton cruelty, for all these men would be of some value as slaves, but is intended as a thank-offering to the gods, to whom it is believed prisoners of war are specially acceptable as having fought on the side of their own opposing gods. Others again are killed to wait on the chiefs who have fallen. This custom, therefore owes its origin to feelings of love and respect for the dead and veneration for the gods, and not to any inherent cruelty of disposition. Human sacrifices are, in fact, prompted by the purest motives. (Claridge, 1915, pp. 437-438)

The executioners who slaughter these prisoners are said to be men or women who are in a “state of frenzy, and by some psychological process . . . find . . . promiscuous killing the only satisfactory relief to their emotions” (Rattray, 1927, p. 108); could this be linked to the rampant changes of insanity while committing the act of murder and then sane after several days or months? This act is what Rattray also called episodic madness:

A spirit may take possession of a man and he may appear to have gone mad, and this state may last sometimes even for a year. Then the priest of some powerful god may be consulted and he may discover, through his god, that it is some spirit which has come upon the man (or woman). The one upon whom the spirit has come is now bidden to prepare a brass pan, and collect water, leaves and 'medicine' of specific kinds. The possessed one will dance, for sometimes two days, with short intervals for rest, to the accompaniment of drums, and singing. Quite suddenly he will leap into the air and catch something in both his hands (or he may plunge into the river and emerge holding something he had brought up). He will either case fold this thing to his breast, and water will be at once sprinkled upon it to cool it, when it will be thrust into the brass pan and quickly covered up. (Rattray, 1923, p. 147)

Someday this spirit might descend upon someone who would then become their priest. Several priests and priestesses I had spoken to had told me that this was how they had first become priests. They had been seized with a spirit and had either lost all consciousness or seemingly had become mad. (Rattray, 1923, p. 182)

He now began to quiver, every muscle of his body seemed to twitch: his heels worked spasmodically upon the carpet; he removed the fibre end of the cow tail from his mouth—he had been holding it between his teeth. (Rattray, 1923, p. 180)

Rattray (1923) allows some insight into several processes that suggests that the Indigenous bodies being occupied by spirits. These accounts also provide the relations between those who perform the killings, those who are killed, for the purpose they are killed, and the false psychological reactions/effects on the Europeans. It permits a better understanding of whether the Indigenes diagnosed with madness by the European are linked to any of Rattrays spiritual possession claims. Leaving one to speculate whether the victims of the Akan's human sacrifices were those that were considered criminals and prisoners of wars as per Rattray (1923, 1927) or whether those who are aged and incapable of labour (disabled) were victims of such sacrifices, a complex account by de Marees (1602), Bosman (1705), and Claridge (1915) that requires further interrogation and interactions with the Indigenous in order to come to a clearer understanding and concrete conclusion.

Religious Disablement

Since the above section has laid out Akan forms of spiritual acts through the lens of the Europeans leading to what was later used to madden the bodies of the Indigenous who were said to be possessed or in the state of episodic madness; this section provides some narratives of Christian missionary radicalization that one can argue created a radical Indigenous which became a disablement through misconceptions.

They (the Indigenous) heard the teachings of the missionaries which, to them, were so novel and strange that it is not surprising that they were the cause of a great deal of misconception and induced the people to believe that by adopting this new faith they

would derive many important temporal benefits . . . although the vast majority thus fell away, there were a very few who adopted Christianity in all sincerity and their numbers slowly increased; a fact which seems to have been largely due to the more politic and temperate conduct. (Claridge, 1915, pp. 465-467)

Is this misconception and belief in temporal benefits another reason why those who claimed insanity when charged with attempted murder or murder also mentioned that God/Jesus sent them to kill? Some of the colonial court cases will be examined for traces of misconceptions and what the benefits of claiming insane the missionaries/European Gods afforded them:

These early Christians, however, became imbued with a fanatical zeal in the cause of their new faith and a contempt for their former belief's that let them into extremes, and the missionaries seem to have made no attempt to curb them. In the end these people went to such lengths that they quite overstepped the bounds of all reason and ordinary tolerance, and so exasperated the pagan community that serious trouble arose and nearly involved the whole country in a religious war. (Claridge, 1915, p. 466)

This is a pivotal discovery to the claim of disablement as they poisoned the minds of the Indigenous with their religion and did not make any attempt to curb what Claridge (1915) claims led to fanatical zeal and extremist followers.

The priests found guilty of conspiracy to poison were publicly flogged in the market place at Cape Coast and subsequently imprisoned for five years . . . while their female confederates received sentences of two years; imprisonment each. But though this exposure seems to have caused a tremendous sensation at the time and the people temporarily lost faith in their beliefs. (Claridge, 1915, p. 473)

The two quotes by Claridge, (1915) depicts the disruptions that early missionary Christians caused including the imprisonment of the priest and the female confederates; but not only that, it also created a loss of faith in Indigenous belief systems. A disablement that may have angered the gods of the land. This form of religious disruption stemming from European religion and the traditional forms of spirituality, performing Rites of Passages and body possession of the gods will also help in understanding the different disablements within the different cases that will be provided in this chapter.

Insane or not Insane? A Discrepancy of the Colonial Institutionalizing System

‘Insanity with animalistic tendencies’ was a label that was placed on the Indigenous when the European interlopers came into contact with them. The Europeans also entered the Coast of Guinea with an understanding of insanity, madness and othering that led to the body stratifications leading to the commodification of Africans for capitalist gains.

Several cases were accounted for after the formalization of colonialism. I speculate that some of these cases were used as a way to demonize, and validate why ‘Black barbarians’ needed so-called saving and ‘taming’ through the use of social control by Europeans. I lay out some of the colonial era cases excavated from both the Accra and Cape Coast Regional Archives; this laying out is to let the archival materials tell its own story while showcasing some of the reasons provided to institutionalize the Indigenous through a medical certificate from the medical professional (alienist)¹⁷. It also creates an afterthought to why a particular case brings to mind several questions of insanity, sanity, or spirit possession due to some form of Rights of

¹⁷ As per Scull (1993), “the medical men engaged in trading in lunacy increasingly referred to themselves as asylum superintendents’ and then, borrowing from the French, as ‘alienists.’ Only in the last third of the nineteenth century did the German term, ‘Psychiatric,’ begin to enter general usage though those running the asylums were by then more inclined to call themselves ‘medical psychologists” (p. 2).

Passage; leaving some of these questions unanswered as it is beyond the scope of the archival documents.

Background of Colonial Statistics

Statistical data were scantily available during the official colonial start as some documents were destroyed, not all colonial administrative systems were recorded, and some may have been transported to colonial headquarters in Britain during Ghana's independence (Nkrumah, 1964; Stoler, 2009). An exploration of the British archives might provide a more vivid analysis/connectivity of data however, this is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Below are some statistical data from a lunatic asylum that was found during my time excavating and exploring the Regional Archive Accra and Cape Coast and as already mentioned, some dating back to 1887 were badly damaged.

Figure 8: Displaying endangered documents found during my visit at PRAAD Ghana. Pictures taken by Evelyn Kissi

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COLONIAL REPORTS.—ANNUAL.

GOA COAST. 1892.

HOSPITALS.

There are four public hospitals maintained by the Government at the following places:—

	Number of beds.
Accra	40
Cape Coast	32
Elmina	28
Krifa	9

There are five dispensaries attached to each hospital and free quarters at the following places, where also a medical officer is posted. At these dispensaries large numbers of natives are daily treated gratuitously:—

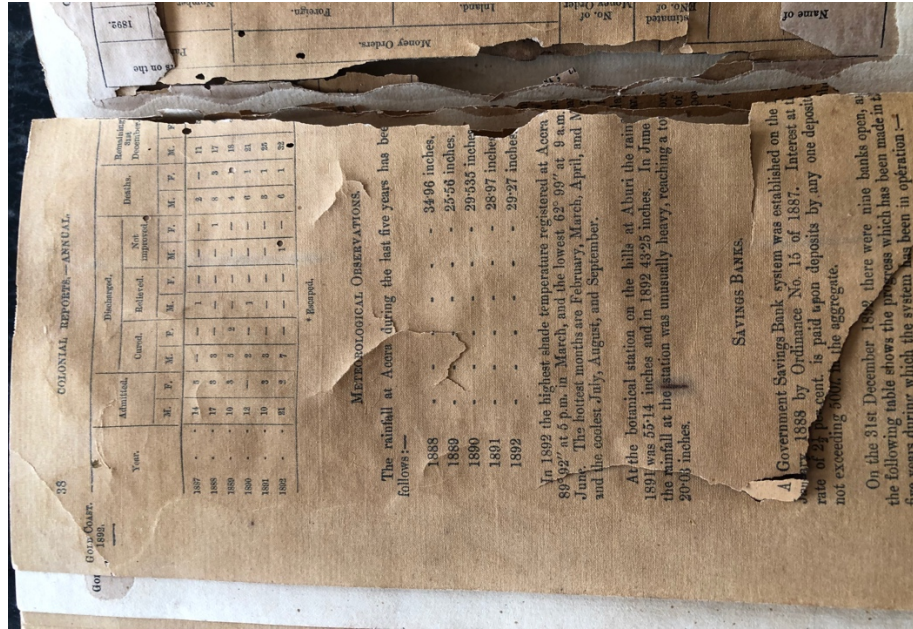
Accra. Saltpond. Winneba. Ada.

During the last five years the following in-patients have been admitted:—

Year.	Patients Discharged.			Deaths.	Totals.
	Cured.	Relieved.	Not improved.		
1887	710	226	12	59	1,007
1888	686	246	32	88	1,052
1889	760	179	40	47	1,025
1890	272	212	41	46	570
1891	840	272	47	71	1,230

PUBLIC LUNATIC ASYLUM.

A lunatic asylum was established in Accra in 1887, and the following male and female lunatics have been treated in it:—



The above annual report shows data from the lunatic asylum as early as 1887 – 1892, with an increase in confinement in this period. It depicts that the confinement of Indigenous males was higher than the females. In the beginning of 1887, there were 14 males and five females confined as lunatics but by the end of the year, there were 11 males left with two deaths and one believed to have been relieved of their insanity; the total data for the females is inconclusive due to damages to the document.¹⁸ By 1892, the report shows that 21 males were confined and only two females; seven males were reported cured, and six deaths, leaving 32 males confined in total by 31st December 1892 and again no data for the females. In 1896, the cemetery report of the colony shows 1059 deaths which includes both Europeans and Indigenous; it depicts that 591 of those deaths were males while 468 were females and 439 were

¹⁸ ADM 5: Colonial Reports, — Annual (Gold Coast 1892). Archival picture taken by Evelyn Kissi.

infants: Out of these reported deaths, only 18 were Europeans, leaving one to conclude that 1041 were Natives.¹⁹

The Medical Report on the Gold Coast Colony: For the year end 31st December 1898 reported that 19 male and eight female patients were confined in the asylum; nine males and two females were reported dead due to chronic diseases and lack of ‘suitable clothing’: This report also shows how the bodies of those confined were commodified into labouring in order not to be idle; a natural defect that the Europeans placed on the Indigenous stemming from their first contact (Fanon, 2004, p. 221; also see Bosman, 1705; Bowdich, 1819; de Marees, 1602). The males were employed as gardeners while “female patient have nothing to do but keep their quarters clean: the washing of the General Hospital was formerly done by them, but it did not prove a satisfactory arrangement, and it is now done by a trained men.”²⁰ This shows that women’s cleaning/work was seen as just chores and therapeutic without the attachment of remuneration but becomes paid work when men had to do the same exact washing and cleaning; a stratified, gendering and commodification of bodies even in confinement. It also shows the imposition of the European patriarchal system being enforced within an institution for rehabilitating the insane for the new civilized society.

There were 2417 confined prisoners reported, with eight deaths in 1898; with only three cases of *Mania* reported. Ernst (2013) states that in “Greek antiquity and for centuries afterwards it was conceived of in terms of humoral theory, being characterised by a host of leading complaints in the absence of fever” (p. 112) its characteristics ranges from “fits of fury and general delusions to confusion, jolliness and excitation to aggression” and was also referred to as insane (p. 112). The 1898 report shows that Mental Diseases are placed in a subsection with

¹⁹ ADM 5: Government of the Gold Coast Departmental Reports (1896)

²⁰ ADM 5/1/54: GOVERNMENT OF THE GOLD COAST—DEPARTMENT REPORTS 1898, (p. 318)

added diagnoses such as Idiocy not only referred to “cognitively impaired elderly people and the starving, but those starving, but also those suffering from various kinds of what is now referred to as intellectual disability” (Ernst, 2013, p. 126); Melancholia was first referred to as “a kind of mania or madness that presented itself in reduced behavioural inclinations. . . . being used in plural ways over the centuries in relation to spiritual, social, political and cultural context” (Ernst, 2013, p. 115); Dementia as described by Ernst (2013) displays manifestation that is said to be related to “neuropathology or as resulting from physical disorders . . . delimited from schizophrenia” (p. 123); and Delusional Insanity during the 1920s was applied if “a patient has previously been diagnosed with schizophasia” or it can also be applied to “any disorder with delusions and hallucinations that did not exhibit major disturbance of affect” (Ernst, 2013), p. 120) as these were said to be nineteenth-century European traditional modes of diagnosing: But weren’t reported due to the lack of proper medical alienist certifications and orders from their home office, Britain.²¹

By 1899, there is a full Departmental Report with more details and recording of what was happening in the colony; this report provides insight into the Lunatic Reporting, which states that:

There is one Central Lunatic Asylum in the Colony, and this is now situated [*sic*]²² in the Castle at Christiansburg, near Accra, which has been excellently fitted for the reception of the patients . . . During the year there were 28 lunatics on the sick list, and of these 11 died from Phthisis, Asthenia, Beri-Beri, Dysentery, Diarrhoea, Cerebral Haemorrhage, Syphilis, Abdominal Tumour, Kidney diseases.²³

²¹ Ibid, (p. 319)

²² I am using *sic* only when necessary in order to convey the message when using direct quotes.

²³ ADM 5/1/55: GOVERNMENT OF THE GOLD COAST—Department Reports 1899

And the most questionable of the report is that “[no] records of Post Mortems have been kept,”²⁴ a report that leads to the question whether these inmates were used as ‘lab rats’ to test western diseases and therefore, performing a post mortem might reveal evidence of violence. Or there were no records of Post Mortems because it was codified as connecting to colonial secrecy purposefully rendered into ashes (Stoler, 2009). The lunatic asylum report for the year also reported that there were 67 lunatic cases from mental disorders such as: Subacute Mania, Mania, Melancholia, Delusional Insanity, Epilepsy, Dementia, and Idiocy. Two new sub-sections were also added to this report as “Brought Forward” and “Functional Nervous Disorders”²⁵:

Brought Forward	Functional Nervous Disorder
Encephalites Abscess of Brain Congestion of Brain	Apoplexy Paralysis Chorea Epilepsy Neuralgia Hysteria

The 1901 *Report on the Hospital at Accra for the Year Ending 31st December* states that: [In] more ways . . . been an eventful one in the history of this hospital, and never has its benefit been more marked, as the admission of Europeans has exceeded in number those of any other year . . . the natives have not patronized the Institution as much as formerly; and this can be accounted for by the fact that, owing to the undermining of the department. . . . The Lunatic have been brought back from Christiansburg castle to the old Asylum within the Hospital Compound. . . The Asylum is under the direct supervision of a medical officer, the garden is kept cultivated, the grounds clean, and

²⁴ Ibid, Report Upon the Lunatic Asylum. (p. 262).

²⁵ Ibid, Monthly Return of Diseases and Death in 1899, At the Following Institutions (p. 272)

further, we can occasionally utilise the inmates as helpers round the hospital, as the four labourers are not equal to the task of keeping things right.²⁶

The question: why would the natives undermine European medicine? The quote provides us an answer to this question. The report also shows a systemized negation which attributes to European obsession of commodification of bodies and idleness, training the criminal through “the process of reintegration that is extremely productive” for the benefit of maintaining the colonial empire in the name of civilizing the primitive lunatic (Fanon, 2004, p. 219).

Such obsession to the commodification of the bodies of those institutionalized was also due to the fact that patient labour creates a self-sustaining institution which brings forth the “exploitation and power . . . whenever vulnerable people are not fully recompensated for the value of their labour” (Ernst, 2013, p. 193). Labour of the inmates was also seen to have its own benefits; inmates were easily controlled, they escaped the various treatments, and sleep well at night without any disturbance which then lead to the professionalization of the occupational therapy (Ernst, 2013). This use of power and exploitation of vulnerable groups for their own (colonials) gains in the name of therapy not only continues to build an empire of pathologizing the Indigenous bodies but also to create a mental enslavement that feeds the capitalist system leading to Gorman’s argument on the invisible saviour. It also creates a mindset of an undesirable body but a contributor of economic enrichment though, not without a control system (Ernst, 2013). The year end report also provided more diseases and disabilities relating to the nerves, mental, eyes, ears, nose, circulatory and respiratory systems.²⁷

By 1904, the *Colony Reports—Annual, No. 464. Gold Coast. REPORT FOR 1904*, states that the colony only has one lunatic asylum which is located in Accra: 71 confined patients

²⁶ ADM 5/1/56: Departmental Reports—For the Year 1901, (p. 18).

²⁷ Ibid, (p. 6)

accounted for by the end of 1904, 83 males and 22 females, 30 were discharged, 14 deaths, one escape.²⁸

The chronological statistics shown within this section provides a glimpse of the types of mental health and/or debilitating illnesses that were used to confine the Indigenous, particularly during the first decade of colonialism supporting Fanon's (2004) claim that the "very structure of society has been depersonalized on a collective level. A colonized people is thus reduced to a collection of individuals who owe their very existence to the presence of the colonizer" (pp. 219-220); hence, a deviated body will go through the process of reintegration through European ways of rehabilitation (Fanon, 2004).

New Social Phenomena Leading to Madness and a Surge in Institutionalization

A hostile, ungovernable, and fundamentally rebellious Nature is in fact synonymous in the colonies with the bush the mosquitoes, the natives, and disease. Colonization has succeeded once this untamed Nature has been brought under control. (Fanon, 2004, p. 182)

This section includes native Criminal Lunatic cases that are considered rebellious under the new form of being through the civilizing mandate of colonization; it will show the different cases that were considered criminal lunatic and the processes used for re-integration, if any. The chapter unpacks some of the different diagnoses that were reported by the Europeans over the period of 1907 – 1940 in order to analyse from an anti-colonial perspective and also to outline the processes of taming the untamed raising the question of whether any of these were diagnosed as being in a Manic/lunatics state as defined by Ernst (2013). I also outline the different disabling systems leading to discrepancies in Ghana's mental health rhetoric which I argue led to the shift in cultural norms. A reality that has socially constructed what is considered "our culture" (which

²⁸ Colonial Reports—Annual. No 465, Gold Coast. Report For 1904. Presented to both houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty. October, 1905.

I have also debunked in an earlier chapter of this dissertation) when it comes to the inhumane acts towards persons with disability and the realities of those confined within ‘*Asylum Down Mental Institution*’ Accra, Ghana or those with mental illness.

By 1930, colonialism had already developed firm with roots in the Gold Coast colony along with the existence of several other forms of confining for those that rejected and revolted against the new type of civilization. During 1929, communications from the Colonial Asylum in Accra to the Home Office indicate that Britain was still enquiring as to the processes for discharging prisoners, and criminal lunatic prisoners confined in the asylum but who were later certified sane:

[These] men are now reported to be sane, yet they are confined in a lunatic asylum and surrounded by actually insane people, as the obsolete aura asylum makes little or no provision for separating and grading patients according to their mental states.

2. Under the circumstances I am of the opinion that they should be removed from the asylum and ‘confined’ in a prison. (dated 29.x.29)²⁹

A response to the above question dated 26th October, 1929 simply states that “. . . they are silent on the point as to how long the convicts are to be confined in prison.”³⁰ They, meaning those in charge from the home office.

Another letter dated 13th December, 1929, regarding the questions of feeding, clothing, discipline and the employment of the inmates which ask for advice if voted funds should be used for inmates food and clothing; how they should be disciplined; and if they should engage in the prisons’ work therapy schemes.³¹ The answer to the following question dated 27th December,

²⁹ CSO 11/8/07, Vol. 1: Criminal Lunatics – Condition of Discharge from Lunatic Asylum (p. 4)

³⁰ Ibid, p. 7

³¹ Ibid, p. 10-11

1929 shows that there are no legal objections to feeding and clothing through the allocated prison funds; in terms of disciplining, the letter states that the D. of P. has no “disciplinary powers over these inmates of the prison except [*sic*] in so far as may be necessary to prevent them from escaping.”³² In the case of employment, the letter states that the choice of working should be placed on the men and they should be left alone if they wish not to work.³³ But why are these questions only being asked in 1929, when the colonial era is over 40 years into existence? Ernst (2013) identifies that 1927 and onward saw ‘vigorous efforts’ of the introduction and integration of the occupational therapy (p. 194); but one can also add that work therapy was used as a self-financing method as increase in institutionalization was also seen within this same period.

The communication outlined above validates Fanon’s (2004) argument which states that colonization in itself is a confinement therefore, a confinement within a confinement only brews confusion as the legalities surrounding a confined certified insane Indigenous was never a question that was brought forth even within the pre-colonial era; this is due to the fact that the Europeans during their time surveying the Gold Coast, already declared the Indegens as “other,” demonic and possessed with some barbaric/primitive spirits needing alignment/taming (see Bosman, Rattray, Fanon, Nkrumah). Therefore the untamed now appears in several hierarchies of severities needing taming, ‘warehousing’ and ‘maintenance of order’ (Ernst, 2013; Fanon, 2004).

During this same time period, archival documents dated 16th December, 1929 shows that some of these conversations were due to the high increase of confinement of Criminal Lunatics leading to overcrowding both in the prisons and in the asylums. A letter from the Colonial

³² Ibid

³³ Ibid, p. 11

Asylum Alienist Officer, in a proposed new development report of a new asylum in point 3 focuses on the increase of those seen as insane states that:

With regards to the question of expansion it is an unfortunate fact that insanity or at least certified lunatics, have increased during the past 10 years both in the Gold Coast and other countries. For example, for in the year ending 1919 . . . [and] for the year ending 1928. With the advent of a new type of civilization and the corresponding changes which it imposes on the existing social code a further increase of the numbers of the insane is practically a certainty. Also with more humane and more hygienic surroundings the remaining chronic cases will accumulate and therefore necessitate expansion. It is necessary therefore to evolve a type of hospital which will be adaptable to expansion in the most economical manner.³⁴

A five page detailed report which provides a vivid picture that confinements of certified lunatics between 1910 – 1919 and to 1928 increased dramatically due to a new form of social norms placed on the Indigenous in the name of civilizing them; new social norms such as being forced within a militant space in a colony that already has several “apparatus for the social control of the mad” a weapon that justifies difference (Scull, 1993, p. 3).³⁵ The report also shows that more upcoming restrictions will necessitate further expansion in years to come; hence a larger space for confinement is needed to accommodate those who deviate and revert to their own Indigenous ways of knowing. The detail report also correlates with Rattray’s time of collecting and documenting data on the Indigenous ways of worshipping which validates my main argument that

³⁴ CSO 11/8/10. No. 2181/30. NEW LUNATIC ERECTION (p. 2)

³⁵ I used Scull because Sociological analysis and research centered on the social history of medicine and psychiatrist and the United Kingdom.

institutionalization of the Indigenes increased during the formalization of colonization due to the Indigenous performing their spiritual offerings.

This same report suggested that several wards should be included in the newly constructed asylum in point 4(e):

The hospital should in my opinion, consist the following portions on both male and female sides.

- a) An admission ward suitable for the reception of cases and where observations could be made for the purpose of grading the patients according to their clinical features.
- b) A hospital ward where the physically sick and the senile could be treated in a modern and human manner.
- c) A convalescent ward where those recovering from the acute phase of their illness and those awaiting their discharge could have a greater degree of liberty of action in order to readjust themselves to their problems of the future
- d) A ward suitable to the acutely violent types of individual with a series of single rooms attached in order that the patients may cause no injury to others or sustain injury.
- e) A ward to contain the chronic quiet cases who the majority of the manual labour in the Asylum and its surroundings and therefore require preferential treatment.
- f) As many of the chronic cases are noisy and mischievous, in my opinion, their association with any of the above grades would be mutually detrimental. A ward therefore with single rooms attached would be required for their care.
- g) A semi infirmary ward for the care of the senile case and those individuals who are quiet but require constant individual attention on account of their lack of personal cleanliness.³⁶

³⁶ CSO 11/8/10. No. 2181/30. NEW LUNATIC ERECTION (p. 2-3)

Bodies and minds capable enough for manual labour receive preferential treatments for keeping quiet? Borrowing Szasz's (2010)³⁷ question, "how does (unwanted) behavior become transformed into (mental) illness" (p. 272) by means of colonial rhetoric of civilizing and taming? Particularly when one is aware that diagnoses of diseases, biological processes of both the bodies and minds and behavioural norms are socially constructed and varies "from time to time, and culture to culture" (Szasz, 2010, p. 272). A "social construct and 'chronicity' [is] no more than a stigmatising label and a sinister attempt . . ." (Ernst, 2013, p. 30) that leads to unjust confinement.

The Europeans before the formalization of colonization classified several accounts of Indigenous behaviours as: "[by] nature they are warm and hot-blooded" (de Marees, 1602, p. 32) "they are wild" (de Marees, 1602, p. 99). "The inhabitants are cruel and evil. . . . They always try to cheat and assault any foreign nations which go there, falling upon them very murderously" (de Marees, 1602, p. 15) "They grow stout and fat, and tend to become Men as strong as Trees" (de Marees, 1602, p. 24). Bosman (1705) also alluded that "Negros were very idle and not easily prevailed on to work" (p. 128). How can those minds, bodies and souls with all these transformed medicalized behaviours be tamed under the 'Penal' control of the colonial masters?

During the year 1939, two cases in particular agree with Szasz's (2010) and Ernst's (2013) arguments on how behaviours are pathologized as mental illness in a socially constructed attempt to label and warehouse; a letter sent from the District Magistrate Cape Coast to the colonial governor regarding the release of *Kwao, Remand Prisoner of unsound mind* states that:

Hon. C. S.,

³⁷ Dr. Szasz who was a Psychiatrist and have written several books on the myths in Mental illness.

It is now for H.E. to consider the Court record and decide where the unfortunate creature should be confined, a matter upon which the Law Officers are not in a position to advise.

2. If it is a case of a man being sent to the Accra asylum and taking his place along with criminal lunatics [*sic*] more criminal and/or more lunatic than himself I would propose that a nolle prosequi be entered and the man released, provided the Alienist is of the opinion that the man is not a dangerous lunatic, which opinion I think he holds.

3. I make the suggestion for the following reasons:

- a) the man is, I think, of simple mind.
- b) the charge is merely that of setting fire to a grass hut and
- c) he has been incarcerated since last February [*sic*].³⁸

The other case is of Suna Basaberimie – Remand Prisoner of unsound mind:

Hon. C.S.,

All we know about this man is that a person called Ali Basaberimie has accused him of receiving a cover cloth value 7/6d and that he is incapable of making his defence to this accusation in a Court of Law, although apparently he is not dangerous to himself or others.

2. The question which arises is whether he is to be incarcerated in a lunatic asylum until he is fit to answer this charge, which on investigation may . . . be entirely baseless.

3. I have stated on another file that in my opinion in case of this kind enquiry should be made by the Magistrate into the charge, to the extent of deciding whether there is a case to be tried, before . . .³⁹

These two cases show that their charges were baseless and their behaviours were pathologized as unsound mind because it deviates and it's not conventional to the European definition of normal.

Point 5 of the same report continues stating that:

³⁸ CSO 11/8/34, File No. 1605/31: Sub-File No. 19. Kwao, Remand Prisoner of Unsound Mind (26.7.39, p. 20).

³⁹ Ibid, (p. 21)

. . . Criminal Lunatics of the Colony are also confined in the Colonial Asylum, provision would have to be made for their treatment and detention. As they are primarily insane and secondarily criminal and also for economical reasons it is advised that no distinction should be made in their treatment. Their segregation would enforce increased building and expenses with no increased recovery rate of financial benefit.⁴⁰

They are ‘primarily’ insane and ‘secondarily criminals’ and confining them is economically increasing the cost allocated to civilize them? Even though their land is being raped of resources, their ways of knowing and their humanness, they are institutionalized based on their deviated behaviours. Denoting that the institutionalization and treatments of those confined and segregated in the asylum for societal good even though they are no threat to themselves or the society, they just did not behave within the socially constructed norms laid for them. If this was the case, then why not revert back to pre-colonial early European accounts that state that there were no poor people roaming about the streets (Bosman, 1705), due to implemented intervention that supported every citizen. Bosman (1705) also makes it clear in his account that, “[any] Negro falling sick here is diligently enough attended, in proportion to his Circumstances . . .” (Bosman, 1705, pp. 221-222). This form of community and/or family care was also utilized in some cases during the colonial prisons/asylums overcrowding, showing that even the colonials reverted to family and community caregiving.

Some of these were seen in the archives when the Colonial Secretary sent an inquiry to the acting commissioner of the central Province of Cape Coast stating that:

⁴⁰ CSO 11/8/10. No. 2181/30. NEW LUNATIC ERECTION (p. 3)

I am directed by the Governor to inform you that the Director of Medical and Sanitary services reports that a number of natives domiciled in the Gold Coast, who are inmates of the Lunatic Asylum at Accra, have sufficiently recovered their dainty so as to be proper persons to be discharged.

2. A list of these persons is enclosed. It is proposed to discharge them to the care of their relatives or of the native authority concerned and I am to request you to cause suitable arrangements to be made for the reception and maintenance of those who may properly be regarded as belonging to your province and to report to this office when this has been done.

3. The list is being forwarded to the Chief Commissioners and the other Provincial Commissioners of the Colony with a similar request.⁴¹

The above communication led to the release of several of those who had completed their time in confined spaces, one inmate, J. H. Welbeck, was released to his uncle who promised to take care of his nephew upon his release. His care was also placed in the hands of the township Chief who also ensured that he would take necessary steps to support the care of Kwa Mensah to take care of his nephew. A list showing the names of several of these form of family and community care can be seen in **Appendix A**. It can be supposed from these cases that families are not just accepting of their own so called ‘insane’ but now classified ‘sane’ family members, but also the head of the community/clan is part of these recovery and acceptance processes.

Discrepancies (British Criminal Lunatic Laws imposed in the British Gold Coast Colony)

Several scholars and ancestors have concluded that colonialism itself was an institutionalizing system that created some form of maddening of the Black Indigenous people

⁴¹ ADM 23/1/226: National Archives of Ghana, 24th June, 1933.

(Nkrumah, Biko, Fanon, Gorman); this of course has also been proven chronologically within this dissertation from all perspectives. This chapter provides several discrepancies that are seen within Ghana's mental health discourses and policies today while also concluding that the systems and stigmatization and the inhuman ways of treating persons with disability today are not from the traditional culture but are rather remnants of the European and colonial systems.

Below, is a particular case that brings to mind several questions of insanity, sanity, and spirit possession due to what might be a form of Rites of Passage resistance; a confusion that raises questions about whether legalized processes were in place during the processes of confinement. Effuah Korantima was certified a lunatic May 9th 1932 by Dr. Alexander McAndrew Gillespie a colonial medical officer in Kumasi. On the 11th of May, 1932 she was adjudged, classified as a proper subject of confinement by His Worship Capt. W Price Jones Police Magistrate Kumasi and transferred from the prison in Kumasi to the Colonial Lunatic Asylum, Accra.⁴²

Korantima was apprehended and charged for the murder of a 3-year-old girl named Ntete whose mother stepped away from her between the hours of 6 pm and 7 pm in the compound of S.P.G Church, Abosso; the murder weapon (a knife) was found under the pillow in Gruma Chokosi's room. Chokosi denied the knife to be his and proved that he was absent during the time of the murder. He was then cleared of the murder, but two witnesses came forward and said that they saw Korantima sitting in front of Chokosi's house on the day and time the crime was committed; she then disappeared immediately after the said crime was reported. She was then arrested and committed to Assizes at Sekondi but was sent to the female prison in Kumasi where she appeared insane and was then transferred to Accra asylum; a murderer, she was well

⁴² CSO 11/8/07: "Criminal Lunatics – Condition of Discharge of From Lunatic Asylum". File No. 2065/30

known to the police as a dangerous character sent to several prisons in Kumasi for assault, wounding and threatening.⁴³

On the 9th of October 1931, Korantima was said to have stabbed a woman “who was not quite right in her mind” named Ebra in Tarkwa; the wounded woman was taken to the hospital but pointed to Korantima before her death as the person who stabbed her.⁴⁴ At this time, Korantima was discharged because there was no evidence forthcoming to validate the deceased’s word. Seen by the authorities as a ‘smart clever’ lunatic, there was a rumour that Korantima drowned her own child, but there was no evidence to prove this charge. On another instance, Korantima was said to have set a keg of gunpowder on fire, which exploded and burnt one of her relatives, but not enough evidence could be gathered to charge her. The Inspector General of Police stated that:

At times she becomes quite normal and appears to be sober and kind to everybody but this does not last long. I am of the opinion that she is far too dangerous a character to be discharged from the colonial Asylum, Accra.⁴⁵

Based on the Inspector General of Police’s report and the Alienist officer, a request dated 9th January, 1933 recommending the discharge of Korantima from the Criminal Asylum was revoked as she was said to have relapsed and will therefore have to stay confined in the asylum as a Criminal Lunatic.⁴⁶

Korantima’s case is complex considering the inspector’s comment which states that she “becomes quite normal and appears to be sober” and kind to everyone around her. Can one conclude that Korantima’s insanity is due to a spirit possession of her body leaving her to enter

⁴³ *ibid*

⁴⁴ *ibid*

⁴⁵ CSO 11/8/07: “Criminal Lunatics – Condition of Discharge of From Lunatic Asylum”. File No. 2065/30

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, File No. 104/29/240

in and out of consciousness or could it be the emotional satisfactory relief from promiscuous killing as accounted for by Rattray (1923)?; as the spirits do not discriminate in terms of the gender of the bodies they occupy. Or could it be based on Claridge's (1915) account of the missionary Christian's teaching which were said to be novel, strange with great misconception leaving the Natives believing that adopting this new faith affords them important temporal benefits such as killing for the sake of their new faith god? Or could it be a mental disorder that required Korantima to be confined as a Criminal Lunatic? Or maybe she is just a smart lunatic? How did her community seek justice for the individuals whose lives were terminated or harmed? Or did the community know her role and continued to harbour her criminality? These questions are asked to generate alternative possibilities and future research. Regretfully, I was unable to obtain Korantima's full case or to trace back to her community to hear what those who may have known her or have heard of her story have to say.

Conclusion

This chapter has created awareness while opening up several spaces for an ongoing dialogue on the politics surrounding the taming of the Indigenous bodies and behaviours through the use of a biological medical weapon. It has laid out some discrepancies of colonial labeling of insanity while also creating hierarchies of inequalities even within confined lunatic spaces. Even 'maddened' Bodies were seen as a commodity through the processes in place for taming those Indigenous who out smarted them and those who are just strong like a tree with too much resistant to be tamed. But at the end of it all, the archival documents laid out several discrepancies leading to the institutionalization of the Indigenous particularly due to social controls that contradicted with the Indigenous' traditional ways of being. Thus validating the main argument of this dissertation that institutionalization of the Indigenes due to their African

spirituality led to an increase in formalized confinement of Indigenous bodies. The chapter further concludes that the Indigenous looked after their sick/disabled, a practice that was also adopted by the colonials but only due to the overcrowding of confined spaces.

Chapter Six—Epilogue

At the intersection of literatures on social policy, disability policy, Nkrumah's approach to anti-colonial social development, global south disability discourse and as a way forward this chapter first looks at defining and understanding social policy and whether pre-colonial/colonial European legacies shaped Nkrumah's anti-colonial social policies. This is followed by how globalizing discourses such as the Social Development Goals and other international development funding's/conditionalities shaped Ghana's contemporary social policies using education as a case study. And lastly, whether and how a resurgence of Critical Nkrumahist social policy can be beneficial for Southern disability justice in order to create an enabling space in Ghana.

Nkrumah's Anti-Colonial Social Policy

A commitment to genuine independence, democracy and social change is essential to the success of any new phase in the struggle for regional and even continental economic, political and cultural integration . . . [which will lead to] an increase in wealth and the insurance that the wealth remains within the country and within the majority, can there be genuine social justice and happiness. (Thiong'o 1986, p. 174)

In the above epigraph, Thiong'o (1986) makes a critical statement provoking Africans (leaders) to understand that commitment is required to create a just world that will bring about a new phase in the struggle for regional and continental freedom. The first step in this process is to understand the struggles at the global level, the continental level, the regional level and then the local level in order to foster change that brings forth economic, political, cultural and social integration; changes that corrects while centering African traditions. Such an approach, Thiong'o claims, will allow Africa's wealth to remain grounded in the continent and be distributed equitably for Her people, a goal that Kwame Nkrumah continuously chased till his death (Biney, 2008). I argue that Thiong'o's call will not only eliminate the argument for limited government

that has restricted human rights claims for persons with disabilities, but also create an Africa without violent development aid as long as Her matters are centered in Her boarders.

Global Policy Context

For decades now, the Global Southern African continent has been subjected to imperial structures by what Nkrumah called neo-colonialism, inflicting on them extreme structural violence that has created a need for extreme interventions and measures (Chernomas & Hudson, 2007; Nkrumah, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964). Some of these structures have made it difficult for the colonized and neo-colonized disabled bodies to fully participate as African Personalities and citizens of their continent due to the socially constructed norms and structures left over by the colonials (Nkrumah, 1962). International instruments and organizations⁴⁷ continue to enact colonial violence when they fail to acknowledge how macro colonially imposed restrictions combined with global expectations of universal policies that ignore how culture and local context have created ‘tall orders’ for what are effectively ‘limited governments.’

Understanding the latter dilemma raises the question asked by Meekosha and Soldatic (2011) on why “many of the everyday experiences of disabled people in the global South lies outside the reach of human rights instruments” (p. 1383). This question raises the issue of whether global social policies can be ethically and equitably justified if the bodies within the Global South do not have access to the instruments that claim universality, especially during this stage of imperial occupations of Africa and Her peoples. Therefore, this problem places this chapter at the intersection of literatures on social policy, disability policy, Nkrumah’s approach to anti-colonial social development and global south disability studies as a way forward.

⁴⁷ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 [UNCRPD]; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 [UNCRC]; and the International Monetary Fund.

Inclusivity and the Intersections

It is argued that lack of access to public spaces and services, cultural and social norms that stigmatize against those with disability have contributed to the marginalization of people and children with disabilities; further, this marginalization results in a correlation between disability from an African tradition lens and European cultural importations to poverty leading to erasure (Abidi & Sharma, 2014; Adbenya & Deku, 2011; Adjei-Amoako, 2016; Avoko, 2001; Botts & Owusu, 2013; Singal et al., 2015). These ongoing disability issues and erasure have led to the inaccurate statistical data which has limited policy makers, the States and international developmental agencies from being able to contextualize the prevalence of disability and the systemic violence that has continued to erase persons with disabilities (PWDs) from employment, and children with disabilities (CWDs) from education and from contemporary society in general (Adjei-Amoako, 2016). Regrettably, these ongoing issues have also created a single story leaving a glocalised conclusion creating a disablement to those with disabilities in the south.

Adjei-Amoako (2016) notes that “limited political will, limited capacity of development agencies, and lack of multi-agency coordination in the disability development sector were barriers to disabled people’s inclusion and participation in development process” (p. 865). But the limited capacity and will, and limited competence of international development agencies are a result of neo-colonist policy constraints leading to resource gains. Such limitations therefore resulted in a lack of accurate data on the number of persons with disabilities globally, and particularly in the Ghana.

Disability studies as a field and international development agencies such as the WHO (2011) acknowledge that the majority of disabled individuals live in the global south, but do not

yet account for “how Europe underdeveloped and continues to underdevelop Africa and its people in any of their reports before ridiculing the governments, the continent and their puppet governments as the worst place to be disabled. As already mentioned, such disabling single stories create violent disablement to those within the continent who are really in need of material supports and advocacy against embodied oppressions (Gorman, 2010, 2016).

Understanding Social Policy

Titmuss (1975) defines policy as “the principles that govern action directed towards given ends” (p. 23). This means any action carried out for the purpose of hopefully creating an equitable instrument that defines the means (end goal) to eradicate a social structural injustice. Policy signifies a voice for a group or community and stands as a fluid document that should be used to encapsulate and support one’s embodied identities. Titmuss argues that policy is valid only when “we (government in expressing the general will of the people) believe we can affect change in some form or another” (p. 24). It is a structural process that brings hope to the vulnerable but only if implementation is necessitated by equitable instruments that recognize their historical struggles coupled with contemporary binding contracts (p. 24). Policy is therefore “action-oriented and problem-oriented,” with the “we” signifying the governing power acting on behalf of the people (Titmuss, 1975, p. 24).

Social, on the other hand, has been differently used in various contexts (social psychology, social history, social work, social law, social medicines, social construction) signifies a relation to humans as social beings rather than “Economic Man” (Titmuss, 1975), which is usually not the case as the body is graded and commodified within the capitalist and neo-liberal world. Therefore, Titmuss (1975) explained, that because of the complex entities that are attached to social policy, it cannot “be isolated from the study of society as a whole in all its

varied social, economic and political aspects” (p. 15). This is because social policy is influenced by the:

[Past] and present and predicted for the future . . . social stratification and the concepts of class, caste, status, and mobility, social change and the effects of industrialisation, urbanisation and social condition, political structures; the work ethics and the sociology of industrial relations; minority groups and racial prejudice; social control, conformity, deviance and the uses of sociology to maintain the political status quo. (Titmuss, 1975, p. 15)

Policy, he claims, will and must face “dilemmas of choice,” choice that might not favour all. This raises the question of what factors factor into these choices and how different powers and political dynamics factor into policy development. For example, how the Global North places debilitating funding restrictions on Global Southern nations that restrict development of wealth to be trickled down for those nations, or how at the local level, those in power maintain their powers through policies that favour their own ableist and puppet minded groups. It can be argued that policy if the means is ‘screwed,’ can be a way of surveilling and controlling the pauper, based on the intentions of those in power. Hence the collection of statistics/data to fit within the available indicators, and measurement and monitoring frameworks that can never be met.

Michael J. Prince (2009), a disability policy scholar, concurs that social stratification, one of the influencers of social policy built on class and power, is a way to stack individuals as “inferior or superior” (p. 68), creating inequality within society. Further, Prince argues that social stratification which creates inequalities within society is not random, but rather a systemic process wherein a hegemonic group stretches their powers as creators and givers of life. This stretch of power disadvantages those who are not included in the hegemonic group, such as

people with disabilities, Africans/Blacks and those living in and on the margins of poverty, specifically in the global Southern world. Prince states that social policy is built on an hegemonic inferior system and Titmuss (1975) notes that the “political propaganda frequently masquerades under social policy labels” (p. 23), a political propaganda that delineates the shapes and forms of social policies for political gains while gambling with the lives of vulnerable citizens.

In this way social policy is political propaganda, seen as a positive instrument of social justice for the vulnerable groups, to “redistribute command over material and non-material resources from the poor to the rich; from one ethnic group to another ethnic group; from working life to old age within income groups and social class” (Titmuss, 1975, p. 26). But it is important to be aware that not everyone is or will be in favour of suggested policy because what is good for one might not favour another (Titmuss, 1975). And being aware that individual values and prejudices can influence policy, thus having an anti-bias, anti-colonial, anti-ableist lens is necessary, knowing that “we have a special duty to do so when we are discussing such a subject as social policy which, quite clearly, has no meaning at all if it is considered to be neutral in terms of values” (Titmuss, 1975, p. 27). Therefore, social policy can be a catalyst for social justice if policy spaces and political platforms are more equitable for all bodies, rather than just working in the interest of those in power.

The United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs (DESA) states that the goal of social policy is to “promote universal social protection and equality” (n.p, n.d). To accomplish this goal, they have tasked themselves with strengthening international cooperation as they tackle issues ranging from: eradication of poverty, employment generation, cooperatives, ageing, youth, family, social integration, disability, Indigenous peoples and civil society (DECA, n.d). Such targets and goals they claim will “Leave no one behind when it comes to sustainable

development” (DESA, n.d.). A universal lens that has claimed such stance for centuries, with gaps due to methodical colonial global social structures which continues to violently stretch between those on the higher and lower end of human classification.

Nkrumah’s Social Policy and its Influences

With the understanding of Titmuss (1975) and Prince (2009) noting that social policy is a means to an end, and political propaganda and DESA defining social policy as a way to promote social equality through universality in the hopes of not leaving anyone behind, this section seeks to unpack how colonial discourses shaped social policy in Ghana, specifically during Nkrumah’s take over and beyond. I have shown elsewhere that the colonial occupations did not influence Nkrumah and his policies even though he spent time away from Ghana in the US and the United Kingdom, which influenced his political drive and social policy vision; Biney (2011) highlighted that he understood the colonial experiences before setting off for school from some of his teachers (Biney, 2011).⁴⁸ I build on this point because Nkrumah’s (1962) account in his book *I Speak of Freedom* allows a glimpse into his vision for Ghana before independence and how this vision was pivotal to not only the independence of Ghana, but also for the unity of the continent.

Nkrumah’s social policy discourses, as the first leader to bring Ghana and the continent to international stage during colonial occupation, “have continued to generate lively debate” (Biney, 2008, p. 130). Such liveliness was because of his drive, which centers “movement rejecting imperialism and foreign rule . . .” (Nkrumah, 1962, p. 3). His rejection therefore led to

⁴⁸ Ama Biney a critical Pan-Africanist and Nkrumahist who focused her graduate work and career on unearthing Nkrumah’s political, social and cultural thought. Her drive for such extensive archival historical work on Nkrumah was to resurge the positive lens of Nkrumahism especially since Nkrumah’s “historical reputation is shrouded in considerable ambivalence and controversy” (Biney, 2011, p. 1). With such knowledge and research on Nkrumahism, this section sees to pull from Biney’s historical/archival account on Nkrumah.

his drive for self-government, a decolonizing tactic which Nkrumah imparted on the people of Ghana to embody the emancipation but not without first returning to their African ways of knowing and being (see Chapters 3 & 4). His self-government goal became a slogan when he was elected general secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) a party that was motivated to secure independence, but was rather slow “to make much impression on the country as a whole” (Nkrumah, 1962, p. 1). The impact of his mobilizing for self-government can be seen during his speech to one of the communities in Ghana; a fisherman pledging his allegiance and donating to the movement for self-government:

I am an honest fisherman. This talk of self-government has so captured my imagination that I gave two shillings during the silver collection. I now hand over my last four shillings to help in speeding the work of the Convention. Believe me, if I had more I would give it. That is all I have to tell you. (as cited by Nkrumah, 1962, p. 3)

This demonstrates how Nkrumah’s drive for change resonated with the Ghanaian peasants, and it illustrates how his change cannot be achieved from the top, but rather from the bottom up through the union’s support and approval of His People who are living the colonial realities.

His first collection of social policies led to the development, growth and independence of Ghana, which included freedom and political independence for Ghana and the continent. To reach this freedom and political independence, Nkrumah (1962) insisted that it would not be attainable unless every Ghanaian is involved in the nations building of the country.

The freedom and political independence of Ghana was, as he argued, a means to an end, “to the building of the good life to the benefit of all, regardless of tribe, creed . . . hence the demand for our freedom for only freeman can shape the destinies of their future” (Nkrumah, 1962, pp. 31-32). The path to freedom includes independent economic policy acceptable to the

people “without borrowing a penny from outside” (Nkrumah, 1962, p. 45). This was achieved within a few short years after his separation from the UGCC while also quickly founding his own party, the Convention People’s Party (CPP).

Another freeman’s destiny within Nkrumah’s first social policy was the improvement of the educational system for the people of Ghana through the creation of free education for all, which included a drive for literacy undertaken in the rural areas (Nkrumah, 1962). The push for education can be linked back to Nkrumah’s colonial disabling account in regards to Africans not being educated because it was considered beyond them or being educated for a structure that does not benefit the country, Her People nor the continent:

. . . the establishment of a school at Cape Coast, was solely in anticipation of the King’s committing some of his children to your care for education, as the foundation of the pre-eminence of Europeans. (Bowdich, 1819, p. 84)

This is why he made sure that the revitalization of literacy within Ghana was prioritized in his first seven years social policy plan (Nkrumah, 1962, p. 45).

Further, he sees this as the strongest weapon of the imperialist, stating that “[imperialism] thrives only where the people are divided and are ignorant of their rights. That is why the educational system is so bad. In fact, there is no system at all. It is one big muddle” (Nkrumah, 1962, p 13), because what the colonial built did not create a space for the African/Ghanaian as they were considered ‘uneducable.’ This is why he saw education as a “function of teaching the population the specific skills that are required to produce goods and services needed by the economy” (Nkrumah, Seven-Year Development Plan (SYDP), 1963-70, p. 141). Nkrumah’s education plan envisioned a day where everyone especially children whether “his parents are rich or poor [disabled or abled] will be able to develop his talents to the fullest degree” (p. 141). To

Nkrumah, education ought to have no barriers and should be offered without a system of inequality. His education policies also stretched to the communities creating mass education and community development, a system created to “broadening the mental horizons of the adult population in remote villages” (p. 142).

To accomplish his social policy education goals, Nkrumah (1962) stated that “[in] order to help achieve a satisfactory level of basic education within the six years it is intended also to exploit more fully the potentialities of audio-visual and other aids” to support the inclusion of every child entering school under the education plan (p. 150). He also called for research studies in school attainment levels before and after his education plan is implemented, the promotion of science and mathematics in schools, the implementation of equitable student selection techniques and “child development studies with special reference to primary school pupils” (p. 162).

Nkrumah’s education policy stands as a lifespan development plan and a way to build on what was left over by the colonials.

Health was another urgent concern of Nkrumah (1962) as the colonial structures in place neglected access to health care, and created fear of accessing western medicine in the natives, a further disablement to the people; “. . . the natives have not patronized the Institution as much as formerly; and this can be accounted for by the fact that, owing to the undermining of the department. . . .”⁴⁹ Such colonial disablement propelled him to quickly construct hospital infrastructures all over the regions creating progression and ensuring that his political promises and policies to the people were met.

His Seven Year Development Plan (SYDP) included the opening of a mental health hospital which was for the rehabilitation of those who were confined during colonial rule with

⁴⁹ ADM 5/1/56: Departmental Reports—For the Year 1901, (p. 18).

mental illness, in order to get them back to their daily life while also enjoying their independent freedom and self-governance dream for all (Nkrumah, 1963-1970). This plan was developed in response to the crumbling of older colonial structures which he saw as unfit and grossly overcrowded, leading to “[five] new mental hospitals . . . planned to provide adequate out-patient and follow-up . . .” specifically for community treatment and support in different regions (SYDP, 1963-70, p.183) for those confined within the colonial asylums. A community follow-up system that would include a “cadre of psychiatric social workers will be increased to ensure that those who have been afflicted with mental disorders are properly re-integrated back into their communities” (SYDP, 1963-70, p. 183).

Nkrumah’s vision and drive was a positive political propaganda that quickly became a push to unite the independent states in Africa. It is critical to acknowledge that even though Nkrumah might not have completely accomplished his United States of Africa vision, his ideology lives on within the AU of which he was a co-founder (Biney, 2008, 2011). Julius Nyerere was one of the leaders that argued against a United States of Africa and its possibilities. But in 1997 Nyerere in his speech during Ghana’s 40th independence celebration admitted that it is unfortunate that he was one of the African leaders who did not see the vision for a United Africa when it was proposed by Nkrumah (Biney, 2008). Therefore, African leaders “failure lay in the lost opportunity to discuss a mechanism for pursuing the objective” of Nkrumah’s United African’s vision (Biney, 2008, p. 147).

It was also visible in the 2005 Fifth AU Summit held in Libya where Gadhafi “called for a mechanism of [defense] to oversee the [defense] and security of the continent that was realistic as opposed to being a paper [window washing] exercise” (Biney, 2008, p. 149). Gadhafi continued his speech stating, “[the] average African has paid the price in the form of subjugation

to disease, exploitation, backwardness and blackmail” (as cited in Biney, 2008, p. 149). While also criticizing those leaders who during Nkrumah considered that a United States of Africa was not plausible and way too premature (Biney, 2008). His speech continued with:

We have been moving gradually for 100 years. . . . Had we heeded [Nkrumah’s] advice at that time, Africa would now be like the United States of America or at least close to it.

But we did not heed his advice, and even worse we ridiculed those predictions. (as cited in Biney, 2008, p. 149)

The 1997 Julius Nyerere meeting and 2005 Gadhafi’s speech are testament to the idea that Nkrumah’s regional and continental vision and drive to a united front is still relevant, his radicalism seems to have been reignited through the “transformation of the OAU into the AU” (Biney, 2008, p. 149).

Nkrumah’s adoption or introduction of a socialist (or humanistic) ideology into a country that is still partially managed under a colonial administration not only landed him in Jail, but was also misinterpreted as communism and was highly critiqued (Nkrumah, 1962; Biney, 2008, 2012). Maurice Low (1913) explains that Socialism breaks down oppressive barriers of:

[Creed], and race, to merge class, to bring about that dreamed-of dream of the visionary, the reduction of society to a common level. . . . Socialism is a plant that thrives

luxuriantly in all soils. . . It throws out its roots in the workshop, the factory, the mine, the college. . . . Socialism is a dream. . . . It glorifies the material and debates the spiritual. . .

[A Socialist] is a materialist through the association of ideas, for under his hands the material shapes itself, but the spiritual has no place (pp. 3-4).

The above provides some context into Socialist ideology as a push for rapid economic development change that was conclusive in Nkrumah’s social policy.

Low's (1913) quote on the essence of Socialism also concurs with Nkrumah's economic development policy specifically as it was used by Nkrumah to understand components of oppressive systems as Ghana exits from centuries of colonial occupation; infrastructure development such as factories, hospitals and education in order to enable the dreams of the citizens; therefore, association of socialism to materialism is fair and for Nkrumah well over due for Ghana and the continent (SYDP, 1963/64). Nkrumah's socialist ideology also created a space for spirituality which was his way to erase all colonial spiritual and structure left overs. Such understanding of Socialism therefore shows the influences on Nkrumah's economic development policies, leading to the conclusion that his policies were not the result of British colonial systems but rather a radical ideology for fundamental change that allows for space to factor in citizens realities and ways of living (see Chapter 3). It is also fair to conclude that his love for Socialism was to show the colonials that Ghana is better off without their rule and without their left-over policies, hence the radical acceptance and rapid policy forwardness for change. Their left-over policies or as Nkrumah mentions:

[Programme] of reconstruction which was designed by the colonial administration . . . was not a development plan. It was a collection of various individual petty projects that has to be built in preparation for future planning . . . [but by] the time we reached the stage of implementation . . . it had already become quite clear to us that the only real solution to the reconstruction of Ghana lay, in the long run, in the adoption of a socialist and co-operative program for industry . . . [Socialism] embodies a long view of the path which should lead to a self-sustaining economy, based on socialist production and distribution. . . . An economy, balanced between industry and agriculture, providing a

sufficiency of food for the people, and supporting secondary industries. (SYDP, 1963/64, pg. ix – x)

Nkrumah's socialist or what he also referred to as humanist radical rapid economic and social policies opened the industrial floodgates of Ghana to investors, which become problematic to the Ghanaians. But Nkrumah reassured the country:

[Our] national wealth must be built up and used in such a way that economic power shall not be allowed to exploit the worker in town or village, but be used for the supreme welfare and happiness of our people . . . we have decided that the economy of Ghana will, for some time to come, remain a mixed economy in which a vigorous public and co-operative sector will operate along with the private sector. (SYDP, 1963/64, pg. x)

Nkrumah also reassured Ghanaians that these “working relationships will enable the workers to acquire the sense of complete belonging and full participation and they will no longer consider themselves as working for colonialist exploiters. The progress, welfare and happiness of the masses is our supreme concern” (SYDP, 1963/64, p. xv). A public and private sector partnership which did not quite materialize as Nkrumah was not present to fully realize such a complex South-North business development relationship.

Nkrumah's Disability Colonial Influence

The argument in chapter 3 and above have showcased several ways in which it can be concluded that Nkrumah's policies were not influences of colonial policies but rather congruently socialist and African. His disability social policy on the other hand was opposite as, it was claimed, was a revival of a colonial program which was based on the British rehabilitation model (Grischow, 2014). Nkrumah was said to be a big believer of making sure that every citizen in one-way or the other, contributed to his grand social economic development goal

(Biney, 2008, 2012; Grischow, 2011; Nkrumah, 1963). Grischow (2014) stated in his archival research compilation on *the Disability and Rehabilitation in Late Colonial Ghana (2014)* that Nkrumah “discovered disability shortly after independence when he began to gather jail destitute and beggars, only to find that many of them were disabled” (n.p.). Leaving him no choice but to recruit “John Wilson, Director of Britain’s Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind.... [and] Wilson’s recommendations prompted the revival of the colonial scheme” that failed during colonial administration (Grischow, 2014).

Such revelation, Grischow (2014) argued, lead to a medical and rehabilitative program which he notes “would have allowed Nkrumah to integrate disabled Ghanaians” into his economic productivity policy” (n.p). But it was rather “rooted in capitalist labor regimes, economic rehabilitation [which] directly contradicted” the program (Grischow, 2014). The “model was ‘social’ in that it defined social citizenship by participation in the labor market; to be a full citizen, that is, one had to be productive worker” (Grischow, 2014, n.p). Grischow also argued that it weighed heavily on the “West African initiative [which] drew comprehensively on the British model of social orthopedics which sought to rehabilitate disabled individuals economically by reintegrating them into the existing workforce” (Grischow, 2014, n.p.). But can Grischow’s conclusion be placed on Nkrumah especially knowing that such model was directly linked to the ex-colonial policies and was clearly created by the British? Can he also place his conclusion on Nkrumah knowing that disability was more of a criminal offence during the colonial period? So was Nkrumah’s disability policy influenced by the colonial? Yes, but its ramifications should not be placed on him as he had no medical background to understand the depth of confinement and what it will take to re-integrate. Also because the only people/person

that could understand the process of institutionalizing and asylum processes would be the British colonials.

With such clarification and conclusion regarding Nkrumah's economic and development social policy, how have globalized discourses such as the Social Development Goals (SDG) shaped social policies in contemporary Ghana? Nkrumah (1962) and his SYDP (1963/64) makes it clearer that Ghana and Ghanaians needed some drastic life altering changes to place Ghana on a continental and world stage. Since such changes were not realized under a socialist influence, how has his fear of re-colonization/neo-colonization become a reality through the use of the new technologies of development such as the social developmental instruments that claim to be universal?

The Social Development Goal's (SDG) agenda "is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. It also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom" (SDG, 2015). This plan as stated on the United Nations website acknowledges that the eradication of poverty is far-fetched therefore taking steps towards the eradication is the best way to make sure equality is spread across the world. The UN-SDG website explains that:

We are resolved to free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want to heal and secure our planet. We are determined to take the bold and transformative steps which are urgently needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2015, n.p.)

What steps have the United Nations taken from previous centuries that have prevented moving the 'world onto a sustainable and resilience path'? What is different now in saving the poor?

Based on the outline, the universal transformative agenda led to the creation of 17 SDGs and 169

targets that seeks to build on the previous un-attained Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in order to “complete what [it] did not achieve” (ibid).

MDG a topic which has been widely criticized and contested on its unfair systemic measurement tool and its bias against Africa due to indicators that were unreachable by global Southern countries (see, Easterly, 2008; Fukuda-Parr et al, 2012; Vandemoortele, 2009). Easterly’s (2008) argument is that the goal of the MDG was not attainable due to the “choices made in defining “success” or “failure” as achieving numerical targets for the MDGs made attainment of the MDGs less likely in Africa than in other regions” (p. 26). The eight MDGs also failed to mention the inclusion of children and adults with disabilities and their growth within the global millennium (Millennium Development Goals and Beyond, 2015, n.p.).

The social and developmental policies are ‘window washing’ instruments; it is a systemic structure that shows that “we live in a time in which violence . . . of economic domination, of capital-labour relations, of the great North-South divide, to say nothing of all the everyday violence’s perpetrated against the weak [and their land]: women, children” and the disabled (Farmer, 2005, pp. 7-8). Leaving one to ponder on the dangers of not reclaiming critical Nkrumahism as he wanted to end such structural violence that was perpetuated against the weak. Also remembering that Sen (2009) and Escobar (1999) states that institutional means to eradicating poverty cannot be reached as it does not place into context the realities of those living at the margins of poverty which unfortunately only benefits the international institutions.

Ghana’s Current Inclusive Education Case – Globalization Influence

Ghana boasts of a Disability Act 2006 that has been passed in the parliament, and an Inclusive Education Policy which also includes Standards and Guidelines for inclusive education from the Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, scholars have argued that Ghana falls short in the

implementation, accountability and monitoring of all the policies that are in place (Agbeyega & Deku, 2011; Botts & Owusu, 2013). Such lack therefore, leaves Botts and Owusu (2013) to state that parents and their children with disabilities “face numerous challenges including stigmatization, discrimination, and exclusion in overt and covert aspects of life” (p. 135). An exclusion from the education system that promises to educate every child for free, which Nkrumah (1963) argues is their independent right and should be a default human right.

Ghana’s Inclusive Education Policy (2013) has also been “influenced by several international laws, treaties, policies, and conventions” (Botts & Owusu, 2013, p. 136). The government has also signed and ratified many of the international and regional conventions related to human rights and disabilities hence the well needed creation of the *Inclusive Education Policy* (2013) and the *Standard and Guidelines for Practice of Inclusive Education in Ghana* (2015). Even though the 1996 Ghana Constitution in Article 29 Rights of Disabled persons mandates that:

(6) As far as practicable, every place to which the public have access shall have appropriate facilities for disabled persons.

(7) Parliament shall enact such laws as are necessary to ensure the enforcement of the provision of this article (pg. 26).

So why did it take this long for the government of Ghana to enforce or put into documentation a system that recognizes a disabled child within their education policy? Especially since the same constitutions also mandates in Article 38 that the State shall provide “free, compulsory and universal basic education” for all (p. 35). And knowing that Nkrumah’s policy had a social inclusive lens on rehabilitating that provided work based on their capacity and provided necessary tools for inclusion (Botts & Owusu, 2013; Grischow 2011; Nkrumah, 1963).

The Ministry of Education (MoE) in the Inclusive Special Needs policy lists the different documents that have influenced the creation or brought about the impetus to putting together their own policies. Listed below are the national commitments both local, regional and international that have influenced the inclusion of children with disabilities within mainstream school:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (1992) – See above for articles affiliated to inclusive education
- The Education Strategic Plan (2010-2020) – Which stipulates that the Ministry of education shall be accessible/provided to those with physical and mental impairments, orphans and those with learning disabilities through the framework of inclusion or within a segregated school.
- The Education Act 778, (2008) – Which correlates with the Education Strategic Plan (2010-2020).
- The National Youth Policy of 2010 – The purpose of this policy is to empower the Ghanaian youth in order to reach their individual potential (but it does not specifically speak to youths with disabilities).
- International Commitments – Which speaks of all the international documentations that Ghana has ascribed to such as the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (1990); United Nations on the Rights of Person with Disabilities (2006)
- The Dakar Framework for Action (which paved the way for inclusive education in order to eradicate marginalization and stigma of children, youth and adults with disabilities.
- World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) this document created a universal framework for universal access to education through equity and inclusion of women, girls and underserved groups.
- Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities of Person with Disabilities (UN, 1993), Ghana Government's commitment to this instrument mandates them to ensure that all obstacles are removed for full participation of PWDs – it requires the State to implement, be accountable, create measurements rather than planning lip service to inclusion.
- The Millennium Development Goals – Which mandates that States provide/create access to Universal Primary Education by 2015. (Ministry of Education Ghana, 2013)

The policy scope provides a framework for the implementation of mainstreaming inclusive education from kindergarten to tertiary/adult education. The Inclusive Education (IE) policy stipulates that the policy will:

[Tackle] a range of discrimination issues in classrooms where persons with diverse and special educational needs, such as slow learners who are excluded from teaching and

learning processes (though they are still in the class). The needs of those who are out of school due to requirements of SEN will not be left out. . . . International best practices on inclusive education will be customized and contextualized strategies will be presented in the action plan. (MoE, 2013)

Unfortunately the above is not the case as parents with children with disabilities are still emptying their accounts in order to send their children to private schools (as per my research interview with parents in August 2019) as public inclusive schools are not economically, structurally pedagogically accessible. Using a critical lens, one can argue that even though Ghana is committed to the mainstreaming of children with disabilities through inclusive education, their policy language still lacks inclusivity leaving one to wonder if the MoE and their policy makers are themselves conversant on how languages can depict marginalization, stigma and unconscious biases; leaving one to argue that the policies are all based on window washing lip services propaganda. Further, their SEN is not mandated as there are no accountability processes in place to make sure that both government and private schools are not excluding children with disabilities.

A 2015 qualitative research and policy analysis by Singal et al, notes that even though the Ghana government has made positive policy shifts to eliminating the exclusion of children and persons with disabilities within contemporary Ghana, there is still a need to develop and provide ongoing professional development to support teachers with adequate training that “respond to the diverse needs of children in their classroom . . . as the absence of schooling is seemingly related to the greater likelihood of the person ending up begging and also living on the margins of community life” (p. 923). But I also add that these policies can be achieved with proper implementation indicators in place that leaves out political propaganda, which holds the State

and all stakeholders accountable for the lack of educating the society on inclusion (Donkor, 2017). This concurs with Titmuss (1975) as he notes that one should be aware of their values, prejudices and political platforms in order not to strip away the human and “natural” in policy making which can happen if accountability and implementation is not coupled with hefty fines.

As already depicted, it is also as important to provide a solid context to understand statistical data to paint an accurate picture of children with disabilities both in the rural and urban areas in order for allocation of resources to be equitable. The United Nations Enable (2016) notes that, “the lack of data and statistics on disability contributes to the invisibility of persons with disabilities. This presents a planning and implementation obstacle to improve the lives and well-being of persons with disabilities” (n.p). And hopefully continuous research will increase the awareness of the several lacks of support for individuals with disabilities in developing nations (Botts & Owusu, 2013; see also Singal et al, 2015), but how long can the children with disability keep hope alive?

Statistical issues leave some behind and will hinder the country or local non-governmental agencies in meeting any developmental goals; hence the SDG 17 created to “[strengthen] the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development” (SDG, 2015). While the SDG 17:16.1, which targets systemic issues, notes that it will “[enhance] the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries” (SDG, 2015). Hopefully this particular SDG can be a new beginning for capturing those who have been left behind or have not been included in country development with complex technologies that Nkrumah promised to every child who needs it.

Agbenyega and Deku (2011), in their research *Building New Identities in Teacher Preparation for Inclusive Education in Ghana*, adapted a post-colonial lens to theorize the critical lack that leaves children behind due to the absence of support and a ridged way of colonial teaching that was inherited and influenced through foreign policies. Both authors argued that a critical post-colonial lens will provide Ghana's trained teachers the "possibilities . . . for educational and pedagogical change, and for supporting social and educational inclusion . . . [as] true change that supports inclusion must start from teacher training institutions (p. 5). But I argue that true change goes beyond the teacher training institutions since it is structural and since most of Ghana's education policies are influenced by Eurocentric structures that claim universality without putting in place macro historical and cultural contexts while also injecting a normalized standard. Such normalized structural influences are injected within funding and grants making it extremely difficult for changes that are deemed pedagogically traditional for the Ghanaian child.

Based on the tenet and the theoretical anti-colonial ideology of this dissertation, Nkrumah would argue that the State has sold the nation as the policies are not in favour of the people and are not creating the happiness that post-independency was supposed to impart. Escobar (1999) would argue that it is due to the methodical and violent eurocentric and technocentric structures that sees the Black African body and continent as abstract concepts (p. 382). Thiong'o (1986) would argue that the success of the new phase for social change in the "struggle for regional and even continental economic, political and cultural integrations" was not met therefore, the educational system that includes all bodies and allows for an African pedagogy in order for genuine social justice and happiness has not yet happened for Ghana (p. 174). While Titmuss (1975) would clearly state that because care was not taken, the complex entity of social policy has isolated the very society that it was created for.

Therefore, the State has failed to grasp policy as a multifaceted entity that requires the State, policy makers and all stakeholders to understand that policy is influenced by structures from pre-formation Ghana, post-colonial and the present contemporary situations in order to predict for the future (Titmuss, 1975). Understanding the past should now allow us into different spaces that need decolonization for the way forward. This dissertation has opened the door to allow lived experiences of disability to be rewritten truthfully rather than constrained by current single stories of disability depicted within the rhetoric of ‘cultural practices.’ Overall, let it not be forgotten that:

There [are] generally grain surplus in the nation or empire that could have rescued the victims, but millions of people died because of public policy and its commitment to the profit system. On the other hand, they were murdered by the violent disruptions of native institutions whose traditions would have meant feeding these circumstances. On the other, millions died, not outside the modern world system but in the process of being forcibly incorporated into its economic and political structures. (Chernomas & Hudson, 2007, p. 3)

Violent disruptions of pre-colonial, colonial and now neo-colonial structures led millions to death, in the name of civilization and modernization, a process that is forcibly incorporated into Africa’s economic, political, social and cultural structure. This in itself is social policy murder.

Way Forward & Conclusion

The bigger question for the way forward is, what are the pre-colonial and colonial disability cultural practices of Ghana that created and isolated those with disabilities in contemporary Ghana? The fact that this dissertation has Sankofa in order to understand the current ontological and epistemological rhetoric surrounding disability as an embodiment, its

policies and the disablement of social and cultural erasure of persons with disabilities stemming from the violence of pre-colonial Europeans through to colonial era becomes a way forward to begin decolonizing current policies and societal attitudes. The overall questions set out in this dissertation were:

1. How are Indigenous Africans Silenced, pathologized, depicted or produced during early pre-colonial European trading (SuperHuman vs. Lazy)?
2. How have the Gold Coast interlopers and colonials influenced or constructed the institutionalization of disability, specifically madness? Has this impact created continuity or discontinuity in how Ghanaian disabled people, particularly those who are classified as ‘insane/mad,’ are produced and treated through the colonial and post Nkrumah period?

This dissertation has provided evidence through the use of archival documents and written European accounts to understand the rhetoric of disability stemming from pre-colonial to before Nkrumah’s take over. I have shown that the current rhetoric of “it’s our culture” to stigmatize, ostracize and erase persons with disability is not a Ghanaian culture but rather a colonial framing used to control Africans and to further European dominance. I have also laid out several institutional continuities and discontinuities through European discrepancies stemming from the pre-formation era and can conclude that their relationships and interactions with Indigenous Africans/Ghanaians became a disablement that has shaped, silenced, and influenced overall stigmatization within contemporary Ghana. It has also declared that there were limitations found in the European accounts on how bodies and whose bodies were used for sacrifice because it could no longer be commodified for economic gain; this limitation mentioned is crucial and will require further investigation through the use of traditional Oral engagement with the locals.

This dissertation creates a Door of Return to Indigenizing African/Ghanaian ways of knowing and rewriting the histories to include ancestors who were silenced; therefore, this dissertation partially concludes that, it is not “our culture” to stigmatize against persons with disabilities particularly those who are classified ‘insane’ as it validates my main argument that institutionalization of the indigenes increased during the formalization of colonization due to them performing their spiritual offerings. Therefore, they should be viewed as being one with the spirit world, interpreting messages from ancestors which in itself is a gift that the Akan’s hold with pride. To further interrogate this inconclusiveness from the European archive, I propose further research that will allow the Indigenes themselves to speak on how, why and if those considered “insane/mad and not able” were banished or erased during pre-colonial Ghana.

Moving forward, I insert that policy and foreign ideology are closely intertwined and can have devastating consequences affecting those who are already marginalized; therefore, a chosen ideology must be fluid and cognisant of both the imperialist macro structures and the local/traditional realities in order to provide a dignified and free life for ALL. I look to a way forward for a Southern disability human rights social justice infused social policy. As clearly stated in this dissertation, Nkrumahism as an ideology provides a lens through which to view disability studies in a new light. One which allows the full examination of different levels of systemic violence that lead to several oppressions before concluding that an African country is the worst place to be disabled in the world. We need to put an end to the erasure that continuously disables a person, country and continent through political propaganda and white washing policies and clinch to nation building that includes, embraces and opens the door of return for ancestors in order to let their souls rest in peace and leaves no one behind. This is the

end that is needed, the end that Nkrumah set forth to create the 'Door of Return' for all African Personalities.

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Appendix A

Appendix 9: ADM 23/1/226 – List of Inmates discharged into the community compiled by the Alienist (1937)

LIST OF INMATES OF THE LUNATIC ASYLUM WHO HAVE SUFFICIENTLY RECOVERED THEIR SANITY SO AS TO BE DISCHARGED.									
NAME	Place of origin	Tribes	Name of Head of Family.	Name & Village of home near relative	sex	APPROX- imate Age	Place where certi- fied	Resident in Asylum	
Sendo Dagonba	Sandaguru	Dagonba	Daramani	Brother Daramani Sandaguru	Male	50 Years	Tamale	Since 28/3/26	
Alasen Dagonba	Savelugu	Dagonba	Unknown	Unknown	Male	60 Years	Cape Coast	Since 13/1/20	
Issa Dagarti	na	Dagarti	Fai	Father Fai. Togo: Near na. also Dago Dagarti Tarkwa	Male	25 Years	Tarkwa	Since 14/7/31	
Damasi Grunshi	Ayincum. (From Certi- ficate) Nayrongo. (Patient's own state- ment)	Grunshi	Abanga	Brother Jesse Grunshi Nayrongo	Male	30 Years	James Fort Prison	Since 31/10/29	
Kojo Mensah	Bayika	Krofi	Kofi Nyami	Brother Kofi Nyami Bayika	Male	30 Years	Sekondi	Since 13/1/28	
Kojo Afumai	Asseman	Akwapi	Unknown	Father Kofi Adjel Kwagiri Asseman	Male	25 Years	Nawaga	Since 2/4/30	
Kwesi Junso	Junso	Akwapi	Kofi	Father Kofi Junso	Male	35 Years	Keta	Since 22/1/30	
X G. B. Gaikey	Appan	Panti	Job Atta	Uncle Job Atta Appan	Male	35 Years	Cape Coast	20/6/16	
Akun	Nzima	Panti	Unknown	Unknown	Male	50 Years	Azim	Since 1901	
X Kwamda Sam	Cape Coast	Panti	Koku Amman	Brother Koku Amman Cape Coast	Male	65 Years	Cape Coast	Since 10/6/0	
X J. H. Holbeck	AGYA Anamaboe	Panti	Kwa Mensah	Uncle Kwa Mensah AGYA Anamaboe	Male	30 Years	Saltpond	Since 9/12/30	
Michael Benny	Winneba	Panti	Unknown	Mother Abina Nyadu Winneba	Male	50 Years	Winneba	Since 27/4/33	
Entsua	Entsua	Panti	Unknown	Unknown	Male	30 Years	Sekondi	Since 22/12/31	

DAMASI GRUNSHI was convicted of "threatening" at
KIM on the 26th September, 1929 and sentenced to two
months imprisonment with Hard Labour.

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LIST C.

Criminal Lunatics who have become sane but are still in the Asylum.

Name	Date of Admission to the Asylum	Charge	Remarks
Hamidu Moshie	3. 11. 27	Murder	Secondary Dementia
Abiri Kusaga	14. 9. 28	"	- do -
Kofi Nkromah	2. 8. 29	"	Dementia Praecox
Kweku Moshie	23. 9. 24	"	Secondary Dementia
Anarfo Frafra	24. 6. 30	-	Acute Mania
Kwabena Adjeman	26. 7. 30	Murder	Senile Dementia
Kweku Fokuo	6. 2. 32	"	
Kwadwo Owu	4. 2. 32	"	
Ghan Kwaw	28. 3. 32	"	
Alabi Lagos	10. 6. 32	"	Secondary Dementia
Atinga Grumah	14. 8. 26	Rape & Carnal knowledge)	Imbecility